

Williamstown Winter Guard brings home first place

BY REID JERNIGAN
STAFF WRITER, WILLIAMSTOWN
INDEPENDENT NEWS

The Williamstown Winter Guard, coached by Liz Glass, ranked first at the Martha Layne Collins High School competition Jan. 31.

“We won because of our excellent show and the constant work we put in to master our show,” Glass said.

Their show is titled, “Haunting These Halls.” During their performance, members used flags and specific dances to act as

ghosts.

“[The show] lasts about four minutes, just as long as their song does,” Glass explained.

Williamstown’s team used a modified version of “Ghost” by Ingrid Michaelson.

“We only have about half of our show done so far, but what we have done is really great,” guard member Addison Beach said.

“It’s been difficult finding spaces to practice but from the time spent in the gym or cafeteria we have all improved so much.”

The team practices two

to three times a week with one day in the cafeteria which limits the ability for them to practice “full out,” Glass said.

“We don’t have enough room in the cafeteria to fully practice our show, so we end up practicing at the competition,” guard member Gorge Maldonado said.

The cafeteria that the guard practices in is much smaller than the gym that they actually perform in.

“This makes this section of our performance the weakest by far,” Maldonado said.

Although prep time was limited due to availability of practice spaces, the team was able to put their show together, Glass said.

“It wasn’t too bad because it wasn’t like we had to combine three different sections together unlike marching band,” guard member Ellison Cheesman said.

“There’s only six of us, so all we had to do was work on a few body things, work on a few technique things.”

The guard will compete again on Feb. 28 at Lafayette High School.



Courtesy of Liz Glass

Williamstown Winter Guard claims first place at Martha Layne Collins High School. Pictured are Keegan Hagedorn, Shealyn McBride, Gorge Maldonado, Addy Beach, Gavin Brelitch and Ellison Cheesman.

Williamstown speech students qualify for state tournament

BY BETSY SMITH
EDITOR

The Williamstown forensics team had a great showing today at the Kentucky High School Speech League (KHSSL) River Regionals held at Beechwood High School on Saturday, Feb. 7.

Freshman Mallory Bachmann took first place in Declamation performing a speech by Pastor John Lindell titled "God is Fighting For You."

Additionally, team members Addy Beach, Penny Brueckner, Desiree France, Brenden Monday and Vandan Patel have also qualified to compete at the KHSSL State Tournament in March at Murray State University.

Head Coach Autumn Halberstadt said, "Mallory has a fantastic work ethic. She has put in hours upon hours of practice. The team as a whole has a strong desire to have fun and make the most out of their tournaments as well as working hard. I



Courtesy of Williamstown Independent Schools

The Williamstown Forensics team strikes a dramatic pose at regionals Feb. 7.

have had multiple members sign up for three events (the max) because they want to fill their rounds as much as possible."

Forensics is a demanding pursuit for a coach, requiring them to work with students one on one instead of as a big group. Each of those three events Halberstadt's

students are doing needs hours of practice before it is ready for competition.

"Because it is an individual event, it is sometimes hard to try to get to everyone for as much practice as I'd like, but on the other hand, it allows for more personal coaching," Halberstadt said.

"I don't have to worry about

if the whole team can make every single practice which makes it more flexible."

In addition to the hours of practice, there are also a lot of Saturdays devoted to tournaments, which she described as "usually a 6 a.m.-6 p.m. commitment." The regional tournament was the team's fifth competition



Courtesy of Williamstown Independent Schools

Williamstown freshman Mallory Bachmann displays the medal she earned for placing first in Declamation at the KHSSL River Region Tournament.

this year, though Halberstadt noted weather cancelled a couple of tournaments.

Halberstadt got her start in the activity when she worked at Grant County and was asked to be an assistant speech coach. Once at Williamstown, she assisted former coach Rachel Retherford.

The benefits of forensics are many. From inclusivity

to skill building, students gain a lot from participating.

"It gives them not only a platform to practice public speaking, something that I think most people struggle with, but a place for them to be themselves ... Forensics students turn into young adults who are open minded, respectful, and passionate. It is the best! I wish I was a part of it in high school!"

Williamstown Board of Education discusses district's master plan

BY BETSY SMITH
EDITOR

While the Williamstown Independent Schools Board of Education didn't have a lot of business to conduct at the Feb. 10 meeting, there was plenty of discussion.

Family Resource and Youth Services Center coordinator Carrie Coleman gave an update on her first year in the position thus far. She took the post after the retirement of longtime coordinator Kelly West.

Coleman outlined several goals for FRYSC. She indicated a staff survey found parent engagement needed boosting, so more family events are in the works.

She also wants to work more with the 21st Century after school childcare program and work on aspects of student social and emotional learning in collaboration with the counselors.

Coleman mentioned a recent

Project Grad meeting with 30 in attendance, saying she'd like to be more hands-on with the parent-led event.

Another effort Coleman detailed was the creation of transition survival kits, specifically the need for hygiene items.

To help families meet such basic needs plus assist with birthdays, Coleman said the Sidekick Shop will be open the third Friday of each month. The Sidekick Shop is free, but appointments are required, according to the district's Facebook page. For an appointment, contact Coleman at 859-824-4184 or email carrie.coleman@williams-town.kyschools.us.

- Josiah McCain, student board representative, reported students are working on getting volunteer hours, including at the recent Kiwanis Auction and the upcoming Night to Shine at The Mount.

He noted seniors are taking advantage of smaller local scholarship opportunities and

completing applications.

Finally, he said the emphasis on school spirit has been getting results.

- Superintendent John Slone discussed the district's master plan for construction, with a focus on Phase I. The idea, he said, is to break things into smaller chunks costing two or three million dollars and accomplishing them one at a time.

Developing a plan with a lot of flexibility is important as well, he indicated.

His goal for Phase 1 is to do one outside jobs and one inside job. Slone placed emphasis on creating a soccer field first, since the school does not have one. A track could be added later.

Athletic Director Darryl Cummins was in attendance, and he discussed the plan to have a single ball field that can accommodate both softball and baseball.

He said Augusta has such a field

with a turf infield and grass outfield. A portable pitcher's mound can be carried on and off as needed. The field has pegs for changing out bases and fences. He said it takes about 15 minutes to transition from a softball to a baseball field, making it easy to host double headers.

One huge advantage for Augusta, Cummins explained, has been the lack of rain-outs on their field. Last year Williamstown had 30 games scheduled but only got to play 17 due to weather.

He acknowledged there would be "growing pains" with multiple teams needing to practice and play on one field. However, for eight or ten years both fields would both still be in existence.

What can be accomplished in the short term depends on funding, of course. Slone said he had been to Frankfort that day seeking support for \$3.9 million in GAP funding for construction. He noted twenty districts are seeking funding

from a \$130 million pool.

Actions

- The board approved the tentative certified and classified staff allocation guidelines for next school year. Slone said they are watching student numbers in third to fourth grade. The final allocation will be in April.

- Tuition rates for out-of-district students will remain the same next year at \$550 for the first child and \$275 for each additional child. Slone said 38 percent of current students are out-of-district, with 30 percent of those being children of staff.

- The board approved continuation of the MOA with Grant County Schools for a shared English Language Learner teacher.

- The board approved the FRYSC District Assurance Certification for 2026-2028.

The next meeting of the Williamstown Schools Board of Education will be Tuesday, March 10, at 6 p.m. at the Board Office, 300 Helton Heights, Williamstown.

UPDATE

FROM PAGE A2

oversight of licensed child care centers while ensuring fair and consistent treatment for providers across Kentucky.

SB 172 is known as the Fuel Surcharge Stability Act, helps stabilize energy bills and improve affordability by allowing the Public Service Commission to extend the period during which utilities recover fuel costs, reducing sudden rate spikes for consumers.

BUDGET UPDATE

We're still waiting on a formal budget proposal from the House, but that hasn't slowed the Senate down. We've continued meeting and digging into the numbers to make sure Kentucky stays on solid financial footing.

A big part of those conversations centers on keeping our budget structurally balanced, protect-

ing our rainy day fund (reserves) and continuing the progress we've made on pensions and debt. We've also been clear that any future income tax reductions must be backed by real, recurring revenue growth, not one-time dollars or accounting tricks that were so accustomed to Frankfort in decades past.

We've talked a lot about what to do with surplus funds. My position is simple: use one-time money for long-term obligations, not to grow government in ways taxpayers have to support forever.

If we stay disciplined now, we can keep lowering the income tax responsibly, protect essential services and keep Kentucky moving in the right direction.

Thanks as always for trusting me to represent you here in Frankfort. If you've got questions or concerns, give me a shout anytime at 502-564-8100 or Matt.Nunn@kylegislature.gov.

STAR

FROM PAGE A1

... There is much more backstabbing, finding hidden immunity idols and switching alliances.”

He said, “Personally, I like more of the physical aspect of the game.

There have been a couple of shows in the past that I believe some of the contestants have actually come off heavier than when they went on.”

Still, he thinks, “They must be doing something right as they are still a very popular show.”

These days, Bingham spends his summers on his farm in northern Grant County putting up hay and

caring for his cattle and enjoying country life. In the winter he does woodworking. He recently finished a second king sized bed for his daughter made out of cherry wood lumber off his farm.

Looking back on Survivor he said, “For me it was the adventure of a lifetime. It truly was. I am blessed to have had the experience.”

GRANT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
820 ARNIE RISEN BOULEVARD
WILLIAMSTOWN, KENTUCKY 41097
859-824-3332

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed bids will be received in the Grant County Schools Transportation & Maintenance Office, 3989 Dixie Highway, Dry Ridge, Kentucky until **9:00 a.m., Friday, February 27, 2026** for the following items:

- Lawn Mowing
- Snow Removal

Specifications can be procured at the Transportation & Maintenance Office. Bids will be opened and read by the Board's designated agent on the above-mentioned date. The bids will be awarded at the regular March 12, 2026 Board meeting. The Board reserves the right to reject any and/all bids and waive all informalities where the best interest of the school system can be reserved. Contract period will be from March 12, 2026 through March 12, 2027. All bidders will be notified by mail of the Board's action.

PUBLIC NOTICE
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT MEETING
CITY OF WILLIAMSTOWN

A Board of Adjustment Meeting will be held by the Williamstown Board of Adjustment in the City Hall of the City of Williamstown at 400 North Main Street, Williamstown, Kentucky, on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 6:30 p.m., in order to approve the December 16, 2026 minutes and to elect 2026 Board of Adjustment officers.

All interested parties may appear at City Hall on March 3 for the meeting, either in person, or by designated representative, and be heard, either by oral comments or by written statement, or may submit written signed comments addressed to Mr. Terry Jacobs, Chairman, Williamstown Board of Adjustment, 400 North Main Street, Williamstown KY, 41097, prior to such time.

/s/ Terry Jacobs
Chairman, Board of Adjustment
City of Williamstown