

## Student Words Inspire at 'Mound Talks' Event



Becca Heistad Neuger  
Communications Coordinator  
Westonka Public Schools

Eighth-grader Katie Clark set the tone for the first-ever Mound Talks event when she said, "If you never do anything different or scary, then you never do anything at all."

Thirteen Mound Westonka High School students challenged themselves to take the MWHS Little Theater stage on Dec. 4 and present their own TED-like talks to an audience of their peers, teachers, families and community members. The talks were centered on the theme "Own Your Future" with topics ranging from cyber-bullying to gender inequality to dealing with the stress of college. Clark's talk, "How to Be Super," focused on helping others to be the best versions of themselves.

"According to senior Andrew LaFortune, the hardest part of the planning process was encouraging students to speak. "Many people shy away from public speaking, but our 13 speakers rose to the challenge."

In his Mound Talk, ninth-grader Anders Erdahl dove into the topic of financial abstraction—the notion that as money becomes less tangible, the less people think of it as being spent. "Kids are raised in a world where money is but an illusion," Erdahl said. "They equate spending to credit and debit cards, Google wallet, PayPal and Zap."

Erdahl illustrated the concept using the example of Magic Bands at Disney World, which allow guests to pay for everything with just the swipe of a wrist. "People don't know what they're spending until it's gone," Erdahl said. "Kids need to learn about financial abstraction when they're my age, or younger, so that they can learn to manage their money and set up a good economy for future generations."

In addition to Clark and Erdahl, student speakers included Grandview Middle School seventh-graders Stephanie Anderson, Josh Seeley and Izzy Embery-Braun; Mound Westonka High School eighth-graders Avery Finck, Josh Nkhata, Maya Jable and Avery Robbins; MWHS ninth-grader Grace Hanson; MWHS junior Zach Riffle; and

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## Regional High School Students Expose their Soul, Write From the Heart

Communications Department  
Anoka-Hennepin School District

Opening their hearts and exposing their souls, Anoka-Hennepin Regional High School (AHRHS) students employed poetic license to express their deepest feelings.

Weeping over a beloved grandmother's death, enraged at a parent's betrayal or determined to make their own way the sophomore students exercised rarely expressed emotion when they read their original poetry aloud during a Dec. 1 poetry reading at the school.

Students recognized the value of the exercise in spite of the pain that may have been ignited during the writing process.

"I found out I write my best poetry when it's about something I can relate to: depression. It helped me be able to explain it to others," said student Marissa Jenkins.

Another student, Kadetra Brooks, wept as she read the poem she wrote about her granny's death.

"I'll have to see you in another dream," she said in one stanza of that mournful lyric.

"Writing my poetry let me express feelings I never had been able to express before,"



Student Jerome Swanson reads his light-hearted poem about his "big hair."

she said.

Classmate Tyler Johnson had never written poetry before, and to his surprise, he discovered that he liked doing it.

"I found out I could write one good poem. Now I might write more," he said.

Diego Vazquez, Jr., writer-in-residence at AHRHS, worked with the students in Kristi Weidlein's English

class during a six-week period and called it a "remarkable experience."

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Warm Regards,  
 Renee, Andria, Andrew,  
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# Apply for a Grant



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

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

Grants up to \$5,000 are awarded

**Deadline:** Grades 6 through 12 applications are accepted year-round. Requests for grants of more than \$5,000 are due August 1 and February 1, annually

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

## AIAA Foundation Classroom Grant Program

The AIAA Foundation Classroom Grant program promotes aerospace education activi-

ties in classrooms from kindergarten through grade 12. The program encourages development of innovative aerospace activities within the prescribed curriculum.

Grants up to \$250 are awarded

**Deadline:** Applications due February 12, 2017

**Website:** [www.aiaa.org/Secondary.aspx?id=4184](http://www.aiaa.org/Secondary.aspx?id=4184)

## Air Force Junior ROTC Grants

The Air Force Association Junior ROTC (AFJROTC) grant program was established to promote aerospace education throughout classrooms and units. Applications are judged by the importance and the impact the selected aerospace activity will have on students.

Grants up to \$250 are awarded

**Deadline:** Applications are due February 10 and October 10, annually

**Website:** [www.afa.org/afa/informationfor/teachers/k12grants/airforcejuniorrotcgrant](http://www.afa.org/afa/informationfor/teachers/k12grants/airforcejuniorrotcgrant)

## Fluid Power Challenge Grants

NFPA awards grants to schools and educational institutions to facilitate the teaching of hydraulics and pneumatics. Fluid Power Challenge Grants are available to educators planning to teach fluid power in their classroom or through a Fluid Power Challenge event.

Grants of \$250.00 are awarded

**Deadline:** Applications are accepted and reviewed year-round

**Website:** [www.nfpa.com/nfpafoundation/actionchallengegrants.aspx](http://www.nfpa.com/nfpafoundation/actionchallengegrants.aspx)

## ecoTech Grants

The Captain Planet Foundation, Inc. (CPF) is offering grants through a competitive program for schools and nonprofit organizations. Grants are awarded to support inquiry-based projects in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields that leverage technology or use nature-based designs to address environmental problems in local communities.

Seventeen grants of \$2,500 each are awarded

**Deadline:** Applications are due March 15, annually

**Website:** [captainplanetfoundation.org/ecotech-grant](http://captainplanetfoundation.org/ecotech-grant)

## Gerald C. Corcoran Education Grant

The North American Native Fishes Association (NANFA) supports projects to educate the general public about native North American fishes and their environment. Project categories include: producing and distributing educational materials such as books, brochures, posters, displays, video, and internet resources; stream surveys with public education as a primary goal; public lectures; nature center displays; school materials and displays; field and laboratory supplies; and teacher training workshops.

Grants up to \$1,000 are awarded

**Deadline:** Applications are due March 31, annually

**Website:** [nanfa.org/corcoran.shtml](http://nanfa.org/corcoran.shtml)

## Captain Planet Small Grants

Grants from the Captain Planet Foundation are intended to serve as a catalyst to getting environment-based education in schools, and to inspire youth and communities to participate in community service through environmental stewardship activities. Projects must be performed by youth and have real environmental outcomes.

Grants ranging from \$500 to \$2,500 are awarded

**Grants Continue on Page 7**

## 'Mound Talks' Continued from Page 1

MWHS seniors Noah Brammer and Tiffany Nguyen.

MWHS DECA advisor Sue Simonson and Grandview Middle School teacher Julie Thomas had been toying with the idea for Mound Talks for a couple of years before finally making it a reality. This year, they decided to turn the "TED Talk" assignment that Thomas gives to her seventh-grade class into a Westonka DECA project.

Juniors Abby Wharram and Katelyn Wagner and senior Andrew LaFortune met with Simonson and Thomas in July to begin planning the event. The three DECA students recruited student speakers and helped to organize and promote the event this fall. They will present a 30-page paper and presentation on Mound Talks as a DECA Chapter Project at the state competition in March.

According to LaFortune, the hardest part of the planning process was encouraging students to speak. "Many people shy away from public speaking, but our 13 speakers rose to the challenge," LaFortune said.

Both teachers and students agreed that the event was a success, and they hope it will continue in future years. "From a teaching standpoint, I was proud of what we created to showcase our students' talents and creativity. From a DECA standpoint, I think the

team did a fantastic job of putting everything together, staying on top of deadlines and executing the plan for the event," Simonson said.

LaFortune said that he felt the topics resonated especially well with adults in the audience. "Hearing talks about things as complex as financial abstraction and the future of gender relations definitely left a greater impact coming from young students," LaFortune said.

Mound Talks received high praise from audience members as well. Following the event, Westonka Superintendent Kevin Borg tweeted: "Very impressed by the organization, delivery, and depth of student's messages. Awesome event! Thanks @WestonkaDECA."

The best part for LaFortune was seeing the standing ovation the students received after the final talk. "That moment made me feel like I had been a part of something important to our community," LaFortune said.

[www.westonka.k12.mn.us](http://www.westonka.k12.mn.us)  
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## Students Write from the Heart

### Continued from Page 1

"It's amazing to see what these kids can do. Some of them went from writing about their favorite basketball team to really writing, really expressing some personal thoughts, really writing about themselves," Vazquez said.

Vazquez visited the classroom several times a week during the six-week period. He gave students exercises and assignments, exposed them to raw and emotional poetry and challenged them to take a risk with their own.

"They were scared at first, nervous, but I just guide them to their own direction and try to reach their hearts. These kids take such risks and I told them there is no bad poetry. Just get it out, get it down on paper. What they got down is remarkable stuff," Vazquez said.

A published poet and novelist, Vazquez said he finds great joy and inspiration in working with the students.

"Poetry always reaches your heart. It's the quickest connection to the heart with no road blocks," he said. "I just guide them in the exercises, let them respond and react . . . create on their own as much as possible," he said.

High school administrators recently learned that Vazquez will be returning as

writer-in-residence another time as well.

"This has been an amazing experience," said Weidlein. "We truly have some amazing students here at Regional and Diego really allowed them to have their own voice – and they have some amazing voices. With Diego they've become better writers, better risk-takers. We're so glad we've been able to have Diego here and so glad that he will be returning."

Vazquez expressed his eagerness to working with emerging writers.

"To see the progression is truly remarkable," he said. "At first they can't think of what to write and soon they reach the heart in such a remarkable way. It's astounding."

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# Recognizing Gifted Students in the Classroom

In most classrooms, the range of cognitive abilities is vast. Inclusion and legislative mandates challenge general educators to design and implement teaching and behavior management strategies that will ensure success for all student groups—including the gifted and highly able.

## Characteristics of Gifted Students

One key way classroom teachers can broaden understanding of gifted students is through knowledge of the general characteristics intellectually gifted children exhibit.

Gifted students often possess an intense desire to learn about their own interests. Their ability to think at abstract levels earlier than same-aged peers and form their own ways of thinking about problems and ideas indicates that intellectually gifted students need advanced content and choice in learning activities. Gifted students' high energy levels and ability to extend the range of projects signify that independent studies may be an option for differentiating instruction for these students.

Varied behaviors and preferences arise from giftedness. An awareness of the social and emotional characteristics of gifted students can further help teachers understand many of the classroom behaviors they observe in these children. For example, the gifted child's desire

to share knowledge may be seen by others as an attempt to show off and may lead to peer rejection. Gifted students' high expectations of themselves and others can lead to perfectionism, personal dissatisfaction, or feelings of hopelessness.

## Cognitive Characteristics of Intellectually Gifted Students

- Process and retain large amounts of information
- Comprehend materials at advanced levels
- Curious and have varied and sometimes intense interests
- High levels of language development and verbal ability
- Possess accelerated and flexible thought processes
- Early ability to delay closure of projects
- See unusual relationships among disciplines or objects
- Adept at generating original ideas and solutions to problems
- Persistent, goal-oriented, and intense on topics of interest
- Form their own ways of thinking about problems and ideas



- Learn things at an earlier age than peers
- Need for freedom and individuality in learning situations
- High desire to learn and seek out their own interests
- Abstract thinkers at an earlier age than peers
- Prefer complex and challenging work
- Transfer knowledge and apply it to new situations
- May prefer to work alone
- May be early readers
- May possess high energy levels and longer attention spans

Teachers should keep in mind that the traits listed are not exhaustive and that every gifted child will not display each characteristic stated. In fact, intellectually gifted students referred to in the literature as atypical may display their giftedness in other ways. There are many groups to consider when identifying an atypical gifted student, including, but not limited to, non-English speaking students and students from low socioeconomic circumstances.

## Close Observation

Given that gifted students clearly do not always exhibit classroom work, behavior, and dispositions that are "teacher friendly," how can classroom teachers make informed decisions about the children they refer for gifted education programs?

A list of pertinent questions follows. An affirmative and detailed answer to some of these questions regarding a particular student might serve as a signal to begin observing the child more closely and keeping anecdotal records to document patterns of behavior. Such activities not only aid teachers in identifying the student for assessment, but also provide valuable information on the frequency of gifted behaviors to professionals who eventually may assess the student formally for

gifted education services.

- Is this student highly verbal in spoken language, written language, or both?
- Does this student use art materials either creatively or uniquely?
- Does this student offer insightful contributions to class discussions that are of interest to him or her?
- Is this student able to comprehend, synthesize, or evaluate story material in unique ways from personal readings or from teacher read-alouds?
- Does this student have unique or varied interests?
- Is this student highly passionate or excited about his or her own interests?
- Does this student have a strong sense of family or interest in family-related topics?
- Does this child get good test grades but often turns in poor class work?

Because of the unique characteristics gifted students possess, teachers need to be aware of the ways in which these attributes manifest themselves in observable classroom behaviors. Some behaviors can be troubling to the classroom teacher; however, being aware of their root causes will help teachers more fully meet gifted students' needs and build positive relationships vital to meaningful classroom experiences.

Keeping abreast of research and information by reading journals devoted to gifted children and gifted education is a good starting place. Becoming more reflective by asking internal "why" questions to understand the root causes of student behaviors will help teachers as they strive to provide the most meaningful education for all the students they teach.

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# Indicators of Learning Disabilities

Many children have difficulty with reading, writing, or other learning-related tasks at some point, but this does not mean they have learning disabilities. A child with a learning disability often has several related signs, and these persist over time. The signs of learning disabilities vary from person to person. Common signs that a person may have learning disabilities include the following:

- Difficulty with reading and/or writing
- Problems with math skills
- Difficulty remembering
- Problems paying attention
- Trouble following directions
- Poor coordination
- Difficulty with concepts related to time
- Problems staying organized

A child with a learning disability also may exhibit one or more of the following:

- Impetuous behavior
- Inappropriate responses in school or social situations
- Difficulty staying on task (easily distracted)
- Difficulty finding the right way to say something
- Inconsistent school performance
- Immature way of speaking
- Difficulty listening well

- Problems dealing with new things in life
- Problems understanding words or concepts

These signs alone are not enough to determine that a person has a learning disability. A professional assessment is necessary to diagnose a learning disability.

Each learning disability has its own signs. Also, not every person with a particular disability will have all of the signs of that disability.

Children being taught in a second language that they are learning sometimes act in ways that are similar to the behaviors of someone with a learning disability. For this reason, learning disability assessment must take into account whether a student is bilingual or a second language learner.

Below are some common learning disabilities and the signs associated with them:

## Dyslexia

People with dyslexia usually have trouble making the connections between letters and sounds and with spelling and recognizing words.

People with dyslexia often show other signs of the condition. These may include:

- Failure to fully understand what others are saying
- Difficulty organizing written and spoken language

- Delayed ability to speak
- Poor self-expression (for example, saying “thing” or “stuff” for words not recalled)
- Difficulty learning new vocabulary, either through reading or hearing
- Trouble learning foreign languages
- Slowness in learning songs and rhymes
- Slow reading as well as giving up on longer reading tasks
- Difficulty understanding questions and following directions
- Poor spelling
- Difficulty recalling numbers in sequence (for example, telephone numbers and addresses)
- Trouble distinguishing left from right

## Dysgraphia

Dysgraphia is characterized by problems with writing. This disorder may cause a child to be tense and awkward when holding a pen or pencil, even to the extent of contorting his or her body. A child with very poor handwriting that he or she does not outgrow may have dysgraphia.

Other signs of this condition may include:

- A strong dislike of writing and/or drawing
- Problems with grammar
- Trouble writing down ideas

- A quick loss of energy and interest while writing
- Trouble writing down thoughts in a logical sequence
- Saying words out loud while writing
- Leaving words unfinished or omitting them when writing sentences

## Dyscalculia

Signs of this disability include problems understanding basic arithmetic concepts, such as fractions, number lines, and positive and negative numbers.

Other symptoms may include:

- Difficulty with math-related word problems
- Trouble making change in cash transactions
- Messiness in putting math problems on paper
- Trouble recognizing logical information sequences (for example, steps in math problems)
- Trouble with understanding the time sequence of events
- Difficulty with verbally describing math processes

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## PACER stands for Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights

Our mission is to expand opportunities and enhance the quality of life of children and young adults with disabilities and their families, based on the concept of **parents helping parents.**



With individual assistance, workshops, materials for parents and professionals, and leadership in securing a free and appropriate public education for all children, PACER's work affects and encourages families **across the nation.**

Learn more about the work of PACER, access information and resources, and find out more about upcoming events at:

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# Student Contests and Awards

## EngineerGirl Essay Contest

The annual EngineerGirl Essay Contest encourages students to write about the role of engineering in society and the impact it has on our world. Essays for the current contest, which is entitled, "Engineering and Animals," should explain engineering ideas to improve life for endangered, critically endangered, and vulnerable animals.



First-place winners are awarded \$500, second-place entries \$250, and third-place entries \$100

**Deadline:** Essays due February 1, 2017

**Website:** [www.engineergirl.org/GetThere/Contest.aspx](http://www.engineergirl.org/GetThere/Contest.aspx)

## Extreme Redesign Contest 3-D Printing Challenge

The Extreme Redesign Contest 3-D Printing Challenge is an annual competition open

to students worldwide. Students work alone or in a team of two to design an original piece of art, jewelry or architecture, or to make an existing design better. Winning entries must be creative, mechanically sound, and realistically achievable. There are three contest categories:

- Engineering: secondary education is open to students in middle school and high school.
- Engineering: postsecondary is open to university, college, or postsecondary school students.
- Art, Jewelry and Architecture: open to students of any grade level.

Scholarships of \$2,500 for a first-place winner, and \$1,000 each for second-place winners are awarded

**Deadline:** Entries are due March 9, 2017

**Website:** [www.stratasy.com/industries/education/extreme-redesign](http://www.stratasy.com/industries/education/extreme-redesign)

## Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision Competition

ExploraVision is a science competition that engages students teams in research and development with a strong emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Working in teams of two, three, or four members, students study a technology of interest and predict what that technology might

be like in 20 years, and then explore what is necessary to make their visions a reality.

Four teams receive a first-place prize of a US EE Savings Bond worth \$10,000 at maturity for each student. Four teams receive a second-place prize of a US EE Savings Bond worth \$5,000 at maturity for each student.

**Deadline:** Projects are due February 6, 2017

**Website:** [www.exploravision.org/what-exploravision](http://www.exploravision.org/what-exploravision)

## We the Students Scholarship Essay Contest

The Bill of Rights Institute seeks to help high school students understand the freedom and opportunity that the Constitution offers through programs such as the We the Students Essay Contest.

The grand-prize winning student receives \$5,000 and a scholarship to Constitutional Academy; six runners up receive \$1,250 each; eight students receive honorable mention and \$500 each; and teachers of winners receive \$100 each

**Deadline:** Applications due February 5, 2017

**Website:** [www.billofrightsinstitute.org/engage/students-programs-events/scholarship](http://www.billofrightsinstitute.org/engage/students-programs-events/scholarship)

## C-SPAN's StudentCam Video Documentary Competition

C-SPAN's StudentCam is an annual national video documentary competition for students in grades 6 through 12. Individual students or teams of up to three students create a short video documentary on the theme of "The Three Branches and You." Each video documentary should tell a story that demonstrates how a policy, law, or action by either the executive, legislative, or judicial branch has affected the applicant's community.

One grand prize of \$5,000 is awarded to the student or team and \$750 to the teacher advisor or school to purchase digital video equipment for the school. First-place prizes of \$3,000 each to the student or team and \$500 each to the teacher and school are awarded. Second-place prizes of \$1,500 each to the student or team and \$250 each to the teacher and school are awarded. Third-place prizes of \$750 each to the student or team and \$125 each to the teacher and school are awarded. Honorable mentions of \$250 each to the student or team are awarded.

**Deadline:** All entries must be uploaded by January 20, 2017

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

# Grants

Continued from Page 4

**Deadline:** Applications are due January 31 and September 30, annually

**Website:** [captainplanetfoundation.org/apply-for-grants](http://captainplanetfoundation.org/apply-for-grants)

## Academic Enrichment Grants

The McCarthy Dressman Education Foundation offers Academic Enrichment Grants designed to develop classroom and extracurricular programs that improve student learning. The foundation considers proposals that foster understanding, deepen students' knowledge, and provide opportunities to expand awareness of the world around them.

Grants up to \$10,000 are awarded

**Deadline:** Online applications are accepted January 15 through April 15, annually

**Website:** [mccarthydressman.org/academic-enrichment-grants](http://mccarthydressman.org/academic-enrichment-grants)

## Amber Brown Grant

The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) offers the Amber Brown Grant to commemorate author Paula Danziger. The grant is awarded annually to one school and includes a visit by a children's book author or illustrator to encourage children and youth to read and connect them with creative influences.

The winning school receives a visit by an author or illustrator, a \$250 stipend, and \$250 worth of books by the visiting author or illustrator

**Deadline:** Applications are accepted November 1 through April 15, annually

**Website:** [www.scbwi.org/awards/grants/amber-brown-grant](http://www.scbwi.org/awards/grants/amber-brown-grant)

## Instrumental Music Grants

The Fender Music Foundation awards

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

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

**Website:** [www.fendermusicfoundation.org/grants/grants-info](http://www.fendermusicfoundation.org/grants/grants-info)

## Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grants

The National PTA Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grants provide matching grants to local PTAs to support in-school and after-school arts enhancement programs. Grants may be used to engage families, support student success, improve the health and safety of students and families, increase access to arts education, and celebrate advocacy and diversity. Grants up to \$1,000 are awarded

**Deadline:** Applications are accepted January 10 through March 17, 2017

**Website:** [www.pta.org/members/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3101](http://www.pta.org/members/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3101)

## School In-Service Training Grants Grades 9 through 12

School In-Service Training Grants for Grades 9 through 12 provide funding support to secondary schools for in-service education in mathematics. Proposals must address need, mathematics content, scope of the plan, other contributing sources of funding, number of teachers and students impacted, distribution of costs, and factors such as urban-rural isolation and multiethnic student body, as applicable.

Grants up to \$4,000 are awarded

**Deadline:** Applications are due May 5, 2017

**Website:** [www.nctm.org/Grants-and-Awards/grants/School-In-Service-Training-Grants-%289-12%29](http://www.nctm.org/Grants-and-Awards/grants/School-In-Service-Training-Grants-%289-12%29)

## Japanese Teaching Material Purchase Grants

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles (JFLA) funds small grants to support nonprofit educational institutions in the United States with purchases of teaching materials for Japanese language programs. Eligible materials include textbooks, multimedia materials, dictionaries, and teachers' reference books.

Grants up to \$1,000 are awarded

**Deadline:** Grant applications are due March 15 and September 15, annually

**Website:** [www.jfla.org/grants-jle-materials.html](http://www.jfla.org/grants-jle-materials.html)

# Authentic Learning

## Engaging With Peers and the Real World to Deepen Learning



Jeffrey Erickson  
Minnetonka High School Principal

“There is no high school that offers the opportunities we provide all students. We are committed to moving every student to deeper and higher levels of learning in every class.”

A key point of the Minnetonka Teaching and Learning Framework is helping all students get to higher levels of learning no matter their starting point. This is a core value at our school. We believe that elements of the Framework—critical thinking, problem solving, authentic learning, and collaboration—should be part of every course. Our team is devoted to making the student experience stronger and discovering new ways to “take it up a level.”

Math teacher Margaret Velasco is engaging students in more creative and collaborative ways to review math concepts before an assessment. Instead of solving sample problems as a class, she asks groups of students to create Google slides with pertinent content, examples and sketches. Groups working on the same concepts compare slides and collaborate to build a

useful bank of resources from which they can solve review questions. The entire class will revisit the slides when it’s time to study for the final exam.

We’ve also renovated classrooms and created new collaborative space for all students that aligns with 21st Century learning. The whole building has a different feel. Every special education room was revamped to allow for more effective teaching and encourage students to interact and work together.

### VANTAGE

VANTAGE is a highly successful example of students engaged in realworld learning. For example, through rigorous AP and IB coursework— statistics, business management, psychology, and economics— students connect fundamental knowledge with real-world projects. VANTAGE students partner with professionals from Twin Cities companies to solve business problems or explore clinical simulations.

Students in the Design and Marketing study area worked with JUUT Salonspa to research how consumers in the 18-24 age bracket interact with salons and respond to advertising strategies. In their final presentation, students described their research findings, survey results and trends in the domestic and international salon industry. They proposed design elements for a new location including logo options and store/brand personality.

Through hands-on, project-based learning, our students learn to respect the complexities of the professional world, work in groups, accept criticism and persevere. VANTAGE partners and mentors are impressed by the level of maturity and creativity Minnetonka students bring to the

table. VANTAGE students enter college with a resume that looks like it belongs to a young professional.

### Minnetonka Research

Last summer, we embarked on a significant renovation, adding a science wing and right-sizing space for our students. We built a dedicated lab for Minnetonka Research—a new and significant innovation—and created three more science classrooms to accommodate our growing program.

Minnetonka Research opened in September with a group of 46 students on a yearlong quest into open-ended scientific inquiry and discovery. Many of these students were enrolled in accelerated science in middle school and exhausted Advanced Placement science pathways at the high school.

Research topics include:

- Biomedicine and health
- Cellular and molecular biology
- Earth and environmental science
- Physics, math and engineering

“I’ve always been fascinated by astrophysics,” Elena Romashkova said. She’ll be

analyzing Gravitational lens magnification models with version 1 pre-Hubble frontier fields data. “I love learning how the universe works and why everything is the way it is,” Elena said. “The skills I’ve learned so far in reading research papers, writing scientifically, designing a project, and dealing with drawbacks will be helpful both in college and in my career.”

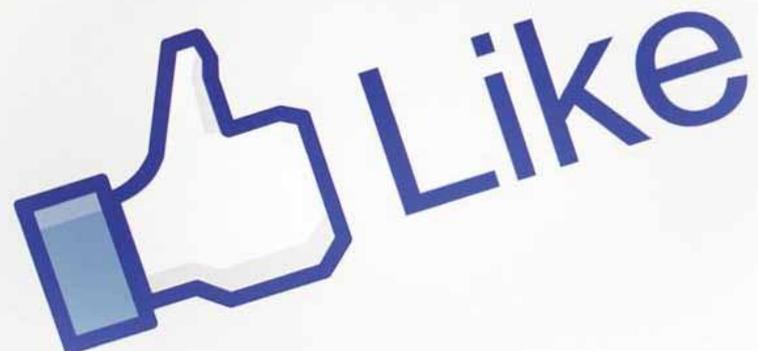
Jack Queenan is studying acid-labile polymersomes from amphiphilic diblock copolymers for glucose-responsive insulin. Last summer he assisted a college student studying a novel way to deliver chemotherapy. From that work, Jack began wondering about other applications for the technology; for example, delivering glucose for Type 1 Diabetes.

The world is changing fast. This facility and high school are preparing students for that change by encouraging students to make a difference in society as scientists.

[minnetonkaschools.org](http://minnetonkaschools.org)  
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# Discovery Academy: First Responders

Carissa Hopkins-Hoel  
Communications Coordinator  
St. Cloud Area School District 742

Greg Borders is a business education teacher at Tech High School, but he is also a certified emergency medical technician (EMT). Border's first responder class in the Discovery Academy is about saving lives.

The Discovery Academy is just one of the post-secondary enrollment options (PSEO) available in District 742. PSEO allows 10th, 11th and 12th grade students the opportunity to earn college credit for courses completed while still in high school. This course is available at Apollo High School during the fall semester and at Tech High School during the spring semester.

In addition to earning college level credit, the students in Border's class will earn their EMT level one certification after passing the class.

"This is the class you want to freak out if you fail," says Borders. "You should care enough about saving someone's life."

There are five steps that each student must complete during the adult and infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) testing:

1. Scene Safety: survey the area to ensure there is no danger to the rescuer.

2. Check for responsiveness and breathing: Ask the person if they are OK.
3. Call 911: have someone call 911 (unless by yourself).
4. Check for a pulse.
5. Begin CPR.

Students are split up into pairs or trios to practice the CPR training on the adult and infant "Annies" (training mannequins.)

Amina Mohamud, a Tech junior, shares, "I'm trying to be a nurse and I wanted to see how this works . . . It's a great class to sign up for. It's my first time taking a college class, so I was nervous. I thought I'd have to test every day. It's a little easier than I thought."

When students feel they are ready to test, they move to the hallway where Borders waits with his clipboard.

The pairs start the CPR five steps, and with the assistance of their automated external defibrillators (AED), begin the chest compressions, attach the defibrillators and use the breathing masks.

The testing is timed and assessed by Borders. A nearby community college will do the test-out for the students to give them their certification.

Tyler Doering and Ali Abdurahman have already passed the adult CPR test.

Doering states, "I was nervous. I get nervous about everything."

Doering is taking the course because he wants to go into law enforcement.

"It's required later on, so I thought I'd get it done now," says Doering.

Hanad Gaal, a sophomore, awaits his turn to test on the infant Annie, "I just walk around holding this baby. It just feels natural because I'm the oldest in my family. I want to be an ER physician."

Sophomore Emily Musielewicz can relate. Musielewicz wants to be a pediatric physician.

"I thought this [class] would be helpful. My mom also owns a daycare. It's helpful to have this knowledge," says Musielewicz.

Musielewicz's older sister is currently in nursing school. Musielewicz is able to share a lot of real-life scenarios her sister is presented with in class. It gives the students the chance to discuss and walk through real-life medical events.



The Discovery Academy and PSEO provides students a free, hands-on experience to get a jump-start on a career path of their choice. These students are taking advantage of their post-secondary opportunities while also learning how to save lives.

[isd742.org](http://isd742.org)  
(320) 253-9333

# Coon Rapids High School's Biomedical Sciences Program 'Captivates' Students, Inspires Success



Derrick Williams  
Communication Specialist  
Anoka-Hennepin School District

Imagine the scene: it's the first day of school and a group of Coon Rapids High School (CRHS) students walk into a fresh classroom that'll be home to their brand new Principles of Biomedical Sciences class. As the students find their seats, their eyes fall on a tragic scene.

"[The students] were immediately captivated," CRHS biomedical program coordinator Leah Sams said.

The riveting scene they witnessed was that of Anna Garcia, a fictional person

portrayed by a mannequin, who lay deceased on the floor. The area was sealed off with crime tape, furniture knocked over, and blood, vomit and pills littered the floor near the body. For the next two trimesters, students used crime scene evidence and Garcia's medical history to determine how

she died.

The Biomedical Sciences Program, a part of the national Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program, debuted at CRHS last school year and transitioned the school into a biomedical specialty school.

Coon Rapids' Biomedical Program Sciences curriculum is a sequence of courses, which follows a proven hands-on, real-world, problem-solving approach to learning. Students explore the concepts of human medicine and are introduced to topics such as physiology, genetics, microbiology and public health. Through activities,

like dissecting a heart, students examine the processes, structures and interactions of the human body – often playing the role of biomedical professionals. They also explore the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease, working collaboratively to investigate and design innovative solutions to the health challenges of the 21st century such as fighting cancer with nanotechnology.

Why offer biomedical sciences? According to CRHS Principal Annette Ziegler, data suggests that job opportunities in the health-care field will increase by 62 percent between 2010 and 2020.

"It's a growing field with lots of different career opportunities," she said. "And it's of great interest to our students."

From nursing and medical research to medical device manufacturing and forensics, there are nearly endless possibilities under the biomedical sciences career umbrella.

Ziegler and Sams also pointed out that Minnesota is home to major medical companies.

"With the education they receive [in this program], some students may be able to get an entry level job at one of these corporations while they work toward a college degree," Ziegler said.

Speaking of college, thanks to being

part of PLTW, this year's Principles of Biomedical Sciences class has already had an end-of-course assessment, which, if a student scores high enough, will allow the class to count for college credit.

How did CRHS' first Principles of Biomedical Sciences class fare? A whopping 87 percent of the students who took the test passed, Sams said, meaning they met the testing criteria necessary for college credit.

"This program gets them ready for college while they are still in the comfort of a high school classroom," Sams said. "The teachers are still there to challenge them, and they can do it at a time where it doesn't cost a lot of money."

The Principles of Biomedical Sciences class was the first of four advanced courses to be implemented in the coming years, with one new class being added each year. This year's new course is Human Body Systems, followed by Medical Interventions and then the capstone Biomedical Innovations after that.

[www.anoka.k12.mn.us/crhs](http://www.anoka.k12.mn.us/crhs)  
(763) 506-7100

## CSI: Apollo High School Style



Carissa Hopkins-Hoel  
Communications Coordinator  
St. Cloud Area School District 742

This class is like a scene straight out of a CSI (Crime Scene Investigation) show on television. Lab technicians are performing DNA tests and other tissue tests to determine cause of death, or in the case of today's classroom project, paternity.

Katherine Herrboldt's Principles of Biomedicine class at Apollo High School is performing the DNA tests. The scenario: a mother, who was artificially inseminated, has an ill child. That child needs a liver transplant.

The mother needs to determine paternity to obtain the child's medical history, but the files at the clinic were destroyed. The clinic has narrowed the paternity down to three possible fathers. Based on the DNA samples, the class must now determine which of the three candidates is the father.

The class is using DNA gel electrophoresis, the method of separating DNA, proteins and other fragments, based on size and charge.

In other words, 150 volts of electrical current is connected to the gel wells that contain DNA samples. Positive electricity on one end and negative on the other. The fragments then start to move toward the positive electricity creating the DNA markers that we are so used to viewing on television.

Principles in Biomedicine is one of the year-long PLTW classes available at Apollo. PLTW classes are hands-on courses that put students in an environment that is engaging and empowering to develop the skills they need to thrive in the workforce. Students earn college credit while taking the course.

Herrboldt has been teaching this biomed-

icine class for a couple of years.

"The class starts at the beginning of the year with a fake dead body," explains Herrboldt. "The whole year, the class analyzes the cause of death and [possible] medical causes. It's about investigating the whole person."

She further explains, "Within the first couple of weeks the students rule out murder as a cause of death based on the evidence. Then they move on to look at what diseases or other medical problems the person might have that would have caused or contributed to the death."

Most of the students in Herrboldt's class want to be in the biomedical field: as nurses, doctors, dental hygienists or forensic DNA analysts. As part of the class, they research all of these careers. They learn how much schooling is needed, job demands and average earnings.

Stephanie Scanlon, an Apollo senior, wants to be a dental hygienist.

"I'm interning at the Tech College," says Scanlon. "But, I'm also interning as a social worker, too."

Scanlon is part of the Health Career Exploration program with District 742, a program that pairs students with internships while still in high school.

"It's never boring in this class," says Scanlon. "I look forward to this class."

Herrboldt turns her attention back to the entire class.

"Take a look at your gels. Do you see bubbles? That's how you know it's running," says Herrboldt. "It's like a jacuzzi."

Students are getting a small taste of what a CSI show on television can be like—with one catch.

"Watching CSI, someone in the show says they need to have the DNA test right away," laughs Herrboldt. "And it's done in less than an hour. That's not realistic. The actual process is much longer."

The process takes a minimum of a few days. Just preparing the gel for electrophoresis can take seven to eight hours.

And, just like the process of electrophoresis takes time, so does choosing a career.

Herrboldt says, "Explore all the different careers. Do you want to be a doctor or nurse? Well, there are so many other careers they could go into that they may enjoy."

These students are learning the process of elimination through science as well as in life.

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## Tiny House, **BIG ACHIEVEMENT:** 100 Students Team-up to Build Tiny House



Intermediate District 287

“When you increase your expectations of students, they will rise to meet them,” said Interim Principal Pat Ames of his students. About 100 high school students from the West Education Center contributed to building an amazing tiny house that was completed in October of 2015. It took them approximately one year to complete and they put in well over 1,000 hours of hard work.

With the help of Special Education and Technology Education Instructor Tim Holzhueter and Educational Assistant Larry Polys, students had the opportunity to work “hands-on” on every aspect of the build. Instruction

was customized to meet the needs of each individual student. The students earned a training wage and also received elective credit that counted toward their high school graduation requirements.

According to Holzhueter, the tiny house project kept students engaged in school, improved attendance and behavior, and helped

them improve their social skills. “I had numerous kids tell me that working on the tiny house project was the main reason they came to school that day,” noted Holzhueter.

Student workers were given the opportunity to complete any and all aspects of the home construction project. “Staff focused on quality control, demonstrating, and supervising, rather than doing the work. We tried to let the students complete the work as much as possible,” Holzhueter said.

Students learned many new processes and techniques related to the construction field, tested their craftsmanship, and vastly

improved their measurement and math skills. Several students who worked on the tiny house moved on to taking technical college classes or to working in other construction programs for high school students such as Youth Build

### Our Tiny House specifications:

- Constructed on an 8 foot by 20 foot dual-axle, 10,000 pound, custom built tiny home trailer.
- 195 square feet of usable space, including storage and sleeping lofts.
- 6½ × 8½ foot sleeping loft with dormers – Fits a king size mattress
- 12-volt & 110 volt electrical systems
- Water pump with 26 gallon freshwater tank
- Dual power, 10 gallon water heater — Electric or propane
- 35,000 btu propane furnace
- Propane oven with 3 burners
- Propane/Carbon Monoxide detector
- Full size shower & self-composting toilet
- Double kitchen sink
- 10 cu. ft., top freezer refrigerator
- Two 30 pound propane tanks
- Walls insulated with Ultratouch denim

insulation made from recycled blue jeans

- R17 walls, R25 ceiling/roof, R18.5 floor
- All energy efficient LED lighting
- Steel panel roofing
- Sanded & sealed cedar exterior walls and trim
- Sanded and sealed tongue & groove pine interior walls
- Custom built staircase to sleeping loft
- 15 Jeld-Wen premium wood windows with aluminum clad exterior. Dual-pane, dual-glazed, low-e and with tempered glass for efficiency and safety
- Built based on the Cypress 20 Overlook plans from the Tumbleweed Tiny House Company

The district planned to sell the home with the main goal being to make seed money for another tiny house project in the future. A tiny house built to the specifications and options that this home has would retail for over \$70,000 from a commercial tiny house builder.

[www.district287.org](http://www.district287.org)  
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Detroit Lakes Fergus Falls Moorhead Wadena



# Next Generation Facilities Plan



Edina Public Schools

With the passage of the May 5 facilities referendum, the district is moving forward with the design and implementation phases of its Next Generation Facilities Plan. This phase will include several input opportunities for students, staff, parents and community members as plans are developed to determine overall layout of building design and how different spaces and areas will relate to each other.

## Facilities Planning Process

*The Next Generation Facilities Plan has been developed in partnership with the community over the last several years.*

Post-Referendum Planning (Design and Construction)

### PHASE 1: Schematic Design (SD)

The foundation of any project is in the quality of the Schematic Design (SD). This phase is critical for establishing the scope of the work for all parties. A thorough schematic design ensures fewer surprises

during the project, establishes expectations, and reduces redesign risks. This phase will include a lot of back and forth, with diagrams drawn by hand vs. using the computer to ensure flexibility and creativity, and allow for the possibility for rapid change and adjustment. Key areas to focus on during schematic design include: project start-up, site, floor plans and diagrams, code issues, massing and elevations, other disciplines, and project management issues.

During this phase, the district will utilize Core Planning Teams comprised of staff, administration, parents/community members, and students (middle school and high school).

### PHASE 2: Design Development (DD)

This phase transitions from the overall into the details. Sometimes referred to as the transition from 2D planning to 3D architecture, the goal here is to develop the aesthetic design as well as functional detail components of the project so that as we transition into Construction Documents, the majority of design

decisions are determined, which will allow for greater accuracy and time to produce a thorough construction set. Key areas to focus on during Design Development include: user input and documentation, interior architecture, material and color selection, design development documentation (drawings, details, outline specification), and DD presentation books.

### PHASE 3: Construction Documents (CD)

The design is done and the focus now shifts to a well detailed/coordinated set that is complete at issuance of the package for bidding. A well detailed/coordinated set is one that helps maintain the relationship between the architects, construction managers and the district, through minimal change orders and detailing that will stand the test of time.

### PHASE 4: Bidding (BD)

In addition to contacting potential bidders for submitting on the bid date, this phase is also the time to identify any issues within the set of documents that will impact bid cost and correct or add clarity to these through Addenda. Addenda are used to modify construction documents prior to the bid date. Change orders modify the documents after award of the construction contract. We use addenda to make minor changes and corrections to the documents.

Addenda are written graphic instruments issued to clarify, revise, add to, or delete information in the bidding documents or previously issued addenda. The primary purpose is to clarify questions raised by bidders, issue changes to the documents and correct errors and omissions (e.g., to change the bid date, time and/or location, to add to, delete from or revise the documents, to include additional manufacturers' products through the prior approval process.)

### PHASE 5: Construction Administration (CA)

Construction commences. Throughout this phase, the CM will continue discussions with the district and architects regarding construction progress and any potential issues that may arise.

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# Tiger Build – a Hands-on Learning Approach



St. Cloud Area School District 742

A family of seven will be moving into a six bedroom home which is currently being built by Tech High School seniors and juniors.

The partnership between Tech High School and Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity gives students hands-on experience in skilled labor trades. This is the second year of the partnership with CMHFH.

Known as the Tiger Build house, 19 Tech students are learning about construction while building a home for Habitat for Humanity.

“The students experience service learning while building a home for a local, low-income family,” said Bill Garceau, instructor with Tech High School’s Technology Education Program. “The partnership also allows us to have the home stay local and the students will come back years from

now and be able to show off the home they built.”

Building a house provides the ultimate in career and technical education. Students learn in different ways. Some students learn from reading books, some from observing. For others, it’s hands-on learning that resonates. Tiger Build students are picking up a hammer and nails, running electrical cords, and installing pipes and ducts. They are acquiring the skills to go out into the world to be our next electricians, plumbers, construction workers, architects and engineers.

“We learned from mistakes. If it was done wrong, we just redid it,” said Garceau.

“We’ve had companies swinging by during class and offering jobs to these kids right out of high school,” said Garceau. “Some of the jobs offered were \$18 to \$20 an hour to start. There’s a real need for construction workers.”

One of Garceau’s favorite things about the Tiger Build partnership is the students get to develop skills that they will have for the rest of their lives. “Many students will continue with a construction related career and be very successful,” he said. “Students take pride and ownership of their work and this is exciting to see.”

Students are learning all the key ele-

ments of building a home. Students are exposed to framing, dry walling, roofing, cabinetry, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, Siding, and insulating.

“The students are proud of working as a team to accomplishing the huge task of building a home from start to finish,” Garceau said. “The hands-on learning approach is very appealing to my students.”

Students are constructing for discovery. What students try in high school quite often guides them in their career choice in college, vocational school or as an entrance into the workforce post-graduation.

This year’s Tiger Build family has already been identified. They will be moving into the house after the Tech students have finished it and the house has been moved to a lot in St. Cloud. The three older kids have expressed interest in giving back and helping to build a home when they get to Tech High School.

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St. Cloud State University is an affiliate of **Project Lead the Way**, offering college credits to high school students and helping them develop the skills needed to succeed in the global economy.



ST. CLOUD STATE  
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# Stillwater Schools are Under Construction



Front view of elementary school

Stillwater Area Public Schools

## Building Brookview Elementary School

A new preK through grade five elementary school will open to families in the southwestern corner of the school district in the fall of 2017. The school will be called Brookview Elementary School.

The school will be located in Woodbury at 11099 Brookview Road - right across from Eagle Brook Church. Brookview will serve families from Valley Crossing Community School (VCCS), and will help relieve overcrowding at Afton-Lakeland and Lake Elmo elementary schools.

Collaboration is the focus of the design. The school will be divided into three learning pods — one for preK-1, another for grades 2-3, and

the last for 4-5. Each pod will feature individual classrooms that open up to a common flexible learning space.

## Students Enjoy New Learning Spaces Across the District

Students and teachers are finding they have more space to move around in the newly renovated science classrooms at Stillwater Area High School (SAHS). Half of

the school's existing science rooms were remodeled during the last school year and over the summer. Students are also enjoying remodeled music spaces and an expanded cafeteria.

"The upgraded learning spaces are opening up a world of new opportunities for our students," said Rob Bach, SAHS principal. "Combined with great teachers and an amazing variety of courses, these new spaces help make our school an incredible place to learn."

## Designing a 9-12 High School

Ninth graders will be moving into Stillwater Area High School beginning in the fall of 2017. That means the high school will undergo a significant addition and renovation project. Construction began in April 2016. The following facility changes will be made:

- Reconfigure to a grades 9-12 high school
- Add classroom spaces for ninth graders
- Remodel science labs
- Expand cafeteria and commons areas and improve circulation
- Upgrade learning spaces
- Complete orchestra pit/auditorium upgrade
- Add physical education, fitness and gym spaces
- Upgrade to Pony Stadium entrance, restrooms, and concessions
- Add multi-purpose practice fields

## High School Adapting To Meet Needs Of Freshmen

Ninth graders are coming to Stillwater Area High School and a team of staff, parents and students are planning to give them a warm welcome when they enter the doors in 2017.

The new addition at the high school will provide ninth graders with common spaces to meet and socialize, but ultimately they will not be contained to one area of the school. Ninth graders will have access to the more than 100



Proposed high school campus (from the west)

electives and 20 college-level and advanced courses offered to all high school students.

The transition team has plans in place to provide additional support to ninth graders through things like advisory time and a mentor program pairing ninth graders with student mentors. An academy model is also being planned, which will pair teams of teachers and students together as a way to develop more personal connections with a core group of people.

[stillwaterschools.org](http://stillwaterschools.org)  
(651) 351-8340



## CAREERS IN CONSTRUCTION

### Construction Laborers

Perform tasks involving physical labor at construction sites. May operate hand and power tools of all types: air hammers, earth tampers, cement mixers, small mechanical hoists, surveying and measuring equipment, and a variety of other equipment and instruments.

### Construction Carpenters

Construct, erect, install, and repair structures and fixtures of wood, plywood, and wallboard, using carpenter's hand tools and power tools.

### Construction Managers

Plan, direct, or coordinate, usually through subordinate supervisory personnel, activities concerned with the construction and maintenance of structures, facilities, and systems. Participate in the conceptual development of a construction project and oversee its organization, scheduling, budgeting, and implementation.

### Construction and Building Inspectors

Inspect structures using engineering skills to determine structural soundness and compli-

ance with specifications, building codes, and other regulations. Inspections may be general in nature or may be limited to a specific area, such as electrical systems or plumbing.

### Civil Engineers

Perform engineering duties in planning, designing, and overseeing construction and maintenance of building structures, and facilities, such as roads, railroads, airports, bridges, harbors, channels, dams, irrigation projects, pipelines, power plants, and water and sewage systems.

### Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators

Operate one or several types of power construction equipment, such as motor graders, bulldozers, scrapers, compressors, pumps, derricks, shovels, tractors, or front-end loaders to excavate, move, and grade earth, erect structures, or pour concrete or other hard surface pavement. May repair and maintain equipment in addition to other duties.

### Electricians

Install, maintain, and repair electrical wiring, equipment, and fixtures. Ensure that work is in accordance with relevant codes. May install or service street lights, intercom

systems, or electrical control systems.

### Structural Iron and Steel Workers

Raise, place, and unite iron or steel girders, columns, and other structural members to form completed structures or structural frameworks. May erect metal storage tanks and assemble prefabricated metal buildings.

### Architectural and Civil Drafters

Prepare detailed drawings of architectural and structural features of buildings or drawings and topographical relief maps used in civil engineering projects, such as highways, bridges, and public works. Use knowledge of building materials, engineering practices, and mathematics to complete drawings.

### Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers

Install or repair cables or wires used in electrical power or distribution systems. May erect poles and light or heavy duty transmission towers.

### Cost Estimators

Prepare cost estimates for product manufacturing, construction projects, or services to aid management in bidding on or determining

price of product or service. May specialize according to particular service performed or type of product manufactured.

### Painters, Construction and Maintenance

Paint walls, equipment, buildings, bridges, and other structural surfaces, using brushes, rollers, and spray guns. May remove old paint to prepare surface prior to painting. May mix colors or oils to obtain desired color or consistency.

### Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installers

Apply plasterboard or other wallboard to ceilings or interior walls of buildings. Apply or mount acoustical tiles or blocks, strips, or sheets of shock-absorbing materials to ceilings and walls of buildings to reduce or reflect sound. Materials may be of decorative quality. Includes lathers who fasten wooden, metal, or rockboard lath to walls, ceilings or partitions of buildings to provide support base for plaster, fire-proofing, or acoustical material.

*This is just a sampling of the careers available in the construction industry. For more information go to [www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)*

# Dr. Curt Tryggestad Named the 2017 Superintendent of the Year



Eden Prairie Schools Superintendent, Dr. Curt Tryggestad has been named the 2017 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year by the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA).

Dr. Tryggestad was selected for this honor by a panel of representatives from a variety of Minnesota education organizations. Superintendent of the Year nominees are evaluated on how each candidate demonstrates:

- Leadership for learning—creativity in successfully meeting the needs of his or her school system.
- Communication skills—strength in

both personal and organizational communication.

- Professionalism—constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills, while providing professional development opportunities and motivation to others on the education team.
- Community involvement—active participation in local community activities and understanding of regional, national, and international issues.

“During his time at Eden Prairie Schools, Dr. Tryggestad has become a pillar of leadership and professional excellence within his schools and the surrounding communities,” said MASA Executive Director Dr. Gary Amoroso. “Dr. Tryggestad is deserving of this award in every fashion, and I am excited to continue to watch him lead Eden Prairie Schools for many years to come. On behalf of MASA, I am extremely proud to have him represent our administrators as Minnesota’s 2017 Superintendent of the Year.”

Dr. Tryggestad has served as Superintendent of Eden Prairie Schools since 2012. Eden Prairie Schools has one of the

most comprehensive digital programs in the country, providing individual devices to students from early childhood through high school and targeted, job-embedded professional development opportunities for their teaching staff.

“Dr. Tryggestad exemplifies every day the key values of leadership, communication, professionalism, and community involvement that are the important components of a successful superintendent,” said Elaine Larabee, Chair of the Eden Prairie School Board. “Eden Prairie has a rich and diverse student culture that requires a variety of programming to serve a variety of needs. During his tenure with Eden Prairie Schools, Dr. Tryggestad has led a number of initiatives that have been respectful of that culture and will result in the long term success of all students and of the district itself.”

“When Dr. Tryggestad arrived at Eden

Prairie, I was unsure anyone could lead this district back to unity – and what he has accomplished in this district is nothing short of amazing,” said Kelly Hopper, Eden Prairie Schools Parent and current PTO President at Central Middle School and President of the Eden Prairie Schools PTO Presidents Council.

“Dr. Tryggestad has brought about a digital learning program in our schools that is second to none, he has gotten a very large referendum passed, he has healed years of divide and distrust in our district and he has brought Eden Prairie Schools back to the culture of excellence that we have all longed for. He overcame incredible hurdles to create a culture of trust, innovation and integrity.”

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have all longed for. He overcame incredible hurdles to create a culture of trust, innovation and integrity.”

Dr. Tryggestad served on the Minnesota Online Learning Advisory Council and

**Continued on Page 18**

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## Educators' Road Map to Graduate Studies

### CAEP

CAEP is the new name for the accrediting boards that used to be the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). Essentially the two accrediting boards merged into one in 2016. In 2014, CAEP was recognized by the CHEA as an accrediting board, and they started the transition.

CAEP is responsible for the oversight on accredited programs, and ensures the proper teaching standards are fully implemented for its accredited programs. CAEP is responsible for ensuring teaching programs at multiple levels are teaching the same subject matter in the same way, which helps fully educate teachers best and helps schools, colleges, and other employers have a greater understanding of what they are getting in a CAEP-prepared teacher.

The CAEP commission has a structure for the standards that were identified as a must by the National Academy of Sciences

2010 report, *Preparing Teachers: Building Evidence for Sound Policy*. The NAS panel research found that there were nearly a dozen factors that likely had strong effects on student outcomes of content knowledge, field experience, and quality of teacher candidates. Thus, CAEP adopted multiple standards, listed below:

**Standard 1:** Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

**Standard 2:** Clinical Partnerships and Practice

**Standard 3:** Candidate Quality, Recruitment, and Selectivity

**Standard 4:** Program Impact

**Standard 5:** Provider Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

**See: [www.caepnet.org](http://www.caepnet.org)**

### Teach to Lead

#### *Leading from the Classroom*

Teach to Lead® is an initiative jointly convened by the National Board for Pro-

fessional Teaching Standards, ASCD and the U.S. Department of Education. The program's mission is to advance student outcomes by expanding opportunities for teacher leadership. This is achieved by providing resources, facilitating stakeholder consultation, and encouraging professional collaborations to develop and amplify the work of teacher leaders. Teach to Lead envisions a world in which teachers are valued as the foremost experts in instruction and, as such, are leaders of informing, developing, and implementing education policy and practice to steer systematic improvements to benefit student learning.

**Mission:** Teach to Lead envisions a world in which teachers are valued as the foremost experts in instruction and, as such, are leaders in developing, informing, and implementing education policy and practice to steer systemic improvements to benefit student learning.

#### **Objectives:**

- Increase pathways and opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership
- Elevate teacher voice to inform and develop policy and practice
- Expand existing efforts and create models to steer systemic improvements to benefit student learning

**See: [teachtolead.org](http://teachtolead.org)**

### Teaching and Principal Ambassador Fellows

Teachers perform many vital leadership activities in classrooms and schools, but too often lack opportunities to contribute their knowledge to the development of education policy on a broader scale. The U.S. Department of Education designed the Teaching Ambassador Fellowship to enable outstanding teachers to bring their classroom expertise to and expand their knowledge of the national dialogue about education. In turn, Teaching Ambassador Fellows facilitate the learning and input of other educators and community members.

**Mission:** The Teaching Ambassador Fellowship is designed to improve education for students by involving teachers in the development and implementation of national education policy. The Fellowship seeks to:

- Create a community of teacher leaders who share expertise and collaborate with policymakers and leaders in the federal government on national education issues.
- Involve teachers in developing policies that affect the classroom.
- Expand teachers' leadership in policy at the national, state, and local levels.

**See: [www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherfellowship/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherfellowship/index.html)**

## St. Anthony Village High School – A 2016 Blue Ribbon School



St. Anthony Village High School (SAVHS) serves approximately 720 students in grades 9-12. The St. Anthony New Brighton School District consists of one Community Services program with a preschool, Wilshire Park Elementary, St. Anthony Middle School and St. Anthony Village High School and is geographically the smallest district in Minnesota at 2.37 square miles. The district educates approximately 1,800 students living in St. Anthony Village, New Brighton, Columbia Heights, Roseville, Minneapolis and several

other neighboring communities.

Teachers and administration have developed a scope and sequence of programming that will meet the needs of all students served. By increasing the rigor and encouraging more students to take advanced or accelerated courses in elementary and middle school, the high school has enjoyed a higher percentage of students who enter the high school prepared for advanced or honors course work. As a result, each year a high percentage of our students take advantage of Advanced Placement, College in

the Schools and Post-Secondary Enrollment Options. The STEM program in the elementary and middle schools has resulted in a growing population of high school students taking Tech Ed classes such as CAD, SolidWorks, Fabrication, SuperHigh Mileage and Electrical Engineering. Mentorship and work-study programs are available for students exploring career paths. By focusing on individual students, teachers and counselors chart a path of education that will engage them and inspire them to complete their high school education, ready to enter the workforce or post-secondary education.

Student emotional development is promoted and supported in a variety of general to specific ways. High school teachers, counselors and support staff are intentional about connecting with the students they work with. Health curriculum focuses on making positive lifestyle choices in aspects of health such as mental and emotional health. For ninth grade students, Connection Crew and the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) program smooth the transition from middle school to high school by confronting and addressing the issues that cause students to struggle emotionally, fail courses or engage in harmful behavior.

Social development of students occurs through a variety of activities. Extracurricular activities are an essential component to a well-

rounded high school experience and our goal is to provide these experiences to every student. Students need and enjoy the opportunity to connect with their peers and teacher/advisor/coaches outside of the classroom setting. At SAVHS, over 70% of students participate in athletics or activities.

St. Anthony Village has a long history of community support. Despite the uncertain economy of the late 1950s the community rallied to build a school and established an independent school district. As the community continued to grow, so did the school. The high school was expanded in 1968, 1996, and again in 2006. Two times the district felt the pressure of consolidation and both times the community fought to retain their independent school district. When SAVHS celebrated its 50 plus years of existence by hosting the 50th All Class Reunion, of the nearly 8,000 students who have graduated from the high school, over 35% returned to participate in the reunion activities. Each year the Alumni association recognizes and inducts members into the St. Anthony Village High School Hall of Fame.

[schools.isd282.org/hs](http://schools.isd282.org/hs)  
(612) 706-1100



# Sara Schmidt, Eisenhower Elementary/XinXing Academy, Selected MN National Outstanding Assistant Principal



Sara Schmidt, assistant principal of Eisenhower Elementary/XinXing Academy in Hopkins, MN and a member of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA), is Minnesota's 2017 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. MESPA and NAESP are 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.

"I believe that all students can, and will, succeed," wrote Sara Schmidt in her National Outstanding Assistant Principal application. "I believe that with appropriate support, all students, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or trauma, can make gains and reach their full potential. I believe that as adults, we have the ability to positively transform the future for the young people we influence each and every day."

Eisenhower Elementary/XinXing Academy, where Schmidt serves as assistant principal, serves over seven hundred diverse students in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade in two collaborative programs: a neighborhood Title I school and an early Mandarin Chinese immersion program. "We must view students as individuals with individual successes and challenges, and we must meet students where they are in order to provide the support they need to succeed," said Schmidt. "This is the area I believe I have made the largest impact on student success as an assistant principal."

Nik Lightfoot, Assistant Superintendent of Hopkins Public Schools, said of Schmidt, "Sara is a highly effective, gifted

administrator who serves students, families, staff members, and our community with a 'can do' spirit. She places student welfare and achievement at the front of her decisions, and exemplifies our mission of excellence for every student, every day! Her willingness to go above and beyond is highly recognized in the building and in our community."

Among Schmidt's accomplishments as an assistant principal are her improvement of the school's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) systems. Through PBIS, she has reduced behavioral referrals by 75% and greatly reduced out-of-school suspensions, with zero suspensions so far this year. Sara has collaborated with district experts and explored best practices in creating a more rigorous intervention-based system to support students through RTI. Through these efforts, special education referral rates are half that of other schools in the district. "Because Sara knows so much about instruction, and is so visible around the building, teachers welcome her in a coaching role," said Paul Domer, Principal of Eisenhower Elementary/XinXing Academy. "They trust her because her expertise, caring demeanor, and strong ability to follow through with her promises."

Assistant Superintendent Lightfoot confirmed the results of Schmidt's PBIS and RTI work, "... Sara's passion for education equity deeply and affirmatively affects Eisenhower/XinXing Academy's learning environment. Her work with anti-bullying efforts and restorative practices has been nothing less than transformational."

In addition to her systematic work that has affected the whole school, Schmidt also connects with students and staff on a personal level, as noted by Courtney Davis, School Counselor at Eisenhower Elementary/XinXing Academy: "Patient and caring, Mrs. Schmidt always gives each student her full attention while considering his or her individual needs. She shows a genuine interest in each student's life. Mrs. Schmidt starts her day eating breakfast with the kindergarteners and always ends her day coloring pictures with the students who are waiting to be picked up to go home. Going above and beyond in her role, Mrs. Schmidt attends every after school activity... She has without question changed our building climate for the better while cel-

brating milestones with staff, recognizing every person with gratitude from teacher to bus driver, hosting holiday celebrations in her home, and encouraging staff morale building with ice cream socials and other events."

Principal Domer wrote in his letter of recommendation for Schmidt, "Sara has had a profound impact on the student and staff culture in our building. She has a reputation for building strong relationships with everyone in our school. She does this through acts of appreciation, by demonstrating high levels of skill in her various job duties, and by getting great results with everything she manages. Students, teachers, and parents consistently describe her as a kind, competent, and passionate leader. As her principal, I am truly reliant on Sara to

"I believe that all students can, and will, succeed. I believe that with appropriate support, all students, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or trauma, can make gains and reach their full potential. I believe that as adults, we have the ability to positively transform the future for the young people we influence each and every day."

—Sara Schmidt

manage the many in-the-moment details of any given school day. I trust her like no other and appreciate our collaborative relationship."

In addition to the high praise given by Schmidt's supervisors, peers, and school staff, a number of students ranging from kindergarten through sixth grade drew pictures and wrote letters of appreciation for Assistant Principal Schmidt.

"When I reflect upon people who have left a lasting mark on my life, I think about the type of relationships I have developed with them . . . It is with that in mind that the legacy I hope to leave at Eisenhower Elementary/XinXing Academy revolves around the relationships I have with students," said Schmidt. "The students are why I do what I do, and keeping students in school, and in the classroom learning, is my passion."

[hopkinsschools.org](http://hopkinsschools.org)  
(952) 988-4000



## Dr. Curt Trygggestad Continued from Page 16

the Minnesota Technology Task Force, both appointments made by the Minnesota Commissioner of Education. Later he was named by MDE to be a participant in the Achieve Open Educational Resources (OER) Institute, established to help a group of states address issues on OER implementation, including the uses of measures of quality for evaluating OER to meet challenging College and Career Readiness/Common Core state standards. He continues to promote and share his expertise in the integration of technology into education both at the local level and statewide. At the state level, Dr. Trygggestad has served as chair of the governing board of Infinity Online Academy and in leadership positions for both MASA and the Minnesota Rural Education Association (MREA). He currently is the 2016-17 President-Elect for the MASA Board of Directors.

In 2010, he was awarded the Administrator of Excellence Award by the MASA, and was recognized by the Minnesota Rural Education Association (MREA) with an Exemplary Program Award for a bullying prevention program. Dr. Trygggestad received the MASA 2015 Richard Green Scholars Program Award

for his doctoral research, "The Role of the Minnesota Superintendent as a Technology Leader: A Delphi Study."

Dr. Trygggestad began his duties as superintendent of Eden Prairie Schools on July 1, 2012. Prior to working at Eden Prairie Schools, he was the Superintendent at Little Falls Community Schools, Superintendent at Esko Public Schools, and Secondary Principal at Pine City Public Schools. Dr. Trygggestad began his career in education as an instrumental music instructor.

"I am truly honored to receive this award," said Dr. Trygggestad. "This recognition is a tribute to the hard work, dedication and outstanding accomplishments of our entire Eden Prairie Schools community."

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