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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH LEAGUE JUNIOR STATE SPEECH TOURNAMENT RESULTS**

They spoke in living rooms, in bedrooms, by kitchen tables or in empty classrooms. And 100 years after the first statewide speech contest in Oratory at the University of Kentucky in 1921, the participants in the 2021 Junior State Speech Tournament made history by competing online instead of in person for the first time during the annual meet held online February 23-27.

This year, while attendance was down due to lessened participation on a virtual platform, the competition was no less intense with earned honors for student speakers statewide.

Lexington’s School for the Creative and Performing Arts (SCAPA) won the state title for the twenty-third time with second place going to Hindman Elementary School. Calloway County Middle placed third with Beechwood Middle fourth, Bardstown Middle fifth, and Kentucky Country Day, Gray Middle (Boone County), the Lexington School, Hebron Middle, and Neon Middle completing the top ten teams. SCAPA also won the Sustained Excellence Award given to teams for outstanding performances over time; their team total for this honor will reset to zero, and they will begin earning points toward this trophy again next year (with Bardstown Middle, Crittenden County Middle, Hindman Elementary, and LaRue County Middle leading going into next year’s race). Additionally, Bowling Green Junior High, Highlands Middle, and Martha Jane Potter Elementary School all were honored as Schools of Distinction for outstanding performances in the state meet.

Bardstown Middle School’s Karen Wilson was voted Coach of the Year by the coach collective, and Beechwood Middle School’s Louis Schlosser received the Blyton Book Award, an annual honor given to an outstanding eighth grade student in honor of Gifford Blyton, longtime KHSSL Executive Director and debate coach at the University of Kentucky. Calloway County Middle coach Jennifer Dunnaway was recognized as a 2021 inductee into the state Hall of Fame, though her induction event has been delayed to the next in-person awards ceremony.

The speech season in Kentucky runs from October to January with 14 Regional Tournaments held in February around the Commonwealth to qualify for State. Students competed online in twelve speech and drama categories from Radio Broadcasting to Storytelling to Oratory. In this virtual year, students recorded their speeches and uploaded them to an online platform where judges watched and ranked groups of students. At the state tournament, after three preliminary rounds for all students, events were narrowed to eighteen semifinalists, scored again in groups of six, and then cut to the top six in each event, known as the Finalists, who received state trophies after being evaluated by new panels of five judges.

KHSSL offers membership to all schools -- public, private, and homeschools -- serving students in grades 4-12 in Kentucky. With member schools from Paducah to Paintsville and from Boone County to Bowling Green, Kentucky’s oldest student activity trains students how to conduct themselves in public settings, how to successfully communicate ideas, how to empathize with others via character analysis, how to read critically and how to research properly with contests to encourage excellence. For more information how to get your students and school involved, browse to [www.khssl.org](http://www.khssl.org).

Award winners list attached including logo and top ten teams list.

For further information, contact KHSSL Executive Director Steve Meadows at khsslboard@gmail.com or 859-927-1100.

He can also easily put you in touch with the coaches for local teams for stories, quotes, etc.