

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nashville Honors 25 New Blue Ribbon Teachers for Excellence in Student Success, Instruction and Leadership

Honorees awarded with \$2,000 cash prize and surprise roundtrip Southwest Airlines vouchers

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Nov. 3, 2025 — Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) and Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) designated [25 educators](#) as new Blue Ribbon Teachers at a ceremony hosted by Vanderbilt University on October 30. Each Blue Ribbon teacher received a \$2,000 cash prize, professional headshots, a trophy, media mentions and two round-trip airline tickets, courtesy of Southwest Airlines. Since 2014, the Blue Ribbon Teacher awards have recognized and celebrated more than 475 of Nashville's top teachers.



Joined by Nashville Mayor Freddie O'Connell, MNPS Superintendent Dr. Adrienne Battle and other elected officials, the 11th annual Blue Ribbon Teacher ceremony recognized MNPS educators for their exemplary work in their classrooms and communities. Honorees were selected in the following categories: Excellence in Student Success and Opportunity, Excellence in Instruction, and Excellence in Leadership.



"Teaching is an admirably tough profession that requires creativity, patience and unwavering commitment. We are so proud to honor the top teaching talent in our city each year and show Nashville how educational excellence can help students thrive, said **Dr. Diarese George, NPEF President & CEO**. "The Blue Ribbon Teacher designation recognizes the hard work of these teachers and shines a spotlight on the innovation and leadership that happens daily in MNPS classrooms."

Eligible Blue Ribbon Teacher [candidates](#) must be full time MNPS teachers for at least four years, have a strong Level of Effectiveness of their performance in the last three consecutive years, and be endorsed by their principals. Winners are determined by a rigorous selection process that includes a review of application materials and evidence by a community panel.

The 2025 Blue Ribbon Teacher award winners are:

1. Courtney Antonello, H. G. Hill Middle

2. Brooke Adler, Martin Luther King Jr. Magnet
3. Tony Berg, Wright Middle
4. Deanna Boorsma, Meigs Middle Magnet
5. Hudson Christian, Stratford STEM Magnet High
6. Christopher Collins, Hume-Fogg Magnet High
7. Sarah Diaz, Maplewood High
8. Abbie Gunkel, Charlotte Park Elementary
9. Manda Hackney, Tusculum Elementary
10. Heather Hall, East Nashville Magnet High
11. Samira Hardcastle, John F. Kennedy Middle
12. Dr. Brittany Harrington, Cockrill ES
13. Maegan Hickey, Cambridge Early Learning Center
14. Joshua Latham, Republic High
15. Matthew Laurence, Hume-Fogg Magnet High
16. Valerie McAnally, Cole Elementary
17. Jennifer Murray, Hume-Fogg Magnet High
18. Meredith Musgrove, Paragon Mills Elementary
19. Marti Profitt, Nashville School of the Arts
20. Likisha Rhodes, Cane Ridge High
21. Alex Robinson, John Overton High
22. Zakeisha Appleton Smith, Tusculum Elementary
23. Mary Alice Strickler, KIPP High School
24. Debbie West, Waverly-Belmont Elementary
25. Courtney Williams, Martin Luther King Jr. Magnet

“The 2025 Blue Ribbon Teachers set the standard for excellence in our district through their dedication and expertise,” said **Dr. Battle**. “At Nashville Public Schools, we are committed to recruiting and supporting educators who drive student growth, exhibit instructional excellence and create welcoming learning environments. We congratulate this year’s honorees and are grateful to NPEF and Nashville’s Agenda for providing a platform to recognize them and elevate the critical role they play in ensuring every student is known, supported and empowered to succeed.”

NPEF setting the stage for next Teacherpreneur cohort

As part of NPEF’s continued investment in educator innovation and professional learning opportunities, applications are now open for the fifth [Teacherpreneur cohort](#). The program invites Nashville public school-certificated, non-administrative educators – including teachers, counselors, librarians and others working directly with students – to bring their ideas for change to life. Through a series of collaborative sessions beginning in early 2026, participants will refine their concepts and prepare to pitch for a share of \$25,000 in cash prizes awarded to the top teacher-led innovations. Applications are due November 12, and interested educators can learn more [here](#).

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About the Nashville Public Education Foundation

The Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) is a nonprofit organization committed to ensuring every child can thrive in Nashville’s public schools. NPEF works to improve student outcomes in Nashville’s public schools by identifying challenges and advancing evidence-based solutions. Since 2002, NPEF’s role as a catalyst for transformation has yielded tangible results in areas such as

teacher professional development, teacher compensation, principal quality, and college access. Learn more at nashvillepef.org.

About Metro Nashville Public Schools

Metro Nashville Public Schools is one of the nation's top 50 largest school districts, preparing more than 80,000 students for higher education, work and life. With the goal of being the premier large urban school district in Tennessee and beyond, MNPS wants to ensure Every Student is Known by meeting focused outcomes that will help each child achieve growth from an academic and social-emotional perspective. The governing body for Metro Schools is the Metropolitan Nashville Board of Public Education, a nine-member elected body. For more information, visit MNPS.org, or follow us on Twitter [@MetroSchools](https://twitter.com/MetroSchools) or [Facebook.com/MetroSchools](https://facebook.com/MetroSchools).

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Access to high resolution photos: [OneDrive](#)