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Lucas named high school music teacher of the year

By ANDREW HARP THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE

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North Hardin High School choir teacher Cassie Lucas, right, teaches some choreography to her students. She has been named the KMEA fourth district high school music teacher of the year award.

Submitted

With about two years of experience as choir director and teacher at North Hardin High School, Cassie Lucas recently was honored for her work, and overcoming COVID-19 pandemic challenges.

Lucas has been named the Kentucky Music Educators' Association fourth district high school music teacher of the year.

A graduate of Central Hardin high School, she attended Western Kentucky University where she received her bachelor's in music education, and is currently finishing her master's in music at WKU. She has taught for eight years.

However, her connections with music go back before college. Her mother is currently the choir teacher at John Hardin High School, and her father also worked in music and theater. Her stepdad also is an accomplished Bluegrass musician.

"I've just been in music my whole life," she said.

Growing up, Lucas said she had rebelled against the notion that she would be working in music because her mother did.

"When it came down to it, spending the rest of my life doing what I'm so passionate about ... seems like the best use for the rest of my life," she said.

She said when the KMEA fourth district meets in September, the group produces nominations for various awards.

Lucas was nominated by Aaron Dale, the current president of the fourth district KMEA. She said Dale had spoken to some students about her, and said she was being nominated due to her adopting a large choir program from a well-loved director in the middle of a pandemic.

Lucas previously worked in Meade County at Ekron Elementary School where she was told by the principal to do what she wants.

“I had an after-school choir, and an after-school musical theater program and it was very successful,” she said.

When she first began working with students, they couldn’t perform due to the pandemic. So instead they worked on skills including sight reading and breathing. She works with around 100 students.

Lucas said that they have had to start over in many ways due to the pandemic, and they are hoping they can do more performances and traveling.

This weekend will be the opening of “Beauty and the Beast” at the Hardin County Schools Performing Arts Center which her and students have been working on. She said she has allowed some students leadership roles, and is excited to see the production come together.

“I love what I do, I get to be there for people and I get to be what they need in one way or another,” she said.

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