

HCHS's Ashley joins Henson, others on ARI Student Senate

Harlan County High School junior Caleb Ashley has been inducted into the Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative's Appalachian Renaissance Initiative's Student Senate.

Ashley joins fellow HCHS student Garry Henson who advanced to become the school's senior senator after serving in the junior capacity last year.



The ARI Student Senate is a critical student agency component of the U.S. Race to the Top Grant received by KVEC. The Senate is comprised of students from 17 school districts in the region. Each district selects one junior and one senior to send to the Senate.

Senate members work toward a more participatory role for students, as full partners in their education, through avenues of academics, community service, and school culture, focusing on themes of community health, economic development, and energy.

Senators work to uphold, promote and support the ideas and activities and initiatives of the student senate. They serve as positive role models, leaders and the voice for the student population at their school, across the region and in their communities.

The group is challenged to empower the entire student body through measures to enhance the student experience through supporting and drafting policy that promotes student interests, needs and welfare. Serving as a liaison

HCHS technology instructor and district ARI Coordinator Scott Pace works closely with the Harlan County students in his role as the innovation coordinator.

“We are very fortunate to have two students who are working hard and are very ambitious in their quest to complete initiatives for Harlan County High School and the Harlan County community,” said Pace.

“In addition to the Student Senate Plan, which the students develop to address and provide a solution for needs/concerns found within the school, we also have the opportunity to apply for a \$10,000 community grant this year. Both Caleb and Garry have a fantastic start on the projects. I couldn’t be more proud of the time and dedication they have each invested and look forward to working with them as the school year progresses.”

Ashley said he is pleased to have been selected to represent his school.

“It is truly an honor to be given the opportunity to be a student senate member for Harlan County High School,” said Ashley. “I will work hard to represent the student body and make positive impacts on our school and community.”

Henson said his experience from the senate last year, said he has goals which he wants to see accomplished this year.

“This being my second year in the ARI Student Senate, I look forward to the amazing opportunities I have to make our school, our community, our state and country a better place,” he said.

Henson noted that students learn from each other and feed off of ideas and actions presented by their peers from other schools and districts.

Ashley is a member of the HCHS Beta Club, the Pine Mountain Chapter of the First Tee, a five-year member of the HCHS Golf Team and participates in the Southeast Kentucky Junior Golf Tour. He was runner-up in the regional MATHCOUNTS competition. He was a Rogers Explorer, selected through the Center for Rural Development’s Youth Programs. He attended the Life Skills and Leadership Academy at Michigan State University as part of the First Tee program. He is the sound room technician at the Putney Bible Church. His parents are Mike and Lisa Ashley of Putney.

A Kentucky Governor’s Scholar, a Rogers Explorer and University of Kentucky Rising Scholar, Henson is a member of the Beta Club, Educational Talent Search, First Priority Scholar and All-A Honor roll. He is a four-year member of the varsity football team and has received Associated Press All-State and All Southeastern Kentucky Conference honors. He attends Teetersville Baptist Church. He is the son of Garry and Donnece Henson of Harlan.