

TEACHING TODAY MN

MINNESOTA'S K-12 EDUCATION CONNECTION

Fall 2015, Volume 1

Westonka Honors WWII Veteran with High School Diploma (69 Years Later)



World War II veteran Russell Whittaker—pictured with Superintendent Kevin Borg and his wife, Winnifred Whittaker—received a Mound Westonka High School diploma from the Westonka School Board July 13. Photo by Becca Neuger

By Becca Neuger
Westonka Public Schools

As Superintendent Kevin Borg noted at the July 13 meeting of the Westonka School Board, students finishing 10th grade this year began their vacation thinking about starting summer jobs, making varsity sports teams or asking someone special to the Homecoming dance. For Russell Whittaker and others attending high school in the 1940s, their focus was on how they could protect and defend their country during World War II.

On Monday night, the Westonka School Board awarded a Mound Westonka High School diploma to Whittaker, an 88-year-old U.S. Navy veteran who served on a minesweeper in the Philippines during the final year of World War II. Whittaker attended school in the Mound Consolidated School District and would have graduated with the

class of 1946.

In 1944, at the age of 17, Whittaker received written permission from his father to leave Mound High School to enlist in the Navy. He served in the U.S. Pacific Fleet aboard the U.S.S. YMS 121 from December 1944 to April 1946 and was honorably discharged in 1947.

After the war, Whittaker continued his education and studied to become an electrician. He married Winnifred Kaufhold in October 1948, and they had four sons and one daughter. Whittaker had a successful career as a union electrician and retired at age 62 in 1989.

Despite his personal and professional achievements, Whittaker said that always felt somewhat incomplete, having never graduated from high school. Knowing this, Whittaker's son Paul contacted the Westonka School District earlier this summer to request a diploma for his father. It was the first request of this kind in Borg's 10 years as superintendent.

"In Westonka Schools, we talk about our 'small school advantages, big school opportunities and real-life success stories,'" Borg said. "Mr. Whittaker's story is truly a 'real-life success story,' and we feel honored to be

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PAKRAT (People And Kids Reading A Lot Together)

St. Cloud Area School District

Sometimes a great idea is sparked, and with a little passion, that idea can grow into something spectacular. The PAKRAT program (an internal reading system that has books categorized by reading levels at elementary schools) allows students to check out PAKRAT books in addition to their library books.

As part of the program, students take a book home to read with their parent/partner each evening and then return the book, along with a brief worksheet about the book to their classroom teacher the next day. Several schools hold "PAKRAT Parades" at the end of each reading cycle to celebrate the students/classrooms that read the most books. The program has been a great success, with spring 2015 survey of parents, students and teachers indicating:

- 80% of the students report that PAKRAT has made them a better reader
- 94% of the parents indicate they wanted the program to continue.
- 94% of the teachers indicate they feel PAKRAT has benefitted the literacy development of their students, and
- 95% of the teachers want the PAKRAT program to continue

"St. Cloud has taken an amazing



pathway to make this access to books available to learners in every single school," said Mary Dank, who brought the idea for the highly successful PAKRAT concept to St. Cloud when she began as an instructional coach in 2008.

The program grew quickly thanks to the Local Education & Activities Foundation (LEAF), broad community support and the work of PAKRAT coordinators Melanie Jiskra and Sara Martini and instructional coach Beth Lovdahl. The PAKRAT child literacy/parent involvement community-wide reading competency program has worked well at nine elementary and preschool locations.

Expansion to a summertime program has helped elementary students living in poverty to improve their reading skills and expand their educational potential — good for everyone in the community.

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TEACHING TODAY MN

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People And Kids Reading A Lot Together

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PAKRAT Summer Roll & Read

Based on Richard Allington's research which indicates that up to 85% of the achievement gap can be attributed to the "summer slide" when many students have little access to quality reading materials, the Roll and Read program provides all students access to these quality reading materials on a weekly basis throughout the summer.

The PAKRAT Summer Roll & Read Project was the idea of Talahi teacher, Sara Martini, after visiting a national conference in Washington, D.C. where another similar idea was already up and running. Martini with the help of Beth Lovdahl, another teacher in the district, started the program at Talahi Community School.

Each week in the summer of 2013, the Roll & Read school bus made stops throughout the Talahi attendance area, drawing students from virtually every elementary school in District 742! In 2014, with help from LEAF and an Otto Bremer Foundation grant, the Summer Roll & Read PAKRAT acquired additional books and continued to grow. The pilot program in the Talahi attendance area was a great success so that by the fall of 2014 Martini and Lovdahl contacted LEAF executive director Bruce Hentges with the idea of purchasing a bus for the Summer Read and Roll program and expanding it district-wide in the 240 square-mile district!

Connections were made and presentations prepared. The St. Cloud Rotary Club gave \$15,000 to purchase a bus, which had to be totally remodeled and repainted to fit DOT regulations. The Local Education Activities Foundation (LEAF) Board of Directors contributed a \$10,000 grant to help purchase books and an additional grant worth \$8,000 was awarded to the program to purchase books. Paul Novak, a district

employee, created the shelving designed to go inside the bus to safely store the hundreds of books. Then with the help of Apollo High School students, who made the shelves, the idea just continued to grow.

Countless volunteers and contributions from the community helped to get the program rolling and continue.

A new bus with an attractive paint job, stairs so students can walk up into the bus to check out books and volunteers not having to roll the carts of books on and off the bus at each stop, allowed the Summer PAKRAT Roll & Read Program to expand to the entire district this past summer. During the summer of 2015, 2,318 kids checked out just under 4,500 books from Clear Lake to St. Joseph in just seven weeks!

The PAKRAT Summer Roll & Read Program is a great example of what can happen when a teacher has a great idea, colleagues step up to provide the professional classroom leadership to support the idea, and the community provides the needed financial support to make it happen. All of those things came together in St. Cloud and our students continue to benefit!

For more information about PAKRAT and the PAKRAT Summer Roll & Read Program may contact the LEAF executive director through the LEAF website: www.leaf742.org.

A special thank you to Bruce Hentges for all of his help with this article!

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

WII Veteran receives High School Diploma

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able to recognize him and welcome him as one of our alumni."

The school board unanimously voted to award a diploma to Whittaker "in consideration of his further education in the military, post-secondary school and life experience, and in grateful appreciation of his service to our country." Sixty-nine years after he would have graduated, Whittaker stepped up to the podium to receive his diploma in front of a room full of family members and well-wishers. As a token of appreciation, School Board Chair Dave Botts also presented Whittaker

with a red rose, the class flower from the Mound class of 1946, tied with ribbons in his class colors, green and gold.

"It means a lot, and I am so grateful to everyone who made this possible," Whittaker said.

[\(952\) 491-8000](http://westonka.k12.mn.us)



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The Teaching Today MN Dream Career Essay Contest

Open for Submissions Now!

**Calling all
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Share your “Dream Career” with the readers of *Teaching Today™ MN*! Submit your essays or Powerpoint presentations, and you could win cash prizes to use towards your future “Dream Career” and have your entry featured in the pages of *Teaching Today MN*.

- ▶ **\$200.00 cash prizes from *Teaching Today™ MN* will be awarded to each of the six winning entries.**
- ▶ **\$75.00 cash prizes from *Teaching Today™ MN* will be awarded to each of the six Honorable Mentions.**

This contest is open to all high school students in Minnesota. Essay entries are to be between 500 and 600 words in length. A Word document or PDF is preferred. Power point entries must be accompanied by a 175–225 word description to run in the print copies of *Teaching Today™ MN*. Links to power point entries will be posted on the *Teaching Today™ MN* website and blog site.

We will be featuring the six winners in our Holiday Issue which will be released in mid-December. The six honorable mentions will be presented in the following three issues.

This contest begins on October 5th and the deadline for submissions is December 4th at 6:00 p.m.

**Whatever your dream career is *Teaching Today MN* wants to read about it!
Submit your essay soon!**



Please send entries to:

*andria@teachingtodaymn.com or
renee@teachingtodaymn.com.*

Call Renee at 715-839-7074 or Andria at 715-360-4875 with any questions.

3 resources for Students looking for a Dream Career

ASVAB Career Exploration Program

The ASVAB Career Exploration Program is a comprehensive career exploration and planning program that includes a multiple aptitude test battery, an interest inventory, and various career planning tools designed to help students explore the world of work. This is free to participating schools.

The ASVAB Career Exploration Program is intended for use with students in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, as well as students in post-secondary schools. The Program provides tools, including the test battery and interest inventory, developed by the Department of Defense to help high school and post-secondary students across the nation learn more about career exploration and planning. Results of the aptitude test and the interest inventory enable students to evaluate their skills, estimate performance in academic and vocational endeavors, and identify potentially satisfying careers. These results are integrated with work values to help students identify and prioritize possible career choices. Students are encouraged to consider their own work-related values and other important personal preferences as they explore the world of work and learn career exploration skills that will benefit them throughout their work lives.

Website: www.asvabprogram.com/

CareerOneStop

CareerOneStop products include:

America's Service Locator connects individuals to employment and training opportunities available at local American Job Centers. The website provides contact information for a range of local work-related services, including unemployment benefits, career development, and educational opportunities. (www.ServiceLocator.org)

America's Career InfoNet helps individuals explore career opportunities to make informed employment and education choices. The website features user-friendly occupation and industry information, salary data, career videos, education resources, self-assessment tools, career exploration assistance, and other resources that support talent development in today's fast-paced global marketplace. (www.CareerInfoNet.org)

mySkills myFuture helps laid-off workers and other career changers find new occupations to explore. Users can identify occupations that require skills and knowledge similar to their current or previous job, learn more about these suggested matches, locate local training programs, and/or apply for jobs. (www.mySkillsmyFuture.org)

Website: www.careeronestop.org/

CareerOneStop is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor

Occupational Outlook Handbook

The Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) provides information on what workers do; the work environment; education, training, and other qualifications; pay; the job outlook; similar occupations; and sources of additional information, for 334 occupational profiles covering about 84 percent of the jobs in the economy.

The OOH is broken up into clusters of similar occupations. In order to find an occupation, browse the occupation groups of interest on the left-hand side of the homepage, or use the A-Z Index . if you know the specific occupation. You may search for occupations by using the selector drop-down menus on the OOH homepage. Select by pay range, entry-level education, on-the-job training, projected number of new jobs, or projected growth rate. If you know the specific occupation you are interested in, you may enter a job title into the “Search Handbook” box at the top. In addition, you may browse by clicking any of the three links titled “highest paying,” “fastest growing (projected),” “and most new jobs (projected).”

The Occupational Outlook Handbook is sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Website: www.bls.gov/ooh/

Chicks and Butterflies at Woodson Kindergarten Center



Students at Woodson Kindergarten Center in Austin observe incubators via a live webcam feed mounted in the school hallway.

Ryan Mayers
Austin Public Schools

Studying life cycles is a major part of the Minnesota Standards for Kindergarten. At Woodson Kindergarten Center, this standard has been addressed in a hands-on way both through the study of plants and watching chicks hatch.

Baby Chicks at Woodson

As the weather turns warmer and the flowers begin to bloom, thoughts at Woodson Kindergarten Center turn toward one thing: chicks. "Oh, it's very exciting," says Jennifer Cuchna, who is in charge of the program. "Everybody loves when we bring the chicks in. It's a big kindergarten memory for a lot of these kids."

Each year, the school brings in a number of eggs which are placed in a pair of incubators in the office until they hatch. At that point, the new chicks are placed in a cage, where they can be observed by the young Woodson scientists.

Once the eggs are brought in, students are given the opportunity to observe them, both in person and on a screen mounted in the hallway with a live webcam feed. "We have them write about what they observe and we talk about things like responsibility and caring for small animals."

Students create various projects commemorating the event, including life cycle mobiles and posters. Then, once the eggs hatch, they get a chance to interact with the newborn animals. "We talk about how to be careful with them, how to pet them and hold them, and how to feed and care for them."

Getting to see [the students] interact with the chicks, seeing how excited they get and how much they learn is just amazing," says



A cup containing caterpillars and all the food they will need to complete their life cycle into butterflies.

Cuchna. "It's great how much it stokes their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. This is just a very exciting 21 days."

Woodson Butterflies

Students are being given another opportunity to witness life cycles first-hand: by watching caterpillars turn into butterflies.

"Every teacher got a cup with several caterpillars and food," says teacher Alisha Galle. "We've always used the chicks and plants to study life cycles but having what we're observing actually in the rooms lends everything a certain sense of immediacy, and along with that immediacy comes student interest."

While the chicks have been instructive, a great deal of their development takes place inside an egg, which makes it difficult for students to be truly invested. With the caterpillars, students can see and document even the smallest changes as they grow and develop. "It was pretty cool, actually, to come back after a weekend and see that they'd already grown so much. The kids loved it."

Since this was the first year using the caterpillars, Galle is still evaluating their effectiveness. For her, a successful implementation will include students making connections and discussing what they've learned outside the classroom. "If the kids from my room are

talking to kids from another room about differences and similarities, that's huge. If they come back and talk about how they were able to identify things happening outside school that relate to what we've been learning about, that means they're internalizing what they're learning."

The importance of the caterpillars, as with the chicks and plants, lies in the project based aspect of what's being taught. "Books are great," says Galle, "but if we can get [the students] involved in something hands-on, actually let them observe and work with these things in real life, then they learn it better."

In the end, students at Woodson are being given numerous opportunities to learn about life-cycles. From plants to chicks and now butterflies, Woodson's Critters are getting the chance to work with real life examples of what they've been learning about. "It's all about internalization. When the students internalize their learning, then they keep what they've learned longer. And that's what this is all about."

[\(507\) 460-1400](http://www.austin.k12.mn.us)



Attention: high school girls with an interest in technology!

Apply now for the 4th annual

Minnesota Aspirations for Women in Computing Awards



Open to all girls in grades 9–12 with computer-related achievements and interests.

Deadline to apply:
October 26, 2015.

Prizes include scholarships, tech devices, cash rewards, mentorship/job shadowing opportunities and more!

Questions: russel.fraenkel@metrostate.edu

Apply: www.advanceitmn.org/aspirations-in-computing-awards.

Student Contests and Awards

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

If you've made a difference by volunteering in your community over the past year, you could win \$1,000 and a fabulous trip to Washington, D.C., by applying for a Prudential Spirit of Community Award! Even more importantly, you could win recognition that might inspire other young people to follow your example. These prestigious awards have honoured tens of thousands of middle level and high school students over the past 18 years solely for their volunteer work.

Website: spirit.prudential.com/view/page/soc/14782?lp=14779

National Geographic Bee

The National Geographic Bee, a contest and educational outreach program of the National Geographic Society, is designed to encourage the teaching and study of geography in grades 4-8.

The top 100 students from the school-level bees (selected based on qualifying test scores) will compete in state-level bees. State winners will be invited to National Geographic headquarters to compete in the national finals.

Deadline: Early registration ends December 18, 2015.

Website: www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee

Voice of Democracy

The VFW established the Voice of Democracy program (VOD) in 1947 to provide students grades 9-12 the opportunity to express themselves in regards to democratic

ideas and principles.

The national first-place winner receives a \$30,000 scholarship paid directly to the recipient's American university, college or vocational/technical school. Other national scholarships range from \$1,000-\$16,000, and the first-place winner from each (state) VFW Department wins a minimum scholarship of \$1,000 and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.

Deadline: November 1st

Website: www.vfw.org/Community/Voice-of-Democracy

Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision

ExploraVision is a science competition that goes beyond the typical student science competition and into what it takes to bring ideas to reality. A teacher will sponsor and lead his/her students as they work in groups of 2-4 to simulate real research and development. A teacher will guide his or her students as they pick a current technology, research it, envision what it might look like in 20 years, and describe the development steps, pros & cons, and obstacles. Past winners have envisioned technologies ranging from a hand-held food allergen detector to a new device to help people who have lost limbs regain movement in real time.

Registration is now open.

Website: www.exploravision.org

SourceAmerica Design Challenge

The SourceAmerica Design Challenge is a national engineering competition that partners teams of high school or college students with non-profit agencies that employ individuals with significant disabilities. The students and the non-profits join together to brainstorm ideas and

design workplace technologies that could create a more productive workplace or generate new job opportunities for people with disabilities.

Round 1 Due Date: November 05, 2015

Website: www.sourceamerica.org/workforce-and-research-programs/design-challenge

Real World Design Challenge

The Real World Design Challenge (RWDC) is an annual competition that provides high school students the opportunity to work on real world engineering challenges in a team environment. Each year, student teams are asked to address a challenge that confronts our nation's leading industries.

Deadline: Teams must register by November 20, 2015.

Website: www.realworlddesignchallenge.org/index.php

National Association of Conservation Districts/Auxiliary Photo Contest

Amateur photographers of all ages are invited to submit up to five photos that depict natural resource or conservation scenes to the National Association of Conservation Districts/Auxiliary Photo Contest. Winners will receive cash awards.

Deadline: Entries due December 1, 2015.

Website: www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/photo

Get to Know Art Contest

This annual Art contest is open to US Residents ages 19 and under and runs until

November 1, 2015. Follow the step by step directions to submit your art, writing, photography, video, and music inspired by the great outdoors. You may enter as many categories as you want!

For the video and music categories, a total of 3 winning entries will be chosen. A variety of prizes can be won.

Website: www.get-to-know.org/contest/us/

The Space Foundation Art Contest

Sixth Annual International Student Art Contest: The theme is "What Space Means To Me". Open to students under the age of 18. Must have a teacher or parent/legal guardian who will provide parental consent to enter the contest. 25 Prizes awarded.

Deadline: November 13, 2015.

Website: art.spacefoundation.org/how-enter

International Compost Awareness Week Poster Contest

The U.S. Composting Council is accepting submissions for its poster contest. The winner will receive \$500 and his or her poster will be used to promote 2016 International Compost Awareness Week. This year's theme is, "Compost! — The Soil and Water Connection."

Deadline: Entries due November 14, 2015.

Website: compostingcouncil.org/2016poster



Stephen J. Brady Stop Hunger Scholarships

Each student selected as a Stephen J. Brady Stop Hunger Scholarship recipient will receive a \$5,000 scholarship, as well as a \$5,000 grant made in his/her name to the hunger-related charity of his/her choice in his/her local community. Each national scholarship recipient will be recognized at the annual Sodexo Foundation Dinner in Washington, D.C. All transportation, meals, and lodging for the student and up to two immediate family members will be paid for by Sodexo.

Deadline: December 5, 2015

Website: www.unigo.com/scholarships/all/Stephen_J._Brady_STOP_Hunger_Scholarships/1000330/#register

Can your school use a 3D printer?

K-12 and higher-education campuses have an opportunity to win a 3D printer and \$5,000 grant, thanks to a new contest sponsored by Stratasys, in partnership with Campus Technology and THE Journal. Schools interested in participating must submit a 500-word essay outlining what a 3D printer would mean to their campuses.

Entry Deadline: November 30, 2015

Website: thejournal.com/pages/stratasys-3d-printer-contest

Vernier/NSTA Technology Award

Awards of \$5,500 for innovative uses of data-collections technology using a com-

puter, graphing calculator, or other handheld in the science classroom (for projects you're already doing). The awards include travel and expenses to the national NSTA conference, \$1,000 for the teacher and \$3,000 in Vernier products.

Deadline: Apply by November 30, 2015

Website: www.vernier.com/grants/nsta

Teacher at Sea Program from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

The mission of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Teacher at Sea (TAS) program is to give teachers a clearer insight into our ocean planet, a greater understanding of maritime work and studies, and to increase their level of environmental literacy by fostering an interdisciplinary research experience. The program provides a unique environment for learning

and teaching by sending kindergarten through college-level teachers to sea aboard NOAA research and survey ships to work under the tutelage of scientists and crew. The program lasts anywhere from a week to a month. All travel and program fees are paid for by NOAA.

Website: teacheratsea.noaa.gov/#/about/who_may_apply

National Wetlands Awards

The National Wetlands Awards recognize individuals from across the U.S. who have demonstrated extraordinary effort, innovation, and excellence in the area of wetlands preservation. The education and outreach award is presented to a teacher, nonprofit staffer, state/local government employee, or reporter involved in hands-on wetland education.

Deadline: Initial applications due November 20, 2015.

Website: www.elinwa.org/nominations

The garden that keeps giving

By Nick Longworth

There's a saying that goes, "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

Although the goal of an entire lifetime might not be a realistic one, the people of the "Giving Garden" program at Burnsville High School figure they might as well give it a try.

Founded in the fall of 2013 by BHS English teacher Matt Deutsch and youth services coordinator Bri Ostoff, the program began as a way to give back to those in need beyond collecting cans for a food shelf or shelter; it would look to grow its own food to donate, while also teaching those who tend it the principles involved in growing and cultivating their own food.

Last year students planted gardens in five-gallon buckets provided by food services throughout the district. Seeds were donated by Seed Savers Exchange in Iowa, and soil was donated by Dakotah Roots. The containers were only temporary, but it was a start.

This past spring, once Vision One91-related construction layout plans were finalized, Deutsch and Ostoff secured a permanent spot

for the garden on the west side of the BHS building.

During Green Apple Day last school year, several students came together to work on environmentally friendly projects — one of them being the new home for the Giving Garden. Green Apple Day is a national day established by the U.S. Department of Education which celebrates the opportunity to transform schools into healthy, safe and productive learning environments through local service projects.

The once plastic-bucket garden was replaced with actual compost, sodding and fencing.

"This past year was amazing, we really had success in growing most of our plants, and students have actively participated. We taught students the process of starting their own garden, from starting plants from seeds to transplanting them to larger pots and cultivating a garden," said Ostoff. Throughout the process students have been involved in site preparation, planting seeds, maintenance, and harvesting. "We learned what plants grow well in our soil and we accomplished our goal of having stu-



dents and community members come together to learn."

"Last spring we had people coming two days a week and then into the summer we had staff and student volunteers as well as community members," said Deutsch.

Succession planting and rotational planting were emphasized over the past year in order to maximize space and output.

into plants that are huge," said Drew Stefanich, an 11th-grade BHS student from Burnsville. Stefanich first became involved with the Giving Garden after hearing about it in Douglas' class, and has been involved ever since. "I've learned a lot. It's a really great feeling when you weigh the produce that you've harvested, knowing it's going to some place that really needs it."

Deutsch said they have been pleased with the amount of support that they have received from the community, including a grant from Foundation 191 and donations from District 191 families.

"With more people involved we could expand the garden, and expand the food selection," Ostoff said.

No matter how big the garden grows to be, both Deutsch and Ostoff agree that their goal for the Giving Garden won't be defined by a number of pounds produced.

"The main message is to teach students that gardening is easy and fun, and a life-long skill they can take anywhere," Ostoff said. "We are showing students how easy it is to provide your community with food, and help those in need through an activity that you enjoy. The benefits for the community and the students are worth putting in the time."

"Every home can have a garden. It can be in the ground, on an offsite plot, or in pots. If all of us as a community grow our own food we are going to be healthier and we're going to reap additional benefits from that," Deutsch said.

"It's an important part of what we do at school, to continue to educate and allow our students the opportunity to learn about everything. It's important to teach others how to grow their own food; it gives them more options for healthy living and sustainability."

"Students are empowered to make a difference in their community — that is our legacy," Douglas said. "Ask any teacher why they get involved — it is the empowerment of students. Students see that they can make a difference in the community through volunteering, and that can be enjoyable. As long as there is a need for fresh produce — students can volunteer their time and be involved in the Giving Garden."

Students have also enjoyed the time that they have spent rolling up their sleeves and getting a little dirty.

"It's for a great cause and I really enjoy doing it. It's been really cool to see all the seedlings we first planted when we started out grow

Burnsville High School participated in national day of service



Students and staff members participated in Burnsville High School's second annual Green Apple Day of Service, a national event with schools focusing on local service projects Sept. 26.

Participants engaged in general cleanup of the school grounds, harvested food from the Giving Garden, worked on the Peace Garden in the front of the building and decorated the school rock.

Students harvested 51 pounds of tomatoes, as well as some green beans and other vegetables. Students cleaned up and prepped beds for spring, installed some rabbit-proofing to their fencing and started to install a

row cover to extend the growing seasons of some fall vegetables. Matt Deutsch, the Giving Garden advisor, expects to hit 700 pounds in food donations to the food shelf this week!

"The Green Apple Day of Service gave students the opportunity to take pride in their school community and see the immediate impact they directly make on the world they live in," said Bri Ostoff, Community Education Youth Service Coordinator at BHS, who was an organizer of the event.

More information about Green Apple Day of Service is available at

www.mygreenapple.org

www.isd191.org

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Harambee Elementary — A 2015 Green Ribbon School!



Roseville Area Schools
U.S. Department of Education

Created as an interdistrict voluntary integration project, Harambee draws students from multiple geographic areas, including over 69 percent free- and reduced-price lunch eligible and over 24 percent limited English proficient students. The school's year-round calendar and looping structure provide for consistent learning. For more than 18 years, the school has been a place where students from diverse cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds learn together.

The school's name is a Swahili word that means "working together for a common

purpose."

Harambee's magnet foci of environmental science and community cultures were carefully chosen and designed to work in unison as integrating themes. These foci are integrated into curricula by classroom teachers, but also have been designated as special-focus classes with a project-based approach that connects people and the environment.

Fruitful partnerships have led to Harambee's participation in food waste recycling, energy reduction efforts, and important work to make school grounds more sustainable. Collaborations with the local watershed district, and the county conservation district make these improvements possible. The school has received grant funding to begin solar and wind projects onsite, and to construct rain gardens campuswide. Located on 28 acres, the campus features a trail system, two outdoor classrooms, gardens, and wildlife habitats.

In 2013–14, a whole-school migration study gave the Harambee community insight

Continued on Page 14

What do 70 kids, 4 teachers, 18 chaperones and 4 hours equal?

750 prairie plants in the ground!



Harambee 4th graders joined naturalists from Maplewood Nature Center and Great River Greening for a day of service learning at the Fish Creek Conservation Area.

The site is a rare piece of undeveloped land in the southern part of Maplewood that was acquired for conservation through the work of many dedicated groups.

Our students spent the day in stations;

doing a pollinator survey, observing the prairie ecosystem and helping to restore this former farmland back to native prairie and meadow.

The partners were impressed with the hard work and focus of the students and the large number of adult volunteers.

Thanks to the hard work of this awesome team, 750 native plants are now growing and will be blooming in the spring to provide important habitat for pollinators.

This site is Maplewood open space and available for public visits. Please contact Ms. Eckman if you want more information about the project or the site.

*JENNIFER.ECKMAN@isd623.org
651-379-2708*

Redtail Ridge Elementary – A 2015 Green Ribbon School!



Prior Lake Savage Area Schools
U.S. Department of Education

Staff and students at Redtail Ridge not only believe in the importance of strong environmental education and promoting stewardship, but also live it each and every day. This is evident from classroom experiments on the effects of

pollution on plants sitting in hallway windows, students following the waste disposal program, classes sitting in the boulder garden recording observations in their science notebooks, junior naturalists replenishing bird feeders, and environmentally-focused morning meetings.

Students are able to track the daily progress-

sion of the native prairie restoration. Funds for the native prairie project were raised through participation in the Project Green Sneakers competition, which was led by the Junior Naturalist team and supported by the community, resulting in a first-place finish. The prairie will be the result of collaboration among the teachers, students, Dads of Great Students club, district grounds crew, and Prior Lake High School Eco-Team members.

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community provides Redtail Ridge with the district organic compost site. Its organics composting efforts began in 2009 with a pig farmer in central Minnesota who would take all of the food waste, process it, and feed his pigs. Once the district outgrew his operation, the Mdewakanton Sioux Community rallied with Redtail Ridge to create the current system, which takes all of the school's food waste and other organic materials and turns it into rich compost for area residents.

Limiting the environmental impact of Redtail Ridge has been the focus since the building's conception. The school is equipped with an automated energy management system for controlling and maintaining a healthy environment and for running the building efficiently. The school practices preventive maintenance and has added water-efficient fixtures throughout the school.

Edible Playground



Redtail Ridge students recently helped prepare the school's new Edible Playground for spring planting. Kindergarten teacher Molly Kalina and fifth grade teacher Sara Aker are leading the garden project with help from the City of Savage and the Dads of Great Kids (DOGS) organization.

Soon Redtail Ridge teachers will receive training to help them use the garden for their curricula. Fifth grade students have already been using the "playground" for math lessons to do some measuring and students throughout the school filled the raised beds with soil.

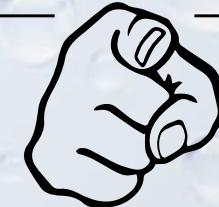
Continued on Page 14

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Howe School Garden Offers Diverse Learning Opportunities

Hiawatha Community School is in an ethnically and culturally diverse, urban community. There are 2 campuses: Hiawatha campus houses grades preK–2nd and Howe grades 3rd–5th. The garden is located on the Howe campus. The garden is a joint project between the school and the PTO. The teachers wanted a garden for several years and parents championed its development when the Howe campus was added as it had a beautiful location for a school garden. Parents, 3rd-5th grade teachers and school administration worked together to plan, design and build the garden on the Howe Campus.

The school garden provides an opportunity to deepen the educational experience, provide hands on learning, build responsibility, and extend classroom learning to the outdoors. Furthermore, the garden provides a space and an additional and very different opportunity for the PTO and school to connect and engage with families and community members.

Treats and snacks

The Howe School Garden design includes perennial beds with trellises, eleven raised garden beds and an elevated garden table for growing crops. There are multiple garden sites, including two main pollinator-friendly gardens for butterfly, bee and culturally important native plants. The plan is being phased in over several years, and today the garden is about half built. There are 7 raised beds, and a large compost bin arranged in

a large open rectangle, creating a grassy area for outdoor class instruction. The garden area is on the south side of the school, with full to partial sun and access to water and is adjacent to an additional outdoor classroom. The garden is highly visible from a secondary road that has considerable foot and car traffic. Most importantly, the location is easily accessible for all students including those with mobility challenges.

Honoring the diverse student population and recognizing the garden's visibility in the community, the garden focuses on using heirloom and native plants from many cultures and varieties. The garden is a space for growing food for consumption (for both animals and humans), habitat for pollinators, and designed to be visually pleasing. There is no use of pesticides, and integrated pest management is practiced; only treating problems as needed, with the least harmful solution.

The 2014 gardens included a native Three Sisters garden using 'square foot' gardening techniques in the raised beds with both native and heirloom varieties.

The garden is a unique hands-on living laboratory for teaching:

- **Social and economic development:** Students learn where food comes from and what it needs to grow.
- **Science:** Students learn about the life of a plant, ecosystems, vocabulary development, and vermiculture (worm composting).

- **Food exploration:** Minneapolis Culinary Services encourages students to try new foods, and the garden supports this effort by growing the foods that culinary services uses in their recipes. Students can eventually like to learn cooking as well.

- **Math:** Measurements and calculations of area and volumes for soils and materials. Analyzing harvests.

- **Social Studies:** Students learn about Indigenous farmers, immigrants and plants that they bring, as well as foods and plants from other cultures, and how they may be used.

From planning to consumption students have opportunities to be involved with their garden. Activities include seed starting, planting, watering, mulching, weeding, and harvesting. Each classroom has a vermiculture bin to provide organic matter for their bed. One bed is elevated to allow students and others in wheelchairs to roll right up to face level with the plants.

Summer Maintenance: The school's Garden Team recruits and organizes parents, teachers, and community members to maintain the garden for one-week intervals during the course of the summer. They orient families on how to maintain the gardens, and trouble-shoot as necessary. Their school maintenance staff mows the grass in and around the garden beds.



Howe has strong parent, staff, and teacher support. This includes but is not limited to the school PTO, school staff, students, parents, and local businesses.

For more information contact: Howe School Garden team at:

howeschoolyardgarden@gmail.com

Source: The Jeffers Foundation

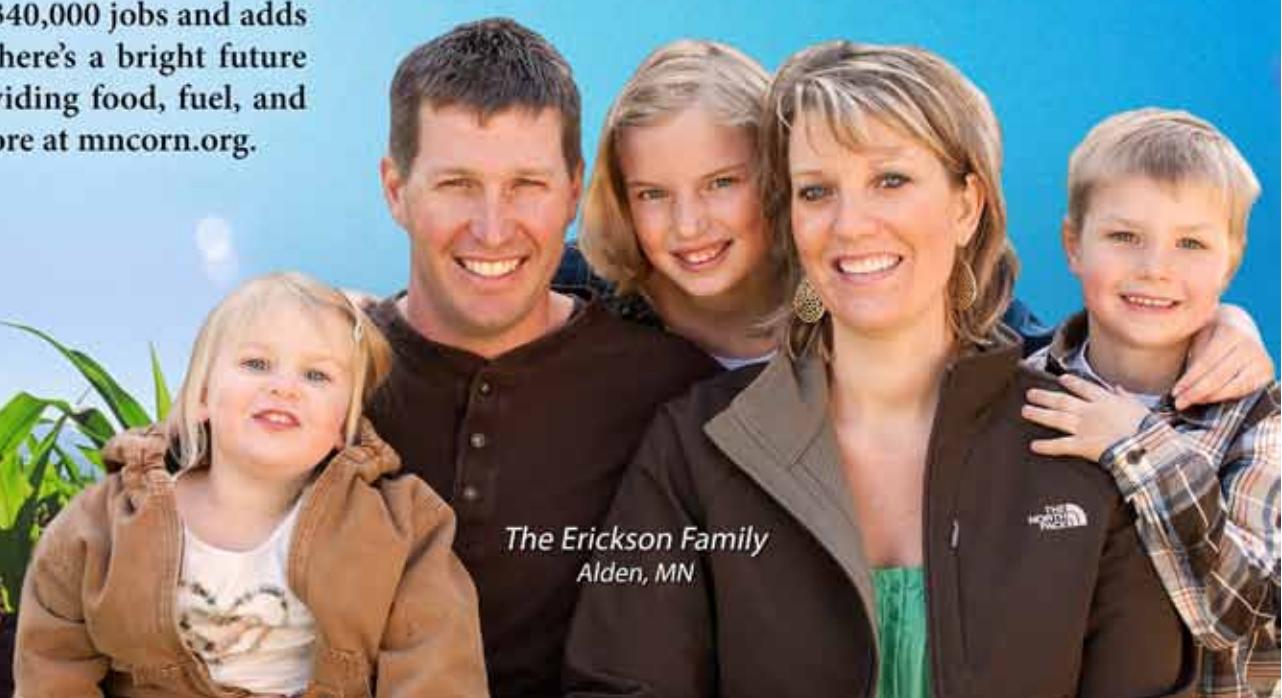
Source of Grant Funds: Jeffers Foundation, PTO, local business, Minneapolis Health Department and their Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) funding.

[\(612\) 668-4640](http://hiawatha.mpls.k12.mn.us)



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Agriculture & Sustainability

Waconia's Edible Classroom

The Waconia Edible Classroom is located on farmland adjacent to Clearwater Middle School and was started in 2008. The garden site includes a ½ acre vegetable garden, 65 fruit trees, and offers a dozen community plots for rent. The Edible Classroom is an outdoor learning space that gives students the opportunity to experience the seed-to-table process through hands on learning. Connections are made between foods they eat and where it comes from, with the goal of fostering environmental stewardship and healthier eating habits.

Over the course of five years, the garden has "sprung to life" with additional projects completed yearly. The first few years were learning experiences both for students and staff. Along with crops, they found that weeds were also grown in hefty quantities. In addition to fruits and vegetables, flowers and annuals are planted in the garden. Students get to see firsthand native species and embrace the beauty of flowers. Bees, butterflies, frogs and other insects can be observed by simply taking the time to sit down on a bench and be still.

An irrigation system was installed to help the large chore of watering such an immense area. Rainwater is collected in an adjacent pond and then used to water the garden.

Along with three new interns, the summer of 2013 welcomed fourteen raised beds built by industrial technology students under the direction of their teacher, John Kelzer. These were

added to existing garden space, increasing accessibility and production.

Summer school students helped to install and fill these beds as well as create the wood chips surrounding them. That summer also included the garden's first entries into the local county fair. This resulted in five first place ribbons and one second place along with a Reserve Champion in the vegetable category.

How does our garden grow?

Early in the spring, students start seeds indoors under grow lights. Once the weather is feasible they are transplanted to the garden outside. Individual classrooms have planned and executed projects including: planting herbs a "Three Sister Garden" consisting of corn, beans and squash.

As the summer months take over, Kids Company participants, coordinators, summer school students and local volunteers tend to the garden. Students in the Kids Company program range from ages 3 to 12 while summer school includes grades 5 to 7. Summer staff incorporates mini-garden lessons, cooking demonstrations, and taste testing of various vegetables and fruits. Even on rainy days, when the garden is not accessible, indoor art activities relating to the garden are completed by the students.

Food grown in the Edible Classroom is



directly taken to the kitchen for student consumption through the school lunch program. Most of the items make their way to the salad bar or are harvested when possible to coordinate with the current lunch menu. The few short weeks in August when students are not in the building, harvested food is taken to the local food shelf to assist community members in need.

Nurturing Community Involvement

Along with school students, the community is invited to volunteer time, money and resources to the garden project. Dozens of business owners and volunteers stepped up

immediately and enthusiastically to support the garden and helped make it the success it has become today. From the donation of seeds, tools, plants, machinery, time and effort the site has encouraged hundreds of people to catch the bug to grow plants, grow young minds and grow the Waconia Edible Classroom.

Source: The Jeffers Foundation

www.waconia.k12.mn.us

(952) 442-0600



Minnesota Farmers Union Camp



Every year MFU holds Elementary, Junior, and Senior camps, and hundreds of children from across MN get to be kids and develop not only as a young adult but also as a leader in their community and in Farmers Union. Campers have opportunities to develop these qualities through some of the simple, day-to-day tasks at camp. These simple activities provide a common foundation for all campers to share the responsibility of making camp a fun, safe place to be and are the foundation of developing cooperation skills that can last a lifetime! Reserve your child or grandchild a spot today! Go to MFU.ORG/CAMP for more info!



Learning about agriculture on all levels with Minnesota Farmers Union

"Teaching the future family farmers is an important job that Minnesota Farmers Union takes on with pride. We have several programs and events that will help guide the youngest farmer into a successful future" Doug Peterson, President of Minnesota Farmers Union

Teaching our youth is part of the foundation of MFU to enable family farmers and ranchers to determine the best course of action to achieve prosperity and a better rural life.

www.mfu.org

651-639-1223

Minnesota Farmers Union Next Step Program



The Next Step program is for young women and men 18-25, who have an interest in Minnesota Farmers Union, agriculture, agriculture policy and rural life as a whole. The program will include speakers, Q & A sessions, networking opportunities, and the chance to hear many convention speakers. Participants will see first-hand how a statewide general farm organization self-governs, develops, debates, and adopts policy positions on issues impacting family farmers, agriculture and rural life. The Next Step program is a great way for students to learn about and discuss current issues within agriculture from leaders in the field.





Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools Grant

K–12 school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program that serve at least 100 reimbursable meals are eligible to receive a six-foot (five-well) salad bar package.

Website: www.saladbars2schools.org/

Clif Bar Family Foundation Grants

Clif Bar Family Foundation Small Grants are awarded for general organizational support or to fund specific projects that protect the Earth, create a healthy food system, increase opportunities for outdoor activity, reduce environmental health hazards, and build stronger communities. The grants, averaging approximately \$8,000 each, are awarded four times per year.

Early submissions are encouraged. Grants awarded during a particular quarter will be announced at the beginning of the following quarter.

Deadline: Applications are due February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 1.

Website: clifbarfamilyfoundation.org/Grants-Programs

Cornell Douglas Foundation Grants

The Cornell Douglas Foundation provides grants to organizations that advocate for environmental health and justice, encourage stewardship of the environment, and further respect for sustainability of resources. The average grant amount is \$10,000. Applications accepted year-round.

Website: www.cornelldouglas.org/apply/

Kinder Morgan Foundation Grants

The Kinder Morgan Foundation supports nonprofit youth programs focused on education, the arts, and the environment. Grants range from \$1,000-\$5,000. Application deadlines are the 10th of every other month, beginning in January.

Website: www.kindermorgan.com/pages/community/default.aspx

Environmental Grants

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

may identify and support other causes that are important to the immediate community.

Deadline: Applications are accepted and reviewed year-round.

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

Captain Planet Foundation Grants

The Captain Planet Foundation (CPF) funds innovative hands-on environmental projects to encourage youth around the world to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their homes, schools, and communities. The foundation's mission is to promote and support high-quality educational programs that enable children and youth to understand and appreciate our world through learning experiences that engage them in active, hands-on projects to improve the environment.

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

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

Website: captainplanetfoundation.org/apply-for-grants

Lexus Eco Challenge

The Lexus Eco Challenge is designed to educate and empower middle and high school students to take action to improve the environment. Teams of 5-10 students and up to two teacher advisors, are invited to participate in

one or both of the two initial challenges, each addressing different environmental elements – land/water and air/climate.

The winning teams will each receive a total of \$10,000 in scholarships and grants to be shared among the students, teacher and school.

Deadline: Submissions for Air & Climate Challenge due December 11, 2015.

Website: lexus.scholastic.com/

Green Ribbon Schools Applications Due

The Green Ribbon Schools Awards from the U.S. Department of Education honors schools, districts and higher education institutions that save energy and reduce operating costs, create environmentally friendly learning spaces, promote student health, and incorporate environmental sustainability into the curriculum.

The Minnesota Department of Education, 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 in late December, and announcement of the award in April. For further information, contact John Olson, MDE Science Specialist at 651-582-8673.

Website: education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/ScholarRecog/GreenRibbonSch

Harambee Elementary — A 2015 Green Ribbon School!

Continued from Page 10

into the life cycle and annual migration of the butterfly. Students began with firsthand study on school grounds, using designated milkweed prairie areas as observation and inquiry spaces. At each grade level, students addressed specific science standards, but also expanded into multiple subject areas.

Students wrote and read poetry about caterpillars and butterflies, and studied human connections to butterflies across time and geography. Through a Minnesota State Arts Board grant, students worked with guest artists to create butterfly sculptures and learn about the music and cultures of the people in the Mexican region where the butterflies migrate in winter. The project culminated with a schoolwide butterfly parade to show off the beautiful works of art and celebrate the installation of a giant monarch mobile in the school's front entryway.

The project extended into the following year: Students participated in online citizen science projects, and created ambassador butterflies to send to schools in the overwintering region.

Harambee connected with an internationally recognized Minnesota Monarch Lab, and invited lab staff to the school to participate in

the project.

As the Harambee community learned more about the complex environmental issues facing the Monarch, it decided to take action. Students began collecting milkweed seeds and researched the most successful ways to propagate plants. They wrote a grant for a specific butterfly garden that would make grounds better for pollinators, and prepared over 1000 milkweed seeds to distribute both seeds and plants to the community. An additional grant from the Minnesota Ornithologists Union now provides support to expand Harambee's migration study to birds, as well as to other grade levels, where students have moved into new kinds of insect study. Harambee's initial authentic learning experience grew into actions that have positively affected the school and larger community.

[\(651\) 379-2500](http://www.isd623.org/Harambee)



Redtail Ridge Elementary — A 2015 Green Ribbon School!

Continued from Page 10

out the building. Natural daylight is used as much as possible in the lunchroom and in classrooms throughout the building. In 2011, Redtail Ridge earned EPA ENERGY STAR recognition.

In 2012, Prior Lake Savage Area Schools became the first district to adopt a districtwide E-STEM approach in the state of Minnesota. E-STEM stands for Environmental Education, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. This was the springboard for the Redtail Ridge teachers to continue integrating environmental education across the curriculum, while working to embed engineering.

E-STEM is an interdisciplinary approach to instruction and learning focused on inquiry and real world problem-solving in the 21st Century, applying hands-on science, technology, engineering and mathematical practices with projects and field experiences related to the environment.

E-STEM is available to all E-12 students. An E-STEM Implementation Committee comprised of staff from elementary, middle school and high school works to ensure E-STEM aligns with curriculum, skills and experiences through 12th grade in all curricular areas.

Whether construction of a water filtration

system in fifth grade or a bird's nest in kindergarten, the engineering and design processes folded into lessons have an environmental focus.

Every school has an outdoor classroom setting used by teachers and students. Each year, our elementary schools hold a day-long, outdoor EE festival that has captured the attention of Twin Cities media and has become a tradition students look forward to each year.

The school's dedication to environmental and sustainability concepts are evident in students' level and proficiency on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in Science. In 2014, 86.1 percent of Redtail Ridge fifth-grade students met or exceeded the standards on the science Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments test, compared to the state average, which was 61.2 percent.

[\(952\) 226-8000](http://www.priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us/schools/redtailridge)



Owatonna Junior High School starts year with new mission statement

3, 2, 1 – Houston, we have lift off!



Principal, Jason Hunt

Up into the air rises a 4.5 million pound state-of-the-art, man-made precision machine — the Space Shuttle. Most of this weight derives from the 2.6 million pounds of solid cell fuel along with the 143,000 gallons of flammable liquid. This fuel pushes this heavy craft skyward at an average rate of eight seconds per mile,

reaching “space” at 62 miles above the earth in about eight minutes. What a marvel! Yet, what starts this incredible process? If you really break it down, the entire process, all of the upward propulsion, the fuel burning and the great force that it takes to get this very heavy machine into space starts with one tiny little spark!

Sure, I’m not a scientist and this may

be a little simplistic, but I think you get the idea that “from a tiny spark may burn a mighty flame.” Over the summer our staff spent many hours over the course of many days planning and preparing for our students this year. As part of this, we developed our mission statement. “Spark Excellence!” We love this statement as it really captures all that we are doing at OJHS.

Sure, our students have challenges. Yes, the junior high years may not have been the most memorable for you. Yup, they do things that just drive us all nuts like sleeping till midday, yelling for no reason, making really dumb decisions without thinking all the way through and sometimes doing things that just don’t make sense. Yet, they are also so full of life, so full of potential and opportunity, much like a giant aircraft waiting for liftoff. All that they need is a little spark.

During our summer we have committed to be that spark. We are dedicated to help, assist and support so that our students may ignite and reach new heights and new destinations. Sometimes, like my old BBQ grill, we might have to keep pushing that button over and over, creating spark after spark in order to get ignition, but we are ready and

committed and won’t ever give up.

The fire we hope to ignite is that of excellence. This word excellence stems from our newly approved district mission statement which speaks of “learning excellence,” and we’d like to add to learning excellence that of excellence in behavior and citizenship. This means setting high expectations and doing our very best in all we do which will result in amazing results.

We ask all of you to join with us in helping spark excellence in each and every one of our students. The possibilities are endless! Here’s to the best year yet.

[owatonnajhs.portal.
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PBIS in Austin Public Schools



Ryan Mayers
Austin Public Schools

Towards the end of March's Character Counts/PBIS assembly at Woodson Kindergarten Center, students found themselves acting like principals. As prompts were read off, the assembled kindergarteners were asked to decide if the action being described was good or bad, and to signify their choices with a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down. The game, which left students feeling happy and accomplished, was meant to help reinforce positive behavioral concepts, a huge part of the PBIS program.

The program has been in Austin for several years. After first being utilized at Sumner, PBIS has made its way to Ellis,

Woodson, AHS, and IJ Holton. "We're seeing a lot of adoption because it's been very successful," says Woodson Principal Jessica Cabeen. "Helping students to understand what's expected of them definitely seems to help curtail behavioral issues."

One important facet of PBIS is its focus on positive interactions with students. "We're working very hard to promote the positive," says Jill Rollie, one of Ellis Middle School's two PBIS coaches. "When we catch someone showing a positive behavior, we give out Packer Pride Cards, and we as a staff are making a concerted effort to highlight the good choices that students make."

The concept of rewarding good behavioral choices is baked into Austin's PBIS

implementation, from Woodson's "Critter Cards" to the "Packer Pride Cards" used at Ellis. This year, even Austin High School has begun using the tactic, with students being rewarded for good behaviors with "Packer Action Tickets", which function as entries into periodic prize drawings.

"Some of the students really get into it," says Kristi Smith, the PBIS coach at AHS. "Just a week or two ago, I gave a card to a student and they got really excited because it was the first one they'd earned. And, of course, immediately afterward other students started trying to do the same thing, hoping they could get a ticket too."

But using reward tickets isn't the only way schools are fostering a positive environment. At Ellis, a big part of their implementation has been quarterly celebrations used as community building activities. "Our first quarter celebration was "Dress up a Teacher", where the students got to dress up their advisory teachers," says Rollie. "For our next celebration, we're making lip-synch videos."

AHS has held several different contests, including both Packer Action and attendance goals. Woodson holds their monthly assemblies where a student from each class is chosen as the Student of the Month. Each school is working within their own culture to promote positive behaviors and, by extension, a posi-

tive environment. "A negative environment doesn't support learning," says Cabeen. "Our goal is to provide a safe and supportive, positive environment, and PBIS is a great way to help promote that."

Kim Potter, Woodson's PBIS Coach, sees PBIS as an incredibly important tool in helping to shape school culture. "We're developing consistency across environments. Our rules, consequences, and expectations are the same across the building. That way, students know what's expected of them whether they're in the bathroom, on the playground, or in the hallway."

This consistency allows all teachers to reward positive behaviors. "We used to have issues where the rules would be slightly different depending on which class you happened to be in," says Potter. "Now, not only are the rules the same, but the consequences, both positive and negative, are consistent too."

Kristi agrees, citing the importance of staff participation in setting the tone for the building. "Our first year was really just learning about the program, and last year was about developing our vocabulary and expectations for areas outside the classroom. It makes everything much easier when every teacher uses the same language and expects the same

Continued on Page 17

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How Does ADHD Affect School Performance?

From the U.S. Department of Education

The school experience can be challenging for students with ADHD. Students usually are identified only after consistently demonstrating a failure to understand or follow rules or to complete required tasks. Other common reasons for referral include frequent classroom disruptions and poor academic performance.

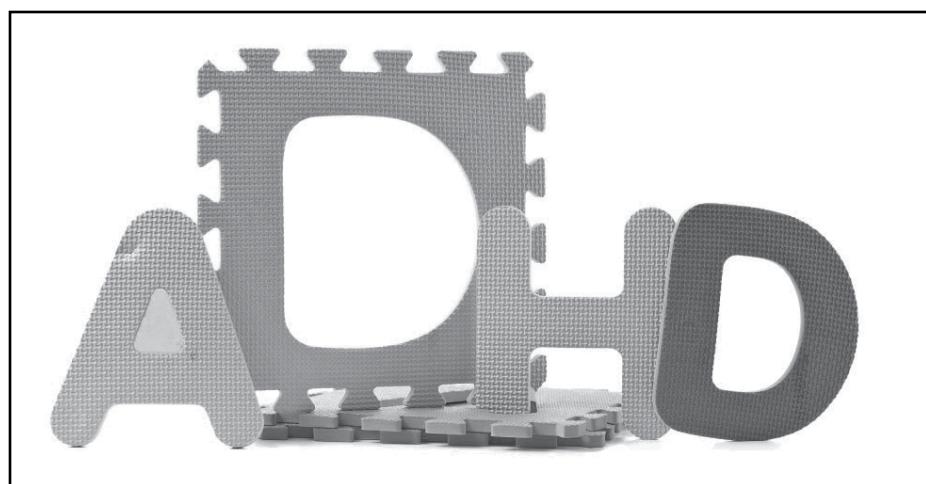
Studies found that students with ADHD, compared to students without ADHD, had persistent academic difficulties that resulted in the following: lower average marks, more failed grades, more expulsions, increased dropout rates, and a lower rate of college undergraduate completion (Weiss & Hechtman as cited in Johnston, 2002; Ingersoll, 1988). The disruptive behavior sometimes associated with the disorder may make students with ADHD more susceptible to suspensions and expulsions. A study by Barkley and colleagues (1990b) found that 46 percent of their student study group with ADHD had been suspended and 11 percent had been expelled.

ADHD's core symptoms—inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity—make meeting the daily rigors of school challenging (Zentall, 1993). Difficulty sustaining attention to a task may contribute to missing important details in assignments, daydreaming during lectures and other activities, and difficulty organizing assignments. Hyperactivity may be expressed in either verbal or physical disruptions in class. Impulsivity may lead to careless errors,

responding to questions without fully formulating the best answers, and only attending to activities that are entertaining or novel. Overall, students with ADHD may experience more problems with school performance than their nondisabled peers.

Helpful Hints

Bos et al. (1999) reported that collaborative partnerships between home and school were especially important during the initial assessment of the child's disability and educational needs, the development of behavior modification plans, the evaluations of medication, and the coordination of assignments. Parents and teachers can share information with one another if they work together to plan behavioral and academic strategies for the student. Parents can offer information about the child—including the child's medical history, hobbies and interests, effective reinforcers, and behavior in other settings—that may inform the decisions made by the teacher and other members of the IEP team. The teacher can keep parents informed about their child's progress, performance, and behavior in school. If the child is taking medication, the teacher can offer feedback to parents regarding how the medication affects the student's performance and the duration of the medicine's effectiveness. This information also can be used to help medical professionals make more informed decisions about the child with ADHD.



If a child exhibits patterns of disruptive or aggressive behavior, best practice research indicates that the child may benefit from a positive behavioral intervention plan that clearly delineates expectations and includes positive supports. The process to develop an effective plan should be collaborative and involve the parents and those other individuals who are most familiar with the child.

Students also can take some of the responsibility for their educational and behavioral adaptations. Blazer (1999) reported that students as young as 5 years old can communicate ways to make their school experience more pleasurable and learning easier. Student input also helps to promote a sense of ownership and responsibility for the new strategies and adaptations.

- Charts for chores;
- Assignment pad to record homework and a specific folder to put work in upon completion; and
- Gain the child's attention before speaking to him or her. Have the child repeat back directions for things that are really important.
- Avoid the following:
 - Repeating patterns of inappropriate behavior followed by ineffective punishment;
 - Administering consequences without prior warning or without the child understanding why he or she is receiving them; and
 - Responding inconsistently to inappropriate behaviors.

Tips for Home

Caring for children with ADHD may be challenging, but it is important to remember that these children can learn successfully. It is critical that parents remember that some of their child's disruptive behavior is a manifestation of the disability and that the challenge is finding ways to help their child change the inappropriate behavior. Key to this is remembering to focus on the need for structure and routine for your child's daily schedule and thereby reinforcing the importance of learning self-control and self-regulation. The following are suggestions for parents:

- Focus on discrete rewards and consequences for appropriate and inappropriate behavior:
 - Tangible rewards and treats;
 - Movie night for a good week at school;
 - Removal of privileges; and
 - Time-out from reinforcing activities: the child is essentially removed from situations that foster inappropriate behavior.
- Set a daily routine and stick to it. Bedtime and preparation for school are much easier if there is a structure already in place.
- Have tangible reminders:
 - A big clock in the bedroom;

Tips for School

A student with ADHD can present unique challenges in the classroom. Inattention, hyperactivity, or impulsivity can be the source of frustration, but there are ways teachers can help students with ADHD to improve the educational experience and control the symptoms of the disorder. It is important for teachers to be aware of coexisting conditions such as learning disabilities, as well as reinforcing the importance of classroom and instructional structure.

The following are tips for teachers:

- Work on the most difficult concepts early in the day;
- Give directions to one assignment at a time instead of directions to multiple tasks all at once;
- Vary the pace and type of activity to maximize the student's attention; and
- Structure the student's environment to accommodate his or her special needs. For example, the student can be seated away from potentially distracting areas (such as doors, windows, and computers) or seated near another student who is working on a shared assignment.

Source: www.ed.gov

PBIS in Austin Public Schools

Continued from Page 16

things in the hallways and common areas."

Another good feature of PBIS is the ability to gather behavioral data. "Since we know our expectations and consequences, we can easily track where we're having issues," says Cabeen. "We have monthly meetings where we look at our data and decide what things we need to address. For example, we were having an issue with students throwing snow on the playground, and since we've defined that as a negative behavior across the board, we were able to quickly identify it as a problem area and focus on rewarding students who were making good choices."

"Since we have data to back up the behavioral issues we've identified," says Potter, "we've been able to empower staff to begin exploring ways to address situations. This past winter we weren't able to have the students go outside in the mornings before school because it was too cold. In the past, we've funneled students into the cafeteria in those situations, but since we've been able to start recording data on specific behavioral issues, we began to see a pattern of poor choices being made by students. So, the staff was able to try a variety of different solutions and gather data on which

ones seemed to be successful. Essentially, it allowed us to address the problem quickly and with data to back up why the outcome was the most effective."

At AHS, the teachers are just beginning to track behavioral data. "Now that we've got a consistent set of rules across the building, we can start keeping track of what expectations aren't being met, and when. That lets us more effectively plan interventions when necessary."

"It's really about changing the school culture," says Cabeen. "We want to make sure all our students know and understand what we expect from them, that those expectations are the same regardless of which teacher is enforcing them, and that we value their positive choices. We've already seen a positive shift in our building, and we're very excited to see what the future holds."

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Varsity team hosts adapted football game



teammates and the special ed kids and just enjoy our time together."

Special education students and alumni were invited to learn about the basics of football from varsity players. They went through a variety of football drills, including throwing, catching, running pass routes, punting, and kicking field goals. Each athlete ran through a lineup tunnel formed by the varsity players, and each player scored a 30-yard touchdown, with varsity linebacker Cory Albertson giving the crowd the play-by-play review over the public address system.

"Most of us on the varsity have been playing this game since the third grade," said Luke Olson, a defensive back for the Ponies. "It's fun to teach the basic football drills to the kids, and just remember what it was like – just the joy of learning football and the fun we had when we were little."

Participants were given the choice of a Ponies mini-football or helmet and a t-shirt or hat to bring home along with new friendships.

"This is the second year my son had a chance to be with the Ponies players for this event," said Jill Chau, the mother of student Liam Chau. "The players aren't just great athletes on the field, but wonderful role models in our community. All of last year, whenever a Ponies football player saw Liam



around town, he would greet him by name and give him a high-five. I can't tell you what a thrill that is for a little kid!"

For Ponies varsity running back Jackson Dunleap, whose brother Michael was one of the participating student-athletes, it was an especially memorable day.

It was amazing to see how much fun he had with all of my teammates," said Dunleap. "He doesn't ordinarily have fun like that. So, it was quite a day for him and for me."

For more photos visit our Facebook page.

www.facebook.com/SAHS834

[\(651\) 351-8340](http://www.stillwater.k12.mn.us)



Stillwater Public Schools

It was a fun-filled Saturday of adapted football for ten special education athletes and the Ponies football team. The 9th annual event took place at Stillwater Junior High the morning after the Homecoming game.

"This is the culmination of our Homecoming Week," said Mutt Hoefferle, Ponies' varsity quarterback. "After a tough week of preparation for the Woodbury game, it was fun to just get outside on a nice day with our

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