

Making a Difference One Day at a Time



Executive members of the Commission (L to R) Mayor Dave Kleis, Zane Murphy, Gabriela Hennes, Siham Fowzy-Abdallah, Nasro Shire and Emmanuel Oppong. Photo courtesy of the City of St. Cloud.

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

In the early morning hours at North Junior High School, you'll find Nasro Shire sporting her blaze orange hall monitor vest. She wears it proudly while assisting and directing kids to class. Shire is the kind of student that believes in making an impact on her surroundings.

"School is fun, a lot of kids don't think so, but I do," says Shire. "Hall monitoring is fun. We get to change the school day by day, by talking with kids."

"The purpose is to not only involve, but incorporate the opinion of the young people in the community," says Mayor Dave Kleis. "Often we only get the opinion and perspective of people of who show up, which is typically under representing the population."

Shire, an eighth-grader, takes the mindset of making a difference day by day quite literally. Shire is not only a hall monitor at North Junior High, she's been a member of the Community Problem Solvers team and is currently a member of the St. Cloud Youth Commission. The commission is made up of 13 students that have been chosen to serve on the community-based group to work closely with the city of St. Cloud on projects.

The group's mission: "The St. Cloud Youth Commission (SCYC) will seek to provide an avenue for young members of the St. Cloud community to advocate for neighborhoods, communities and organizations in an advisory role at a municipal level."

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"Hey, World!" Minnetonka Students Share Their Chinese Immersion Experience

Minnetonka Public Schools

What happens when children begin learning a second language at an early age? They become fluent, much more quickly than adults.

Meet the Hughes family: Xander 展涛, Vaughn 展望 and Quinn 可馨 have been learning Mandarin Chinese since preschool. Xander is a seventh-grader at MME, Vaughn is a sixth-grader at MMW and Quinn is a fourth-grader at Excelsior Elementary. They are also the stars of Hey, World!, a kid-hosted YouTube Channel in Mandarin with English subtitles.

"We created Hey, World! 你好世界! because we want to share our love of language, travel, learning and family with others," explains their father Brett Hughes, the writer and producer of the show. "We want to leave a record of what it's like for an American kid to grow up with a Mandarin-immersion education in the early 21st century. We hope to build an international audience and interact with viewers both home and abroad." It's a great way for Xander, Vaughn and Quinn to use their Chinese in a fun and rewarding way.

The Hughes family has traveled, but never



lived abroad. Their language fluency is the direct result of immersion education. "We had two reasons for pursuing a Chinese immersion education. First, Mandarin is the most commonly used language in the world with over one billion speakers. Considering there are 'just' 301 million Americans, being multilingual gives a student or young professional from the United States a distinct advantage," shared Brett. "Even when

"Even when real-time translation technology is perfected, there will be no substitute for face-to-face genuine conversation or the ability to internalize thoughts in a non-native language."

real-time translation technology is perfected, there will be no substitute for face-to-face genuine conversation or the ability to internalize thoughts in a non-native language."

"The second reason we are raising bilingual speakers is because of the way a tonal language [Chinese] requires the brain to use both hemispheres. Most

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From the Blog:

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22nd Annual Minnesota Autism Conference

The 22nd Annual Minnesota Autism Conference will be held April 26–29, 2017 at the DoubleTree Hilton Hotel Minneapolis — Park Place in Minneapolis. During the conference, experts, educators, therapists, direct support professionals, parents, caregivers, and people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) will connect, collaborate, advocate, and educate.

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up, which is typically under representing the population.”

Mayor Kleis believes it gives the kids the opportunity to engage and self-initiate. The students choose their own leadership and projects.

“What was great is when we asked the students who wanted to be the chair, most of them raised their hand to be chair,” says Kleis. “We are there to support them. They are learning the democratic process and city functions.”

“Education is key,” says Shire. “Community Problem Solvers impacted my life. It taught me how to solve problems. The SCYC is more hands-on. It is for a positive cause . . . I’ll be part of the community that will make change.”

Shire goes on to laugh, “We’re not getting out of school for nothing!”

The group is taking on a large project this year. As one of the executive officers, she’ll have a larger role in the coordination of the project. The group is planning a variety show to be held at the River’s Edge Convention

Center during the city’s Fall Expo.

This event will be the first of its kind. The idea behind it is to bring in many cultures and many talents. They’d like to incorporate a fashion show as well. The event will be a fundraiser and the proceeds from the event will go to Adopt-a-Village, which helps to provide shoes, clothes, books and other things for children.

Emmanuel Oppong, community engagement coordinator for the city of St. Cloud, says, “The students came up with the idea [variety show], but in terms of the logistics, we’re here to support them.”

Mayor Dave Kleis never misses a meeting. It’s important to him to stay engaged with the students.

“It’s always impressive to watch,” says Kleis. “Everything is done through Robert’s Rules and the students have done a pretty good job of building a consensus group.”

The group meets for one hour every month, which is why the group has learned to stay on task. The first meeting, the group was taught Robert’s Rules of Order, how to use the

mics in the city chambers and how to allow others to speak.

“With the commission, everybody gets a voice,” explains Shire. “They let me speak my mind. The thing I’ve learned is that I do have a voice to change the community.”

Shire takes her gender, color and religion as motivation to be a better person and pursue a career in business, preferably fashion and design.

As Shire describes North’s environment, the announcements overhead are shared including a quote by John Wesley.

“The way we build a better tomorrow is by building better people today. We do all the good we can. By all the means we can. In all the ways we can. In all the places we can. At all the times we can. To all the people we can. As long as ever we can.”

“At North, our Eagle pride and Eagle Nation, it’s the one thing we’re good at- bringing people up,” says Shire.

Travis Okerlund, assistant principal at North, gave Shire a nudge for the St. Cloud Youth Commission.

“Nasro was a clear leader last year, but she lacked some direction on how to have her voice heard,” explains Okerlund. “We spent a lot of time in my office last year working on some conflicts she was having. Rather than punish or give consequences, we pushed her to challenge herself. Which, to her credit, she did.”

“I want to thank Mr. Okerlund,” says Shire. “If it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t be here. I’m not a ‘straight A’ student, but the teachers connect with the kids. We’re like a big Eagle family.”

Shire is excited about her time with the commission and is looking forward to sharing their first project with the St. Cloud community. Keep an eye out for their upcoming event!

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“Hey, World!” Continued from Page 1

languages don’t require use of the right hemisphere to process pitch and tone while one is speaking or listening. We added violin to our musical repertoire for the same reason: to grow more neurological connections and challenge the kids’ brains at an age when these connections can be more easily built and maintained,” he added.

This family’s opinion is supported by decades of research. As reported by NPR, Harvard researcher Gigi Luk studied 100 fourth-grade students in Massachusetts and found, “Bilingual students also scored higher on tests of executive functioning . . . Even though they didn’t have huge mental dictionaries to draw on, they may have been great puzzle-solvers, taking into account higher-level concepts such as whether a single sentence made sense within an overall storyline.” Other research cited in this article contends that switching between languages is a skill that requires focus, “Bilinguals pay focused attention without being distracted,” further evidence of executive functioning.

Our District’s student assessment data supports this theory that language immersion challenges children’s brains and develops more neurological pathways which increases flexibility in thinking across all subject areas. Since Chinese and Spanish immersion began in 2007, we have carefully monitored student achievement in both English and the target language (Spanish or Chinese). On both NWEA and state MCA tests beginning in third grade, Chinese immersion students outperform their English program peers in both reading and math, even though the tests are administered in English.

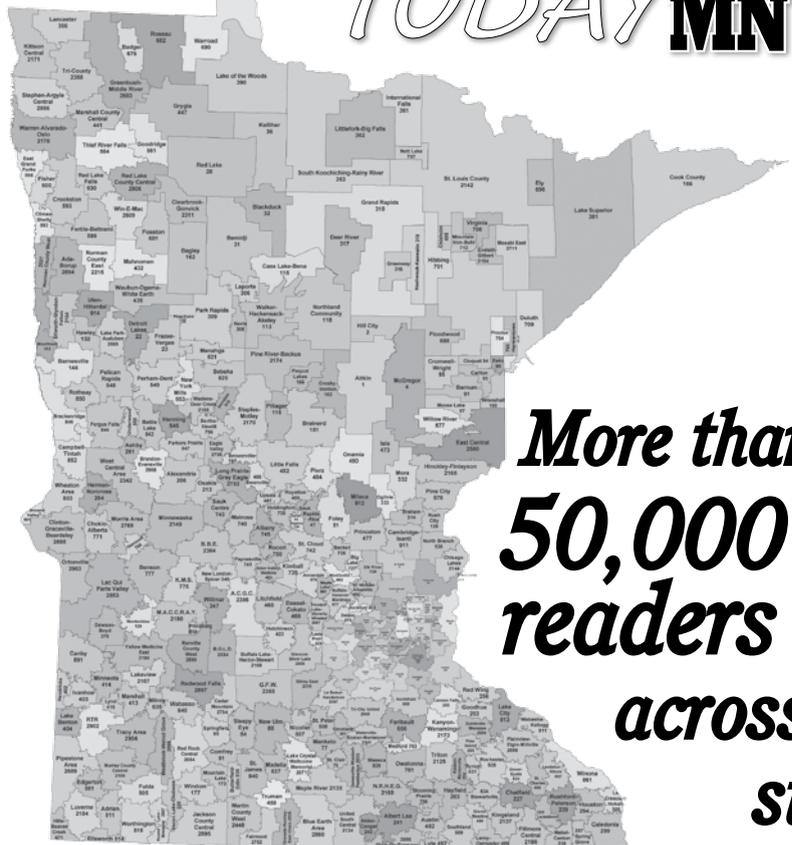
For the Hughes family, they have seen first-hand benefits of language immersion. They took a trip to Asia in 2014 and visited Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo, which provided a lot of video for their “Hey, World!” series. Quinn, the youngest in the family, says, “I think the [Chinese immersion] program is very educational. It’s cool that we can speak another language now. It was an amazing experience to go to China and speak to the people in their language.”

Other immersion families who have traveled with their elementary children have had similar experiences. “It really is impressive to see our young American children speak with native-like fluency in China. Our students have spoken with government officials, elders in the park and business owners in the market,” shared Scenic Heights principal Joe Wacker, who has three children enrolled in Chinese Immersion. “There is a universal expression of surprise when adults in China hear our Minnetonka students speak in Mandarin. It is very unexpected and their language fluency is quite strong.”

For a father who describes his own Chinese speaking as “just enough to embarrass,” Mr. Hughes is confident that raising immersion children is a gift that will last a lifetime. “I am truly envious of my kids who have been learning Chinese and Spanish since they were toddlers.”

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Capstone Projects Launch Opportunities For Adaptive Physical Education



Communications, Edina Public Schools

Six contraptions built by Edina High School students have transformed adaptive physical education at South View into an inclusive opportunity to play games and sports. The creations could all be described as a type of catapult and were designed by 20 Edina High School (EHS) students in their capstone engineering and design class, taught by Tim Berndt.

A conversation between Berndt and Lori Volding, developmental adapted phys. ed. teacher at South View, was the beginning. Volding had seen a similar apparatus at a conference and mentioned to Berndt that it would be great to have one. Berndt knew it would be great

for his class, one of the Project Lead the Way offerings at EHS. The students researched the needs of the adaptive phys. ed. students, designed and built the catapults to help students shoot baskets, play ladder golf, throw Velcro balls at targets, play badminton and other gym games. It is a melding of authentic learning and service learning, and a demonstration of unity across ability levels.

Long tubes, duct tape, and ropes were constructed into wooden-based apparatus that operated with the tug of a string or push of a button so that students with limited physical mobility could take part in the action. “My students spent a lot of time researching and thinking about the needs of the adaptive class students, some of whom may only have mobility in their wrist,” Berndt said. “They creatively found ways for the students to activate the catapults. This was a real-life engineering experience for them.”

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When Volding’s DAPE students arrived



in the South View city gym for class, they found that Berndt and his students had lined up the contraptions in a row with all of the accompanying nets, targets and stacked plastic bottles. The EHS students provided hands-on guidance to the middle schoolers on how to operate each apparatus, and also were enthusiastic cheerleaders when students succeeded in their efforts . . . and even when they didn’t.

The contraptions are now part of the DAPE phy ed equipment collection, along with instruction manuals and demonstration videos also prepared by the EHS students to ensure class periods of fun for everyone.

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* National Autism Indicators Study, Drexel University

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Autism — Tips for Teachers and Administrators



Teachers and administrators may not typically be thought of as “First Responders”, but when a situation arises at school, they will in fact be the first ones to respond to a crisis or escalated situation involving an individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder. With this in mind, it is essential that school personnel understand the basics of autism spectrum disorders and the best ways to respond to an individual on the spectrum. With proper training and information, teachers and administrators

will not only have the ability to de-escalate a situation but also to respond to crises in a more safe and effective way. Equipping teachers and administrators with the proper knowledge base and skill set will allow them to ensure the safest learning environment for children on the autism spectrum.

Educate Yourself

Have a working understanding of autism and what that means for your particular student(s). Your education about autism will evolve as your relationship with the family and the student develops and your knowledge about the disorder and skills in dealing with its impact on the classroom grows.

your particular student(s). Your education about autism will evolve as your relationship with the family and the student develops and your knowledge about the disorder and skills in dealing with its impact on the classroom grows.

Reach Out to the Parents

Parents are your first and best source of information about their child. Establish a working partnership and building trust with

your student’s parents are essential. Establishing mutually agreed modes and patterns of communication with the family throughout the school year is also very important.

Prepare the Classroom

There are ways you can accommodate some of the needs of children with autism in your classroom that will enhance their opportunity to learn without sacrificing your plans for the class in general. Of course, there are practical limitations on how much you can modify the physical characteristics of your classroom, but even a few accommodations to support a child with autism may have remarkable results.

Educate Peers and Promote Social Goals

You should make every effort to promote acceptance of the child with autism as a full member and integral part of the class, even if that student only attends class for a few hours a week. As the teacher of a child with autism, you can create a social environment that encourages positive interactions between the child with autism and his or her typically developing peers throughout the day.

Collaborate on the Implementation of an Educational Plan

Since your student with autism has special needs beyond academics, his or her educational plan is defined by an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is a blueprint for everything that will happen to a child in the next school year.

Manage Behavioral Challenges

For students with autism, problem behaviors may be triggered for a variety of reasons. Such behaviors may include temper tantrums, running about the room, loud vocalizations, self-injurious activities, or other disruptive or distracting behaviors. The key is to be consistent with how you react to the behaviors over time and to use as many positive strategies to promote pro-social behaviors as possible.

www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/educator.html

Artists Wanted for Autism Awareness Month Display at Bank



AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

The Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank is seeking artwork created by artists with autism to feature in its gallery during Autism Awareness Month in April. Artists are welcome to submit a variety of different media, including photography, paintings, drawings, sculpture, and others. If the artwork is intended to be displayed on the wall, it should be provided in a format that is ready to be hung. If you or someone you know would

like to submit art for display, AuSM will accept submissions, on behalf of the bank, at its office in St. Paul from Feb. 27–March 24.

Artwork submitted for this display will be on display from April 3–26 and seen primarily by bank staff and visitors; because the bank is a secure facility, the general public will not have access to the gallery. However, artists whose work is being displayed will be invited to an optional special event at the bank on April 26 from 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m. Artists must make arrangements for their artwork to be picked up from the bank on April 26. For additional information, e-mail info@ausm.org or call Jillian Nelson at AuSM at (651) 647-1083.

www.ausm.org



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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

STEM Grants

The PPG Industries Foundation supports projects in the areas of research and development; manufacturing; information technology; and industries related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) professions. The foundation is interested in education programs related to STEM, such as collision repair training, color science, ceramic engineering, chemistry, and material science.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.ppgcommunities.com/Our-Story/Education.aspx

Environmental and Science Education Grants

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

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.wm.com/about/community/charitable-giving.jsp

Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund Grants

The Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund makes grants in the areas of education, child development and welfare, and the environment and conservation. Examples of previously funded programs include expanding music education for students in kindergarten through grade 12 and promoting professional develop-

ment for music teachers; hands-on botanical and art museum experiences for children who are underserved; and employment and leadership support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Priority is given to programs that address education, environment and conservation, and youth development.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.bridgestoneamericas.com/en/corporate-social-responsibility/community

Let It Grow Contest & Grant

The Let It Grow Contest invites teachers and community adults to vote daily for a school (public, private or parochial schools containing any class with students in grades 6, 7, or 8; home schools are not eligible) to win a \$5,000 grant. The school with the most votes proportionate to the school's student population, and five schools with the next highest number of votes, will win:

- One Grand Prize: One \$5,000 grant to be used toward a garden/gardening supplies and an introduction to a local agronomist.
- Five Runner-Up Prizes: One \$1,000 grant to be used toward a garden/gardening supplies and the opportunity for an in-school celebratory event. To win the in-school celebratory event, all winning schools will be asked to create an original 1–2 minute video explaining what their school plans to do with the grant money.

Deadline: The contest ends at 5 p.m. March 14, 2017.

Website: www.thescienceofsoil.com/contests/3

Project Produce: Fruit and Veggie Grants for Schools

The Chef Ann Foundation and Skoop have teamed up to help schools increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables for children and youth, and nutrition education in schools. The purpose of Project Produce is to create planned lunchroom activities to showcase and taste fresh vegetables and fruits. Proposed projects must be planned with the intention of offering activities to all students in the school building. Lunchtime-based projects are preferred because they offer access to all students.

Grants of \$2,500 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.chefannfoundation.org/programs-and-grants/project-produce

High School Weight Room Grants

The Lift Life Foundation's mission is to help provide young people with tools to improve their fitness levels and boost self-worth. The foundation provides high schools across the United States with the opportunity to have their school weight room transformed with brand-new equipment. To be considered for a weight room makeover, high schools must be nominated. Anyone may nominate a high school; nominations must be submitted online.

Deadline: Nominations are accepted year-round.

Website: www.liftlifefoundation.org/#spark

Let's Play Imagination Playground Grants

KaBoom! supports organizations that build playgrounds for children and youth to ensure they have the opportunity to lead an active and healthy lifestyle. KaBoom! grants support community-inspired projects that engage the larger community in all aspects of project planning and playground build execution.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: kaboom.org/grants/creative_play

Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grants

The National PTA Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grants provide matching grants to local PTA art projects within their school community. Funded projects will increase access to learning opportunities in the literary, media, visual, or performing arts for at-risk or underserved audiences. Arts projects must actively engage families and community partners to strengthen family and school partnerships.

Grants up to \$1,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted through March 17, 2017.

Website: www.pta.org/members/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3101

Music Performance Attendance Grants

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

Grants up to \$500 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are due June 30, annually.

Website: sites.google.com/site/gewirtzkidstoconcerts

Roads to Reading Literacy Initiative Grants

The Roads to Reading Literacy Initiative (RTRLI) provides grants of new children's books as educational resources to schools, child-care centers, and nonprofit organizations serving children in need from birth to age 16. Donated books must be used for on-site literacy programs that target underserved communities and are administered by the applicant organization.

Deadline: Applications are accepted from April 1 through September 25, annually.

Website: pwirtr.org

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

Japan Foundation Center Grants

The Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership (CGP) awards education grants for projects designed to increase awareness and understanding of Japan in the United States by students and teachers in kindergarten through grade 12. Grants may fund support of teacher training, curriculum development, and community outreach efforts. The program has generally funded projects such as lecture series about Japanese culture and society, and teacher workshops on how to teach Japanese culture and society.

Grants up to \$5,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Grant applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.cgp.org/grassroots-exchange-and-education/education-grants

Ezra Jack Keats Minigrant Program 2017

A EJK Mini-Grant offers funding of up to \$500 and the opportunity to design and implement a creative program for your school or library. A Mini-Grant is an award of up to \$500 that the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation gives to eligible organizations to provide creative, innovative programs that support or extend the Common Core Standards in education. Programs may serve children from preschool to grade 12.

Deadline: March 31, 2017

Website: www.ezra-jack-keats.org/section/ezra-jack-keats-mini-grant-program-for-public-libraries-public-schools

Redwood Falls Philanthropist Contributes \$1 Million to Tech Center

Community/school collaboration will educate high school students and be available to local manufacturers as well

A \$1 million contribution from a local philanthropist will enable Redwood Falls to join the likes of Alexandria, Fergus Falls, and White Bear Lake, whose school districts have embraced the value of technical education for its students alongside close collaborations with its local manufacturers.

Orrin Estebo, a Redwood Falls attorney, recently committed \$1 million to establish the Orrin S. Estebo Career Development Center at the local high school.

Rick Ellingworth, Redwood Falls' school superintendent, said the donation—part of a \$2 million overall plan—will help enable the district to remodel the west wing of its current high school to develop a manufacturing tech center for high school students as well as local manufacturers for after-hours training.

Local manufacturers, he said, have voiced concern about their ability to maintain their workforce in the face of Baby Boomer retirements over the next five years. "Can we work together somehow so that kids who are graduating from here can be aware they don't have to move away to get a good job?" They can walk across the street and do that, but they have to know about it.

He said the school's wood shop looks like the shops that I grew up in. What we're

wanting to do is partner with some businesses in town and create a career development center that would be for kids by day and for adults after the school day ends.

"Orrin has been promoting this idea for years," Ellingworth said. "He said the world doesn't necessarily need more four-year college graduates. We need more people who can earn a good living and make a difference right in their local communities with their hands."

Estebo, who grew up on a farm, has "an appreciation for people who are able to do some kind of mechanical things themselves." There are good local jobs for those who are willing to get training, he said.

Estebo is a longtime patron to the Redwood Falls school district. He made his first major contribution in the early '90s using the proceeds of a life insurance policy he had received following the death of his wife Nancy. As a teacher in Redwood Falls, Nancy had a school-sponsored life insurance policy for \$100,000.

I wasn't expecting this," Estebo said and promptly directed the money to fund technology, a coordinator and a computer lab for the district, according to Ellingworth, which, he adds, "was pretty revolutionary back then."

A few years later, Estebo contributed \$250,000 to start a Dollars for Scholars chapter for Redwood Falls, a program that awards scholarships to students who are going to be graduating from the local school. He has since given another \$1 million to that project.

"He and Nancy didn't have any kids of their own. He's done very well in life. He would say he's lucky, we would say there's a lot of brightness that goes along with that."

Ellingworth pitched the idea of a \$2 million project to Estebo at lunch, after which Estebo announced that he wanted to kick it off with a million of his own.

"We've always had a collaborative spirit around here that said two good entities working together can produce more than two good entities working in isolation," Ellingworth said. "Orrin has kicked this up with this gift."

Ellingworth said that he and Estebo will try to find other business players to contribute to the project.

"By the end of this project we're going



to be on the cutting edge of doing things in partnership with the business community, who by the way, already contribute through the tax base. We want to take it to the next level."

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Workforce Development: Manufacturing Partners

Training Tomorrow's Workforce

By Jessica Lipa
 Career & Technical Education Director for
 Anoka-Hennepin Schools

If the future of the economy is dependent upon an educated, skilled workforce, then improving the skills, knowledge, and credential attainment of our workforce is critical. In order for that to happen, intentional collaboration and partnerships are needed with local school districts, workforce agencies, and industries.

The Anoka-Hennepin School District is aligning itself with employers to close ties with industries and develop competent, high performing high school graduates who are successful in the high skill, high demand manufacturing workforce.

Anoka-Hennepin Schools have five large high schools and the Secondary Technical Education Program (STEP). The five high schools offer traditional technology education courses, and the STEP program (attached to Anoka Technical College) provides courses in advanced machining and engineering. Students in 11th and 12th grades who attend STEP can earn industry recognized credentials and college credit. With ever-increasing employment projections in the manufacturing field, it seemed

impossible that classes leading into manufacturing careers would be difficult to fill.

A New Pathway

After several years of declining enrollment in traditional technology education and advanced machining courses and input from industry partners, Minnesota's largest school district determined it needed to develop a career pathway in manufacturing to help meet the needs of the future workforce and assure that their students were ready to compete in a global economy. With strong support from Superintendent David Law and the school board, the Career & Technical Education department sought out the expertise, knowledge, and background from the Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce (Manufacturing Committee) and Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association (MPMA).

A Manufacturing Advisory Board was formed and met monthly to evaluate and analyze the district's current model and design a new, innovative manufacturing career pathway for students. The Advisory Board's purpose was not to "rubber stamp" what already existed; rather it was to offer suggestions for improving the program and supporting potential growth and expansion.



The industry was changing and the district did not believe that the courses, curriculum, and equipment met the needs of the future workforce.

It was determined that the school district should not chair or lead the discussion but, rather, should listen and seek input. John LeTourneau, a representative from the Chamber, chaired the committee to create a cohesive group, lead the meetings, and provide recommendations to the school district. Together with Luann

Bartley (MPMA), the school district developed a high-quality committee of local and respected industry leaders who are dedicated to supporting the community, aware of current trends, and visionaries for the future of manufacturing. Membership included representatives from the school district, Anoka County Workforce Center, Anoka Technical College, Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED),

Continued on Page 17



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Metal Shop Meets the Technology Age



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

Sparks are flying and metal is screeching in the Intro to Welding class at Apollo High School. Students are hard at work designing metal end tables. The most exciting part for these students is the use of the newly acquired and technologically advanced plasma cutter.

Students have chosen a cut-out design for their tabletop. With the new plasma cutter, a process in which an accelerated jet of hot plasma cuts through metal, they are able to import images into the computer, adjust size and measurement on an electronic grid, and layout where the image will be cut out of the large piece of sheet metal. Within a matter of minutes, the design is cut from a piece of sheet metal and ready for grinding.

In the background, students are grinding their cut-outs to smooth edges in preparation for welding their pieces together.

"There's a huge vacuum for this kind of work," says Mark Weimer, technical education teacher at Apollo. "It's been building for about

15 years. You used to be able to just do it [the job] with your hands. Now, you have to know how to use a computer, too."

Weimer is referring to CNC (Computer Numerical Controlled) work: basically, any machine that is computer or robot controlled.

"We just toured three companies by Monticello," explains Weimer. "They range from making medical parts to other machinery parts, but all have been CNC milled."

The students in this class learn the old "with my own two hands" style as well as CNC. This entry level class gives them a taste of machinery, turning metal and how to work with a plasma cutter. The first advanced class in welding will be offered in the spring of 2017.

Tyler Evinrude, a 10th-grade student, is taking his first welding class.

"I took this class as an elective because it seemed like it would be fun. And it is a lot of fun!" says Evinrude.

Evinrude is currently working on a hanging plant holder.

"I'm definitely considering going into welding," says Evinrude. "In this class, I'm



learning to weld and what machines do what. There are so many aspects and so many different ways to get the same outcome."

Symone Douglas, another 10th-grade student at Apollo, is also taking this class for the first time. Douglas was in an engineering class and had the opportunity to work on the lathe.

"I really enjoyed working on the lathe," says Douglas. "So, I decided to take this class. I did it because I just wanted to experience it. I plan on going into psychology."

Douglas is the only girl in the welding classes. She says, "It's cool being in a class with all boys, but there is a little extra pressure to do a good job."

However, Douglas doesn't let that bother her. "I've always been the handy person in my house," she explains.

"If you want to take this course, there is a lot of measuring. Be good at it or learn to do it well during class," Douglas advises.

The class has become so popular, they receive project requests.

Earlier this year, Weimer's class received a request for podiums for an upcoming swim meet. The request came in on a Tuesday and the class had them finished by that Saturday meet. The podiums will also be used in the spring at track meets. The class will also be creating an art piece inspired by Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech, "I Have A Dream." The piece will be



made with the wood from the old gymnasium floor of Apollo, laser engraved and have metal silhouettes.

"I'm going to make this my baby," says Weimer of the welding program for District 742 students. "It's got a long way to go to get it up to where I want it."

Weimer, along with Douglas and Evinrude, encourage students to join the class. Even just for a bit of fun or experience.

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132 Teachers are Candidates for Minnesota Teacher of the Year

The 2017 Minnesota Teacher of the Year will be chosen from a field of 132 candidates. These candidates have accepted their nominations and completed the required materials to become eligible for the honor.

This year's program will name the 53rd Minnesota Teacher of the Year, celebrating the tradition of excellence in teaching in Minnesota. Candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade and Adult Basic Education teachers, from public or private schools.

The 2017 Minnesota Teacher of the Year will be announced Sunday, May 7, at the Radisson Blu Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn. Over the coming weeks, a 25-member panel of community leaders will name a group of semifinalists and finalists.

Abdul Wright, who teaches language arts at Best Academy in Minneapolis, was named 2016 Minnesota Teacher of the Year on May 15, 2016.

For a full list of the candidates go to:
www.educationminnesota.org/news/media-resources/news-releases/132-teachers-are-candidates-for-Minnesota-Teacher



Breanna Blad



Dennis Loeks



Sue Lundquist

Sue Lundquist is Candidate for Teacher of the Year

Robbinsdale Area Schools

Plymouth Middle School English teacher Sue Lundquist has been named a candidate for 2017 Education Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

Lundquist, who has been teaching at Plymouth Middle School (PMS) since 2001, is also the department chair for English at the school. Her two children also attended school in the district.

"Being nominated for Teacher of the Year was a wonderful surprise for me," she said. "I work with so many wonderful teachers at PMS who care so much and work so hard for our students. We are making great strides in terms of collaboration and reflection, and the net result is improved practice. I take that aspect of my job very seriously, so being nominated, especially this year, when we are adopting a new and rigorous SpringBoard curriculum, feels like recognition of the positive work we are all doing to help kids learn. I feel like my nomination is really a recognition of all of the English teachers in my building and the hard work we are doing."

"Teachers like Sue Lundquist help make this district great by creating educational excellence for all of our students," said Superintendent Carlton D. Jenkins. "We are very happy Sue has earned this recognition."

Two Osseo Area Schools teachers named 2017 MN Teacher of the Year candidates

Osseo Area Schools ISD 279

Breanna Blad, kindergarten teacher at Basswood Elementary, and Dennis Loeks, vocal music teacher at Palmer Lake Elementary, have been named 2017 Minnesota Teacher of the Year candidates. Blad has served students and families at Basswood for three years; prior to that she taught at Garden City Elementary. Loeks, who is a two-time nominee for Teacher of the Year, has been teaching at Palmer Lake for eight years.

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Andover High School Teacher a Candidate For Minnesota Teacher of the Year



Dan Bordwell

Anoka-Hennepin School District

Andover High School social studies teacher Dan Bordwell has been named a candidate for Minnesota's Teacher of the Year award.

He's joined by 131 other teachers statewide as candidates for the prestigious award.

Bordwell is taking his candidacy in

stride, saying it's affirming to be up for the award, but that his candidacy reflects upon his colleagues as much as it does him.

"It's nice to be recognized for the work that I've done, but teaching is not an individual or isolated event and there are a lot of people who have contributed to how I think about teaching and how that translates into what I do professionally," he said.

One of the things Bordwell said he takes most pride in is authentically caring for his students and their success both as students and emerging adults.

"I try to make the classroom a space where (students) want to be, want to have fun, and want to do their best," Bordwell said. "I am a reflective person and when a lesson or class does not go as well as I hoped, I work to make it better the next time I teach it."

His work as an educator isn't limited to his classroom at Andover. Bordwell is a doctoral student and he works with future

social studies teachers where they examine the purpose of the field and its importance and need in the world.

"Working with them helps me remember why I wanted to teach in the first place and the need for great teachers," Bordwell said.

At this point, most people don't know Bordwell is a candidate for the award, he said. He hasn't told his students, and hasn't really discussed it with colleagues. But that may change if he moves forward in the process.

Sometime in the next couple weeks, a 25-member panel of community leaders from around the state will whittle the 132 candidates down to a much smaller group of semifinalists, and then finalists. The Minnesota Teacher of the Year will be announced May 7.

And while it's possible he'll move on, Bordwell remains grounded. "It's a nice honor, but I would rather have a student come up to me, whether it be in class or three years later, and tell me how some-

thing we did (in class) helped them," he said. "That aha moment is more important to me."

This isn't the first time an Anoka-Hennepin teacher has been up for the Minnesota Teacher of the Year. Last year Blaine High School teacher Steve Drewlo, Monroe Elementary School teacher Nathan Elliott, Coon Rapids High School teacher Tony Hirte and Adult Basic Education teacher Donna Escobedo were named candidates for the award.

This year's program will name the 53rd Minnesota Teacher of the Year, celebrating the tradition of excellence in teaching in Minnesota. Candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade and Adult Basic Education teachers, from public or private schools.

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Student Contests and Awards

2017 OPTIMUS PRIME Spinoff Promotion and Research Challenge

NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center invites you to enter the OPTIMUS PRIME Spinoff Promotion and Research Challenge, or OPSPARC. Spinoffs are technologies originally created for space and modified into everyday products used on Earth. This contest challenges students to create a multimedia poster using a tool developed by Glogster. Winning students will be invited to Goddard to participate in a behind-the-scenes workshop, attend a VIP awards ceremony and meet actor Peter Cullen, the voice of OPTIMUS PRIME.

Audience: Students in Grades –12

Deadline: March 13, 2017

Website: nasaopsparc.com/

Extreme Redesign Contest 3D Printing Challenge

The Extreme Redesign Contest 3D Printing Challenge is an annual competition open to students worldwide. Students work alone or in a team 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

InvenTeams

InvenTeams is a national grants initiative of the Lemelson-MIT program. InvenTeam students rely on inquiry hands-on problem solving as they integrate lessons from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to develop invention prototypes. InvenTeams are composed of high school students, teachers, and industry mentors. Working collaboratively, InvenTeams identify a problem to be solved, conduct research on the problem, and develop a prototype invention.

Grants up to \$10,000 are awarded annually, with approximately 15 grants available. Excite Awards recipients receive travel, food, and lodging for one educator to attend EurekaFest.

Deadline: Initial applications are due April 10. If selected to continue to the next step, final applications are due September 4.

Website: lemelson.mit.edu/inventeams

Young Scientist Challenge

Discovery Education and 3M invite students in grades 5 through 8 to participate in the Young Scientist Challenge. Entrants must create a one- to two-minute video describing a new, innovative solution that solves an everyday problem.

Ten finalists each receive \$1,000. The grand-prize winner receives \$25,000.

Deadline: Entries are due April 19, 2017.

Website: youngscientistlab.com/challenge

Project Competition

The American Statistical Association/National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Joint Committee on the Curriculum in Statistics and Probability and the American Statistical Association's Education Department encourage students and their advisors to participate in the annual Project Competition. A statistical project is the process of answering a research question using statistical techniques and presenting the work in a written report. Projects must be original design and creation of the entrant(s). Subject matter is the choice of the participant(s).

Entries may be submitted by students in grades 7 through 12. Students may work individually or in teams. The maximum number of students per team is four.

Deadline: Projects are due June 1, annually.

Website: www.amstat.org/asa/education/ASA-Statistics-Project-Competition-for-Grades-7-12.aspx

American Association of Physics Teachers High School Physics Photo Contest

For many years, the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) High School Physics Photo Contest has provided teachers and students an opportunity to learn about the physics behind natural and contrived situations by creating visual and written illustrations of various physical concepts. The contest is open to high school students in grades 9 through 12. Entries are limited to 15 per school each year.

Deadline: Entries are accepted annually from March 1 to May 15 for that year's competition.

Website: aapt.org/Programs/contests/photo-contest.cfm

Young Reporters for the Environment Contest

Youth between the ages of 13 and 21 are invited to participate in the national Young Reporters for the Environment competition. Participants, who may enter as individuals or as part of a class or group, investigate an environmental issue and report on it in writing, photography, or video.

Deadline: Submissions due by 5 p.m. EST March 15, 2017.

Website: www.nwf.org/Young-Reporters-for-the-Environment/About-Young-Reporters/Join-the-Competition.aspx

Photo Competition: Gathering Waters

Send us your photos! We're looking to capture the beauty and value of Wisconsin's special places in pictures, for use on our website, social media, and publications—so we're holding a photo contest. Send us your digital photos by April 1 for a chance to win up to \$250.

Deadline: April 1, 2017.

Website: gatheringwaters.org/news-and-events/gathering-waters-events/gathering-waters-2016-photo-competition



Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award

The Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award is an annual award given to a school library that has conducted an exemplary program or program series in the humanities during the prior school year. The humanities program can be focused in many subject areas including, but not limited to, social studies, poetry, drama, art, music, language arts, foreign language, and culture. Programs should focus on broadening perspectives and helping students understand the wider world and their place in it. The humanities program should be initiated and coordinated by the school librarian, and exemplify the role of the

library program in advancing the overall educational goals of the school.

Grants of \$5,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted from February 3 through May 5, 2017.

Website: ala.org/programming/jaffarianaward

Earn STEM Digital Badges to Celebrate the Centennial of NASA's Langley Research Center

NASA's Langley Research Center turns 100 this year! To celebrate, three STEM digital badges are available for educators and students. Educators may earn up to 15 hours of professional development. Student badges include up to six hours of content aligned to the educator badge. The first 1,000 educators to complete all three badges will receive a NASA insignia iron-on patch.

Deadline: April 30, 2017

Website: nasatxstate-epdc.net/

Citizen Science: Asteroid Mappers

NASA's Dawn Mission invites you to investigate and analyze high-resolution Dawn images of the giant asteroid Vesta, including craters and other features, from your own computer. The Dawn Mission's spacecraft has gathered intriguing data, including tens of thousands of images, more than the Dawn team has time to analyze in detail. That's where you come in. Register today to help the Dawn Science Team make sense of new elements on the surface of Vesta and learn more about this mysterious world.

Website: dawn.jpl.nasa.gov/DawnCommunity/asteroid_mappers.asp

Presidential Awards for Excellence in Math & Science Teaching

This year's annual Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching will honor outstanding teachers of grades 7–12 in mathematics and science (including computer science).

Awardees are recognized for their contributions to teaching and learning and their ability to help students make progress in mathematics and science. In addition to honoring individual achievement, the goal of the award program is to exemplify the highest standards of mathematics and science teaching.

Before applying, teachers must first be nominated. Teachers may nominate themselves or be nominated by someone else (e.g., principals, fellow teachers, parents, or other members of the general public).

Recipients of the award receive the following:

- A certificate signed by the President of the United States
- A paid trip for two to Washington, D.C. to attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities
- A \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation

Deadline: Nominations due April 1, 2017.

Website: www.paemst.org

Lunch Time Left Overs 'Rescued' For Those In Need



Communications, Edina Public Schools

The uneaten bananas and unopened milk cartons were already piling up at the end of the first lunch at Normandale Elementary. Last week they would have been piling up in the trash, but this week they are being "rescued."

Food Rescue is designed to redirect unopened, unpeeled and uneaten food from school lunches to people who need it. Alex Turnbull, registered dietician with Chartwells, the district's food service partner, is introducing

the nationwide program to all EPS schools. The collected lunch items are donated to Loaves and Fishes, a nonprofit program serving hot meals to persons in need throughout seven counties in the Twin Cities and in two outstate communities.

She introduced Food Rescue at Concord Elementary in October and spent two months fine-tuning the program and the message. "We encourage students to eat their lunch," she said. "We don't want them to donate food items that they want to eat!"

In December, Creek Valley joined the Food Rescue effort, and Cornelia began the program in January. Turnbull's focus for February is to bring Normandale on board before she moves on to the other schools in coming months.

Turnbull positions herself, her collection crate and sign at the beginning of the lunch room recycling station so she can spy items that could be recycled before they are tossed into another bin. Many kids already understand the program, adding a piece of fruit or packaged crackers to the crate. But many are still learning what it's all about.

One student wanted to donate a bag of grapes from her lunchbox. "We can't take items from home," Turnbull tells her. "Save it and have it for a snack later." A boy comes with four bananas, having bought extras so he

could donate them. "But it's for a good cause!" he exclaimed, after Turnbull explained that he should not buy extra food to donate but should just bring leftovers he doesn't want to eat. "I can help you think of ideas where you can donate food, if you like," she said.

Turnbull said the hope is not only to use the program to serve community need, but also as an educational opportunity to help students learn how reducing food waste can help the environment.

Three food facts that Turnbull shares:

- Americans waste 40% of our food
- Rotting food in landfills creates methane gas which can harm the environment
- 1 in 6 Americans are food "insecure"

Before each school's rescued food is sent to the high school collection point, the school's nursing staff chooses items they need for their office. Once a week, volunteers from Loaves and Fishes stops at EHS to pick up the district's donation. Since the program began, Turnbull reports that a total of 6,577 items (mostly apples and cartons of milk) have been donated. That translates into 822 pounds less methane gas released into the environment by keeping the food out of landfills.

Turnbull said that watching the items that are put into the rescue crate also gives her ideas about ways to tweak the lunch menu to appeal



to her young customers, who are her first priority. "I think kids would eat more apples if they were served in slices," she said. "I am looking into how we can serve slices instead."

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District 191 Teacher Named State Art Educator of the Year



Art teacher Kathryn Petri dressed up as Leonardo Da Vinci to fill the role of face painter at a school learning fair.

Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191

Kathryn Petri went to an awards ceremony recently thinking that she was being honored as the 2016 Minnesota Elementary Art Educator of the Year.

Turns out she had also been selected as the 2016 Minnesota Art Educator of the Year — not just for the elementary level.

Petri was selected for the honor and

received her award during the Art Educators of Minnesota (AEM) annual conference on Nov. 4. The award is presented to teachers who have made significant contributions to art education that merit state-wide recognition and acclaim.

“We’re proud to have the top art educator in Minnesota as a member of the One91 community,” said Dr. Joe Gothard, superintendent of Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191. “Kathryn engages students with her knowledge, skills and passion for art.”

He also describes Petri as a dedicated, talented and creative teacher leader, both locally and at the state level.

Petri had been a successful interior designer and graphic designer when she decided to change careers and become an art teacher. “It might sound sappy,” she said, “but I wanted to make a difference, do something positive that makes the world a better place.”

She’s certainly done that, according to those who nominated her.

Petri excels at creating a culture for learning and at engaging students in learning, according to Stephanie Cin, a continuous improvement coach in the district, who was

among the nominators. “She is also dedicated to finding avenues for students art work to be displayed throughout the community.”

Petri is a licensed K-12 teacher and has taught elementary and secondary students over the past 25 years, including nearly six years in Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191, first at Rahn Elementary and now at Harriet Bishop Elementary in Savage.

Petri incorporates performing arts — music, theater, drama, movement — into classroom learning along with the visual arts. She varies her instruction because students learn in many different ways. For example in a recent class with second graders, she read a humorous poem about make-believe characters called “The Wumpaloons Which Never Were” by Jack Prelutsky. Then she collaborated with students to create a Wumpaloon, followed by each student designing their own.

“Kathryn is full of joy as she delivers

masterful, well-organized lessons,” according to colleague Linda Lange. “She pulls up technology sources, artists’ prints and her

original productions to teach art concepts, inspire student creativity and demonstrate how students can produce their own works of arts.”

“Elementary students have so much energy and I love that they’re so creative,” said [Karen] Petri. She focuses on getting their ideas flowing and encourages them to think outside the box — exactly the qualities that companies are seeking in their employees.

ideas flowing and encourages them to think outside the box — exactly the qualities that companies are seeking in their employees.

“They awe me,” she said about her students. “I love what they do — that’s the joy of teaching.”

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Thriving in Westonka!



From the Westonka Pride Blog

Friday, January 27, 2017:

I began my career in Westonka over 20 years ago as a member of the MWHS English Department. During the past two decades, the school has been my second home and both of us have experienced tremendous change and growth since the late

90s. So if you had asked me last year if there was anything I didn’t know about the school or the staff, I would have confidently chuckled feeling I have done and seen it all. Until this fall happened!

In September, I entered into a new and unfamiliar role at MWHS, one of parent to an incoming 8th grader. This past semester, I gained new insight and appreciation for the students and the staff at the high school. And I noticed one theme has woven through this experience. Mound Westonka doesn’t just

want its 8th graders to survive the transition to the high school; it wants them to thrive.

This commitment to student success was evident in August when my baby and 200 other new students were welcomed to the high school by their Link Crew leaders. These students compassion, enthusiasm and school pride were contagious and set the

stage for our year. In September, I attended Curriculum Night and beamed with pride as I watched the passion ooze from the faculty while they discussed both their content and their approach to students and learning. I walked away with tips and ideas about how to help my own student blossom.

In October, I watched my daughter continue to grow through strategic mentorship as a member of the pep band and the Swim Team. Both programs strategically positioning older students as mentors to help incoming students feel welcomed and be successful. I also watched my daughter have the opportunity to develop independence as a learner using the flexible learning spaces in Global Studies, Advisory and English.

November meant conference time and my turn to be on the other side of the table. There were no academic surprises at conferences since teacher use technology to post grades and course materials, but again I was impressed at how each seemed to have some insight into my student, her strengths and her areas for improvements.

In December, I helped plan the student celebration assembly which focused on the heroes among us at MWHS. This was the first time 8th graders were recognized for their academic improvement and success. I was struck by the young students beaming

with pride when recognized for their perfect attendance, honor roll and contributions to the heartbeat of the classroom. I am confident this is laying the groundwork for future success.

In it is now the end of January and my 8th grader is confidently diving into semester two bolstered by the support of her teachers, the staff at MWHS and a bevy of student mentors. Over lunch last weekend, she discussed with anticipation the classes she wants to take next year and the activities she may want to try as a Freshman.

Being able to experience MWHS through the eyes of a parent and through my own daughter’s experiences has given me a new appreciation and pride for the students, staff and programs at MWHS. I cannot wait to see what discoveries I have yet to make about MWHS over the next four years and to watch the ways it continues to help my child thrive rather than just survive.

mwhspride.blogspot.com





Richfield Public Schools Principal Named 2017 Science and Mathematics Principal of the Year



Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

Dr. Joey Page, principal of Richfield S.T.E.M. School (R-S.T.E.M.) in Richfield, MN, has been named the 2017 Science and Mathematics Elementary and Middle Level Principal of the Year.

The award recognizes the vital impor-

tance of fostering lifelong science literacy and honors the key role principals play in developing a culture that encourages and celebrates student interest in math and science.

In reviewing applications for this year's recipient, the award committee looked for evidence of the nominees' support of professional development and coaching for the teachers in their schools, active partnerships with other organizations, efforts to apply math and science standards to curriculum and provide support materials, support of out-of-school as well as in-school experiences, inclusion of families, and evidence of other creative ways of fostering interest in math and science.

Dr. Page "is driven to encourage and celebrate science and math literacy, and strives to motivate the teachers, staff, and students

around him to reach their full potential," wrote Cindy Lybeck, R-S.T.E.M. Instructional Coach, in her recommendation of Page.

Page worked with other district educators to create R-S.T.E.M., which opened its doors in 2010 to provide new educational opportunities for 800 kindergarten through fifth grade students in Richfield. Prior to the school opening, Page, in collaboration with other district leaders, worked with university staff to learn more about their S.T.E.M. Education certification program and to cultivate a robust, first-of-its-kind talent development plan for teachers. Between 2010 and 2012, 45 teachers earned certification in S.T.E.M. education, which had a positive impact on the school's identity and success.

The teachers at R-S.T.E.M. continue to

receive professional development through partnerships Page has set up. This program, now in its second year, provides sustained teacher development by allowing teachers to partner with scientists to write science modules for their classrooms. In addition, teachers continue to partner with the scientists as resources to update the modules with new research, aid in students' inquiry-based experiments, and call on them to help answer students' questions.

Since its opening in 2010, R-S.T.E.M. students have tripled science proficiency test scores. In addition to significantly higher overall proficiency rates, minority students are near or above proficiency rates as compared to the rest of Minnesota and English Language Learners proficiency rates have surpassed the state scores four out of the last five years.

Students are able to showcase their learning each year at the school's Science Expo, an event where students highlight the projects, experiments, and designs they have worked on and learned about throughout the year to their families and community members.

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Workforce Development Continued from Page 9

and a variety of local business and industry partners.

The committee began by establishing priorities and determined that an immediate review of facilities, curriculum, marketing, and advocacy was critical to moving forward with developing a high quality career pathway. Members toured facilities and labs and immersed themselves in a review of the curriculum, including reviewing course objectives and standards and identifying whether or not the current reality met the needs of the labor market. The members provided advice on essential academic, technical, and employability standards, informed the school district on emerging fields, and identified minimal industry standards or credentials for students to be successful.

As a result of the work of the advisory committee, the school district has:

- Developed a new course that will begin in the 2017-18 school year.
- Deleted older and outdated courses and devised a five-year implementation plan for a new manufacturing pathway with the ultimate goal of students earning industry credentials, college credits, and/or engaging in internship opportunities.

One of the most amazing outcomes has been the level of collaboration and support for the local school district.

- The workforce centers and DEED agreed to offer transportation and field trips for students to tour industries hosted by partners.
- The partners have agreed to help promote, advocate, and market the programs in the school district; and the school district has taken employer input to directly impact course offerings in K-12 education, as well as provide information and education to school leaders, counselors, and families.

More Challenges

While the overall partnership and engagement has been deemed successful, there are still limitations and challenges for Anoka-Hennepin Schools. Those include:

- One of the biggest needs is equipment upgrades and professional development. Much of the equipment being used at the traditional high schools is more than 30 years old, requires updating to reflect industry needs, and doesn't meet the needs of large, high

school class sizes. As a result, students spend as much time observing the instructor or another student on a machine as they spend waiting their turn. It is difficult for students to learn, practice, and be assessed on industry standards without access to modern equipment.

- In the last 15 years, teachers have been asked to teach multiple courses and multiple levels within a single class period to maintain enrollment. Consequently, they have had little time to stay current on trends and equipment and need support from industry partners for ongoing professional development and training.

Now, more than ever, Anoka-Hennepin will be reaching out to industry partners to steer the district toward available resources to sustain and grow a new model in manufacturing.

The idea of partnering with local school districts and other agencies is not new and, in fact, with initiatives sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, the idea has been around for decades. However, economic necessity and the landscape of the workforce have made these agencies realize that it isn't

just partnering that will make an impact, rather collaborating and aligning through long-term commitments will assure that students are prepared for success in the 21st century workforce.

Jessica Lipa is the Career & Technical Education Director for Anoka-Hennepin Schools and the Secondary Technical Education Program (STEP). She is also the President of Minnesota Association for Career & Technical Administrators (MACTA) and collaborates with technical educators across the state. For more information or to get involved, contact Jessica at Jessica.lipa@ahschools.us or 763-433-4001.

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Community Members Explore 20 Years of History



Stillwater Area Public Schools

Demographic shifts, budget cuts, successful levies, superintendent turnover, accomplishments in arts and athletics, and programming changes — these are just a few of the key events a group of community members identified as having shaped the district's recent history.

Nearly 40 community members who serve on the Superintendent's Community Advisory Council came together to consider the last 20 years as a way to better understand where we are and where we are going.

During the January meeting council members took part in a StoryWall activity. By creating timelines stretching back to 1996, participants identified the key events — both internal and external — that have shaped our district's culture and experience.

More than 150 teachers participated in a similar StoryWall activity in

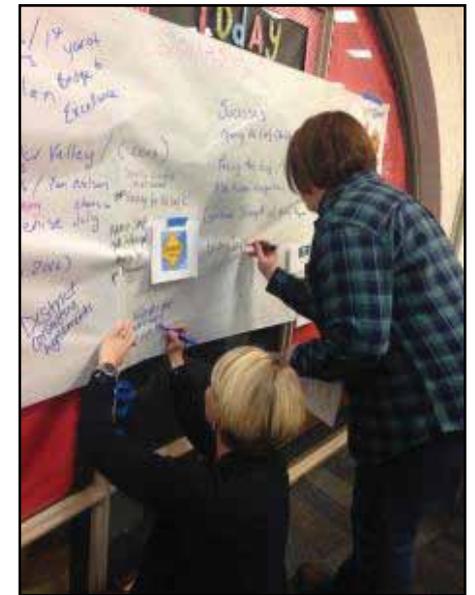
December, as did school board members and district administrators. The activity is designed to create a collective understanding of the many factors that have influenced decision-making in the past, and will continue to impact our present and future decisions. It's just one part of a larger plan to help bring unity and healing to the district during a time of significant transition and change.

The activity was eye-opening, many of the participants said. For the advisory council members, one important idea that emerged was that we're a district balancing legacy and tradition with rapid change. They cited the importance of institutional memory, which has been lost with turnover in leadership and changes within the community. One council member stated, "We can be inspired by how adaptable the district has been, and that it has survived the many changes to do great work on behalf of students."

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Teachers also found the activity worthwhile. One teacher said, "Even though I've been here for years, I don't think you realize much of what you've been through until you do something like this. It's eye opening." An overall theme for teachers and staff was that it's empowering to know our past in order to move forward positively."

The Superintendent's Community Advisory Council's role is to engage in open communication between the community and district leaders for the benefit of all students. The council is comprised of about 50 members — parents and community members from each of our 18 communities — and represents the changing demographics of our school district. The group meets quarterly to talk about the challenges and opportunities that exist in our current system.



stillwaterschools.org
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Dr. Joey Page Named 2017 Science and Mathematics Principal of the Year

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"Dr. Page strives to find ways for R-S.T.E.M. staff to engage in culturally relevant pedagogy while maintaining a deep commitment to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics," wrote Lybeck. "He has led the implementation of several sustaining initiatives. With his leadership and support, these programs have helped our school cultivate and grow learning environments where students feel safe, validated, and accepted. Dr. Page reminds us that positive relationships between students and teachers can determine students' academic success or failure."

Richfield School Board Chair, Christine Maleck, has known Page since her son — who is now a high school senior — was in kindergarten at Sheridan Hills Elementary where Page was the principal at the time. After seeing Page's work in multiple capacities — as a parent of a student, as the PTO chair, and now as the school board chair — Maleck feels a quote by Ronald Regan exemplifies Page: "The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things." She has seen this quote come to life in the opportunities Page provides the staff

so they can better serve the students. "Page has worked to create partnerships with many organizations and has been the driving force behind the W.O.W. [World of Wonder] Room at Richfield S.T.E.M., where students can learn about coding on a computer and then apply that way of thinking to physical, hands-on experiences," said Maleck.

Lybeck summed up her recommendation of Page by writing, "Dr. Page continues to show his commitment, dedication and support to Richfield Public Schools as he sets high standards for instruction and student achievement."

As the 2017 Science and Mathematics Elementary Principal of the Year, Page was recognized during The MESPYS, MESPA's annual principal honors celebration on February 2.

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