



Advanced Welding Company Empowers Good Students to be Excellent Employees



Patrick Tepoorten, Art Tobin, Sara Paul
North Branch Area Schools

There is no doubt that public high school education is changing, with more emphasis on Career and Technical Education. Teaching the skills students need to succeed in a workplace has become an important component of high schools across the state, but having the skills to work in a trade is only part of the equation. Students also need to learn what it means to be a good employee, be familiar with the measures put in place for their safety, navigate Human Resources departments, work with others, advocate for themselves, and more. At North Branch Area High School, the newly formed Advanced Welding Company (AWC) takes a unique approach to addressing a multitude of work-related issues while also teaching important skills necessary for a career in the trades. To accomplish this, AWC operates with an employer/employee dynamic as much or more than a teacher/student dynamic.

The uniqueness of AWC starts from the moment students enter the class. Rather than what you would expect to see in a high school classroom, AWC is taught not by a teacher in the traditional sense, but rather the school district's Director of Building and Grounds, Art Tobin. Tobin brings decades of experience in the trades to the position; he has worked with hundreds of employees over his career, and is schooled in a wide variety of trade skills, job supervision, project planning and execution,

site management, project budgeting, policy, and job site coordination, to name just a few.

"I like to think of the Advanced Welding Company as being the pin in the compass," said Tobin. "It gives students a 360-degree view of the careers they are considering so they can make decisions about their future with their eyes wide open."

To accomplish this, classes are structured to reflect real-world conditions on job sites. Students "punch" in and out of class as though they were employees rather than students. Once in class they are exposed not just to advanced skills such as TIG, MIG, and acetylene welding, brazing, and soldering, but also to quality control expectations, deadlines, work climate, safety requirements, inspections, new application training, and more. More experienced students are expected to act as "foremen," and assist students who are less

Continued on Page 6



Jefferson Elementary School Gardeners: The Heart of New Ulm in Action

The Heart of New Ulm Project

Throughout the community of New Ulm, the efforts of Hearts Beat Back: The Heart of New Ulm Project have helped plant the seeds for knowledge and resources about healthier eating. One such seed was literally planted in 2017, when Jefferson Elementary started its schoolyard garden.

The garden was the brainchild of approximately 20 third-grade students at Jefferson, who formed a garden club that met many times during lunch and recess to discuss and plan how to get a garden planted at school. The students asked Beth Sletta, an educator in the STEM program (science, technology, engineering and math) if she would help them get the garden started, and she became the unofficial volunteer garden advisor. Soon after, all the ingredients came together.

"Students wanted to do something to help the pollinators around the school, teachers wanted an outdoor learning space, and both groups wanted to grow healthy foods right on school property to teach students how to grow their own food and make healthy food choices," explained Sletta.

A True Sense of Ownership in the Garden

The students communicated with other teachers, parents and community partners, researched plants that would attract pollina-



tors, and studied vegetables to see which would grow best in the schoolyard garden. The students also helped fundraise for the garden by designing a Fresh Air Garden that won a national cash prize.

Visiting the garden weekly with or without their advisor present, the students feel ownership of the garden and are proud of their success. In addition to periodically meeting with the initial group of students, Sletta also meets with groups of 20-30 students from the Kids Connection latchkey program every Friday during the summer. More than 100 different kids from the program work in the garden over the summer and harvest any produce that is ready. (Prior to having their own school garden, students in the summer

Continued on Page 22

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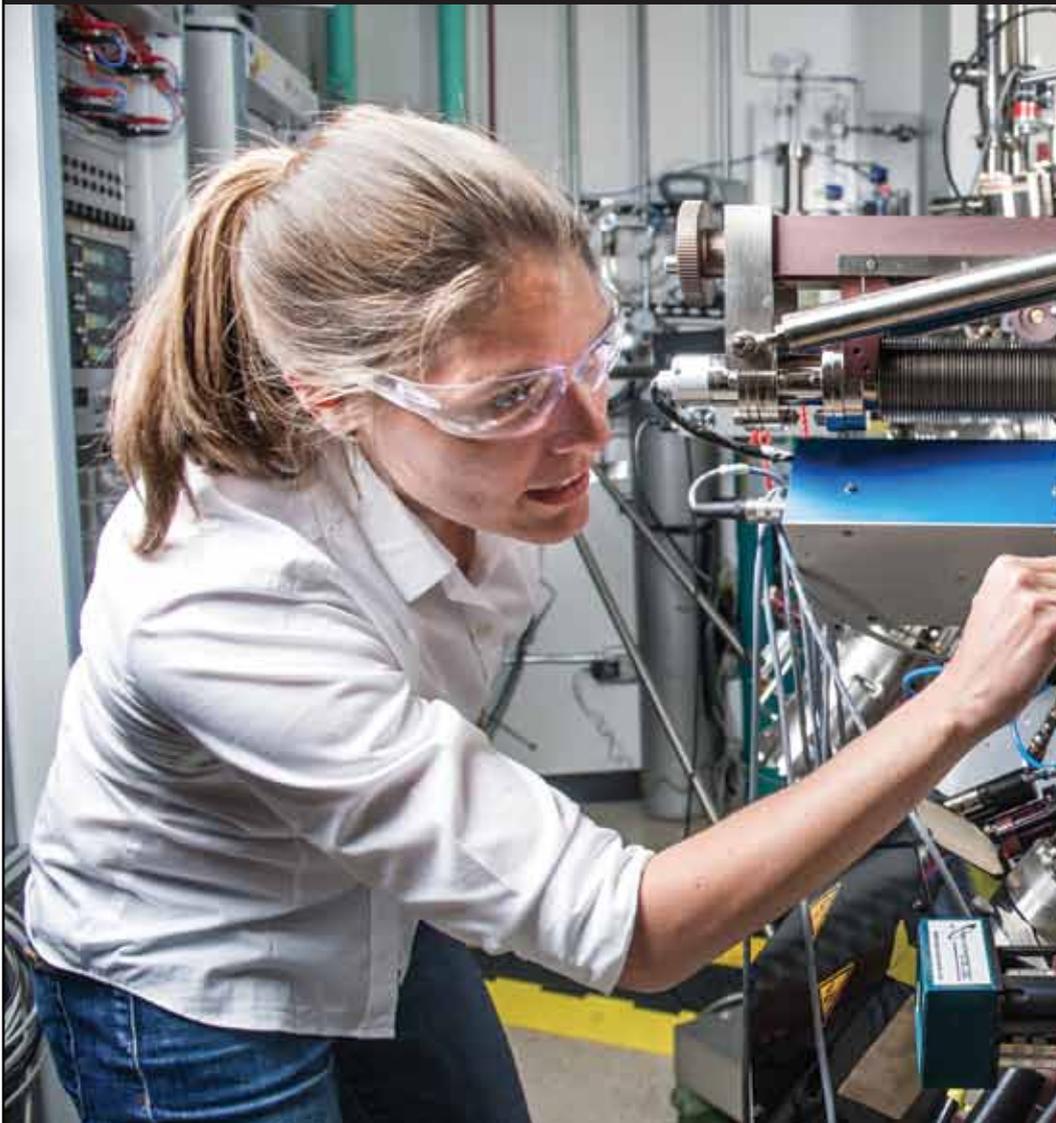
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Luke Adam is a mathematics teacher who also teaches the Spartan Angling class as a part of the Natural Resources Pathway.

"I have taught math for nearly 20 years and have always loved to fish," said Adam. "I have always wondered how I can integrate the two, as teaching students how to fish doesn't even sound like work! I don't have a degree in Natural Resources, but just a passion for the outdoors and teaching."

Spartan Angling is staying busy with projects this year, including learning how to build fishing rods and how to tie knots. Students are also beginning to learn about fish behaviors, biology and migratory patterns. The class is preparing for their first trip to Blue Lake where they will fish for panfish, as well as a trip to Lake of the Woods. Students will stay overnight at Border View Lodge in early March to fish for walleye and learn about running a resort.

Joe Gabardi is an industrial arts teacher at Nashwauk-Keewatin High School and teaches classes that are a part of the Manufacturing Pathway. He teaches Industrial Metals 1, Industrial Metals 2, Industrial Metals 3, Production Management, Women's Shop, as well as the Career Pathways capstone Manufacturing Career Internship Course.

"My father was an automotive and welding instructor for 33 years," Gabardi shared. "Growing up I always had an interest in hands-on work. Throughout my high school years, my knowledge and passion for the trades only grew. It was a perfect fit for my passions of industrial tech along with the enjoyment of helping others."

Gabardi said there is always exciting projects happening in the shop program. Currently, one of his classes is working on an electric conversion vehicle. "We are in the process of taking a 1984 Pontiac Fiero and converting it into an electric vehicle," Gabardi explained.

Furthermore, Gabardi is looking forward to beginning year three of the career internship program within the Manufacturing

Pathway. Beginning in the second semester of this school year, he will have 15 students from Nashwauk, Grand Rapids, and Greenway out working with industrial partners all throughout the local area.

"It has been a very successful program and continues to grow each year," Gabardi stated. "I can't thank all our business partners enough for their willingness to step up and welcome our students each year."

He extended his thanks to the manufacturing business partners for the 2022 school year.

"We are getting our future workforce exposed to many different opportunities across our region. Industry is looking for workers, and I have students looking for job possibilities," Gabardi said. "The career internship program is helping bridge that gap."

Braden Depaulis and Myles Nagles are both in their senior year at Nashwauk-Keewatin High School. The two have been taking classes in the Manufacturing Pathway since 9th grade. Both seniors shared that being a part of the Manufacturing Pathway has been helpful as they think of their plans past high school.

"It gives us a big idea on what we want to do and how you can do it," Nagler said. "Especially with the teachers we have, and the machines and the equipment we have. The possibilities are endless with them."

Nagler plans to attend a nearby community college next year to pursue a career in law enforcement. Depaulis also plans to go to college to be a part of the heating and cooling technician program.

"It gives you a big jump on life," Depau-

lis said. "It's just a good experience."

Both Nagler and Depaulis are currently in Gabardi's welding class. Earlier this year the class built a trailer and now they are working to build a raised grill with a seating area around it for the high school.

"It was a big learning curve for all of us to see what you go through to make something like that," said Nagler.

The two seniors complimented their teacher, Gabardi, for the work he has done with his classes.

Depaulis added, "especially all of the knowledge he has. He just passes that onto us to make us better and smarter."

Gabardi commented that the program is always looking to add more industry partners to the team and to contact him or Scott Patrow, director of Next Career Pathways, if they would like to get started.

Adam also shared his excitement as the Nashwauk-Keewatin school district voters approved a referendum this week which will invest \$47.7 million to build a new school and an attached community wellness center. The new school is set to be built near the O'Brien Reservoir which will open many doors for the Spartan Angling class.

"A class period could be actually going fishing for an hour! Great opportunities await! We are currently working with the wood and metal shop to construct a spear house that will be used for the class and can be placed on O'Brien," said Adam.

Another goal for Adam is to expand his program to other schools.

"I want to keep producing anglers who are passionate about the outdoors and are pursuing careers in Natural Resources," Adam stated. "I would love to expand this class to other Iron Range Schools to offer more opportunities."

Gabardi echoed this sentiment with his vision for the future of Next Career Pathways. He hopes to see schools within the program specializing in different pathways. He explained that each school could focus on one pathway in order to provide the best opportunities for students.

"Nashwauk could become the center of excellence for manufacturing and turn its focus more in the direction of manufacturing," Gabardi said. "As students build interest through the manufacturing pathway in their home school, then they could travel over to N-K for half days their junior and senior years, and really focus on perfecting that interest. This is something we could

accomplish fairly easily, and each school could participate and focus on specific areas."

Currently, each school offers multiple pathways for its students to be a part of, but focusing on one could potentially save money.

"We all know education can be expensive, especially in the Technology Education areas," Gabardi said. "By creating centers of excellence, we could focus equipment, training, and business exposures through one spot. It would be a win for both industry partners as well as the students in the pathway."

The possibilities seem to be endless for Next Career Pathways as schools and business partners all work together to give students an opportunity to find their passions.

"Next career pathways as a whole are offering students the ability to get exposure to different career areas of interest," Gabardi commented. "We can have students explore areas of interest and have a chance to see if it might be something they truly want to continue to explore. I see our program as an opportunity for students to find areas they are not interested in just as much as areas they are interested in."

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You can see the article at <https://nextpathways.com/creating-centers-of-excellence>

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MOMENTUM Program at Minnetonka High School Expands Opportunities for Students in the Trades



Minnetonka Public Schools

Minnetonka High School is often referred to as a 'school of opportunities,' able to support and challenge students to discover and pursue their passions while achieving personal excellence. The growing MOMENTUM Design and Skilled Trades program, launched in fall 2020, provides opportunities for students to explore the trades through pathways focused

on manufacturing, construction, architecture, engineering & design and engine & automotive careers.

The vision for MOMENTUM began as a reimagining of the high school's technical education department.

"As we dreamed about what MOMENTUM could become, we looked to the success of other signature programs at the high

school, such as VANTAGE and Minnetonka Research," shared Jeff Erickson, Minnetonka High School principal. VANTAGE is an advanced professional studies program that launched in 2013, and Minnetonka Research is an interdisciplinary research program that challenges students to pursue authentic, collaborative research projects based on their own curiosities and interests.

In Minnetonka High School's signature programs, students engage in real-world learning through experiences such as site visits, collaborative projects, mentorships and guest lectures from industry professionals.

"We saw the passion in our students to learn about the trades in an experiential way, and we saw the opportunity to partner with businesses and organizations in our community to provide authentic learning and mentoring as part of the courses. It's been amazing to see the excitement that students, staff and community members have brought to the table," said Erickson.

In the 2020–21 school year, 472 students took a class through MOMENTUM. From freshmen to seniors, the program's launch has inspired many students to take a technical education course for the first time. The number of freshmen taking such a course tripled, the number of sophomores doubled, the number of juniors tripled, and in total,

56 seniors took their first technical education course last year.

Spotlight on Manufacturing

The Manufacturing pathway, which is one of five pathways MOMENTUM offers, includes four courses: Metals I, II and III and Metal Sculpture. The Metal Sculpture course is an interdisciplinary offering, allowing students to complete part of the arts credit that is required for graduation. It is taught by an instructor from the art department.

In Metals I, class is run rotation-style. Small groups within each class take turns completing units on metal removal with lathes and mills, metal forming (including Sheet metal, casting and forging) and metal joining with gas and arc welding. "By the end of the semester in Metals I, students are well experienced in using most everything in the Metals classroom," said Dave Kitzmann, Metals instructor at Minnetonka High School. "In Metals II and III, students are ready to design and build their own projects using the CNC plasma cutter and MIG and TIG welders."

Guest presenters from nearby colleges and the ICATT Apprenticeship program meet with students in Metals courses to discuss opportunities for high paying and high

Continued on Page 12

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Continued from Page 1

skilled. At the end of the day, the hope is that students are learning just as much about how to thrive as an employee as they are about the skills they need for the workplace.

One of the reasons this approach is so effective is that NBAPS worked with industry partners to ensure students are learning on industry-standard equipment. With their help, the equipment these students learn on, including the welding gear, lathes, CNC machines, saws, and presses, are exactly what students would expect to find in private industry. Private industry is also very much a part of the AWC in an ongoing way; multiple welding companies have provided instructors already to assist students with some of the more refined skills, and guest speakers from the pipefitters union, steelworkers union, and other related industries are in the works — to provide students with a better picture of what to expect from jobs in a wide variety of industries.

The goal of the program is to help students become career-ready by the time they leave high school. "We need to shift away from the mentality of one-and-done decisions at the time of graduating from high school," said Superintendent Paul. By knowing the industries they are interested in, students can make informed career choices. Students have



access to opportunities through the relationships formed within their chosen industry.

"For me, the best part is seeing a light go on," said Tobin about his students' experience and the moment they find a skillset that appeals to them. "I'm helping students go from being good students to excellent employees."

Students Lake Mechtel and Logan Holcomb are excited about the opportunity to learn such a wide range of knowledge before embarking on a career path. "I appreciate the

knowledge Mr. Tobin has," said Mechtel, adding, "textbooks can only give you so much. To have someone with the knowledge who can help you correct mistakes is really valuable."

Holcomb, who hopes to be a welder after high school, is excited for the intern and career possibilities. "The knowledge I can use from this class is amazing," he said.

NBAPS' goal for the program is to continue growing the program and expanding the available opportunities for students to consider multiple on-ramps into their future, including opportunities right out of high school, with a two year degree or four year degree. With the AWC, students are learning and preparing for their futures — getting the experience and confidence they need to go from classroom to jobsite before ever leaving high school.

"We have a spirit of abundance as we approach alignment of our educational programming with workforce needs," said Supt. Sara Paul. "We are fortunate to have strong industry partners, skilled staff, and industry-standard equipment to provide new pathways to lucrative careers for students."

Word is getting out about this unique offering at NBAPS. The North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce is coming alongside to increase internship opportunities in



a program called Viking Bridge. One of our State Senators and a U.S. Representative toured the program recently. Said one of the program, "This should be a blueprint for what schools ought to be doing, not just in Minnesota but across the country."



B Bemidji Career Academies = Real-World Experiences

Brian Stefanich, Solway Elementary Principal
Bemidji Career Academies Director
Bemidji Area Schools

Our Youth Skills Training approved programs continue to help our students have meaningful paid internships at local businesses and industry partners. We currently have 70 business and industry partners in the Greater Bemidji area that financially sponsor our career academy program. Our Bemidji Career Academy was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant to award our career academy students \$1,000 scholarships to attend a Bemidji technical college following their high school graduation this spring.

Mechatronics and manufacturing courses through the Minnesota Innovation Initiative (MI2) program continue to be popular class choices, as we had 8 students enrolled this year, earning a total of 15 certificates. Mechatronics with MI2 has trained a host of Bemidji High School students since the Fall of 2015 and placed numerous students in jobs at our community manufacturing companies.

We have also placed 22 Bemidji Career Academy students in paid work internships with our partners since January 2021 in our Youth Skills Training (YST) paid internship program through the MN Department of Labor grant.

The Bemidji Career Academies were created in 2017 with the mission to build learn-

ing opportunities for our local businesses and industry partners to help prepare the next generation of employees and community leaders. In doing this, our vision is to create a pathway for every student at Bemidji High School to succeed and thrive in our greater Bemidji community. We wish to train our students and retain our talent thus strengthening our local workforce.

The Bemidji Career Academies program's goal is to equip students with the skills necessary to obtain high-skilled employment while staying in the community. Rather than sending students out of the community to attend college, perhaps never to return, the Bemidji Career Academies seeks to partner with local businesses, agencies and schools so that students can find an opportunity to earn a vocational certificate or diploma without leaving Bemidji. Through community collaboration and intentional coursework design, Bemidji Career Academies allow students the opportunity to thrive in today's workforce while staying in Bemidji and becoming productive income earners contributing to the economy of the Greater Bemidji area.

The uniqueness of the Bemidji Career Academies lies in the tremendous numbers of collaborating businesses and agencies that support the 15 existing career academies and 22 career pathways. Bemidji Career Academy students are given the opportunity to assess their

skills and talents as they pertain to the world of work, build skills transferable to the workplace by taking courses specific to their chosen Career Academy, access free college courses while in high school, and have the opportunity to participate with community businesses who provide invaluable "real world" workplace experience.

Students completing all academy requirements, earn a certificate of completion and a medallion to wear at graduation showing the hard work they have put in during their time at BHS!

The Bemidji Career Academies exist because of our hardworking community and our curious and excited students, and we are thankful for both. You can see a list of our academies below, with more information found on our Bemidji Career Academy website (bemidjicareeracademies.com), including over 70 community sponsors and partners that we have here in our own backyard!



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A Focus on the Manufacturing & Engineering Career Pathway at White Bear Lake Area Schools



Jenny Moore
Career Pathways Coordinator
White Bear Lake Area Schools

The Engineering & Manufacturing Career Pathway at White Bear Lake Area Schools (WBLAS) is thriving and continues to help students make informed decisions about their career choices, support teachers and staff as an additional resource in their classroom, and aligns educational opportunities with the local workforce needs of the NE Metro.

Unique to WBLAS Career Pathways, students can opt to take a variety of Career Pathway courses. Students who are learning and exploring the Engineering & Manufacturing career field can take Biomedical Engineering, Civil Engineering & Architecture (PLTW), Digital Electronics (PLTW), Introduction to Engineering Design (PLTW), Manufacturing & Applied Engineering I & II (college credit opportunity), Precision Machining I & II, and/or Principles of Engineering (PLTW). These courses are offered for students in grades 9–12 at both White Bear Lake Area High School (WBLAHS) — South and North Campuses.

Brand new this year, students in grades

10 through 12 who are committed to pursuing a career in the Engineering & Manufacturing career field, can now register for the specific Engineering & Manufacturing Career Pathway. Students who register will see the career pathway show up in their school schedule, but will not interfere with any other required or elective courses. WBL Career Pathways is a voluntary, self-select program for students who wish to take the next step in their future.

Benefits to registering for the Engineering & Manufacturing Career Pathway includes, but is not limited to, alumni support, career pathways coaching in addition to support from their assigned school counselor, employability skills workshops, and scholarship opportunities. Registered participants also get first dibs on National Manufacturing Month events, job shadows, industry recognized credentials like OSHA and CPT 4.0 through the Manufacturing Skills Standard Council (MSSC), paid internships, and job placement. During the fall 2021 semester, over 200 students are taking Engineering & Manufacturing Career Pathway Courses and over 50 students have taken the

additional step to registering for the Engineering & Manufacturing Career Pathway.

WBL Career Pathways is excited to offer MSSC Certification to our Engineering & Manufacturing Career Pathway students to become Certified Production Technicians (CPT). Students who complete the CPT 4.0 Certification Program can demonstrate “mastery of the foundational, core competencies of advanced manufacturing production at the entry-level to front-line supervisor through successful completion of the certification assessments” (MSSC, 2021). CTE Teacher, Joshua Dery adds that “MSSC testing helps our district align our curriculum to industry standards and offer concurrent enrollment options to our students. Industry standard tests are an important part of a CTE program.” Last year, WBL Career Pathways had 7 students complete the certification and this year over 60 students are eligible to get certified!

Also during the 2021–22 school year, WBL Career Pathways will be using the generous funds they received from the Gene Haas Foundation to create scholarships for graduating seniors committed to pursuing a career in Manufacturing, as well as, help purchase tools for graduates and even support the WBLAHS Robotics Team!

In addition to on-campus experiences, WBL Career Pathways is blessed by the support of their local community members. Industry partners continue to show up for WBLAHS students. Lunch & learns, paid internships, job site tours, scholarships, job shadows, and innovative job placement partnerships, prove that working with local industry partners is a huge component to the success of WBL Career Pathways.

WBL Career Pathways continues to offer paid opportunities in the Engineering & Manufacturing career field. One such example was the partnership with a U.S. based plastic services company. In an effort to address the workforce demand in their Assembling Department, the company created a 20-hour, part-time Assembler position for high school students. Not only does the job work around a student’s school schedule, it also provides a family sustaining wage, on-the-job training, and a quality resume builder for students interested in the wide world of Manufacturing & Engineering.

WBLAHS Senior, Tyler Thinesen said he loves working at this industry partner’s company. “I get to work inside the company

and see how products are made and how things work inside and out. After I leave the United States Army, I hope to one day own my own Manufacturing Company. This experience will help me reach my goals, learn new skills, and help me decide what route I want to go in Manufacturing.” To date, over 15 students have been hired and the number is growing.

Another great example is highlighting Noah, a WBLAHS Senior who participated in the paid Gen Z Connections internship this summer. Noah rotated through three companies. After completing the minimum hours, not only was Noah offered extra internship hours, but he also accepted a job with MME Group, Inc! Noah is one of many students who are choosing to take the next step in their career path in the Engineering & Manufacturing world. Noah and local employers continue to see the importance of collaborating, bringing work to life, and working together to shape the future.



At WBLAS, we want students to find their purpose, become productive citizens, and see why education matters. All students regardless of their academic ability or post-secondary plans are valued. WBL Career Pathways continues to collaborate with students, staff, and the local community to *work together to shape the future*. If you would like to learn more about WBL Career Pathways, you can visit their website at:

wblahs.isd624.org/academics/career-pathways

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Renovations at Detroit Lake High School Bolster Successful Manufacturing Program



From March through November of 2021, renovations were completed on some of the Tech-ed facilities of Detroit Lakes High School.

Work was done on the Metal Fabrication/Welding Lab, Finishing Room, CTE Computer Lab, Wood Shop, Building Trades Area, Small Engines Shop, Ag Growing Lab and Ag Classroom.

The Metal Fabrication/Welding Lab has 11 welding bays, a grinding room, a CNC plasma cutter, a manual plasma cutter, tube benders, metal saws, a CNC lathe, an ironworker, a hydraulic shear and various other machines. It's a lab where students can create just about anything related to metal.

Finally, there is a small business office between the two labs where students can conduct sales and business activities for the Laker Woods and Laker Metalworks businesses that are part of the curriculum for each area. Students complete sales, accounting, customer service and marketing activities in that space.

Many local businesses and organizations have assisted in the purchasing or donation of equipment in these areas. This has enabled us to offer our students up-to-date technology and equipment.

DLHS Exposing Students to Careers in Manufacturing

Joshua Omang, Principal

Vern Schnathorst, Work-Based Learning Coordinator

Detroit Lakes Schools

"You Can't Be 'It' Unless You See 'It'." Nashville Public Schools shared this catchy slogan with us on one of our district's visits

to learn more about their career academies. "It" refers to all of the different opportunities available to our students that they aren't aware of when they begin high school. How does Detroit Lakes High School make sure students see and know about "It"?

At DLHS, we feel it's our responsibility that a number of different things take place during our students' four years to ensure they know about the many different "Its." First, we help freshman students learn about their different interests and aptitudes. We want them to determine what they like and, of equal importance, where do they excel? The next step is to expose them to all these different "It" opportunities that are high skill, high wage and high demand. We expose them to many different opportunities in our five pathways. Our pathways were determined by utilizing DEED data, a community business survey and a student interest survey. Finally, we offer them different work-based learning opportunities at each grade level that build on each other. We start with very broad-based exploration activities during their freshman year and progress toward more focused and defined activities throughout their senior year. This is all based off the students' area of interest and pathway they've selected. We feel by offering these experiences to all of our students, they will leave DLHS with a much better idea of what "It" means for them and how they can most effectively get there.

DLHS began the fourth and final year of its academy implementation process this fall. A large part of the implementation this year is having all seniors complete a semester-long internship or Vantage project (pre-professional studies). Student experiences range from working with professionals in the community to running and completing the work for new, student-run businesses.

One of our pathways is Production. A large component of the Production pathway is our manufacturing curriculum. Manufacturing is a large part of our community's business sector with several large and successful businesses located in Detroit Lakes. These businesses offer great career opportunities with the chance for upward mobility for students that are interested in those occupations. To assist our students and regional manufacturing sector, DLHS offers students some in-depth and quality work-based learning experiences.

DLHS received a Youth Skills Training grant in 2020. One of the areas of focus in the grant is Advanced Manufacturing. During the last three semesters, we have had three DLHS students (ages 16-18) complete paid internships at BTM Manufacturing. BTM is one of the largest custom metal manufacturing businesses in the United States. The students have had internships in welding, tool & die, quality control, engineering and maintenance. Interns spend three to four periods of their day working in a paid internship learning and working in their area of interest. At the end of the semester, students create and deliver a final presentation to BTM management and employees, school district officials and parents summarizing their experience. Some of the students have continued with BTM in part-time jobs during the year and full-time employment in the summer.

In addition, we have done collaborative projects with BTM Manufacturing this year. The students welded tool carts for their facility in Georgia using a jig provided by BTM and assembled the carts after welding them together. They have also created various other projects for BTM and individuals.

DLHS has also had students that are 18 years old complete paid and unpaid experiences with other manufacturing and trade businesses in the community to explore those occupations as possible future careers. Our goal is to market as many of these opportunities to students as possible before they graduate. We also try to create partnership activities with as many businesses as possible to provide the opportunity for the business and students to develop a relationship. These activities include guest speakers, field trips, classroom demonstration/work activities and one-day job shadows.

Another curricular area we have started

this year is the creation of student-run businesses. One of the student-run businesses is Laker Manufacturing. This business has three areas of focus based on the needs and opportunities in our region's business sector: metal fabrication, wood working/construction and clothing production. Students have been tasked with the following business formation activities: goal setting, creating action plans, identifying their target market, surveying potential customers, identifying consumer needs and wants, creating catalog products, cost analysis, accounting set-up, marketing activities, establishing business relationships, creating sales procedures and scheduling production activities. Students are allowed to choose their role in the student-run businesses. These roles range from accountant to production manager. Over the course of the semester, students will determine their responsibilities through self-directed learning, accessing business mentors and getting periodic direction from their instructors. The business decisions and production activities will primarily be determined by the students, and it will be their



responsibility to make sure the tasks are completed. Our goal is to create students that are problems solvers, self-directed learners and creative thinkers.

Providing these career exploration and work-based learning activities in manufacturing will assist our students in seeing and doing "It." With a consistent effort over the next few years, this should provide many of our students with great opportunities in manufacturing and assist our local businesses with their workforce needs.



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Jacket Manufacturing at Perham High School



Perham-Dent Public Schools

Jacket Manufacturing is a student-run business that is run through Perham High School. Utilizing the tools provided by the High School Career Tech -Ed Center, Jacket Manufacturing started in the fall of 2018. The business was started from the ground up. Students in the class worked together in making a name, logo, business plan, and business projects. This class was started to offer students experience in an atmosphere related to an actual career.

One thing we were very fortunate about was coming into a brand-new High School with all new tools. The new tools are computerized machines that are similar to other computerized machines that businesses use every day in manufacturing products. Tools used include the CNC Metal Mills, CNC Wood Mill, CNC Plasma Cutter, CNC Router, CNC Lathe, Welders, Aluminum Welder, and many other machines.

A key factor of Jacket Manufacturing is that it provides students not only with the hands-on skills of manufacturing careers like running machines, using an up-to-date computer software in order to manufacture products, it also teaches soft skills involved with a career like learning communication skills in a work environment.

What makes Jacket Manufacturing work so well, is all the support we receive from the community. Local businesses such as BT&D and others have joined together to better educate students in the field of manufacturing and other skills involved in becoming a good employee. These businesses have provided Jacket Manufacturing with material, business help, presentations, and knowledge that one could only receive from successful, experienced people in the manufacturing field.

perhamschools.org



Over the last three years people have been trying to find a sense of normalcy amongst our crazy lives. Things are returning, very slowly, back to the way the world was before it shut down. Jacket Manufacturing is working on that as well. Believe me when I say that we have had a strange year indeed.

Last year, our school decided to do hybrid learning up until the end of November when they then decided to go fully online. Obviously with shop classes you would have to come in because otherwise you would not have any kinds of those classes. Much of the time

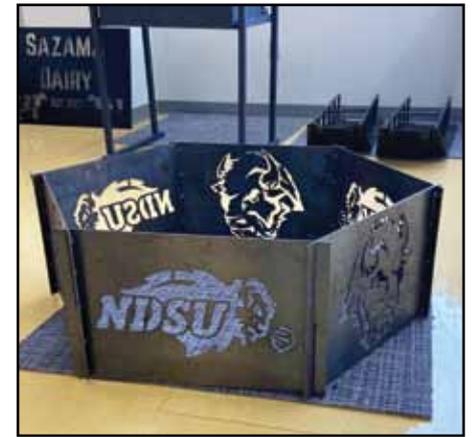


we would get small jobs to do because there weren't many of us there.

Now this year with the school reopened and no hybrid learning we are back to our full class size, which for Jacket Manufacturing is about 17 kids. We had about 5-6 seniors who graduated last year and this year we have recruited 8-9 new kids, most of which are sophomores. Normally they wait to offer the class to juniors and seniors but quite a few of them really wanted to join so they were allowed in. Everyone is coming up with new ideas and new ways to sell our products to others. They are doing a great job of it.

At the beginning of this school year, we thought that we would have more orders, so we had waited a bit longer than we probably should have before advertising. Around Halloween, we started making little magnetic wooden ornaments for the holidays, and those went very quickly. We did the same for Thanksgiving and then again for Christmas. During the months of December and January, we became very busy with an assortment of products. Mid-February, we started mass producing wood duck boxes and we sold 33 of those. Now we just sent out an advertisement for selling wood lawn chairs for this summer. So, as you can see, we are doing very well this school year.

We did not reach our last year's goal of getting a booster club to pay former students,



and to have the people who are here now get paid for their work. We did set up an initial meeting with our sponsors to figure that out at the beginning of the year, but it didn't end up working out. Eventually we will continue to try and pursue that, but it just was too much to work on this year and everyone was just trying to find that normalcy that we once had.

This program is a great benefit to schools and to its students. It promotes creativity and it offers different positions for kids to try. Just like most of the world, Jacket Manufacturing is finding its feet and continuing on.

Olivia Rosenthal

Student/Member of Jacket Manufacturing

MOMENTUM Program at Minnetonka High School

Continued from Page 6

demand jobs in the manufacturing field. Students also visit job sites and training facilities periodically throughout their courses to gain real world insights and experiences.

In addition to MOMENTUM courses, students interested in the Manufacturing pathway are encouraged to further their learning through extracurricular activities such as the Robotics Team and the Supermileage Challenge, a fuel economy competition hosted by the Minnesota Technology and Engineering Educators Association each spring. Competing students and clubs build a one-person, fuel-efficient vehicle powered by a single cylinder, four-stroke cycle engine. In 2021, the MHS Supermileage Team received the award for state runner-up in the modified class. Its car got 313 miles per gallon while competing at the state contest.

New Classroom Space to Enhance Opportunities

The MOMENTUM program will have new, expanded program space beginning in the spring semester of 2022. A 10,300-square-foot addition to the High School's athletic center will house a four-car automotive shop for students to utilize in automotive mainte-

nance courses, and flexible-use maker spaces will provide dedicated classrooms for other MOMENTUM opportunities.

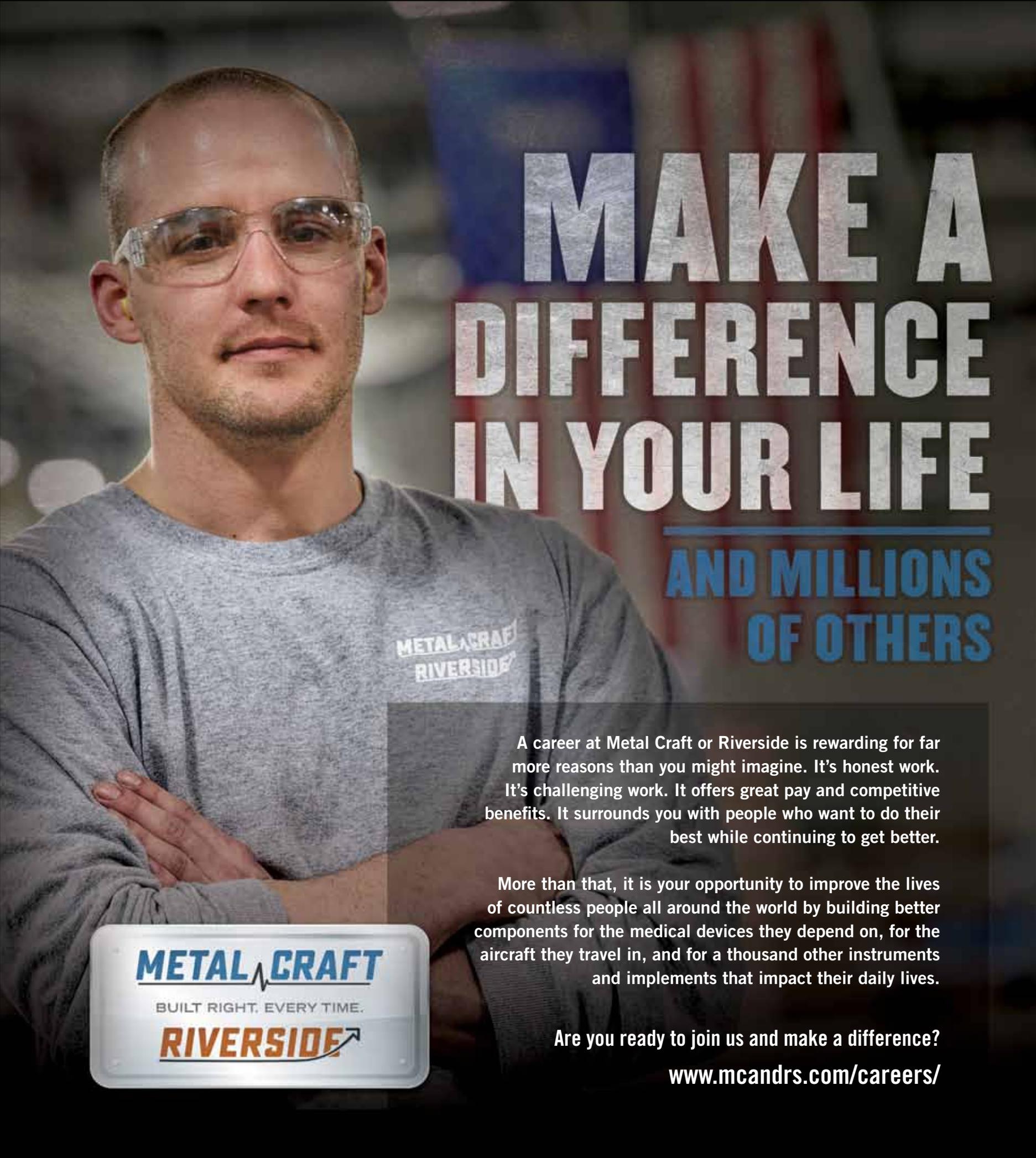
"We know that a space a class uses can encourage how learning happens, how engagement happens and how students collaborate," said Erickson. "A dedicated facility for the skilled trades will enhance the opportunities we can offer at MHS, so we can truly support every student toward achieving personal success."

The construction of an additional learning space—this time a new, freestanding building that will include classrooms for both MOMENTUM and VANTAGE—was recently approved by the Minnetonka School Board. Though it is still in the planning stages and there are additional approvals outside of District leadership that are needed before moving forward with bids, the goal is for the building to be ready for classes in the fall of 2023.

For more about MOMENTUM, visit www.minnetonkaschools.org/MOMENTUM

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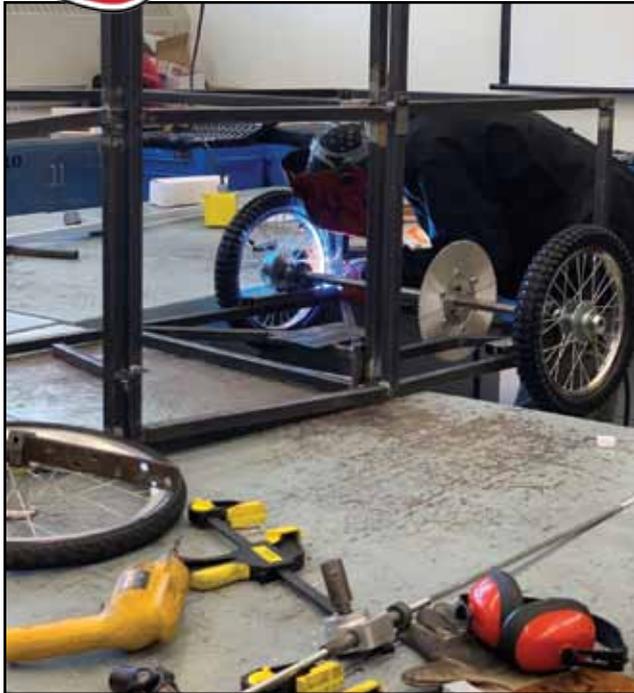
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Technology Education at Centennial High School



Andy Angell, Technology Education Teacher
Centennial High School

One of the goals of the Centennial School District's strategic plan is to expand programming to address the vocational, college prep, and remedial needs of each student. At Cen-

ennial High School, the need to prepare students to enter into career and technical fields has taken a top priority. With the many advancements in manufacturing, students that choose this path are likely to be working in top-notch facilities with great benefits and pay upon high school graduation. Many employers are looking for students with a strong desire to work, and with some added knowledge of manufacturing processes, this makes them a very strong candidate. Over the past six years at Centennial, the Technology Education department has responded to the need of preparing students and have implemented a series

of PLTW classes including Introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, Civil Engineering, and most recently, Computer Integrated Manufacturing.

Other courses that have evolved in preparing students for the skilled workforce

include Small Engines, Robotics and welding. With the addition of new courses at Centennial we have looked to industry to purchase equipment that would allow a seamless transition for students from high school to work. Centennial was able to purchase a HAAS Mini Mill six years ago which has allowed students from Computer Integrated Manufacturing classes to create their own parts using CAD software, write toolpaths, set up and machine them. The robotics team has also utilized the CNC mill to create custom parts. In addition, the Centennial super mileage team, also part of Centennial High Schools Small Engines and Welding class, used the CNC mill to machine custom parts for their car. Some parts included an F1-style steering wheel, brackets, and custom suspension components. The HAAS mini mill purchase was made possible through a \$15,000 Perkins grant and additional school district funding.

A fairly recent addition to Centennial High Schools tech. ed. program is welding. Over the summer of 2019 Centennial was able to purchase welding booths and in the 19-20 school year, students are learning how to cut, fabricate, and weld. There is a very high demand for people to enter into welding careers. Centennial has begun developing partnerships with local industry to support the program. Support from industry includes a

donation of 5 new Mig welding guns.

Student enrollment grew from 89 students in 20–21 to 200 students in 21–22. Over 60 students enrolled in Small Engines and Robotics 1 earned their OSHA 10 General Industry safety certification in the fall of 2020. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, students in small engines and robotics have still completed hands-on welding projects. Students have also assisted in completing supermileage cars for the MTEEA supermileage challenge.

Centennial has been awarded \$11,000 in grants from the Gene Haas Foundation to support students entering careers in manufacturing. Last spring, three student scholarships totaling \$2,500 for students entering technical education post-secondary in machine tool technology or in engineering with a manufacturing emphasis. Centennial also has a goal to continue working to expand and strengthen its partnerships with local manufacturing industries to facilitate internships and job placement for students.

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Educating and Recruiting a Younger Workforce in Manufacturing



Amy Lord, CTE Coordinator
ISD 728 — Elk River, Otsego, Rogers and
Zimmerman

Independent School District (ISD) 728 serves Elk River, Otsego, Rogers and Zimmerman communities as the 8th largest school district in Minnesota. The communities in this area are composed of many manufacturing businesses. Labor shortages are an issue in all industries at this time, but manufacturing has been working to build their pipeline for several years as they saw the baby boomers retiring

and had little interest from the younger generations. Local manufacturers reached out to the high schools to discuss a partnership to educate teachers and students about career options as manufacturing has high tech, high skills careers that provide good wages.

The ISD 728 developed classes based on industry standards and offers 2 years of Computer Aided Engineering & Design classes to introduce students to drafting and design along with 1 year of Welding Fabrication and up to 3 years of Design, Engineering & Manufacturing Courses at the high school level. The trade and industry instructors are amazing and very passionate about what they are teaching their students to ensure they have the skills to help them excel in post-secondary education or the workforce. In these classes, students are learning about the manufacturing industry as a whole, safety on the job, blueprint reading, technical skills, operation of industry standard tools and equipment, quality control and inspection and employability skills. They invite local employers in as guest speakers and offer tours.

In the 2018-19 school year ISD 728 added CTE Internships as the school board and administrators are committed to supporting and funding strong CTE programs. After completing related CTE courses, like listed above, students can register for the CTE internship to provide

hands-on experience in local manufacturing businesses. The changes in legislation to allow "student learners" ages 16 and 17-year-olds to work in manufacturing in partnership with schools and the Department of Labor and Industry created a new opportunity for students and employers. ISD 728 hosts paid internships with over 20 local manufacturing employers in our communities. Some interns have chosen to continue employment after graduation, while furthering their education or pursuing their dreams. Some interns have even made the transition from trainee to trainer in their career path.

ISD 728 is committed to helping all students explore and learn about a variety of career paths. To support the manufacturing pathway, ISD 728 has been awarded a \$100,000 YST Grant, \$10,000 Gene Haas Scholarships, received donations from local employers to purchase equipment, hosted Employer Manufacturing Breakfast, Chamber Sponsored Cool Jobs Tour and even started a small partnership with the local nursery to sell fabricated signs



Mr. Opsahl at Zimmerman High School preparing equipment for students to create products for Nelson's Nursery.

to support the welding program at Zimmerman High School. ISD 728 encourages innovation and new partnerships to educate, inspire and empower our diverse learners, to shape their futures, to accomplish their dreams and to contribute positively to our local and global community.

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The Academy for Sciences & Agriculture



in conjunction with Minnesota Ag in the Classroom. The 7–12 grade curriculum includes developing leadership skills and learning about career opportunities in five areas of AgriScience, including: Engineering; Animal Science; Plant Science; Environmental Science; and Food Science. AFSA K–12 staff are all responsible for growing students' agricultural literacy by integrating agriculture topics into all classes and experiences.

Student's opportunities don't stop at the classroom door. They are exposed to a wide variety of content areas and unique experiences within hands-on and practical learning applications that go above and beyond a typical classroom setting. With our own buses available to us, students K–12 have weekly field trip opportunities. This may be

to a park to explore the woods or to a coffee company to learn about fair trade. The high school's rooftop garden boasts raised bed planters built by AFSA's construction classes. The school's landscaping is done by the Landscaping class, and our Floriculture class makes the boutonnières and centerpieces for special events. AFSA students take ownership of their school and design new clubs, activities, and propose school-wide changes.

Community is a big part of the AFSA K–12 culture. The school emphasizes family

involvement, community support, and partnerships with agribusiness and educational organizations.

Each school year we hold two major fundraisers, our annual fruit sales and our spring plant sale. Plants for the sale are grown by our students in our greenhouse. Along with the plant sale comes the planting of the school's giving garden. Produce from the garden is donated to local food shelves. Over the summer months the school participates in many local events. These events are a great way to help us bring science and agriculture to the community, AFSA style. Our Science and Ag on the Go activities are highlighted at a variety of events in our surrounding communities throughout the summer. AFSA's FFA officer team and student volunteers share their appreciation and knowledge of science and ag with the young families attending the events. Twice a year the student body goes out into the community to volunteer and help local agriculture related businesses with a variety of projects. Our Farm and Community Service Days not only give our students service experience but hands-on agricultural experience as well. Students help maintain city parks and rain gardens, prepare blueberry fields for the winter/summer, plant, harvest, and package fresh produce. Helping in the community helps build the family environment AFSA is known for.

Agriculture opportunities for students continue with AFSA's FFA affiliation. All students in grades 7–12 are members of the local, state, and national FFA Organization making AFSA the largest FFA Chapter in Minnesota. The partnership with the FFA allows the school to provide additional opportunities such as CDE's (Career Development Events), SAE's (Supervised Agricultural Experiences), and the AgriScience fair. AFSA's FFA Alumni coordinates a Potato Hug each fall which not only serves as a fundraiser, but it is primarily a chance for students to sell wares that they have produced during their SAE. Students have a chance to truly experience being an entrepreneur.

Agriculture is the foundation of everything AFSA. From the youngest grades to our graduates AFSA K–12 is bringing agriculture to urban and suburban communities. We are always looking for volunteers to be Science Fair Judges, Career Day Speakers and more. Don't miss our annual plant sale coming up



Stephanie Forliti
Marketing and Communications
AFSA K–12

Whether students are working on their science fair project, planting in the greenhouse or heading out to help the community for Farm and Community Service Day, agriculture is everywhere and it is the heart of AFSA K–12. Beginning in the younger grades, agriculture studies focus on local agriculture, environmental stewardship, agriculture consumerism, and human impact. Many lessons are taught



May 5–7, 2022. Check our website for more information about AFSA K–12 at www.afsa-highschool.com or contact our Executive Director, Becky Meyer at bmeyer@afsahighschool.com.

The Academy for Sciences & Agriculture (AFSA) engages learners in academically rigorous, student-centered learning experiences and leadership opportunities within a science and agricultural context. AFSA brings agricultural literacy to urban and suburban populations.

This K–12 public charter school was founded by the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council (MAELC) in 2001. AFSA began as a 9th–12th grade high school with 41 students. Currently over 425 students are enrolled and the school will grow to about 600 students over the next three years. AFSA's locations, in Vadnais Heights and Little Canada, allow inclusion of students from all north/east Twin Cities areas. Currently students from 19 different school districts attend AFSA.

AFSA K–12 prepares students to be wise consumers, savvy decision makers, and successful, career-oriented lifelong learners. The unique curriculum with hands-on and experiential learning drives the success of the students through high school and beyond.





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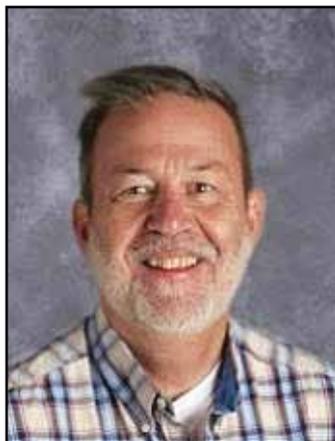


UMN AECM



Minnesota's Outstanding Middle/Secondary Agriculture Education Program Congratulations!

Nathan Thompson has been a High School Agriculture Instructor and FFA Advisor in Minnesota for the past 31 years. He currently teaches at Edgerton Public Schools. His program has been named the Outstanding Middle/Secondary Ag. Ed. Program by the Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators (MAAE).



By Nathan Thompson

Edgerton Public Schools, District 581 is located in the Southeast corner of Pipestone County in the town of Edgerton with its population of 1244 residents. Production

based agriculture is our leading employer and is predominantly made up of the family farm. Agribusiness is also vital to our school district. The agriculture education program of Edgerton Public Schools depends greatly upon and reflects a thriving and progressive agricultural community.

The Edgerton Agricultural Education Mission is to create career ready students who are passionate about the opportunities that agriculture will provide. It is important that students understand where their "Basic Essentials" for life come from and how it impacts everyone daily. Furthermore, how each of my students can positively play a role in telling the "story" about agriculture.

In our program, I have three beliefs that I follow with my teaching philosophy:

1st — Challenge the students to apply their knowledge in a "hands on" format that is rigorous and age appropriate since our program is 7th-12th.

2nd — Make the classroom a friendly, positive and exciting place to learn for everyone that is involved with the curriculum, k-12.

3rd — Make sure to involve the community in the classroom and the agriculture education program.



I have recognized a long time ago that I cannot be or even come close to being an expert in all the skills/areas of Agriculture. I utilize my community and volunteers a lot as coaches for FFA contests, guest speakers, chaperones and have a strong Advisory Board to "bounce" ideas off and get assistance with instructional ideas.

I have found over my career, that I have needed to allow the mission of the program as well as myself professionally to "evolve" as times are changing and agriculture is too.

When I first arrived in 2016, the Edgerton School District had absolutely no Agricultural Education Department. The community knew very little about what an Agricultural Education Program looked like. Let alone what a FFA Chapter was or how it would enrich and deepen an agriculture students understanding of agricultural concepts. District 581 did however have a 40' x 60' shop facility that had housed a part-time woods instructor for the previous five years that had the potential for growth. This facility is what the school board, school administration, community and I began to build our Agricultural Education Department around.

In the 2016-2017 school year, our first class offerings were: Welding and Fabrication, Farm and Residential Wiring, Animal Science, Agriculture Business Management, Small Engines, Agriculture Structures and leadership for our Junior and Senior students. Introduction to Agriculture 1 and 2 for our freshmen and sophomores. Plus 3 hexes of Exploring Agriculture 7, plus three hexes of Exploring Agriculture 8 for our 8th graders. Hexes are 6-week long courses designed to expose all our junior high students to some of the "basic" units we cover in our High School curriculum. Because of our initial facility being in a shop, students are exposed to 2 weeks of shop skills such as measuring, tool identification, welding

and woodworking that are age appropriate. We utilize open areas in the shop and the school's courtyard for our two weeks of plant sciences including Hydroponics. Our high School curriculum and classes are all 18-week long semester classes.

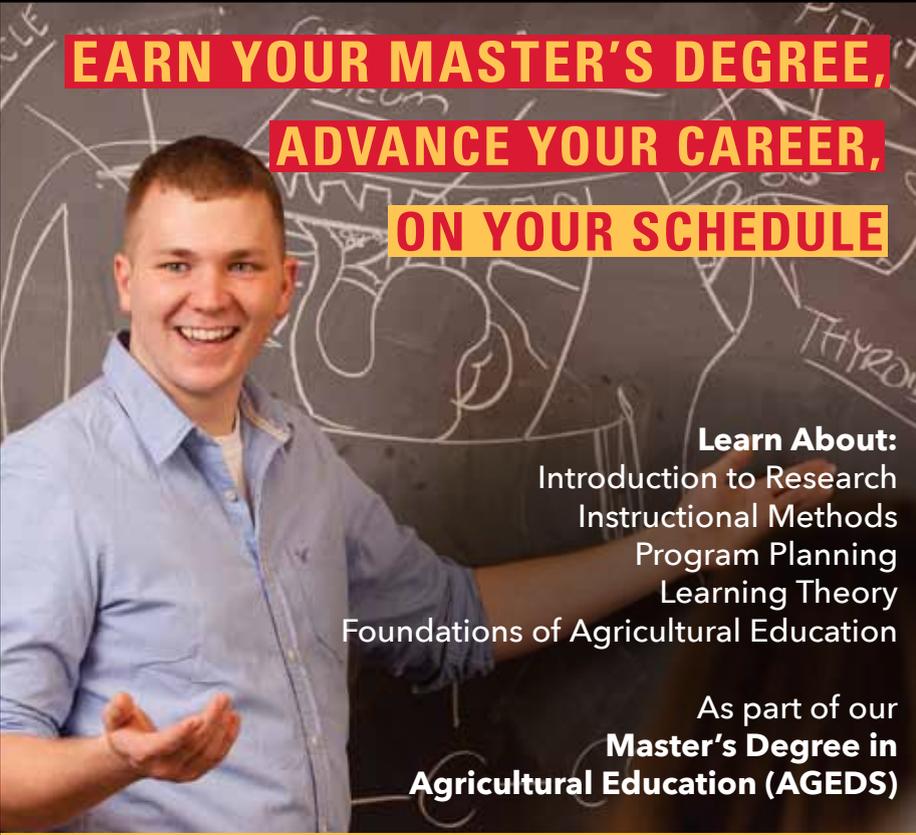
The 2017-2018 school year we expanded by adding the following courses to our department: On-The-Job Training/Work Readiness, Wildlife Management for our Juniors and Seniors.

We have continued to expand the curriculum over the years to include Wood Techniques (2019-2020) and this year, Horticulture/Landscape design. Edgerton students are able to earn an "Art" and "Economics" credit toward graduation in these classes now. We follow the state standards in art and economics as guidelines. These expansions to our curriculum have continued to grow our program numbers to 17 semester classes offered on an "every other year" rotation.

Facilities

- In 2017, we expanded our department facility to include a 10-acre school farm. Students in all the Introductory Ag. classes plus the Agricultural Business management class and our Summer Agricultural Education Program utilize this laboratory to learn grain marketing strategies and are introduced to variety of plant science skills. 200 plus students have gained skills utilizing the land for agronomy activities and developing a variety of plant science skills on what is now called the Edgerton FFA School Farm. The school farm has also helped the FFA Chapter financially as it's our largest fundraiser assisting FFA members attend many functions.

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Elizabeth Johnson, Tracy Area High School Educator named MAAE Outstanding Early Career Teacher of the Year

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Tracy Area Public Schools

Tracy is a small town in southern Minnesota that if you blink, you might just miss it driving down the road. It is a small tight knit community of around 2,300 people but is a huge agricultural community that welcomes anyone into town with open arms.

Tracy Area high school has students from three different counties: Lyon, Murray, and Redwood. There is one full-time Agriculture teacher, offering over 33 different classes on a yearly rotation.

Elizabeth has been teaching in Tracy for four years and has worked on reviving the Agriculture Program. When she started teaching in Tracy, a school board member and the president of the Tracy FFA Alumni drove her around to all of the businesses to meet the owners. It was remarkable to be able to start making connections to businesses from the beginning. Elizabeth has since been able to have several guest speakers, materials donated, ordered materials, events sponsored, and so much more through those connections.

Elizabeth has formed many partnerships that are able to help her be more successful in the classroom as well as helping promote the FFA.

"I want to be able to build the program to be able to give Tracy members as many opportunities as I can." – Elizabeth

The Agriculture Program at Tracy High School

The Ag Program at Tracy includes a greenhouse where students can experience starting plants and taking care of them. There is also a garden that is cared for over the summer months with all of the produce being

donated to the school for school lunches.

Elizabeth believes it is important to make sure students have access to equipment that is used in the industry. She has strived to improve all aspects of the agriculture department over the course of the last few years. She has received grants/ donations over the last four years totaling over \$60,000.

One of the biggest improvements that Elizabeth has done is updating the welding shop. It is now one of the most current welding shops in the area. She was also able to purchase an iron worker that cuts her classroom preparation time in half. The shop went from four welding booths to seven. Elizabeth's classroom numbers have also dramatically increased from six students in welding three years ago, to 39 students in welding this year.

Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE)

SAEs play an important role in Elizabeth's classroom. All students that take Ag classes are required to put in 15 hours per course outside of the classroom. She has seen many students start a SAE and it becomes a passion that they have and go on to major in it in college to continue to pursue their passions.

Summer SAE Visits

Learning doesn't just happen within Elizabeth's classroom it also happens outside of the classroom. During the summer, she makes sure to visit all the FFA members that have SAE projects. During the visit, she takes pictures as well as making sure that they are taking accurate records. She also spends time with students in the winter working on State Degree applications as well as proficiency applications based on their SAEs. In her first year of teaching, she was able to get one student to fill out a proficiency application which placed third in the state. This year, she had students complete twenty four proficiency applications, nine state degrees and one American degree application. Also six of the 24 proficiency students placed first at regions and eight more placed second. Seven of her students have also placed in the top three at the state level this coming spring. Elizabeth has also had four national proficiency finalists in her seven years of teaching.

Community service is also a huge part of the Tracy Area FFA program. Some of these activities have included: sewing masks,

Continued on Page 22



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Minnesota's Outstanding Middle/Secondary Agriculture Education Program

Continued from Page 19

- A recent partnership is bearing fruit. In the spring of 2021, working with our school board and 45 area businesses, construction began on the Edgerton Agriscience lab. This is a "State of the Art" 18' x 36' Greenhouse with an attached 24' x 24' Head house/Classroom. This cooperative effort yielded over \$50,000 plus in donations with four businesses are providing the "In Kind" support for the concrete, earth work and electrical. This facility will provide more diversification in our curriculum and a classroom for our department.
- We currently have over 3000 plugs planted and growing!
- Each year our members assist with the town celebration called "Dutch Fest". Approximately Fifteen members are busy helping with washing and hanging sponsors banners for this event. These members also plan and run the "mutton busting" event which is at intermission of the Bull riding. They provide trophies and T-Shirts to each of the approximate 15 young "Mutton Busters" drawn annually. Proceeds raised goes to support Camp True Friends, Civic projects like our picnic table refurbishing, and City Park Improvement projects. During the town celebration members also play in the "Marching" band and create and ride on Floats.
- The FFA membership also provides the "petting Zoo" for the "Fall" town celebration called Rock River Pumpkin Festival.
- Another 10 members annually work with the Pipestone County Farm Bureau to assist with the "Farmers Share Breakfast", serving meals prior to school during National Agriculture Day. This breakfast serves approximately 700 Pipestone County residents.
- Our Chapter members hold an Annual Corn Drive for Camp True Friends, our local FFA Support Scholarship program, and the Angel Tree. Not only does this continue to strengthen the speaking and leadership skills in our members that are organizing and conduct this event annually. The proceeds have raised over \$6,000 for the camp and provided over \$2,000 in college scholarships while providing gloves, hats, coats and snow pants for over 50 plus disadvantaged students in our district.

FFA membership and district 581. We now have several Alumni members who serve as coaches or provide facilities to train our dairy, meats, horse and livestock judging teams. I'm proud to say that this partnership with these teams has allowed the students/ FFA members to compete well enough to qualify for state the past three years.

Edgerton Agriculture Education students and our FFA members have continued to grow as young leaders within our chapter, community, region and state over our first inaugural years. With each year, they are pushing themselves to attend more trainings and strive to become better as individuals and as a team member while experiencing new things.

"Mr. Thompson exhibits his passion by the way he conducts himself with such poise and optimism."

Brian Gilbertson, Edgerton Principal

Community Service

- Locally our chapter has been extremely active and are awesome at providing community service too.
- Annually, 20 members assist daily during the week of our county fair. They're busy educating the fairgoers about animal welfare topics as part of the Chapter Barnyard and announcing the FFA livestock and horse shows results.

FFA membership individual accomplishments

- 1 American Degree & 1 in 2022
- 5 State Degrees & 2 in 2022
- 6 State Proficiencies of which 3 are in the Top 3 with 1 state winner

The Edgerton Agriculture Department and FFA Chapter would not be where it is today without the support of many individuals and supportive groups. Since I arrived in 2016, we/I have been working hard at "fostering" partnerships that have been and are currently benefiting the students,

edgertonpublic.com



Elizabeth Johnson, Tracy Area High School

Continued from Page 21

making tie blankets to donate, farm safety day, hosting benefits for families, serving meals to different organizations, and so much more.

"When growing up, I remember asking myself, and sometimes the teacher, 'How is this important to me and why do I need to learn this?' From my experiences in high school, I realized that it is very important to tell and show students that what I am teaching that day in class relates to something that they will use in the future." — Elizabeth

Teaching in Africa through Helping Hands Organization

Not only have I been able to use my agricultural education skills here in Minnesota at a high school level, but I was also had the opportunity to share my skills with other students in Africa during the summer of 2019. I went to South Africa in June for three and a half weeks where I was able to teach in schools about woodworking, electricity, vegetable production, math, and so much more. I taught in two separate schools for the three weeks that I was there. Each section that I taught had 30-40 students in it as well as several teachers wanting to learn the exact same thing. Each school was able to discuss what they would like built out of wood for

their school so the students could learn while making them. The students that were able to participate in these classes gained valuable shop skills that they may not have otherwise been able to learn. I started with teaching the basics like how to use a screwdriver, cut wood with a saw, and how to measure. Being that almost all of these students have never been given the opportunity to use any of these tools, we had to work together to get each schools projects built. I spent quite a bit of time on electricity in their schools. I created a small frame out of wood so that we could practice wiring a light switch, light, and outlet. We then tested these to make sure that they worked. This was a small learning challenge being their electrical wiring is a little different than what we have in America and only one room in their whole school would have electricity. Both schools also had a garden where I spent a little time helping them identify bugs, how to plant, and fertilize. All of the tools and supplies that we bought were left with the schools so that they can continue to teach these skills in their classroom.

www.tracy.k12.mn.us



Jefferson Elementary School Gardeners

Continued from Page 1

program would bike to the New Ulm Community Garden for lessons and activities.)

After the young gardeners complete their garden work, they learn about nutrition. "We've taught students how to harvest basil, clean the leaves, store it and use the basil in recipes at home," said Sletta. "We also froze plentiful harvests of strawberries and used them to show students how to make healthy smoothies. Beets were also harvested and cooked to introduce them to a vegetable many had not tried before."

Community Partners Join In, Too

The garden also welcomes several community partners, including John and Brooke Knisley from Alternative Roots CSA, who help them with gardening questions. Dr. Craig Sievert, a family medicine doctor and his wife Laura, have also visited the garden to teach the kids more about pollinators, and Sletta hopes to enlist the help of a nutrition expert or dietitian in the future. She teaches more than 650 students in grades 1-4 and uses the garden as an outdoor classroom for STEM and nutrition lessons. With limited garden produce during the winter, she plans to freeze or dehydrate as much produce as possible for use throughout the school year.

The seeds of the garden continue to grow and bear fruit. "Many students have encour-

aged their families to start small garden plots at home, or have begun growing herbs or vegetables in containers," said Sletta. "Students and parents often contact me for recipes, garden ideas, or just to tell me about their gardens at home.

The Jefferson Elementary schoolyard garden is part of a relatively new and comprehensive approach by the New Ulm Public Schools to build students' knowledge and skills related to growing food and healthy options.

Education and exposure starts during the early childhood years at the Washington Learning Center, where kids have small beds for gardens and pollinators. At the high school, a brand new greenhouse and aquaponics operation is used by both the Agriculture and Family and Consumer Sciences departments for teaching students about growing foods and preparing healthier meals through a college-level Culinary Arts Program.

As New Ulm kids are showing, working together, New Ulm residents are collectively making the healthy choice the easy choice where they live, work, learn and play.

www.newulm.k12.mn.us



Teacher of the Year Candidate Field Narrowed to 25 Semifinalists

The field of possible candidates for this year's Minnesota Teacher of the Year honor has been narrowed to 25. An independent selection panel of 22 community leaders chose the semifinalists from an initial field of 77 candidates from across the state.

The panel will review the semifinalists' portfolios again and review semifinalist video submissions in early March and will select about 10 finalists from among the group. The current Minnesota Teacher of the Year, Natalia Benjamin, will announce her successor at the Minnesota Teacher of the Year banquet, tentatively scheduled for May

1 at the Saint Paul RiverCentre.

This year's program will name the 58th Minnesota Teacher of the Year. The program celebrates the tradition of excellence in teaching in Minnesota. Eligible candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade, Early Childhood Family Education and Adult Basic Education teachers, from public or private schools.

Semifinalists for 2022 Minnesota Teacher of the Year are listed below, including the district, school, subject area and grade taught:

Edward Barlow, *Minneapolis Public Schools, Anwatin Middle School*, music, 6th–8th

Mary Betland, *Anoka-Hennepin Schools, Jackson Middle School*, English/language Arts, 7th

Emily Dalen, *Morris Area School District, Morris Area Elementary School*, elementary education, 4th

Younna Eiden-Giel, *South Washington County Schools, Park High School*, social studies, 11th and 12th

Jon Fila, *Intermediate District 287, Northern Star Online*, English, 9th–12th

Angela Fritzlar, *Bloomington Public Schools, Ridgeview Elementary School*, social, emotional and behavioral skills, 3rd–5th

Kevin Gentz, *Albert Lea Area Schools, Albert Lea High School*, math, 11th and 12th

Kendall Gonzalez, *White Bear Lake Area Schools, Matoska International School*, elementary education, kindergarten

MacKenzie Hildahl, *South Washington County Schools, East Ridge High School*, English, 9th and 11th

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Lauren Hoof, *Osseo Area Schools, Birch Grove Elementary School for the Arts*, elementary education, kindergarten

Paul Houck, *SouthWest Metro Intermediate District 288, SouthWest Metro High School*, English, 9th–12th

Brad Hubred, *Moose Lake Community School*, science, 5th and 6th

Niccole Goulet Jordan, *Bloomington Public Schools, Bloomington Kennedy High School*, vocal music, 9th–12th

Erin Karlgaard, *Brainerd Public Schools, Lowell Elementary School*, elementary education, 3rd

Ariane Kokes, *Columbia Heights Public Schools, North Park School for Innovation*, art, pre-K–5th

Sarah Lancaster, *Onamia Public Schools, Onamia Elementary School*, elementary education, 1st

Ariana Lynch, *Mounds View Public Schools, Pinewood Elementary*, elementary education, 1st

Megan Rafferty, *Anoka-Hennepin Schools, Mississippi Elementary*, ESL, K–5th

Aberdeen Rodriguez, *Minneapolis Public Schools, Thomas Edison High School*, English, 9th

Ira Sanders, *Roseville Area Schools, Roseville Area High School*, economics/government, 12th

John Schneider, *Austin Public Schools, Banfield Elementary School*, elementary education, 3rd

Rachel Volkmann, *Hopkins Public Schools, Gatewood Elementary*, all subjects/literacy, 4th and 5th

Andrea Welvaert, *South Washington County Schools, Cottage Grove Middle School*, ASD/SPED, 6th–8th

Caroline Young, *Rockford Area School District, Rockford High School*, social studies, 11th and 12th

Eric Zuccola, *Robbinsdale Area Schools, Robbinsdale Cooper High School*, English, 9th–12th

For more information, contact:

Doug Dooher
651-292-4820 (work)
651-245-6141 (cell)

Chris Williams
651-292-4816 (work)
651-247-5539 (cell)

Courtesy of an Education Minnesota press release

The original 77 candidates for 2022 Minnesota Teacher of the Year, listed by their school districts or operating entities:

Kayla Host, *Aitkin Public Schools*

Kevin Gentz, *Albert Lea Area Schools*

Mary Betland, *Anoka-Hennepin School District*

Megan Rafferty, *Anoka-Hennepin School District*

Stacy Bauer, *Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis*

Lauren Trovarello, *Aspen Academy Charter School, Savage*

Jenna Fitzgerald, *Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City Public Schools*

John Schneider, *Austin Public Schools*

Janelle Field, *Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa Public Schools*

Angela Fritzlar, *Bloomington Public Schools*

Niccole Goulet Jordan, *Bloomington Public Schools*

Beth McCoy, *Bloomington Public Schools*

Teri Roder, *Bloomington Public Schools*

Erin Karlgaard, *Brainerd Public Schools*

Jacki Kyllonen, *Cedar Mountain Schools*

Ariane Kokes, *Columbia Heights Public Schools*

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CPHS Principal Mike George Recognized for Outstanding Leadership in an IB School



Anoka-Hennepin Schools

Champlin Park High School — International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme (CPHS) principal Mike George was recognized by the Minnesota Association of IB World Schools (MNIB) for his outstanding leadership in a Minnesota IB school.

George was surprised with the award during an administrators' meeting at CPHS Feb. 8 when MNIB executive director Jon Peterson presented him with the award in front of his leadership team at the school.

"I am humbled and honored to receive this recognition," George said. "I would like to acknowledge the staff and coordinators of

our program, as they are most deserving of this recognition. Our committed, determined and passionate staff make my role of supporting the IB program easy. I would also like to thank the Minnesota Association of IB World Schools, along with the staff who nominated me for this recognition."

The MNIB administrator award was first given out four years ago and recognizes administrators who have demonstrated collaborative leadership with IB coordinators in their buildings to help their programs succeed and grow.

"Mike is an exemplary example of exactly what we're trying to do," Peterson said. "We

want that partnership (between administrators and building leaders). I was really excited to see that there was a career program connection to this award, because that is a program we are really trying to snowball here in Minnesota."

CPHS is one of just seven schools in the state of Minnesota offering the IB career-related program, and one of 20 offering the IB diploma pathway.

IB aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

Students in the diploma programme take six subjects in IB, English, math, science, history, an elective, and world language. To complete the career pathway, students can choose from one of the following pathways: architecture/construction, communication, culinary, design and fabrication, education, medical, or transportation.

Ashley Brown (diploma programme coordinator) and Chris Baker-Raivo (career-related programme coordinator) lead the IB program at CPHS and nominated George for this award because of his support for their work in providing students these opportunities.

"Mike has been very supportive of this new initiative within the career program," Brown said. "We also have a new initiative this year to start bringing IB English into all of our 11th grade classrooms, and next year all of our 12th grade students will have the IB English curriculum. That is a big ask of

a building to shift their whole entire English program into an IB focus, and Mike has been very supportive and encouraged those kinds of initiatives. These are things that kind of push the bar, things that not everyone is going to agree with or like, but he's certainly willing to always hear our ideas and to discuss."

"The IB career-related program is a unique opportunity that affords students the ability to explore a number of career areas while challenging themselves with IB diploma courses, language study and service learning," Baker-Raivo said. "As we created pathways for students interested in education, the medical field, culinary careers, design, and manufacturing, Mike was tireless in supporting our endeavors. At every turn, Mike proves himself to be a creative problem solver and a dynamic leader. However, his most impactful trait is his focus on people. Mike leads from the heart and is focused on making both students and staff feel taken care of. I feel very lucky to work with Mike and happy that he is being recognized for his contributions to the IB career-related program."

There are currently 85 junior and senior IB diploma and career candidates at CPHS, and there are over 700 students taking individual IB courses. For more information on the IB programme at CPHS, visit ahschools.us/cphsib.

www.ahschools.us



Teacher of the Year Candidates Continued from Page 23



Andrea Adrian, Crookston Public Schools
Debra Hannu, Duluth Public Schools
Nathan (Nate) Gabel, Eden Prairie Schools
Emily Larson, Eden Prairie Schools
Kassy Miller, Eden Prairie Schools
Leif Voltz, Elk River Area School District
Heather Stromberg, Fairmont Area Schools
Jennifer Hogan, Farmington Area Schools
Michael Bare, Fergus Falls Public Schools
Shelley Schoeneck, Fergus Falls Public Schools
Jessica Linman, Herman Norcross Community School
Karin Brinkhoff, Hopkins Public Schools

Sarah Gleason, Hopkins Public Schools
Scott Stillman, Hopkins Public Schools
Rachel Volkmann, Hopkins Public Schools
Jon Fila, Intermediate District 287
Ryan Rasmussen, Jordan Public Schools
Kristin Wishy, Kasson Mantorville Public Schools
Traci Raknerud, Lake Park Audubon Public Schools
Michelle Mitchell, Mahtomedi Public Schools
Pam Gabrielsen, Mankato Area Public Schools
Kevin Armbrust, Milaca Public Schools
Edward Barlow, Minneapolis Public Schools
Aberdeen Rodriguez, Minneapolis Public Schools
Diane Daniels, Minnetonka Public Schools
Stacy Schroeder, Moorhead Public Schools
Brad Hubred, Moose Lake Community School
Emily Dalen, Morris Area School District
Courtney Hess, Mounds View Public Schools

Ariana Lynch, Mounds View Public Schools
Tracy Wilk, Northeast Metro 916 Intermediate School District
Heather Olivier, Northfield Public Schools
Sarah Lancaster, Onamia Public Schools
Lauren Hoof, Osseo Area Schools
Mark Langlois, Owatonna Public Schools
Tyler Blom, Proctor Public Schools
Eric Zuccola, Robbinsdale Area Public Schools
Caroline Young, Rockford Area Schools
Ira Sanders, Roseville Area Schools
Amy Westland, Roseville Area Schools
Janice Bisch, Saint Paul Public Schools
Emily Manson, Saint Paul Public Schools
James Schreiner, Sauk Centre Public Schools
Trisha Bemboom, Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools
Tina Douvier, Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools
Jacci Lissick, Shakopee Public Schools
Claire Troxel, South St. Paul Public Schools

Younna Eiden-Giel, South Washington County Schools
MacKenzie Hildahl, South Washington County Schools
Kiersten Jaeger, South Washington County Schools
Andrea Welvaert, South Washington County Schools
Paul Houck, Southwest Metro Intermediate District 288
Maggie Lee, Spring Lake Park Schools
Tom Muschler, St. Charles Public Schools
Holly Becker, Wadena-Deer Creek Public Schools
Anne Bolsem, West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools
Mara Drill, Westonka Public Schools
Lyndsay Geyen, Westonka Public Schools
Jodie Rasicot, Westonka Public Schools
Kendall Gonzalez, White Bear Lake Area Schools
Julie Hebb, Willow River Area Schools



Dr. Heidi Miller, Anoka-Hennepin Schools, Selected NAESP Outstanding Assistant Principal™ from Minnesota



Dr. Heidi Miller, assistant principal of Rum River Elementary School in the Anoka-Hennepin Schools District and a member of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA), is Minnesota's 2022 NAESP National Outstanding Assistant Principal. MESPA and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) present this prestigious award.

The National Outstanding Assistant Principal™ program was established in 2011 to honor assistant principals who are

doing a superb job in their roles. NAESP is committed to preparing assistant principals to step into the principal role. This program promotes educational excellence for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade (PreK-8) schooling and calls attention to the fundamental importance of the assistant principal. NAESP will share their successes and best practices in a practical document for other principals to utilize.

Lynn Shereé Lesmeister, a kindergarten teacher at Rum River Elementary, singled out Dr. Miller's dedication and attitude as some of her greatest strengths. Lesmeister said, "I have been an educator for over 30 years and I have never experienced someone in her position with such a combination of professionalism, drive, and warmth. She radiates positivity."

Dr. Miller considers collaboration to be one of her best practices as an educator. She explained that staff groups meet weekly to analyze student data and have open conversations about what is working, what needs to change, and create an action plan.

She said, "Establishing vulnerable and supportive teams throughout our school sets the tone of our school's positive culture and happy staff morale." Dr. Miller attributes

improvements in academic achievement, staff morale, and decreases in undesirable behaviors at Rum River to this collaborative practice.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Dr. Miller recognized the major shift taking place in her school and took the opportunity to build practices that would support the entire school community. She explained, "I worked with my teachers to ensure that their needs were met, that they felt supported and cared about and that we were able to successfully move forward as a united team." She considers shifting the educational practices at Rum River while protecting their vibrant school atmosphere to be one of her greatest accomplishments.

"Dr. Miller has a clear vision of excellence in teaching and learning and is able to convey this vision to staff members, students, and parents in a positive and collaborative manner," said Jeffrey Clusiau, principal at Rum River Elementary school. He praised her balanced leadership and holistic approach to the Assistant Principalship saying, "She provides consistent and fair leadership to staff members while supporting the mission of the school and school district by taking on a wide range of duties

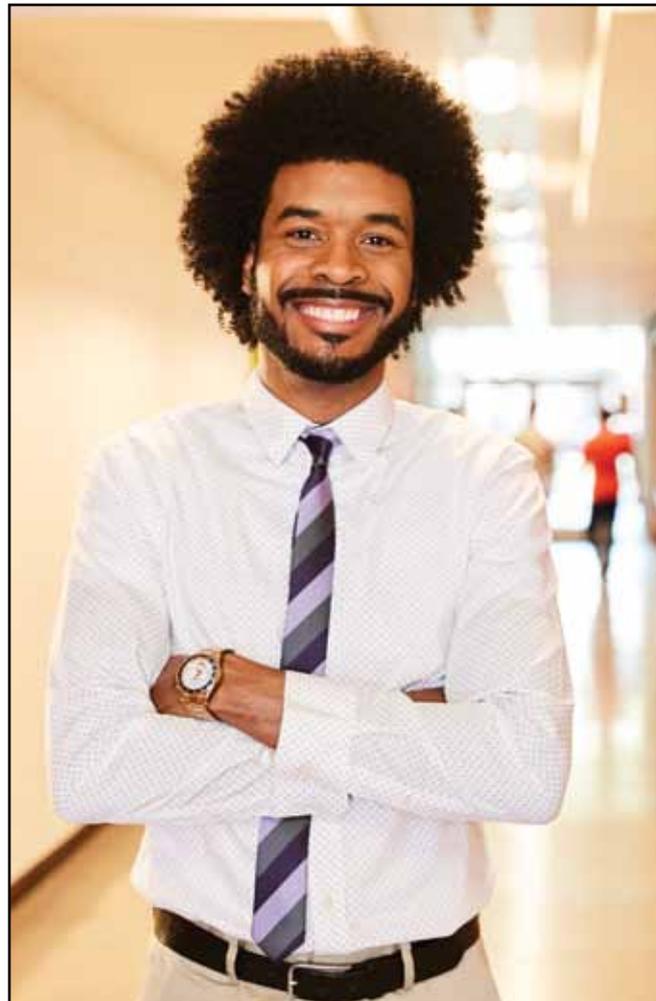
and responsibilities within the school."

Dr. Miller has been working in the field of education for more than 10 years, serving as a classroom teacher, literacy specialist, and administrative intern before becoming Assistant Principal of Rum River Elementary in 2019.

"I am honored and humbled to be the recipient of this award," said Dr. Miller. "This recognition would not be possible without my school's dedication, determination, and grit. Together, we are all committed to educating our students and meeting their needs."

Courtesy of Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA)

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2022 Minnesota Principals of the Year

Congratulations!

2022 High School Principal of the Year



Nathaniel "Natty" Messick
Fertile-Beltrami High School
Fertile-Beltrami School District #599

Nathaniel "Natty" Messick, principal of Fertile-Beltrami Schools for being named the

2022 Minnesota High School Principal of the Year. Natty has been the principal of his school for the past eight years.

Over those years, Natty has instilled the value of the "Falcon Way" — focusing on a culture of responsibility, respectfulness and determination. As one student states, "Our school has an amazing sense of unity that doesn't happen in other places. There is so much support for each and every student. Our teachers and administration always greet everyone with a smile and make sure that each student knows that they are cared for." Furthermore, according to an administrator in the district, Natty creates a strong culture, "Mr. Messick is very approachable, people-person, student-oriented principal who works to establish one-on-one relationships with all participants in our school system. Students, staff and community members feel connected and supported by our principal — which, in turn, creates trust and a sense of belonging."

fertilibeltrami.k12.mn.us



2022 Middle Level Principal of the Year



Michael O'Neil
Pequot Lakes Middle School
Pequot Lakes Public Schools

Michael O'Neil has been named this year's recipient of the Minnesota Middle

Level Principal of the Year. Mike has been an administrator for eight years, the past seven years as the principal at Pequot Lakes Middle School.

Mike understands the importance of individualized and high-quality education offerings for his students. He states, "As a campus community, we have worked to stay the course in providing each child with their version of "what they need" to be successful. This includes a strategic PLC devoted to Social Emotional Learning and the support of some of our most challenging students on campus." As stated from a teacher under Mike's leadership, "Mike has been courageously steadfast in his messaging and in his decisions related to equity. His advocacy for equity is rooted in his desire to hear from people whose perspectives have been shaped by experiences different than his own. He is a humble learner in this regard, modeling curiosity and respect in his personal and professional equity work."

www.isd186.org



2021–2022 Assistant Principal of the Year



Nick Bakke
Mora High School
Mora Public Schools

Nick Bakke, Assistant Principal at Mora High School, has been named this year's recipient of the Minnesota Assistant Principal of the Year Award, and is now eligible to be considered for the National Assistant Principal of the Year honors. Nick has been an administrator for the past nine years at Mora High School.

Nick comes with high praise from staff and community members. A special education teacher shares that Nick comes with many strengths, including listening to the concerns of others as well as being able to soothe stressful situations. Both powerful tools when working with students and parents. Furthermore, Nick's principal notes his dedication to continually improve the culture of Mora High School. Although he faces many challenges and difficult conversations with students, he never shies away. His ultimate goal when working with students is not to discipline, but to change behavior. One community member expressed that Nick treats all students, regardless of age, gender, race or GPA with respect. He is always thinking of ways to include kids in different levels of activities and training to ensure he finds ways for them to fit in. Congratulations Nick! Thank you for your strong leadership and dedication to your students, staff and community.

www.moraschools.org



Courtesy of The Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP)

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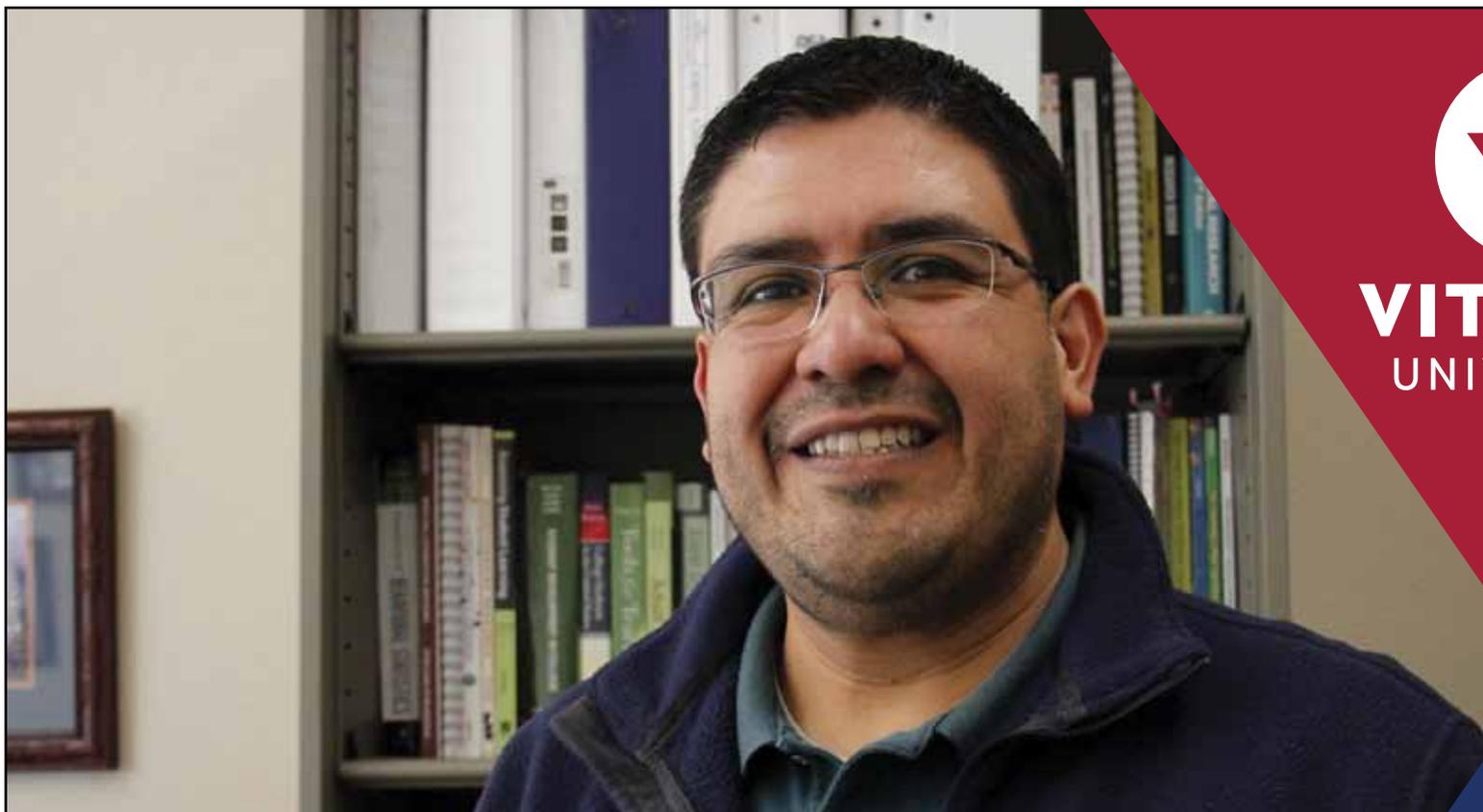
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As a Viterbo University graduate, you will be equipped to revolutionize your teaching practices, which will prepare you to be an agent of change both in and outside of the classroom.

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- Create your own path
- Choose areas that support your professional development
- Electives selected from licensure and certificate programs
- 30 credit hours

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- Builds capacity to improve classroom instruction
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- 31 credit hours

www.viterbo.edu/mae



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

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