



Grow Your Own Educators

Kentucky's Educator Pipelines

December 2025

Happy Holidays, Teaching and Learning!

Reflect & Rise: Your Teaching and Learning 2025 Highlights and 2026 Hopes

In 2025, we ...

- Had several students place at Murray State University Regional Competition! (Graves County High School)
- Doubled our enrollment in our Educators Rising chapter for Henderson County High School which means we took more students to regional!!! AND THEN we brought home more awards!
- Hoped to learn and grow by doing new and challenging things! (Ignite Institute)
- Worked to find opportunities (set our pace)! (Henry Clay High School)
- Stepped outside our comfort zones and have had many laughs! (Union County High School)
- Started our Educator's Rising career pathway (Casey County High School)
- Extended our schools we can observe and got to visit a different college campus! (Jefferson County Public Schools)



Kentucky Department of
E D U C A T I O N

KY Educators Rising Vision:

To eliminate the teacher shortage by reimagining educator pathways.

KY Educators Rising Mission:

To inspire and grow current and rising educators to become community leaders and advocates for high-quality education.

- Grew through hands-on teaching experiences and community involvement. (North Bullitt High School)
- Had planned on everyone competing as normal in the Kentucky Educators Rising Competition. However, due to weather that we could not have predicted nor prepared for in a million years, slammed our area. This weather left us out of school for weeks and many of my students without power and internet. The coordinators waited as long as they possibly could for our pre-score materials, but there was nothing we could do. So unfortunately, we had 5 students who were not able to compete. (Leslie County Area Technology Center)
- Held three meetings this fall, featuring alumni and district leaders, introducing students to new dual-credit opportunities through Eastern Kentucky University, and encouraging participation in the state conference. Chapter officers and members also volunteered at multiple school and community events, building meaningful connections they hope will carry into their future teaching careers. Additionally, Wayne County High School aided in Wayne County Middle School's Reality Town for 8th-grade students. They spoke to 8th-grade students about Educators Rising and talked to them about their career interests. Students also got to speak with community members.

In 2026, we will ...

- Continue to look for opportunities for Graves County High School's Educators Rising to be more involved in classrooms and further their hands-on experiences.
- Be more intentional with our monthly service learning while increasing enrollment and bringing home more awards from regional and state! (Henderson County High School)
- Build our skills as future educators, share our gifts with others through service and shine a light on the "GOOD" we see daily in our schools and in our teachers' classrooms! (Ignite Institute)
- We hope to continue building on that foundation (lead the race)! (Henry Clay High School)

Grow Your Own (GYO) Greats: The GYO December Spotlight Shines Brightly on Wayne County Public Schools!



Rebecca New

Jessica Thrasher and her Educators Rising Chapter have provided opportunities for the GYO pipeline to shine!

They have hosted three Educators Rising chapter meetings at Wayne County High School during club days, drawing a dedicated group of about 20 students. At the September meeting, 2025 graduate and former Educators Rising member Rebecca New, pictured above, spoke about how the organization shaped her path into education. She now works as an instructional assistant at the district's elementary school while attending Somerset Community College and pursuing her bachelor's degree in elementary education through Western Kentucky University's Somerset campus.

Thank you, Jessica, for bringing a GYO Great in for

- Plan to do the same! Push ourselves to take every opportunity to grow and learn. And we plan to laugh even more! (Union County High School)
- Participate in our first competition and working to grow our program. (Casey County High School)
- Observe in multiple schools in Louisville! (JCPS)
- Take on new learning opportunities and competitions! (North Bullitt High School)
- Have all of our students prepared and ready for state competition! We have begun our state preparations, and we are utilizing every free moment that we can so that we have a vast majority of our competition work completed prior to heading out for Christmas break. My classroom may look like a construction zone, but that is A-OKAY! (Leslie County Area Technology Center)
- Compete at the State Educators Rising Conference. We will also participate in Read Across America Week in March, reading to students at our elementary schools. Our chapter will continue to meet on club days and participate in the community events to promote and learn about a career in education. Three of our officers are seniors this year, so we hope they will continue to pursue a career in education and participate in Signing Day. (Wayne County High School)

A huge thank you to all of our colleagues who shared their reflections on this past year and their hopes for the year ahead. I wanted to share these with everyone as a reminder that you are never alone – whether your goal is simply to get started or to compete at the state conference this year. No matter where you are in the Grow Your Own process, know that we are here to support you. Thank you for being the incredible teachers you are, Teaching and Learning!

In 2025, we saw Teaching and Learning enrollment continue to rise. We celebrated at least 11 junior varsity and eight varsity schools earning Top 10 finishes at Educators Rising Nationals – four of whom brought home first place honors!

In 2026, we will deliver innovative, engaging sessions at our state conference and remain committed to

your students, and thank you, Rebecca, for playing a critical role in Kentucky's GYO pipeline initiatives!



KENTUCKY

2025-2026 Educators Rising State Officers

President:

Hunter Carr, Region 1

President-Elect:

Lily Russell, Region 6

Director of

Communications:

Haley Chowning, Region 3

Director of

Communications:

Kelly Esquivel Hernandez,
Region 3

Director of Membership:

Alyssa Pollard, Region 3

Director of Outreach & Service:

Nia Serikali, Region 3

Educators Rising KY State Conference Pre-Scored Materials Early Bear Submission Dates Announced

Hi everyone! A quick heads-up on submitting your pre-scored materials for the conference.

If you can get them in by **Jan. 16**, you'll snag our **Early Bear** reward! While the absolute final technical cutoff is **Feb. 6** (after which no changes can be made), I strongly recommend aiming for **Feb. 1, which will also**

supporting our Teacher Leaders and their students every step of the way.

– Bree

Tis the Scholarship Season!



The Educator Rising's scholarship program ties you into a network of educators and offers many one-time and renewable awards.

They have more than 100 scholarships available, with one-time and renewable awards ranging from \$500 to \$4,000.

The application process will opened on Dec. 1, with a deadline to apply of March 1, 2026.

Members can apply through their Membership Portal under their Membership Resources. Click on your membership type below to access your Membership Resources.

Access Educators Rising scholarship information at our [GoTeachKY website](#).



Connect with Educators Rising Kentucky

Kentucky's Educators Rising influencers are busy like Santa's elves. Please follow us on social media to support growing our Educators Rising Kentucky

qualify you for an **Early Bear** reward! Padding your timeline by those few days ensures a much smoother submission process and gives us time to handle any tech hiccups.

Let's all aim for that Feb. 1 goal to keep things stress-free!

Become a Student Officer with Educators Rising Kentucky: Applications open Jan. 2

Although the student leadership application window does not open until January, please take a moment to share this information with your students who may be interested in leadership opportunities through Educators Rising.

KDE's [GoTeachKY.com](#) website has been updated with the flyer, important dates and detailed descriptions of student officer roles. Whether you're traveling to conferences or to classrooms, seek those natural leaders who could represent Kentucky at the officer level.

Educators Rising National Conference Opens Call for Sessions

Be a part of shaping the future of education at Educators Rising's premier national event!

We are looking for

community of rising professionals!

Connect with Educators Rising

[Instagram \(National\)](#)

[Instagram \(KY\)](#)

[Facebook \(National\)](#)

[Facebook \(KY\)](#)

[LinkedIn \(National\)](#)

[LinkedIn \(KY\)](#)

[Educators Rising Teacher Leader Facebook Group](#)

Shawnee Students Spark Service with November Giving Project



Dr. Jaime Whitaker and her Teaching and Learning students from The Academy at Shawnee in Jefferson County dropped food donations to a charity in their school community. Shawnee is paving the way for our Educators Rising chapters. We are rising educators with hearts of service!

The Educators Rising's November Service Project was a Food Drive.

Educators Rising Serves Our

educational leaders to present breakout sessions for more than 3,800 rising educators, teacher leaders and professional educators from across the country.

[Learn more about being a conference session presenter and how you can apply.](#)

Contact

[Bree Massie](#), Education Program Consultant

(502) 892-6231, ext. 4548

Access our [Teaching and Learning KY Teacher Leaders Request Form](#)

Resources

[Educators Rising/Teaching and Learning Dates to Know 2025-2026](#)

[Monthly meeting summaries and recordings](#)

[Kentucky Teacher Leaders Google Drive Folder](#)

[Educators Rising Curriculum Implementation](#)

A Message from Your Program Consultant

T&L family,

Happy Holidays from KDE! Relax and forget what day it is this winter break. We will come back in January recharged and ready to take on Louisville in March!

- Bree

Communities: December Toy Drive



For guidance on gearing up for your December Toy Drive, please access our [Educators Rising Toy Drive Guidance Document](#)

Other Educators Rising December To-Do's:

1. Host an officer meeting.
2. Celebrate with a holiday party
3. Chapter officers present on Ed Rising at a school board meeting.
4. Fundraiser: Set up a gift-wrapping service at a bookstore or mall.
5. Invite someone from the special needs support staff to speak at a meeting.
6. Education topic discussion: Use the monthly articles and guided discussion questions posted in the Ed Rising Membership Portal

**Eddy our Teddy,
Educators Rising's
Official Mascot, Wishes
You a Happy Holidays!**



Looking Ahead

- **Reminder:** Sign up your students for National Membership so they can participate in Educators Rising activities for the remainder of the year. The membership registration deadline is **Feb. 2**, and the final payment deadline is **Feb. 15**.
- Register your students for the Kentucky Educators Rising State Conference by visiting GoTeachKY.com or accessing the [Educators Rising State Conference Registration Form](#).



TEACHING AND LEARNING
CAREER PATHWAY



Kentucky Department of Education
[Subscriber Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Help](#)