

Four Minnesota Educators Chosen as Finalists for Prestigious STEM Awards — Congratulations!

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has announced that four Minnesota teachers have been selected as 2023 finalists for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST).

PAEMST is the nation's highest honor for U.S. K-12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics and/or computer science teachers. The award is administered by the National Science Foundation on behalf of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

The four finalists are:

- **Lainey Bristow**, Hiawatha Collegiate High School, Minneapolis. Science Finalist
- **Jill Jensen**, Scott Highlands Middle School, Apple Valley. Science Finalist
- **Dr. Beth Robelia**, St. Paul Public Schools Online High School, St Paul. Science
- **Alexis Wolf**, John Glenn Middle School in Maplewood. Mathematics Finalist

Teaching At Its Best

Lainey Bristow is in her 2nd year teaching A.P. Biology at Hiawatha Collegiate High School in Minneapolis.

Lainey sits as the department head and teaches two sections of A.P. Biology class/discussion, in addition to 4 lab sections with instructional time solely focused on experimentation and building transferable skills. She also enjoys coaching the high school varsity soccer team at the high school!

Her pedagogy is centered on shifting

instruction to skill-based engagement, where teacher instruction takes a step back, and student-led learning becomes a more significant part of the learning process. Practicing a flipped classroom model has allowed Lainey's students to focus class time on vital skills development.

Lainey is a fellow in the Hollyhock Fellowship Program 2022-2024, a professional development program that provides instructional training and support to high school teachers from across the country who are interested in deepening and developing their content-specific instructional practices and creating equitable access and opportunities for all learners in their classrooms.

"In my work with high schoolers, I remind my students that they are doing their best and that they are enough. I always try to remind myself of that as well.

At the same time, we can still hold ourselves to a high standard, and be proud of our work and enjoy it very much."

— Lainey Bristow



Lainey Bristow



Continued on Page 8



Moorhead Students Use Their Skills to Impact Others

Moorhead Area Public Schools

Last fall, Moorhead High School teacher Chantz Rud, partnered with Fix it Forward, a community non-profit to give his students an opportunity to use their skills to impact others. Fix it Forward provides donated cars to the program for learning and repairing.

The result is a win for students, a win for Fix it Forward, a win for an individual or family in need and a win for the community as a whole.

Chantz leads the Automotive Program at Moorhead High School.

In 2021, the Moorhead School District opened the Moorhead High School Career Academy. The Academy is changing the way students approach high school. Based on industry and professional standards, the program offers unparalleled experiential learning about careers and self.

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St. Paul Educator Michael Houston is 2023 Minnesota Teacher of the Year



Michael Houston, a mathematics teacher at Harding High School in Saint Paul Public Schools, is the 2023 Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

Houston is the 59th recipient of the prestigious award, and the fifth from the St. Paul district, to be named Minnesota Teacher of

the Year. Houston is a two-time finalist for the award, also having been named a finalist in 2017. An independent selection committee representing Minnesota leaders in education, business and government chooses the Teacher of the Year from individuals who are nominated and who then choose to become a candidate.

Raised in a single-parent household by his mother with help from his grandparents, Houston was the first in his family to graduate from college, first earning a bachelor's degree in St. Paul, and then going on to earn a master's degree from Hamline University. In addition to teaching at Harding, Houston also works as adjunct professor teaching math classes to prospective elementary teachers.

Houston's 19-year career at Harding includes 18 years as a football coach – 10 of which he was head coach. At Harding, Houston is the mathematics department chair, a learning team facilitator and union steward.

"Teaching is important to me because I get to help shape, form, and mold the academic minds of the students in my classroom. In my time here at Harding, being able to witness students' growth academically and athletically has been the most amazing. I have been very fortunate to have built community, a trusting atmosphere, and an enjoyable learning experience within my classroom for many students over my 19 years."

"Michael is passionate about his students and works tirelessly to engage them in the study of mathematics," wrote Kimberley Nichols, a Gordon Parks High School math teacher who previously worked with Houston at Harding and served with him on the SPPS district mathematics team. "His ability to engage all students, particularly students of color, is exceptional; partly due to his lived experiences as a teacher of color and to his determination to help all students achieve success. He meets students where they are and

inspires them to learn deeply. His passion and dedication to equity and culturally responsive instruction has made a tremendous difference in the lives of the students he works with every single day."

Houston says his teaching philosophy "has always been centered upon creating classroom community. In the wake of the pandemic and the ongoing trauma our Harding students have endured, my goal every day is to make sure they have fun in their learning and know they are loved."

Courtesy of Education Minnesota and St. Paul Public Schools

www.spps.org



11 Were Selected as 2023 Minnesota Teacher of the Year finalists

The 2023 Minnesota Teacher of the Year was chosen from a group of 11 teachers from across the state who were named finalists in the program. An independent selection panel of 21 leaders in the areas of education, business, government and nonprofits selected the finalists from a group of 44 semifinalists. There were 132 candidates for this program year.

The selection panel met on May 6 to conduct individual interviews with each of the 11 finalists and to cast votes for the 2023 Minnesota Teacher of the Year. For a look at how the selection process works, go to <https://educationminnesota.org/news/awards-and-honors/teacher-of-the-year/>

The 2023 Minnesota Teacher of the Year finalists:

Michael Houston – MN 2023 Teacher of the Year!

Math Teacher, Harding High School
19th year with St. Paul Public Schools/Harding High School (See above article)

Molly Keenan

Social Studies Teacher, Harding High School. 10th year with St. Paul Public Schools /Harding High School. An educator since 2002.

"Teaching is incredibly challenging, and it is also the way I can influence the future for good, bend the world toward justice and love, and have laughter and creativity in my life every day."



2023 Minnesota TEACHER of the YEAR 59th Anniversary

Sorcha Nix

Science Teacher, Open World Learning. 8th year with St. Paul Public Schools. Four years at Open World Learning after four years at Murray Middle

"Coming from a family of educators, I am so proud to be a teacher. It's an incredibly rewarding and extremely challenging profession."

Fathimath Eliza Rasheed

Theater Teacher, Global Arts Plus Upper Campus. 13th year with St. Paul Public Schools and Global Arts Plus

"Teaching is important because



it's the basis of human connection. We're all standing on the legacies of the stories, knowledge, and wisdom of our elders."

www.spps.org



Joe Schulte

Sartell High School, Sartell-St. Stephen School District 748 Technology education, 9th–12th
See article on Page 20



www.isd748.org



Fatuma Ali

Hopkins High School, Hopkins Public Schools, English, 10th–12th

Fatuma Ali is an English and AVID teacher at Hopkins High School. Her passion for teaching stems from the desire to create a positive learning environment for her students and to be the teacher she wished she had when growing up. Fatuma has revolutionized the English curriculum at her school, creating classes that are much-needed and beloved by her students.



Allyson Wolff

Eisenhower Elementary School, Hopkins Public Schools, Spanish Immersion, 1st

Allyson Wolff, a first-grade Spanish immersion teacher at Eisenhower Elementary. Allyson's dedication and passion for teaching are evident in the way she creates a safe and caring environment for her students to learn and grow.



hopkinsschools.org



Continued on Page 6

The School of Education and Leadership extends our warm congratulations to **Michael Houston, MAEd '11**, on being named the **2023 Minnesota Teacher of the Year** by Education Minnesota.



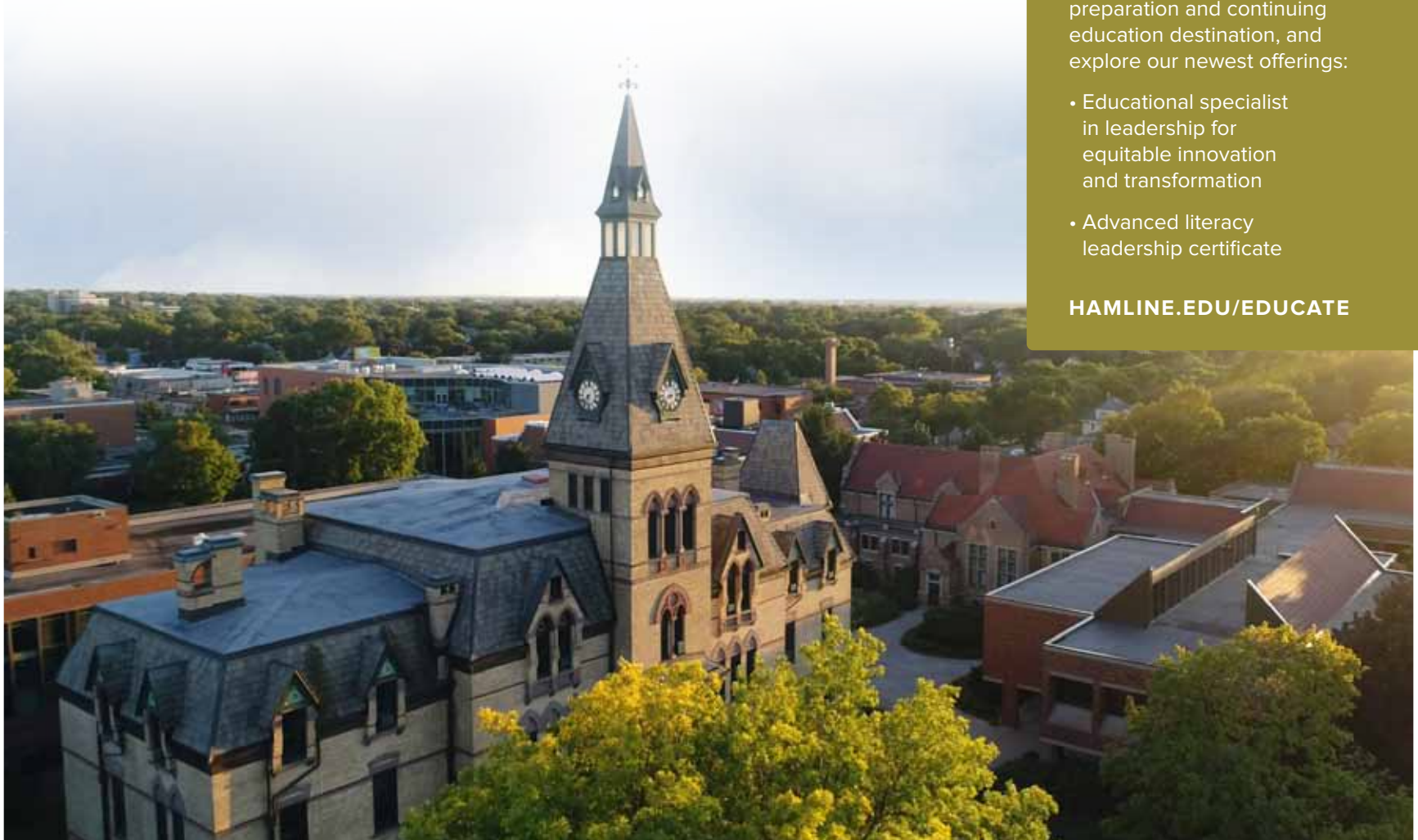
2023 Minnesota Teacher of the Year
Michael Houston

Michael joins a growing list of Hamline University alums who have received this prestigious award in the past eight years; Amy Hewett-Olatunde MAEd '02, EdD '15 (2015 winner), Abdul Wright MAEd '16 (2016 winner), and Jessica Davis MA in Teaching '06 (2019 winner).

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One Last “Hats Off” to These Exceptional Educators. Well Done And Enjoy the Summer!

Sarah Lancaster is 2022 Minnesota Teacher of the Year

Sarah Lancaster, a first-grade teacher at Onamia Elementary School in the Onamia district, is the 2022 Minnesota Teacher of the Year. Lancaster is the 58th recipient of the prestigious award, the first from the Onamia district and the first teacher of Asian Pacific Islander descent to be named Minnesota Teacher of the Year.



Lancaster believes in the power of relationships and helping her students establish an identity for themselves. “As a teacher, I get to show my students that they can reach beyond whatever barriers they encounter,” she said in a video submitted to the Teacher of the Year selection panel. “I get to show them that beyond these barriers is an amazing person, a scholar, an athlete, someone looking to connect with their culture and find their true identity. I can supply and awaken the language, strategies, enthusiasm and joy that very well may have been inside them all along.”

“No matter the age of the students she is working with, Sarah displays an unrivaled amount of passion for student education and improvement,” said Cynthia Martin, a fellow first-grade teacher at Onamia Elementary, in a letter of recommendation for Lancaster. “Sarah is forever willing and open to acquiring new knowledge to help students in need of intervention or enrichment. Her breadth of knowledge in teaching methods is vast, and she is able to connect with students in so many effective ways.”

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Ariana Wright, Kasson-Mantorville Schools, Named Minnesota’s 2022 NAESP National Distinguished Principal

Among her greatest accomplishments as a principal, Wright is proud of building a strengths-based leadership culture at Kasson-Mantorville Elementary. “Over the past four years we have developed this culture in our school community through learning about strengths and embedding a strengths-based approach into our systems,” Wright emphasized that staff, not just administrators, must be part of the framework for this system to work, “To ensure positive learning conditions for students, work needs to be done to ensure positive working conditions for all staff.”



Alecia Meline, a First Grade Teacher at Kasson-Mantorville Elementary, recommended Wright highly for the honor, “Mrs. Wright has many admirable leadership qualities, but most foundationally, she leads by example. She does not ask her staff to do something she would not do herself. She reaches out to families with strategies and solutions she has used with success. She knows that the mark of a good leader is building a community of good leaders. This has been built in our school by paying attention to the voices around her, sharing responsibility, recognizing compatible strengths, making a safe space for differing opinions without judgment, delegating when necessary and appropriate, being creative, being persistent, and being inexhaustibly positive with a great sense of humor. For that, she is admired.”

“I am humbled and honored to represent the hundreds of passionate, dedicated and student-centered elementary principals from around the state as the 2022 National Distinguished Principal of Minnesota,” said Wright, “Serving students, families, staff, and the communities of Kasson and Mantorville is my passion and being recognized for doing what I love is something I will treasure as a highlight of my career!”

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CSTA Teaching Excellence Award – Congratulations Melanie Olson!

Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose School District’s Melanie Olson is one of ten national recipients of the 2022 Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA) / Infosys Foundation USA CS Teaching



Excellence Award. She is the first Minnesota educator to receive this award.

Melanie Olson resides in Monticello and has taught for the Buffalo-Hanover Montrose School District in Minnesota for 17 years, with the last 11 being in the Quest Program which is a school-within-a school for gifted and talented students.

Melanie says, “My ultimate goal is to instill a passion for CS and give students the tools and resources they need to continue learning beyond the walls of my classroom.”

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2023 Minnesota Teacher of the Year finalists Continued from Page 4

Bee Lee

Emmet D. Williams Elementary, Roseville Area Public Schools, Visual arts, K–6th

We are SO PROUD of Bee Lee, an art teacher at

Emmet D. Williams Elementary School, and a finalist for this year’s Minnesota Teacher of the Year. Bee attended the Minnesota Teacher of the Year banquet and her dedication and commitment to her students, family, and colleagues was shining bright! Bee was joined by Jex Arzayus and Carrie Uwadiae, two amazing educators who (in addition to Kristi Buhler) were also MN Teacher of the Year candidates from Roseville Area Schools. Congratulations to all! We are so fortunate you chose Roseville.



www.isd623.org



Josh Mann

St. Michael-Albertville High School, St. Michael-Albertville School District. Social studies, 9th–12th.

We couldn’t be prouder of STMA High School Social Studies Teacher & Theater Director Mr. Josh Mann! Mr. Mann was honored in St. Paul for being a 2023 MN Teacher of the Year Finalist. Mr. Mann is one of the best & exemplifies our strong tradition of excellence!



www.stma.k12.mn.us



Giovanna Valeria Margalli

Cornelia Elementary School, Edina Public Schools. Grade 4 teacher at Cornelia Elementary



www.edinaschools.org



John Peter

Pelican Rapids High School, Pelican Rapids Public Schools. English as a second language, 7th–12th



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Brendan Bogart is Minnesota's 2023 NAESP National Distinguished Principal



Brendan Bogart, principal of Lincoln Elementary in the Alexandria School District, is Minnesota's 2023 NAESP National Distinguished Principal (NDP). The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA), and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) presented the prestigious award.

Jon Millerhagen, Executive Director of MESPA — "Brendan has been an active and supportive member of MESPA (Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association) and has gained high respect from his colleagues. This recognition indicates that Brendan has demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and achievements in his role as a principal, and we are proud to have him represent MESPA as our National Distinguished Principal."

Principal Bogart began his career in education in 1996 as a 6th-grade teacher in the Watertown-Mayer School District.

Twenty years ago, he transitioned from teaching to the principal role. Bogart — "One of my notable accomplishments was serving as the Appleton/Milan Elementary Principal in the Lac qui Parle Valley School District for four years. I developed great relationships with staff and learned so much during that time. While some readers might initially question the significance of this achievement, its impact became evident later in my career and has influenced my work over the past 16 years as principal of Lincoln Elementary School."

At Lincoln Elementary, the vision is for all staff members to feel valued, and families to feel welcome and supported. The mission of Lincoln Elementary is to work as a team to ensure all students learn and grow. It is the engagement and partnership between school and home that create conditions where staff do their best day in and day out to create a desirable daily experience where students can be their best selves.

Rick Sansted, Superintendent of Alexandria Schools — "Brendan has effectively established a clear mission and vision for Lincoln Elementary. When you walk into the building, you will see banners affirming the mission and vision and that all are welcome. Brendan also focuses on what matters most — our students. This commitment to students comes through in all of Brendan's

work as the principal at Lincoln Elementary. Mr. Bogart is an exemplary principal in our region. It is without reservation that I recommend Brendan Bogart for consideration in the National Distinguished Principal Program."

Another proud moment for Lincoln Elementary was achieving the 2019 National Blue Ribbon School Award distinction.

Bogart — "It is humbling to receive the MN National Distinguished Principal Award. MESPA, NAESP, and the Western Division Principal Association have all influenced my leadership over time. I look up to many peers in the association and hope to reflect on the passion and perseverance they have for serving Minnesota's children and families. I am also grateful to Alexandria School leaders, past and present, who have shaped my career and provided lessons and inspiration, and to the community of Alexandria where we have raised a family, lived, and learned for much of my principalship. I am fiercely proud to work alongside a team at Lincoln Elementary that day in and day out embraces our mission of "working as a team to ensure students learn and grow." I do not have to look far to find joy and satisfaction in my work. From the office staff, paraprofessionals, cooks, custodians, and teaching staff, my heroes and motivation walk the halls and are seen in classrooms throughout our building supporting Lincoln Learners and families."

The National Distinguished Principal program was established in 1984 to recognize

and celebrate elementary and middle-level principals who set high standards for instruction, student achievement, character, and climate for the students, families, and staff in their learning communities.

The selection committee responsible for reviewing the applications consisted of representatives from each of the 12 geographical divisions of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA), including the committee chair, Kenny Newby, Minnesota's NAESP State Representative. Also on the committee was Ariana Wright, the 2022 NAESP National Distinguished Principal from Kasson-Mantorville Elementary.

On May 5, 2023, Brendan Bogart and two other finalists underwent interviews conducted by the selection committee.

The other finalists for this honor were: Duane Dutrieuille, principal at Hazel Park Preparatory Academy, and Ronald Salazar, principal at Birch Grove Elementary School for the Arts.

For more details on the NDP process, visit National Distinguished Principal under Honors on MESPA's website: www.mespa.net/ndp

www.alexschools.org



Courtesy of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

Four Minnesota Educators Are Finalists for STEM Awards Continued from Page 1

Dr. Beth Robelia has a deep knowledge of online curricular resources from a decade of teaching science online. She has outstanding Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge (TPACK). She shares her knowledge



Beth Robelia

with a districtwide group to craft new material to meet the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Beth implements the new standards blending student interests with phenomena-based software. She also creates phenomena in her live class sessions with simple demonstrations of science concepts using everyday materials students can relate to such as toy cars and cabbage. Her physical science class had a fireside chat (in front of her fireplace) when they were starting the unit on energy. Students also enjoyed visiting her "drum cave," a room full of percussion instruments. She uses everyday objects to capture student interest, inspire questions, and show examples of disciplinary core ideas. Dr. B also brings this passion into the Biology and Anatomy and Physiology instruction she provides for our online students.

She brings the world to her students with

her Youtube channel full of videos from ecosystems across the country and the world. Other classrooms and individuals use these videos to support their learning. She also uses Youtube to support students who cannot attend synchronous classes because of jobs or family responsibilities. English language learners also appreciate the videos as they can slow down the explanations and rewatch difficult sections. She has a passion to provide our students with the best online science experience available and her passion, dedication, and creativity are all factors contributing to this well-deserved recognition.

"It is so important to provide our online students with the background and skills needed to inspire the next generation of scientific discovery. Having her on staff is exciting for our school and our students and she is an excellent choice for this recognition."

— Principal Jeff Bush

www.spps.org/onlineschool



"Jill Jensen does wonderful work as an educator at Scott Highlands Middle School. She is creative, thoughtful, and so engaging with the lessons she creates for students. Whether creating an outdoor Wild Flower classroom space that beautifies our school, or simply sitting next

to a student to help that student engage with the curriculum and learn at a higher level or to just show that student that she cares, Jill is an excellent teacher in every way. Our school and her students feel lucky to have Jill Jensen. We are proud of her for this great honor as a finalist! She makes such a positive difference for our school!"

— Scott Highlands Middle School, Principal, Dan Wilharber

shms.district196.org



Alexis Wolf, math teacher at John Glenn Middle School, ISD 622, is recognized as the 7–12 Mathematics Minnesota State Finalist for the 2023 Presidential Awards for Excellence in



Jill Jensen



Alexis Wolf

Mathematics and Science Teaching. PAEMST is the nation's highest honor for K–12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics and/or computer science teachers.

www.isd622.org/johnglenn



The finalists represent the most outstanding teachers Minnesota has to offer, and they serve as both a model and an inspiration to fellow teachers. 2023 Minnesota finalists will be recognized informally during STEM day at the Minnesota State Fair, and formally during the Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics conference and the Minnesota Science Teachers Association conference.

Teachers who are selected as PAEMST awardees receive a trip to Washington, D.C., where they attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities. They also receive a \$10,000 award from NSF, a Presidential certificate and join an elite cohort of award-winning teachers who can influence STEM teaching in Minnesota and nationwide.

For more information about PAEMST, visit <https://paemst.nsf.gov>.



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**- Sarah Fredricks, 6th grade science teacher
at Cheney Middle School, West Fargo**

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One Last “Hats Off” to These Exceptional Educators. Well Done And Enjoy the Summer!

Dr. Heidi Miller, Anoka-Hennepin Schools, Selected NAESP Outstanding Assistant Principal from Minnesota

Dr. Heidi Miller, assistant principal of Rum River Elementary School in the Anoka-Hennepin Schools District.

Lynn Shereé Lesmeister, a kindergarten teacher at Rum River Elementary, singled out Dr. Miller’s dedication and attitude as some of her greatest strengths. Lesmeister said, “I have been an educator for over 30 years, and I have never experienced someone in her position with such a combination of professionalism, drive, and warmth. She radiates positivity.”

Dr. Miller considers collaboration to be one of her best practices as an educator. She explained that staff groups meet weekly to analyze student data and have open conversations about what is working, what needs to change, and create an action plan.

“Dr. Miller has a clear vision of excellence in teaching and learning and is able to convey this vision to staff members, students, and parents in a positive and collaborative manner,” said Jeffrey Clusiau, principal at Rum River Elementary school.



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STEM Teachers Announced as Recipients of Prestigious Presidential Award

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) are the highest honors bestowed by the United States government specifically for K–12 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics teaching.

Brian Hare - Science, E-STEM Middle School, Saint Paul Public Schools

Brian creates curriculum that is inquiry-based and allows students to experience science at their own level. He continually incorporates real-world experiences that bring students closer to how science “is done” in the field. He balances having fun in the classroom with challenging students to push themselves further to become physical science content experts.



Abram Schwartz - Mathematics, Bemidji Middle School, Bemidji Area Schools

Inspiring a love of mathematics and fostering rich mathematical discourse are staples in Abe’s classroom. He uses real-world examples and active learning to keep students excited and interested in mathematics. Through grants and professional opportunities, he has helped create a rich STEM program with diverse learning experiences for the Bemidji Middle School students.



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Congratulations to the Minnesota Principals of the Year 2022

(Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP))

Nathaniel “Natty” Messick, Fertile-Beltrami High School

2022 High School Principal of the Year

Natty has been the principal of his school for the past eight years. Over those years, Natty has instilled the value of the “Falcon Way” — focusing on a culture of responsibility, respectfulness and determination. As one student states, “Our school has an amazing sense of unity that doesn’t happen in other places. There is so much support



for each and every student. Our teachers and administration always greet everyone with a smile and make sure that each student knows that they are cared for.” Furthermore, according to an administrator in the district, Natty creates a strong culture, “Mr. Messick is very approachable, people person, student-oriented principal who works to establish one-on-one relationships with all participants in our school system. Students, staff and community members feel connected and supported by our principal – which, in turn, creates trust and a sense of belonging.”

Michael O’Neil, Pequot Lakes Middle School

2022 Middle Level Principal of the Year

Mike understands the importance of individualized and high-quality education offerings for his students. He states, “As a campus community, we have worked to stay the course in providing each child with their version of “what they need” to be successful. This includes a strategic PLC devoted to Social Emotional Learning and the support of some of our most challenging students on campus.” As stated from a teacher under Mike’s leadership, “Mike has been courageously steadfast in his messaging and in his decisions related to equity. His advocacy for equity is rooted in his desire to hear from people whose perspectives have been shaped by experiences different than his own. He is a humble learner in this regard, modeling curiosity and respect in his personal and professional equity work.



Nick Bakke, Mora High School

2021–2022 Assistant Principal of the Year

Nick comes with high praise from staff and community members. A special education teacher shares that Nick comes with many strengths, including listening to the concerns of others as well as being able to soothe stressful situations. Both powerful tools when working with students and parents. Furthermore, Nick’s principal notes his dedication to continually improve the culture of Mora High School. Although he faces many challenges and difficult conversations with students, he never shies away. His ultimate goal when working with students is not to discipline, but to change behavior.



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Superintendent of West Salem School District
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SabreCON Finishes Second Home for Habitat for Humanity



*Sarah Kleppe
Communications specialist ...
Sartell-St. Stephen School District ISD 748*

Sartell High School, located north of St. Cloud in central Minnesota, recently celebrated the completion of a second home built for Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity by students in SabreCON, a level 3 Technology Education class.

Teacher Joe Schulte said, "With 56 students registering to be a part of the next SabreCON Build, we are trying to answer that call and also looking at scaling this model to other area high schools."

Students build their homes for Habitat on a 40'x80' concrete pad on the South end of the school building to optimize protection from the elements. The building area provides a temporary foundation/level surrounding with air and electrical outlets as well as proximity to the school building for tool and material storage.

Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity's Director of Development and Communication Emily D. H. Olson shared, "We are truly grateful for the ongoing partnership between

CMHFH and Sartell High School! The School Build students continue to be instrumental in the mission of providing affordable homeownership options for residents in Central Minnesota. The SHS participants are among the 50 students that exit the CMHFH School Build program with skills to start their construction career or receive further education and training. The CMHFH and SHS School Build program continues to impact generations of students as well as our current and future homebuyers. THANK YOU, and we look forward to the 23-24 School Build year!"

Sartell High School Principal Shayne Kusler shared, "Our partnership with Habitat for Humanity has provided great opportunities for our students to learn so much, specifically in construction trades. Mr. Schulte has also spent time to ensure students learn about housing insecurity and the ways that giving of oneself can provide opportunity and success for others."

www.isd748.org



First Habitat Home Moved to its Permanent Location This Year



The students' first home, completed last school year, was moved to its permanent home on a lot donated by Ryan and Bethany Cross, co-owners of a local construction company. The Crosses are proponents of learning through tangible experiences and thinking beyond themselves. "We are invested in our community, and this opportunity aligns with our family values beautifully," said Ryan Cross. "Our family is able to support our local community and help in educating skilled trades people, who are vital to our community and our workforce."

Construction Careers Foundation Announces New Minnesota Trades Navigator

The Construction Careers Foundation has named Charie Gill as its new Minnesota Trades Navigator.

Gill, a social entrepreneur, has more than 20 years of community organizing and youth mentorship experience. She previously held roles as the Director of Community Programming with the North Community YMCA in Minneapolis and served as the Work and Career Path Director of the Upper Midwest JA Program.

"Charie Gill is charismatic, tenacious, and a great advocate for the youth we serve," said Pat Wagner, Executive Director of the Construction Careers Foundation. "Charie has worked with diverse and underserved populations and is perceptive to youth experience and barriers they may encounter when exploring the pathway to a construction apprenticeship."

Gill knows from personal experience and her decades of work with youth that opportunity youth are disproportionately youth of color, often living in low-income neighborhoods and facing important barriers to job access such as disconnections and labor market discrimination.

"I have always focused my work on opportunity youth and creating education and career pathways for highly mobile, highly impacted young adults, including those aging



out of the system," Gill said. "I use the term social entrepreneur to describe myself because I have a professional passion to develop young adults' well-being and in doing so, I start to look at what opportunities are viable for them to obtain economic independence and success."

Gill first learned of the Construction Careers Foundation (CCF) as a partner program to one of her previous youth organizations.

Continued on Page 14

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Jordan's Building Trades Course



Jordan Public Schools

The Building Trades course, started in the 2021-2022 school year, is a part of our Summit Academy program at Jordan High School. The Summit Academy is an experiential career studies program aimed at highly motivated juniors and seniors looking to expand their educational experience and develop in the professional world working side-by-side with experienced professionals in authentic learning experience. The Building Trades course can be taken after applying to join the course.

Students taking the building trades course gain experience in every aspect of construction including surveying, concrete, rough carpentry, plumbing, electrical, insulation, sheetrock, roofing, finishing/trim, and painting. Students also earn the 10-hour OSHA certification as well as potential college credit through articulation agreements with partners for nine educational courses. Students taking this course may look ahead to education and careers as con-

tractors, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, masons, project managers, and engineers.

The Building Trades course has partnered to create projects for both school and community use.

For example, students have built a storage shed for soccer equipment and re-shingled, while adding new fascia, to the baseball dugouts.

This year, students put together two camper cabins for Cedar Lake Farms (part of the Three Rivers Parks District). The Park District provided the materials, and Jordan students built the cabins to include the 14' x 24' structure, bunk beds, and dining area.

A local lumber yard has donated the materials for the camper cabins and other structures, such as yard sheds or chicken coop, and upon completion, the lumber yard sells the structures within the community.

Students learn and create in a workshop space at Jordan Public Schools. For larger projects, such as the camper cabins and sheds, the students utilize a paved area

located directly adjacent to the workshop space.

Any projects that offer students work in various trades through the entire building process are ideal. In these types of projects, students are able to connect with different pieces of project management, and it's great to see them engage in differing aspects of the building process that they really enjoy.

"A lot of students are able to apply what they have done elsewhere, but it may make more sense here. They can apply what they've learned in Math classes, or other courses and get a taste of the trades," Steve McClellan, Building Trades Teacher.

"We are very proud of our Building and Trades course. It gives students the opportunity to learn about the trades in a hands-on environment. This is the type of real-world learning that we strive to offer our students,"

Jeff Vizenor, Jordan High School Principal.

"Any time school life can connect to the students' personal passions and future plans an entire new learning experience unfolds. The authentic experiences gained through courses like Building Trades are a central and fundamental piece of student growth. Allowing students to flourish and develop in a classroom that mirrors their own personal interests is exactly where education needs to continue growing," Erin Hjelmeland, Director of Teaching and Learning for Jordan Public Schools.

www.jordan.k12.mn.us



Construction Careers Foundation Announces New Minnesota Trades Navigator

Continued from Page 12

"It was like a veil was lifted from my eyes and I saw a clear, attainable pathway to get more BIPOC youth introduced into the construction industry," Gill said. "CCF programming is an economically rooted, skills-focused opportunity allotted to those who do not have much if any exposure to careers in construction."

"As a youth worker at heart, I know young people bring value to our conversations and work," Gill said. "I believe in youth choice and voice. We can't expect respect; we have to earn it — that's how I feel when working with young people, so I use language to assert respect among young people and interns."

Gill adds that respect is one cornerstone of building a collaborative partnership where youth participate as interns and become advocates for themselves and other BIPOC young

people entering the construction industry.

"As youth prepare for the interview and apprenticeship process, I join them in conversations with the unions to serve as a broker," Gill said. "First and foremost, I am a youth advocate and I want them to understand the career demands and benefits fully while they are making their career commitment."

"I am dedicated to advocating for our youth. They are our future, and they will build Minnesota's future too."

Courtesy of The Construction Careers Foundation



Real World Connections Make the Difference in Minnetonka High School MOMENTUM Program

Minnetonka Public Schools

The Minnetonka High School MOMENTUM program is a dynamic, skilled trade-focused learning opportunity that offers students courses in Construction Systems, Manufacturing, Design, and Transportation.

MOMENTUM classes integrate learning and doing to keep lessons engaging and relevant. Professional guest instructors visit frequently to provide their insights on site at the high school, and companies also invite students to tour their local businesses and construction projects so they can see how the academic topics they are learning about show up in future careers. MOMENTUM instructors also implement “professionalism” lessons into their curriculum, based on input from local business partners. By focusing on five core components – Safety First, Actionable Mindset, Reliability, Engagement, Proactivity and Effective Communication – students build valuable soft skills to accompany their trade knowledge.

Lessons and experiences are coordinated to provide maximum student engagement. For example, in “Mathematics in Home Renovation” and “Physics of Home Renovation,” two courses in the Construction Pathways strand of MOMENTUM, students learn about math

or physics topics and then engage in projects that bring those concepts to life. A lecture on electrical circuits might be connected to an opportunity for students to practice wiring their own electrical systems. Academic courses are then connected to guest speakers or site visits where professionals working in the industry share their experiences with students.

“This year, physics and math students worked together to build our first ever ‘ice castle,’” shared Minnetonka High School MOMENTUM instructor Brent Veninga. “It’s a full-sized ice fishing house where students have done everything from framing the walls and interior cabinetry to wiring the electrical systems, plumbing a toilet and shower for the bathroom, and even planning the interior aesthetic design. It’s been a multifaceted project for students to lean into their strengths and interests in a real way.”

MOMENTUM Physics/Mathematics of Home Renovation classes also participate in a “mini youth apprenticeship” program where students visit nine different companies monthly, exposing them to community businesses related to their areas of interest. These mini apprenticeships can be great connections for future internships and career opportunities.

Veninga makes a point to gather student

feedback after every event, guest lecture and site visit. Students regularly give experiences such as the mini youth apprenticeships high praise. “These direct quotes from our students, when they are sharing about their experiences with external partners in our program, are pure gold,” said Veninga. Student feedback is an important metric in MOMENTUM’s forward planning, and it helps demonstrate the value the program provides to students as they plan their steps after high school.

After the program’s “Human Resources Day,” where MOMENTUM students had the opportunity to work on job application and interview skills while hearing from local hiring professionals in the industry, one student shared: “This program has helped me figure out what path I want to take right now. It’s such a good path for many kids who are hands on and might want to be in the trades, but don’t know where to start.”

Changing minds and opening opportunities is what MOMENTUM is all about. In



a recent survey of students, MOMENTUM program leaders found that more than three quarters of the students surveyed agreed that their perspective around the trades has changed since being in MOMENTUM. “It has really sparked an interest in me,” shared one student. “It has shown me the amount of opportunities available through this field.”

minnetonkaschools.org



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CAREERS IN CONSTRUCTION

Construction Laborers

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

Construction Carpenters

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

Construction Managers

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

Construction and Building Inspectors

Inspect structures using engineering skills to determine structural soundness and compliance with specifications, building codes, and other regulations. Inspections may be general in nature or may be limited to a specific area, such as electrical systems or plumbing.

Civil Engineers

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

Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators

Operate one or several types of power construction equipment, such as motor graders, bulldozers, scrapers, compressors, pumps, derricks, shovels, tractors, or front-end loaders to excavate, move, and grade earth,

erect structures, or pour concrete or other hard surface pavement. May repair and maintain equipment in addition to other duties.

Paving, Surfacing, and Tamping Equipment Operators

Operate equipment used for applying concrete, asphalt, or other materials to road beds, parking lots, or airport runways and taxiways or for tamping gravel, dirt, or other materials. Includes concrete and asphalt paving machine operators, form tampers, tamping machine operators, and stone spreader operators.

Structural Iron and Steel Workers

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

Architectural and Civil Drafters

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

Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers

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

Highway Maintenance Workers

Maintain highways, municipal and rural roads, airport runways, and rights-of-way. Duties include patching broken or eroded pavement and repairing guard rails, highway markers, and snow fences. May also mow or clear brush from along road, or plow snow from roadway.

Painters, Construction and Maintenance

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

Traffic Technicians

Conduct field studies to determine traffic volume, speed, effectiveness of signals,

adequacy of lighting, and other factors influencing traffic conditions, under direction of traffic engineer.

Surveyors

Make exact measurements and determine property boundaries. Provide data relevant to the shape, contour, gravitation, location, elevation, or dimension of land or land features on or near the earth's surface for engineering, mapmaking, mining, land evaluation, construction, and other purposes.

Transportation Engineers

Develop plans for surface transportation projects, according to established engineering standards and state or federal construction policy. Prepare designs, specifications, or estimates for transportation facilities. Plan modifications of existing streets, highways, or freeways to improve traffic flow.

Electricians

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

Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics

Diagnose, adjust, repair, or overhaul mobile mechanical, hydraulic, and pneumatic equipment, such as cranes, bulldozers, graders, and conveyors, used in construction, logging, and mining.

Career/Technical Education Teachers, Postsecondary

Teach vocational courses intended to provide occupational training below the baccalaureate level in subjects such as construction, mechanics/repair, manufacturing, transportation, or cosmetology, primarily to students who have graduated from or left high school. Teaching takes place in public or private schools whose primary business is academic or vocational education.

This is just a sampling of the careers available in the construction industry. For more information go to www.onetonline.org



Minnesota Asphalt Pavement Association

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MAPA supports and facilitates workforce development by **providing scholarships** to students interested in asphalt careers, creating a marketing program to promote **available jobs** with MAPA members, and performing **outreach to school districts** to provide resources to promote careers in the asphalt industry.

Check out the resources available at:
www.asphaltisbest.com



District 622 Students Participate in Northeast Metro 916 Construction Occupations Program



North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale ISD 622

Encompassing 42-square miles, District 622 includes all or portions of seven communities within the Twin Cities metropolitan area – North St. Paul, Maplewood, Oakdale, Lake Elmo, Landfall, Pine Springs and Woodbury.

Serving more than 81,000 residents, the district includes seven elementary schools (K-5), two middle schools (6-8), two high schools (9-12), an online school (K-12), two early childhood education centers, a learning center, a transition program and a senior center.

District 622 students can enroll in the Northeast Metro 916 Career and Technology Center construction program made possible through partnerships with the City of North St. Paul, two nearby colleges, and local businesses. Students experience the satisfaction of building a home in their own community. Program participants build the home from the ground up. Students develop invaluable skills and experience working alongside industry professionals. They learn how to use the tools necessary for carpentry, masonry, plumbing, HVAC, and electrical careers.

Critical thinking skills are developed in a hands-on environment while students explore potential career paths.

Students can earn up to thirteen college credits and leave with industry credentials and certifications, giving them a competitive advantage in their future plans after high school.

This year, eight North and Tartan High School students are working on a home at 2172 Eldridge Avenue in North St. Paul.

Last July, the community was invited to an open house at the 2021–2022 house before that home went on the market. Representatives from the various construction trade partners, Northeast Metro 916 staff,



District 622 staff, and students were present to answer questions about the project.

Look for more information about this year’s student-built home by following 916 Career and Tech Center on Facebook or Instagram. Learn more about how high school students can benefit from participation in the 916 Construction Occupations program.



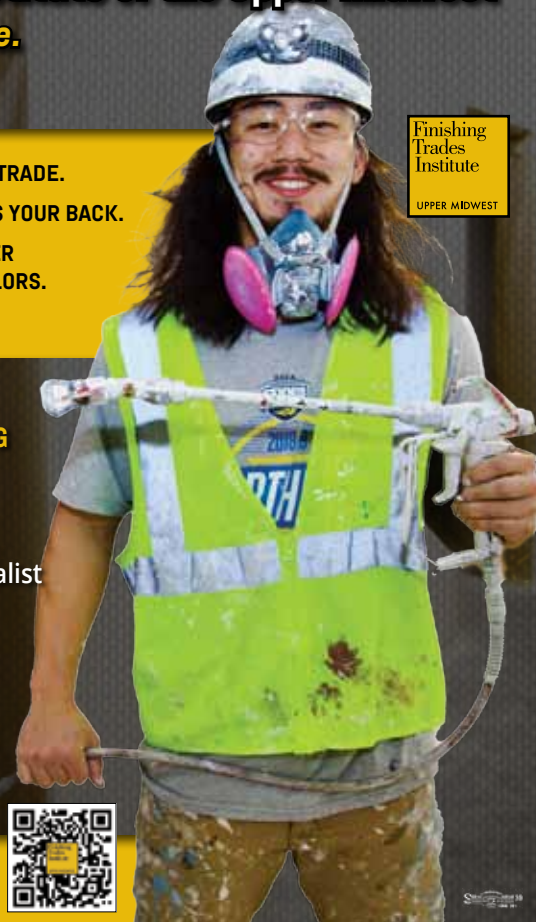
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Construction workers can find themselves grappling with physical strain, long hours, and demanding environments that can profoundly impact their mental health. By integrating mental health education into their academic journey, construction students acquire coping skills and support networks. This transformative knowledge empowers workers to not only take care of their own mental wellbeing, but also shifts construction culture in a positive direction.

“Our main goal has always been to help our members succeed. We’ve seen that professional success isn’t only about showing up to work, learning skills, and getting paid,” said Jeff Stark, Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer of IUPAT District Council 82. “It’s about building a culture of support and wellness that helps members and their families in the long term.”

This year, we at the Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest (FTIUM) at IUPAT District Council 82 (DC 82) have pioneered a new program with TEAM Wellness



at Work aimed at providing direct access to free mental health counseling. The program is called the FTIUM Care Team.

The FTIUM Care Team provides students with access to life-saving mental health services, substance use counseling, health consultation and other critical resources.

The Care Team consists of four licensed, multilingual clinicians who are available for all students, staff and members of IUPAT DC 82 to schedule a private appointment on-site at the training center.

“What makes FTIUM and DC 82 different is that we create spaces for students to be their whole selves,” said FTIUM’s Director of Academic Education, John Burcaw. “Many workers are starting to wake up to our industry’s historical toxic masculinity and how it hurts them and their peers. They’re beginning to recognize the immense strength that comes with talking about your struggles. We’re proud to be part of this important shift in the construction industry.”



Project-Based Learning Leads the Way



Dahl and Miles Hooper work on the shed.

Carissa Hopkins-Hoel
St. Cloud Area School District

Every year students in Project Lead the Way woodworking classes at North and South Junior High Schools have a chance to do a major build project. They work from start to finish on a shed or playhouse using lumber and tools. The project is possible due to the generous donation and partnership with a local lumber company.

“Students are introduced to safety and machine use in seventh grade,” explains South career and tech ed teacher Tom Dahl. “While the focus is on safety and materials fabrication, students [also] learn techniques of measurement, assembly and finish work. Our assignments are geared toward learning by doing, and we’ve introduced projects that are culturally transferable.”

Transferable skills to the “real world” is

the main objective. Every student learns how to properly handle tools, take measurements and plan a project. Whether a student ultimately owns a home, attempts a do-it-yourself project or works in construction, they’ll take these skills and confidence with them throughout their lifetime.

South eighth grader Mailyann Vo took the class because she was interested in woodworking. Vo built one of the scaled (3/16) replicas of the shed.

Eighth grader Yaitza Arroyo-Ruiz at South grew up helping her dad build things, so the class brings back good memories for her.

“He used to build things for construction,” explains Arroyo-Ruiz, “so I would help him build certain stuff.”

“Students that find enjoyment in working with their hands often elect to join the year-long class. Their understanding and technique are further challenged by learning milling and

a few joinery techniques,” says Dahl.

Masaud Mohamed, another eighth grader at South, was responsible for doing the measuring of the lumber.

“I took the class because it would help me learn some life skills,” says Mohamed. “Taking this class helps me see what it is and maybe take it in high school.”

Career demand for skilled workers is at an all-time high.

“My colleague, Mr. Stadther, and I often hear from industry professionals about their needs, which keeps us in tune for how to design and teach our courses,” shares Dahl.

There is something for each student. Students who are nervous about using machinery still learn the operations and soon learn that with proper training, a build project is very satisfying.

Michelle Sininger from the lumber company says, “We have had a fantastic partnership with the junior high instructors over the years in being able to provide them with the materials to build small sheds and playhouses with the students. We all know that the earlier we can expose kids to the trades, the more likely they are to have interest in the field. We are blessed to be able to give back to the students, our builders and our community through this partnership.”



Mohamed secures roof rafters

“From my point of view,” says Dahl, “they have been very generous in their support of our students. Their donation allows us to improve the program through the purchase of tools and materials for future use.”

When the next shed is complete, it will be up for sale to the public.

Students who exit the program have experience with machine and tool usage, building and finishing projects, and completing plans from start to finish. Even if a student does not become a carpenter or cabinet builder, the skills they learn develop confidence and practical knowledge for life.

www.isd742.org



Dahl with some of his students and their shed




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Minnesota Construction Teachers Conference engages secondary and post-secondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) educators of the construction trades. Through participating in this conference, they will:

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- Understand the current data trends in high school graduation rates, college attendance/graduation rates and how to promote careers in the trades to young people and their families
- Share and learn about models of promoting Career and Technical Education to youth and their families at the secondary level
- Examine current practices in safety training with special emphasis on training youth to be safe in the trades classroom
- Develop basic grantseeking and grantwriting skills necessary for procuring additional resources and materials for their classroom/program
- Learn about the latest trends in construction through touring an active commercial job site.
- Participate in structured networking with other educators, administrators, and industry professionals.

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Career Fair Forges Connections



Spring Lake Park Schools

Energy, volume and engagement were high at the second annual career fair on April 6 where 118 organizations connected with nearly 2,000 Spring Lake Park High School students to support career exploration and employment.

The Spring Lake Park High School auxiliary gym came alive as students wandered the aisles and engaged with employers and colleges to learn more about immediate job openings, summer opportunities and longer-term career

paths.

Eric Van Brocklin, career pathways lead and career fair organizer, is passionate about Career Fairs like this being for all grade levels.

“There’s all this pressure on students to know what they want to do. You don’t have to know what you want to do,” says Eric. “Exposure to different career opportunities over time – and seeing familiar faces of our community and industry partners – helps students figure out

their path over time.”

Spring Lake Park Schools is fortunate to have a strong – and growing – list of industry and community partners spanning all sectors. Students explored business and financial services, human services, agriculture, food and natural resources, arts, communication and technology, engineering and manufacturing, health sciences technology, law enforcement, and military paths. Colleges and universities

were also well represented.

Many organizations came with interactive components that showcased their industry or specific product or service. Students piloted remote-controlled robots to pick things up. They tried their hand at framing and construction skills. They printed in 3D and even practiced welding (on a simulator).

“We asked people to think about what makes their work unique and what might engage students — give them an entry point,” says Eric. “We also have been preparing students with questions they can ask – and tips on how to figure out if something is a good fit.”

Juniors Aya and Nimo carried big bags of brochures and giveaways.

Aya was interested in the information she had collected from Volunteers of America as it aligns with a passion for helping others. Nimo, who is interested in the medical field, was enthusiastic about the number of people and organizations.

“There’s a lot here,” she said. “It opens up opportunities for jobs, learning about requirements and just a lot of things to think about. I also like that the universities I’m interested in are here. I can get information online but it’s nice to get the information right here and talk with someone.”

Darlene Dahlseide, with the Minnesota

Department of Transportation Office of Aeronautics, was promoting aviation careers. In the coming years, there are expected to be more than 600,000 jobs needed in the industry – from maintenance to air traffic control to cabin crew and pilots. Students were surprised to learn that aircraft maintenance technicians earn \$60,000 a year after two years of post-secondary education.

Fridley Police Department was on site and was blown away by the turnout and the level of engagement. They had handed out 300 brochures and were running low.

“We do a lot of career fairs,” said Detective Stevens. “This is incredible. Very well organized. The students are asking great questions and are really engaged.”

“We have awesome partners – many are here today, some couldn’t be here but show up in our classrooms as guest speakers or offer work site tours, internships and other opportunities,” says Eric. “The opportunities we provide are about really helping kids find the right fit for their futures as we also invest in our workforce and community.”

[springlakepark
schools.org](http://springlakeparkschools.org)



ACTE Announces University of Minnesota Educator as the 2022 National Winner



The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) announced Brad Greiman, Professor Emeritus at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, Minnesota, as the 2022 ACTE Teacher Educator of the Year. This award recognizes teacher educators who have demonstrated innovation in teacher education, leadership in improving CTE, and commitment to preparing teachers to deliver high quality CTE programs.

The foundation of Brad Greiman’s 42-year career as an agricultural educator is built on career and technical education principles. He taught 21 years as a high school agricultural education teacher at Algona, Iowa. His community-based program earned recognition as Outstanding Agricultural Education Program in

Iowa, Governor’s Council Award for Best Use of Advisory Committees in Agricultural Education, and the top FFA Chapter in Iowa.

Next, Greiman pursued his goal of becoming a teacher educator and earned his Ph.D. in Agricultural Education from the University of Missouri in 2002. Since then, he has been faculty at two universities: Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education in the School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development at Louisiana State University (1 year), and the last 17 years at the University of Minnesota (UM) as Associate Professor of Agricultural Education where he has served in several leadership roles: Lead/Co-lead for the Agricultural Education Teacher Licensure Program (16 years), Director of the Minnesota Teacher Induction Program (TIP) for New Agricultural Educators (13 years), Undergraduate Major Coordinator (10 years), and Academic Program Leader for the Agricultural Education, Communication & Marketing (AECM) Program (6 years).

Greiman was one of five finalists for the 2022 national title. The national winner was announced at the ACTE Virtual Awards Gala, recognizing the best CTE educators in the country.

For more information about the ACTE Excellence Awards, visit <https://www.acteonline.org>.



Sartell CTE Teacher Joe Schulte Teacher of the Year Finalist



*Sarah Kleppe
Communications specialist
Sartell-St. Stephen School District ISD 748*

Joe Schulte helps students at Sartell High School make a difference within their classrooms and their community.

In the 15 years he’s been a Technology Education teacher at his alma mater, Mr. Schulte has helped establish pre-engineering internships, a video production program, a metal art sculpture program during a distance learning model, and an annual home build as part of Sartell High

School’s construction technology programming.

Sartell High School Principal Shayne Kusler shared, “Joe Schulte is an educator who cares about the whole student. He works to make sure his students are prepared with the skills to be successful after high school but is also very focused on helping to prepare them with a mindset for success and understanding of the world and their ability to help make the world a better place.”

Prior to his work at Sartell High School, Mr. Schulte taught at Apollo High School in neighboring St. Cloud. He graduated from Saint Cloud State University with a degree in Technology Education in 2001 and has been enjoying teaching ever since.

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St. Paul Central High School Automotive — A Hidden Gem



Matt Lijewski has been teaching automotive technology at St. Paul Central High School for the past 13 years. His path was not the traditional one taken by most teachers.

After graduating from high school, Matt pursued an Associate Degree in Automotive Technology and went on to work in the automotive industry for 20 years as a transmission and driveline specialist.

Feeling his career had become stagnant and looking for a change that was both challenging and personally fulfilling, Matt explored a job opening at Central High School as an automotive instructor. He thought it might be a new and interesting career where he could utilize his personal experience and extensive automotive knowledge to educate the youth of St Paul.

“My interview went very well, and I was immediately given the position as automotive instructor as a licensed community expert,” said Matt. “I entered the teaching profession without the benefit of any teacher education or training. Basically, I was given the keys and

had to either sink or swim. Unfortunately, the former instructor had taken all of the materials with them, and I had to create my own lesson plans, worksheets, tests, learn how to interact with staff and students and most importantly, making sure my students left the shop with all of their fingers and toes intact.”

Matt worked to become a fully licensed teacher. In 2015, he graduated with a degree in Career and Technology Education. In that same year, he was also awarded the Outstanding Alumni of the Year Award by his technical college. As he continued his education and growth as a teacher, he felt that the School of Urban Education Program in the Twin Cities metro area would be beneficial to his teaching profession and provide the best education for the inner-city school that he works at. In the summer of 2022, after years of hard work, he graduated with a Master’s Degree in Urban Education.

Automotive Program at Central High School

The Automotive Program at Central High



School consists of two levels; Auto 1 and Auto 2. Auto 1 is offered to grades 9-12.

“In my introductory Auto 1 class, I educate my students about the basics of automotive knowledge and repair. How to work in a shop safely, hand tools/power tools, maintaining your vehicle, tires, batteries, starters, and alternators. The goal of the class is to prepare my students for purchasing and maintaining their own automobile and avoiding common problems associated with vehicle ownership. In addition, we explore career options in the industrial trade industry, which is a well-paying, essential, high demand career. This class is taught in a traditional classroom setting.

In my advanced Auto 2 class, I prepare my students to become a “do-it-yourselfer” or to enter post-secondary automotive training. I accomplish this goal by providing a mixture of traditional classroom education with real world/hands on training. In addition, I have partnered with local businesses to give my students valuable apprenticeship opportunities for career exploration and employment. I feel that what I teach is a lifelong skill, that is transferable to other career options and will save my students thousands of dollars in their adult life.

This class is taught outside of the traditional classroom.

Auto 2 is taught at a shop located two blocks away from the main campus. It was originally a Skellys gas station back in the 1940’s. In 1971, Skelly donated the shop to the St Paul school district and it was converted into an automotive shop/classroom. It’s a small, two-bay garage. Quite often we do repairs outside due to the limited work area. In the last few years, the district did gift the program with two new hoists, new tire machines, an updated security system, new LED lighting, a new heating system and a new, beautiful, epoxy floor.

Auto 2 is available to students in grades 10-12 that have successfully completed Auto 1. Students learn everything from brake jobs to engine removal. This class specializes in general vehicle maintenance repairs, not auto body repairs. The unique part of Matt’s Auto 2 program is that they work it like a real shop. Students learn on teacher/student/community member vehicles. Students must diagnose the problem, write up the vehicle, order parts and complete the repair. The main benefit of this

Continued on Page 24

Moorhead Students Use Their Skills to Impact Others Continued from Page 1

In addition to learning the technical skills to complete the tasks, they are learning the skills required to be independent workers that still know how to work together in groups. They can find their own resources and information. They know how to rely on each other and cooperate for a common goal.

Students are learning the process of interviewing customers, checking in a vehicle, initial inspections, diagnostics, part ordering, repair, and thorough record keeping.

After the students have worked on the school’s learning vehicles, then their own vehicles, they wrap up each class by working on the donation vehicles to help out the community. They take pride in their work and understand that what they’re doing is going to greatly improve someone’s life.

This spring, Chantz’s students performed work on what was to be Fix it Forward’s 400th vehicle donation.

A young mother from Youthworks in Fargo was awarded the car. Youthworks is a nonprofit that provides support to vulnerable teens and young adults.

With a referral from anti-trafficking specialist Karlee Liddle from Youthworks, the young lady from Fargo no longer has to worry about taking public transportation with her child.

“The case worker for the individual who will receive the 400th car donated by Fix it

Forward shared the woman’s story. In just the few seconds it took to share the background of her life, there were quite a few “tough guys” that were visibly holding back a couple of tears. You could see that they fully understood what their little class project was going to mean to someone.”

— Chantz Rud, MHS Teacher

An big milestone today! We were blessed to donate our 400th vehicle to a very deserving member of our community!

We celebrated this morning with our friends at the Moorhead High School Career Academy, honoring their incredible faculty and students who performed the needed repairs on car #400.

On hand was the vehicle recipient, her Youthworks caseworker, members of the local media along with Ministry leadership. A very special day, an opportunity for these talented, young students to witness first hand the power of giving back through the use of their minds, hearts and hands.

—Post from Fix It Forward Ministry.





Employment Opportunities Through School Connections

Spring Lake Park Schools

Seniors Griffin Gaspersich and Ryan Kollbaum got jobs at local transportation company (BB) after touring on a school visit. Through the many partnerships that connect high school students with businesses in the community, students are exploring future career paths and landing jobs.

BB, a local business that provides parts, service and towing for trucks and trailers, has been involved with Pathways programming at Spring Lake Park High School for years. They've served as judges, guest speakers, hosted a booth at the career fair, and helped provide unique event opportunities like a transportation day cookout for students.

This school year, BB a group of high school students for an on-site visit. Griffin Gaspersich and Ryan Kollbaum were a part of the group. Both seniors have taken various trades courses during their time in high school and were interested in learning more about the industry. Following the tour, they learned about open job opportunities for students and they interviewed.

"BB has been flexible with their school schedules and very supportive in teaching them as much as possible about the industry," says Eric Van Brocklin, SLPHS career pathways lead.

Parts Warehouse

Ryan has been working in the parts warehouse approximately 35 hours per week since January. He says the schedule provides a good balance between school and work. A big part of the job involves pulling parts orders, staging them for delivery and pickup, and helping in other areas of the warehouse including shipping and receiving.

"I drive all around the metro area to deliver parts," says Ryan. "I like this work environment, the people I have met, and the freedom to drive around the community and meet new people while helping them complete their projects."

He has had a lot of on-the-job training, and his experience at BB has taught him the importance of teamwork.

"I have learned many technical skills related to inventory manage-

ment and warehouse processes. On the professional side, I have also learned how to have positive customer interactions," says Ryan.

He plans to continue working at BB until November 2023 when he'll head off to college. He will attend college in Staples, MN and is enrolled in the fast track (8 months) Heavy Equipment Operation and Maintenance program.

Trailer Shop

Once swim team season wrapped up this winter, Griffin was looking for a job to align with his schedule and interests. He works three days per week on the evening shift, 6 p.m.-midnight.

"When I'm done with work, I get in my car and feel good about what I did. I don't even feel tired - it's a feeling of satisfaction," says Griffin. "I enjoy that every shift is different; it's definitely not repetitive."

With an interest in mechanical work discovered in one of his favorite classes, construction trades, Griffin works primarily in the trailer shop.



Continued on Page 26

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Matt's Journey into Auto Body Repair and Teaching



Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District
191

Building on a passion for working with his hands, Matt Omodt is now teaching the importance of Career and Technical Education to college students.

Growing up in Savage, Matt was mechanically inclined from a young age, often tinkering with various things around the house. During middle school, a camp that involved automotive classes sparked a passion to become a mechanic and get all the knowledge he could about how automobiles work and how to repair them. He was drawn to Burnsville High School (BHS) because they offered automotive classes, which ended up being a very impactful life choice.

As a sophomore, Matt dove into classes centered around the trades, learning about construction, welding, drafting and audio electronics, but it was during his junior year that he found a passion for auto body repair.

"I am really creative and I like the artistic part of auto body work," said Matt. "I like to bring a car back to life and make it look brand new. The principal at the time approved an auto body class to count as an art credit and I helped with the airbrushed van as a big school spirit project which ended up being around a long time."

While Matt says he did well in high school, he acknowledges that he did the best in the more hands-on courses, thanks to interesting projects and support from teachers like Mr. Russ Tesmer.

"I really enjoyed working with Matt during his high school years," said Tesmer. "Matt was passionate about learning the trades and it was fun to see the pride gleaming from Matt's face after he had accomplished a quality repair on staff members' vehicles."

At the time, it was more than just a high school class, as part of an independent study

program, they actually operated an auto shop out of the school, working on real cars owned by school staff.

"I became the shop foreman my senior year and I got introduced to a lot of different skills through real world experience including working with customers," said Matt.

After he graduated from BHS in 2012, Matt chose to attend North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton, which featured a variety of trades programs. During college, he never shied away from a new skill or challenge and prepared himself to work relentlessly to achieve his goals.

When he graduated in 2014, he set his sights on purchasing a house by age 21 and worked hard to achieve it. He moved to Fargo and got a job with a major large-truck manufacturer in auto body and collision repair, eventually becoming the lead frame and engine technician. Additionally, he worked on restorations, did custom paint jobs out of his home, worked in the commission automotive collision industry eventually specializing in heavy hits. While he was getting valuable experience in the field, he started chasing his desire to help teach and train the next generation, eventually going back to North Dakota State College of Science, this time as an instructor.

"I started working on every certification and every training opportunity that I could to be positioned to be an instructor," said Matt. "I always thought that Mr. Tesmer had the dream job and being in the industry made me want it more. The first year has gone really well and I am excited to grow this program."

Like his experience in high school, Matt and his students are operating an actual shop with real customers. After learning on donor cars from a local salvage yard for the first eight weeks, Matt's students begin running a shop that charges lower prices than other shops, with the expectation that the work

will take a little longer. Students get a chance to learn about sourcing parts, providing estimates and of course doing the work themselves.

"I guess things have come full circle," said Tesmer. "I started with a wrench in my hand and taught others to use them. Now my graduates are teaching others!"

As an instructor, Matt is able to take the knowledge he gained throughout his education and time in the field and pass it along to his students. With recruitment as part of his job, he plans to work with Mr. Tesmer and the Pathways program at BHS to offer a great next step for aspiring automotive workers.

"Working with cars is not this low paying, blue collar job. It requires a lot of knowledge, is changing rapidly and if you work hard, you can do really well," said Matt. "Career and Technical Education is

so important because it is not the typical school experience of learning, testing and moving on, it's working with your hands and it encompasses so much."

Though he knew his preferred path pretty early, Matt encourages high school students and even his students to try new things, pursue other options, find opportunities to job shadow and see what's out there.

"Don't feel stressed if you don't know what you want to do, just pick something and try it," said Matt. "I would hate to have somebody stick to something that they don't love and I think that more knowledge really means more power so go learn all you can!"

www.isd191.org



St. Paul Central High School Automotive

Continued from Page 22



type of working/learning set up is that students are working on real world problems, the vehicle must be repaired correctly, and the tires can't fall off when the vehicle drives out of the shop. The customer gets the value of an inexpensive repair (we charge \$10-20 for repairs or sometimes just a box of doughnuts) and the students get the experience of fixing real problems. An A in this class can earn college credit as well!

"I feel that what I teach is a lifelong skill, that is transferable to other career options and will save my students thousands of dollars in their adult life. I want to prepare all of my students for success, no matter their race, color of skin, gender or economic status. Without my program, many urban youths would not have exposure to the subject matter and struggle with the inevitability of vehicle ownership," says Matt.

"I identify myself as a hardworking, passionate educator. As in my career in auto-

motive, I want to be the best at my teaching profession. I feel that my students deserve nothing less. I truly love my job at Central and enjoy teaching a diverse student population. I feel that the best part of my job is connecting with students and getting to know them on a personal level. I have found that the key to student success is taking the time to build that all important teacher/student relationship and treating students with equity and respect. Each student brings in a unique set of skills and life experiences that provide excellent opportunities for us to learn from each other."

www.spps.org/central





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Minnetonka Public Schools

MOMENTUM is the Minnetonka High School program for design and skilled trades. It provides opportunities for students with a passion for real-world, hands-on learning to take courses that can lead to skilled trade careers. The program began as a reimagining of Minnetonka High School's technical education program, with its first courses launching in 2020–21. Three years later, there are more than 500 students involved in classes within MOMENTUM's four different areas of study—Construction Systems, Manufacturing, Design, and Transportation—the last of which is expanding in a big way in the 2023–24 school year to offer a track in aviation.

Aviation first surfaced as an opportunity in the winter of the 2021–22 school year. Throughout 2022–23, Minnetonka leaders completed initial program research, gathered data about high school aviation programs and gained school board approval for the new courses to launch in 2023–24. MOMENTUM staff hoped to have 12 students register for the new opportunity. But when the registration window for 2023–24 opened, 179 signed up for Aviation I and 99 chose to continue the program with Aviation II. A full-time aviation instructor has been hired for the upcoming school year.

The MOMENTUM aviation classes will provide students with the potential opportunity to earn a ground pilot/drone license by the time they graduate, and it will also enable them to work toward a private pilot's license. Watch a feature on MOMENTUM's new aviation track here: <https://bit.ly/3IltazP>

In addition to the new aviation courses, the 2023–24 school year will bring a new building for MOMENTUM classes – the second building that Minnetonka Schools has designated for the program.

During the 2021–22 school year, Minnetonka High School opened a dedicated space for the MOMENTUM program, which

Minnetonka High School MOMENTUM Expands Programming and Classroom Space: New Aviation Classes and a New Building on the Horizon for 2023–24



includes a four-car automotive garage and flexible “maker bay” for different hands-on classes. Having dedicated and specialized classroom space for the program has raised student excitement and engagement, according to Minnetonka automotive instructor Lee Berger. “Seeing the impact the new facility has had on students has been my favorite part of the semester,” Berger said. “It’s been a different atmosphere from past classes. I think the new space has really exceeded students’ expectations, and they are surprised by and appreciative of all that it has to offer.”

Now, the new VANTAGE/MOMENTUM building is under construction. Once completed it will house aviation classes and

other MOMENTUM offerings, as well as strands from the High School's VANTAGE program, which offers advanced professional studies programs for a wide range of concentrations—including International Relations, Global Business, Business Analytics, Public Policy, Health Sciences, Global Sustainability, Multicommunications, Design+Marketing, UX Experience and Education.

“We are ushering in the next chapter for the VANTAGE and MOMENTUM programs and opening up new opportunities for students,” said School Board Member Chris Vitale during the building's groundbreaking last spring. “With VANTAGE alone, in less than a decade, the program has grown so large it's bursting at the seams—with more than 500 students planning to take a VANTAGE course next fall. This new building is the result of that growth and interest.”

MOMENTUM is also growing rapidly, and the new building will serve as one of the primary locations where Minnetonka students in the MOMENTUM program will hone their skills and expand their education in the design and skilled trades fields.

“Minnetonka High School is a school of opportunities where we work to help each student find their passion and place,” said MHS Principal Jeff Erickson. “MOMENTUM and VANTAGE, in particular, provide pathways for our students to broaden their horizons and apply their learning to real-life scenarios in fields that are in dire need of the next generation of workers, such as the trades.”

Learn more about VANTAGE: <https://www.minnetonkaschools.org/academics/mhs/vantage>

Learn more about MOMENTUM: <http://www.minnetonkaschools.org/MOMENTUM>

minnetonkaschools.org



Employment Opportunities Through School Connections Continued from Page 23

The job entails everything from installing tarps that cover semi-trailers all the way down to brake systems. It's a bit of everything.

“I've learned a broad range of mechanical skills, such as following spec sheets. There's an order of operations that you must follow to keep everything in check, otherwise it's unsafe,” says Griffin. “I've learned to have confidence in my own work, accountability and the ability to figure things out on my own.”

After graduation, Griffin would like to stay at BB for another year to become a lineman. Eventually, he'd like to move out west to Montana or Wyoming. He credits his teachers at Spring Lake Park High School for their mentorship as he's discovered his future path.

“Scott Wicklund and Eric Van Brocklin do a fantastic job of opening doors for us students and helping us find what it is we'd like to do,” says Griffin. “They really care about how you would like to continue your education.”

Creating opportunities for students to explore careers is a key focus of Career and College Pathways programming.

In April, Spring Lake Park High School hosted its career fair featuring more than 100 interactive booths from industries in Business, Agriculture, Arts, Information Systems, Engineering, Technology, Manufacturing, Human Services, Health Sciences, and Colleges/Military.

Career Exploration Continued

As the career pathways lead, Eric has witnessed the value these partnerships bring to the lives of students.

“We truly appreciate the support we get for our schools through these community partnerships,” says Eric.

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