

LOUISIANA STUDENTS *of the Year*

The Louisiana Department of Education proudly announces the 2025 Students of the Year state-level honorees. In conjunction with the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), the Department recognizes outstanding fifth, eighth, and twelfth-grade students who have demonstrated excellence in leadership, academic performance, achievements, citizenship, and service to the school and community through the Students of the Year program.

All Students of the Year state-level honorees were celebrated and honored at the 2025 Students of the Year Award Ceremony at Louisiana State University's Lod Cook Alumni Center on May 16.

Congratulations to these outstanding students!

2025 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT OF THE YEAR



Mary Mack Thornton
Caddo Parish

Mary Mack Thornton attends Eden Gardens Fundamental Elementary Magnet in Caddo Parish (BESE District 4). Thornton excels both in and outside of the classroom. Along with being a team member for the All-American Cheer Team, she serves as a team captain for her competitive travel team for soccer and assists with coaching younger players. Thornton was the first to be named Competitive Girl Player of the Month by the Caddo Bossier Soccer Association. She is a member of the Student Lighthouse Team for her school and credits the experience for lessons on communicating effectively and serving within her community. An issue that is important to her is childhood health and physical fitness. She believes "learning healthy habits at a young age will help students stay on track for a lifetime." Thornton aspires to be an otolaryngologist (ENT) and states, "The road to becoming a physician is hard and long, but I am up for the challenge!"

2025 MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT OF THE YEAR



Rylann Renee Viator
Vermilion Parish

Rylann Renee Viator attends Erath Middle School in Vermilion Parish (BESE District 7), where she excels academically while serving as the Student Council President and the vice president of her school's BETA Club. She is also the treasurer for the 4-H Club. Viator states, "As a school leader, I have learned the importance of promoting school pride in others, working as a team to achieve successful changes, and sharing my positivity with my peers." In addition, Viator is on the dance team, track team, and is a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Outside of school, Viator plays softball, is a competitive dancer, and serves as a dance class assistant for younger dancers. Viator wants to pursue a career as an occupational therapist because she wants "to make a difference in people's lives by helping them retain their independence and confidence." An issue that she is passionate about is the responsible use of social media.

2025 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT OF THE YEAR



Neal Pramod Tandon
Jefferson Parish

Neal Pramod Tandon attends Haynes Academy School for Advanced Studies in Jefferson Parish (BESE District 1). Along with many academic accolades, Tandon was selected as one of Louisiana's representatives for the [U.S. Senate Youth Program](#). Tandon serves as the secretary-general (president) of the Louisiana YMCA Youth and Government Model United Nations Program, is the co-president of the Haynes Quizbowl Team, and has performed in theater productions at his school. He is the co-president of Hayne's Bollywood and Bhangra Club, where he helps create choreography for performances. Tandon is a Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council member who worked on HB 577, which prohibits "social media companies from collecting data to use for targeted advertising to minors." The bill was recently signed into law. His past experiences from hurricanes fuel his dedication to community service, and he states, "I've learned that the health of society stems from the strength of a community, forged through the bonds of rebuilding."

2025 STUDENTS OF THE YEAR GRADE 5 FINALISTS



**Oliver Paul
Richard**
Calcasieu
Parish



**Zoey Olivia
Jenkins**
East Baton
Rouge Parish



**Aly Lea
May**
Ouachita
Parish



**Brynlee
Elizabeth Perez**
St. Charles
Parish



**Anniston
Elizabeth
Guidry**
St. Martin
Parish



**Lauren Kay
Singleton**
St. Tammany
Parish



**Kai Ava-Jrew
Butler**
West Baton
Rouge Parish

2025 STUDENTS OF THE YEAR GRADE 8 FINALISTS



**Janiya Amani
Belle**
Algiers
Charter School
Association



**Brielle Taylor
Poche'**
Ascension
Parish



**Lily Lynne
Kees**
Bossier
Parish



**Avery
Bernadine
Dixon**
Lincoln
Parish



**Christopher
James Godso III**
Livingston
Parish



**Ramy D.
Dali**
St. Bernard
Parish



**Jayden Michael
Gardere**
The Willow
School

2025 STUDENTS OF THE YEAR GRADE 12 FINALISTS



**Marlie Blair
McLellan**
Ascension
Parish



Akshita Sridhar
Benjamin
Franklin High
School



**Kylie Marie
Small**
Bossier
Parish



**Walker John
Prejean**
Lafayette
Parish



**Colton Charles
Brasher**
Ouachita
Parish



**Trey Matthew
Meyers**
St. Bernard
Parish



**Krishawndalyn
Louise Rian
Clark**
West Baton
Rouge Parish