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Western Kentucky's Gatton Academy accepts five area high school students

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Next fall, 99 students from 48 counties in Kentucky will attend The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science at Western Kentucky University, the academy announced Wednesday.

Of those 99, five students are from Hardin County. Catherine Appelman of Elizabethtown High School; Amara Danturthi and Patrick O'Boyle of John Hardin High School; JaMaur Lyons of North Hardin High School; and Christopher Nathaniel Smith of North Hardin Christian School were accepted.

They will complete their junior and senior years of high school at Gatton Academy and graduate high school with a minimum of 60 college credit hours.

Gatton Academy Director Lynette Breedlove said in a news release the application class was full of exceptional students.

"We are excited to welcome the Class of 2020, an exceptional and diverse group of young people," she said. "Each year our admissions process reveals a remarkable number of outstanding Kentucky students seeking to challenge themselves in the STEM fields. Admissions decisions were as difficult this year as any."

Applicants were evaluated on ACT and SAT scores, grades, awards, extracurricular activities, responses to essay and short answer questions, and letters of recommendation, according to the release.

The class had an average composite score of 31.36 on the ACT and 30.84 on the mathematics portion of the exam, new high scores for an incoming class at Gatton Academy.

The 99 students will bring Gatton to its funded capacity. The academy receives state support

and is geared toward students with interests in advanced science and math careers.

“The ability to offer this opportunity to these bright, young high school students interested in STEM is truly exciting,” said Zack Ryle, assistant director for admissions and public relations. “I am thrilled that each one of the 99 students has agreed to be a part of our community for the next two years.”