



Homecoming Pants: A Lakeville Original



Lakeville Area Schools

Visit almost any high school in Minnesota this time of year, and there's a good chance they're talking about homecoming. It's either coming up, going on or fresh in the memory. Like hundreds of other school districts across the state, Lakeville Area Schools celebrated its homecomings this fall with all the regular pomp — and a unique tradition that sets the district apart: homecoming pants.

Lakeville North High School Activities Director Mike Zweber ('92) said the homecoming pants tradition began one ordinary week in 1991. Zweber, a senior at the then only Lakeville High School, said he and three of his friends on the football team had originally intended to buy regular overalls to wear with their jerseys on game days, but the only style to be found was a pair of embarrassingly bright blue overalls.

"We were in the heart of the stone-washed, acid-washed age," Zweber said. "You'd never want to wear blue blue jeans, so what we did is, we brought them back to my buddy's house. We bleached them out to see if we could acid wash them ourselves."

When that didn't work, Zweber said, they tried another approach.

"It still didn't even make them faded enough for the times, and so the next thing we thought of was, well, why don't we go to the store, buy a bunch of paint, and we can paint the overalls up. So that's what we did!"

As the years progressed, Zweber said, everyone began making overalls of their own. A tradition was born, and when the District expanded with the opening of Lakeville South High School in 2005, the tradition grew, too.

"Eventually it became such an intricate and detailed project that it went from every Friday down to homecoming [only]," Zweber said, "and since then, it's continued to get bigger and better every single year. The amount of work that goes into it is just crazy."

Fun Memories

"They're way out there. You decorate them with fabric paint and sparkles, lots of sparkles."

Today, you can even find "Homecoming Pants" boards on Pinterest, filled with creative ideas and inspiration. Michaela Messier ('18) is a Lakeville South High School graduate and has fond memories of making her own homecoming pants.

"People start in the summer to make them for October. It's a pretty big deal," Messier said. "They're way out there. You decorate them with fabric paint and sparkles, lots of sparkles."

Continued on Page 4



Skilled at Making a Difference in Life

New Prague Area Schools

When Nicole Saatzer was 12 years old, her younger brother was diagnosed with autism. She had no idea how it would impact her life . . . or the lives of countless other students in New Prague Area Schools.

Saatzer, now a special education teacher at Falcon Ridge, draws from her first-hand experience to help students and families navigate the journey of special education and makes a huge difference by teaching life skills to the students who need her help most.

"My experience with my brother was one of the things that led me to choose a career in special ed," said Saatzer. "It also helps me understand the impact on families and what they are going through."

After graduating from NPAS in 2000, Saatzer went on to get her degree in special education from St. Cloud State University with a license in Developmental Cognitive Disabilities. She has worked in New Prague ever since, getting her Masters in Autism Spectrum Disorders in 2013.

She works with students that have developmental disabilities supporting their social, academic and communication needs to help them function more independently. Saatzer works with them on their individual needs and because of her help they are able to spend some time in mainstream classrooms.

"I feel that the life skills program at Falcon Ridge has such a positive impact for our school. I see so many general education



students benefit from their interactions and friendships with students with special needs, and vice versa," said Saatzer. "I believe that NPAS does an amazing job of accepting and including all, and students see it modeled daily by school staff. Because students see it firsthand, they are so much more apt to demonstrate that same mindset that everyone is unique and we all have some amazing qualities to bring to our school. I see so much kindness and acceptance daily."

Fellow special education teacher, Kellie Frey, knows how valuable Saatzer's passion and enthusiasm for teaching is. "Nicole has a unique relationship with her students. She teaches so much more than reading and math. She teaches her students how to be kind and independent, how to advocate for themselves, and equips them with real-world life skills," said Frey. "She cares for each child as an individual and goes above and beyond her job description to help the students reach their fullest potential. Nicole

Continued on Page 4

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PUBLISHER/EDITOR: Renee Feight
 EDITOR: Andria Reinke
 PAGE COMPOSITION: Andrew Clausen
 WEBMASTER: Scott Bayerl
 SPECIAL ASSISTANT: Allie Zacharias
 Please direct articles, advertising, questions or comments to:

*Teaching Today MN*TM
 PO Box 1704
 Eau Claire, WI 54702
 Phone/Fax 715-839-7074
 www.teachingtodaymn.com

Please direct all inquiries to:
 renee@teachingtodaymn.com

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In this issue

Student Contests Page 4
 Aiding Others Through Habitat Page 5
 White Bear Lake Area Schools Embraces Construction Careers Pathways for Middle and Senior High Students Page 6
 Careers in the Construction Industry Page 7
 New Construction Course at Eagan High School Gives Students the Tools of the Trades Page 8
 Anoka Hennepin Health Service Coordinator Cynthia Hiltz Earns National Honor Page 10
 VANTAGE's New Health Sciences Format Proves to be a Rich Experience Page 11
 After School Run/Walk Club at Mississippi Elementary School Page 11

Grants Page 12
 Fertile-Beltrami Public School is a 2018 Blue Ribbon School! Page 13
 Maple River East Elementary School is a 2018 Blue Ribbon School! Page 13
 Mora Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence Page 14
 Pine Island Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence Page 14
 Saint Anthony Park Science Teacher Honored with Presidential Award Page 16
 Soupier Earns 'Excellent Educator' Honors Page 17
 St. James Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence Page 17
 Jay Haugen is the 2019 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year Page 18

From the Blog

teachingtodayMN.wordpress.com

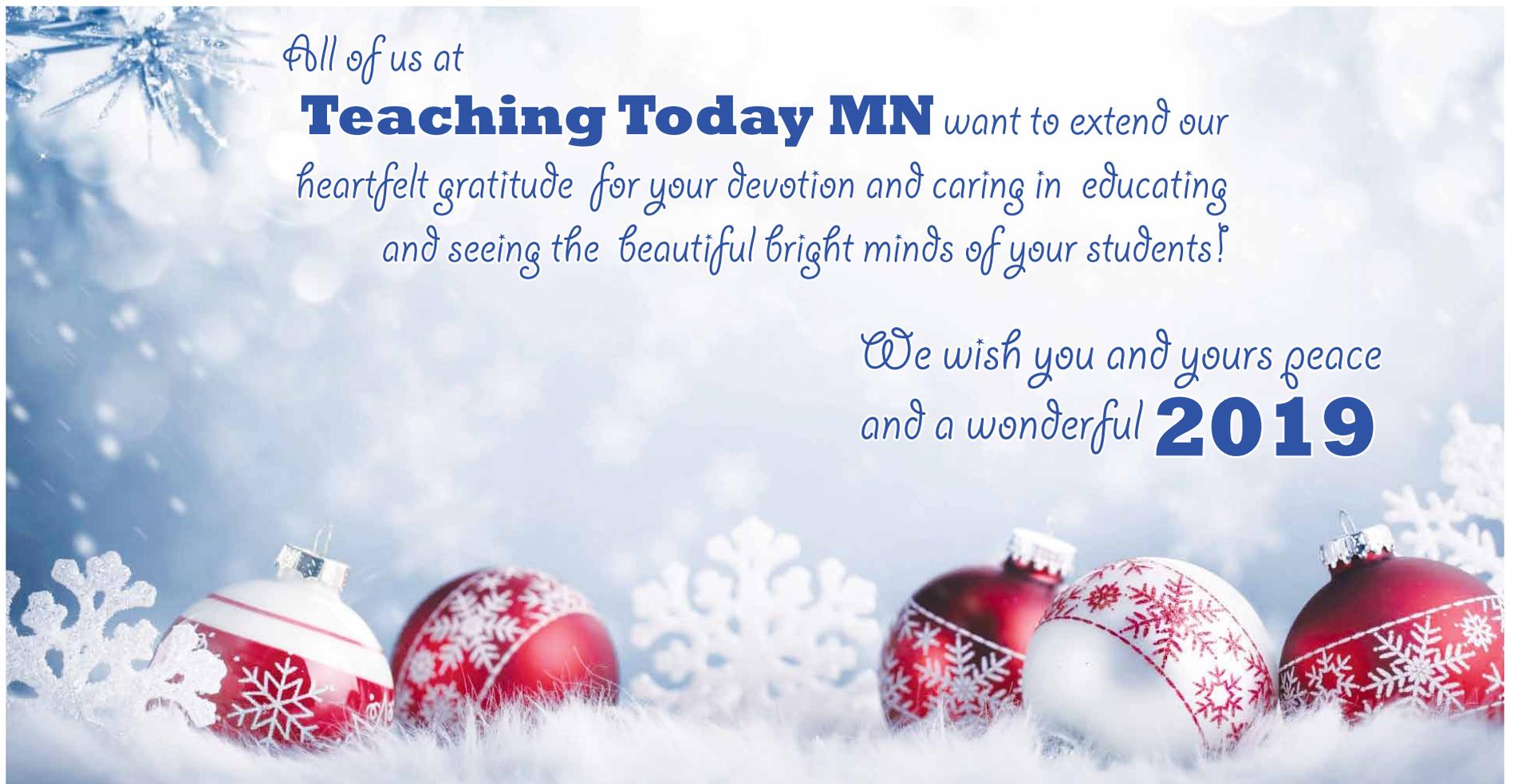
U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Applications

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), in cooperation with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, nominates candidates based on an application process. The timeline includes the availability of the application in early September, submission deadline of January 2019, and announcement of the award in May or June.

A Workshop for High School Teachers

Climate Crisis: Implementing Solutions
 Saturday December 1, 2018

The purpose of this workshop is to disseminate this free-to-use material and thereby encourage high school teachers and academic administrators statewide to implement these courses at their own schools, colleges and universities.



All of us at **Teaching Today MN** want to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your devotion and caring in educating and seeing the beautiful bright minds of your students!

We wish you and yours peace and a wonderful **2019**

Student Contests and Awards

eCYBERMISSION

eCYBERMISSION is a web-based science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) competition free for students in grades 6 through 9. Teams of students can compete for state, regional, and national awards while working to solve problems in their communities.

Deadline: Team registration deadline is December 19, 2018.

Website: www.ecybermission.com/HowToCompete

Wonder League Robotics Competition

The competition is intended to help students develop computational thinking, problem-solving, and creativity by learning to code; encourages growth mindset and twenty-first century skills; and builds teamwork and community spirit. Student teams design solutions to real-world science and technology challenges by programming robots.

Three winning teams receive a cash prize of \$5,000. Each member of the winning team also receives a robot of choice.

Deadline: Registration is due Dec. 31, 2018.
Website: www.makewonder.com/classroom/robotics-competition/

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 For Your Community," should convince other to improve the community's infrastructure.

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

Deadline: Essays are due February 1, 2019.

Website: www.engineergirl.org/108311/2019-contest

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.

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

Deadline: Projects are due February 8, 2019.

Website: www.exploravision.org/what-exploravision

National Science Bowl

The US Department of Energy (DOE) National Science Bowl (NSB) is a nationwide academic competition for middle and high school students that tests knowledge in all areas of science and mathematics. It was created in 1991 to encourage students to excel in mathematics and science and to pursue careers in those fields.

Regional competition dates vary, but are typically between January and March. See the website for specific dates. The national competition will take April 26 through 30, 2018; April 25 through 29, 2019; and April 30 through May 4, 2020.

Website: science.energy.gov/wdts/nsb/

World of 7 Billion Video Contest

Population Education is sponsoring a video contest open to all middle and high school students in grades 6 through 12. Contest entrants create a short video of 60 seconds or less that illustrates the connection between population growth and one of the three following global challenges: (1) preserving biodiversity; (2) sustainable resource use; and (3) protecting human rights. All videos must include how population growth impacts the issue and provide at least one idea for a sustainable solution.

For high school, one first prize of \$1,000; one second prize of \$500; and two honorable

mentions of \$250 are given, for a total of 12 prizes. For middle school, one first prize of \$500 and one runner up prize of \$250 are given for a total of six prizes.

Deadline: Entries are due February 28, 2019.

Website: www.worldof7billion.org/student-video-contest/

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 current theme. Each video documentary should choose a constitutional right, national characteristic, or historic event and explain how it defines the American experience.

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, 2019.

Website: www.studentcam.org

Homecoming Pants: A Lakeville Original Continued from Page 1

You put your year or a cheer, and they're really stiff. I had to put them in the back of my trunk and then put them on when I got to school. I couldn't ride with them."

Messier said Lakeville Area Schools are still the only ones she knows about to make homecoming pants, and the fun isn't limited to the high schools.

"Even little kids down in the elementary schools, even though we don't have homecoming week like in the other schools, like in the high schools," Messier said, "they do jeans, and they have all these tassels off the side. They're pretty wild."

Student-Led Celebrations

"All of the activities that happen throughout the week, [...] it's all planned and organized by kids."

Of course, the pants are just one aspect of the homecoming fun. Zweber said he has always appreciated the level of school spirit and involvement that the kids have.

"I mean, it's year in, year out," Zweber said. "It never really seems to be a lull from one year to the next. It just continues to keep growing a little bit more. Kids get excited about it. They have a lot of fun with it, and I think

that part of what makes that fun is that all of the activities that happen throughout the week, from the pep fest to the SMASH-A-CAR to the homecoming DJ to the games at lunch to everything that happens in between, it's all planned and organized by kids. So, I think our students grew up through the ranks and get excited about one day being the organizer of a homecoming activity, and that's why the traditions keep growing as strong as they are."

Lakeville Pride

The stands were packed with Lakeville pride as the Lakeville Area Schools community of alumni and students celebrated homecoming week football games at Lakeville North High School on September 28 and Lakeville South High School on October 12. Both schools came away with commanding wins, with the Panthers defeating Wayzata 42-13 and the Cougars jumping past Shakopee in a 34-20 victory.

Skilled at Making a Difference in Life Continued from Page 1

is always looking for new ideas and ways to motivate her students. She frequently gives up her lunch break or prep time to support a student in need. Nicole is a bright spot in the Falcon Ridge special education team. We appreciate her more than she knows!"

One of Saatzer's favorite traditions each spring is attending the Lifeskills graduation party at the high school for her former students. She always leaves teary eyed and with a full heart. This event reminds her of why she does this job year after year – to see the students as seniors and to look back at the progress they have made over the years. The kids are so happy when Mrs. Saatzer walks in, a true testament to her years of showing her students she cares and a shining example of The New Prague Way!



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Aiding Others Through Habitat

Paul Downer, Communications Coordinator
Superintendent/School Board Assistant
Delano Public Schools

Sometimes the most meaningful learning experiences come outside the classroom, a truth that a number of DHS Spanish students recently experienced when they spent a day volunteering with Habitat for Humanity.

Ten College in the Schools Spanish students led by Spanish teachers John Fitzer and Paige Entzi traveled to Minneapolis, where a number of them were assigned to work in Habitat's "ReStore" and a few others were dispatched to Bloomington to help with a home restoration project.

"It was very fun. I would definitely like to do it again," said senior Camden Tschudi, who spent his day installing laminate flooring in a basement under the direction of two Habitat supervisors, who also oversaw the installation of tile upstairs and painting and restoration of a deck.

"It was just a really cool experience because you really felt like you were helping other people," said senior Riley Campion, who stayed at the ReStore during the day to help construct shelving. "We only did shelves, but to help the company that makes such a big difference in people's lives – that helps them get started or do things they didn't think they

could because of the situation they are in – it was very cool."

Fitzer said the inspiration for the experience came from the CIS curriculum through the University of Minnesota, which has strongly encouraged service learning. While working through a human rights unit, students learned not only about various abuses, but also about positive developments and groups like Habitat for Humanity.

"We were talking about Habitat, why not go see it in action?" said Fitzer, who began exploring the possibility last spring and may seek to arrange similar experiences in the future.

Although the trip conflicted with the state basketball tournament, which resulted in a smaller group than originally planned, Fitzer said the feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive.

"I would do it again in a second. I heard that from almost every one of them," he said. "I wasn't expecting that, but I was really hoping they were going to feel this was something very positive. I was hoping they would see that you don't have to do much and you can help people in need. You're from a more well-to-do community and with very little effort you can go online and volunteer, go to a house site or go to their ReStore and volunteer. I'm hoping the kids will realize, 'I can do this.



It doesn't take much and I can help someone else out who is less fortunate than I am."

The Work

At the house site Tschudi said the group of students made good progress, finishing the upstairs floor tile and deck work, and nearly completing the basement flooring. Tschudi explained that in addition to building new homes, Habitat will buy up existing houses, restore them and sell them at reduced rates to those who qualify.

He said the students who participated didn't hesitate when Fitzer asked if they would be interested in the service learning day.

"A lot of us jumped on board right away. We were like, 'Yeah, we'd love to,'" he said.

Meanwhile, at the ReStore Fitzer, Entzi and three students were tasked with building shelves.

"They just said, here, look at this shelf and you go from there. So we did it wrong like three times, which was kind of frustrating, but also funny," said Campion. "I think it took us an hour to build our first shelf, and then once we finally got the hang of it was about 15 minutes per shelf."

Campion said it was eye-opening to see the huge area filled with countless discounted items, from appliances and furniture to doors and windows.

"Everyone thinks of building homes with Habitat, but a lot of people already have a house and they just can't afford the good stuff to go inside of it. But this is someplace where they can get it," she said.

Holistic Education

Although there was a tie to the group's Spanish curriculum, Fitzer said the point of the trip was not necessarily to build Spanish skills but to seek experiential learning.

"After you've been a teacher a long time you realize that while my particular curricu-

lum is important, the big picture is educating kids and getting them ready for real life," he said. "We educate the whole child here. Part of educating the whole child is giving them life experiences that are going to make a difference in the future. Twenty years down the road they might remember Mr. Fitzer taking them to Habitat. They will remember it was a good experience and it might cause them to look for things to do to help out in their own community."

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White Bear Lake Area Schools Embraces Construction Careers Pathways for Middle and Senior High Students



For many high school students, college seems like the only option after graduation. But for those hoping to work with their hands and go straight into the workforce, and earn while they learn, a career in the construction industry may be the perfect fit.

One school district that has taken the lead in developing alternative career pathways for high school students is White Bear Lake Area Schools (ISD 624). Jenny Moore, Career Pathways Navigator and Jeremy Kerg, College and Career Counselor lead the Career

Pathways program at White Bear Lake Area Schools, says the program has been instrumental in connecting students with careers in construction as well as several other industries.

“The program started several years ago when we received a grant to fund a program in manufacturing,” Moore says. “We experienced such a positive impact with the program that White Bear Lake Area Schools decided to keep investing in the program to ensure all students are college and career ready post-graduation.”

Today, the White Bear Lake Area Schools’ Career Pathways program offers four career paths for students to explore: construction, healthcare, manufacturing and information technology (IT), which are primarily offered to students in grades 9 through 12. The program serves approximately 595 students, of which 65 students participated in the construction

track during the 2017-18 school season.

track during the 2017-18 school season.

The Career Pathways Program welcomes all students, from those who choose to begin working immediately after graduation to those who decide to pursue a variety of post-secondary degrees. The school’s guidance counselors work with each student to develop a post-graduation career plan, which is required for graduation.

“The program at White Bear Lake Area Schools represents an amazing opportunity for young people,” says Don Mullin, executive secretary of the St. Paul Building and Construction Trades Council and the school board chair of the White Bear Lake Area Schools. “What we’re doing is kicking the door open for students to explore different options, such as careers in construction.”

In addition to attending classes specific to their career track, students can learn about different jobs over Lunch & Learns, listen to guest speakers, attend career fairs, and apply for internships in their respective programs.

With the Construction Career Pathway program, students earn high school credits toward graduation while gaining real-life knowledge about the construction industry.

“Students can sign up for relevant classes specifically designed for those planning to go

into construction or a related field after graduating,” Moore explains. “As Career Pathway participants, students have additional opportunities outside of their classes to learn more about the construction skilled trades.”

“We also understand that students are committed to electives such as choir, band, world language, and other engaging classes,” Moore continues. “If a student’s schedule is full and they’re unable to take one of our construction classes, then we encourage them to join the Career Pathways Program to receive notifications of additional opportunities.”

“It also allows students to see how subjects such as math and science are used daily in building Minnesota’s infrastructure (roads, bridges) and buildings,” Mullin adds. “What I hope the young people in our school district see is that there may be a career for them, such as in the construction industry that appeals to their interests. When we do that, we’re on our way to helping people find careers that they actually enjoy.”

The Construction Apprenticeship Preparation (CAP) program, administered through Construction Careers Pathways, a statewide effort to introduce young adults to careers in

Continued on Page 7

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Careers in the Construction Industry

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. May clean and prepare sites, dig trenches, set braces to support the sides of excavations, erect scaffolding, and clean up rubble, debris and other waste materials. May assist other craft workers.

Median wage (2016) \$16.07 hourly, \$33,430 annual

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. Includes managers in specialized construction fields, such as carpentry or plumbing.

Median wage (2016) \$42.93 hourly, \$89,300 annual

Construction & 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.

Median wage (2016) \$28.12 hourly, \$58,480 annual

Operating Engineers & 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.

Median wage (2016) \$22.06 hourly, \$45,890 annual

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.

Median wage (2016) \$40.16 hourly, \$83,540 annual

Construction Carpenters

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

Median wage (2016) \$20.96 hourly, \$43,600 annual

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.

Median wage (2016) \$29.71 hourly, \$61,790 annual

Cement Masons & Concrete Finishers

Smooth and finish surfaces of poured concrete, such as floors, walks, sidewalks, roads, or curbs using a variety of hand and power tools. Align forms for sidewalks, curbs, or gutters; patch voids; and use saws to cut expansion joints.

Median wage (2016) \$18.84 hourly, \$39,180 annual

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.

Median wage (2016) \$25.35 hourly, \$52,720 annual

Plumbers

Assemble, install, or repair pipes, fittings, or fixtures of heating, water, or drainage systems, according to specifications or plumbing codes.

Median wage (2016) \$24.74 hourly, \$51,450 annual

Architects

Plan and design structures, such as private residences, office buildings, theaters, factories, and other structural property.

Median wage (2016) \$36.99 hourly, \$76,930 annual

Heating and Air Conditioning Mechanics & Installers

Install, service, or repair heating and air conditioning systems in residences or commercial establishments.

Median wage (2016) \$22.07 hourly, \$45,910 annual

Source: O*NET

Construction Careers Pathways at White Bear Lake Area Schools

Continued from Page 6

construction, provides the technical curriculum for the two construction courses offered by White Bear Lake Area Schools.

CAP programs are offered by eight Minnesota public school systems, including Minneapolis Public Schools, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools, Bloomington Public Schools, Roseville Area Schools, Saint Paul Public Schools, White Bear Lake Public Schools, Mounds View Public Schools and South St. Paul Public Schools. Interest in the program is growing rapidly.

High school students are not the only ones interested in learning more about careers in construction through CAP school curriculum. White Bear Lake Area Schools is introducing middle school students to career opportunities as well.

"We have 25 students, in grades 5 through 9, who participated in the Construction Career Pathways' Kids at Work summer program," Moore says.

Kids at Work is a hands-on summer experience for students in grades 5-9 that combines the fun and games of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) with exciting activities focused on the construction building trades.

"We hope that all of these students will be inspired to take Construction Career Pathway

courses when they come into high school, and eventually pursue careers in the construction industry after they graduate," she adds.

School counselors, career counselors and the Career Pathways Program at White Bear Lake Area Schools support and encourage all students to pursue post-secondary training and academic opportunities. When students are exploring apprenticeship opportunities and careers in the construction trades, faculty and staff are mindful to mention other important skills such as communications, professionalism and math.

"All of our counselors are so supportive," Moore says. "They want students to focus on being a productive citizen, whatever that means to them."

"Our counselors ask every senior to turn in a plan for after high school," she says. "This set of high school seniors grew up during the Great Recession, and aren't in any hurry to take on tons of debt right after high school. A career in construction is a great alternative to that, and gives students a chance to work with their hands."

Like students, parents also need to be educated on viable post-high school options for their children.

"We are starting the conversation with families about what it means to pursue a career

in construction," Moore says.

"At the same time, we're educating parents about the skilled trades. They don't always understand how challenging an apprenticeship training program can be," she adds. "Their child is training to become journeyman, and that's no easy task."

Due to the Construction Career Pathway's infancy, White Bear Lake Area Schools is working on gathering data for future analysis.

"I use a lot of student testimonials and data in my grant proposals, and the numbers certainly don't lie," Moore shares. "We are already having an impact, and in three to five years, we'll start to see how big that impact really is."

One person who is seeing an impact is Gretchen Harriman, principal of White Bear Lake Area Schools' Area Learning Center (ALC). "The parents of the ALC construction students are thankful that their students have found a meaningful career pathway. Some of them are in the trades themselves. Others have seen their students engage in decisions that have created a crossroads where they can choose a positive path or a harmful one — those parents tend to see the Construction Career Pathway Program as a lifeline for their teenagers' futures."

Jennifer is highly optimistic that high

school construction programs will have a positive impact on students interested in pursuing construction, engineering or technical careers in the future.

"Independent School District 624 supports the growing need for construction careers, and appreciates how much drive and passion our students have shown so far," says Moore. "We're going to continue working as hard as we can to make sure that our students are successful at whatever they do after high school."

"What this is really all about is that these young people are our sons and daughters. They represent our future," Mullin adds. "By exposing them to careers in construction, we're helping them see that they have options that will allow them to gain long-term employment that will put them squarely into middle class with fringe benefits they can count on."

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New Construction Course at Eagan High School Gives Students the Tools of the Trades



Communications Department,
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public
Schools District 196

Underneath the frame of a tiny house, Eagan High School teacher Ryan Hauenstein teaches one his students the proper way to install pipes for a plumbing unit. He then supervises as another student carefully slices a wooden ceiling plank, installing it moments later. It is this hands-on learning technique in Hauenstein's Construction and Building Trades course that is molding the next generation of tradespeople.

Funded by a Construction Careers Foundation grant, the elective was added last fall. Twelve students signed up for the inaugural class and have been navigating the construction field throughout the year during a two-block period at the end of the day. Just seven months, Hauenstein said the course is already proving to be a valuable investment.

Last October, students took on their first project — a tool shed, which for the novice builders admittedly was a challenge. Everything from the design to framing, siding, painting and installing rafters were tasks the students learned how to complete.

"It was more like a test project for us,"



said senior Romeo Owen. "There were a few of us that had some experience, but the rest of us were still trying to learn basic terminology."

Inexpensive materials allowed students to build — and rebuild — a functioning structure, as well as build on their knowledge of construction. When Hauenstein went looking for a second project, he was offered an opportunity to construct a tiny house.

"I think part of it was the increased responsibility and pressure of getting this right, because this was someone's home," said senior Jake Koenen. "We all went in more careful knowing that someone was going to live in this."

Just before fall break, the students got to work erecting the tiny house frame on a two-wheel trailer bed. Rain or shine, even on sub-zero winter days, the students hammered away at the project. Hauenstein said braving the elements is a real-life factor in the construction business and learning how to persevere through unfavorable conditions was an important lesson for students.

Week after week the frame began to take the shape of a house, which when completed will be roughly 250 square feet. As the tiny home grew, so did the skillsets of each student,

as well as their interest in the field. For Koenen, the class brought everything full circle for him.

"From barely being able to read a tape measure to now people can just shout something up to me while I'm working and I understand them, that's a cool feeling," he said.

"The biggest thing is that at the start of this class, if

you asked the majority of students if they felt comfortable building a wall or running pipe or wire, or if they even know how it worked, I think everyone would have said no," Owen added. "Now, we all have that knowledge."

In May, the students were expected to hand over the tiny house to its owner, who supplied the materials and will put on the finishing touches.

Replenishing an Industry

The course isn't just about teaching students new skills, it's also about setting them up for potential careers.

"We have heard that 50 percent of the workforce in Minnesota will retire in the next five years," Hauenstein said. "And statistics say that Baby Boomers hold 5 million construction jobs. When they move out of that sector, there will be a huge gap."

Together with fellow tech ed teacher Wayne Krantz, the two advocated for the new class. Students had the opportunity to network with professionals in the field and took several field trips to learn directly from them. They met with tradespeople in the construction industry, Habitat for Humanity and trade unions, an interaction Krantz said drove home the idea of what it's like to work in construction.

"This class really showed me that I could have a viable future in construction," Koenen said. "And the more I dig deeper, the more I like this as an option for me."

This last summer, Koenen, who wants to go into carpentry, was planning to work on small projects alongside his neighbors, one of whom is a stonemason and the other is a plumber. Several of his classmates are also exploring careers as skilled laborers. Emma Zellmer, who had only helped her dad with minor projects around the house, is now switching her education track from pre-law to a double major in construction management and business.

"For decades we've been pushing the traditional college track, but for some kids that isn't the best fit," Hauenstein said. "Here in the trades environment, they thrive. And they can walk away and not just see a grade, but something they build with their own hands."

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Anoka Hennepin Health Service Coordinator Cynthia Hiltz Earns National Honor



Anoka-Hennepin School District

Anoka-Hennepin's Health Service Coordinator Cynthia Hiltz recently earned a title very few school nurses ever have.

Earlier this year, Hiltz was named a National Academy of School Nursing (NASN) fellow, an honor only 98 other school nurses have earned nationally since 1997. It's the highest honor a school nurse can earn.

"Oh my gosh, it was amazing," Hiltz said of learning she had earned the fellowship. "This is truly national peer recognition in school nursing — it really is. When your peers are looking at you for this — it's a big deal. I'm so proud."

Hiltz, who has her Master of Science (MS), nursing license (RN), is a public health nurse (PHN) and is a National Certified School Nurse (NCSN), joked that she can now add another acronym to her title: FNASN, or fellow of the National Academy of School Nursing.

"It's a lot of acronyms," she said, "but it's also 30 years of hard work, and it's amazing to be recognized."

According to the NASN, the fellowship is a symbol of superior achievement in the school nursing profession, and recognizes exceptional contributions to NASN and the profession of school nursing. "The depth and breadth of the fellow's imprint on the field is extraordinary; their contributions have had a significant and enduring impact, and their exemplary leadership qualities and achievements are recognized by many," the NASN fellowship description said.

Hiltz started working in the Anoka-Hennepin School District in 1994, first as a substitute, and then a full-time school nurse in 1996. In 2002 she became the district's health service coordinator. In her time leading the district's health services team, Anoka-Hennepin has become a model across the state and nationally, she said. There are RNs and health paraprofessionals at every site, which isn't common across

the state or nationally, which sets the district apart.

"It feels like that's my legacy," Hiltz said. "I think we have a great model and I'm proud of where we are."

Hiltz said school nursing is still a bit of a mystery for a lot of people in the community, something she's trying to help with, too.

"The public thinks that a child goes to school and they get sick or they fall and someone helps them, but in reality, that's just the tip of the iceberg," she said.

School nurses are also working with students who might be struggling academically, Hiltz said. "Sometimes if students are struggling with academics, they often have an underlying medical condition, and school nurses help and assess them to get them the care and help they need."

School nurses are also there to support students management of chronic health issues during the day, such as asthma, diabetes, or seizures.

"We have kindergarteners who are using an inhaler for their asthma, but can't even tell the time yet," she said. "We support them so they can focus on learning."

Another area school nurses are leading the way is in mental health, Hiltz said.

"I think our district is leading the

nation in several student health issues, such as mental health care," she said. "You look at other districts — they don't have the range of interventions that can be given. The support team we have in Anoka-Hennepin is amazing."

As for the fellowship, Hiltz said she's heard from school nursing colleagues from around the nation offering congratulations. She first learned she'd earned the recognition from NASN President Nina Fekaris.

"That phone call — that was amazing. I thought she had called me to say hi," Hiltz said.

Hiltz was officially recognized as a fellow on June 30 during NASN's annual conference in Baltimore, Maryland. She's also recognized by the Anoka-Hennepin School Board at its March 26 meeting.

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VANTAGE's New Health Sciences Format Proves to be a Rich Experience



Minnetonka Public Schools

As part of VANTAGE's commitment to provide the best student experience, their Health Sciences strand was reconfigured for the 2018-19 school year. Impacts are already huge as enrollment grew from 16 to 84 students. The amount of energy in the building and the learning that is happening is inspiring.

In addition to AP Psychology and Human Anatomy, each student is either being trained to become an emergency medical responder or a registered nursing assistant. The new format provides insight into the vast career opportunities available in the healthcare field. In the spring, students will have the option to take a

state certification exam which could translate into the possibility of a job in healthcare.

Through their first semester project work, students have the unique opportunity to interview and develop a relationship with a resident from a senior living residence as they compile data on how the resident's sense of community and sense of purpose has developed over their lifetime.

Students will ultimately make recommendations to the resident facility on how they may want to implement any improvements found during their research.

Human Anatomy instructor, Stephanie Nelson, said, "We have a motivated and adaptable group. Each week, students balance the demands of AP Psychology, their medical science certification, Human Anatomy, a lab at the high school, their 1:1 mentor relationship, and their Semester 1 group project."

Lisa Wagner, Minnetonka School Board Chair, commented, "The School Board is pleased that VANTAGE continues to more than

meet the expectations of our students and families. It is clear the adjustments made this year to the health sciences strand have provided new, exciting opportunities for students interested in the medical field. The tremendous growth in enrollment in VANTAGE overall, and the positive comments we continue to hear from students and from community partners are testaments to the program's outstanding leadership and to the strength and quality of the VANTAGE experience for our students. We are so appreciative of our community partners, staff, and mentors for all they do to make this program so meaningful for our students."

About VANTAGE

Minnetonka High School's professional studies program, VANTAGE, is a vibrant example of innovation in modern education. VANTAGE offers a unique way for high school students to apply their course work in real-world

settings through hands-on learning, solving authentic business problems through project-based assignments, and working one-on-one with mentors in the community, all while fulfilling rigorous academic credit requirements.

VANTAGE offers six areas of study (or strands):

- Health Sciences
- Global Food Sustainability: Economics and the Environment
- Design + Marketing
- Digital Journalism
- Business Analytics
- Business in a Global Economy

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After School Run/Walk Club at Mississippi Elementary School Provides Avenue For Exercise and Fellowship

Anoka-Hennepin School District

The run/walk club at Mississippi Elementary School is still going on strong, 10 years later, thanks to the leadership of Twyla George and Dawn Applequist. The run/walk club started under the direction of former principal Mark Hansen and longtime physical education instructor Kevin Nysted while the two were training for a marathon.

Now with Hansen taking over as the principal at Jefferson Elementary School, George and Applequist have taken control of the club and are happy to see it continue to grow.

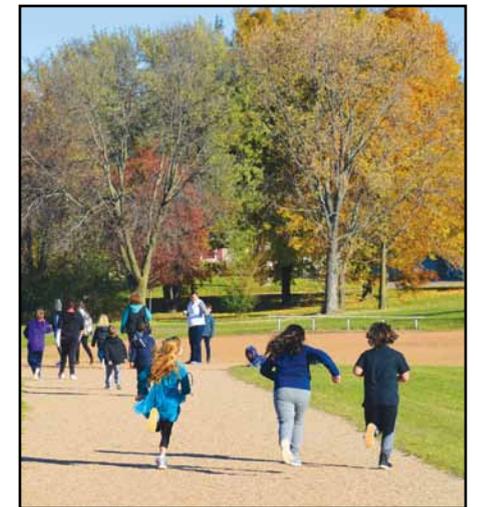
"We now offer three sessions throughout the year," said Applequist, a math specialist at Mississippi. "In the winter we put on a group called Move and Groove and we steadily have over 40 students sign up for all three events."

Around 10 percent of the student body at Mississippi are currently participating in the after-school program. The run/walk club is held twice per school year, once in the fall and again in the spring, and runs for six weeks while the Move and Groove club is held in the winter.

Located on school grounds at Mississippi is a quarter-mile track in which the students have a goal to run and or walk at least four laps per session, with many opting to alternate between running and walking and far exceeding the weekly goal.

Another aspect of the club is to learn the benefits of exercise and movement and living a healthy lifestyle.

"We talk about the health benefits and the importance of exercise on the first day of run/



walk club," Applequist said. "Fortunately our current group of students enjoys the activity and we haven't had to revisit the topic."

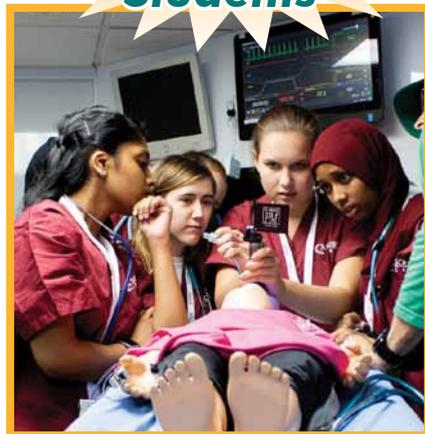
Applequist added that some students within the group are training to be the fastest in their class in the mile run and the program offers them a chance to continue training.

At the end of the day on Oct. 23 the Mississippi run/walk club members also received the benefit of enjoying a beautiful fall afternoon, outdoors, with their classmates.

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ecoTech Grants

The Captain Planet Foundation (CPF) is offering grants to support inquiry-based projects in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields that leverage technology or use nature-based designs to address environmental problems in local communities.

Grants up to \$2,500 are awarded.

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

Website: captainplanetfoundation.org/grants/ecotech

ecoSolution Grants

The Captain Planet Foundation (CPF) awards ecoSolution Grants to support solution-oriented, youth-led projects that result in real environmental outcomes. Projects must be solution-oriented, project-based, performed by youth, and have real environmental outcomes.

Awards range from \$500 to \$2,500.

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

Website: captainplanetfoundation.org/grants/ecosolution

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.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

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

Youth Garden Grant

To be eligible, schools or organizations must plan a new garden or expand an established one that serves at least 15 children aged 3 to 18 involved in the project. The selection of winners is based on the demonstrated program impact and sustainability. Applications must be submitted online.

The top five programs receive garden award packages valued at \$2,100. Twenty programs receive garden award packages valued at \$500.

Deadline: Applications are due December 17, 2018.

Website: kidsgardening.org/garden-grants

Project Produce: Fruit and Veggie Grants for 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

Emeril Lagasse Foundation Grants

The Emeril Lagasse Foundation works to inspire, mentor, and enable student success by integrating gardening and cooking concepts into school curriculums. The foundation makes Small Grants to support schools, and community organizations partnering with schools, that have an existing school garden or a culinary education program.

Grants up to \$10,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Concept papers accepted year-round.

Website: emeril.org/small-grants

American Honda Foundation Education Grants

The American Honda Foundation supports education with a specific focus on the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); the environment; job training; and literacy. It engages in grant making that reflects the basic tenets, beliefs, and philosophies of Honda companies.

Awards range from \$20,000 to \$75,000 over a one-year period.

Deadline: For new applicants, applications are due February 1 and August 1, annually. For returning applicants, applications are due May 1, annually.

Website: www.honda.com/community/applying-for-a-grant

Enhancing Student Mathematics Learning through the Use of Tools and Technology Grants

Enhancing Student Mathematics Learning through the Use of Tools and Technology Grants are awarded to classroom teachers in prekindergarten through grade 12 to encourage innovative use of technology and other tools for effective teaching and meaning-

ful student learning. Eligible grant expenses include materials such as books, calculators, tablets, computers, or related equipment, as well as professional development in the use of the designated tools and technology.

Grants up to \$3,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are due May 3, 2019.

Website: www.nctm.org/Grants-and-Awards/Grants/Enhancing-Student-Mathematics-Learning-through-the-Use-of-Tools-and-Technology-Grants-%28Pre-K-12%29

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

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

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

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

Website: www.toshiba.com/taf/612.jsp

Saxena Family Foundation Grants

The Saxena Family Foundation has a particular focus on initiatives that promote US science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and the empowerment of girls, female children, and young women so that they have equal rights later in life. The foundation focuses on empowerment programs to include economic, educational, and political empowerment of women through literacy programs, jobs, and life-skills training.

Most awards range from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

Deadline: Applications accepted year-round.

Website: saxenafoundation.com

AIAA Foundation Classroom Grant Program

The AIAA Foundation Classroom Grant program promotes aerospace education activities 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 January 11, 2019.

Website: www.aiaa.org/Secondary.aspx?id=4184

Calvin K. Kazanjian Economics Foundation Grants

The primary focus of the Kazanjian Foundation is to increase economic literacy. It gives special attention to proposals and projects with

national impact, specifically programs that:

- Raise the public's participation in economic education or create a demand for greater economic literacy.

- Apply new strategies for teaching economics, including online and web-based instruction.

- Encourage measurement of economic understanding.

- Help otherwise disenfranchised youth and young adults with children learn to participate in the economic system.

Grants up to \$150,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are due February 15 and September 15, annually.

Website: www.kazanjian.org/grants/apply

Japan Foundation Grants

The Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership offers Education Grants for projects designed to increase awareness and understanding of Japan in the United States by addressing the needs of students and teachers in kindergarten through grade 12. Funds support teacher training, curriculum development, and community outreach efforts.

Grants up to \$5,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications accepted year-round.

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

Music Education Grants

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

Deadline: Applications accepted year-round.

Website: www.guitarcenter.com/pages/corporate-giving

Minigrants for Youth Amateur Radio Groups

The ARRL Foundation of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) administers grants through the Victor C. Clark Youth Incentive Program. The primary focus is to support programs and projects for youth that enrich the experience of radio amateurs under the age of 18. Minigrants are made for the following types of projects: securing equipment for antennas for club stations; purchasing training materials; and local service projects that bring favorable public exposure.

Grants up to \$1,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Grant requests accepted year-round.

Website: www.arrl.org/the-victor-c-clark-youth-incentive-program

Fertile-Beltrami Public School is a 2018 Blue Ribbon School!

The Fertile-Beltrami School is a rural school located in Northwestern Minnesota. Fertile-Beltrami is a k-12 school that serves over 450 students living in the area surrounding the communities of Fertile and Beltrami. The Fertile-Beltrami School has been recognized for its academic accomplishments numerous times by Minnesota's Department of Education with its "Reward School" and "Celebration Eligible" designations.

The Fertile-Beltrami School staff and school board are committed to educating for success in an environment of learning, respect, and responsibility. The Fertile-Beltrami School is committed to small class sizes, which allows for a more individualized direct instruction for our students. Our teachers are devoted to their students and work hard to ensure that Minnesota Academic Standards are delivered in a meaningful way for all students. Teachers take pride in their students' accomplishments and push them to be their very best.

The Core Curriculum at Fertile-Beltrami is focused on providing students with the essential knowledge that will have them ready for college and prepared to enter the workforce. The Core Curriculum ensures Fertile-Beltrami students are literate and have the skills necessary to be successful readers and writers. Fertile-Beltrami's Core Curriculum is designed to satisfy more than just the basics to survive beyond high school, it lays the foundations for life long aptitude in mathematics. Fertile-Beltrami offers numer-

ous high school science courses to supplement the standard science offerings. Students have the opportunity to extend their learning in science through Advanced Chemistry, Anatomy and Physiology, Environmental Science, and Zoology. The Core Curriculum also gives Fertile-Beltrami students the skills necessary to be informed, productive and proactive citizens, and has them ready to tackle the civic challenges that will present themselves in both college and their careers. In addition, Fertile-Beltrami students are afforded the opportunity to take up to 45 college credits, through partnerships with area colleges in our dual credit College in the High School program.

At Fertile-Beltrami students are exposed to many opportunities outside of the Core Curriculum. Fertile-Beltrami has visual and performing Arts, Business and Technology, Industrial Arts, Ag, Physical Education and Health, Spanish, and Library. These additional curricular areas compliment Fertile-Beltrami's Core Curriculum. They help students achieve success not only academically, but build skills for life-long learning and promote college and career readiness.

Fertile-Beltrami offers a wide variety of opportunities through its business and technology department. Along with a traditional business program consisting of finance and accounting principles, they also offer Web Design and Video Editing, and Computers for 10th through 12 grades. Seventh and 8th graders take a combined computer and keyboarding class



for one semester and 9th grade takes a yearlong career class. The apex of Fertile-Beltrami's business program is its Web Masters course. This is a course open to seniors that must apply and be "hired" into the class. The class maintains the school's website and also runs a business. The business they run manages and maintains websites for many businesses and organizations. The class uses the profits from the business to cover costs and award a scholarship each year to a graduating senior.

Another key factor in the success of the Fertile-Beltrami School is that it has tremendous support from the community. We have a very generous Education Foundation. The Fertile-

Beltrami Education Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to expanding education opportunities beyond the basic curriculum, increasing programs for gifted and talented students, and inspiring students and teachers to pursue creative ideas that improve education.

Source: National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

fertibeltrami.k12.mn.us
(218) 945-6933



Maple River East Elementary School is a 2018 Blue Ribbon School!



Our long-term success at Maple River East Elementary School comes from our staff's ability to work with students and parents to meet the individual needs of all students. We feel that collaboration between the home and the school play an integral role in the development of each student.

Our goal is to always challenge our kids to be the best they can be. This includes preparing them to succeed in their academic lives

as well as helping them overcome any personal challenges. Goal setting starts with the student and teacher creating personalized goals which are then shared with their parents. With this knowledge, parents can create their own goals to help further their child's educational development. For example, goals can range from creating a time and place for homework, studying math facts to discussing the school day with students each night. This collaboration method

has proven to be a valuable activity for our teachers, parents and students to rally around.

Maple River has implemented a STEAM program, which has quickly become a favorite class for many students. The hands-on building activities and online coding, allows students to express themselves in ways they cannot in their regular subjects. The support from teachers, PTO, parents, administration, and the school board, has played a huge role in the program's success.

In kindergarten, first, and second grade, students have had opportunities to create projects in a single day setting. Kinders had fun creating bear dens, making paper plate marble mazes, and creating bridges to cross a 12-inch span. In first grade, students made coffee filter leaves to watch colors changing, made paper robots, and practiced measuring their heads to create reindeer antlers. In second grade, students were excited to make wind-powered cars to race, build tents, and made sleighs.

In third, fourth, and fifth grade, students work on multi-day, cooperative building activities. Third graders have made pinball machines and created new animals. Fourth graders have made ballooned powered buses to see how far they could travel and made scale & 3D models of dream classrooms. Fifth graders made compound machines to move a plastic egg and created a carnival game that incorporated concepts from their force and motion unit. All of the upper grades are actively coding online using Code.org and love making familiar characters move on their screens.

The board of education felt the need for students to have access to iPads. The first year we shared these devices at our two-section grade level. This past year all of our students have their own handheld device. Our K-2 students are using iPads, while our grade 3-5 students are

now using Chromebooks. With these devices students now have access for supplementary learning programs such as Accelerated Math, Accelerated Reading, Reading Eggspress and others. They also provide opportunities for students to access their math and reading lessons. Students are motivated by this method of learning. This has been a benefit to the students to continue learning.

Education has changed since the 1850's when the first settlers of the town arrived. It has always been an important part of our community and always will. We have been recognized multiple times as a Reward School. A Reward School is a state based award for excellence. We take great pride in that feat and celebrate when the students accomplish these awards. We continue to provide our students with a safe and supportive learning environment while continuing to make improvements to our system to provide the best education for our students.

Source: National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

www.isd2135.k12.mn.us
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Mora Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence



Chris Goebel

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

Goebel is one of six educators being honored by the WEM Foundation and Synergy & Leadership Exchange for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student learning. His recognition comes in

the Athletic Coach Award, which recognizes teachers who are exemplary coaches of athletic teams.

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

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

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

Goebel recognizes the lessons running

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

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

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



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

moraschools.org/schools
(320) 679-6200

Pine Island Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence



Megan Schimek

Megan Schimek, a teacher at Pine Island High School in Pine Island Public Schools, was surprised April 13 with the news that she is a recipient of a 2018 WEM Outstanding Educator Award for Ethics in Education, an honor that is accompanied by a \$15,000 award.

Schimek is one of six educators being honored by the WEM Foundation and Synergy & Leadership Exchange for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student learning. She is one of two recipients of the WEM Foundation’s statewide Ethics in Education Award, which recognizes educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom

or school activities, policies or curriculum.

Schimek has been teaching for 10 years and currently teaches high school biology at Pine Island High School. To help her students see the big picture of studying biology, Schimek started a Biology Brown Bag Career Seminar series. She invites professionals from the various biology fields to come in during the lunch hour and talk about their jobs and the paths they took to get them there. Many of her students enjoy biology or the medical field but have no idea of the career options available. She feels this is one way to open the doors of possibility to them.

Superintendent Tamara A. Berg said, “Because Schimek has developed mutual trust and respect with her students, she has numerous opportunities to teach beyond scientific concepts. The aforementioned experiences outside of the classroom have provided lifelong experiences that will forever impact our students.”

In addition, Schimek co-created a mentorship program called EcoliteracySCHOOL. This program takes high school students interested in health science and college students pursuing careers in health on a field experience together. Students practice calling upon nature as a resource for promoting and sustaining their own health as they learn to care for others. This student-to-student partnership benefits the high school students by helping them learn about the college experience from the UMR students and benefits the UMR stu-

dents by allowing them to practice mentoring and reflect on their own career pathways.

“Ms. Schimek is someone I think of often for inspiration and remember in moments of both defeat and success,” shares a student. “Ms. Schimek encourages the contemplation of deeper ideas such as how we fit into this vast world and the impact we leave through our journey of life.”

In addition to the Ethics in Education Award, honorees are recognized with the Academic Challenge Coach Award (teachers who are exemplary coaches of student teams that participate and compete in academic challenges approved by the Minnesota Academic League Council), Teacher Achievement Award (exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning as evidenced by student achievement) and Athletic Coach Award (teachers who are exemplary coaches of athletic teams).

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a blue ribbon selection panel, which reviews and ranks the nominees.

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Saint Anthony Park Science Teacher Honored with Presidential Award



St. Paul Public Schools

Saint Anthony Park Elementary School Teacher Jim Schrankler loves to get students excited about science.

“My goal as an elementary science teacher is for my students to have a greater respect and appreciation for the world they live in,” said Mr. Schrankler. “As they grow older, I hope students continue to ask questions and be curious about their surroundings. I hope that students think and act like scientists and engineers -- even if they do not pursue careers in science.”

Mr. Schrankler recently became the fifth science teacher from SPPS to be honored

with the Presidential Award of Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

Only 102 people in the United States received this year's award — with Mr. Schrankler being one of two educators in Minnesota to receive the honor.

“I honestly feel that this award represents the work of all the amazing educators in my life and my students,” said Mr. Schrankler. “I have been fortunate to work alongside excellent teachers who have inspired me and shared their expertise. My students have driven me through their sense of curiosity and enthusiasm.”

“Every time I walk into Mr. Schrankler's room, I see engaged, culturally-responsive teaching and learning,” said Saint Anthony Park Principal Karen Duke. “I see students active and engaged with hands-on experiments, approaching tasks with curiosity and a desire to do well. I see students who struggle

at school feeling valued and successful. I always think to myself, ‘I wish I could be a learner in Mr. Schrankler's classes!’”

Earlier this month, Saint Anthony Park Elementary School surprised Mr. Schrankler for his award. Students made presentations and presented him with a banner, a personalized lab coat and a check to fund a new Schrankler Science Section in the school library.

“I was in awe,” Mr. Schrankler said about the surprise assembly in his honor. “Being recognized by the students and staff was a very humbling experience. I have tremendous respect for all of the staff and students in attendance and feel that every staff member in the room deserves that kind of recognition.”

“Mr. Schrankler doesn't want science to just stay in our classroom,” said Harper, a third-grader at Saint Anthony Park Elementary School. “He wants us to observe science everywhere, every day of our lives. He is very, very nice and I am thankful that he is our science teacher. I think we are very lucky because he teaches us a lot.”

To put it simply, “He makes science fun,” said Gus, a third-grader at Saint Anthony Park Elementary School.

“We always do really fun experiments in class, and learn new things every day,” added

Tariq, a third-grader. “My favorite experiment was learning about centripetal force.”

The Presidential Award of Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching was established in 1983, and is the highest award kindergarten through 12th grade mathematics and science teachers can receive from the U.S. government. The award alternates years between kindergarten through sixth grade and seventh through twelfth grade teachers.

“I'm very proud of him,” William Schrankler, James' father and a former SPPS principal said of the award. “I was flabbergasted when he told me he received this award. He works hard at his craft, and he is very good at it.”

Mr. Schrankler is not only an outstanding teacher in his classroom; he is a valued colleague and teacher leader, said Duke.

“We all learn from his balanced approach to professional learning,” Duke said, “his commitment to equity, and his ability to form strong, positive relationships with all students.”

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Soupir Earns 'Excellent Educator' honors

Paul Downer, Communications Coordinator
Superintendent/School Board Assistant
Delano Public Schools

Kelli Soupir suspected that something unusual was happening as she descended the stairs from her second-floor classroom to the Delano Elementary School media center on Thursday, Sept. 13.

Her students waited expectantly below. Other students and staff members ringed the room, waiting.

"I thought, 'OK, this is not what a normal day looks like. Something must be going on,'" the third-grade teacher said with a laugh.

She was right, of course. When she reached the bottom of the stairs Kim Johnson, an anchor for WCCO-TV, approached and presented Soupir with a plaque identifying her as one of the station's "Excellent Educator" award winners.

An on-camera interview followed, and Johnson and her cameraman followed Soupir and her class as they resumed lessons in order to gather some additional footage.

"It was very unexpected, a total surprise," Soupir said later that afternoon. "I had heard about similar things on the radio, but never in a million years did I think that I

would be selected for it. I put teachers who earn that up on such a high pedestal. They are veteran teachers. So getting that honor myself was just a really big shock."

Following the presentation, Johnson explained that she fields nomination letters and chooses one school staff member to highlight on the Excellent Educator segment during each week of the school year. That means about 39 teachers are honored annually, and Johnson said that total does not come close to the total number of nominations she receives.

Because of that competition, only the most compelling nominations result in an award. What made Soupir stand out, Johnson said, was the praise she received from a parent of a student she taught last year.

"This parent thought she was so caring and fair with her students, and that she displayed such wisdom and skill for a first-year teacher," Johnson said. "This person felt she truly cared for the parents of her students as well. By the time I finished reading the nomination I wanted to share her story. I wanted to meet her."

Soupir hastened to credit her fellow staff members for helping her negotiate the challenges that come with the start of any new teaching career.



"It is so humbling, as a second-year teacher, to be recognized, because you don't always know that what you're doing in the classroom is the right thing. You're just trying it out on your own," Soupir said. "It's really a testament to how great this community is and how the other teachers at Delano have really embraced their new teachers and helped make them successful. I definitely could not have been the teacher I was last

year or the teacher I am this year without their help. I'm really honored, and really grateful for the opportunity I've had here."

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St. James Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence



Stephen Chapin

Stephen Chapin, a teacher at St. James Middle/High School in St. James Public Schools, was surprised April 16 with the news that he is a recipient of a 2018 WEM Outstanding Educator Award for Teacher Achievement, an honor that is accompanied by a \$15,000 award.

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

evidenced by student achievement.

Chapin has been teaching for 22 years and currently teaches health and physical education to high school and middle school students. A big focus for Chapin is hands-on, real-life learning. He created a cooperative project with the school's food service company. After educating 10th-graders on the 'rules' of school nutrition, his students worked with the professionals from the food service company to understand the requirements around creating school meals. Teams of students worked to research and design nutritionally balanced school lunches. Once completed, each team is responsible to work with the cafeteria staff to prepare the meal for more than 500 students in the school. Chapin shares, "This has shown immense benefits including student ownership, working with food service professionals and real-world experiential learning."

"Mr. Chapin tries to keep his students as involved as possible to enhance their learning," a student shared. "Every day there is an activity related to the learning and sometimes the activity consists of having the kids communicate with their parents. Education to Mr. Chapin means opening the door for the student to grow as an individual, but also opening the door for the parents to become involved with their child."

Another initiative Chapin spearheaded is a joint project with the local Clinic Health System. With guidance and support from them

and other local healthcare businesses, Chapin created a hands-on experiential education course entitled "Health Care Career Explorations." This course allows students with direct contact to 14 different aspects of the healthcare system, including working with the local hospital, nursing home, optometrist, chiropractor, dentist, and new this year mortuary science.

"Mr. Chapin models learning for his students and colleagues," said Principal Karla Beck. "He is constantly stretching his own base of knowledge which in turn stretches those around him. When he sees a learning or social/emotional hole within our students he is the first to fill that hole with curriculum or activities."

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

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Jay Haugen is the 2019 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year



Jay Haugen

The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) has named Jay Haugen, Superintendent of Farmington Area Public Schools, the 2019 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year. As the Minnesota honoree, Haugen is a candidate among other state recipients for National Superintendent of the Year, to be announced during the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) convention held February 14–16, 2019 in Los Angeles, CA. Haugen was selected for this honor by a panel of representatives from a variety of Minnesota education organizations. Nominees are evaluated on how each candidate demonstrates leadership for learning, communication skills, professionalism, and community involvement.

“During his time at Farmington Area Public Schools, Jay has become an inspiration within his community through his extraordinary leadership and community outreach practices,” said MASA Executive Director Dr. Gary Amoroso. “Jay is a leader in education innovation within Minnesota and the nation – and I am very eager to see the continued transformations that Jay has in store for his district.”

During Haugen’s eight-year tenure with the Farmington Area Public Schools, he has cultivated and inspired the design of a new system of schooling. Guided by the district’s strategic plan, it is an education system that is student-centered, where every student is unique and learns to be in charge of their learning experience. The strategic plan was established and is regularly updated

by a representative committee of community members, students, and staff. The strategies and goals that stem from the plan are then refined by another 70 community and staff.

Haugen has pushed Farmington towards this new educational system through the district’s approach at supporting its administrators and staff in achieving their strategic plan’s direction. A major part of the system was completely reforming the staff evaluation model across the district. This started with the understanding that, like students, every administrator and teacher also has their own specific skills and deserves a unique pathway to their own creation and success. The end result is a system of rubrics that allows each teacher and staff member to achieve their best results using their specific strengths and passions.

Farmington Area Public Schools conducts a survey within the community on an annual to biennial basis. This survey allows the district to know what the community’s views are regarding the district’s progress. Through these strategic community surveys, Haugen is able to better understand what the community values and where there might be hesitation. In his first year as Superintendent, Haugen spoke with more than 2,000 people in the surrounding community. Haugen often holds town hall style forums and hosts special community events such as “Soup with the Supt,” where he cooks a meal and invites the community to come share. These ongoing grassroots processes ensure deep community involvement and commitment to their strategic direction.

The district plans purposefully to provide more flexible learning environments to meet student needs. The high school, which is less than 10 years old, is reaching its design maximum of 2,400 students, but under Haugen’s leadership, the high school space is utilized much more like a college campus and so it can accommodate up to 4,000 students and never feel confined. This innovative utilization of space within the high school is estimated to save the community more than \$100 million in taxes in the coming years.

The district also updated older buildings that now serves a significant number of students by finding unused spaces, including locker areas, book storage areas, and old computer labs that were not being used due to Haugen’s 1:1 tablet

initiative. The renovation cost was \$2 million and it recaptured an estimated \$10 million of space. The district also built the largest solar array by a single public entity in Minnesota, which will save the district more than \$100,000 in electricity a year.

Haugen is in his 23rd year as a Minnesota superintendent. Prior to his Superintendency in Farmington, he was the Superintendent of Sleepy Eye Public Schools and then of West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools. Haugen began his career as a high school science teacher, eventually moving on to pursue graduate studies while providing pioneering work in the development of educational software. He returned in an administrative capacity serving a consortium of seven southwestern Minnesota school districts near Redwood Falls, MN as Director of Curriculum and Staff Development. Haugen then served as a regional coordinator for Minnesota Department of Education’s Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program (MEEP).

Haugen is an active member in both MASA and AASA. He served on the MASA Board of Directors from 2012–15, and as MASA President during 2013–14. Haugen has been involved in MASA committees including the Legislative Committee, and served as the chair of the Federal Advocacy Committee during 2008–09. He is also a member of Interstate Migrant Education Council (a federal program representing

more than 20 states) and was the chair of the Three Counties for Kids, a children’s mental health collaborative.

Haugen is a member of various community organizations including the Farmington Rotary Club, Lions Club, Farmington Business Association, Dakota County Chamber of Commerce, and the Farmington Development Committee.

Haugen has received numerous awards including the MASA Richard Green Scholar Award, MinnSPRA Star Award: District Leadership for Excellence in Communication, Blandin Leadership Program for Contributions to Community, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council for Service on the Migrant Head Start Policy Council, and the Region V Award of Appreciation for Serving on the Governing Board.

Haugen holds a master’s degree in education and a 6th year administrator credential and he received a bachelor’s in biology and a teaching certificate from North Dakota State University.

For more information on the AASA Superintendent of the Year Program, please visit www.aasa.org.

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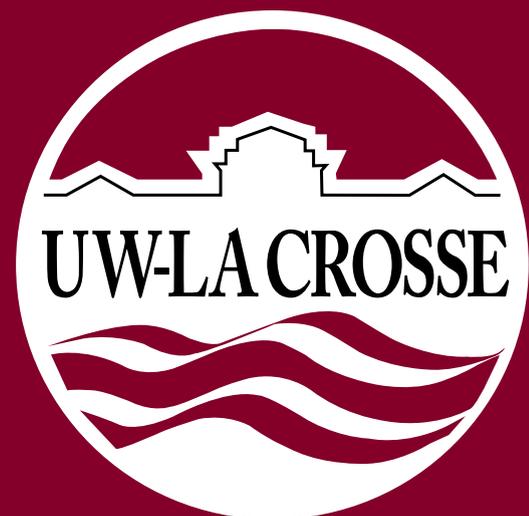
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