

Fridley High School Students Travel Abroad to China



*Sarah Burghardt, Communications Specialist
Fridley Public Schools*

For the first time in the history of the school district, Fridley High School students had the chance to travel abroad to China and immerse themselves in a unique learning opportunity.

For 16 days, a group of 16 students traveled to the cities of Beijing, Xi'an, Chengdu, Suzhou and Shanghai. The summer trip was led by district Chinese language teachers Hsiao-hsuan Huang (Fridley High School) and Diane Nordin (Fridley Middle School). The students who participated in this trip are students enrolled in Chinese language classes at the high school. Fridley Public Schools offers Chinese and Spanish languages to students as part of its International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP).

In addition to providing students with an authentic experience to motivate their learning, [language teacher Hsiao-hsuan] Huang added that the trip helped to promote students' open-mindedness as they explore cultures that are different from their own.

In Chengdu, a city in southwestern China, the students visited the Giant Panda Breeding Research Base, where they were able to get close to the incredible creatures. Visiting at a very special time for the facility, the group had the rare opportunity to see two newborn baby pandas.

Students also enjoyed a Yangtze River Cruise, where they rode past lofty peaks, precipitous cliffs and towering trees along the river. The whole group was also invited to perform a song for the crowd in Chinese during a talent show held on the boat.

Parents were able to check in with their students during the trip through the app "WeChat". Throughout the trip, the supervisors posted photos and messages, updating

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Makin' Beats: North's Royal Records Studio Allows Students a Space to Create Original Music and Videos

A grant from the Hopkins Education Foundation has expanded North Junior High's recording and production capacity, giving student artists the opportunity to turn their stories into songs.

Hopkins Public Schools

There's a new recording studio in town, located at North Junior High, and you might recognize some of its star artists. Royal Records is a budding after-school program giving students a hands-on experience with creating their own music and music videos.

Funded through the Hopkins Education Foundation's (HEF) Awesome Fund—grants the specifically benefit school clubs—the Royal Records Studio in the media center was outfitted with brand new equipment at the beginning of the school year. Ninth-grader Audry Ensminger and advisor and video production specialist Matt Houchin had a vision for an after-school program that was safe, supportive, and where students can produce original music.

"I just like to write for fun, and I made a song for choir class and ended up showing Matt," Ensminger said. "I like writing songs about my passions; social justice and how to make



this world a better place. And other fun stuff about being young."

Royal Records got off the ground last year when Ensminger and fellow classmates Riley Jouppi and Rafael Wesley came up with the idea. Houchin said the students had previously helped with the "Royal Roundup" videos and enjoyed creating new content. Through word of mouth, Royal Records grew organically and

more students wanted to be involved. With the help of a \$1,000 HEF grant from the

"I think it's great that they are able to write about and record whatever inspires them," [Matt] Houchin said. "A program like this gives students a platform to showcase their school and the positive messages that are out there. It's very inspiring."

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Student Contests and Awards

International Interdependence Hexagon Project

The International Interdependence Hexagon Project is a visual arts opportunity for young people aged 4 to 18 worldwide to explore global themes, issues, and ideas in school. The project asks students to create art within the interlinking shape of a hexagon, a metaphor for interconnectedness. Any art form in a variety of media, such as a drawing, painting, collage, print, digital, and relief sculpture, is acceptable as long as it can be displayed on a plasterboard gallery wall or on a pedestal or floor.

Deadline: Entries are due June 30, annually.

Website: hexagonproject.org/

InvenTeams

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 9, 2018. If selected to continue to the next

step, final applications are due September 4, 2018.

Website: lemelson.mit.edu/inventeams

The Paradigm Challenge

The Paradigm Challenge is an annual competition developed by Project Paradigm and the American Red Cross. The challenge is intended to inspire youth to use science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills and kindness, creativity, and collaboration to make a difference. The annual challenge aims to generate new ideas to reduce waste in homes, schools, communities, and around the world.

One grand prize of \$100,000; first-place prizes of \$10,000; second-place prizes of \$2,000; third-place prizes of \$1,000; and final prizes of \$200 are awarded.

Deadline: Entries are due May 1, 2018.

Website: www.projectparadigm.org/rules

World of 7 Billion Student 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) advancing women and girls and their access to education, gender equality, women in government, women's health, and child marriage; (2) feeding ten billion (hunger, food waste, resource and

energy use, deforestation, and pollution); and (3) preventing pollution (impacts on air, water, land, climate change, human and wildlife health, and ecosystem destruction).

Deadline: Entries are due February 22, 2018.

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

American Association of Physics Teachers High School Physics Photo Contest

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.

Deadline: Entries are accepted March 1 through May 15, annually.

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

Saving Endangered Species Youth Art Contest

The national Saving Endangered Species Youth Art Contest provides students with an opportunity to learn about endangered species and express their knowledge and support through artwork. To be eligible, students' artwork must depict a land or ocean-dwelling species that either lives in or migrates through the U.S. and its waters, or a plant/flower that is found in the U.S., and has been placed on

the threatened/endangered species list or is considered a recovered species or a candidate species (proposed to receive protection).

Deadline: Entries due March 1, 2018.

Website: www.endangered.org/campaigns/endangered-species-day/saving-endangered-species-youth-art-contest/

SchoolsNEXT Design Competition

The SchoolsNEXT Design Competition offers an opportunity to illustrate the kind of creativity that students bring to the planning and design process. The competition highlights the importance of well-planned, high performance, healthy, safe and sustainable schools that foster student achievement and enhance community vitality.

Deadline: Submissions due March 1, 2018.

Website: www.a4le.org/websites/main/index.php?p=161

Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest

The Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program is an integrated art and science curriculum developed to teach young people environmental science, habitat conservation and a greater awareness of our nation's natural resources.

Deadline: Entries for most states due March 15, 2018.

Website: www.fws.gov/birds/education/junior-duck-stamp-conservation-program/junior-duck-stamp-contest-information.php

Fridley High School Students Travel Abroad to China

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parents on their adventures.

Chinese language student Joze Vescio, senior, said she highly recommends the trip to experience a culture other than your own. She added that China has preserved its history very well. One of her favorite aspects of the trip was seeing the different architecture and learning more about the history of China.

"I really loved seeing all the different temples in every city," Vescio said. "They were all such intricate buildings, very beautiful and so well preserved." Vescio said the trip was amazing for both educational and architectural purposes.

Huang said she enjoyed watching the excitement students felt when they were beginning to understand the language in real-life situations.

"I love when they see, for example, a store sign or when the local guide introduces something, they understand and they feel excited,"

Huang said. "The most important thing is that this experience inspires their motivation."

In addition to providing students with an authentic experience to motivate their learning, Huang added that the trip helped to promote students' open-mindedness as they explore cultures that are different from their own.

She added that she is very thankful to all those who participated.

"Although I did plan the trip, I'd like to thank the students and parents for their cooperation, the school district for their support, and extend a special thank you to the parent chaperones and Mrs. Nordin for their assistance on the trip," Huang said.

www.fridley.k12.mn.us
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North's Royal Records Studio

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Awesome Fund, the school purchased drum and keyboard pads, a new microphone and mic stand, a pop filter or noise protection for the microphones, acoustic foam to absorb the sound, and headphones to better hear their recordings.

"We used to only have one recording station and you'd see many students waiting for it to open up," Houchin said. "This allows us to have multiple stations to work and effectively quadruples the capacity to record."

During the 15-minute homeroom each morning, Royal Records club members flock to the school's media center to have even a few moments to get some words onto paper or practice a beat or line they had been working on. Houchin said students are excited to stay after school and work on their projects and collaborate with one another. Recent videos include "Snack Cart 2.0," which features school nurse Ann Salzar and "Rise Over Run

(Slope)," an ode to line graphs and linear equations.

Ensminger, who's had a passion for music since childhood, said she hopes to pursue it as a career. Her goal is to make music that challenges people's perspectives and positively benefits her community.

"I think it's great that they are able to write about and record whatever inspires them," Houchin said. "A program like this gives students a platform to showcase their school and the positive messages that are out there. It's very inspiring."

www.hopkinsschools.org
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Intro to Engineering

Paul Downer, Delano Public Schools

A unique course at Delano Middle School is introducing students to engineering and challenging them to learn in new ways.

In September, members of Tory Spanier's Design and Modeling class were given the task of crafting a foot orthosis to help people with cerebral palsy.

"It's been fun to try something new and see what you can create," said eighth-grader Ethan Unrein.

The Project Lead the Way program focuses on science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM subjects. Spanier said that projects typically encompass an engineering branch, biomedical branch or computer science.

Design process

In this case, students were challenged to build a foot orthosis just days after school began, and later were introduced to an established design process.

"We throw that first project at them, have them design something to get their feet wet, and then afterward you step through each of the different phases of the design process and share more detail about how to use it," said

Spanier. "So Design and Modeling is about trying to add another problem-solving method to their tool belt. We ask them how their process could have been better if they had used this process."

The sequence includes everything from defining the problem and generating concepts to creating sketches and engineering drawings. Later steps include building a model prototype, testing it, modifying it and ultimately reaching the optimal solution. Students work together in teams, which also challenges them to build collaborative skills.

"It can be quite frustrating because there are lots of different ideas and a lot of them don't work," said eighth-grader Cole Koets. "Learning how to work together gives you the best solution, but it can also be really hard."

To help eliminate individual bias in favor of any given idea, students are introduced to a concept called the decision matrix. The matrix helps students evaluate each concept based on things like cost, materials needed and difficulty, and provides a tool for ranking the concepts after that evaluation.

Whether or not students maintain an interest in the engineering field going forward, Spanier said there is value in the course for all



participants.

"Maybe they won't choose a career in engineering, but at the basic level there is a problem-solving approach they can take out of it, or maybe it makes them a better consumer to understand how things are made and why things are made that way," said Spanier. "It helps them understand that engineering is

involved in everything they see and touch and do in their lives."

www.delano.k12.mn.us
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Engineering Club at Cottage Grove Middle School



South Washington County Schools

Cottage Grove Middle School has a new after school club: The Engineering Club. Over the last four weeks, students have

been meeting each Tuesday afternoon to build woodworking projects by hand. Some of these projects include a toolbox or flower planter, and a capstone bird house project.

"I think it's important that these students learn how to build things with their hands. I provide them with the blueprints, which

includes the project's dimensions and measurements, and they take it from there," said Dan Hines, advisory for the Engineer-

ing Club. "This is also a great trial and error opportunity. When something doesn't work out, they need to improvise."

Every three weeks, a new project is assigned. Students can build the project from the instructions provided, or they can choose something a little more in-depth. Students use minimal tools, including tape measures, scroll saws, impact drivers/drills and sand paper.

"I really like how hands on this is. Most classes you sit in a desk and listen to the teacher. But in this club, you get instructions and then you're free to work and learn how you want," said Gavin, an eighth-grade student at CGMS.

"Many of them are performing applied physics and trigonometry, and they aren't even aware of it. It is great to see them

working, both together and independently, to solve problems they may encounter," continued Hines.

This woodworking course is one of several courses, or mini-series, throughout the rest of the school year. Future mini-series include working with aerospace, electronics, building structures and machines.

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Designing a New Way For Middle Schoolers to Learn



Stillwater Area Public Schools

Matt Howe's classroom at Oak-Land Middle School is alive with activity during third and fifth hour each day. Small groups of students are working together; some on computers, others at whiteboards, and still others around a workbench or at a 3D printer. Each group is doing something different, though their goal is common; to create a project that solves a defined problem. It's noisy, and

might feel a bit chaotic, but if you ask the students they'll tell you the Design and Make class is one of the best parts of their day.

"It's a really great class," said Spencer Mau, an eighth grader. "The best thing is that it encourages creativity and really works your mind."

Design and Make is a unique elective course developed as part of the new middle school program. It allows students

the opportunity to work in a hands-on environment where they can take their ideas and make them into reality. It is based on the design process used by engineers and other professionals charged with creating new innovations. Students collaborate in small groups to define a problem, brainstorm solutions, research, develop ideas, and reach consensus on the best idea to move forward. From there they use computer software and physical materials to build a model or prototype. They test and evaluate their model, improve the design, and ultimately present their results to the rest of their class. Students create a variety of projects - from key chains and fidget spinners to robotics. For one project, students even used 3D and virtual reality software to design their ultimate bedrooms.

"It's fun and you have a lot of freedom to do what you like to do," said Will Barwick.

Beyond being an engaging and fun class, Howe believes the Design and Make philosophy provides students with opportunities to develop higher-level thinking skills. Students aren't just graded on the end product, but are being evaluated on how they work through each step of the design process - both individually and as part of a team.

"It's a switch for most of our students who are used to handing in a project and

getting graded on its merit," Howe said. "I'm really looking at how they worked together as a team, how they handled failure, and how they were able to learn from their mistakes. These are the real-world skills that will help them succeed in the future."

While the Design and Make course is the first of its kind in our middle schools, school leaders hope to embed the principles of the design process into more classes in the future. From English and social studies to math and science, the skills used in the design process help keep students engaged in their learning while preparing them for future careers.

"Teaching students the Design Thinking process is about them learning to identify with the conditions of a problem in order to create progressively more effective solutions," said John Perry, director of learning technology and systems design. "It moves classrooms beyond having students select the correct answer and challenges our kids to change the world."

www.stillwaterschools.org

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 Teacher, Adult Basic Education 2017–2018
 Teacher, Art — Anwatin
 Teacher, Theatre — Sanford
 Teacher, Bilingual/Bicultural (Spanish) — Sheridan (2018–2019)
 Special Education Assistant — River Bend (2017–2018)
 Special Education Assistant — Transition Plus
 Special Education Assistant — Barton
 Teacher, Special Education (2018–2019 Candidate Pool)
 Special Education Assistant — Early Childhood Special Education
 Teacher, Art — Bryn Mawr
Website: www.mpls.k12.mn.us

Spring Lake Park Schools

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Spanish Immersion Teachers: Anticipated Openings: (2018–2019 school year)
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 Kidstop Instructor (Weaver Lake 3:30pm–6:00pm)
 Kidstop Instructor (Basswood 2:45pm–5:45pm)
 ESP — Instructional
 Teacher — Mathematics (Long Term Substitute)

Teacher — Social Studies (Long Term Substitute)
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St Cloud Area School District

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Stevenson Students Participate in an Hour of Code



Fridley Public Schools

During the week of Dec. 4–8, 2017, students at Stevenson Elementary School celebrated Computer Science Education Week by participating in an Hour of Code. The Hour of Code is a global initiative which was designed to introduce students to computer science, learn the basics of coding through tutorials and activities, and get excited about emerging technology. The initiative was launched by Code.org, a nonprofit organization dedicated

to expanding access to computer science and increasing participation of girls and underrepresented students of color.

All Stevenson students, from kindergarten to 4th grade, had the opportunity to learn more about coding in the media center. The youngest students coded on Bee-Bots, a programmable floor robot in the shape of a bee. Coding a Bee-Bot to move in programmed directions teaches students about sequencing, estimation and problem solving. Older

students learn coding fundamentals through courses on the computer. The interactive and fun games work to increase computer-literacy in young students.

Many students at Stevenson have previous experience in coding. In 2015, English Language (EL) teacher Dianne Rae introduced students to coding in Code Camp, an after-school program. Initially, the club began with Rae's EL students and was immediately a hit.

"They loved it and did so well, so I knew I had to figure out how to have an Hour of Code for the entire school," Rae said.

After the first Hour of Code was held in 2015, students filled out an "interest questionnaire" which indicated that over 200 students were interested in participating in Code Camp. The program has now grown to a total of four after-school Code Camps with a different group of students each night during Learning Academy, an after school educational support program. Rae has also started a t-shirt initiative, where students can earn different colored t-shirts as they advance in their coding courses.

Coding has been growing in popularity among young students across the country, and the benefits that coding provides for students is virtually endless.

"Students learn computational thinking. They learn how to ponder a problem and

then reduce it to small, efficient steps," Rae said. "This is a coveted higher order thinking skill."

Rae added that coding fosters creativity and allows students to build fluency in basic technology. According to the Tech Advocate, a news organization that focuses on digital technology, in the future "not knowing how to code may be comparable to not knowing how to read."

"Knowing the basics of coding will be beneficial for every job in the future," Rae said. "By starting students early, they will have a foundation for success in any 21st century career they choose. This can definitely open doors to higher paying jobs for our students."

Rae said all students can find success and satisfaction in coding. "I know this is good for the kids in so many ways and I hope to keep promoting this and see computer science grow throughout our entire district."

See the full photo album at:

www.fridley.k12.mn.us/page.cfm?p=2305&newsid=799

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Demystifying Code

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

Have you ever heard about the Hour of Code? It sounds like a challenge level of a video game. Well, that's not too far off. The term Hour of Code was coined to introduce computer science and "demystify code." It's an easy and simple way for anyone to learn the basics of computer coding. And it's gone global.

Every December, St. Cloud Area School District uses the Hour of Code in collaboration with Code.org during Computer Science Education Week to teach elementary students code basics starting in kindergarten. District technology integrationists along with media specialists and teachers spend one hour a day with students computer coding.

Though the focus of Hour of Code is emphasized during Computer Science Education Week, the lessons learned are continued throughout their entire curriculum all year long. Coding gives students the skills to think critically and problem-solve.

Students at Oak Hill Community School worked through their courses on Code.org while also exploring STEM resources. The goal this year is for teachers to connect

these resources to their curriculum in order to make coding and problem-solving part of everyday learning.

In the beginning of the year, classes at Discovery Community School read problem-solving books during morning announcements and later viewed videos in preparation for coding.

Other schools like Madison Elementary School and Talahi Community School expanded the learning to include families by holding Technology and Math (STEM- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) Nights. Families were able to interact with drones and robots, code and even earn certificates of completion through the Hour of Code.

Kennedy Community School invited Logan Farrell, application engineer at NASA, to speak to Ms. Keil's class via webcam about his career at NASA. Students learned how he worked on the Modular Robotic Vehicle (MRV) and Robonaut.

One piece of advice Farrell gave students, "Find something and make it do something."

Recently Amy Jensen, a Westwood Elementary second grade teacher, presented



"The Techie Teacher Transforms the Terrified Teacher" at the 2017 Technology Education Conference with technology integrationist and Code.org facilitator, Angie Kalthoff, how second-graders are using Dash and Dot robots in the classroom.

One hour of coding a day transforms District 742 students into curious problem-solvers and critical thinkers. And, just

maybe, takes a little mystery out of computer programming and turns it into something fun.

www.isd742.org
(320) 253-9333



Minnetonka Middle School Student Creates Hall Pass App



Minnetonka Public Schools

Minnetonka Middle School student Omar Elamri may just be the youngest person to have created an app now found in the Apple Store. Called Digitr, the 13-year old's digital hall pass app for middle school teachers tracks how long and how often students are out of class.

The idea for a custom electronic hall pass was first suggested as a district innovation through Minnetonka Schools' annual Hunt for Big Ideas. The goal was to come up with

something that could be integrated with the iPads students already use in school. While the idea generated early interest, it didn't gain traction until STEM teacher Michelle Brunik learned of it and brought it to the perfect student to help get it off the ground.

"I knew Omar had the skills [to create the app]," said Ms. Brunik, who also serves as advisor for an afterschool coding club for kids called Coders Unite, where the app came to fruition. "I wanted to push him, and I knew if I gave him a challenge, he would rise up."

He did.

After working on another student's initial prototype for such an app, Omar decided to start over and build his own prototype for Digitr from scratch. He learned and applied new coding skills, worked with Apple and the school's technology department to fine tune it, and surveyed teachers and students all before testing the prototype. In January, he launched Digitr (then called mPass), and it was used all semester at his school, Minnetonka Middle School East. Omar then met with representatives from Apple to show them the Digitr app.

"Not one of our team members was familiar with a middle school student building an app this extensive. There was a lot of excitement around the table," said one of the Apple Corp. representatives. "It was inspirational for us."

More recently, Omar has added even more features, such as the ability for teachers and principals to view analytics on the activity patterns of students.

It's no surprise this achievement comes from a student in the Minnetonka School District, a district that sets a high standard when it comes to using technology as an accelerator for learning. Beginning in elementary school — as early as kindergarten — the District's innovative Tonka CODES curriculum introduces students to basic coding principles.

"It's not just that they develop the coding skills or the ability to code and program," said Pete Dymit, principal of Omar's school. "Once they understand things at that level, it better positions them to be successful in a variety of different fields."

Coding opportunities don't stop in middle school. Omar, like all Minnetonka students, may choose to continue to explore coding in STEM classes, and in eighth grade, they may elect to take Introduction to Computer Science, which is also offered at Minnetonka High School and through Tonka Online. High school students may also enroll in courses such as AP Computer Science Principles, IB Computer Science, Video Game Design, Web Page Design, and AP Computer Science A.

"As technology advances and coding programs become more accessible, we expect to see even more students stepping up to address real-world challenges like this, by creating technological solutions," Dymit said.

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Mall Madness Teaches Business Skills



Paul Downer
Delano Public Schools

The business world can be an exciting but unforgiving place, and fourth-graders in the talent development program at Delano Elementary recently experienced a taste of it through their Mall Madness unit.

About 25 students in the math-focused section developed the idea for a business, then applied for an artificial small business loan and state business license, as well as space to rent in a "mall" set up in the elementary school's large multi-purpose room.

They also made decisions on how much and what kind of advertising to purchase before creating or acquiring their products, naming them and ultimately selling them at the annual Mall Madness day (see video here). Through it all the students kept their own checkbooks and monitored their account balances.

On Mall Madness day all the fourth-graders in the school, plus some parents and staff, passed through the room where the products were displayed for sale vendor-style. Each vendor was required to have at least 15 of their products, which ranged from cribbage boards to decorated rocks, but they were also allowed to have more if they thought the market would support it. One vendor sold out of her stress balls in five minutes flat. The student with the most items, 48, sold all but six.

Afterward, the entrepreneurs evaluated their decisions on advertising, inventory and more.

"It's about the decision-making process, what really goes into a business," said Gwen

Briesemeister, the gifted/talented coordinator for Delano Public Schools. "It helps them understand that it's not all luck. There is thought that goes into it. And afterward they evaluate their choices and why someone else might have been more successful than they were. They look at the money they brought in, the pricing of their products — all those things are everyday essential skills that students in business need to have."

Some students made their own products, like hair bows or Tiger signs. Others collected and sold items made by family members or pedaled products that were acquired in some other manner.

"They have different tools at home and there are skills where maybe certain people can help," said Briesemeister. "Grandmas might do some crocheting, or parents or older siblings can help. They're allowed to pull any resources they have."

After the sales were completed, students learned how businesses in town show appreciation for their customers through donations or giveaways, then donated about 10

percent of their earnings back to the fourth-grade class for a party, games or some other use to be determined by the teachers.

In all, the unit ran from September to December, with some extra business-related items worked in.

"It has been a really fun project for the kids to do," said Briesemeister. "They are always really excited about it, especially when they can take home their \$14 or whatever they made at the end. They just love that. Most of the kids are very successful and they learn a lot."

Student experience

The opportunity to make business decisions and sell their products to real customers made the learning come alive for students.

"It was cool that we had a real business and made real money. It wasn't all just pretend," said Luke Gilliland, who made about 40 sports posters and sold all but three.

One pretend duty involved managing a checkbook, but Eddie Binsfeld, who made his own cribbage boards, said that was his favorite part of the unit because it made the activity seem real.

During the course of Mall Madness day students learned the importance of a good display, and Binsfeld said the taller displays seemed to attract the most attention. Sydney Pink produced and sold 20 bookmarks, and said setting up was time-consuming but worthwhile.

"It was a fun experience, but there was quite a lot of work to prepare for it," she said.

Binsfeld agreed.

"It was actually kind of stressful because there was real money at stake," he said.

Successful or not, Christmas ornament merchant Hayden Rue said the activity was still exciting for all involved.

"Even the people that didn't sell a lot still had fun," he said.

The students agreed that they now look at stores a bit differently when they visit, knowing some of the considerations that go on behind the scenes to make a profit. Taking into account the utility of the products and how much store owners spent to acquire them, for example, is a new line of thought.

"Most people didn't make much money (on Mall Madness day) because they had put a lot into it beforehand," said Binsfeld.

Gilliland was left with a lingering appreciation for the time business people take to pursue success.

"What we went through, it was kind of like what business people really deal with," he said. "We only had one product, but they have tons of products to think about."

Mall Madness day was hectic and crowded, but Gilliland said that was all part of the experience.

"Now I know what salespeople feel like on Black Friday," he said.

www.delano.k12.mn.us
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Inaugural “Hopkins Shark Tank” Challenges Students to Explore Entrepreneurial Ideas

Hopkins High School students put their business acumen to the test in a friendly competition, with the winner taking home prize money to get their idea off the ground.

Hopkins Public Schools

Unique business ideas, creative sales pitches, judges, prize money — If you’re thinking these all have the makings of a great episode of “Shark Tank,” you’d be correct. Except there is one small change in venue, it’s “Hopkins Shark Tank.”

Hopkins High School students put their business acumen to the test earlier this month during a friendly competition that encouraged students to explore their entrepreneurial talents. The first-ever “Hopkins

Shark Tank” was funded through private donations and offered the winner \$1,000 to be put toward getting their idea off the ground. Business educator and ProPEL advisor Jesse Theirl said.

“My motivation for helping create this was to hopefully get students excited to compete,” said business educator and ProPEL advisor Jesse Theirl. “An additional

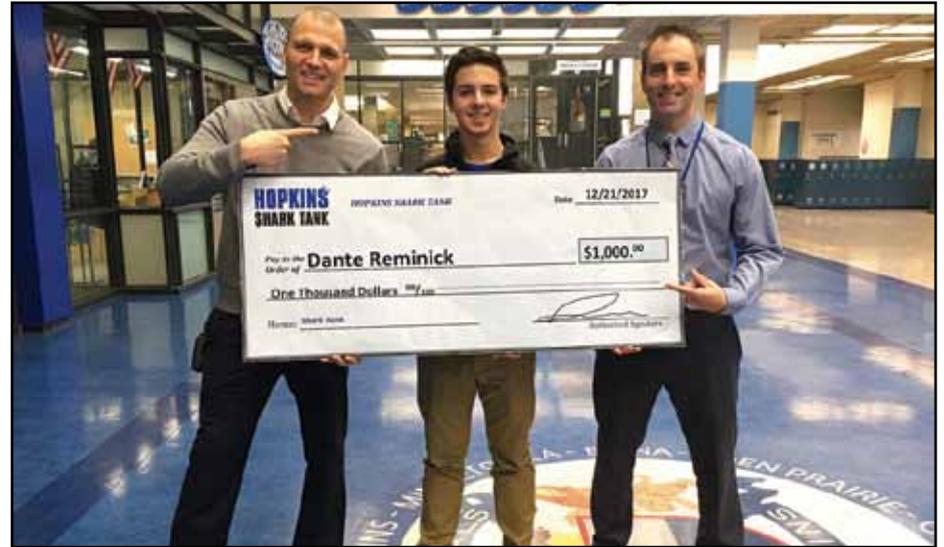
benefit would also be the conversations that other students have with the competitors. Essentially, they’re talking about ideas and interests, which is really the organic career conversations we want people at this age discussing.”

Students submitted executive summaries of their ideas and the top 12 moved onto presentations. A panel of judges from all roles and business backgrounds were brought in to critique each idea during several rounds of judging. Theirl said by

having projects advance each round it gave students the opportunity to fine tune their ideas and keep improving. The 12 were whittled down to three finalists.

Dante Reminick’s pitch was to expand his Give a Goat operation by traveling back to Uganda and study the effects of the program he helped implement in seventh grade. The second project chosen was Evan

[Business educator and ProPEL advisor Jesse] Theirl, who is also the DECA advisor, said he hopes to make “Hopkins Shark Tank” an annual event, adding hands-on learning such as a business competition helps students think outside of the box.



Miranda and Max Arneson’s “Hygienic Handle.” A prototype made from antimicrobial fiber, the Hygienic Handle is placed over any door handle to prevent the spread of germs. And the third pitch came from Alex Jono, Connor Sedoff, and Lilli Appelmann. Their new social media app “Roomeet” helps college students find compatible roommates.

Heather Harnisch, who is the chief of staff for apparel at Target, and Anne Rucker, founder and owner of Bogart’s Doughnuts, were the two judges for the final round. They grilled each team with questions about their idea, asking about return on investments, target markets, cost of production, and long-

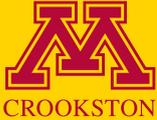
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Celebrating a Decade of Language Immersion



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

It has been one amazing decade of language immersion programming in St. Cloud Area School District 742, and immersion high school students are now masters in Chinese or Spanish. The program is described as a “little miracle” by language immersion and world language coordinator Sue Linn-Hasbrouck.

Linn-Hasbrouck has witnessed firsthand the years of work and effort these students have put into acquiring their bilingualism.

High school students in the immersion program have been immersed in another lan-

guage since kindergarten. The oldest class is now in tenth grade and they’ve evolved and grown with the program.

Originally, the program was designed to be a seven-year commitment for students entering kindergarten. However, with the popularity and love of the program, it’s continued to expand year after year. The program now offers AP level immersion classes at both Apollo High School and Tech High School.

“I see our programs getting stronger as we continue to reflect and get feedback from teachers, parents and the community,” says Linn-Hasbrouck. “Our immersion students will have an advantage by being bilingual

and acquiring increased global competencies. Immersion education is an avenue to increase global competency and 21st-century skills among our students, which will, in turn, develop future leaders of a global society.”

Celebrating the impact of immersion programming has been a focus this anniversary year.

A community-wide Language Immersion Celebration was held this fall showcasing District 742 immersion students and their decade of accomplishments. It brought together families, businesses and communities from all backgrounds and cultures.

“Being a part of another culture is special,” explains Tech freshman, Kailee Jensen. “It’s really amazing.”

“The whole experience has been life-changing,” adds Isaiah Weekes, a sophomore at Apollo. “We get a chance to see how people on the other side of the world live and learn.”

Weekes traveled to China this year with his classmates. The two-week experience put his skills to the test in an academic setting when he attended some high school classes and worked with elementary students, but also enriched his understanding in a home setting. His stay with a host family gave him insight into their home life. During the trip, Weekes and his classmates were also introduced to careers in translation and ambassador possi-

bilities to the United States.

Being bilingual opens doors.

“It [bilingualism] gives a student a head start in language requirements in college and increases job opportunities in many careers,” explains Linn-Hasbrouck. “Being bilingual is an asset regardless of what field of study a person chooses.”

Linn-Hasbrouck’s ability to speak German and Spanish, in addition to English, has resonated throughout her own life.

“[Traveling] I’m able to bring a certain connectedness,” says Linn-Hasbrouck. “Through human connection, we feel whole and a part of something bigger than ourselves . . . Being multilingual has added deeply to the quality of my life.”

Over the last decade, immersion students have connected with the St. Cloud community as well as international communities. The next decade holds great promise for District 742 immersion students personally, academically and professionally. They very well may become our next global leaders.

www.isd742.org
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“Hopkins Shark Tank” Continued from Page 11

term goals. After deliberation, the judges chose to fund Reminick’s Give a Goat idea. They cited the fact that it was already a successful campaign and the actions created tangible results as reasons for selecting the idea.

Reminick, who is a junior, first went to Uganda in seventh-grade and said after seeing the impoverished communities he wanted to help. He talked with local leaders and they informed him that goats were needed. Now he wants to expand on his idea and ensure its longevity.

“This is a sustainable, pay-it-forward initiative that is run by youth,” Reminick said. “And I plan to go back over spring break and conduct an impact study to see how we can scale this organization to new heights.”

Theirl, who is also the DECA advisor, said he hopes to make “Hopkins Shark Tank” an annual event, adding hands-on learning such as a business competition helps students think outside of the box.

“Having done DECA for a long time, some of the most meaningful learning for students happens ‘when the lights come on for the game,’” he said. “Like sports, you quickly realize what you were prepared for and what you were not prepared for. It’s from this experience that we learn the most.”

“Hopkins Shark Tank” participants

- Dante Reminick: “Give a Goat” (winner)
- Evan Miranda and Max Arneson: “Hygienic Handle” (runner-up)
- Alex Jono, Connor Sedoff, and Lilli Appelman: “Roomeet” app for finding college roommates (runner-up)
- Lexi Stephenson: “Buddy Collar,” a dog mood and tracking collar
- Kol Jansa: “Lending Hands” app for organizations looking for volunteers and volunteers looking for opportunities
- Gabe Gauderman and Ruot Nyak: “Schoolie” app for schools
- Eli Scheeter: Social media marketing consultant for businesses
- Preston Wesley: Bike fidget spinners
- Hunter Towle: “Full Dive Virtual Reality” for military/medical/gaming
- Plamedi Bangila: Plakton social deals

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Davidson Fellows Scholarship

The Davidson Fellows Scholarship awards \$50,000, \$25,000 and \$10,000 scholarships to extraordinary young people, age 18 and under, who have completed a significant piece of work in categories including science, technology and “outside the box.” Davidson Fellows are honored every year in Washington, D.C. with Congressional meetings and a special reception.

Deadline: Apply by February 14, 2018.

Website: www.davidsongifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship

Young Eco-Hero Awards

Action for Nature seeks applications from students ages 8-16 for its Eco-Hero Awards Program. This program recognizes the individual accomplishments of young people whose personal actions have significantly improved the environment. Winners receive a cash prize and a special certificate of achievement, as well as public recognition on a website and elsewhere.

Deadline: Apply by February 28, 2018.

Website: actionfornature.org/eco-hero-awards/application-form

Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators

The Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators recognizes outstanding K-12 teachers who employ innovative approaches to environmental education and use the environment as a context for learning. Up to two teachers from each of EPA’s 10 regions, from different states, will be chosen. The White House Council on Environmental Quality, in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administers this award to honor, support and encourage educators who incorporate environmental education in their classrooms and teaching methods.

Deadline: Apply by March 1, 2018.

Website: www.epa.gov/education/presidential-innovation-award-environmental-educators

President’s Environmental Youth Awards

The President’s Environmental Youth Awards recognize outstanding environmental projects by K-12 students. Since 1971, the president has joined with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to recognize young people for protecting our nation’s air, water, land, and ecology.

Deadline: Apply by March 1, 2018.

Website: www.epa.gov/education/presidents-environmental-youth-award

M State High School and Community Partnership Program

In the summer of 2017, Minnesota State Community and Technical College launched its High School Partners/Community Partners program, reaching out to 18 regional Minnesota high schools in an effort to strengthen relationships and accomplish the following goals:

- Improve the college preparedness and college readiness of high school graduates coming to M State by 2 percent annually.
- Enhance the value proposition of the relationship by sharing each high school's M State first-time-in-college cohort performance data with high school administrators, teachers and regional media outlets
- Create additional scholarship opportunities for partner high school graduates

K12 Collaborations Manager Megan Adamczyk and Vice President of Student Development Peter Wielinski met with principals and superintendents during the summer of 2017 to review historical data on high school graduate placement and explore opportunities for enhanced partnerships. The opinion of these high school administrators remained consistent: M State is viewed positively, and too many of their students fall into either the category of thinking that

a four-year institution is the only path to success (when many would be better suited to complete their first two years at M State or consider an occupational pathway), or the category of thinking that college is an unattainable pursuit altogether (when many ought to realize that there is an affordable educational pathway accessible through M State). Of the 18 administrators approached, 16 jumped at the opportunity for an enhanced partnership.

M State Partner High Schools: 2017–18 Cohort

Barnesville	New York Mills
Detroit Lakes	Park Rapids
Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton	Pelican Rapids
Fergus Falls	Perham
Frazee-Vergas	Sebeka
Hawley	Underwood
Lake Park-Audubon	Verndale
Moorhead	Wadena-Deer Creek

The sharing of college performance data with partner high schools is an innovative approach to inform high school administrators and faculty of the levels of preparedness and readiness achieved by their graduates. Partner high schools are receiving three reports designed to inform their efforts to

improve high school success, college readiness and successful transition.

1st Report (August): information on their graduate classes from 2007 to 2015 and how many of their students who enrolled in a college or university in the fall following their graduation a) stayed in Minnesota and b) attended which regional institution. A companion sheet displays the same data for all of west central Minnesota so they can see how their school compares with schools in the region.

2nd Report (September): more specific information (aggregate, FERPA-respectful) on their graduate cohorts from 2013-15 who enrolled at M State. It will include the top programs of study pursued, how they performed during their first term, whether they graduated and, if they transferred to another college, the name of the transfer institution.

3rd Report (January/February): data (aggregate, FERPA-respectful) on their 2016-17 graduates who enrolled at M State for a Fall 2017 start: which programs of study they chose, their scores on our course placement assessments and the amount of their tuition and fees

that was covered by grants and other “free” money.

All 16 partner high schools determine which additional resources they wish to take advantage of — financial aid workshops, college selection workshops, campus visits, instructor-to-instructor collaborations and technological solutions. Each of the 2017–18 founding cohort partner schools' graduates this year are eligible to apply for a \$2,500 scholarship. A minimum of two \$2,500 scholarships are available to 2017–18 graduates at each of the 16 partner high schools.

This program is off to a great start, and plans are underway to host a June 2018 Collaboration Network event where 2017–18 partner high school teams can come together to share promising practices and engage in professional development. Plans also are underway to begin selection of an additional 12 Minnesota and North Dakota high schools for the program's second 2018–19 cohort of partners.



M State Thanks Its Sixteen 2017-2018 High School Partners for Collaboration in Student Success!

- Barnesville
- Detroit Lakes
- Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton
- Fergus Falls
- Frazee-Vergas
- Hawley
- Lake Park Audubon
- Moorhead
- New York Mills
- Park Rapids
- Pelican Rapids
- Perham
- Sebeka
- Underwood
- Verndale
- Wadena-Deer Creek

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Air Force Junior ROTC Grants

The Air Force Association Junior ROTC (AFJROTC) grant program was established to promote aerospace education throughout classrooms and units. Applications are judged by the importance and the impact the selected aerospace activity will have on students. Funds may be used for any aerospace education related activity from purchasing textbooks or videotapes, to going on a field trip to an aerospace museum, Air Force base, or other aerospace facility.

Grants up to \$250 are awarded.

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

Website: www.afa.org/afa/informationfor/teachers/k12grants/airforcejuniorrotcgrant

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 January 16 through July 15 and July 16 through January 15, annually.

Website: www.captainplanetfoundation.org/grants/ecosolution

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 January 16 through July 15 and July 16 through January 15, annually.

Website: www.captainplanetfoundation.org/grants/ecotech

Environmental and Science Grants

Waste Management, Inc. supports environmental and science education programs, such as science fairs and Earth Day projects targeting middle and high school students. There is also interest in proposals to preserve and enhance natural resources.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

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

Emeril's Culinary Garden and Teaching Kitchen Program

The Emeril Lagasse Foundation works to inspire, mentor, and enable student success by integrating gardening and cooking concepts into school curriculums. Emeril's Culinary Garden and Teaching Kitchen Program partners with qualified elementary and middle schools to inspire appreciation for food sources and understanding of nutrition and healthy eating, promote life skills, and teach culinary skills.

Deadline: Letters of Interest are accepted year-round.

Website: emeril.org/emerils-culinary-gardens/schools

Project Produce: Fruit and Veggie Grants for Schools

The Chef Ann Foundation and Healthy 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.

Grants of \$2,500 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

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

Instrumental Music Grants

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

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.fendermusicfoundation.org/grants/grants-info/

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

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

Japan Foundation Grants

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

Grants up to \$5,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Grant applications are accepted year-round.

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

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

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.

Deadline: Nominations are accepted year-round.

Website: www.liftlifefoundation.org/#spark

Baseball Tomorrow Fund Grants

The goal of the Baseball Tomorrow Fund is to increase youth participation in baseball and softball by awarding grants to schools and school districts, municipalities, and qualified

nonprofit groups that are involved in youth baseball or softball.

Deadline: Applications are due January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1, annually.

Website: www.mlb.com/baseball-tomorrow-fund

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 are accepted year-round.

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

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.

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

Website: www.scbwi.org/awards/grants/amber-brown-grant

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.

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

Website: pwirtr.org/register

Armatage Montessori School Validated as a 2017–2018 Minnesota School of Excellence

Minneapolis Public Schools
Principal Joan Franks
Asst. Principal Paul Scanlon

Armatage Montessori School has been validated as a Minnesota School of Excellence by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA). This prestigious honor was awarded to Armatage for its commitment to 21st century teaching and learning.

"Through the Minnesota School of Excellence program, grounded in national research on highperforming schools, MESPA has created the premier opportunity in the state for validating greatness in a school community," said Jon Millerhagen, MESPA executive director. "This school improvement program examines the entire school community through six national standards, ensuring there is a holistic approach to creating a plan for future achievement and celebrating the unique accomplishments of each School of Excellence."

Sam Richardson, chair of the School of Excellence Committee, said, "It takes hard work and commitment to thoroughly assess areas of strength and at the same time plan for continual improvement. The SOE process provides an opportunity for the entire school community to reflect on the collaborative work being done and to celebrate these

accomplishments. Schools that receive validation have had important data-driven conversations about what a high-quality 21st century learning experience should be for all students and have plans to make that learning experience a reality. Honoring the important work of dedicated staff, eager students, and supportive communities is an essential component of becoming a School of Excellence."

Armatage Montessori is located in the Minneapolis Public School District and serves 654 students in K–5, PreK, Montessori, and Early Childhood Special Education. Armatage's mission is to foster lifelong learners that work toward meeting their own potential in a caring and respectful school community.

"[The School of Excellence process] provided additional opportunities for our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) to examine our practices, parent relationships, and community outreach as a mechanism for improvement," said Joan Franks, principal of Armatage Montessori. "The survey process helped us reflect and align our work in order to reinforce the success we have had with the realignment of resources. We were pleased to see our ILT and survey results reinforced data conversations we have had in previous years." Our school survey data indicated that Armatage possesses a culture of regular dis-



course about emerging knowledge, trends, and changes in the society and that we use both short-term and long-term implications strategies for attaining our school's vision. Engaging in these conversations with PLCs, ILTs, and one-on-one data meetings will keep us current as changes develop.

Armatage Montessori School fosters a community of learners through its dual Professional Learning Community [PLC] models. Their horizontal PLCs reflect traditional PLC practices: classroom teachers, content specialists, special education resource teachers, EL teachers, and admin-

istration meet roughly every four weeks to look at current student achievement levels, essential learning needs, and strategies for implementation. Building coaches use data findings to provide resources and support for individual teachers, and staff build on our culture of learning through collaborative problem solving.

Their vertical PLCs also meet roughly every four weeks to discuss the findings of the horizontal teams, to share best practices and to assess the alignment of the K–5 curric-

Continued on Page 17



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- Providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards;
- Advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers.

Developed and revised by practicing educators based on research and practitioner expertise, the National Board Five Core Propositions and Standards describe what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do to have a positive impact on student learning. National Board Certification identifies teachers who meet those standards through a performance-based, peer-reviewed series of assessment components.

First published in 1989 and updated in 2016, *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do* articulates the National Board's Five Core Propositions for teaching. The Five Core Propositions — comparable to medicine's Hippocratic Oath — set forth the profession's vision for accomplished teaching.

Together, the propositions form the basis of all National Board Standards and the foundation for National Board Certification.

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See more: www.nbpts.org/national-board-certification

Armatage Montessori School

Continued from Page 15

ulum, instruction, and Montessori materials. Teachers meet individually with administration and curriculum specialists to discuss fall and winter Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) data. Individual teachers share their overarching goals and findings with their PLC groups, and larger trends are discussed with the ILT.

“The differentiation inherent in the Montessori process and the success it has provided for our students [is a strength of Armatage that was highlighted through the SOE process],” said Franks. With an emphasis on the whole child, including social and emotional development, the Montessori method appeals to the full spectrum of intelligences and learning styles—logical, linguistic, kinesthetic, artistic, spatial—and seeks to educate the whole child. Because the quality of the overall learning environment

is paramount, students are taught to take responsibility for the culture of their class. Students learn to respect each other's work and to give each other the space and the tranquility that are conducive to learning.

“On behalf of our staff and students, we are extremely proud to receive recognition of our hard work and dedication,” said Principal Franks and Assistant Principal Paul Scanlon. “We believe the collaboration between students, staff, and community is a key component to our success.”

Source: Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA)

www.armatage.k12.mn.us
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Techam Named Teacher of the Year



Paul Downer, Delano Public Schools

It has been a memorable year for Marie Techam, who earned a Leadership in Educational Excellence Award in October, and was named the district's 2018 Teacher of the Year in November.

The high school social worker does not preside over a conventional classroom, but instead provides vital support to students in the areas of mental, social and emotional wellness. Each year the Delano Teacher's Association votes from a list of candidates for a Teacher of the Year to represent the district at the state level.

"Being named Teacher of the Year is such an honor and definitely one of the highlights of my career," said Techam. "Since moving to Delano, working here, and having my kids go to school here, I have been truly amazed by the excellent teaching staff and support personnel we have. Our district employees overall are so dedicated to helping students, and go above and beyond to give students a quality education. To be a school social worker getting this honor, it truly is a testament to the teachers and how much they value all areas of helping students."

A nomination written by Shalyn Tordeur, alternative education instructor and School Within a School director for Delano, recognized Techam for working behind the scenes to help both students and staff perform to their full potential.

"She's witnessed and helped not only students but staff in their darkest moments, and is an advocate for all," Tordeur wrote. "Marie embodies what every teacher should be. She is caring and respected and never asks anything from others. She strives for each student to feel loved, and helps each teacher know the importance of this. She truly is a gift to Delano."

"Our students are faced with so many challenges, many that we aren't even aware of, and it is our job to help them come to a place in which they feel they are supported and are able to work through anything that may be getting in the way of their learning," said Techam. "Each student has something unique and valuable to offer, and as educators we can find that quality within each of them."

In Delano since 2005

Techam is in her 11th year at Delano, and 18th overall as a social worker in education. The Little Falls native graduated in 1999 with her bachelor's degree in social work, and earned her master's degree in education in 2003.

"I went into this career to help kids. I like social work because it allows you to help people help themselves," Techam said. "My philosophy of education is that every child deserves a safe and nurturing place to learn. Every student should feel a sense of belonging when they walk into school each day. I have witnessed firsthand the weight that is lifted off of a student's shoulders when they simply are able to talk about some of the problems they are experiencing with a trusted adult."

Her first job was at the Minnesota River Valley Special Education Cooperative in Jordan, where she served E/BD students in grades K-12 from 2000 until 2005. From 2005 to 2007 she worked for the Ogilvie schools, focusing on truancy and family collaboration.

Techam joined Delano as the social worker for grades 5-12 in 2007, and after a middle school social worker was hired began to focus exclusively on high school students in 2015.

"The most enjoyable part of my job is when I witness change within a student," Techam said. "When they learn coping skills or strategies to help themselves through a difficult situation it is so gratifying to see. In working with high school students I often get to witness them taking control over important areas within their lives and making choices to better their future. To see a student start to improve in their self-esteem and confidence

and be able to advocate for him/herself makes me so proud of them."

A fulfilling career

Techam works with individuals as well as groups. Some of the groups she has facilitated over the years focused on grief and loss, emotional regulation, cognitive behavior skills, anxiety, family change, social skills, friendship and ADHD/impulse control.

Along with Tordeur, she also started the school's COMPASS (Character, Opportunity, Mentorship, Perseverance, Academics, Service and Success) program in January of 2016, which focuses on volunteer projects and organizes an annual suicide awareness and prevention day.

"We are so proud of this program and how it is making a difference in the lives of many of our students," she said.

Techam added that mental health and suicide prevention are her passion within social work, and that she has been able to form Delano's first suicide risk assessment procedure. Another aspect of her work includes coordinating various resources from outside the district to aid students, including Wright County's Human Services and Public Health departments, The Central Minnesota Mental Health Center and the Rivers of Hope Domestic Violence Center.

"Our students are faced with so many challenges, many that we aren't even aware of, and it is our job to help them come to a place in which they feel they are supported and are able to work through anything that may be getting in the way of their learning," said Techam. "Each student has something unique and valuable to offer, and as educators we can find that quality within each of them."

Techam lives in Delano with her husband Terry, a math teacher in Orono who serves as the Delano varsity boys' basketball coach, and three children who are students in Delano. They are Derek, a high school junior; Trent, an eighth-grader; and Grace, a first-grader.

Outside of work Techam said she enjoys spending a large portion of her time at her children's basketball games.

"It's so fun to see my children be dedicated members of teams and learn all of the important life skills that sports can instill in young people's lives," Techam said. "I love spending time with my family."

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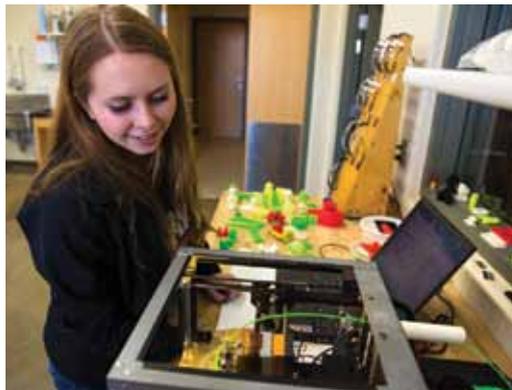
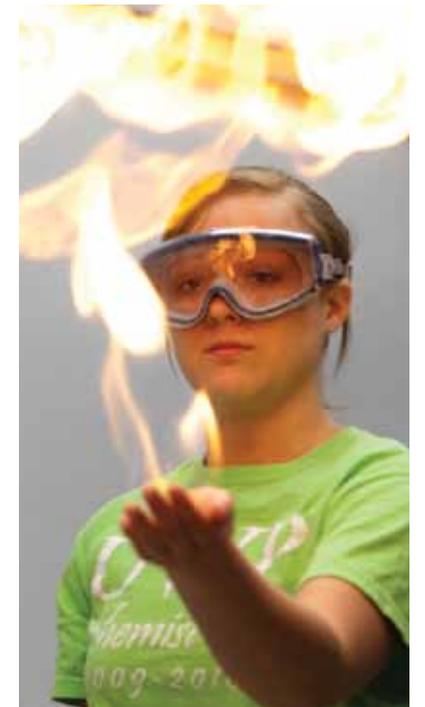
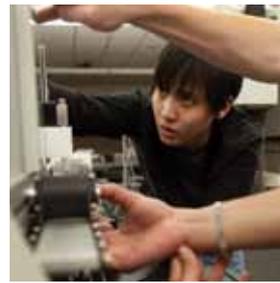
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