

MAPPING OUT HER ROAD TO SUCCESS

AMAYA JOHNSON says being named Middle School Student of the Year has been a surreal experience. "It's exciting because it's something that our school has not done in a while. My entire school—all the staff— every time I see them, they clap and cheer. Everyone here is so proud of me. It was a shock, but I adjusted," she says.

The Westdale Middle School student is actively involved in academic, athletic and extracurricular activities. She is the school's Beta Club president, captain of the volleyball team, and a talented performer in theater and music.

"Education is important because it helps you get where you want to be, and for me, that means becoming a lawyer," she says. "I take pride in my grades and the school I plan to attend."

Her journey to practice law in Louisiana starts with plans to attend Baton Rouge Magnet High and then law school. She knows the road to success will be challenging and will require perseverance. "I've had to tell myself many times to keep pushing ... even when I'm tired or had to get up early, or stayed up late because I had schoolwork to do. You have to keep working hard, but ultimately, it's all worth it. You have to promise to never give up."

Amaya encourages her peers to be humble and respectful. "It's more than how well you do in school," she says. "Yes, grades are important, but even more important is how you treat people and how others see you."

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