TEACHING TODAY MN™
Summer/Back to School 2025
MINNESOTA'S K–12 EDUCATION CONNECTION

Jordan's Building Trades Course

"Students leave prepared to jump into the trades after taking this class!"

Jordan Public Schools

For the past four years, Jordan High School students have had the opportunity to take a Building Trades course in grades 11 or 12. Students taking this course complete work in fields including electrical wiring, plumbing, carpentry, and various other projects that give them a taste of a future career in building and trades. In the past, students have worked on projects ranging from constructing camper cabins and storage sheds to focusing on roofing and fascia.

"Our Building and Trades class is a great opportunity for students. It allows them to get skills in the construction trades in everything from building sheds to concrete structures to wiring," said Jordan High School Principal, Jeff Vizenor. "Students leave prepared to jump into the trades after taking this class!"

During the 2024-2025 school year, students have had the unique opportunity of experiencing a school building construction project on our campus at Jordan Elementary School first-hand. Building Trades student job site visits have included meetings with trades foremen, viewing in-progress and completed work, and even a site safety consultation with OSHA. Additionally, a few of the students have met individually with trades foremen to learn more in-depth information about the work they do, to see if it may be a good fit for them in the future.

This spring with the help of our construction partners (a professional firm), half of the Building Trades students have been working on the replacement of a memorial garden at Jordan Elementary School. They have been working with the Project Superintendent and carpentry foreman to design, obtain

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Meet Minnesota's Teacher of the Year, Linda Wallenberg

Congratulations Wally!

Linda Wallenberg, an English teacher at Eden Prairie High School, is the 2025 Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

Wallenberg — known affectionately as "Wally" by generations of students — is now in her 49th year of teaching. She is the 61st recipient of the prestigious award and the first from the Eden Prairie district to be named Minnesota Teacher of the Year. 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.

"Teaching is about the journey — the opportunity every fall and every single day to begin anew, to guide students along their own journeys, to build people, not just scholars," Wallenberg said. "I believe teaching is a calling of love, an awakening of sorts — creating a sacred space where students can feel seen, believe in themselves, and trust their own authentic voices to take them out to the world."

"Before meeting 'Wally,' I did not understand what true, unbridled devotion looked like," said Sophia Yoerks, an Eden Prairie High School 2024 graduate, in a recommendation letter for Wallenberg. "Not only does she teach impactful and informative material, but she also finds countless ways to connect both herself and her students with it. Even though I have known her for almost five years, she still continues to amaze me."

Wallenberg began teaching after graduating from college in 1975, which followed her studies in Sweden. She earned a degree in English and Scandinavian studies, becom-

2025 Minnesota Teacher of the Year Linda Wallenberg

ing the first certified Swedish teacher in Minnesota. She taught 8th-grade English at Faribault Junior High for a year and a half before coming to Eden Prairie High School in 1977 as an English and Swedish teacher and head gymnastics coach.

Wallenberg has a master's degree in English education and has additionally taught in Canterbury, England, and for the past 42 summers has been both the director and a Swedish teacher at a nearby college's Swedish Language Village.

She has been named Eden Prairie Teacher of the Year three times, a finalist for Minnesota Teacher of the Year in 2005 and 2025, named National Gymnastics Coach of the Year twice

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

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

Please direct all inquiries to:
renee@teachingtodaymn.com

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Blending Trades Training and Affordable Housing

Minnesota Housing Awards $560K to School-Led Projects

Minnesota Housing has awarded more than $560,000 to six school-led housing projects that will create or preserve affordable homeownership opportunities across Greater Minnesota. The grants are part of a newly created program named Housing Challenge Funds for Schools. This initiative combines hands-on learning in construction trades with efforts to address local housing needs.

The selected projects, in Beltrami, Goodhue, Sherburne, Wright, Nicollet, Lac qui Parle, Swift and Chippewa counties, will result in the construction or rehabilitation of single-family homes. All six initiatives are led by school districts partnering with local nonprofits, Habitat for Humanity affiliates, and technical colleges.

Licensed instructors and experienced nonprofit partners will provide oversight, tools, and support throughout the process. Projects will serve households earning at or below 80-115% of area median income (AMI), with all homes located in designated workforce housing communities.

"These are viable career pathways and my goal here is to provide real-world, hands-on experiences where our students can learn a variety of skills to be successful in a career in construction or at least knowing things about homeownership and maintenance," said Tony Hommes, Construction Trades Instructor at ISD 31.

Awarded districts include:

- **Bemidji Area Schools** – *$99,750* – In partnership with Headwaters Housing Development Corporation and Northwest Technical College
- **Goodhue Public Schools** – *$99,030* – Collaborating with Goodhue County Habitat for Humanity
- **ISD 728 Elk River** – *$99,999* – Partnering with Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity
- **Saint Peter Public Schools** – *$99,999* – Continuing a long–standing partnership with Habitat for Humanity of South Central Minnesota
- **Kenyon-Wanamingo Schools** – *$61,690* – Advancing student–led homebuilding in partnership with Goodhue County Habitat for Humanity
- **Lac qui Parle Valley School District** – *$99,999* – Launching a home rehabilitation project with support from Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership

This funding opportunity was made possible by 2024 legislation expanding the eligible uses of the Economic Development and Housing Challenge (EDHC) program to include grants for school districts, charter schools and certain cooperative units. Funding recommendations were approved by Minnesota Housing's board on May 22, 2025. Grant contracts are expected to be finalized by August, with construction taking place during the 2025–2026 school year.

Future funding for similar school-led projects will be available through the 2025 Single Family Request for Proposals, now open on the Minnesota Housing website: https://www.mnhousing.gov/index.html

A Tradition of Building Homes for Over 30 Years: Bemidji High School's Construction Program

Bemidji Area Schools, District 31

For more than three decades, students from Bemidji High School (BHS) have been doing more than learning from textbooks—they've been building homes. Measuring in at 1,834 square feet, the most recent student-built home features four bedrooms and two bathrooms. It marks another successful project through a unique partnership that began over 30 years ago between BHS and the Headwaters Regional Development Commission (HRDC).

Each year, nearly 200 students engage in different phases of the construction

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Students Gaining Valuable Home Construction Knowledge While Filling a Critical Need

Bob Hawley, Executive Director
Goodhue County Habitat for Humanity

Students in two Goodhue County, Minnesota schools are gaining valuable home construction knowledge and are filling a critical need for their communities. Both Goodhue High School and Kenyon-Wanamingo High School are collaborating with Goodhue County Habitat for Humanity (GCHFH) to construct affordable, workforce homes for Habitat families with their high school home construction classes.

Goodhue High School students, interested in learning home construction techniques and skills, had been able to do so until a shared program with Zumbrota-Mazeppa Schools ended in 2023. The Goodhue School Board, Superintendent Evan Gough and Principal Michele Rehder formed a committee of local business supporters to find a way to continue providing technical training at the high school. At the same time, GCHFH was recruiting local realtor Lana Huemann to their board of directors. Lana suggested that GCHFH Executive Director Bob Hawley meet with Gough and Rehder. Within a short time, plans were being made for a collaboration between the school and the Habitat affiliate for a high school home construction class.

Hawley was also aware that the Kenyon-Wanamingo School did not have a home construction class. He approached Superintendent Beth Giese, who immediately saw value in the concept and became a supporter for her school. Discussion and planning led to the formation of a collaboration between GCHFH and both schools for the 2024–25 school year and two homes were constructed.

GCHFH serves as the General Contractor for the construction of the homes, providing house plans, construction financing, sub-contractor engagement and coordination, and construction oversight. Goodhue High School hired Mike Harvey to be the instructor for the home construction class of six students. The students worked every school day for 90 minutes, beginning at 8:15 AM. Kenyon-Wanamingo High School engaged Doug Thompson for their class of 22 students. The class was spit into two overlapping sessions beginning at 12:15 PM each school day. Doug Kleese, a local contractor, volunteered to provide additional supervision for the large class.

Habitat utilizes volunteers to construct homes for families selected to become homeowners. The families purchase the homes and provide sweat equity as they work with Habitat staff and volunteers to construct their own home. Both homes were for single mothers with one and two children. Both had basements with bedrooms and bathrooms. The homes were designed to accommodate families as they age with kitchen, living room, bedroom, bathroom and laundry on the main floor. Each has an attached single-car garage.

GCHFH planned to increase home production in Goodhue County. However, since Covid, volunteer numbers had diminished. The school home construction class approach helped Habitat fill the volunteer void. Additional volunteers were needed to complete the homes in both Goodhue and Kenyon. Rochester Build Crew, a dedicated, skilled volunteer group effectively filled that need in Kenyon, working alongside the students two days each week. A few other dedicated volunteers from Zumbrota helped in Goodhue, with instructor Harvey and GCHFH staff supplementing the students' efforts.

Students were involved with constructing both the Goodhue home and the Kenyon home from the basement footings to the roof. One class of six students in Goodhue and two classes of 22 total students in Kenyon-Wanamingo helped set the forms and pour the concrete footings, set ICF (Insulated Concrete Form) blocks for the foundation and filled the blocks with concrete from a pumper truck, capped the basement with floor joists and plywood, constructed wood interior and exterior walls, set roof trusses and capped the roof with plywood, installed windows and doors, insulated walls, painted and sided the exterior, installed exterior and interior trim, installed flooring and much more.

The school districts supplied tools and equipment for the home construction classes, including scaffolds. The schools provided safety training. GCHFH utilizes local contractors for more technical needs, such as HVAC, electrical, plumbing, excavating and roofing. As much as possible, the students witnessed and learned about these trades in addition to carpentry and house construction techniques.

The collaborations were strongly supported by the respective communities and worked so well that both schools decided to extend their home construction collaboration for another year. The success of the program motivated each school and GCHFH to seek funding from the Minnesota Housing Community Homeownership Impact Fund — Housing Challenge Funds for Schools. These funds are awarded to schools for direct costs related to the construction of homes.

Once again, collaboration produced success. Kenyon-Wanamingo Schools were awarded $61,690 for their second home. Goodhue Schools were awarded $99,030 for their second home. A portion of the funding for each school is for purchasing additional tools, and a tool trailer in Goodhue. Much of the funding will pay the cost of technical subcontractor work on the homes — HVAC, plumbing and electrical, as well as the moving cost for the Goodhue house. The second house in Goodhue will be constructed on a school site and then moved to a permanent site in Lake City.

Goodhue Schools, Kenyon-Wanamingo Schools and Goodhue County Habitat for Humanity understand the value their collaboration brings to all involved. Students gain strong, useful knowledge and experience. Schools are not only providing the students this wonderful opportunity but are benefiting their greater communities with affordable homes. GCHFH is satisfying its mission of building homes, hope and community, and nurturing the very important culture of volunteerism. It is a 'win' for all.

goodhue.k12.mn.us
www.kw.k12.mn.us

Challenge Grant Approved to Kickstart Habitat Construction Project at Elk River High School

Jim Boyle, Editor for The Star News

A request for $100,000 in Housing Challenge Funds made by the Elk River Area School District has been approved, setting the wheels in motion for a program that will allow Elk River High School's construction program to go from one that builds sheds to one that builds houses.

The plan is for high school students to start building a house during the 2026-27 school year. The work will be part of a partnership with the Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity, thanks to a $99,999 grant approved on May 22 by the Minnesota Housing Board.

The Minnesota Legislature approved the grant funding in the 2024 session, and the agency responsible for distributing the funds received nine proposals totaling $735,468, all asking to serve communities in Greater Minnesota. These grants will support direct construction costs, budgeted as building materials, construction tools and professional labor and support.

Former Elk River Mayor Stephanie Klinzing serves on the Minnesota Housing Board and was able to make a motion for the grant approval and cast one of the votes in a unanimous decision for the Challenge Grants.

Klinzing said it was good to see the ISD 728 reach out for funding.

"It seems like it's often same people applying," Kinzing said. "They have done it before and have the sophistication and scale to (apply). I was really delighted that some attention is being paid to this area."

The Elk River woman knows all too well housing is an issue in Sherburne County, as she sat on the County Board years ago when housing concerns raised by the public were passed on.

"We'd give them a one-way ticket to St. Cloud," she said.

She said it's getting better, and this is another good step. But affordable housing and homelessness remain issues to be tackled in places like Elk River.

CMHFH was formed in 1989 to improve availability of quality housing. With offices in St. Cloud, the organization has a geographic focus that includes Elk River. The city of Elk River has also been a recipient of affordable housing aid that has been allocated by the state.

The hope is to model the program after a partnership with Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity in St. Cloud and Sartell-St. Stephen school districts.

Students at St. Cloud Tech are working on their 10th home in 10 years, and the operation is looking for a site for its 11th home to be built in the coming school year.

Students in the Sartell-St. Stephen School District are working on their fourth home and hope to be building their fifth next year.

Chad Bouley, the executive director of the Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity, and Amy Lord, coordinator of the school district's career and technical education programming, went before the Elk River Housing and Redevelopment Authority on June 2 to explain the program and how the HRA can help.

"I am super excited about this new partnership that we're building," Lord said. "I think it's going to give our students so much more experience."

Lord explained how students are learning framing, roofing and some of the other basics of construction, and this new partnership will help them learn so much more.

"This house (project) is going to teach them HVAC, plumbing, electrical, flooring and just so much more," she said, noting that such opportunities are not available to youth typically until they are 18 years of age.

The CMHFH service area includes Stearns, Benton, Sherburne and Wright counties. Partnering with high schools and districts is one way it achieves its goals.

"We've been at this for a long time," Bouley said. "We're starting to look for property for 'Tiger 11,' which would be the site of its 11th home."

Students build these houses during the school year at the high school, and they are finished in the summer by volunteers and transported up to 15 miles to a Habitat for Humanity site.

"What's interesting about this program is that over half of the students that sign up for these programs end up going into the trades or to school for the trades or both," Bouley said. "As we all know, getting people into the trades is kind of important."

Bouley, who grew up in Rogers, graduated from Elk River High School and now lives in Zimmerman, looks forward to bringing this partnership to life to the area.

ISD 728 has three traditional high schools serving students in parts of Sherburne, Wright, Anoka and Hennepin County.

Lord said the district is looking at the possibility of having kids from the high schools in Rogers and Zimmerman come in and help or even do some construction aspects at their own school like trim work. Lord said it would be difficult to build a house at each high school, so the district applied to have the program operated out of the centrally located high school.

Next school year will be dedicated to a planning stage, and the plan is to add the courses to the registration book by October for students signing up for classes in the 2026-27 school year.

"We don't have a cool name yet, so we're going to have to figure out what our No. 1, No. 2 or No. 3 project will be called," Lord said, referring to Tiger 1, 2, 3 at St. Cloud Tech.

The plan is to do one house a year, and an important feature of the partnership is the students will not be pressured to finish the house by the end of the school year.

"The kids don't finish the house," Lord said. "We're going to have volunteers help throughout the summer to finish the house. We don't want the students to feel rushed. We want them to learn and learn well."

Bouley said that's one thing they learned in another school district, where quality control became an issue and the partnership unraveled.

"That's exactly what we're not going to do here," Bouley said.

Denny Chuba, the chair of the HRA who has had a long career in the construction trade, asked if they design the houses to be lot specific.

Bouley said they do, and noted that's why the time to locate a site to purchase is now.

"We don't want to start the house and then be looking for a lot," Bouley said.

Members of the HRA, including Chuba, expressed support for the program and said it sounded like it would be a good one.

Bouley has asked for the HRA's help in finding a lot.

The community of Elk River has completed three Habitat for Humanity projects, but those were the culmination of more traditional community-led Habitat for Humanity models.

The high school in Elk River has not previously built new homes, but they do have an active construction program and have built over 15 sheds over the past five years.

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Pathways to an Electrical Career

The Electrical Association

Many high schools are getting smart about preparing their students for the future and are focusing on career preparation in addition to college preparation. There are many pathways to success, and not all of them include college.

Enter apprenticeship, it is the model used by the construction trades to provide skills to our next generation of tradesworkers. While this model of education is centuries old, it is not often understood by the younger generation.

Apprenticeship is typically a combination of on-the-job training (often taking four years for most trades) and related technical instruction (RTI). The great part of this is the learning is being paid for the on-the-job training the entire time! The Electrical Association provides electrical apprentice training (RTI) for electricians even if those apprentices are not employed by one of our members. Our school year starts in September and ends in late April, so apprentices have their summers off to focus on work.

Starting wage for an apprentice electrician is typically $18.38–$24.63 per hour. As the electrician shows they can do the work, their wages will quickly escalate. After four years of experience, the apprentice can sit for the licensure test. Licensed electricians often command over $50 per hour.

Electrical contractors are looking for attitude and aptitude and they are willing to train the rest. That said, there is competition for these apprenticeship seats and the industry is limited to two apprentices for any one licensed electrician. Electricians need strong math skills and good reading comprehension. They also need to follow safety protocol for their own and public safety.

While there is plenty of opportunity to step into an electrical career right out of high school, graduates from 2 year construction electrician programs are typically top of the list for hire. Most of these programs have 2 year waitlists, so I recommend applying Junior year if you are interested in attending one of these programs.

Electricians are integral to clean and sustainable energy providing installations in solar, wind, energy efficiency, building automation, and electrical vehicle charging stations. They also work in residential, commercial, highway, industrial and agricultural settings.

The Electrical Association provides support for all stages of an electrician's career from job seeker to master electrician. You can find information regarding careers on our website. We can also arrange for a speaker to discuss electrical pathways in your classroom. www.electricalassociation.com

Bemidji High School's Construction Program Continued from Page 4

process. From framing and siding to insulation, painting, and cabinetry, students are immersed in every step of building a home—aside from a few major installations like concrete, well, and septic systems. In recent years, the program has expanded through a collaboration with a nearby technical college, allowing their students to install plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems, further enriching the hands-on learning experience for all.

Building Lasting Partnerships

This program wouldn't exist without the continued support of HRDC. The partnership was originally launched in 1994 when former BHS teacher Ron LeClaire, with help from former HRDC Executive Director Tim Flathers and Habitat for Humanity, secured the initial grant funding. Since then, students have built over 60 homes in the Bemidji area—each one providing new educational opportunities and a tangible impact on the community.

Each year features a new house plan to broaden the range of student experiences. Locations are carefully selected within 10 minutes of the school to allow students to easily rotate between classes. They spend about 60 minutes on-site, after which the next group of students picks up where the last left off, creating a continuous, collaborative workflow.

Focused on Real-World Experience

The primary mission of the BHS Construction Program is to prepare students for success—whether they enter the trades or simply learn valuable life skills. Not every student will pursue a career in construction, but all gain practical experience and exposure to career possibilities they may not have previously considered.

"There are so many potential careers in construction that students don't know exist. We aim to not only teach them how to build, but to show them that there are high-paying, meaningful jobs in the trades," one instructor shared. Over the past seven years, the program's scope has grown to include deeper involvement with technical training, thanks to the partnership with the technical college. Impressively, several former BHS students who participated in the program are now continuing their construction education at the college level.

Strength in Community Support

The program thrives thanks to a wide network of community partners—from local lumber yards and cabinet manufacturers to excavators, trade unions, and parents. Many former students, now working professionals in the trades, have returned to support the program that helped shape their careers.

In 2024, BHS received a $25,000 grant from a global HVAC and plumbing supplier, in partnership with Exploring the Trades, to build a skills lab that expands student training in HVAC systems. Additionally, through HRDC's guidance, the school applied for and was awarded a Minnesota Housing grant to support the next home build scheduled for the 2025–26 school year. These funds will go toward purchasing building materials and tools to further enhance the student learning experience.

As workforce conversations across the country increasingly emphasize the value of trades, this program stands out as a proven model for how education, community, and industry partnerships can converge to empower the next generation.

Advice for Schools Looking to Start a Similar Program

The success of the BHS Construction Program is deeply rooted in the expertise of its educators and the strength of its partnerships. For schools looking to start or expand their own student construction programs, the message is clear: "You need an instructor with extensive knowledge of home construction—someone who understands the field and can lead students safely and effectively. Just as important is building a strong network of community and industry partners who can provide materials, mentorship, and support."

Ultimately, students need ownership of the experience. While some choose specific tasks that interest them, all are encouraged to engage in every phase of the build. The result is a sense of pride and confidence that carries well beyond graduation.

www.bemidji.k12.mn.us

Minnesota Housing Grant Helps Fuel the Future of Student Construction

In early 2025, Bemidji High School was awarded a Minnesota Housing grant—a significant step forward for the long-standing student construction program. The grant proposal was submitted through the school's ongoing partnership with the Headwaters Regional Development Commission (HRDC) after HRDC shared the opportunity with school leaders.

Funds from the award will be used to purchase building materials and tools for a new four-bedroom home to be constructed during the 2025–26 school year. This grant not only supports hands-on learning for students but also reinforces the importance of high school-level trade programs in addressing workforce shortages across the state.

Jordan's Building Trades Course

Continued from Page 1

bids, order supplies, and complete the work of building the memorial garden. The work to rebuild the memorial garden structure has included concrete work and brick and mortar work, using many leftover materials from the building construction at Jordan Elementary School.

The other half of the Building Trades students have been building garden sheds with supplies that were donated by a local Jordan lumber company. This work has included framing, siding and shingle work. When completed, the sheds will be sold by the lumber company within the Jordan and surrounding communities.

When asked about the work students are doing on these projects, Teacher Stephen McClellan agreed with Mr. Vizenor's sentiment, "the Building Trades students at Jordan High School were given the opportunity to work alongside trades contractors, giving them a realistic and engaging view of the workforce. Whether they pursue a trade career or not, the exposure builds skills, awareness, and confidence that will benefit them in any path they choose."

www.jordan.k12.mn.us

Exploring Possibilities: BHS Classes Help Jairo Leana Experience Potential Careers

Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191

As far back as he can remember, Jairo Leana has been interested in building things. One of the Burnsville High School junior's earliest memories is when his uncles taught him how to construct wooden cabinets.

"I've always been a hands-on type of guy. I like doing hands-on work," Jairo said. "I pretty much grew up around that type of work and have been interested in that myself."

Jairo's interested in pursuing a career related to engineering or construction, but is undecided on what specific direction he wants to go. That's why he's spent his three years at Burnsville High School taking advantage of the numerous classes in those subject areas and gaining as broad of range of experiences as he can.

"I really appreciate it because I'm actually learning what my future might be like, the different opportunities and the different challenges. At BHS I have this great opportunity to explore the different careers I might have because there's a bunch of different classes - AP, honors, careers classes, and PLTW (Project Lead the Way) classes like I'm taking," he said. "It's helpful for someone who's not sure about their career to try different things."

Jairo put his passion for hands-on learning into action in Woodworking 1 and 2. One of his favorite projects was cutting a couple of two by fours and building a wooden table. He learned the basics for building large-scale projects in Intro to Construction and now he's gaining a more detailed understanding of what goes into those projects in his Civil Engineering and Advanced Construction classes.

"We're learning blueprinting and how things are built. Something that interests me is the fact that you have to have more skills and knowledge to be able to do (larger projects), and you have to be well organized and well taught," he said. "You have to have a lot of responsibility and it makes you feel like you really know your stuff. The skills you have to develop are really unique."

In Advanced Construction, Jairo is learning about architecture and plumbing as he designs a miniature bathroom. His Civil Engineering class took a field trip to study the architecture of U.S. Bank Stadium, an experience he said made an impression on him.

"It really showed me how much of a skilled person you have to be to build something like that and plan it out," he said.

After high school, Jairo wants to continue to do what he's done at BHS - try a lot of different things to see what he enjoys most. He plans to join a construction union, which will allow him to work on various kinds of projects, including plumbing, welding and other trades.

"As part of the union, I'll be able to explore my options to see what I want to do," he said. "I don't want to commit until I first really experience my options and see what I like best."

www.isd191.org

Kaitlynn's Journey in the Design, Engineering and Manufacturing Technology Pathway

Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191

Kaitlynn Patterson's interests in interior design and construction were first sparked as a kid when she'd watch home makeover shows on HGTV.

She enjoyed helping out with small projects around the house, but she never saw it as anything more than a fun way to stay busy and be useful. It wasn't until she started taking classes within the Design, Engineering and Manufacturing Technology Pathway during her sophomore year at Burnsville High School that she started to think about how she could develop her passion and someday turn it into a career.

"All of the classes in the Pathways allowed me to explore my interests and begin narrowing down my future intentions and plans. They really cemented it for me," Kaitlynn said.

In addition to her Interior Design class, Kaitlynn has also taken Architecture and Civil Engineering, which have given her a broader understanding of design principles and the role design plays in larger infrastructure projects. Kaitlynn said she most enjoys interior design because it allows her to be creative both with her style and with how spaces are arranged and used.

"I definitely have developed my very own style of interior design through all the Pathways classes that went over all the principles of design," Kaitlynn said. "I think it really appealed to me because I'm able to create a safe and visually appealing space - really take a space and use lighting and colors to give definition to it."

In Interior Design, Kaitlynn enjoyed working with a construction class to design and build a 3-D model home. The construction class followed a floor plan to build the home and Kaitlynn then got to paint the home and apply her own style to the interior. One of her favorite parts of the project was when the class used Computer-Aided Design (CAD) software to design the floor plans for houses.

"It's really similar to what companies actually use and how businesses actually operate. I think access to those tools has been really helpful," she said.

Kaitlynn has continued to gain hands-on experience, as well. She took Construction as a junior, as well as Woodworking. Then last summer she got a job clearing out dirt as part of a demolition crew that was preparing land for an apartment building near her house. She said the experiences she had in those classes at BHS had her feeling well prepared when she was on an actual job site.

"My skills have majorly improved and given me a lot of experience, especially with the different tools we have," Kaitlynn said. "The things that we're learning are definitely applicable. A lot of the stuff I learned is directly connected to it. I can take what I learned at the high school level and take it further in college and use it on job sites."

Kaitlynn plans to major in Interior Design or Architecture in college. She's already been accepted into the Queen University of Charlotte, as well as UNC Charlotte, which has a nationally recognized architecture program.

"I think my ultimate goal is I would really love to be able to flip houses, working with structural components and being able to design them and set them up for buyers," she said. "That would bring together the construction and the design components. I think that would be really interesting."

Learn more at pathways.isd191.org.

www.isd191.org

Wabasso Enables Students to Achieve Future Goals through CTE

Wabasso Public Schools, ISD 640

Wabasso Public School, located in rural Southwestern Minnesota, is home to about 400 K-12 students and serves the communities of Vesta, Wanda, Lucan, Seaforth, and Wabasso. Wabasso Public School students have a wide array of opportunities in the areas of industrial technology, agriculture, and art.

Our industrial technology classes include: IT 8, IT 9, Advanced Woods I, Advanced Woods II, Metals, and Welding, and Home Maintenance and Improvement. All of these courses offer hands-on learning opportunities where students can engage in learning about CTE skills and careers associated with CTE.

Advanced Woods I and Advanced Woods II are two courses designed to give students experience in the industry of woodworking. Students are active in learning about the uses of equipment, building skills, and real-world career paths associated with woodworking. Students have helped to build ticket booths for our football, baseball, and softball games. They have also engaged in creating their own projects.

Students also have the opportunity to work with our laser engraver where they cut wood, aluminum, and engrave wood, plexiglass and metal surfaces. We create the majority of our athletic and activities awards in house as part of our industrial technology classes. Also, we help out our district with making awards. In addition to making awards, we also have helped engrave for businesses with creating signs or logos for them. Students also use the laser technology to enhance their own projects with family farm emblems, creation of 3D designs, and adding names to their work.

The woodworking classes also create projects that are given to one of our fundraisers. Every year we hold a Rabbit Pride Gala, which is an event that entails a silent and live auction with the proceeds supporting our school. Our woodworking students have donated cedar planter boxes, cutting boards, and coffee tables for the silent auction. For the live auction, they donate much larger projects like finishing a garage or roofing a house. This year the students in advanced woodworking are building an American Flag high top table with benches to be auctioned off at our Gala.

Another industrial technology class offered is Home Maintenance and Improvement. In this class, students learn the skills of home building. Our students have put steel on our press box and suites that allow our spectators to stay warm and dry during football games. They also have helped to build a spectator platform by our football field. Other projects include a Morton building and most recently, our students were building a garage for a community member.

Wabasso Public School emphasizes the importance of giving back to our community and one of the ways is our industrial technology classes helping residents with building garages, roofing, and home maintenance.

We truly emphasize the importance of woodworking in these classes and offer experiential learning opportunities. Our students will go to a manufactured homes manufacturer in Redwood, MN and learn how homes are made at their facility. Some of our students work there during high school or post high school. We will also take our students to career fairs with an emphasis on industrial technology.

Wabasso Public School does an excellent job equipping our students with CTE skills and career opportunities that will enable them to achieve their future goal!

www.isd640.org

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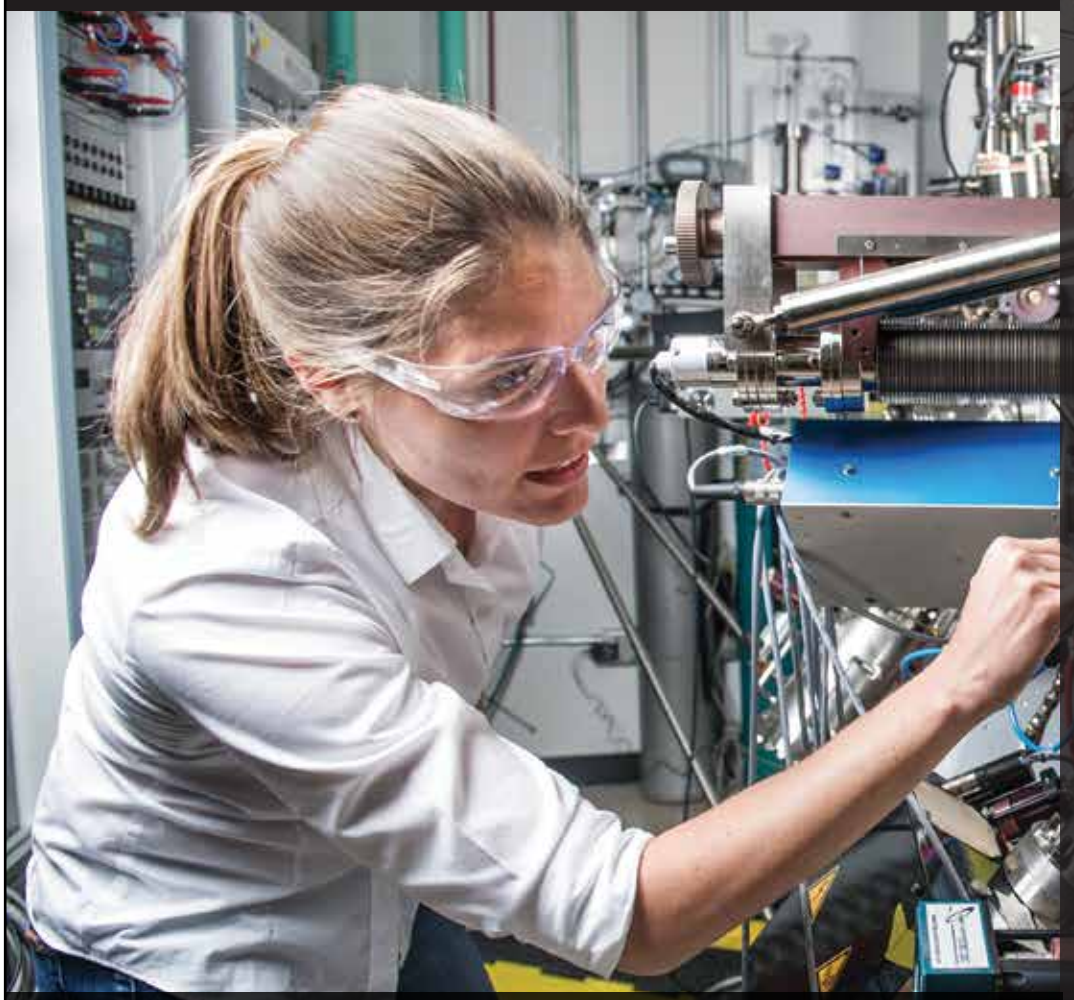

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Highlighted Degrees

Undergraduate Programs

- **Construction Management**
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- **Technology Education**
  Learn how to inspire in your own students' understanding of the interconnectivity of science, technology, society and the environment. The program leads to a 5–12 teaching license.

- **Manufacturing Engineering Technology**
  An applied algebra-based engineering field that looks for better ways to manufacture products. This includes reducing cycle times, maintaining quality, increasing safety, and keeping costs reasonable.

(Scan the QR codes to learn more about each program)

Graduate Programs

- **Technology Education Master's Degree**
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Graduate Certificate**
- **Work Based Learning (WBL) Graduate Certificate**

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From Theme Parks to Survivor Island

Spring Lake Park Schools

The 8th graders are huddled around giant graph papers scattered with colorful shapes. The shapes are the rides and shops they've designed for their amusement park. They've imagined each feature, calculated area, perimeter, and entrance coordinates. Next, they will apply physics concepts to design and model their rollercoaster.

A group whose theme is video games is discussing a big blank rectangle on their graph paper. It's their last ride, and they can't agree on a name for it. They've designed Sonic Drop, Rocket Rollercoaster (which they describe as "exhilarating") and several other rides but they are stuck on this last element.

This larger team of students has a group of four core teachers for English Language Arts, social studies, math, and science. The teachers work in pairs to teach interdisciplinary classes that bring the essential concepts of each discipline together in their design of student work.

For the amusement park project, students are using knowledge and skills they have learned throughout the year to design the park. Their graph paper design had required many different math skills. Next up, groups will be using ideas from science – force and motion – for their rollercoaster designs and models.

I think the project is a good experience. It's fun," says one from the video game crew. "You put in all you learned for the whole year."

His teammate offers another opinion, "I kind of hate it, because it makes me think!"

They all laugh. They will need their collaboration and communication skills to land that last ride.

"The whole idea is that this is more real world and authentic when we do school this way," says Lindsay Leet, science teacher. "My husband, a scientist, never does science in the absence of math…and he writes reports and communicates with people. He is interdisciplinary at his job. Any opportunity we have to do this with kids helps them be more prepared for that realistic future."

Team Approach

This group of teachers has been working with this team of 7th and 8th graders all year – the yellow team.

They have "Inquiry" which is a blending of science and math, and they have "Humanities" which is a blending of English Language Arts and social studies. Sometimes they have subject specific lessons but as much as possible they try to overlap.

"It might be as simple as making math problems that have examples that are from science or the science topics that they're learning," says Lindsay. "But it also extends into large performance assessments (like the amusement parks) that involve pieces of both math and science at the same time."

English Language Arts and social studies is Humanities - a natural mix because English doesn't necessarily have topics. The class reads, writes and speaks focused on the social studies topics for 7th and 8th grade.

"In 7th grade, it's American history for social studies, so when we're in the Civil War unit, we're reading about the Civil War. We're looking at Civil War era poetry," says Shelley Anderson, English Language Arts teacher. "It's a little trickier in 8th grade when it's Geography but we've found some ways to make some really good connections."

With subjects combined, the team works within bigger blocks of time throughout the day. This allows for lessons that take a longer time or a shorter time to flow more naturally than a more time-bound schedule.

"Because we team teach in the same room for a lot of the day, we use our time and space flexibly," says Lindsay. "We might be together for part of it and then go to an adjoining room for a bit and then come back. There are generally just fewer transitions for our kids. It's all just interconnected."

"I Survived Survivor Island"

The interconnectedness of the learning really pushes students. It also provides the platform for doing high interest, engaging work and projects.

The second trimester for 8th grade Humanities is one big unit called Survivor Island. The geography components include learning about different landforms, different climate regions, and weather patterns. While students learn the geography concepts, they are working on summarizing skills in English Language Arts by reading stories of people who have survived in different climates.

"There's a survival story of somebody who crashed in the Andes Mountains. There's a survival story of somebody who got stuck in the ocean," says Shelley.

When they have the basics, students are tasked with developing an island with landforms, climate regions and weather patterns. They make a population density map based on what they've learned about where people would live on the island.

"An example is that people live by rivers. People don't live on top of tall mountains where it's too cold. . . that type of thing," explains Shelley.

When their islands are complete with data, students write a report to the United Nations. The scenario is the discovery of a new island. Students write an official report to document whether or not people could live on the island using their essay writing formula.

"Then we do our speaking skills," says Shelley. "The students create a presentation and give that speech like we're a mini UN conference. By the end of the trimester, we worked on our reading our writing and our speaking competencies alongside our social studies competencies."

Differences and Advantages

This way of teaching and learning has some clear advantages for this team. One is time savings.

"If you think about Shelley's example where they're doing their English Language Arts around these social studies topics, you can actually save a little bit of time doing that," observes Lindsay. "They can choose exactly what they want to focus on and spend a majority of their time on that."

Because the teachers spend so much of their time planning and preparing together, they get to know each other's curriculum.

"I really know the math curriculum quite a bit," says Lindsay, "which means that I can always reinforce it so the students are getting extra math in science just because I know what's going on. I think when we're siloed in our individual subject areas sometimes that piece is lacking."

There's also a clear advantage for individualizing support.

"Because we're comfortable with each other's content, we can work a little more individually with kids when we need to," says Shelley.

Students are also able to see connections between skills and subject areas more clearly.

"We used to hear a lot more *'why do I care if my paragraph is right? It doesn't*

Continued on Page 13

Labor and Industry Announces 2025 Youth Skills Training Grant Recipients

Seventeen partnerships across Minnesota will receive funding to develop and expand programs to offer meaningful career exposure and paid work experience for students 16 years of age and older.

Objective

The Youth Skills Training (YST) program encourages, promotes and supports the development of local partnerships between schools, employers and community organizations. These local partnerships provide students with related classroom instruction, safety training, industry-recognized credentials and paid work experience in the high-growth, in-demand occupations of advanced manufacturing, agriculture, automotive, health care, and information technology. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) awards grants to local partnerships to create, implement and expand YST programs throughout Minnesota. Successful applicants will demonstrate the ability to achieve program objectives through various means including outreach, education, training, and supportive services for students. The goal of the YST program is to create pathways for students to high-growth in-demand occupations and support industry with future talent.

Eligibility

YST programs are composed of a minimum of one school partner and one employer partner. They may include multiple schools, employers and community organizations.

School partners do not need to go through a formal approval process, but should meet with YST staff to demonstrate a plan to provide the following:

- meaningful industry exposure for diverse students,
- an offering of at least one industry-related course for high school credit,
- a pathway to industry-recognized certification/credentialing, and
- paid work experiences in one or more of the following industries: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, automotive, health care and information technology.

Employers must be approved for YST paid work experiences prior to student learners being placed at employer sites. Download employer approval forms. Programs are not required to be a YST grant recipient to become an approved YST program.

YST grants will be awarded to the following 17 partnerships, which will receive and split $1.5 million in funding to be used for programs operating from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2027. Alexandria Area High School

- Alexandria Area High School
- Cass Lake-Bena High School
- createMPLS
- Dawson-Boyd Public Schools
- Edina Public Schools
- Faribault Public Schools
- Marshall Public Schools
- Minneapolis Public Schools - Career and Technical Education
- Monticello High School
- Princeton Public Schools
- Robbinsdale Area Schools
- Rochester Public Schools
- Roseau School District
- Shakopee High School
- TrekNorth Jr. and Sr. High School
- West Central Area School District
- West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Eagan Area School District

Grants can be used to create programs, recruit students and employers, provide training, transport students and pay for industry-related student certifications. A ninth round of grant applications will open in winter 2025.

More information

For more information about Youth Skills Training contact Jo Daggett, program manager, at 651-284-5354 or jo.daggett@state.mn.us; Nimo Samatar, program consultant, at 651-284-5184 or nimo.samatar@state.mn.us; or Faye Blough, program specialist, at 651-284-5341 or faye.blough@state.mn.us.

From Theme Parks to Survivor Island Continued from Page 12

matter, this isn't a writing class.' Now, everything is writing class," says Shelley. "They're seeing a little bit more how this skill I'm developing in math has an application in science. This skill I'm developing in language arts has this application over here."

This way of learning — for teachers and students — is amazing. It also takes a lot of teacher time and effort.

"I don't ever want to not team teach or integrated teach, and it is time consuming," says Shelley. "We just have to acknowledge that."

The benefits of interdisciplinary learning and team teaching are worth it.

"I just love the stuff we've come up with together," says Lindsay. "It is so much better than what I would have ever come up with on my own."

On this day, the Inquiry class is splitting into two rooms. Some groups stay to work on their park designs. Some groups head to the science lab to work on their rollercoasters. In the lab, they quickly get to work with foam tubing, tape, various sized boxes and stands and marbles. They raise and lower their tubing and shift angles to observe the effects on the marble — and their future rollercoaster.

As Lindsay works her way around the room, she asks each group questions. "Why did making the loop shorter help? Did it work better when you started higher or lower? Why is that?"

After they have their designs, they will write their claim, evidence and reasoning. Then, they'll go through the steps of making a model. They'll draw and label each component, note the relationships and create descriptions.

One group cheers as their marble lofts a break in the track, lands on the other side and continues to the track's end. In the corner, the horror themed team is working on a severe loop. Across the room the fantasy team (plenty of wizards, unicorns, and dragons) has a large drop and curve going. There is a general buzz in the room as teams discuss different approaches and discoveries.

"We have been so amazed by the number of students wanting to come in at lunch, working at home, or giving up outside play time to work on this project. We are loving it!"

Lindsay Leet, science teacher

This energy around the learning has been one of the most rewarding things for teachers — especially seeing students volunteer their time.

Propelling Possibility: Johnson High School's Aerospace & Engineering Magnet Program Soars Forward

Saint Paul Public Schools

"When you think you might not be able to do something, step out of your comfort zone because you'll be able to do it."

—Johnson Engineering student 2025

At Johnson Senior High School in Saint Paul Public Schools, the sky is not the limit—it's just the beginning. Reinvigorated by a dynamic team of educators and community partners, Johnson's Aerospace and Engineering Magnet program is taking off, giving students hands-on experience, real-world exposure, and a pathway into high-demand careers across the Twin Cities and beyond.

Leading the charge is Tom Corcoran, a physics and math teacher whose enthusiasm for flight and engineering is matched only by his commitment to student success. Nearing completion of his private pilot's license, Corcoran has brought fresh energy and vision to the program, helping position Johnson as a standout hub for STEM education in the region.

"Imagine the thrill of not just seeing a plane fly overhead, but understanding the physics that lift it. Imagine knowing all of the different people working in a variety of jobs that work together to put that plane in the air. That's what we're trying to do here at Johnson, we're trying to introduce students to the wide world of aviation and understand the principles behind flight." —Tom Corcoran, Aerospace Teacher

The revitalized program offers far more than just traditional coursework. Johnson boasts state-of-the-art flight simulators and industry-standard equipment, allowing students to learn on tools that mirror those used by professionals. From coding and robotics to welding and drone operation, students are developing technical skills that translate directly to modern careers in aerospace and engineering.

With critical support from Work-based Learning Coordinator Mary Voigt, students also participate in unique experiential learning opportunities with key industry partners. These connections give students a real-world understanding of the many career paths available in aerospace, transportation, and engineering—and they begin building a professional network before they even graduate high school.

The program starts early, thanks to Devon Vojtech, who teaches PLTW Engineering Essentials to all 9th-grade students. This hands-on course introduces students to core engineering concepts and lays the foundation for deeper exploration in upper grades. Vojtech's passion for project-based learning helps students connect immediately with the material—and gets them excited about what's ahead.

"In the beginning, I struggled, but now as I see the circuits and work with them, I'm understanding it more."

—Ti Char Kue,
PLTW Engineering Essentials Student

As students progress, they can pursue an array of specialized courses, including:

- Introduction to Industrial Robotics
- Introduction to Computer Programming
- PLTW Civil Engineering & Architecture
- PLTW Engineering Design & Development
- PLTW Principles of Engineering
- PLTW Computer Integrated Manufacturing
- PLTW Computer Science and Software Engineering
- Intro to Flight Simulators
- Drone Flight Training
- Advanced Flight Simulators

Supporting and expanding the pathway, Jamie Lindfors offers robotics and computer science, while Jeff Opichka teaches courses in construction, engineering, and welding—critical skills that round out a student's STEM experience and lead directly to industry certifications and employment opportunities.

Johnson's Aerospace and Engineering Magnet program is more than just a collection of classes—it's a launchpad for students to discover passions, build professional skills, and access career pathways that are in high demand. With Minnesota's aerospace and advanced manufacturing sectors growing rapidly, the program is helping to fill critical workforce needs across the Twin Cities and beyond.

"Aviation opens up a world of exciting jobs beyond just flying planes. It takes effort and heart, but our classes and field trips help you find that passion within you."

— Romeo Xiong and Touvue Thao,
Johnson Aerospace Students

Thanks to a forward-thinking team, powerful partnerships, and cutting-edge resources, Johnson High School is proving that high school programs can prepare students to thrive in tomorrow's industries—one flight, one build, and one innovation at a time.

www.spps.org

Up, Up and Away: Aeronautics Capstone Students take Discovery Flights

Eden Prairie Schools

The late morning sun beat down on the Flying Cloud tarmac as the Cessna 172 propeller cut through the hot air. Seatbelts and headsets were secured. It was time to fly. Inside the small plane were three EPHS students and one professional aviation instructor. This wasn't the flight simulator the high schoolers had gotten accustomed to in their Aeronautics classroom — this was a real plane. The instructor would guide the takeoff and then, one at a time, turn over controls to the students. It was time to see if being a pilot was what these Eagles wanted to pursue.

This "Discovery Flight" celebrated the end of a three-course learning path in aeronautics at Eden Prairie High School that falls within the Engineering, Technology & Manufacturing Pathway. Ten students had come to Flying Cloud Airport for a chance to feel what it was truly like to fly. Over the course of the school year, they'd learned most of the Pilot's Handbook and all about charts, taxiways, airspaces, weather and airport signage. Dr. Michael Nehring, the Aeronautics Capstone teacher, had introduced students to a variety of career paths in aviation, from engineering to design to air traffic control to drone piloting. Students, he said, were so close to the emergence of drone technology that they could influence the future of what the next careers in this field could look like. This was an exciting time, and the Capstone he was teaching was an opportunity for students to explore their interests in aeronautics while learning about all the possibilities for pursuing it as a career.

Today was just that: a chance to see if being a pilot was the right fit for students. 12th grader Quang Luong seemed ready. "I could have fun with anything that moves with four

Continued on Page 16

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Information based on 2023 NDSCS data.

White Bear Lake Area High School Automotive Program Named Exemplary Secondary Program of the Year

Minnesota State Transportation Center of Excellence is delighted to announce that White Bear Lake Area High School's Automotive Program, led by Automotive Instructor and Technology Education Building Lead Derek Doescher, has been named the Exemplary Secondary Program of the Year. This award showcases secondary level transportation programs that serve as exemplary models of institutional support, instructional leadership, and program-wide excellence.

Under Derek Doescher's leadership, the Automotive Career Pathway at White Bear Lake Area High School has experienced significant growth and success. Since joining White Bear Lake Area Schools in September 2019, Doescher has expanded student enrollment and fostered partnerships with local industry leaders. His efforts have led to over 1,000 students gaining exposure to the automotive industry and more than 250 students enrolling in Automotive Career Pathway courses each year, marking the highest enrollment to date. Doescher's commitment extends beyond the classroom, as demonstrated by his initiative to increase paid summer work experiences for students, resulting in 31 placements, many of which led to full-time employment offers. During his tenure, Doescher has also focused on inclusivity, increasing female student enrollment in automotive courses from six to over 40 annually.

Doescher brings a rich background in technical education and hands-on industry experience to his role. After high school, he went on to graduate with honors from the Automotive and Ford Accelerated Credential Training (FACT) programs. He then worked in the automotive industry for over eight years as a certified technician. In 2016, he transitioned into education, earning his Bachelor of Science in Technology Education. Today, his dedication to continuous education includes becoming Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) master certified and currently working on his Master's degree in Career and Technical Education.

White Bear Lake Area High School's Automotive Career Pathway provides students with a well-rounded, hands-on education in automotive technology, equipping them with the skills and certifications necessary for careers in the transportation industry. The curriculum includes courses such as Automotive Technology I, Automotive Technology II: Brakes, Automotive Technology II: Steering and Suspension, Automotive Technology II: Electrical, Car Care, and Engine Repair. A key highlight of the program is its emphasis on industry credentials—students have completed more than 200 modules annually through the Ford Automotive Career Exploration (ACE) program. This commitment to workforce readiness has made the White Bear Lake Automotive program a regional leader in automotive education and certification achievement.

Doescher would like to thank all the individuals who have donated their time and effort to help support and improve the program over the last six years. Together, they are truly growing the technicians of tomorrow.

The awards will be officially presented on August 6th at the MTTIA Conference in Brainerd, MN.

For more information about the TCOE Awards, visit https://www.minntran.org/tcoe-awards

www.isd624.org

Aeronautics Capstone Students take Discovery Flights Continued from Page 14

wheels and an engine," he said at the start of the day. Others were more cautious. "I hope they're a little scared," joked Karen Brettingen, the industry partnership coordinator for Eden Prairie Schools. "They are," Nehring replied with a smile.

Many students were a bit nervous — but a great deal excited — as they gathered in the local flight school's lobby. The local flight school, along with a college aviation school, are community partners for the Aeronautics Capstone, helping to provide real-world applications of students' learning. "It's one thing when you're sitting in the classroom learning, but it's another when it's experiential," said Paula Piazza, senior admissions coordinator at the college. "When they're considering a career in aviation, they have to [fly]. This is that experience that really solidifies that decision."

Before students took flight, they each needed one important piece of equipment. Josh Smith, sales director for the flight school, was there to hand them out. "This is not just a log book," said Smith as he passed students the small black books filled with green paper. "This is your new adventure in life." These books would record each flight that the students would ever make in their careers, starting today. Soon, half of the students would begin filling out their books, as they'd be flying first. The other half would tour the hangars and planes at the flight sschool. Then they'd switch.

As the first group of students headed toward their planes, Superintendent Dr. Josh Swanson appeared on the tarmac. As a pilot himself, he'd come to support students on their first flight. He even brought a radio to listen to their communications with the tower as they took off. It was a proud day for Eden Prairie Schools, and the culmination of a great deal of work from students, staff and community partners.

For 12th grader Maya White, it was the final element of a series of classes that had fueled an interest in aviation, which she planned to study in college next year. "I always knew I didn't want to be in an office," she said, waiting on the tarmac for her chance to fly. She'd brought her camera with her and was excited to take pictures while she was up in the air. Being a pilot would give her a chance to travel, but for Maya, the day was all about "seeing if I'm actually up for the job." She hadn't expected to fly when she started her aeronautics courses. "[When I found out we were flying], I thought it was a little bit of a joke," she remembered. But it was real, and the day had come.

Maya had never been in a small plane before, but she had been training on the high school's flight simulator. When she got into the cockpit, all the controls were familiar. Still, she was nervous. "I just need to keep the plane stable," she thought to herself as she took over the controls. She was flying! It was a bucket list item she could check off, and she learned something about herself up there, too. "Flying a small aircraft isn't for me," she reflected after the flight. That realization didn't mean aviation wasn't a future career for her, though: "I can confidently say that I chose the right major studying aviation and will continue to explore different avenues in college that pertain to aviation," Maya shared.

Maya's experience, though unexpected, showcases what Pathways courses are all about: discovering interests, exploring possibilities and pursuing passions through real-world experiences and career-focused opportunities. Some Eagles wanted to take to the skies. Others learned they'd rather stay grounded, but all were exploring how they wanted to spread their wings. "I do still want to work in the aviation industry," Maya affirmed, "just not up in the air."

www.edenpr.org

Building New Skills at Central Middle School

Eden Prairie Schools

Crouched in a hallway at Central Middle School (CMS) on March 21, student Madisyn Frank steadies herself for a final test of her small, hand-built car. Riding on two 3D-printed wheels in front and two wheels made from CDs in back, Madisyn's vehicle runs on a mousetrap engine. Building up a store of potential energy, the mousetrap spring releases its power through an attached arm that rotates forward, pulling on a string wound up around the axle, which drives the car forward. It's a feat of engineering made possible through Madisyn's sixth grade Pathways to Engineering class. Over the course of the term, students have designed, built, redesigned and rebuilt their cars, all in a process of discovery and exploration of what it means to engineer something.

As part of the Eden Prairie Schools Inspired Journey, students from preschool through 12th grade and above constantly discover, explore and pursue new pathways of learning. For sixth graders at CMS, Exploration courses, like Pathways to Engineering, give them a chance to dive deeper into their interests and begin building skills and curiosities. Today, Madisyn has gathered with the rest of her class to see just what their cars can do. It's a "fun culmination," says teacher Ryan Rice, of a class focused on research, brainstorming, designing, building and testing. He watches the cars as they race down the hallway, marking their distances on the floor.

Students call out to Mr. Rice, wondering if their two-person team's car has gone the farthest. Meanwhile, other students are back in the classroom, refining their construction after a less-than-desirable test run. Then they're back out to the hallway to see if they can take first place. Sixth grader Portia Baruti is ready to tinker — but the car doesn't need much optimization. It works quite well and is in the lead for a while.

Then, on one of the last runs, student Isaac Kamara and his teammate Cruz Rodriguez make a move. Their car rolls forward, not too quickly, but confidently. It keeps rolling, overtaking Portia's record. 42 feet!

"I was not expecting to win at all," Isaac says after the record breaking run.

Though some cars go further than others, ultimately, all students walk away winners with their curiosity about design sparked. Will they build another mousetrap car, even bigger and more powerful next time? Who knows. One thing's for sure, though: This hands-on activity, done with friends, brought learning to life for some inspired Eagles!

www.edenpr.org

Career Academy's Dryburgh Receives Statewide Teaching Award

Moorhead Area Public Schools

In late February, the month observed as Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month, the Minnesota Association for Career and Technical Education (MnACTE) named Tom Dryburgh, advisor and community outreach coordinator at the Moorhead High School Career Academy, the 2025 Career Guidance Teacher of the Year.

This award recognizes school counselors and career development professionals who have demonstrated commitment to connecting students with opportunities for success, show innovation in career exploration and development and have advocated for CTE as a viable option for all students.

"To me, this award is about what a phenomenal job our district has done over the last few years to promote the CTE field," said Dryburgh. "It also speaks to how we're on the right path to continue to build our career and technical opportunities up for our students."

MnACTE hailed Dryburgh's leadership of Career Academy college fairs, career fairs, sophomore industry tours, junior and senior work experiences and the freshman work seminar course. Additionally, Dryburgh works to create partnerships with area businesses and organizations to further the hands-on opportunities available to MHS students.

One such partnership that launched this year offers Emergency Medical Response training that can lead to state certification.

"Our CTE offerings are constantly evolving," added Dryburgh, "as we continually evaluate partnerships and courses to put together the best possible career and technical education for our students. The goal is to implement as many new pathways as possible without losing focus on the most important thing: our students."

Dryburgh's honor marks the second straight year that MnACTE has honored a staff member at the MHS Career Academy: in 2024, FACS teacher Johanna Heigaard received the organization's New Teacher of the Year award.

Businesses and organizations in the Red River Valley interested in partnering with the MHS Career Academy for career and technical education opportunities can contact Dryburgh at by phone at 218-284-6544 or via email at tdryburgh@moorheadschools.org.

www.isd152.org

College Opportunity — CIM Program at SDSU

If you have a child thinking about college or you know a student who's interested in a high-demand, hands-on career, there's a unique program that could be a perfect fit.

South Dakota State University (SDSU) offers a **Concrete Industry Management (CIM)** bachelor's degree program, designed to prepare graduates for leadership roles in one of the world's most essential industries: concrete construction and materials.

What is the CIM Program?

The CIM program is **a four-year Bachelor of Science degree** that blends:

- **Concrete-focused technical education** (materials, production, and construction applications)
- **Core business courses** (finance, marketing, project management, statistics)
- **Real-world experience** through internships, site visits, and industry networking

Students graduate with the practical knowledge of concrete technology and the business acumen to move into management roles. Options for minors include management and marketing, both of which are designed to enhance the student's value upon graduation.

Why This Matters for Minnesota Families

- **In-State Tuition**
  Minnesota is one of approximately 10 feeder states in the region whose residents qualify for in-state tuition at SDSU, thanks to a regional partnership, making this a cost-effective option for Minnesota students and families.
- **Industry-Specific Scholarships Available**
  Numerous scholarships are offered through the CIM National Steering Committee, the North Central region CIM Patrons, and local industry partners. These are designed to support students who want to grow their careers in the concrete or construction fields.
- **Tailored to the concrete industry**
  The CIM program prepares students to excel in roles such as:
  - o Ready-mix operations
  - o Precast operations
  - o Cement and aggregate manufacturing
  - o Construction project management
  - o Materials sales, logistics, and engineering
  - o Quality control and sustainability
- **Career-Ready Graduates**
  Students in the CIM program have high job placement rates, thanks to strong industry connections, hands-on internships, and national exposure. There are numerous professional networking opportunities with industry managers, ving graduates direct access to employers nationwide.

Scholarship Packages & In-state Tuition: WI, MN, ND, NE, IA, IL, CO, WY, MT, KS & MO.

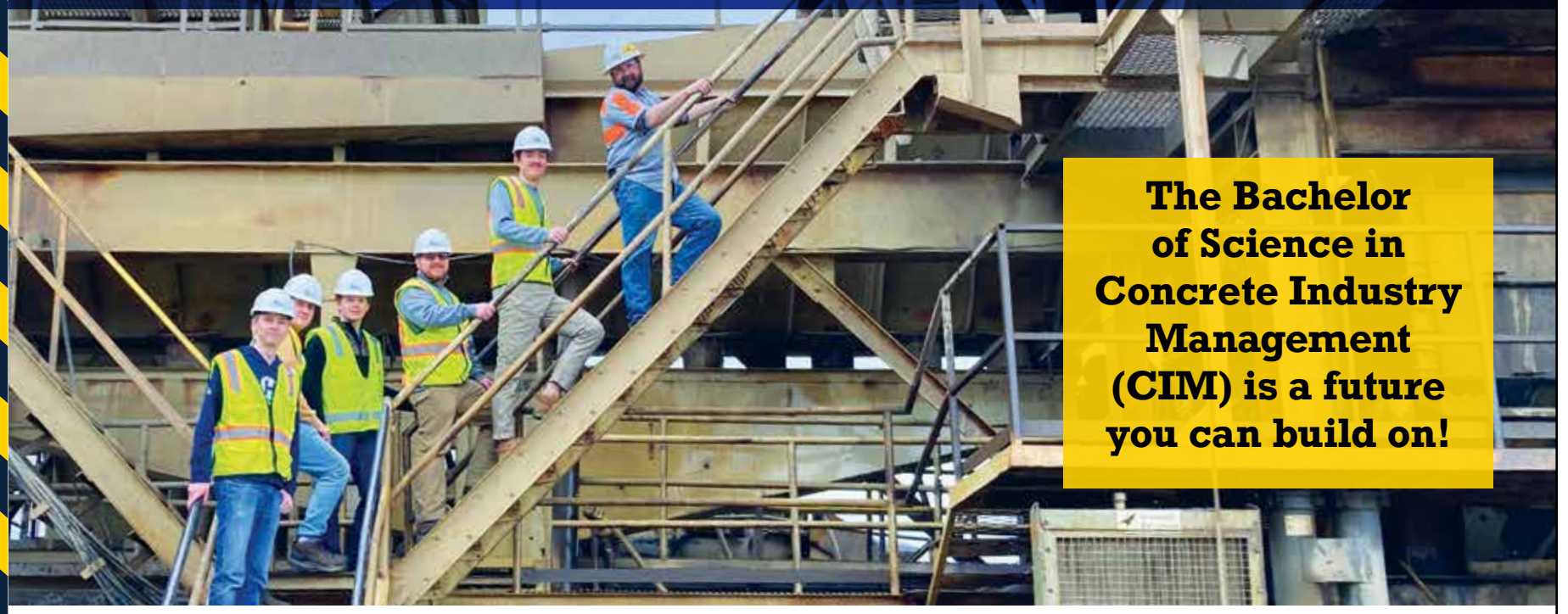
Key Facts About CIM at SDSU:

- Program launched at SDSU in 2021, one of only five in the U.S.
- Classes include concrete materials, construction safety, estimating, and management
- Opportunities for paid summer internships in the industry (often leading to job offers)
- CIM students participate in industry organizations, networking events, and competitions

Next Steps for Interested Students and Families:

- **Learn more online:** Concrete Industry Management Program | South Dakota State University
- **Explore financial aid and scholarship options:** SDSU offers dedicated financial counseling
- **Connect with the program faculty:** if you'd like to discuss career pathways from the CIM Program at SDSU, contact the program director, Tim Hostettler, at timothy.hostettler@sdstate.edu.

South Dakota State University
Concrete Industry Management



The Bachelor of Science in Concrete Industry Management (CIM) is a future you can build on!

The Bachelor of Science in Concrete Industry Management curriculum is a broad blend of science, engineering, and business management, enabling graduates of the program to manage people and systems, and promote products or services related to the concrete industry.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A CIM DEGREE?

- Environmental Management
- Operations Management
- Quality Control Management
- Safety Management
- Estimation/Sales Management
- Marketing Management
- Contracting Services Management
- Concrete Product Management
- Project Engineer
- Project Management
- Construction Management
- Inventory Control Management
- Cement Terminal Management
- Ready Mixed Concrete Plant Management
- Concrete Pipe Plant Management
- Precast-Prestressed Plant Management

PROGRAM PERKS

- Industry-specific scholarships help cover tuition costs.
- Patron funded travel to industry events (including the World of Concrete in Las Vegas!)
- Well-rounded business management education.
- Experiential summer work opportunities for added income and industry insights.
- Internship program ensuring real-world experience.
- Strong industry networking opportunities with leaders in the industry
- Nearly 100% job placement

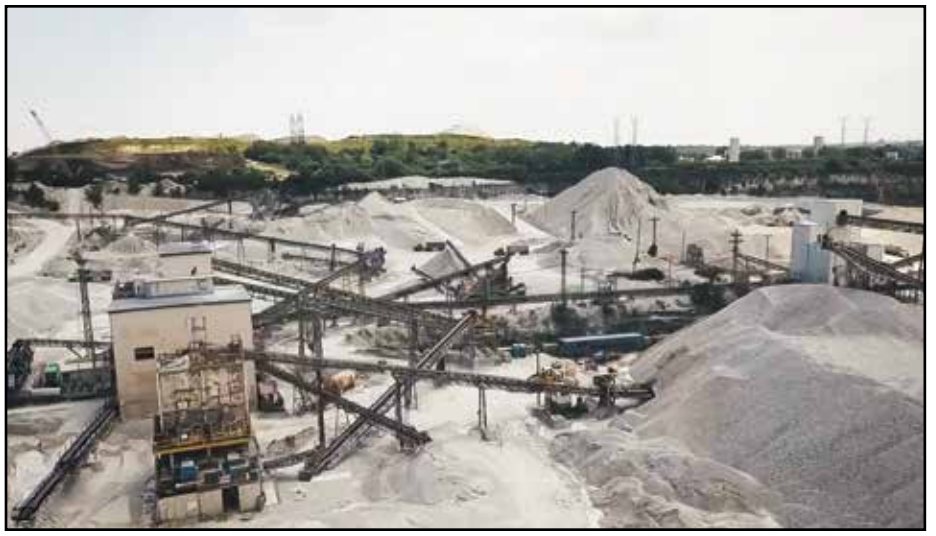
Create your career path into a multibillion-dollar, global industry — Enroll in CIM today!

CIM CONCRETE INDUSTRY MANAGEMENT

Contact: Timothy Hostettler
CIM Program Director
Concrete Industry Management Program
Brookings, SD
(605) 688-6998
Timothy.Hostettler@sdstate.edu | www.sdstate.edu

Scan to Apply Now!

Careers in the Aggregate and Asphalt Industries



Careers in the Aggregate Industry

In an average year, Minnesota requires 8 tons of aggregates per person to support construction and maintenance of our infrastructure, homes, and buildings. The aggregate industry responds to that demand by producing about 55 million tonnes of stone, sand, and gravel every year. Minnesota's aggregate and concrete industry is huge and shows no signs of slowing down. It's no surprise that an industry this large has a stunningly broad range of career opportunities.

Safety, Engineering, and Science Careers

- Safety Engineer
- Health Engineer
- Civil Engineer
- Structural Engineer
- Electrical Engineer
- Process Engineer
- Mechanical Engineer
- Engineering Technician
- Surveyor
- Geologist
- Hydrologist
- Environmental Scientist

Quality Control Careers

- Laboratory Technician
- Materials Testing Technician
- Laboratory Professional

Operations Careers

- Heavy Equipment Operator
- Welder
- Electrician
- Dredge Operator
- Weigh Scale Operator
- Millwright
- Truck Driver
- Explosive Specialist

Sales & Marketing Careers

- Construction Materials Sales
- Market Analyst
- Graphic Designer
- Product Promoter

Office Professional Careers

- Accountant
- Comptroller
- Credit Collection Professional
- Bookkeeper
- Human Resource Professional
- Information Technology Professional
- Office Manager
- Clerical Worker
- Administrative Assistant

Asphalt Industry Jobs

Each year, asphalt is used to build and maintain roads, highways, airports, and trails across the state. Asphalt is essential to our everyday lives and economic vitality, supporting everything from school bus routes to freight corridors. Minnesota's asphalt industry plays a vital role in this system, powering thousands of jobs and driving long-term infrastructure investments.

This fast-moving, technology-driven industry offers diverse and rewarding careers—from engineering and environmental science to skilled trades and plant operations.

Engineering, Environmental, and Technical Careers

- Civil Engineer
- Pavement Design Engineer
- Materials Engineer
- Construction Inspector
- Quality Control Technician
- Environmental Specialist
- Lab Technician
- Mix Design Specialist
- Engineering Technician

Construction and Field Operations Careers

- Paving Crew Member
- Screed Operator
- Roller Operator
- Equipment Operator
- Truck Driver
- Foreman/Superintendent
- Project Manager
- Surveyor

Plant & Production Careers

- Asphalt Plant Operator
- Control Room Technician
- Maintenance Technician

- Loader Operator
- Scale Operator
- Plant Foreman

Business & Support Roles

- Estimator
- Scheduler
- Safety Manager
- Dispatcher
- Procurement Specialist
- Sales & Customer Service

Minnesota's asphalt industry is modern, sustainable, and constantly evolving. Whether you prefer hands-on fieldwork or technical lab work, there's a path for you to build a strong future—while building the roads that connect us all.

Together, we build Minnesota!

Minnesota's construction industry is huge, and it shows no signs of slowing down. Help us build Minnesota and build careers in marketing, management, engineering, quality control, and operations.

AGGREGATE & READY MIX
ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA
letsrockminnesota.com

Minnesota Asphalt Pavement Association
asphaltisbest.com

Heavy Machines for Road Construction

Heavy machines are required in different large projects to make the job safer and easier. Road construction is a specialized area of construction that is highly technical, requiring various specialized equipment. Whether it's building a new road, or rehabilitating an old road, using the right machine is important. Here are nine common types of machines for road construction.

1. Asphalt Plant

(Image source: theasphaltpro.com)

An asphalt plant is a plant designed to create asphalt concrete, also called blacktop, and other forms of coated roadstone applied in road construction. Asphalt concrete consists of several aggregates, sand, and a kind of filler, such as stone dust. Firstly, mix them in the correct proportions, and then heat them. At last, the mixture will be coated with a binder, usually bitumen based.

2. Truck Crane

(Image source: zoomlion.com)

A truck crane is a frequently used machine for road construction, featuring compact and movable. A crane is mounted on the back of a heavy truck to do the lifting job on the road construction site. A truck crane consists of the lifting component and the carrier. A turntable joins the two together, enabling the lifting to move backward and forwards. As we mentioned before, since a truck crane is small, it requires very little mounting space.

3. Asphalt Pavers

(Image source: cat.com)

An asphalt paver, also known as a road paver finisher, asphalt finisher, or road paving machine, is designed to lay asphalt concrete on the surface of roads, bridges, parking lots, and other places. Besides, it can also do minor compaction before a roller starts working. The paving process starts with a dump truck moving the asphalt into the paver's hopper. Then, the conveyor delivers the asphalt to the dispersion auger to distribute the asphalt to a heated screed. The screed flattens and spreads the asphalt across the road, creating an initially compact surface of the road. Moreover, after the basic compaction, a roller will be used for further compaction.

4. Cold Planers

(Image source: cat.com)

Cold planers, or milling machines, are a type of heavy equipment designed for milling the road surface. A cold planer utilizes a big rotating drum with many carbide-tipped road milling teeth on it to grind and remove the pavement. As the drum rotates and cuts the pavement surface, the paved asphalt is delivered by a conveyor belt to another truck moving in front of the cold planer. There are several advantages of using a cold planer, including recycling asphalt, repairing existing damage, building rumble strips, etc.

5. Drum Rollers

(Image source: crescorent.com)

Drum rollers, also called road rollers or compact rollers, are important machines for road construction. They are designed to flatten and smooth road surfaces effectively in construction sites. There are several types of rollers, including pneumatic rollers, sheepsfoot rollers, smooth wheeled rollers, vibratory rollers, etc. Different rollers are used to compress different materials.

6. Excavators

(Image source: cat.com)

Excavators are one of the most well-known heavy machines for construction. You will find an excavator at almost any construction site as it is a very dispensable large machine for various projects. It is mainly used to dig or excavate rocks and earth and load them onto dumper trucks. An excavator consists of a cabin, a long arm, and a bucket. The bucket can be used to excavate, haul, demolish, remove brush, or dredge the river. Sometimes, an excavator can also be applied in the forestry industry with certain attachments. Excavators can be divided into three types by their sizes, including mini excavators, medium excavators, and large excavators.

7. Forklifts

(Image source: heavyequipmentcollege.com)

Forklifts, also named fork truck, is a type of construction equipment designed to move objects short distances at a construction site. Before using a forklift, make sure the volume of the objects is right for your forklift. There are several types of forklifts – counterweight, side loaders, pallet jack, and warehouse forklifts.

8. Motor Graders

(Image source: cat.com)

Motor graders, also known as road graders or maintainers, are another commonly used machine at worksites, especially at a road construction site. A motor grader is mainly designed to flatten surfaces. For projects requiring versatility, a motor grader is more suitable than a bulldozer. With a long horizontal cutting blade or cutting edge, a motor grader can cut and level the soil surface. Besides, motor graders are also suitable for snow removal. The carbide-tipped bits mounted on the cutting edge are replaceable.

9. Wheel Loaders

(Image source: cat.com)

As the name implies, a wheel loader is used to load or move materials onto dumper trucks at construction sites. Unlike a track loader, a wheel loader has durable wheels, making it more convenient to drive around at worksites. A wheel loader has a relatively short moving arm and a very large front-mounted bucket which is used to move materials such as dirt and rocks.

DISCLAIMER: Above pictures are not for commercial use.

https://konecarbide.com/9-common-machines-for-road-construction

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- Natural Resource Conservation Services [B]
- Sustainable Landscape Technology [B]
- Sustainable Greenhouse Production [B]
- Sustainable Local Food [B]

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- Business Management [B] [O]
- Healthcare Accounting [B]
- Healthcare Administrative Specialist [B] [O]
- Management [B]

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- Dental Hygiene [B]
- Emergency Medical Response Technician [B]
- Nursing (RN) [B]
- Nursing Assistant [B] [S]
- Practical Nursing [S]

Information Technology Career
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- Computer IT Security & Networking [B] [O]
- Computer Microsoft Office Professional [B] [O]

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- Conservation Officer Preparation [B]
- MN Peace Officer [B]

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- Machine Operations [S]
- Mechatronics [S]
- Robotics/Automated Systems Technology [S]
- Welding and Fabrication [B]

Media Careers
- Graphic Design [B] [S]
- Graphic Design Media Technologies [B] [S]

Transportation Careers
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- Diesel Equipment Technician [S]
- Heavy Equipment Operation & Maintenance [S]
- Marine & Powersports Technology [B]

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- Exercise Science Transfer Pathway [B]
- History Transfer Pathway [B] [O]
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- Political Science Transfer Pathway [B]
- Pre-Social Work Transfer Pathway [B]
- Psychology Transfer Pathway [B] [O]
- Sociology Transfer Pathway [B] [O]
- Spanish Transfer Pathway [B]

[B] - Brainerd Program
[S] - Staples Program
[O] - Online

Ashley Farrington of Birchview Elementary in Wayzata Public Schools Receives National Award

The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) is proud to announce that Ashley Farrington, principal of Birchview Elementary in Wayzata Public Schools, has been named the National Association of Elementary School Principals' 2025 National Distinguished Principal (NDP) from Minnesota.

Farrington will be honored alongside other state honorees this fall in Washington, D.C., for his visionary leadership, unwavering commitment to equity, and exemplary impact on school climate, student achievement, and community connection.

"Every kid has a superpower. We need to foster an environment to help every student be successful," Farrington said in his final NDP interview—a sentiment that defines his leadership philosophy.

A Culture of Belonging and Achievement

Since stepping into leadership at Birchview, Farrington has led transformative initiatives rooted in inclusion, collaboration, and academic excellence. One of his standout accomplishments is the rebranding of Birchview's core mission to "You Matter" (#AtBVYouMatter), a message that permeates school culture through murals, books, pledges, and daily practices. This guiding principle is more than a motto—it is the heart of the school's identity. In student interviews, 98% of students reported that adults at Birchview help them feel good about who they are.

Farrington's data-informed and relationship-centered leadership has also yielded tangible academic gains. Last school year, Birchview exceeded its goal to improve reading proficiency, achieving a 7% increase in students making typical or aggressive growth on FASTBridge assessments and boosting MCA reading scores through targeted literacy support and robust PLC collaboration.

"Ashley is an authentic and intentional leader who wears his heart on his sleeve and leads with passion," praised Bret Domstrand, Chair of the NDP Selection Committee. "He is unapologetic about advocating for students and doing what's best for them. Beyond that, he genuinely loves his school community and includes them in every decision he makes. Birchview is fortunate to have a leader who makes such a meaningful difference."

Champion for Equity and Representation

Recognizing the importance of community among leaders of color, Farrington founded the MESPA BIPOC Affinity Group in 2022 to support principals of color across the state. What began with five members has grown to nearly 50, offering an affirming space for collaboration and professional growth in a role that can be isolating.

"As we strive to increase representation in our schools for our kids, it starts with our leaders. We want to create mirrors for our students to see leaders who look like them. We also know that our principals need safe spaces to navigate this hard job," Farrington stated in his application. "I believe that our BIPOC Affinity Group is providing the necessary support needed for our principals of color and I am so grateful that I could be helpful in supporting the creation and facilitation of this group."

Building Capacity and Leadership Within the School Community

Farrington is also dedicated to fostering leadership within his own school. He believes in building capacity with the incredible individuals that make up the Birchview school community. To this end, Farrington has established three core building teams: the Building Instructional Leadership Team, the Bobcat Pride Team (Culture and Climate), and the Equity Team. These teams, all led by facilitators, play a pivotal role in executing the school's growth plan and carrying out its key goals.

"We try to include various members from all departments on one of these teams," said Farrington. "This shared responsibility and collective approach allows me to achieve some balance and trust my team to do the important work."

Farrington's commitment to shared leadership and collective responsibility helps ensure that every staff member is empowered to take an active role in the school's success.

A Shared Commitment

Farrington believes that a positive climate starts at the front door. Through shared leadership, visibility, feedback loops, and frequent celebrations, he has cultivated a school where every voice matters—staff, students, and families alike. Lastly, implementation of circle practice around the school has allowed all voices to be elevated and help the school accomplish its goal: "At Birchview, you matter!"

"Principal Farrington exemplifies what it means to lead with heart, vision, and purpose," said Michelle Krell, MESPA Executive Director. "His leadership has not only elevated Birchview but also strengthened the broader principal community across Minnesota. We are thrilled to celebrate him as our 2025 National Distinguished Principal."

Courtesy of The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA)

wayzataschools.org

Meet Minnesota's Teacher of the Year, Linda Wallenberg

Continued from Page 1

and awarded the Royal Order of the Polar Star from His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden. She has authored two gymnastics books: Fundamental Gymnastics and Play-By-Play Gymnastics.

Many of "Wally's" students have gone on to be professional poets, professional hockey players and Olympic medalists. However, she says her proudest achievement is to have inspired countless students to become teachers – including at least three Minnesota Teacher of the Year finalists in the past five years.

12 Educators selected as 2025 Minnesota Teacher of the Year finalists

An independent selection panel of 21 leaders in the areas of education, business, government and nonprofits selected the finalists from a group of 31 semifinalists. There were 142 candidates for this program year.

The 2025 Minnesota Teacher of the Year finalists (listed alphabetically, with school, district, subject and grade[s] taught) are:

- **Stacy Bartlett**, Stillwater Area High School, Stillwater Area Schools, biology, 10–12
- **Katelyn Bruce**, Lake Harriet Lower Campus, Minneapolis Public Schools, second grade
- **Ben Cuevas-Rengstorf**, Roosevelt High School, Minneapolis Public Schools, culinary arts, 9–12
- **Christoph Dundas**, Austin High School, Austin Public Schools, band, 9–12
- **John Horton**, J.J. Hill Montessori School, Saint Paul Public Schools, grades 1–3
- **Amanda Jagdeo**, Hamline Elementary School, Saint Paul Public Schools, pre–K
- **Zoe Kourajian**, Edgewood Middle School, Mounds View Public Schools, U.S. history and girls' leadership, 7–8
- **Soren Olesen**, Roseau High School, Roseau Community School District, welding, machine shop and work-based learning, 11–12
- **Sean Padden**, Roseville Area Middle School, Roseville Area Schools, health, 7–8
- **Araceli Pastrana**, Eagle Heights Spanish Immersion, Eden Prairie Schools, third grade
- **Kong Vang**, Washington Technology Magnet School, Saint Paul Public Schools, ethnic studies, 9–12
- **Linda Wallenberg**, Eden Prairie High School, Eden Prairie Schools, English, 9 & 12

Education Minnesota, the 84,000-member statewide educators union, organizes and underwrites the Teacher of the Year program. Candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers, ECFE and ABE teachers from public or private schools.

www.edenpr.org

Celebrating Jeff Granrud, Combining Education & Community

Math Teacher, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted Public Schools
2024 South Central Zone MREA Educator of Excellence

In the heart of Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted's (HLWW) rural school district, a teacher stands out not just for his years of service but for the profound impact he makes on students and the wider community. With 27 years of teaching experience—26 of which have been spent in HLWW —Mr. Granrud embodies the essence of commitment, resilience, and heart.

Mr. Granrud's journey in education began with a sense of confidence. "My first five years, I thought I knew everything," he recalls. Yet, by year 27, he humbly admits, "I realized I don't know anything." This perpetual willingness to learn and grow defines his career. Each year, Mr. Granrud embraces change and adapts his teaching methods to meet the needs of his students. "The methodologies that I use vary from class to class, from year to year," he shares, underscoring his passion for continual improvement.

Walking into Mr. Granrud's classroom, students are met with an infectious enthusiasm. He greets them warmly—"Hey guys, how's it going?"—creating a space where learning is approachable and relevant. His teaching extends beyond textbooks and theories; he connects lessons to real-world applications, ensuring students understand the value of what they're learning. One student remarked, "He always makes it a point to explain that everything he teaches is something they're going to use somewhere outside of high school."

Mr. Granrud's classroom is not just about academic rigor; it's a place of laughter and camaraderie. "No matter what subject it is or how hard it is, he always makes us laugh every single day," says another student. This blend of joy and knowledge turns learning into an experience that students cherish.

Mr. Granrud's influence doesn't stop at the school doors. His dedication is equally felt in the community. An active member of the fire department and ambulance team, Jeff has served his neighbors for years. He's also been a coach in various school programs and leads a youth fishing initiative that instills a love for the outdoors. About nine years ago, Jeff began volunteering with the Woitalla Fishing Expo, an event that takes Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted fourth graders out for a day of fishing and fun. What began as a single personal day of volunteering transformed into a leadership role when the original organizers could no longer continue. Without hesitation, Mr. Granrud took over, ensuring the beloved event's legacy continued.

Mr. Granrud's commitment to his students is multifaceted. He tailors his approach to meet individual needs, whether it's offering strict guidance or showing leniency and grace. "Some kids need a big brother; some need someone a little more strict," he says, underscoring his sensitivity to each student's unique journey.

It's no wonder his colleagues hold him in such high regard. "He's very dedicated to the district," HLWW Principal Dr. Stephanie Kuehn. Growing up in a rural area himself, Jeff seamlessly made Howard Lake his home, championing the community and placing others above himself.

In Mr. Granrud's world, teaching is far more than a job—it's a lifetime mission intertwined with community spirit and unwavering dedication. He models continuous learning, compassion, and selfless service, making him more than just a teacher; he is a mentor, leader, and beacon of inspiration. MREA honors and celebrates Mr. Granrud for embodying what it truly means to educate and uplift—both in and out of the classroom.

Congratulations Mr. Granrud!

Article and photo courtesy of the Minnesota Rural Education Association — https://www.mreavoice.org

hlww.k12.mn.us

Minnesota Principals of the Year 2025

Awarded by the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals

2025 High School Principal of the Year

Christian Ledesma
Roosevelt High School

Christian Ledesma, Principal of Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis, has been named the 2025 Minnesota High School Principal of the Year by the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals. This recognition highlights his exceptional leadership in creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive school environment that prioritizes both academic success and emotional well-being. Ledesma has fostered a culture of care at Roosevelt, where students, staff, and the broader community feel valued. His commitment to educational equity, especially in increasing representation in advanced courses, has further transformed the school into one of the most sought-after in the district. Known for his genuine community engagement, Ledesma's leadership has made Roosevelt the fastest-growing high school in Minneapolis Public Schools.

roosevelt.mpschools.org

2025 Middle Level Principal of the Year

John Awsumb
Proctor Middle School

John Awsumb, Principal of Proctor Middle School, has been named the 2025 Minnesota Middle Level Principal of the Year for his exceptional leadership in creating a supportive, safe, and positive school environment. Known for his charisma and optimism, Awsumb is praised by students, staff, and parents alike for his genuine care, collaborative approach, and transparent decision-making. His ability to inspire and uplift the school community has made him a highly respected leader, with teachers and parents appreciating his open communication and proactive efforts to enhance the middle school experience.

ms.proctor.k12.mn.us

2024-2025 High School Assistant Principal of the Year

Lamii Zarlee
Fridley High School

Lamii Zarlee, Assistant Principal at Fridley High School, has been named the 2024-2025 Minnesota High School Assistant Principal of the Year for his exceptional leadership, focus on student success, and dedication to fostering a positive school culture. Known for his approachability and strong relationships with students, Zarlee builds connections by being present and engaged with them, offering support and checking in on their progress. Teachers and staff praise his promotion of restorative practices and his active role in community engagement, using methods like community circles to repair relationships and create open communication. As a leader, Zarlee effectively balances the demands of his role, ensuring systems of support are in place to meet students' academic and social-emotional needs while fostering a collaborative culture among staff.

fhs.fridleyschools.org

2024-2025 Middle Level Assistant Principal of the Year

Julie Johnson
Wayzata Central Middle School

Julie Johnson, Assistant Principal at Wayzata Central Middle School, has been named the 2024-2025 Minnesota Middle Level Assistant Principal of the Year for her exceptional leadership in creating a supportive and inclusive environment. Students and staff alike praise her for fostering a positive school culture where students feel safe, supported, and valued. Johnson is recognized for her focus on both academic excellence and social-emotional learning (SEL), integrating SEL into daily practices to address students' needs, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her commitment to personalized support and student well-being extends beyond the classroom, with parents appreciating her holistic approach to helping students succeed both academically and emotionally.

wayzataschools.org/cms

Courtesy of the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals

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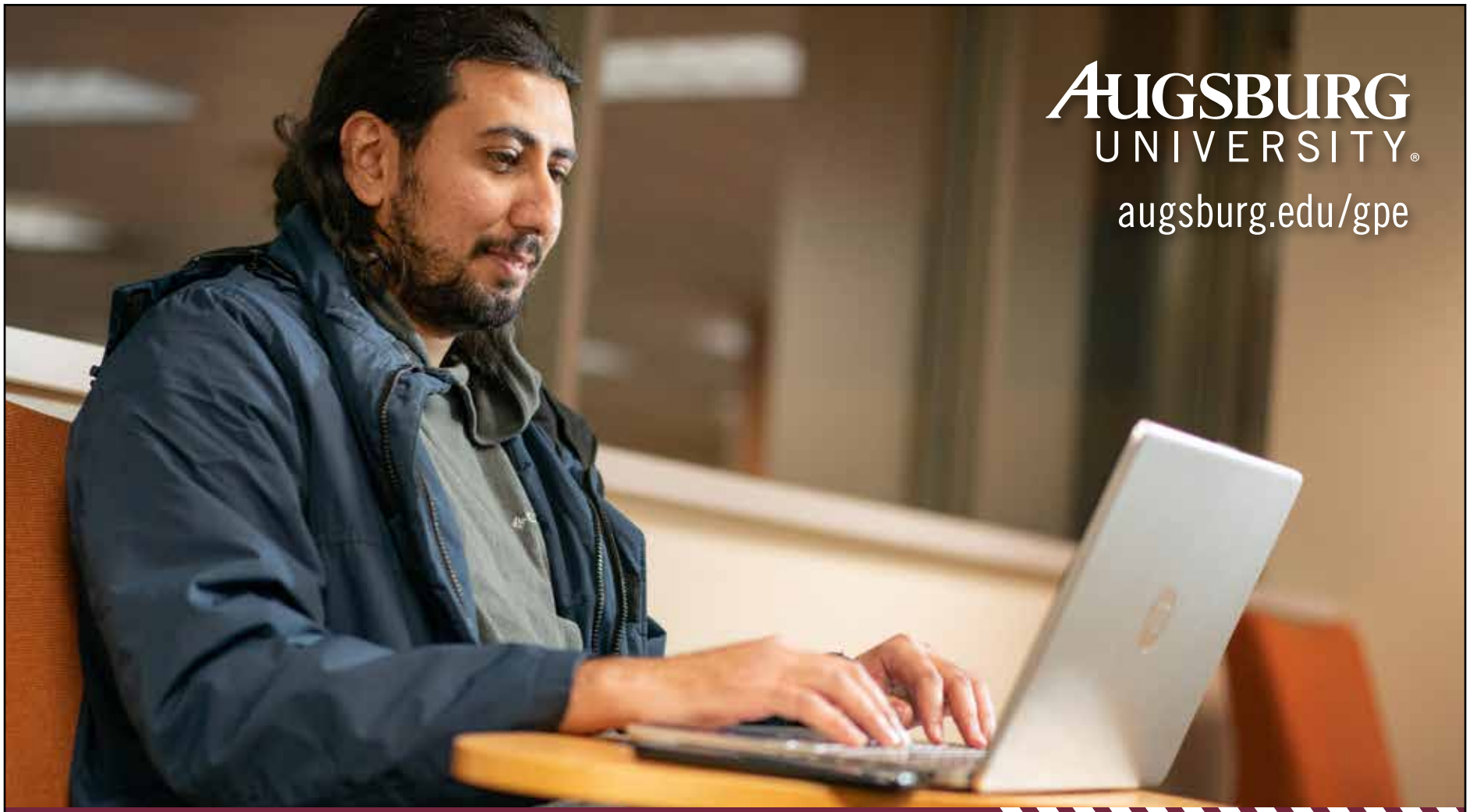

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The MAT provides essential learning for all new teachers with licensure concentrations spanning elementary education, secondary education, special education, and English as a second language. This program offers a uniquely Augsburg approach to teacher education and licensure, empowering you to not only build the necessary skills for educating K–12 students but also acquire the confidence to critically analyze your own pedagogy and the complex power structures in education.

For more information and to apply, visit **augsburg.edu/gpe**.