



## Building a River System



Paul Downer  
Delano Public Schools

It isn't often that eighth-grade earth science students have an opportunity to watch a river carve new paths through erosion, but a unique tool in Brian Allison's classroom has changed that.

In mid-November Allison set up a home-made stream table in his room, allowing students to create their own river routes, then watch as the flow of water changed the river bed before their eyes. It was an engaging conclusion to a unit on river processes, which also included a field trip to the Rush River in Henderson the previous month.

"This is just a scaled down version of a natural river system," said Allison, who used an old door as the base for his table, then constructed the sides with spare wood and finished

Students experiment by replicating spring snow melt, creating a dam and more. "For them it's like playtime, but they're learning," said [Brian] Allison. "They try to modify it as much as they can. Sometimes it works and sometimes the river has its own mind and does its own thing."

the box with silicone and a coat of paint. The box is filled with purpose-made plastic grains that don't discolor the water like natural sand, but show the same process of erosion.

During a river process lab, about 30 gallons of water in a reservoir are pumped to the head of the table, which gradually slants downward back toward the reservoir. Then gravity

takes over and river beds of the students' design begin the process of evolving.

"They're making observations of how a river changes over time, how it starts and tends to flow straight, like young rivers do, and then given enough time it will start to meander and

develop curves like the Crow or the Minnesota or the Mississippi," said Allison.

The idea for the stream table came from a conference Allison attended, where a company from Illinois advertised them for \$1,500.

"They do great work with earth science and river systems, but \$1,500 was too much for us," he said, adding that his home-made table, including the pump, cost less than \$50 to build. The expensive part was

Continued on Page 3



## WHS Students Guide CNN Espanol Crew



Paul David  
Waconia Public Schools, ISD 110

For someone who has never been ice fishing, it's just one of those things that you need to experience to really understand what it's actually all about. A crew from CNN Espanol — in Minnesota to cover the Super Bowl — came to Waconia to drill some holes and catch some fish. Among their guides, three Waconia High School students who are all in an accelerated Spanish program called College in the Schools (CIS). Erick Valenzuela, Cal Sinclair and Nick Fulford had a lot of explaining to do to the two camera people and the reporter, Raul Saenz.

"They really had no idea what was going on," Nick Fulford said. "Everything was foreign to them which, I guess, is not surprising."

The crew is based in Miami but has roots in Puerto Rico and Mexico. They all spoke English while off camera but when the cameras started rolling, they spoke Spanish to each other. Just getting to the ice house was an experience.

Cal Sinclair recalled, "One of the first questions the cameraman asked me was, are we actually going to drive on the ice. When I said, yes, he was like, you guys are crazy!"

Cal Sinclair recalled, "One of the first questions the cameraman asked me was, are we actually going to drive on the ice. When I said, yes, he was like, you guys are crazy!"

"They were really skeptical at first," Erick Valenzuela added.

The CNN Espanol crew kept asking how they knew that the vehicles wouldn't fall through. "We told them that the ice is about 18 inches thick and they'd be fine," Nick said.

The CNN crew was also impressed with the 'hardiness' of the Minnesota teenagers.

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## From the Blog

[teachingtodayMN.wordpress.com](http://teachingtodayMN.wordpress.com)

### Creating a Customized Plan for a School District's Future

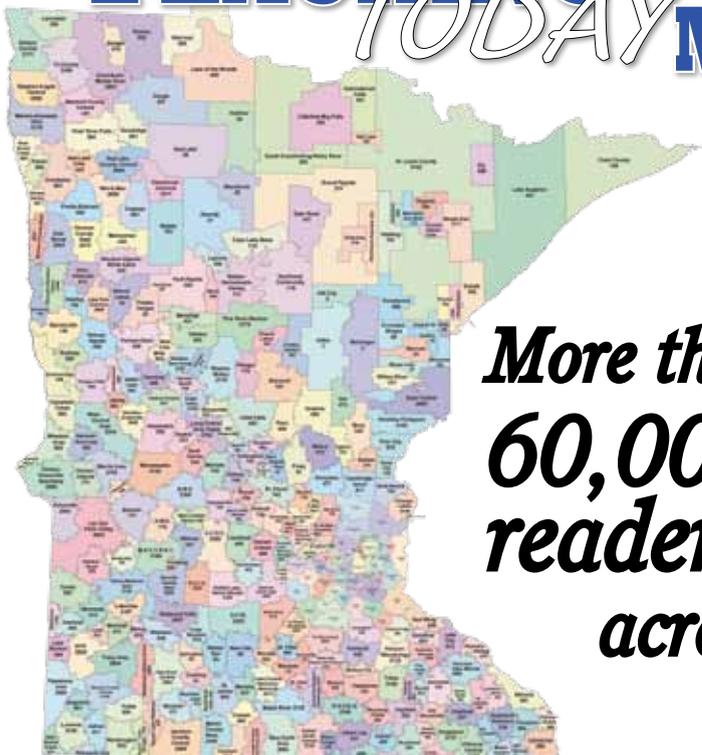
How has ICS helped Minnesota schools pass over \$500 million in referendums this past year? Effective strategic planning. Whether a school district enrolls 200 or 2,000 students, the need for effective strategic planning is critical. Strategic and systematic thinking are the hallmarks of districts positioned for future growth.

### Top 7 Tips on How to Approach Pre-Construction

Stahl's role during pre-construction includes attending design and planning meetings and offering immediate or near real time input on the following:

- Risk Management
- Feasibility Studies
- Budgets

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# GREEN CONTESTS & AWARDS



## Brower Youth Awards for Environmental Leadership

Earth Island Institute established the Brower Youth Awards to honor founder and legendary activist David R. Brower. Each year, the awards recognize six young people ages 13-22 living in North America who have shown outstanding leadership on a project or campaign with positive environmental and social impact.

Each recipient will receive a \$3,000 cash prize, a professionally produced short film about their work, and flight and lodging accommodations for a week-long trip to the San Francisco Bay area.

During their stay in California, the recipients will participate in a camping trip, leadership activities, speaking and media engagements, trainings, and environmental conferences — giving them a chance to meet

with mentors and peers. The week culminates in an awards ceremony.

**Deadline:** Apply by May 20, 2018.

**Website:** [www.broweryouthawards.org/apply/#application](http://www.broweryouthawards.org/apply/#application)

## Entomological Society President's Education Awards

The Entomological Society of America's (ESA) President's Prizes for Outstanding Achievement in Primary and Secondary Education recognize educators who have gone beyond the traditional teaching methods by using insects as educational tools. One winner will be chosen from teachers of grades K-6 and one from teachers of grades 7-12.

### Prizes

- Up to \$400 to the winner's school to purchase teaching materials required to expand the use of insects in the teaching curriculum
- Up to \$400 to the winner for expenses associated with travel required to present a paper or poster on the use of insects in primary or secondary educational programs at a peer professional venue of their choice
- Gratis registration to attend ESA's Annual Meeting
- Up to \$800 to the winner for expenses associated with travel, hotel arrangements, and all other costs associated with attending the ESA Annual Meeting

Teachers who win this award must be available to present a lesson plan at a symposium during the ESA Annual Meeting. Membership in ESA is not required. Also, a separate nominator is not required; applicants may nominate themselves.

**Deadline:** Apply by June 1, 2018.

**Website:** [www.entsoc.org/awards/professional/educational](http://www.entsoc.org/awards/professional/educational)

## Young Birder of the Year Contest

Young people ages 10-18 are invited to compete in the American Birding Association's (ABA) Young Birder of the Year (YBY) contest, designed to help young birders discover new skills and enhance their talents. Entries will be judged in two age group, 10-13 and 14-18. Contestants can choose from five modules to customize the contest to fit their talents and interests:

- Field Notebook
- Conservation/Community Leadership
- Illustration
- Writing
- Photography

Judges will select one first-place winner per age group in each of the five modules. The top three finishers in each module per age group will be listed on the ABA YBY results webpage and will be eligible to receive prizes.

**Deadline:** Register by June 15, 2018.

**Website:** [youngbirders.aba.org/young-birder-of-the-year-contest](http://youngbirders.aba.org/young-birder-of-the-year-contest)

## Ocean Awareness Student Contest

Middle and high school students are invited to participate in the Ocean Awareness Student Contest. This year's theme is "Our Oceans in a Changing Climate."

Submissions should explore the relationship between human systems, climate change, and our oceans. Students are challenged to create a piece that not only presents issues and challenges, but also communicates a message that inspires others to act. You are encouraged to connect your submission to your own life, your local community, or something else that motivates you.

Submissions are accepted in visual art, poetry, prose, film and music. Awards range from \$100 for honorable mentions to \$1,500 for the gold awards. The Making Waves Award will be awarded to one submission in each age division that demonstrates a powerful, engaging, and original voice of ocean activism. Winners receive a \$250 cash prize.

**Deadline:** Submissions due June 18, 2018.

**Website:** [bowseat.org/contests/ocean-awareness-contest/overview](http://bowseat.org/contests/ocean-awareness-contest/overview)

## WHS Students Guide CNN Espanol Crew

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"They were all decked out in hats, gloves, heavy coats, scarves, they had everything and I was wearing tennis shoes." Erick laughed. "They asked me if I had layers of socks on and when I said I didn't, they thought I was kidding."

Once they finally left In Towne Marina and got to the ice house, even though holes were already drilled, they wanted to show them how to drill a hole in the ice.

"Raul didn't want to do it because he was afraid of falling through," Nick explained.

The ice house was fully outfitted, including an underwater camera that was hooked up to a television hanging on the wall.

"A muskie swam through at one point, right next to the camera and it had a bluegill t-boned in its mouth," Nick said. "One of the crew asked me if that's one of the rare ones and I said, yea, that's a rare one. It was a huge muskie."

Nick hooked a much smaller fish for Raul and then gave him the rod. "He said it was the first fish he had ever caught in his

life, so that was pretty cool to be a part of that."

Others who were helping with the production fileted the fish and cooked them up for the crew.

"They said it was the healthiest thing they've had since coming to Minnesota, fried fish," Erick explained.

Translated, the headline for the story that is on CNN Espanol's website says: Fishing in ice? It's possible in Minnesota.

For the students, it was quite a memorable experience, not to mention how memorable it was for the CNN crew.

"It was really cool and I'm glad I did it," Cal said.

"I liked seeing them working behind the scenes," Erick added. "It's cool to look at CNN Espanol's website and say, hey, that's us."

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## Building a River System

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the plastic fill, which came in three 50-pound boxes from a manufacturer in Connecticut. The boxes were about \$50 each, but the shipping cost was triple that due to the weight.

Allison has included his stream table in the unit for about the past six years, and said it has added a fun, interactive element to the lessons.

"It's made it more enjoyable, I think, because they can see it. It's not just an outdoor topic where you have to go visit a river. This brings a river to them," Allison said.

Students experiment by replicating spring snow melt, creating a dam and more.

"For them it's like playtime, but they're learning," said Allison. "They try to modify it as much as they can. Sometimes it works and sometimes the river has its own mind and does its own thing."

### River Visits

In October students continued a decade-long practice of visiting the Minnesota River valley, as well as Rush River County Park near Henderson, to see real rivers in action. Why not simply visit the Crow in Delano?

"We go there because the Minnesota

River, when it was formed, cut so deep," said Allison. "It cut through three layers of glacial fill. When we go to the Rush River County Park, we can access the remnants of those glacial till layers. The Crow is only cut into the top layer of glacial till. There is no base level that's low enough for what we need."

There is also the simple fact that wonders of nature can often go overlooked in the hustle of everyday life.

"We make a stop on the Minnesota River to see how big that river valley is," said Allison. "Most people here aren't aware of it, or as they go through it they're listening to music and just aren't paying attention to what is around them."

Thanks to some active learning both in the classroom and abroad, lack of awareness in regard to rivers and their actions should not be much of an issue for Delano students in the years ahead.

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## Construction in Progress at Chisago Lakes



*Chisago Lakes School District*

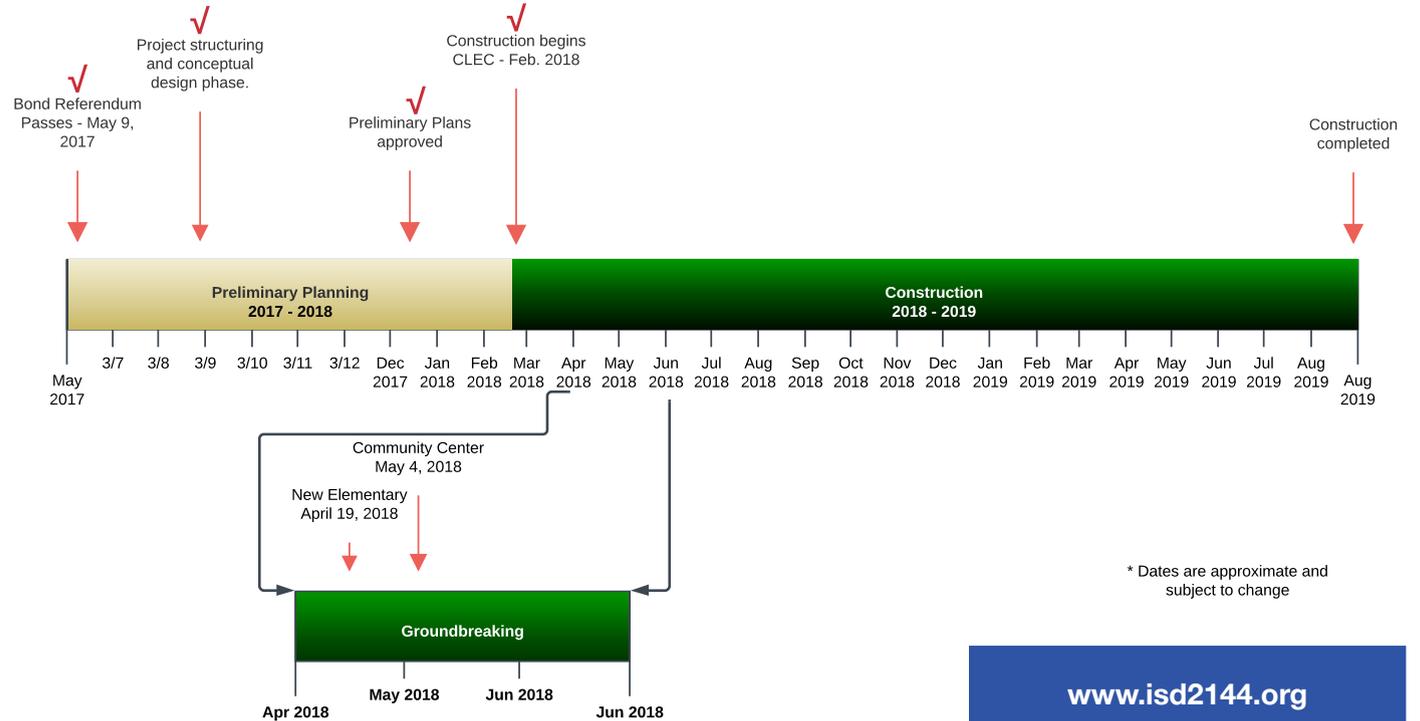
This process started in the summer of 2015 at our Board retreat. The School Board asked me to do a facility audit of our school district. During the 2015–16 school year, we met with representatives from all of our buildings and we also held six public meetings to gather information to gain input so we could formulate a plan.

The total cost, after accessing the District's needs, is \$64.95 million. Highlights of the bond referendum include:

- Construction of an Elementary School (Grades 2-5) to replace Lakeside
- Additions and renovations at Taylors Falls Elementary School and remodeling at the Middle School
- A manufacturing /agri-science lab, along with a Community Center, at the High School
- District-wide safety and security upgrades including the remodeling of the Primary School and Taylors Falls Elementary secure entrances.

The referendum passed on May 9th, 2017.

**Chisago Lakes Schools Building Project Timeline \***



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## Referendum/Construction Progressing in Prior Lake–Savage Area Schools



Thanks to voter approval of Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools' (PLSAS) two school funding requests, PLSAS is now in the process of moving from concept proposals into a design phase, along with construction timelines, for building renovations and additions, a new elementary school and new Bridges Area Learning Center.

Jeffers Pond and Redtail Ridge elementary schools will each have two additional classrooms constructed, along with renovations, with completion expected in the fall of 2019. Remodeling and additions will also be made to Grainwood, WestWood and

Edgewood in time for the 2019/2020 school year. PLSAS is expecting to break ground on a new elementary school in the Big Sky Estates development in Savage in late spring of 2019. The new elementary school will then open in the fall of 2020.

At the secondary level, classroom additions and a kitchen/cafeteria expansion will be made at Prior Lake High School, along with additions/remodeling at Hidden Oaks and Twin Oaks middle schools and the construction of Bridges Area Learning Center, all of which are slated to open in fall of 2019. Other high school construction projects, including a secure front entrance and gyms, will open in fall of 2020.

[priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us](http://priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us)  
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## Construction Complete at Centennial School District 12

### Centennial School District 12

Thanks to Centennial voters for the passage of \$49.9 million in bonds to support our facilities long-term.

Maintenance upgrades and enhancements to learning spaces were completed in 2015 at Centennial Middle School, Blue Heron Elementary, Rice Lake Elementary, and Golden Lake Elementary. Construction was completed in 2016 at Centennial High School (West Building), Centennial Elementary, and Centerville Elementary. Construction at Centennial High School (East Building) was completed in 2017.

### Centennial High School East Building

Construction is complete at the East Building. Construction included upgrades to boilers and the mechanical system; a renovation of the existing building which includes ceiling replacement in most areas, new hallway flooring--vinyl floor tile and terrazzo, new casework, converted classrooms into science labs; created flexible learning spaces by converting classroom and hallway spaces.

### Centennial Elementary

Construction includes Upgrades to the boilers and mechanical system; floor cover-

ing replacement in the hallways; new ceilings and casework; upgrades to the media center included removing the computer room wall and replacing the carpet; gym upgrades include floor refinishing; reconfigured main office; removed and replaced the demountable walls, updated restrooms; new roof.

### Centennial High School West Building

Construction includes upgrades to boilers and mechanical system; ceiling replacement in most areas; new hallway flooring--Vinyl Floor Tile and Terrazzo; new casework; flexible learning spaces were developed by converting classroom and hallway spaces. The former West Media Center was rehabbed and made into multi-function spaces and renamed "The Learning Commons;" gym floor refinish; updated restrooms; new roofing.

### Centerville Elementary

Construction includes boiler and mechanical system upgrades; floor covering replacement in classrooms and hallways; ceilings and casework replaced; upgrades to media center; cafeteria improvements include terrazzo floor and mechanical systems; gym upgrades

Continued on Page 7

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# Construction to Begin on Fit For The Future Projects in Spring



## Anoka-Hennepin School District

On Nov. 7, Anoka-Hennepin voters overwhelmingly approved a request for new funding, which will allow the School Board to address facility and class size challenges found across the district.

The Fit for the Future plan will create safe and secure learning environments, construct additional schools and classroom space, provide solutions for maintaining quality schools, and address class sizes at all levels.

“The support our community shows for our students and their future is amazing,” said Superintendent David Law. “We have already begun putting these funds to work, and the community will see the impact of these resources beginning this spring.”

## The election

Voters approved question one, an operational levy request that asked voters for \$226.20 per pupil, or \$9.5 million annually, to fund operational needs of new spaces

proposed in question two, and also promised to provide relief to class sizes across the district. The question was approved.

Meanwhile, voters also approved question two, which was a bond issue asking voters for \$249 million in funding to build two new elementary schools, construct additions on nine schools (including all five traditional high schools), and improve science labs, media centers and flexible learning areas at all district schools. With the additions, the School Board also promised to remove all 62 portable classrooms found at schools across the district.

## Now what?

With spring approaching, work has already begun on bringing the Fit for the Future plan to life.

Blaine school map Anoka-Hennepin has already purchased land at the two proposed elementary school sites — one in Ramsey and one in Blaine. The first is a combined 38-acre parcel of farmland,

along the east side of 170th Avenue NW and County Road 5 (Nowthen Boulevard) in Ramsey, which cost a total of \$2.3 million. Meanwhile, Anoka-Hennepin also purchased a 37-acre parcel of land on the northwest corner of Lever Street and 125th Avenue NE (Main Street, Highway 14) in Blaine for \$2.8 million.

Chuck Holden, the district’s chief operations officer, said Anoka-Hennepin has already started pre-construction testing and environmental work at both sites, and has had meetings with city and county officials as the planning process ramps up. The work done thus far will allow the school district to begin construction as early as April 2018 on the new schools, and the goal is for both to be ready to go for the start of the 2019-20 school year.

In addition to the new schools, nine other large-scale projects will be done, including major additions to all five traditional high schools, as well as construction projects at both campuses of Anoka Middle School for the Arts, Champlin-Brooklyn Park Academy/Jackson Middle School, and the River Trail Learning Center.

“For a variety of reasons, not all of the construction will happen at once, but rather be rolled out in three phases,” Holden said. “Within four years, we hope to have all projects completed.”

## History

The Fit for the Future referendum came after 18 months of facilities planning, which included recommendations made by a 32-member community task force, as well as feedback from the community during a series of meetings.

Ramsey school map “We took the task force recommendations to the community twice (over) nine months to make sure we had their input and that voters understood what the School Board was asking,” Law said. “The referendum results show the community was informed, understood the recommendations, and responded with support.”

## Timeline and details for construction and renovation projects

### Andover High School:

Construction on classroom additions and the cafeteria and auditorium expansions will begin summer 2018 with completion set for fall 2019. Construction on gym/fitness spaces begins summer 2020 with completion set for fall 2021.

### Anoka High School:

Construction will begin summer 2018 and continue through 2020. Classroom additions will be the priority with completion set for fall 2019. All other work will extend until summer 2020 (cafeteria, fieldhouse, and fitness spaces).

### Anoka Middle School for the Arts:

*Fred Moore:* Construction will begin spring 2020 on the additional classrooms, and the front office and cafeteria moves. Completion set for fall 2021.

*Washington:* Construction will begin spring 2020 on the additional classrooms, cafeteria and gym expansions. Completion set for fall 2021.

### Blaine High School:

Construction will begin with classroom additions and the cafeteria expansion during summer 2018 with completion set for fall 2019. Construction on fieldhouse and fitness expansions and the front office move will begin summer 2020, with completion set for fall 2021.

### Champlin-Brooklyn Park Academy/Jackson Middle School:

Construction will begin spring 2020 on the additional classrooms, media center and gym, as well as the kitchen/cafeteria expansion. Completion set for fall 2021.

### Champlin Park High School:

Construction will begin summer 2018 with completion of the classroom additions, and the cafeteria, fieldhouse and fitness expansions set for fall 2020.

### Coon Rapids High School:

Construction will begin fall 2018 on the front entry move with completion set for winter 2019. Construction will begin spring 2020 on the additional classrooms, front office move and fitness expansion, with completion set for fall 2021.

### New elementary schools in Blaine/Ramsey:

Construction will begin spring 2018 with completion set for fall 2019.

### River Trail Learning Center:

Construction will begin spring 2020 on the additional classrooms and special education improvements. Completion set for fall 2021.

### All schools:

Science, media center and/or special education improvements will be occurring at all district schools from 2018 through 2021. Smaller general improvements will occur from 2021 through 2023.

## Construction Complete at Centennial School District 12 Continued from Page 6

include floor refinishing; restroom updates; new roofing, parking lot, and landscaping.

### Centennial Campus Improvements

Improvements to the Centennial campus on North Road include closing the link between the East and West buildings to traffic during the student day; bus pick-up and drop-off modifications; expanded student parking (340+ spaces); parent pick-up and drop-off for Centennial Elementary moved off North Road; second turf field added; additional green space.

### Early Childhood Addition at Rice Lake Elementary

*Construction of a 17,000 sq. ft. Early Childhood Center opened in April 2017.*

### Upgrades Made Throughout Centennial

Construction included building access, security and visitor management systems; master lock and intercom system; computer network improvements; phone system upgrades, board room audio/visual upgrades; exterior maintenance; visitor management; site traffic safety improvements.

### Blue Heron Elementary

Construction included gym dehumidification; parking lot resurfacing; exterior

maintenance; ceiling tile and floor replacement; boiler and controls; plumbing upgrades.

### Centennial Middle School

Construction included cafeteria and common area improvements; carpet replacement; air handling upgrades; chiller plant replacement; boiler addition; parking lot replacement; exterior maintenance.

### Golden Lake Elementary

Construction included enclosing classrooms as well as the library for safety, security and sound; replacing original casework, interior doors and hallway flooring; mechanical system updates; roof replacement and exterior maintenance.

### Rice Lake Elementary

Construction included all-purpose gym floor replacement; mechanical system updates; roof replacement and exterior maintenance.

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# Next Generation Facilities: Construction Projects Pass Milestones

## Edina Public Schools

The district-wide Transforming Spaces district-wide facilities plan passed several milestones recently with the completion of a 70,000 square foot multi-purpose activity center at Edina High School (EHS) and the ahead-of-schedule completed renovation of third floor learning spaces at South View Middle School (SVMS).

In January, sixth grade classrooms at SVMS moved to the newly remodeled third floor. The project, which began this summer, created new classroom configurations and three extended learning spaces available for small and large group collaboration. New student furniture will arrive in August when the entire SVMS project is complete. Several other SVMS classrooms moved to temporary spaces over winter break to allow interior remodeling to continue in the north hall on the first and second floors.

## Bids approved

At its December meeting, the Edina School Board approved bids for remaining building projects related to the district-wide facilities construction plan. Bidding for all projects funded by the \$124.9 million bond referendum, approved by voters in 2015, are now complete and the facilities plan budget remains on target, according to Margo Bauck, business services director.

Approved was a project bid for additions and renovations at Creek Valley and Highlands elementary schools, and renovations at Valley View Middle School. Construction at these buildings will begin this spring.

The Board also approved a bid for earthwork related to construction at South View Middle School. (The building construction bids for South View were approved last spring.) In addition, the Board approved the purchase of fitness equipment for the newly constructed Activity Center at EHS.

## Former transportation facility sold

In November, the district closed on the sale of the former transportation services facility on Eden Avenue. The buyer finalized the sale for a purchase price of \$4.7 million, per the purchase agreement approved by the School Board in March.

Proceeds from the sale have been applied to the construction cost of the new facility located in southwest Edina, which was included in the 2015 Next Generation Facilities Plan. The district's transportation operations and vehicle fleet moved to the new facility in August, where there is increased space to house all of the district's vehicles and provide improved service, maintenance, and office facilities.

## 2015 Bond Referendum Completed Projects

### Early Learning Center

**Project Cost: \$3.15 million**

**Renovations (11,750 sq. ft.):**

- Creation of expanded, cohesive programming space for classrooms, family education and sibling care
- New Family Commons
- Improved, convenient space for early childhood screening

### Countryside

**Project cost: \$2.2 million**

**Addition: 2 classrooms (2,000 sq. ft.)**

**Renovations:**

- Learning studios organized by grade level, include classrooms and learning commons with flexible learning space for collaboration, project work, individual study
- Media Center with learning commons and designated areas for book stacks and maker space
- Improved music/band classroom
- Improved classrooms for special education, gifted, and learning specialists

### Edina High School

**Project Cost: \$60.66 million**

**Additions (135,000 total sq. ft.):**

- Classrooms, labs, specialist areas, flexible learning spaces
- Activity/Wellness Center (69,680 sq. ft.)
- 3-station gymnasium
- Walking track
- Auxiliary gym
- Fitness center
- Two locker rooms
- Gym support space
- Lobby/large group project area
- Activities and fabrication lab
- School Store

**Renovations:**

- Relocated, enhanced main entrance
- Expansion/remodel of commons, includes stairway link to cafeteria
- Media Center
- Increased natural light
- Improved Special Education spaces
- Student Support Services suite – guidance and counseling, health services/wellness, social worker, psychologist/mental health

### Concord

**Project Cost: \$3.6 million**

**Addition: 4 classrooms (3,600 sq. ft.)**

**Renovations:**

- Learning studios organized by grade level, include classrooms and learning commons with flexible learning space for collabora-

tion, project work, individual study

- Media Center with learning commons and designated areas for book stacks and maker space
- Improved art and music classrooms
- Improved classrooms for special education, gifted, and specialists

### Normandale

**Project Cost: \$6 million**

**Addition: Classrooms, flexible learning space, lockers, bathrooms (3,600 sq. ft.); located in north wing (formerly District Offices)**

**Renovations:**

- Media Center with adjacent learning commons and designated areas for book stacks and maker space
- Learning studios, organized by grade level, include classrooms and learning commons with flexible space for collaboration, project work, individual study
- Improved music space
- Improved classrooms for special education and specialist spaces
- Kitchen expansion

### Cornelia

**Project cost: \$4.1 million**

**Addition: Gymnasium, classroom (7,800 sq. ft.)**

**Renovations:**

- Media Center with learning commons and designated areas for book stacks and maker space (coming soon!)
- Learning studios organized by grade level, include classrooms and learning commons with flexible learning space for collaboration, project work and individual study
- Improved classrooms for special education, gifted, and specialists

### Transportation Services

**Old Facility: Approx. 2 acres located on Eden Avenue; Build in 1913 (addition in 1968)**

**New Facility: 9.25 acres**

**Project Cost: \$8.3 million (Sale of former site: \$4.7 million applied to project cost)**

- Parking bays for 84 buses
- On-site parking for 100 drivers and staff
- Meeting/Training Room
- Maintenance and wash bays
- Controlled access and secured facility - \$7.98 million districtwide
- Provides for potential growth of services

[www.edinaschools.org](http://www.edinaschools.org)  
(952) 848-3900

## CREATING SPACES THAT FOSTER EDUCATION AND GROWTH

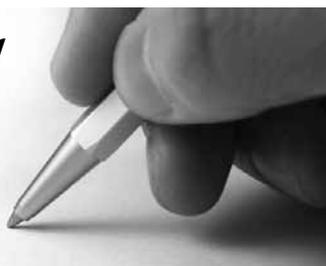


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# Apply for a Grant



## Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers

The Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers (ITEST) program promotes prekindergarten through grade 12 students interests and capacities to participate in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and information and communications technology (ICT) workforce of the future.

Exploratory grants of up to \$400,000 with durations of up to two years. Strategies grants up to \$1.2 million with durations up to three years are awarded. SPrEaD grants up to \$2 million with durations of three to five years are awarded.

**Deadline:** Full proposals are due August 8, 2018; and the second Wednesday in August, annually thereafter.

**Website:** [www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=5467](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5467)

## Toshiba America Grant Program for 6-12 Science and Mathematics Educators

Toshiba America Foundation accepts applications from teachers who are passionate about making science and mathematics more engaging for their students. The foundation seeks to support teachers by providing funds to support classroom projects. The foundation strongly encourages projects planned and led by individual teachers or teams of teachers for their own classrooms.

**Deadline:** Applications are accepted year-round for requests less than \$5,000.

Requests for grants of more than \$5,000 are due June 1 and November 1, annually.

**Website:** [www.toshiba.com/taf/612.jsp](http://www.toshiba.com/taf/612.jsp)

## E2 Energy to Educate Grants

Through the E2 Energy to Educate grant program, Constellation NewEnergy, Inc. offers grades 6 through 12 and college students opportunities to problem-solve today's and tomorrow's energy challenges. Grants fund projects designed to enhance students' understanding of science and technology and to inspire them to think differently about energy.

Successful projects should be hands-on, engage at least 100 students, and align with one of three energy knowledge and innovation focus areas:

- Energy in Transportation: what the future of transportation will look like with new

technology.

- Backyard Generation: how decentralized energy generation is improving efficiency and resilience.
- Zero Waste: how to harness energy that would otherwise be wasted.

Education grants up to \$25,000 each are awarded for grades 6 through 12. Higher education grants up to \$50,000 each are awarded for two- and four-year colleges.

**Deadline:** Applications are due October 1, annually.

**Website:** [www.constellation.com/community/e2-energy-to-educate.html](http://www.constellation.com/community/e2-energy-to-educate.html)

## ecoTech Grants

The Captain Planet Foundation (CPF) is offering grants to support inquiry-based projects in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields that leverage technology or use nature-based designs to address environmental problems in local communities. Ideal projects are youth-led, project-based, and integrate technology to address an environmental problem that results in real, demonstrable environmental outcomes.

Grants up to \$2,500 are awarded.

**Deadline:** Applications are accepted July 16 through January 15 and January 16 through July 15, annually.

**Website:** [www.captainplanetfoundation.org/grants/ecotech](http://www.captainplanetfoundation.org/grants/ecotech)

## Environmental and Science Grants

Waste Management, Inc. supports environmental and science education programs, such as science fairs and Earth Day projects targeting middle and high school students. There is also interest in proposals to preserve and enhance natural resources. Local facilities may identify and support other causes that are important to the immediate community.

**Deadline:** Applications are accepted year-round.

**Website:** [www.wm.com/about/community/charitable-giving.jsp](http://www.wm.com/about/community/charitable-giving.jsp)

## Emeril's Culinary Garden and Teaching Kitchen Program

The Emeril Lagasse Foundation works to inspire, mentor, and enable student success by integrating gardening and cooking concepts into school curriculums. Emeril's Culinary Garden and Teaching Kitchen Program partners with qualified elementary and middle schools to inspire appreciation for food

sources and understanding of nutrition and healthy eating, promote life skills, and teach culinary skills.

**Deadline:** Letters of Interest are accepted year-round.

**Website:** [emeril.org/emerils-culinary-gardens/schools](http://emeril.org/emerils-culinary-gardens/schools)

## Project Produce: Fruit and Veggie Grants for Schools

The Chef Ann Foundation and Healthy Scoop have teamed up to help schools increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables for children and youth, and nutrition education in schools. The purpose of Project Produce is to create planned lunchroom activities to showcase and taste fresh vegetables and fruits.

Grants of \$2,500 are awarded.

**Deadline:** Applications are accepted year-round.

**Website:** [www.chefannfoundation.org/programs-and-grants/project-produce](http://www.chefannfoundation.org/programs-and-grants/project-produce)

## Green Thumb Challenge Grant

Green Education Foundation (GEF) and Gardener's Supply Company have teamed up on a funding opportunity for established youth garden projects nationwide. The organizations are calling on schools and youth groups to submit chronicles of their garden projects in a race to win a cash prize. The award is designed to support the continued sustainability of an exceptional youth garden program that has demonstrated success, and has impacted the lives of children and their communities.

Grants of \$250 are awarded.

**Deadline:** Applications are due September 30, annually.

**Website:** [www.greeneducationfoundation.org/greenthumbchallengesub/greenthumb-challenge-winners.html](http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/greenthumbchallengesub/greenthumb-challenge-winners.html)

## Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Grant Program

Projects must focus on appreciation for nature through the use of and teaching about native plants. The foundation focuses on projects with native plants that include multiple native plant species to provide food, shelter, and other habitat services. Projects must involve students in planning and carrying out the project.

Awards range from \$100 to \$500.

**Deadline:** Applications are due October 15, annually.

**Website:** [www.wildones.org/seeds-for-education](http://www.wildones.org/seeds-for-education)

## SunWise Environmental and Health Education Program

The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) supports the SunWise Environmental and Health Education Program to promote sun safety measures at school and teach students about UV radiation and stratospheric ozone. The foundation distributes

free program tool kits containing 50 cross-curricular, standards-based activities and a UV-sensitive Frisbee for hands-on learning and physical fitness.

**Deadline:** Applications are accepted year-round.

**Website:** [www.neefusa.org/sunwise](http://www.neefusa.org/sunwise)

## Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership Grants

The Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership (CGP) awards education grants for projects designed to increase awareness and understanding of Japan in the United States by addressing the needs of students and teachers in kindergarten through grade 12. Grants may fund support of teacher training, curriculum development, and community outreach efforts.

Grants up to \$5,000 are awarded.

**Deadline:** Grant applications are accepted year-round.

**Website:** [www.cgp.org/grassroots-exchange-and-education/education-grants](http://www.cgp.org/grassroots-exchange-and-education/education-grants)

## Instrumental Music Grants

The Fender Music Foundation awards instruments and equipment to eligible music instruction programs that are part of US public schools or qualified nonprofit organizations. The instruments and equipment are lightly used, blemished, or otherwise imperfect and have been collected from manufacturers and retailers.

**Deadline:** Applications are accepted year-round.

**Website:** [www.fender.com/pages/fender-music-foundation/](http://www.fender.com/pages/fender-music-foundation/)

## Music Education Grants

The Guitar Center offers grants that support music education projects and programs. The company believes that music inspires creativity and personal expression, builds self-esteem, and teaches cooperation and team building from playing music together.

**Deadline:** Applications are accepted year-round.

**Website:** [www.guitarcenter.com/pages/corporate-giving](http://www.guitarcenter.com/pages/corporate-giving)

## Music Performance Attendance Grants

The Sharon Gewirtz Kids to Concerts Fund provides small grants to provide the opportunity for children and youth to attend live performances of classical music and other related programming. Grants are open to schools and nonprofit music programs throughout the United States, and eligible applicants must demonstrate financial need to be considered.

Grants up to \$500 are awarded.

**Deadline:** Applications are due June 30, annually.

**Website:** [sites.google.com/site/gewirtzkidstoconcerts](http://sites.google.com/site/gewirtzkidstoconcerts)

# LIVEGREEN — Sustainability at District 197



School District 197

What do you get when you put together an energy efficiency program and an environmental club? LIVEGREEN, School District 197's sustainability program.

LIVEGREEN promotes energy saving, recycling and a lot more throughout the school district. District 197 serves about 5000 students from the communities of Eagan, Inver Grove Heights, Lilydale, Mendota, Mendota Heights, Sunfish Lake and West St. Paul, MN.

Each school in the District has a LIVEGREEN Team that consists of students and a teacher. These teams help implement low-cost or no-cost strategies to reduce energy use, promote recycling, composting, and focus on conserving resources. Through sustainability efforts, the district has avoided more than \$2 million in utility costs since 2003. All 8 schools have earned an Energy Star label from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Moreland Arts and Health Sciences Magnet is in the running for the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Award. If chosen they will be the fifth school in District 197 to be named a Green Ribbon School, joining Pilot Knob STEM Magnet (2017), Henry Sibley High School (2016), Garlough Environmental Magnet School (2012) and Heritage Environmental-STEM Magnet School (2013). In addition, District 197 was named a Green Ribbon Schools District Sustainability awardee in 2015.

Last Spring Friendly Hills Middle School and Moreland Elementary flipped the switch on rooftop solar arrays; both are estimated to save the school district nearly \$300,000 in

electricity costs over the next 25 years. The systems will not only save energy dollars but also provide science learning opportunities for students. The solar panels were manufactured in Mount Iron, Minnesota.

Next year three more schools will join Friendly Hills and Moreland. Garlough, Heritage, and Mendota Elementary plan to host the remaining systems. In total, the five projects expect to offset nearly 360,000 pounds of CO2 emissions annually and save the school district an estimated \$750,000 in electricity costs over the next 25 years. The school district had zero upfront costs to install the projects and will pay lower electricity rates over the next 30 years or more.

These solar projects are in line with our mission to promote energy savings using low cost or no cost strategies.

"For more than a decade our district has been committed to Green practices, with active recycling, composting and energy-efficiency programs in our schools," said Mark Fortman, district director of operations. "Changing our approach to grounds maintenance so that it supports a healthy, more natural environment for wild pollinators is a great addition to our sustainability initiatives."

February 2016, the School Board approved a resolution declaring District 197 as a "Pollinator Friendly School District" — the first district in the state to pass such a resolution. Small steps each year to protect and promote pollination will include, minimize the use of insecticides and pesticides, establish

lawn mowing schedules that protect pollinators and promote pollination, use native plants to support pollinators in landscaping, when possible. "We're excited to get started!" said Lisa Johnson, district sustainability manager and LIVEGREEN program coordinator. "It's the right thing to do for the environment and sets a great example for our students. It's a win-win for the pollinators and our schools."

Many of the new pollinator-friendly lawn and landscaping practices will not be

noticeable to the public, however, community members may start to see shifts in mowing schedules. Some grasses (not including athletic fields and playgrounds) will be allowed to grow longer in the spring in order to promote the growth of clover, which is a source of food for pollinators. In the Spring, lawn signs were placed around the school grounds throughout the district to share our new practices with our neighbors and community.

Summer 2017, the grass islands in the parking lot starting at Sibley were replaced with wildflower beds. These plantings will be an oasis for bees as they seek food sources.

Other areas will not be mowed at all to create habitats for native pollinators who nest in the ground and can find food in unmowed areas.

"For more than a decade our district has been committed to Green practices, with active recycling, composting and energy-efficiency

programs in our schools," said Mark Fortman, district director of operations. "Changing our approach to grounds maintenance so that it supports a healthy, more natural environment

for wild pollinators is a great addition to our sustainability initiatives.

All schools will participate in an Earth Day clean on school grounds. Pilot Knob LIVEGREEN students will be Plogging, picking up litter while jogging. It is a trend that

started in Sweden, when asked about it, Emily Natrop Pilot Knobs LIVEGREEN leader said, "what's not to like, its a fun name and kids love to run!"



[www.isd197.org](http://www.isd197.org)  
(651) 403-7000



## CenterPoint Energy

CenterPoint Energy wants you to stay **safe and smart.**

Safe and Smart with Buddy Blue Flame is made available by CenterPoint Energy and is a great interactive website to learn about natural gas.

Kids, teens, parents and teachers can visit the website to learn where natural gas comes from, how it is used and how to be safe and smart around it.



- Resources for students of all grade levels
- Safety tips for parents
- Classroom activities and free resources for teachers

Visit:  
[safeandsmart.org](http://safeandsmart.org)

Learn more about CenterPoint Energy at: [www.centerpointenergy.com](http://www.centerpointenergy.com)

# Careers in Energy

You might be surprised to learn how many types of jobs there are at a utility company. An energy company needs many different kinds of employees to do all the work needed to supply energy to your home and school.

Whatever your skills and abilities, chances are you could find an interesting career in the energy industry. If you are good at science, math, like working with people or fixing things with your hands, there are good jobs you might enjoy at an energy company.

## Sales & Marketing

- ▶ Marketing & Sales employees help the company communicate with its customers in many ways. They prepare brochures and other materials about the company's products and services, research what customers are thinking and what they want, and look for ways to help them use energy more wisely.
- ▶ Account Executives spend a lot of their time visiting big cus-

tomers – companies, schools, hospitals and others who use a lot of energy. They help customers understand their energy use, and help them to save energy and money through conservation and other special programs.

- ▶ Product Developers work to come up with new products or programs, or improve existing ones that help solve customers' energy problems. For example, Product Developers have developed ways to help customers reduce their air conditioning costs by 50%.

## Administrative & Customer Service

- ▶ Administrative Assistants work in an office. They keep track of files and records, schedule meetings, prepare letters and reports on the computer, and help keep their boss or department organized and running smoothly.
- ▶ Customer Service Associates

work in special call centers. They use the telephone and computer to help the customers who call in with questions or problems with their energy service.

- ▶ Billing Associates also work on the phone and computer, helping customers who call with questions about their energy bills.

## Engineering

- ▶ Electrical Engineers are experts on all the electrical equipment and systems the company uses. They solve electrical engineering problems and help decide what electrical equipment the company should buy.
- ▶ Mechanical Engineers work in the power plant on all the mechanical equipment and systems the company uses. They make detailed drawings of these systems and help decide what mechanical equipment the company should buy.
- ▶ Chemical Engineers and Envi-

ronmental Engineers keep track of state and federal environmental rules, help reduce power plant emissions and make sure company projects are done in a way that does not damage the environment. They work to prevent spills or other accidents, and respond to emergencies.

- ▶ Civil Engineers plan and supervise large construction projects such as dams, buildings, pipelines and roads. They work to build strong, safe structures, and help decide what equipment to buy and solve other construction problems.

## Field Operations

- ▶ Linemen take care of the electrical lines and equipment, restoring power after outages and responding to emergency calls. They work outside most days, alone or as part of a crew.
- ▶ Pipe Fitters work in power plants or as part of gas construction, maintenance and

operations crews. They install and fix gas lines, meters and appliances and repair cooling systems and steam pipes in the plant.

- ▶ Utility Workers install and repair gas lines, using heavy equipment and tools. They work outside, usually as part of a crew, and in the shop.

## Power Plant Operations

- ▶ Electricians build, install, fix and take care of electrical equipment in power plants and substations. They often work from ladders and bucket trucks and wear special protective clothing to keep them safe.
- ▶ Instrument and Control Room Operators work inside the plant on sensitive equipment that controls the operation of the plant. They do tests, install, adjust and fix the instruments.

Source – Xcel Energy

# JUMPSTART YOUR CAREER.

We need new, ambitious talent to help us build a future of clean, renewable and affordable energy. At Xcel Energy, you'll find entry-level positions which can provide you the opportunity to learn new skills and expand your current skillset. We also offer paid college-level internships that include benefits, and can result in full-time jobs down the road.

Career opportunities are waiting. **Explore the possibilities at [xcelenergy.com/Careers](http://xcelenergy.com/Careers).**



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## Our Employees Bring the Energy

At **Xcel Energy**, the electric and natural gas service we provide is a critical part of everyday life. If your service has ever been interrupted, you know what I mean. Our internship programs play an essential role in helping us keep the power on and the natural gas flowing for our customers.

Careers in the utility industry require extensive technical training. To become a qualified line worker it requires two years of technical college and four years of on-the-job training. Our nuclear employees prepare for years in formal education and once they've been hired spend countless hours training and conducting drills to ensure they know how to respond to any sit-

uation. Those are just a couple of examples of the specialized knowledge required to work in the utility field.

We've built a robust internship program to ensure the knowledge of our experienced workers is passed on to the next generation of Xcel Energy employees. Our internship program brings talented and diverse candidates into the company and prepares them for their future careers. Our interns receive valuable real world job experiences, opportunities to tour company facilities, and the challenge of taking on projects outside of their immediate job duties. They gain not just a paycheck, but valuable skills that will help them build a career at Xcel Energy, or anywhere.

You're invited to the

# 2018 E3 WORKSHOPS

## Energy Education for Educators

High School Agriculture, Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education Teachers are encouraged to register for and attend one or more of these **FREE WORKSHOPS!**

### Session I: June 11-12

Minnesota State University  
Mankato, MN



**Energy Topics:** Drone Technology, Renewable Energy Research, Solar, & Wind

**Industry Tours:** Wilmarth Power Plant, Mankato Energy Center, MTU Onsite Energy, MSUM's Engineering Dept. & Wind Tunnel

In partnership with the Minnesota State Engineering Center of Excellence



### Session II: June 13-14

Central Lakes College  
Staples, MN



**Energy Topics:** Drone Technology, Renewable Energy Research, Ethanol, Solar, & Wind

**Industry Tours:** CLC's Farm & Solar Site, Hewitt Wind Turbine, Sams Farm, Todd-Wadena Electric Co-Op

In partnership with the Minnesota State Agriculture Center of Excellence, North



## Four Sessions Four Opportunities

Workshops run 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

16 CEUs available to attendees



On-Line Registration is available for each site March 1 – May 11, 2018.

Participants may register for more than one site.

*Space is limited to 16 participants at each location. Register now!*

Register at: [energycareersminnesota.com/energy-education](http://energycareersminnesota.com/energy-education)

For Additional Workshop Information, Contact Any of Our Mentors

Bruce Peterson, Director  
bruce.peterson@mnwest.edu  
320-267-8872

Carol Hegna, Program Coordinator  
carol.hegna@mnwest.edu  
320-564-5020

# Sessions Opportunities to Attend!

10 PM both days at each site.

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## Session III: June 18-19

Fond Du Lac Tribal & Community College  
Cloquet, MN

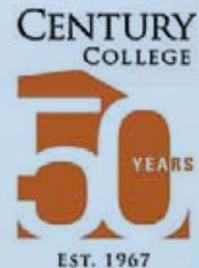


**Energy Topics:** Biomass, Energy Efficiency, Hydro Power, & Solar

**Industry Tours:** Minnesota Power Hydro power Station Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa 1 MW Solar, 1/2 MW District Heat, and Energy Efficiency Project

## Session IV: June 20-21

Century College  
White Bear Lake, MN



**Energy Topics:** Biomass, Transmission Systems, Micro-Grid Technology, Power Line, Solar & Wind

**Industry Tours:** Century College Solar Labs, Great River Energy, District Energy, Xcel Energy Hugo Training Facility

**Teachers attending E3 will receive for their schools:**  
Classroom Presentations, Curriculum & Lab Kits

### Also included in the Workshop:

- ▶ Industry tours
- ▶ Lunch and snacks both days
- ▶ One night's stay at a nearby hotel
- ▶ An opportunity to book the Energy Trailer for your school during the 2018-2019 school year



Registration for educators-june-2018

Minnesota Energy Center Staff:

Coordinator Rose Patzer, Program Coordinator  
du rose.patzer@mnwest.edu  
320-564-5044

Funding for the workshops is provided by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and by the Minnesota State Energy Center of Excellence.

## E-STEM in Action



*Teri Staloch, Ed.D., Superintendent  
Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools*

Winter can be an unpredictable time to explore outdoor learning in Minnesota; however, many students and teachers in Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools (PLSAS) continue to engage in exciting E-STEM activities and embrace the weather.

From learning outdoor winter survival skills at McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center, to Jeffers Pond first graders becoming “nature detectives” studying animal tracks to determine who had been in their woods, students are fully engaged in the district’s E-STEM learning activities.

E-STEM stands for Environmental Education, Science, Technology, Engineer-

ing and Math. E-STEM is all about engaging instruction and learning that is focused on inquiry and real world problem-solving, and our staff and students are really good at it. In fact, our schools were the first district-wide E-STEM schools in the state of Minnesota and we have even been receiving national recognition as leaders in providing high-quality environmental education programming.

Edgewood School/La ola del lago, Glendale, Redtail Ridge, Five Hawks and Jeffers Pond have all received a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools designation and our district was also named a Green Ribbon Sustainability District.

Now, Hidden Oaks and Twin Oaks Middle Schools are applying for Green Ribbon recognition based on their ability to reduce environmental impact and costs, improve the health and wellness of students and staff and provide effective environmental and sustainability education, incorporating STEM, civic skills and green career pathways.

Middle School teachers are also hard at work planning their first ever E-STEM Day set for May 18. The day will be filled

### PLSAS Brings Solar to its Students

Thanks to a \$100,000 donation from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC), PLSAS students have even more math and science learning opportunities through the use of newly installed solar panels. The district will also realize nearly \$100K in energy savings over the next 25 years, helping to meet its sustainability and E-STEM goals.

The project was installed at Twin Oaks Middle School by a local solar developer and funding for the project was made possible through the generosity of the SMSC. Students now have the ability to chart data, conduct experiments and learn through hands-on application of the solar panels. They can access a dashboard which charts how much energy is produced on any given day, week or month and they can even see the performance of each panel.

**Continued on Page 16**

### Agriculture helps Minnesota grow.

Minnesota's farm families grow more than just our food. Agriculture provides more than 340,000 jobs and adds \$75 billion to our state's economy. There's a bright future ahead for those interested in providing food, fuel, and fiber to the next generation.

Learn more at [mncorn.org](http://mncorn.org).

# An Adventure in Aquaponics: Three Waconia High School Seniors Fish for Sustainable Success

Christina Catron

Waconia Public Schools ISD 110

It began when Waconia High School science and engineering teacher Mike Jensen wanted to build a system to grow fish and produce, using a smaller footprint, in the classroom. When students Charlie Kinneberg, Max Doty, and Evan Schumacher discovered the project in an environmental engineering course, they were hooked.

In its simple form, aquaponics is a closed, soil-free system that cycles water between fish and plants. The plants have bacteria on their roots that convert the fish waste into nutrients that promote plant growth. The clean water is then recycled back to the fish. A rocky media serves as a plant root bed that traps “bad bacteria” to keep it from disrupting the system.

As Charlie, Max, and Evan explained, aquaponics uses 90 percent less water than traditional farming, and the USDA recently declared it can be an organic way of farming, so long as organic practices (i.e., organic seeds) are used. With hydroponics, manmade chemicals are used; in aquaponics, fish naturally make the chemicals.

“The bacteria are nitrifying bacteria,”

Evan explained. “It’s like the digestive system inside of us. We have a microbiome of different bacteria to help us digest food. This is an external digestive system, so it’s on the roots, and it changes the ammonia that the fish excrete into something the plant can use.”

Not unlike fish, plants, and bacteria, these three seniors played well off each other’s strengths in describing the growth and progress of what has become a strong independent study that Jensen now guides. They’ve dubbed their organization “MEC”—Max, Evan, and Charlie.

To get the project started and to gain foundational understanding of the biology and chemistry, the MEC team set up an on-site tour and visit with Dr. Alex Primus at the University of Minnesota. They then formed instrumental relationships with Spark-Y, a youth-empowering nonprofit that supports education in sustainability and entrepreneurship.

Spark-Y helped them learn more about fish and animal plant compatibility, refine their engineering design concepts, and develop acumen in small-business skills. Max, Evan, and Charlie each had Spark-Y project supervisors and clients, and each



became Spark-Y Sustainability Certified through the summer internship program.

What are good plant and fish combinations? Evan explained that salmon and spinach grow well together because they prefer colder temperatures. There are also plants and fish that are less temperature-sensitive. “We’re using bluegill in our tank, and people also commonly think of tilapia. . . They’re easy to take care of, widely available, and adaptable,” Charlie and Max said.

The MEC team discovered that butter leaf lettuce grew well and quickly. “It was pretty cool to have the product of your system that you built and planted . . . so you could sit down and eat a salad,” Max said.

Plans to scale up include the goal of producing food for ISD 110 students and for local restaurants. “We’d like to sell our produce to Lola’s [Lakehouse] or Iron

Continued on Page 17

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**Keith Olander** ~ Director of AgCentric  
P: 218-894-5163 | kolander@clcmn.edu

**Judy Barka** ~ AgCentric Project Manager  
P: 320-221-0219 | jbarka@clcmn.edu

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**MINNESOTA STATE**  
Agriculture Center of Excellence, North



# Lessons from the Garden



Paul Downer, Communications Coordinator  
Delano Public Schools

Half a dozen years ago a grant and a few donations helped bring a set of raised garden beds to Delano Elementary School.

Since then, the gardening project has expanded to about 12 beds through additional donations, and K-4 students have all had a hand in raising a wide variety of vegetables

and edible flowers that serve as snacks while providing hands-on education in the process of planting and growing.

“The kids love it, absolutely love it,” said DES special education teacher Heather Walberg, who began organizing the gardening effort in its second year.

Students plant before school lets out in the spring, and summer school students and

community volunteers weed and water the plants over the summer months. After school resumes in the fall students are able to harvest the crops.

In a typical year the gardens are able to produce enough mini pumpkins for each student to take one home, and there are also some practical benefits throughout the growing season.

“If someone forgets to bring a snack for their day at summer school we can let them go out and pick a cucumber,” said Walberg.

“It’s great when students are excited about cucumbers for snack instead of processed crackers and fruit snacks,” said kindergarten teacher Meredith Huikko.

While doing their own gardening fits in well with lessons on spring, seeds and a field trip to a farm, Huikko said there are also some additional insights that gardening can impart.

“In the spring kindergarten students plant small pumpkin and gourd seeds. The following fall, the new set of kindergartners gets to pick one,” said Huikko. “One class plants, but another class receives the final product. We get a chance to talk about doing things for others.”

An end-of-growing-season project involves saving and drying seeds for planting the next year, which allows students to see the full seed cycle over multiple years. Aside from periodic snacks, some produce is sent home

for students to try with their families, and a future goal is to share fresh produce with the lunch room.

A highlight of last year’s garden was an oversized experimental gourd.

Other than mini pumpkins and giant gourds, the garden includes rhubarb, herbs, tomatoes, beans, radishes and more. The project involves minimal expense, as seeds are either saved or donated, but there is some cost for sprouting pods. Different grade levels manage different beds, and students keep track of how their garden did and possible reasons for a light or plentiful harvest.

“They can’t hurt the garden,” Walberg said of the youngest farmers. “There is no pressure to make it perfect. We just tell them, ‘If you pull the wrong thing out, shove it back in.’ It’s a good way to introduce the root system to them.”

Future plans involve planting fruit trees and further expanding the gardens.

“We’ve had pretty good luck with it so far, and it’s just a lot of fun,” said Walberg.

[www.delano.k12.mn.us](http://www.delano.k12.mn.us)  
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## E-STEM in Action Continued from Page 14

with opportunities for students to learn about personal health and wellness, raptors in Minnesota, water quality, climate data, as well as ways to improve their school forest by removing invasive buckthorn plants.

While environmental education is what PLSAS is known for, staff and students are also engaging in STEM activities such as coding. PLSAS students are learning the language of the future - a language that powers software, websites and mobile applications - and they start in kindergarten!

Elementary students are learning fundamental computer science skills in media classes using hands-on digital resources. Teachers and district leaders are also developing courses for secondary students so they can continue to build on the skills they learn in elementary school.

To make E-STEM truly work for students, it takes committed, dedicated teachers and support staff to make it happen. Last month, during our student early release day, staff came together for professional development in support of our district’s strategic plan and priority work.

Early childhood through 5th grade educators braved the elements with naturalists from Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center, the Jeffers Foundation and the

Raptor Center to learn how to integrate outdoor learning into their curriculum.

Middle School teachers spent the afternoon planning for an interdisciplinary day of project based learning for all students, and high school teachers learned a wide variety of ways to use technology in the classroom.

Whether it’s being outside to study the mass and volume of snow, or crawling inside our district’s mobile planetarium to learn about our winter constellations, PLSAS believes in its vision to create challenging, diverse and personalized learning for students so that all learners can reach their full potential. E-STEM is just one of many ways we work to help students become contributing and productive members of our ever-changing global community. We are PLSAS!

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# Gatewood Students Win the Innovative Garden of the Year Award

*This is the second year in a row the Gatewood garden has taken the top honor at the Minnesota Schoolyard Garden Conference.*



Hopkins Public Schools

What do you do when your garden is too cold to cultivate in the winter? You warm it up, of course. That is exactly what Gatewood Kids & Company students learned while building a solar panel.

The students and their Kids & Company supervisor, Kara Wattunen, submitted their functioning solar recycled panel design to the Innovative Problem Solving Showcase and took home the top award – the Innovative Garden of the Year. They were presented with the honor at the Minnesota Schoolyard Garden Conference, which was held at the Landscape Arboretum in Chaska, Minn. on March 3.

The idea to build a solar panel came from something simple: looking outside. Kara Wattunen, Gatewood Kids & Company supervisor and outdoor enthusiast, challenges her students to be problem solvers. When they began to think of ways to grow their love of gardening well into the winter months, they wanted

to go solar.

“We started to think of ways of how to warm up the garden outside all year long,” Wattunen said. “We had built ‘trash bag greenhouses’ last year out of PVC pipes and school trash bags. So working with the ideas of the past, we knew we had to create a heating element.”

But a traditional heater near trash bags, Wattunen said, wouldn’t be very safe. Students had to think outside of the box, and an idea from one of her fourth-grade students to build a solar panel was the perfect solution. It had to be budget friendly and resource friendly. Wattunen said her students researched materials, looked up how others created simple solar panels, and put together a plan.

“We began to look for a storm door to use as the front glass,” she said. “We knew we also needed a small bit of insulation, as well as a lot of cans. After finding a door and having families bring in their recycling, we had enough recycled materials to go forward and construct



the panel.”

The cost was minimal, as the only item Wattunen needed to purchase was a few two-by-four pieces of plywood. To create the heat collection element, students created tower structures out of the cans and spray painted them black to absorb heat. The box was constructed using plywood and the storm door was sealed to the wood. Once enough towers were built, they were assembled in the box.

“We also drilled a hole in the top of the box,” Wattunen said. “This is where we are attaching a hose, so that when the box fills with heat, it will rise and only escape through the hose, which will be inserted into our ‘trash bag greenhouses.’”

This STEM-focused project is teaching students about green technology and showing them how easy it can be to reduce their own carbon footprints.

“In our room, this is just another fun project that happens to be geared at sustainability,” Wattunen said. “It shows them that

there can be many different avenues to help the environment in addition to just going and picking up garbage. They see the same everyday items and realize that each thing in life has much more than just a one-time use.”

This is the second year in a row that Gatewood has earned the top award. Last year, their recycled hydroponic garden also won in the same category.



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## An Adventure in Aquaponics

Continued from Page 15

Tap,” Charlie said. “One of the things we learned about from Spark-Y was growing microgreens,” Max said. “It’s profitable, and although there are specific techniques, it’s easy to grow and there is high demand for them in restaurants. They’re often plated and aesthetically appealing.”

They’ve tinkered with growing microgreens in the dark that are all white. They also tried growing popcorn kernels via their Spark-Y internship. Spark-Y shared a valuable bank of documented growing successes and failures with MEC.

Aquaponics has so many advantages, according to the MEC team. It’s not polluting the waters, it’s organic, there are no pesticides, and it offers a full yield all year long, even here in Minnesota. And it’s simple to do. Max described a goldfish and string set-up that yielded plant growth. They’d like to have set-ups around the high school and work with other students’ talents to make the systems visually appealing.

“I see these three students now as engineers and leads,” Jensen said. “They’re the ones setting up meetings with people. They are presenting to different stakeholders—the school board, Spark-Y, and the Lions Club—to ask for money. They are in the promotion

phase. They will be in the building phase, hopefully soon.”

The school district has a shed allocated to the independent study that needs to be insulated, but it could then be used to grow plants on a larger scale. Max said they’ve spoken with Barb Schank, director of Nutritional Services for ISD 110, about these plans.

“This is the kind of learning I hope our kids can and should be involved with,” Jensen said. “Students don’t learn in a prescribed way, and our economy isn’t built this way. So having these opportunities for kids to explore these pathways while still getting credit helps them make the transition from the hand-holding that happens in middle and early high school to being more independent learners and creative thinkers.”

[www.isd110.org](http://www.isd110.org)  
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# Making Friends: Answers for Teens with Autism



## What Is a Friend?

Friends are people that you can have fun with. Friends share, hang out together, and laugh with each other. A friend likes you for who you are.

A good friend can cheer you up when you are sad, and keep you company when you are lonely. Friends stick up for each other when someone is mean, or being a bully. In fact, having a good friend can make it less likely that a bully will bother you. That's because friends stand up for each other.

Your friends may change as you get older, but some friendships can last your whole life.

## Where Can I Meet New Friends?

You might have heard the saying "There are no strangers, just friends you haven't met yet." Friends are everywhere. Start by looking around your classroom or in the cafeteria. Other places you might find friends include:

- school clubs, sports, and music groups
- after-school activities like swim practice, karate, or soccer
- pools and parks
- camps
- places of worship
- social skills groups (these groups help people practice talking, listening, and building other friendship skills)

## What Should I Look for in a Friend?

It's easy to make friends with someone who likes to do the same things you do. If you like to draw, try to find someone who likes to do that too. Maybe you love board games! Whatever it is, try to look for a friend who likes what you like. When you have things in common, there's more to talk about.

Liking the same things is important, but it's even more important to find someone who

is nice. A person who is mean, makes fun of others, doesn't listen to the teacher, and gets in trouble at school is not a good choice for a friend. Choose someone who:

- smiles at you
- shares
- lets others join in
- is interested in what you have to say
- makes you feel good

If you are wondering if someone could be a friend but you're not sure, talk to your mom, dad, teacher, or another trusted adult. An adult can help you decide if someone might make a good friend.

## What Do I Say?

Once you've found someone who you think would be good friend, look for chances to say "hi," smile, and be friendly.

Here are some other tips:

- Offer to share something, like a pencil in class if the person lost theirs.
- Say "Do you want to sit here?" or "Can I sit with you?" in the lunchroom.
- Give a compliment, like "Cool sneakers!"

Just as you like to talk about your favorite things, so do friends. So when you're together,

ask your friend questions about himself or herself. "What do you like to do after school?" or "What do you do for fun?" and "What's your favorite band?" will make your friend feel special and keep the conversation going.

## What Else Should I Know?

When you're making friends, it's important to know when to end the conversation or say goodbye. People are ready to talk about something else, or do something else, when they give clues like these:

- not looking at you
- looking past you or around the room
- doing something else, like looking in their bookbag
- changing the subject

If it helps, practice talking to a "new friend" with your mom, dad, or other trusted adult. This way, you'll know what to say the next time you meet someone you like. If someone doesn't want to be your friend, that's OK. But don't give up! There will be other chances to meet new friends.

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## SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCES

### Bookshare

Bookshare, the world's largest accessible digital library for people with print and learning disabilities (such as dyslexia), provides free membership to qualified U.S. schools and students, thanks to an award from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education. Get access to more than 43,000 digital books, textbooks and teacher-recommended readings to help your child succeed and enjoy reading independently.

**Website:** [www.bookshare.org](http://www.bookshare.org)

### Bridges 4 Kids

Bridges 4 Kids is a non-profit parent organization providing a comprehensive system of information and referrals for parents and professionals working with children from birth through transition to adult life. The organization provides a circle of support for ALL children, with a special focus on those who have disabilities, special needs, or who are at-risk.

**Website:** [www.bridges4kids.org/](http://www.bridges4kids.org/)

### Guides & Toolkits

Colorin Colorado is pleased to offer free print guides created for parents, teachers, and anyone who wants to improve the reading

achievement of children. You're welcome to download and print these guides for your own use or to distribute to others.

**Website:** [www.colorincolorado.org/guides-toolkits](http://www.colorincolorado.org/guides-toolkits)

### The Family Center on Technology and Disability

A resource designed to support organizations and programs that work with families of children and youth with disabilities. We offer a range of information and services on the subject of assistive and instructional technologies.

**Website:** [www.ctdinstitute.org/](http://www.ctdinstitute.org/)

### Auties

Website for the first global employment service by people on the spectrum for all people on the autistic spectrum.

**Website:** [www.auties.org/](http://www.auties.org/)

### First Signs, Inc.

A non-profit organization dedicated to educating parents and physicians about the early warning signs of autism and other developmental disorders in early childhood.

**Website:** [www.firstsigns.org/](http://www.firstsigns.org/)

### Between the Lions

Between the Lions is an award-winning PBS children's series designed to help young children learn to read. The Web site includes games and materials from the show, including a literacy curriculum aimed at children ages 4-7.

**Website:** [pbskids.org/lions/](http://pbskids.org/lions/)

### Art of Making Life Easier - Tying Shoes

Apparently most of us have been doing it the wrong way all of our lives. No, the incorrect way is not the bunny ear technique. Great tie method for kids with sensory issues. The laces do not touch your ankles. From Thriving in School

**Website:** [hosmerot.blogspot.com/2011/05/art-of-making-life-easier-tying-shoes.html?pref=bl](http://hosmerot.blogspot.com/2011/05/art-of-making-life-easier-tying-shoes.html?pref=bl)

### Best Practice of Inclusive Services: The Value of Inclusion

Includes definition of inclusion, overcoming barriers, six step process and best practices of inclusive services, From the National Center on Physical Activity and Disability

**Website:** [www.nchpad.org/341/1999/Best-Practice-of-Inclusive-Services-The-Value-of-Inclusion](http://www.nchpad.org/341/1999/Best-Practice-of-Inclusive-Services-The-Value-of-Inclusion)

### Curb Cuts — Hands-free Computer Access Video

Video from Curb Cuts, a California TV show about assistive technology highlights hands free computer access options with particular attention paid to an eye gaze system, an infrared head pointing device and a mouth operated joystick.

**Website:** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=u35z3Vpobow](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u35z3Vpobow)

### 12 Tips to Setting up an Autism Classroom

Checklist and ideas for keeping a structured classroom, using visuals, schedules, reducing distractions and more.

**Website:** [kendrik2.wordpress.com/2007/10/10/12-tips-to-setting-up-an-autism-classroom/](http://kendrik2.wordpress.com/2007/10/10/12-tips-to-setting-up-an-autism-classroom/)

### 5 Ways to Minimize the Negative Impact of Change for Autism

Some tips for minimizing the challenges of transitions, change, moving day, etc. for those on the autism spectrum.

**Website:** [ezinearticles.com/?5-Ways-to-Minimize-the-Negative-Impact-of-Change-for-Autism&id=412904](http://ezinearticles.com/?5-Ways-to-Minimize-the-Negative-Impact-of-Change-for-Autism&id=412904)

## Two Standout Teachers Chosen as 2018 Educator Of Excellence Award Winners



Jennifer Enright, first grade teacher at Eastview Elementary

Lakeville Area Public Schools, District 194

Education Minnesota-Lakeville awarded two teachers in the Lakeville Area Public Schools district with its 2018 Educator of Excellence awards. The individuals were chosen for their daily dedication to students and families and for exemplifying the highest standards and qualities of a professional educator.

**Jennifer Enright**, a first grade teacher at Eastview Elementary, was nominated by Oak Hills Elementary ESL teacher Missy Kaus-

Helmert and won the elementary level award.

**Derek Otten**, an English language arts teacher at Lakeville South High School, was nominated by Lakeville South special education teacher Amanda Chase and won the secondary level award.

“Both of these individuals represent the best traits and qualities of professional educators and make us proud,” said EML President Don Sinner.

In her nomination, Kaus-Helmert

applauded Enright for her teaching approach, which promotes stability, independence and individualism for all students.

“If you were her shadow for a day you would see a teacher that is genuine, organized and extremely knowledgeable,” Kaus-Helmert said. “You would see a teacher that goes above and beyond what is expected of her; students doing yoga during bathroom breaks, students transitioning seamlessly during Daily 5, you would notice anchor charts and learning targets that are written for first graders to understand, flexible seating (long gone are the neat rows of desks) . . . and a classroom library that is accessible to all students.”

In Otten’s nomination, Chase touted Otten as an expert on his curriculum, always seeking professional development and resources to improve his lessons, as well as flexible, considerate, and accommodating.

Chase also nominated Otten for his ability to engage with each of his students in a unique way every day.

“From beginning the class with trivia when all students have a chance to show their unique knowledge to direct instruction where he elicits students’ thoughts to work time when he provides praise and feedback, Derek gives 100 percent of his attention to students 100 percent of the time,” Chase said.

Enright and Otten’s awards will be pre-



Derek Otten, English language arts teacher at Lakeville South High School

sented at an upcoming school board meeting. Additionally, each of the winners will be nominated for the 2019 Education Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

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Register early for summer classes at [mnstate.edu/summer](http://mnstate.edu/summer).  
Explore graduate education at [mnstate.edu/graduate](http://mnstate.edu/graduate)

## 12 Selected as Teacher of the Year Finalists

Twelve teachers from across the state have been named finalists in the 2018 Minnesota Teacher of the Year program. An independent selection panel of 23 leaders in the areas of education, business, government and non-profits selected the finalists from a group of 43 semifinalists. There were 167 Teacher of the Year candidates for this program year.

The selection panel meets again May 5 to conduct individual interviews with each of the 12 finalists and to cast votes for the 2018 Minnesota Teacher of the Year. For a look at how the selection process works, go to [www.educationminnesota.org/news/awards/teacher-of-the-year.aspx](http://www.educationminnesota.org/news/awards/teacher-of-the-year.aspx).

The 2017 Minnesota Teacher of the Year, Corey Bulman of Mound Westonka Public Schools, will announce this year's honoree at a banquet at the Radisson Blu Mall of America May 6.

The 2018 Minnesota Teacher of the Year finalists (listed alphabetically, with school, district, subject and grade[s] taught) are:

- .....
- Courtney Bell**, North Academy of Arts and Communication, Minneapolis, social studies, grades 9–12
- Dani Berry**, Epsilon, Intermediate District 287, math, grades 7–12

### Minnesota TEACHER of the YEAR

**Scott Glew**, Salk Middle School, Elk River, social studies, grade 8

**Kelly Holstine**, Tokata Learning Center, Shakopee, English, grades 9–12

**Adam Kuehnel**, Minnesota Correctional Facility–Faribault, State of Minnesota, English language arts, Adult Basic Education

**Alyssa Larsen**, Waconia High School, Waconia, human geography and world history, grades 10–12

**Tim Leistikow**, Fridley High School, Fridley, English, grades 11–12

**Shaylee McComb**, Weaver Elementary, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale, music, grades K–5

**Malia Norton**, Medford Elementary, Medford, elementary, grade 2

**Renee Swanson**, High School for Recording Arts, St. Paul, biology, grades 9–12

**Sheena Tisland**, Red Wing High School, Red Wing, language arts, grade 9



**Dani Berry**  
Epsilon, Math, grades 7–12  
Intermediate District 287

We are so excited that our very own Dani Berry is a finalist for the 2018 Teacher of the Year! Dani is a math teacher extraordinaire at Epsilon.

*“My favorite part of my job is helping students see themselves differently. Some students told themselves their whole lives that they were not good at math. Once in my classroom, we debunk this belief! They develop new ways of thinking and believing in themselves — and learn that how they view themselves as learners is what matters. They experience all the awesome ways that math impacts their lives and more times than not, they evolve into “math nerds!” I love seeing the confidence in their face and spark in their eyes when they start seeing the beauty and power of mathematics all around them.”*

— Dani Berry

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**Gregory Truso**, Wilshire Park Elementary, St. Anthony-New Brighton, elementary, grade 2

[www.educationminnesota.org/home](http://www.educationminnesota.org/home)

Continued on Page 21



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## Eighth Annual 21st CENTURY Teaching and Learning Conference

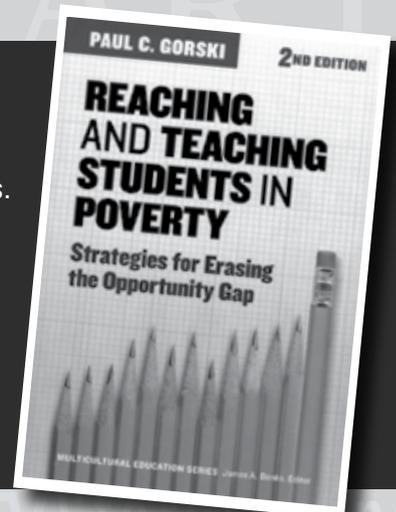
Join us for an exciting one-day conference for networking with leaders in the field of education. The conference begins with an inspiring keynote address and offers a full day of breakout sessions.

**WHEN:** Tuesday, June 19

**SPEAKER:** Paul Gorski, Ph.D.

**KEYNOTE:** Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty: Strategies for Erasing the Opportunity Gap

**Registration now open**



[go.css.edu/MEDConf](http://go.css.edu/MEDConf)

## Teacher of the Year Finalists Continued from Page 20



**Tim Leistikow**  
Fridley High School, English,  
grades 11–12,  
Fridley Public Schools

“I definitely want to give my thanks to IB coordinators Jessica Baker and Carol Nielson nominating me,” Leistikow said. “There are so many incredible educators in this district and the fact that they took the time to nominate me is very humbling.”

Leistikow has taught in the district for 13 years and is known as a conscientious, enthusiastic and fun teacher among Fridley students. He is always working collaboratively with his students to engage them in their learning process, as well as connecting the material to relevant aspects of kids’ everyday lives.

“Through our IB model, we’re much more mindful of conceptual learning that’s

driven by inquiry,” Leistikow said. “We’re really asking our students to be co-creators of what they’re learning.”

Leistikow said he has always been passionate about equity in education, focusing on closing the achievement gap and discipline gap. Pursuing this goal, Leistikow volunteers to participate in a number of efforts aimed at improving curriculum and instruction to be equitable upon on all levels. He works with a cohort of teachers, focusing on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning. This pedagogy recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning. In addition, Leistikow works as a trained consultant to this education approach at a national level.

“Fridley Public Schools is really at the cutting edge and doing very important work that has to be done on a state level and national level,” Leistikow said. “I really do feel like the honor that I’ve received [from the Minnesota Teacher of the Year program] is just a reflection of what’s happening here and that is why I’ve had this opportunity.”

Leistikow is highly respected by administration and staff. He served as an Instructional Leader for four years, providing guidance for staff through new initiatives and teaching strategies. He is also the Fridley High School IB leader of the Language and Literature department and works with fellow teachers to write and advance the IB curriculum. Tim also leads Fridley staff development sessions and presents on a district level on a regular basis. He firmly believes in the importance of validating and

recognizing all students while building and bridging to support their academic success.

“He is constantly pushing to improve the culture and curriculum of our school,” said Language and Literature teacher Dan Terebayza. “He holds himself and the rest of us to a higher standard and expects to always be pushing forward our goal to serve the community and our students.”

According to Terebayza, Leistikow is at the forefront of new ideologies, and his enthusiasm and ability to help FHS staff learn how to implement these new ideas into their daily jobs are invaluable to them as a staff.

He is a TED-Ed Innovative Educator, having completed a year-long professional development program which involves K-12 educators across the country. He also leads a TED-Ed club in his Theory of Knowledge class, and offers students the opportunity to learn how to give TED-style talks. The club encourages students to identify and research important topics and practice presentation literacy.

“What really sets him apart is that he never waits to be told anything,” said Jessica Baker, Fridley IB Coordinator. “He’s always reading, seeking out knowledge, trying new things, before anybody else, and on his own initiative. He always thinks big picture and really looks at the ‘why’ of the things that we do.”

“I have worked in four school districts as a teacher and administrator, and I have never worked with someone as talented and dedicated as Tim,” she Hand. “Without a doubt, he deserves this recognition as he

continues his professional journey as an outstanding educator at Fridley High School.”

Leistikow said he enjoys Fridley because it’s a small district with a big city feel. Compared to larger districts, Fridley Public Schools is a tight-knit community among its students and staff. According to Leistikow, the community is able to come together whenever there is a need, as well as learn from each other.

“During my 13 years here, we’ve shifted demographically, so it’s cool to me that when you go to the pep fests or just walk into any classroom, you’ll see multiple ethnicities and hear multiple languages. With this, our students are becoming more and more aware of issues and ideas, multiple ways of looking at the world. To me, that’s so powerful in a small district because you’re able to make those deeper connections and relationships that are tougher to do in a larger district. This is a place that embraces everyone and really does create a sense of family and community.”

He added, “We’re a community that is very rooted in its past and tradition but is constantly evolving and changing and looking toward its future. That really sums up what makes Fridley such a special place, that it has such a great connection to who it is, but doesn’t let that prevent it from being open and willing to grow to who it can be.”

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## 2018–2019 Honors: Call for Nominations and Applications

### Minnesota School of Excellence Validation



Letter of intent due in the MESPA office  
October 29, 2018.

Application due June 4, 2019.

The Minnesota School of Excellence Program promotes excellence through a rigorous year-long evaluation process that showcases dynamic schools of the 21st century.

### National Outstanding Assistant Principal from Minnesota



Application due in the MESPA office  
November 13, 2018.

Nominees must be a member of MESPA and NAESP, an active assistant principal, and have been an active assistant principal for at least two years.

Awardee will also be granted a free registration to NAESP’s national conference in July, and will be recognized at the conference.

### MESPA Division Leadership Award



Nomination due to  
division president October 29, 2018.  
Application due in the MESPA office  
November 13, 2018.

The award is an annual recognition made by each of MESPA’s 12 divisions to honor their colleagues’ leadership. Any MESPA member may nominate a peer for consideration; division presidents then facilitate the selection process within each division.



## Maplewood Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence

**Susanne Collins**, a teacher from Edgerton Elementary in the Roseville Area School District, was surprised March 23 with the news that she is a recipient of a 2018 WEM Outstanding Educator Award for Teacher Achievement, an honor that is accompanied by a \$15,000 award.

Collins is one of six educators being honored by the WEM Foundation and Synergy & Leadership Exchange for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student learning. She is one of two recipients of the Teacher Achievement Award, which recognizes exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning as evidenced by student achievement.

Collins has been teaching for 19 years and currently teaches sixth grade at Edgerton Elementary. Collins is a goal oriented educator. One of her major goals is to eliminate the achievement gap. She feels in order to do this, there must first be a change in the opportunity gap. She has spent endless hours writing grants as a way to

obtain more technology for students. She uses technology to not only enhance curriculum but to expose students to computer science and coding. She wants to develop skills in her students that can grow and benefit them in the future.

“Every year Susanne’s students come in with a broad range of abilities and life experiences,” shares a colleague. “No matter how expansive the range is she differentiates her instruction to fit the needs of everyone in her room. She not only supports the students academically but also personally. She is constantly striving to make our school better and to give our students opportunities they otherwise would never have the chance to experience.”

Another initiative in Collins’ classroom is a weekly allowance of Collins Cash. Students have opportunities to go above and beyond expectations and earn more Collins Cash by reading, blogging, and completing extra credit assignments. Students have to decide how they are going to spend the Collins Cash. They may use it to buy a snack or save their money for the Winter Break Auction to purchase presents for family

members. They may also use the money to purchase free assignments or extra privileges in the classroom. Through opportunities presented to them through Collins Cash, they learn how to go above expectations and budget their money.

“Mrs. Collins is known for building positive relationships with our students who struggle behaviorally,” said Principal Melissa Sonnek. “They say that some students ask for love in the most unlovable ways yet she responds to students consistently with love. She works hard to connect

with them, finding out their interests, and nurtures their hopes and dreams. She creates rapport and strong relationships.”

[www.isd623.org](http://www.isd623.org)  
(651) 628-6452



## Mora Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence



**Chris Goebel**, a teacher at Mora Elementary in the Mora Public Schools, was surprised March 21 with news that he is a recipient of a 2018 WEM Outstanding Educator Award as an Athletic Coach, an honor that is accompanied by a \$15,000 award.

Goebel is one of six educators being honored by the WEM Foundation and Synergy & Leadership Exchange for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student learning. His recognition comes in the Athletic Coach Award, which recognizes teachers who are exemplary coaches of athletic teams.

Goebel has been teaching and coaching for 17 years. He currently teaches fifth grade and is the head coach of the Mora High School cross country and track and field teams.

According to Principal Brent Nelson, “Chris Goebel cares more about developing his athletes into successful, well-rounded individuals than he cares about wins and losses. One example of this is how he starts each season. Instead of just requiring each student to write out a track goal or a cross country goal, he makes his athletes reflect on developing their character. They write a family goal, a school goal, and a personal goal. Goebel revisits these throughout the season to hold students accountable.”

The programs Goebel coaches has grown from 30 to 80 students participating. The boys’ cross country team has qualified for State Cross Country 12 straight years, and the girls’ team has qualified three times. During that time period, the boys have won three Class A State Championships and have produced multiple All-State Athletes.

Goebel recognizes the lessons running can teach his athletes, but is quick to point out their academics will take them further in life. Once a week his teams have a short practice and then the students gather in his classroom to do homework. He feels the homework nights are very beneficial to the program. It allows the junior high runners a chance to see what a student athlete looks like. They have the opportunity to watch high achieving students work.

Goebel shares, “Watching role models study and do homework is the best way to show how to value academics and it doesn’t matter how fast or slow in running you might be.”

“Coach Goebel cares deeply about each of his athletes, and wants nothing but to better their lives, and help them find the complete enjoyment that running can bring to them. Coach Goebel’s passion for coaching and teaching spills over and can’t help but infect the lives of those around him,” said a student.

[www.moraschools.org](http://www.moraschools.org)  
(320) 679-6200



In addition to the Teacher Achievement Award and the Athletic Coach Award, other educators are being honored with the Academic Challenge Coach Award (teachers who are exemplary coaches of student teams that participate and compete in academic challenges) and Ethics in Education Award (exemplary educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum).

Educators are first nominated for the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program by students, parents, colleagues or community members. Those who accept the nomination provide additional information for consideration by Synergy & Leadership

Exchange and a blue ribbon selection panel, which reviews and ranks the nominees. In addition to the six statewide honorees, additional educators have been selected as regional honorees for 2018. These honorees will be announced in May.

Synergy & Leadership Exchange (Synergy) is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering collaboration to advance the development of ethical citizens, providing educational resources, and celebrating achievement and best practices in Minnesota schools, businesses and communities. For more information on the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program and Synergy & Leadership Exchange, visit:

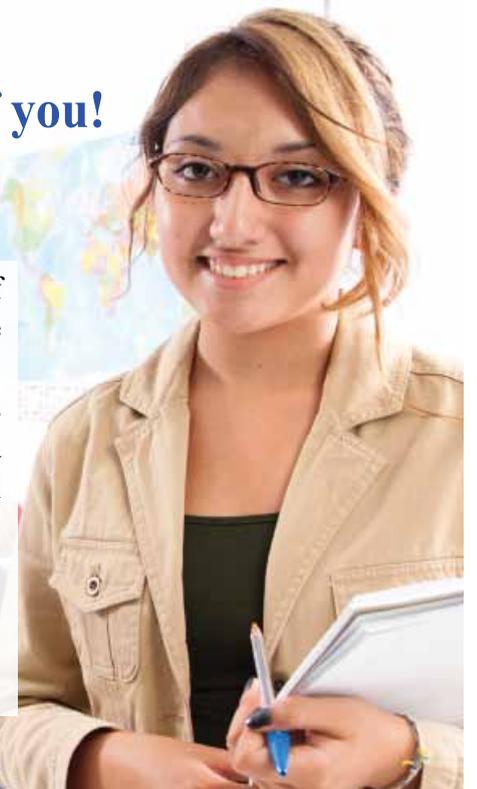
[www.synergyexchange.org](http://www.synergyexchange.org).

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Abdul Wright, '16 MA-Education, 2016 Minnesota Teacher of the Year

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