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THE

PIONEER NEWS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

WWW.PIONEERNEWS.NET

VOL. 143, No. 102 \$2

SCHOOL SAFETY: BCPS pleased with progress

THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

FRANKFORT – While the newest report won't give specifics, it is apparent that a vast majority of schools in Kentucky are complying with state safety standards.

The state recently released its 2025-2026 School Safety Risk Assessment Report, which is a requirement for the Office of the State School Security Marshal.

The office is required by law to conduct annual unannounced visits

to all public schools to verify compliance with state-mandated security measures.

According to state officials, the newly released report shows that schools are complying with statutorily mandated access control requirements regarding electronic-locking front doors, surveillance, locked classroom doors, classroom window coverings and a threat-assessment team.

“The dedication of Kentucky’s public-school teachers, staff and school resource officers is evident in

the fact that nearly all of our schools are following requirements and putting the safety and security of our students first,” Gov. Andy Beshear said. “Our commonwealth’s future is secure because of their work inside the classroom as well as their work to create that safe learning environment all our kids deserve.”

The report shows that 937 school resource officers (SROs) are now protecting public school campuses in Kentucky, as required by House Bill 63. This is nearly 100 more

SROs since the start of the previous school year and a 130 percent increase since the Beshear-Coleman administration took office in 2019.

“Our Kentucky school professionals diligently work together as a team with the Office of the State School Security Marshal to create and maintain safe schools,” said State School Security Marshal Shannon West. “I could not be happier with the effort we see year after year to provide the safest campuses and strongest relationships between

educators and public safety partners.”

Bullitt County Public Schools superintendent Dr. Jesse Bacon said the district has utilized a vast number of opportunities to make everything safer.

In looking at ways to evaluate the progress, Bacon said that the district has had 100 percent compliance in all schools since the program started in 2019, which is when the Kentucky School Safety,

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Bullitt County Public Schools

Old Mill Elementary third grade teacher Amanda O'Bryan was recognized at a ceremony in Frankfort as one of nine to receive the 2027 Kentucky Teacher Achievement Award.

OMES teacher O'Bryan recognized at state level

STEPHEN THOMAS
THE PIONEER NEWS

MOUNT WASHINGTON — A Bullitt County Teacher of the Year was recognized in Frankfort as one of the tops in the state.

Amanda O'Bryan, a third grade instructor at Old Mill Elementary, was one of nine selected for the 2027 Kentucky Teacher Achievement Award presented by the Kentucky Department of Education.

Three teachers each from throughout Kentucky were named at elementary, middle, and high school levels. O'Bryan was selected from a pool of over 600 classroom instructors.

O'Bryan traveled to Frankfort for the Teacher of the Year reception, accompanied by her husband, Marty, Old Mill principal Brittany Joiner, and Bullitt County Public Schools superintendent Dr. Jesse Bacon. Though she didn't receive the top award, she was pleased with the experience.

“I really wanted to win Bullitt County (Elementary Teacher of the Year),” she said. “I was beyond happy to be one of the nine finalists. More than anything, I wanted to do the best I could do for the county.”

“This recognition is a testament to Mrs. O'Bryan's unwavering dedication, passion for her students, and the high standard of excellence she brings to Old Mill Elementary every single day,” said Bacon.

“Our entire Old Mill community could not be prouder of her,” said Joiner. “While Amanda is an exceptional educator, what makes her truly special is the way she sees and values children.”



Bullitt County Public Schools

Amanda O'Bryan with Old Mill Elementary principal Brittany Joiner

Joiner, a former Bullitt County Teacher of the Year, credited O'Bryan's ability to maintain teacher-student relationships at the core of the educational experience.

“It goes even deeper than that,” said Joiner. “She genuinely appreciates her students for exactly who they are. She celebrates their personalities, strengths, differences and ideas, and she encourages them to embrace what makes them uniquely themselves.”

Old Mill has been O'Bryan's only school as a teacher. She began 25 years ago when she was first hired by then-principal Rod Firquin as an extra reading assistant. She has since moved to the first grade classroom, then second, and is now in her third year with the third graders.

“I'm pretty happy where I'm at and I have a good team,” she said. “Any one of them could've been named (Teacher of the Year).”

O'Bryan has adapted over the years to newer styles and more advanced technologies, knowing that on top of that the students are much more tech-savvy.

“Technology is always evolving,” she said. “But that means there's more we can do as teachers.”

“Amanda is always willing to take on a challenge, try something new, reflect on her practice, and look for ways to become an even better teacher for her students,” Joiner said. “She is the type of educator who never stops learning because she never stops thinking about what is best for kids.”

The three winners of the Kentucky Teacher Achievement Award each received a six-month sabbatical, allowing them to represent the state promoting education. The other nominees received a \$1,500 cash

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Councilmember reprimanded for ethics charges

THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

SHEPHERDSVILLE – A councilmember who voted to appoint a son-in-law to the town board has been reprimanded.

In a hearing before the Shepherdsville Ethics Commission, long-time councilmember Faith Portman was found guilty on three charges.

The charges were brought by mayor Jose Cubero and councilmember Bonnie Enlow. Neither were present at the hearing.

While guilty of violating the city's ordinance, the only repercussion will be a letter stating the board's finding and a requirement that the offenses not be repeated in the future.

The incident relates to a July 13, 2026, Shepherdsville City Council meeting.

With the death of Mike Hibbard, the council had a vacancy to fill.

During the nomination of Kenny Newton as that replacement, Portman voted in favor of her son-in-law filling the seat until the end of December.

The charges brought

stated she violated three portions of the ordinance – conflict of interest, lack of withdrawing from participation and nepotism.

At the time of the vote, Portman said she didn't feel there was anything wrong with the vote. At the time, no one, including the city attorney, mentioned that there might be a problem.

With or without Portman's vote, Newton would have been elected to the board. He declined the appointment the next day.

In recounting the actions leading up to the meeting, Portman said councilman Rob Adams said he was considering a nomination of Newton and she said she could support that.

While not remembering if she asked councilmember Brad Whittaker for his vote, Portman said she did discuss the matter with the town board member.

“I do feel this is a personal attack on me,” said Portman, who didn't know which of the two may have pushed the issue.

Her belief was that there was no financial gain for her if Newton was appointed.

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West Hebron, Clarks Lane to be resurfaced

THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

FOX CHASE – In its annual presentation, nearly \$1 million in secondary road projects are being proposed for Bullitt County.

In the annual Rural Secondary program, the state Transportation Cabinet District 5 staff has recommended a pair of resurfacing projects for the current fiscal year in Bullitt County.

Of the available \$1 million in funds, \$486,000 will be appropriated for the normal maintenance of the 72 miles in the rural secondary program roads in Bullitt County.

Every county judge's office receives an amount for administrative work. For Bullitt County, that would be \$32,300 for the 2026-27 budget.

Two major projects are

suggested.

First, the state would spend \$139,475 to resurface 1.3 miles of Clarks Lane from just east of Greenwell Road to Cedar Grove Road.

Second, West Hebron Lane would be resurfaced from Kentucky 6313 to just south of Lee Hester Parkway, near UofL Health South Hospital.

The cost of that resurfacing work would be \$254,806 for the 1.6-mile stretch. Last year's projects, which were awarded to Mago Construction, included resurfacing of a 3.2-mile stretch of Deatsville Road and a 4.8-mile stretch of Ridge Road.

Tom Hall, an engineer from the state Transportation Cabinet, talked with court members

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HOMEcoming PARADES THIS THURSDAY
by Bullitt Central and North Bullitt
Both start at 6 p.m. so be ready for
traffic congestion

