

Address of the President of Latvia, Egils Levits, at the Atis Kronvalds Award Ceremony

Published more than 4 years ago

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Dear teachers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am truly happy to welcome you to the Riga Castle and say 'thank you' to the best teachers and most excellent schools in Latvia for what you have been doing in terms of educating our children.

The prize named after Atis Kronvalds is awarded both for your personal excellence and promoting of teachers' image publicly, as well as the whole education system that gave you the skills required to pass the knowledge further to schoolchildren.

I

Atis Kronvalds is a kind of father of Latvian school system. His ideas and concepts about schooling in Latvian paved the way for today's understanding of what the education system should look like.

Back then, in the age of Young Latvians, when Latvians only began to build their national awareness, Kronvalds, who was also very popular, avid publicist and public speaker, had huge influence on consolidation of the Latvian nation. He advocated for Latvian culture and language, demanding status equal to German and Russian culture and language, which dominated at the time. His views were idealistic and reflected his deep love for the Latvian nation.

II

But his biggest impact on the time period and his contemporaries, the deepest trail in the history of our nation comes from Kronvalds' work as a teacher, a relentless educator and patron of Latvian education.

Throughout his relatively short life, he died when he was 37, he worked hard and proved himself as a very inspirational teacher who is able to leave a lasting impact on many following generations until today.

Kronvalds believed that schools in Latvia should teach children everything about their homeland, its history, language, and they should also teach how to love Latvia. He was absolutely convinced that schools play a special role in the life of a nation and its future. He even said: 'Every true teacher is the lord of the land of light, and every school is a castle of light'. These words ring true to this day.

III

Dear teachers,

The new academic year is days away.

This year is going to be different. This will be a special year because Latvian schools are transitioning to a new and improved curriculum, and new learning and teaching approaches. The aim of the reform is to give pupils 21st century knowledge, skills and attitudes.

In this day and age, we and our youngsters, of course, need different knowledge and skills than of Atis Kronvalds in the 19th century. Yet Kronvalds specifically underlined that schools are meant to not only educate but also nurture – something that is relevant to this day.

That is why I would like to urge you to focus your everyday work on knowledge and skills. But, more importantly, also on this third component of the reform, the attitudes.

One's attitudes towards the world, fellow men and women and own country are the backbone of values.

We live in Latvia. One of the main values we have will always be our people, language, culture, past experiences that are embodied by our folk wisdom or, in other words, our special take on the world that is rooted in our experience.

Our core national values include independence, democracy, rule of law, social responsibility and nation state. These values make us a part of European and Western system of values, an integral part of it.

And schools play an enormous role in teaching and carrying these values over from one generation to another. Schools are today working with generation that will create future Latvia.

Their knowledge and skills, but even more so their values, will determine what our democracy, rule of law, social responsibility and national identity will look like in the decades to come.

IV

Dear teachers,

I believe that by following the common idea of school as a castle of light, you are the living bridge between today and the time when Kronvalds lived, although nowadays we do not speak of it in such beautiful and noble terms as Young Latvians and Kronvalds used to. I want to thank you and all the other teachers who are doing more than they are required either by professional standards or job description. I want to thank all the teachers who have individual approach to their children and youngsters, everyone who helps them reach their maximum talent and boosts their future potential. Their future potential is the future potential of the whole Latvia.

Thank you for all the passion and commitment. Keep up the good job. Standards that will lead you to Atis Kronvalds Award.

I hope you to continue to strive for more and have endless energy to keep teaching our young people this school year.

Winners of Atis Kronvalds Award

Inita Kriškāne, Biology and Science, Cēsis State Gymnasium

Inese Ločmele, Chemistry and Biology, Alūksne Ernst Glück State Gymnasium

Karmena Liepiņa, Mathematics, Riga 1st State Gymnasium

Valentīna Prokofjeva, Russian, Daugavpils State Gymnasium

Mārtiņš Danusēvičs, Professor, University of Latvia

Winners of the Big Owl 2020

Big Owl, Big schools

1st place: Riga Classic Gymnasium

Small Owl, Big schools

2nd place: Riga 10th Secondary School

Big Owl, School ranking, Big schools

3rd place: Riga 40th Secondary School

4th place: Riga French Lycée

5th place: Daugavpils Technology College-Lyceum

Big Owl, Small schools

1st place: RTU Engineering High School

Small Owl, Small schools

2nd place: Rudzāti Secondary School

Big Owl, School ranking, Small schools

3rd place: Daugavpils Concord Primary School

4th place: Mežciems Primary School

5th place: Špoģi Secondary School

Big Owl, State gymnasiums

1st place: Riga 1st State Gymnasium

Small Owl, State gymnasiums

2nd place: Āgenskalns State Gymnasium

Big Owl, School ranking, State gymnasiums

3rd place: Ventspils 1st State Gymnasium

4th place: Riga 2nd State Gymnasium

5th place: Riga German State Gymnasium

Star Rating

1st place: Riga 1st State Gymnasium

2nd place: RTU Engineering High School

3rd place: Cēsis State Gymnasium

4th place: Gymnasium of Nordic States

5th place: Gulbene Regional State Gymnasium

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