



## Getting Students Prepared for Life After High School



### Seymour Community School District

The Seymour Community School District is proud of their state-of-the-art Technical Education facility, which includes learning spaces for automotive, wood shop, fab lab, machining, home construction, electricity, welding and metal fabrication. It is also the home to Thunder Manufacturing and the Thunder Service Center.

This beautiful facility is the culmination of activities that began during the 17/18 School Year. Prior to that year, enrollment in the Tech Ed programs was floundering and the district struggled to hire and retain staff. Staci Sievert, who was a current staff member at that time in the Social Studies department, offered to get her certification and teach the Tech Ed. classes.

It was also during the 17/18 school year that school leaders brought local business and

community partners together to collaborate with school staff on how best to develop the local workforce to support our local communities. These discussions helped to create the foundation for the Tech Ed curriculum and program development, guided the purchase of new equipment, and played an instrumental role in the eventual passage of the building referendum. This project is a true example of community partnership.

We continue to expand our programming to meet the needs of our students. From creating classes that integrate both math and technology standards to increasing our number of dual credit classes that our students can benefit from, we continue to seek out opportu-

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## Next Level Learning: La Follette Introduces New Video Game Design Course



### Madison Metropolitan School District

For La Follette senior Cullen Samsa, the path from playing his favorite video game — Resident Evil 4 — at home to building a game of his own at school has been nothing short of surreal.

“It’s been what I’ve wanted to do since the beginning of the decade,” he said. “Now I get to be on the other side of it, actually making games. It’s so cool.”

He’s one of nearly 90 students enrolled in La Follette’s brand-new Game Design 1 course — a yearlong class that introduces students to C# coding, 3D game development using Unity software, physics concepts and even 3D modeling. By the end of the course, students have the skills to create a functional 3D game entirely from scratch.

The interest has been so high that teacher

Freddie Pellien II started the year with three full sections and more students than computers. And for Pellien, that enthusiasm speaks to something much bigger happening across Madison.

In recent years, major game studios have expanded their footprint in the city, Pellien said. But until now, Madison’s high schools haven’t offered coursework designed to prepare students for these fast-growing careers.

“We have graphic design, video production, computer programming . . . but nothing tailored specifically to game development,” Pellien explained. “If these companies are coming here, we want our students to be ready

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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 WI™*  
 PO Box 1704  
 Eau Claire, WI 54702  
 Phone/Fax 715-839-7074  
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Please direct all inquiries to:  
 renee@teachingtodaywi.com

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## Building Homes, Building Futures: Inside Monroe's LAUNCH Skilled Building Trades Program



*Cara Carper*  
Student Occupation & Academic Readiness  
(SOAR) Coordinator  
Monroe School District

In Green County, students aren't just learning about construction, they're building homes that change lives. The LAUNCH Skilled Building Trades program, also known as the Home Construction Cooperative, is part of Monroe School District's innovative LAUNCH initiative. Designed for juniors and seniors, LAUNCH connects classroom learning to real-world business and community projects through career-based "strands." The Skilled Building Trades strand prepares students for in-demand careers while addressing the county's housing shortage.

### A Program Built on Purpose

The Home Construction Cooperative began in the 2023–2024 school year when students renovated a dilapidated house donated by an area hospital to the Green County Development Corporation (GCDC). GCDC then raised more than \$120,000 from local businesses and non-profits to cover the costs of renovation materials. Skilled Building Trades students completely gutted and renovated the home. The home was then sold by GCDC, with proceeds reinvested into the program to fund future builds.

That first year proved the concept. In year two, students got the opportunity to build a new home from the ground up. Now in year three, due to increased student interest and participation from students from other area schools, another session of the class was added, providing a morning crew and an afternoon crew. This year the home was purchased before construction was complete, so students are working directly with the buyer to personalize finishes and manage changes throughout the build. Students also were able to learn how change orders happen, how adjustments are managed,

and what it takes to communicate clearly when plans shift.

### Facilities and Learning Spaces

Currently, students split time between classroom instruction and the active job site. However, with the construction of the Monroe School District's new high school, a dedicated LAUNCH area and updated technical education spaces will give students access to modern shop facilities before stepping onto the build site. This improved preparation (including additional hands-on work with tools, plan reading, and measurement skills) will elevate both student confidence and construction quality.

### What Students Learn

The Skilled Building Trades strand exposes students to materials, tools, machines, and processes used in light construction. Using a problem-based, hands-on approach, students apply algebra, geometry, and trigonometry to real construction challenges. The curriculum includes foundational math, construction technology, carpentry, and units aligned with plumbing and electrical basics, along with the core LAUNCH collaborative classroom experience.

Students learn to operate industry-standard tools and equipment, including circular saws, miter saws, nail guns, drills, levels, layout tools, and various hand tools essential to carpentry and finishing work.

In addition to hard skills, students gain important durable skills such as teamwork, leadership, project management, problem-solving, critical thinking, professional responsibility, and work ethic

### Real-World Impact

Green County faces a projected need for 2,578 additional housing units by 2030. At the same time, local construction businesses

are experiencing workforce shortages. This program tackles both issues at once.

Of the 36 students who participated in the first two years, 18 have gone directly into the trades or pursued construction-related degrees, including construction management at a nearby college. Many have joined local contractors, strengthening the county's workforce pipeline.

### Community Partnerships

The program would not be possible without collaboration with the community. Monroe School District partners with GCDC, local contractors, realtors, the City of Monroe, and other Green County school districts. If this year's project wraps up early, students may assist Green County Habitat for Humanity on their home build. This opportunity will reinforce the service-minded spirit behind the program.

### Looking Ahead

Planning is already underway for next year, with invitations again extended to all Green County school districts to continue to provide the benefit of the program county-wide. The new Monroe High School facility will further expand hands-on opportunities and strengthen continuity between classroom and job site.



The long-term vision is clear: build quality homes, strengthen the local workforce, and give students a meaningful pathway into skilled trades careers.

In Green County, students aren't just constructing houses. They're constructing their futures, one board, one blueprint, and one opportunity at a time.

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## Building Futures: The Vision House Legacy at Hartford Union High School



Hartford Union High School District

Since the 1990s, the Hartford Rotary Club and Hartford Union High School (HUHS) have maintained a partnership with a singular goal: putting students in the driver's seat to build a real, single-family home from the ground up in just one school year. The result is the Vision House.

Building a home is about more than just wood and nails. Our students take the lead throughout the entire process, gaining hands-on experience in:

- Creating the Vision: Designing floor plans and selecting interior finishes.

- The Heavy Lifting: Working side-by-side with local professionals to frame the structure and install complex systems.
- The Finishing Touches: Executing the landscaping and learning the nuances of marketing and selling a property.

Students who rise to this challenge do not just walk away with two school credits; they leave with real-world skills that many professionals don't master until years into their careers.

### The 2025/2026 Vision House

We broke ground on our latest project on September 18, 2025. This year's home was

designed by 2025 graduate Mr. Ethan Birkel. While Mr. Birkel developed the plans during his time at HUHS, his design is so impressive that local builders in the Hartford area are already utilizing his plans for other new constructions!

What makes this house special?

- Spacious Layout: A light-filled 3-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom floor plan.
- Smart Features: A two-car attached garage and an exposed basement ready for future finishing.
- The "Wow" Factor: A second-story deck located directly off the kitchen, offering a spectacular view.

This year, we also welcomed a new partner, a local contracting company, featuring a familiar face at the helm: Project Manager Mr. Mike Berger. Mr. Berger is a former HUHS student and a Vision House participant himself. Having a graduate return to mentor the next generation provides our students with a living example of exactly where their hard work and dedication can lead.

### A Sustainable Community Impact

The Vision House is a premier example of a community working hand-in-hand with its youth. The Hartford Rotary Club Foundation manages the financing and land acquisition.

When the house is sold, 100% of the profit is reinvested to purchase the lot for the following year's class, ensuring this legacy continues.

Keep an eye out! The 2025/2026 Vision House will be hitting the market in just a few short months.



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## What is a Boilermaker?

Abe Inghram, Apprentice Coordinator  
Boilermakers #107

One of the more common responses we get is, "Don't they play for Purdue?" Truth is that many people have never heard of a Boilermaker.

What we really do is industrial construction across the country. We build and repair power plants, refineries, chemical plants, paper mills, steel mills, shipyards, mines, and a variety of other industrial facilities. To work in these facilities, we develop skills in welding, rigging, cutting, layout, fit up, blueprint reading, planning, and many more. A group of Boilermakers will be able to know how to take a 100,000-pound component, hook it up to a crane, safely move it into place with precision, make x-ray quality welds, and do it all with pride.

The Boilermakers started their history by making steam locomotives. We continue our history by making today's latest nuclear plants, advanced naval ships, and adding vital infrastructure to this country.

Boilermakers don't have your typical work lifestyle. We are busy during the spring and fall months, stay steady during the winter months, and then work slows during the summer. This equates to about a 9-month work year that includes a healthy salary. We travel for work, usually being at a work site for about

2-4 weeks. We can travel across the country, but most Boilermakers stay within the state.

My 2 favorite things about being a Boilermaker are having my summers off (Wisconsin summers are great) and the amount of change in my work setting. I'll be on a job for 2-4 weeks, then go to a different site that has different co-workers, different bosses, and different work. I wouldn't last long in a work setting that doesn't change. Another plus is that as a journeyman Boilermaker you will always have a choice to work as much as you please. You can work a lot and travel the country or only work a couple jobs a year that are close to home. It all depends on how much money you want to make.

The career has its negatives also. The places we work aren't meant for humans. We'll work at heights, in the cold, in the heat, in tight spots, in dirty spots. Some jobs are a challenge (maybe not a negative).

All in all, Boilermakers are skilled in their trade, needed across our country, and are proud of what they do.





## Tiger Nation Spotlights: Technical Education in Action at Hillsboro

Rose Davey,  
Hillsboro School District

### We Are Hillsboro: Ed Levy



“Hillsboro is a place where people care about each other and want to see each other succeed. This district is where I went to school, and where I plan to retire from.”

Mr. Levy began his career as a technical education teacher in the fall of 1994 in the Waupun School District. “When my wife and I started our family, we decided to move back to Hillsboro, where we had grown up. I took a job in Mauston at that time, and ended up teaching long-term in Richland Center. When my former Technical Education teacher, Mr. Schaufnagel, retired from Hillsboro, I applied for the job. I wanted to give back to this community.”

An average day in a tech ed classroom centers on teaching students how to use the variety of machines in the shop. “My classes cover the basics in

woodworking, construction, welding (using several different processes), and power mechanics.” Each course begins by ensuring students know how to safely use the equipment in each class. For Ed, what quickly follows is relevance. “My goal is always to deliver content that my students are going to be able to use in their day-to-day lives. I want them to take confidence and pride in the skills they develop during their time here.”

Mr. Levy’s own journey as an educator began in the same Hillsboro Tech Ed classroom he teaches in today. “I chose this field because of the influence of my former teachers here in Hillsboro. Mr. Isley, Mr. Marshall, and Mr. Schaufnagel showed me the dignity of having dirty hands after work, and that you can help others at the same time.”

Ed now has a collection of remind-

ers from his history as a helper, “I ruined several outfits in shop when I started because you truly do “get your hands dirty” demonstrating and teaching students. My wife still does not appreciate the good shirts with oil stains and welding holes in them.”

In his time away from school, Ed enjoys spending time with his family, being a grandpa, and restoring vintage and antique vehicles.

“I want to thank our families for allowing me to interact with the most important people in your life for eight hours a day. I hope my students leave my classes with new skills and a boost in their self-esteem.”

[www.hillsboro.k12.wi.us](http://www.hillsboro.k12.wi.us)



### Mr. Levy Offers Rehearsal in Trades



Thanks to a generous donation of materials from a Hillsboro lumber company, students in Mr. Levy’s Building Trades class have been erecting a construction trainer module. This model is a replica of a building corner, featuring a laid platform and walls constructed at full scale by students.

The firsthand experience doesn’t stop where the framing ends, this model will be used to practice residential electrical wiring, plumbing, and drywall work as semester continues.

Building Trades offers students in grades 10–12 the opportunity to learn how to safely operate a variety of portable power tools, practice footing and foundations, framing, roofing, and careers in construction, plumbing, masonry and electrical. The class also emphasizes workplace safety across the industries.

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### From Sanding to Standing

Students in Mr. Levy’s Woods and Welding class have been diligently drafting designs and executing plans as they fabricate end tables.

“It’s been really fun to watch the kids with this project, many have gone a step above to create something special that is going to last a very long time.” Mr. Levy said of his students’ work.

Sophomore Levi Hemmersbach’s table came from humble beginnings - upcycled scrap wood and metal bars from the shop. Levi sanded the boards repeatedly and extensively before beginning the epoxy process, and was so pleased with the final construction, he gifted the table to his mother.

For students in Woods and Welding, these tables are more than just a place to set things down, they stand as a testament to their progress as craftspeople. When students turn their plans into a sturdy reality, their self-concept and competency expands to meet and complete the next project.



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## Platteville High School Construction Class Wraps Up 2-Year Project



Platteville High School Construction Teacher, Jason Sasse and his students are wrapping up a two-year, full-size, residential house build project.

Ready for landscaping and a few finishing touches, the 5-bedroom, 3-bathroom home features approximately 3,800 square feet of living space, modern finishes, and energy-efficient design. Over the past two school years, more than 40 high school students took on every phase of

the project, including foundation work, framing, roofing, electrical wiring, plumbing, and interior finishing such as drywall, floors, cabinetry, and trim.

*Note — Licensed contractors performed all wiring, plumbing, and HVAC. Students observed and assisted when applicable. The owners contracted out the roofing, drywall, foundation and excavation work.*

“This isn’t a small project or a model home

— there was a high-level of customization to this project,” says Sasse. “It is a culmination of partnering with the local community construction experts teaching our students about the construction process. Seeing them transition from reading the house plans to safely and skillfully installing siding or flooring is incredibly inspiring.”

Across the board, the PHS Construction Program aims to teach students to be safety-minded, have an understanding of what to expect when they get to the adult world of construction, and how to handle their own continued growth in whichever industry they enter.

“One of the reasons we have this program is to help equip the students to be the future workforce for area trades companies. We don’t know if kids are headed into commercial, residential, or specialty trades so we’re striving to give them a solid look at all aspects of the construction industry,” Sasse said.

“People learn best through repetition. Sometimes that repetition happens after failing at a task. We’re giving them a low-cost environment to “not get something perfect” so they can learn from the mistake and not repeat it when the stakes are higher. Part of that process means helping students understand that they aren’t perfect, can struggle through tasks and re-work, and not get frustrated when someone needs to address quality issues. That experience is something that applies to many future work environments, and many future employers will benefit from having

an employee that can work through those situations without getting offended,” he continued.

The PHS Construction Program is comprised of 4 classes that build off each prior course:

**Construction 1** deals mostly with foundations, framing (floor, wall, and roof), roofing, openings, and exterior coverings (siding, soffit, and fascia). Students learn about each system (and safety requirements) and then construct each system in a shop setting. When finished we have a completed 8’X12’ lawn shed that requires no maintenance (usually having lined up an owner before we start the project). Students are required to do all materials estimating and pricing to provide the potential “customer” a price quote.

**Construction 2** covers all interior located systems/processes including introductions to plumbing, electrical, insulation, window/door sets, flooring, drywall (hanging, finishing, texturing), trim, and some cabinetry content. Students learn about systems, then (and safety requirements), participate in a lab giving them hands on experience with materials, tools required, and a general sense of time required for installation. These labs are generally disassembled or discarded after completion.

**Construction 3 and 4** (for returning students) is where we have done a full house build. The students do all framing (other than truss setting) soffit/fascia, siding, window and exterior door installations, interior door sets, hard flooring, and most trim work. While electricians, plumbers, insulators, and drywallers are on the site, students have had a chance to watch and help with the installation process of each phase. While on site, all safety requirements are observed and students are equipped with all PPE necessary for safe participation.

Past projects also include:

- A 16' x 16' pool house
- A 40' x 48' 4 van/4 12' x 12' storage bay garage
- Several sheds of various sizes
- Did a demo and framed a new basement space
- Re-floored an entire house

“Overall, I think a student having the experience of heading to a jobsite (even when weather conditions aren’t perfect), having to accomplish steps in a process they don’t absolutely love, while enjoying the satisfaction of taking a process through to completion is an immensely beneficial journey we can give.” says Sasse “Seeing the parts come together as a whole is key to the trades education process, and that understanding is something we can’t easily “grade” but is invaluable to future trades employers.”

## Getting Students Prepared for Life After High School

Continued from Page 1



nities to grow and change.

Outreach also plays an important role in our program development. Staff members have hosted afternoon and evening classes for community members to use the school equipment to construct their own projects. The Thunder Service Center has hosted com-

plementary tire pressure checks for senior citizens, and Thunder Manufacturing has created small batch personalized products for local businesses.

One of the special projects that is happening this year is the building of a small green house by our adaptive technology education class. Funded by a Community Impact grant from Harbor Freight Tools for Schools, students will work in partnership with skilled community members to construct a greenhouse that will then be used for life skills training, job skills training, and science lessons for years to come.

Excitement in the woodshop was palpable as students began work on the greenhouse March 9th. Adaptive students are putting drills to use as they build walls for their group’s own greenhouse. Freshmen Intro to Technology students are learning how to read blueprints to help support the work. And beyond the construction, students in the adaptive class are learning that money earned through their ThunderBrew coffee business will be important to buy seeds and soil once the greenhouse is built.

In the evolving field of technology education, we continue to prioritize staying

connected to industry partners to ensure that our students are ready for the work force. This includes an annual Career and Job Fair that brings over fifty local businesses to the high school to share information about different careers and jobs with all of our high school students, as well as students from neighboring communities. At the Fair, students have the opportunity to ask questions about different job opportunities, as well as the skills and education needed for success in that job field. For many students, this experience is their first opportunity to interact with industry professionals independently.

In a community where technology education and the trades are highly supported and valued, Seymour Community School District continues to seek out opportunities to continue to provide students with relevant and engaging experiences in this critical content area and to ensure that their students graduate ready for life after high school!

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## Students Build Tiny Home, Big Opportunities at Logan High School



*Nick Marcou  
Communications Coordinator  
School District of La Crosse*

Inside the construction lab at Logan High School, students measure, cut, and lift the frame of what will soon become something much bigger than a school project — a tiny home built by students, for students, with

lessons that reach far beyond the classroom.

Students in Logan’s Building and Construction program have started work on a fully functional tiny home that will serve as a hands-on learning experience in skilled trades and a future training space for students building independent living skills. The project is made possible through a Gold Star Grant from the La Crosse Public Education Foundation.

Students designed the tiny home and are now constructing it from the ground up. They will gain real-world experience in framing, electrical work, plumbing, roofing, siding, finish carpentry, and ADA accessibility.

“This project gives students the chance to build something with big, positive impacts,” said Ryan Schreiner, technology education teacher at Logan High School. “They’re learning technical skills, teamwork, responsibility, and pride in their work. When our kids see a structure they built with their own hands from the ground up, that experience sticks with them.”

Students will work alongside educators and community trades professionals who will share expertise in all areas of the project. The collaboration will connect students with local industry while helping them see the wide



range of careers available in the skilled trades.

When construction is complete, the tiny home will take on a second life as a hands-on learning space for students in special education programs across the district. Students in grades 6–12 from Logan and Central high schools and Logan and Longfellow middle schools will use the space to practice independent living skills such as cooking, budgeting, home maintenance, and daily routines in a realistic environment.

The project will leave something lasting well after graduation: a place built by students, for students, where learning continues long after the final nail is set.



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## Middleton High School's Woodworking and Constructions Teachers and Students Look for Community Support to Build a Solar Kiln



Carrie Brooker, Public Relations Specialist  
Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District

Middleton High School engineering and technology teacher Justin Zander recently earned a grant to build a solar kiln, and he's looking for community partners to support

his efforts to remove and harvest trees to collect logs and mill them into lumber.

Justin Zander said milling their own lumber will reduce costs and allow woodworking students to do more and bigger classroom projects. He said the school spends about \$6,000 a year on lumber. He estimates that once the kiln is operating, the figure will be closer to \$600 annually.

With the grant Zander won from the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District Education Foundation, he plans to build a solar kiln with his colleague Dan Biddick and Biddick's construction students next semester. Once the kiln is finished, Zander's woodworking

students will begin collecting logs and milling them into lumber.

Zander would like to connect with local arbor-related businesses as well as municipalities and individuals that remove and

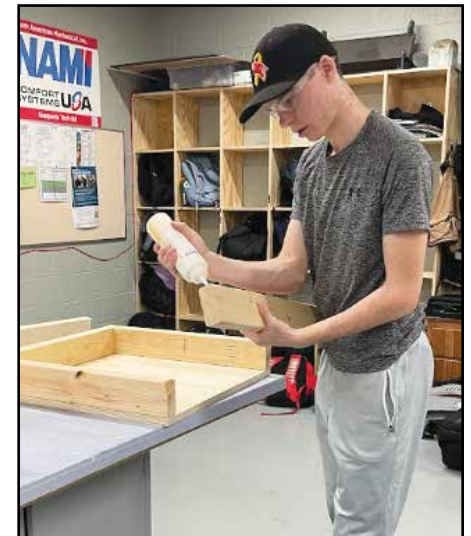
harvest trees to draw on their knowledge and resources. He and three of his woodworking students recently talked with WMTV 15 News about the project.

He explained how the kiln operates: "It's basically an insulated shed. You put vents into it, and it acts like a wind tunnel to dry out boards in the right way. It heats up wood to kill bugs and acts as a dryer to take the moisture out of the wood."

Riley Kuehn Freshmen Henry Courtier and Riley Kuehn and junior Veda Gear shared with WMTV 15 News what the woodworking classes mean to them and the importance of finding a high school class where you belong.

Zander is teaching 125 students in five woodworking classes this semester, and he said the high school has 125 to 175 students enrolled in woodworking classes each semester. It's part of Middleton High School's strong career and technical education offerings, which have been highlighted in national outlets including The Wall Street Journal (subscription required) and CBS Evening News.

"I am hopeful that we can generate enough lumber to easily meet the needs of all our high school students and then start working towards assisting with the supply at the middle schools as well," Zander said. "I am looking for members of the community



that may have resources and knowledge to guide this endeavor."

Individuals and organizations interested in supporting Zander's work can email him at [zander1@mcpasd.k12.wi.us](mailto:zander1@mcpasd.k12.wi.us).

[www.mcpasd.k12.wi.us](http://www.mcpasd.k12.wi.us)



## Kromrey Middle School's "Trade Up" Event Showcases Skilled Trade Careers



Seventh graders at Kromrey Middle School got a sneak peek of careers in the trades at the school's Trade Up event on Feb. 17.

Technical education teacher Dan Biddick organized the event to coincide

with a day-long academic and career planning (ACP) experience for seventh graders to learn from skilled trades professionals and employers.

He invited plumbers, electricians and operating engineers, who run heavy machin-

ery such as cranes and excavators, to talk with students. Representatives from two construction companies also presented, discussing careers at their companies such as mechanical contractors and construction jobs.

The presenters highlighted education and training requirements, salary ranges, work environments, and what their jobs entail. They also discussed apprenticeships and the requirements for obtaining journeyman licenses.

Students asked presenters questions about what they do, how much they earn, and how to start training.

"Honestly, all the careers were really interesting to me because you can keep developing your skills, and you can keep advancing onto one specification in your career," seventh grader Harshitha Manikandan told WKOW 27 News, which covered the event.

In addition to hearing from professionals, the event's curriculum included opportunities for students to learn about different types of post-secondary education and post-high school pathways. Students

also received a preview of Middleton High School's Youth Apprenticeship program.

WMTV 15 News also covered the event. Kromrey Middle School Associate Principal and ACP coordinator Joanna Cree told WMTV 15 News the event aimed to broaden students' perspectives about their options after high school.

"The message we're emphasizing is that not everyone wants to go to a four-year college, and that's completely okay," Cree said. "The skilled trades offer great pay, job security and the chance to see something you built with your own hands."

[www.mcpasd.k12.wi.us](http://www.mcpasd.k12.wi.us)





## Real Needs, Real Deadlines, Real Learning

Wil Losch, Technical Education Teacher  
School District of Rhinelander

On Thursdays, the day starts early at the Habitat job site next to Rhinelander High School. Just before 8:00 a.m., students walk across the school parking lot to a row of residential lots owned by Northwoods Habitat for Humanity. Students are currently working on the second of what will eventually be four homes built with RHS crews.

By the time the students arrive, Habitat Construction Manager Ann Sorensen has unlocked the trailer and tool shed. Kwik Trip glazers sit on a work table—an informal tradition once a week. Sorensen and Building Trades teacher Wil Losch gather the group for a quick briefing: task assignments, reminders about sequencing and safety, and some small talk about how a Hodag sports team is doing, how the play rehearsals are going, or who's deer hunting this year. For these students, the school day begins with real work that matters to someone else.

The Building Trades program at Rhinelander High School is structured as a three-course sequence that moves students from foundational skills to full-scale residential construction. The entry point is Light Construction, a semester course typically taken by sophomores and juniors. Students learn safe tool use, basic framing principles,

and how to work with common construction materials. They complete the OSHA 10 curriculum through a partnership with Nicolet College.

Light Construction is also where shop culture begins to take shape. Students see that a successful shop operates much like a professional job site: every tool has a place, materials are stored properly, and the space is left ready for the next crew. Keeping the lab clean, organized, and functional becomes part of the learning experience.

The program's new construction lab opened in December 2025 as part of a \$26 million renovation that will transform all tech ed spaces at RHS and James William Middle School. Local referendum voters sent a clear message of support for building the technical skills of our students and preparing more tradespeople and craftspeople.

Projects in Light Construction vary each semester, but they share a common feature: meeting a real-world need. Students have built storage sheds for district programs and shop equipment such as miter saw tables, worktables, and motor stands for the Marine Powersports course. They have built dugouts for the baseball and softball teams, redecked pontoon boats, and are currently constructing an ice shanty.

Among these projects, sheds are the



Ann Sorensen (L) and Wil Losch (R) pose with a few of their students after a morning briefing on the 2024–25 build.

preferred experience. Building one allows students to practice many of the same structural components used in residential construction—framing walls, setting trusses, installing siding and trim, and completing exterior details like soffit, fascia, and roofing. By the time students finish the project, they have the skills needed to build the shell of a house.

Just as important as the technical skills is the mindset students develop. At the start of the semester, Light Construction classes discuss the values in the Sweat Pledge developed by famous trades advocate Mike Rowe. The pledge emphasizes responsibility, accountability, delayed gratification, and pride in doing work well. The virtues of “Hungry, Humble, and Smart,” described by Patrick Lencioni in *The Ideal Team Player*, also shape team culture. Residential Construction students use these ideas when evaluating their team members each quarter.

Behind the scenes, the program also aligns with the district's target-based grading practices. The Technology Education department at RHS, working with input from local business owners and tradespeople, developed a shared set of learning targets used across all department courses—from automotive and fabrication to construction. While each course defines proficiency differently, the categories remain consistent: Safety, Measurement, Materials, Tools, Project Management, and Professionalism.

Students who enroll in Residential Construction I and II partner with Northwoods Habitat for Humanity to build homes for local families. Losch and Sorensen have collaborated on Habitat homes since 2022, and this spring, students will help them complete their fourth house as Northwoods Habitat moves towards completing its 30th house.

Residential Construction students represent the largest volunteer workforce on these

Habitat builds. Because the course sections cover four periods each day on an eight-period schedule, students spend extended blocks of time on site from early September through late May. Students learn from and work alongside master plumbers, electricians, and concrete specialists as those stages are completed.

One of the most memorable moments this year came late in the fall when the crew worked to finish the roof before winter arrived. A few times each year, the school principal grants permission for the class to spend a full school day at the build site when the construction schedule demands it. Roofing week was one of those times. By mid-afternoon, students worked their way up the final rows of shingles, nail guns popping steadily in the cold, wet November air. The last ridge cap went into place just a day before the season's first permanent snowfall.

The program itself has deep roots in the community. Building trades courses at Rhinelander date back to the 1980s under longtime teacher Tom Davis. In a fitting full-circle moment, Sorensen herself took the class as an RHS student in the early 2000s when Davis was building one of his final houses with students. RHS and Habitat Collaborations date back to 2014.

For our students, the lessons extend beyond construction techniques, and the relevance extends beyond a course grade. Students learn how to solve problems, work as a team, and take pride in building something that matters. Whether it is a shed for a school program or a home for a local family, each project reinforces the same idea: meaningful learning often begins by meeting a real need.

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## Hamilton Hosts Industries in Schools Tour Connecting Students With Local Professionals



### Hamilton School District

Dozens of business leaders from local manufacturing and construction companies visited Hamilton High School (HHS) March 11 to tour Applied Engineering and Technology (AET) labs and business classrooms. The event connects students and staff with industry professionals to strengthen community relationships. Industries in Schools Tours are

conducted in partnership with the Waukesha County Business Alliance.

“When our business partners saw our teachers teaching and heard directly from one of our senior students, it reinforced what makes our school special; passionate students, dedicated teachers and incredible opportunities,” shares Hamilton High School Business Education Teacher Sheila Frafjord.

“Industries in Schools gives the busi-

ness community a firsthand look at how schools like Hamilton are preparing students for the future,” comments Waukesha County Business Alliance Vice President of Talent & Workforce Jerry Pettigrew. “By connecting business leaders with educators and students, we can better align classroom learning with the skills employers truly need. It was inspiring to see the career pathways Hamilton has built in the trades, business, IT and more. The hands-on experiences they offer are helping students explore meaningful careers that will support our business community.”

Community Programs Manager for a manufacturer of generators, Kelly Skindzelewski, says the visit to HHS offered an eye-opening look at the school’s strong academic programs and impressive educators. “It was clear how closely the curriculum aligns with real-world business needs,” Skindzelewski noted. “As we prepare to establish operations in Sussex, we’re optimistic about the potential opportunities to partner with the district.”

“This was such a great event,” shares Hamilton High School Associate Principal and Extended Learning Coordinator Marquee Goike. “I really appreciated having the opportunity to show off the amazing



things our Career and Technical Education teachers do each day for our students. It goes beyond just content, our teachers are setting students up for success in the future. I want to thank our visitors for taking the time to come in and learn all about what we offer and how we can best support kids and the future of our community.”

[www.hamilton.k12.wi.us](http://www.hamilton.k12.wi.us)



## Hamilton Students Build Ultimate Doghouse for NARI NextGen Trades Challenge



### Hamilton School District

Hamilton High School students put their construction skills to the test by creating the ultimate doghouse as part of the NextGen Trades Challenge, hosted by the NARI Milwaukee Foundation. The completed project was on display during the NARI Milwaukee Spring Home Improvement Show in February.

The NextGen Trades Challenge is designed to provide real world trades-related projects and create connections between students, schools and NARI Milwaukee member contractors. The goal is to inspire the next generation to consider careers in the trades industry.

“The challenge allows our students to

apply what they’ve learned in the classroom to a real-world project,” shared Hamilton High School Applied Engineering and Technology Teacher Alan Mamerow. “They took pride in their work and gained confidence in their skills, exactly what hands-on education is all about.”

Hamilton students have been fully immersed in the construction process; planning, measuring, cutting, assembling and finishing a doghouse designed to be both functional and eye-catching. The project was featured within an interactive “Backyard Build Off” area at the NARI Milwaukee Spring Home Improvement Show, where attendees could see the students’ craftsmanship up close.

“We are incredibly proud of our Applied Engineering and Technology Program at Hamilton,” Mamerow explained. “Taking part in this challenge is an opportunity for our students to share their talents with a larger audience.”

Hamilton was one of ten local high schools taking part in the NextGen Trades Challenge. Students at each school tackled individual elements of the backyard and were assigned different projects such as an ultimate doghouse, a play set, a ninja cave and an entire outdoor activity zone.

“The challenge is a great way for students



to get hands-on experience and participate in a project from start to finish,” said NextGen Trades Challenge Advisor Tom Gies. “They follow all the same steps as a professional construction project, from preparing drawings to working together as a team to complete the project on time.”

[www.hamilton.k12.wi.us](http://www.hamilton.k12.wi.us)





## West Bend Students Near Finish Line on Habitat for Humanity Home

Nancy Kunkler, Communications Manager  
West Bend School District

A machine breakdown causing a three-month siding delay. Wisconsin winters. For the West Bend East and West High Schools students in the Advanced Construction class helping to build a Habitat for Humanity home in West Bend, the project has delivered far more than construction skills. It has delivered a masterclass in resilience.

The home is now on track for completion in April 2026, a milestone that has been hard-won by more than two dozen students

from West Bend, Kewaskum High School, and Living Word High School working under the direction of West Bend Technology Education Teacher Rob Willmas.

When a machine failure at a siding facility occurred, the project stalled. The delay stretched to three months, the kind of setback that derails timelines and tests the patience of even seasoned tradespeople. For the students, it became a teachable moment that no classroom exercise could replicate.

Willmas pivoted. Students took on smaller construction tasks, while also focusing on resume and cover letter writing, and learning workforce readiness skills. Contractors were invited into the classroom to speak candidly about their trades, including the work, the challenges, and the career paths available.

"It's not just about you," Willmas has told his students throughout the build. To deliver a successful project, they must demonstrate communication, patience, and attention to detail—the same standards any employer or foreman would expect on a job site.



That professional framework has shaped how students approach their work. They have been reminded repeatedly that the home they are building is someone's home. The project, now in its second academic year, marked a significant step up in scale and complexity from previous Advanced Construction class projects. Earlier student teams partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Washington and Dodge Counties to construct tiny homes while fully indoors at a local technical college. However, this 1,920-square-foot, three-bedroom residence in West Bend required pre-built framing to be transported and assembled on-site.

This Habitat for Humanity build demonstrates what applied learning looks like at full scale: East and West High Schools students encountering the same supply chain disruptions, scheduling challenges, and professional expectations that define careers in the trades. The delays were not a detour from the curriculum. They were the curriculum. Come April, those words will carry new weight.

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## Greater Fox Cities Habitat for Humanity — Youth Build Program



*Nadine Janik*

*Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity*

Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity is proud to celebrate a successful year with our Youth Build Program. We are especially thankful for our continued partnership with Menasha High School for the 2025 Youth Build.

Under the leadership of Technical Education Instructor Bryan Arnold, Menasha High School students worked incredibly hard and demonstrated exceptional dedication throughout the build.

The students gained valuable hands-on construction experience, built confidence, and experienced a deep sense of purpose while contributing to a safe, affordable home for a local family. Students worked side by side with contractors, senior crew volunteers, Habitat construction supervisors and staff, industry professionals, and the partner family—an experience that truly brings learning to life!

*Bryan Arnold shared:*

“This year’s Youth Build has been an amazing experience for all who have been involved. Each day the students are on site, I have seen a growing confidence in their skills and abilities. There were many learning opportunities with companies around the area who donated their time and labor to make our students’ experience positive. Whether it be the countless volunteers who worked alongside and mentored the students each day, or the businesses that took the time to meet our students, Habitat went above and beyond in supporting our students’ learning—and mine as well.

I was able to witness these students grow and learn in a real-life atmosphere that taught them so much more than how to build a home. The teamwork, dedication, and positive attitudes they brought to the job site every day—even during hot, cold, or rainy weather—made me proud to be their teacher.

We have several students who are now interested in pursuing careers as electricians,

equipment operators, and carpenters. I can’t thank Habitat and all involved enough for their time and commitment to creating a positive experience for our kids here at Menasha High School. I hope that our experience this year can be a steppingstone for the future of Youth Build not only in our area, but throughout the State of Wisconsin, as it provides such a unique opportunity to help foster the growth of our youth. Thank you again to all involved.”

*One of the Menasha High School students, Emma, shared:*

“This year’s Youth Build experience gave me a deeper understanding of the trades and the teamwork required to bring a home to life. Being on site allowed me to learn how each phase of construction connects—from reading blueprints to framing and exterior work. It was powerful to see how planning, communication, and hands-on skill all come together to create something lasting. Knowing that our work would eventually become a home for a family made every task feel more meaningful and rewarding.

The trades education I gained through Youth Build also gave me a new appreciation for the level of detail, craftsmanship, and problem solving involved in construction. I learned how important precision and layout are, especially when it comes to siding and structural work, and how even small details can make a big difference in the quality of a home. Working alongside experienced builders and the Senior Crew allowed me to learn techniques, safety practices, and real-world skills that you can’t fully understand in a classroom. This experience gave me confidence in my abilities and a stronger understanding of what goes into building quality homes. Learning the process from the ground up has been invaluable and will continue to influence how I approach my future in housing.

While I haven’t always planned on working directly in construction, I’ve had a long-standing interest in architecture, interior

design, and home sales. Through the experience and knowledge I gained from Youth Build, I was able to land an internship with a local construction and realty company, which perfectly combines construction and real estate. I am now also a licensed real estate agent, and this program played a big role in helping me understand homes from the ground up.”

Our contractors also shared how meaningful it was to work alongside the Menasha High School students this year. The students learned so many aspects of the trades—from watching trusses go up, to raising walls, installing windows, roofing, drywall, electrical work, and more. Contractors spoke with pride about the students’ willingness to learn, try new things, and grow with every step of the build.

*Cameron Taylor, Construction Coordinator, shared:*

“As a representative of Portside Builders, the projects we can help sponsor bring much joy and growth to our communities. The Youth Build Program is another inspiration to Portside Builders as we continue to build the future of the construction trades in Wisconsin. It was my pleasure to be a part of this opportunity.”

*Mike Ebben, Co-Owner of a local roofing company, shared:*

“Partnering with Habitat for Humanity for

the Youth Build continues to be an incredible experience for our team. What makes it especially meaningful is seeing students gain real, hands-on experience that connects directly to life skills and future career opportunities.

Through the Youth Build program, students are able to physically participate in as much of the homebuilding process as possible. When it came to roofing, we created a full mock roof system on the ground so students could safely experience the entire process from start to finish. They installed materials, worked with real tools, and problem solved real world scenarios just like our crews do in the field.

Many students didn’t realize how in-depth roofing truly is. They were surprised by the technology and specialized tools used in today’s industry. We explained how we continually improve our processes to make the work safer, faster, and more efficient. Their engagement was incredible—every student put their best foot forward.

This experience tied directly into their Shop class curriculum, making the learning even more impactful. Several students shared that the hands-on exposure helped clarify which trades they’re most interested in pursuing. Approximately one third of the students

**Continued on Page 15**



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# Building Futures Through Trades Education

*Tiffany Arnold, Executive Director  
Habitat for Humanity of Wausau*

Across the country, educators are looking for ways to reconnect students with hands-on learning and meaningful career pathways. In Central Wisconsin, a partnership between local high schools and Habitat for Humanity of Wausau offers a strong example of how schools and community nonprofits can work together to prepare students for careers in the skilled trades.

Habitat Wausau's Trades Education Program began in 1998 through a partnership with the local technical college. The goal was simple: give students the opportunity to learn residential construction by building a real home that would eventually serve a local family. Over time, the program evolved from a college-based partnership into a model offered directly through area high schools.

Today, Habitat Wausau partners with DC Everest Senior High School, Mosinee High School, and Merrill Senior High School, where construction classes range from 6 to 17 students. Each school hosts the construction project on its campus, creating a real-world learning environment where students can participate in the full process of building a home.

The partnership works because each organization brings different strengths to the project. Schools provide the build platform on school grounds and a qualified instructor to guide students through the learning process. Habitat

Wausau serves as the certified dwelling contractor, provides the building plans and materials, and covers the cost to move the completed home.

Students work together throughout the school year learning layout, framing, roofing, drywall installation, safety practices, and other foundational construction skills. Unlike simulated shop projects, students are building an actual Habitat home that will later be moved to its permanent site and purchased by a Habitat partner family in the community.

One DC Everest senior, Logan Cherek, said he enrolled in the class because he enjoys building projects with family members and had heard the course offered meaningful hands-on experience. Through the program, he has learned that layout and planning are critical elements of residential construction and gained practical experience installing trusses and drywall.

For local contractors, the program has also become an important workforce pipeline. Alex Forer, the owner of a local construction firm, noted the value of hiring students who have participated in the Habitat build:

"When I hire one of the students, I know their teachers, I know what they're learning. I know what they're capable of. There is no other feasible way for these guys to get the kind of experience they do without the Habitat program."

The D.C. Everest Area School District



also notes the program provides students with a unique hands-on opportunity to explore construction careers, build critical skills, and develop a sense of pride in contributing to their community through the construction of a Habitat home.

Over the years, the partnership has helped introduce hundreds of young tradesmen and tradeswomen into the local workforce. Many students graduate with job offers from local contractors, apprenticeships, or plans to continue their education in technical construction

fields such as electrical or plumbing.

For educators seeking ways to expand career and technical education, the Habitat Wausau Trades Education Program demonstrates how schools and nonprofits can collaborate to create meaningful learning experiences. By combining classroom instruction with real-world construction projects, students gain valuable skills while contributing to a project that will benefit a family in their own community.

## Greater Fox Cities Habitat for Humanity — Youth Build Program Continued from Page 14

expressed interest in moving forward in the trades after this experience.

Seeing young people actively learning and envisioning their futures is truly rewarding. Youth Build not only helps build homes—it helps build confidence, clarity, and direction for the next generation. We are honored to be part of a program that invests in both our community and its future workforce."

As the build neared completion, the students led tours of the home for their peers and contractors, proudly sharing what they learned and inspiring others to get involved.

**Max Crookston, Sales Representative for a local roofing supplier, shared:**

"This past year's Youth Build was amazing. All of the students were very engaged and ready to learn. They did a fantastic job with the walkthroughs, describing in detail the process of building a home. These events give me great hope that we have real talent coming to the trades, and I value the opportunity to invest in the next generation."

**Ryan Hartman, President of a local window and door company, shared:**

"Youth Build was a rewarding experience for us. It allowed our company to give back in two ways—by helping provide an experience

to the Youth Build program and by helping a family get into a safe and secure place to live. By giving back to the youth participating in the build, we were able to provide a hands-on experience for future builders. We showed the students the process of placing windows in a home, then allowed them, with oversight, to set and install windows in the remaining openings. Each student gained hands on experience they would not have received elsewhere."

This year, we expanded our Youth Build Program with a new pilot designed to engage more students in meaningful community involvement. We partnered with local building suppliers—who generously donated materials to Menasha, Appleton, and Kaukauna High Schools—as well as local Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, who used these materials to build picnic tables and Leopold benches.

These projects were donated to the Habitat ReStore, displayed, and sold to the public. All proceeds directly support the Youth Build Program. Through this experience, students gained a deeper understanding of the Habitat mission and the importance of giving back. Whether they pursue trades careers or simply carry forward values of community, teamwork, and compassion, the lessons learned through Youth Build stay with them for a lifetime.



We are deeply grateful for our partnerships with community schools, youth groups, and local businesses—all working together to expand hands-on trades education and inspire the next generation of builders.

And for the family, who will call this house their home, the students' work means even more. Every wall raised, every window set, and every nail driven represents hope, stability, and a fresh start. Their hard work will be felt long after the final walkthrough—creating a home built not just with skill, but with heart.

The students helped make homeownership possible and were there to welcome the family into their new home.

It's a full circle journey—students learn and build, communities come together in support, and futures are shaped with purpose.





## Charger Robotics Brings “STEM Blast Off” to Elementary Students



and excitement about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) through fun, interactive activities led by high school students.

“For many of us, it was incredibly meaningful to return to our old elementary schools and give back to the next generation,” says Hamilton High School junior and Charger Robotics co-lead Abbie Dong. “Seeing the excitement in the students’ eyes reminded us why we fell in love with STEM in the first place,” she adds.

High school students visited all four Hamilton School District elementary schools during the months of October and November to introduce STEM

when I was a kid. That is what inspired me to go into STEM and robotics. I got to enjoy seeing many students experiencing the same passion spark I once started with,” Fuhr adds.

Charger Robotics members guided younger students through each station, offering mentorship, encouragement and relatable role models. Elementary students rotated through a variety of activities where they experienced things like driving a robot built by Charger Robotics, building a tower using marshmallows and skewers and experimenting with circuits. Each student received a STEM passport, which is stamped at every station they visit.

“The kids seemed to be most excited about driving the robots themselves and having hands-on projects to do,” says Charger Robotics advisor Morgan Swartzendruber. “I loved seeing the elementary students asking the Charger Robotics students for directions and, in return, watching them help the kids problem-solve.”



Research consistently shows that students introduced to STEM at a young age are more likely to pursue STEM careers later in life. This was a driving force behind the organizers’ mission to bring STEM Blast Off events to younger students.

For more information about Charger Robotics, visit [www.ChargerRobotics.org](http://www.ChargerRobotics.org).

### Hamilton School District

Hamilton High School’s Charger Robotics Team brings hands-on STEM learning to district elementary schools through a new outreach event called “STEM Blast Off.” The program is designed to spark curiosity

experiences to more than 800 third and fourth grade students.

“I attended the Maple Elementary STEM Blast, the school I had gone to years ago,” shares Hamilton High School junior Elise Fuhr. “I remember doing activities like this

[www.hamilton.k12.wi.us](http://www.hamilton.k12.wi.us)



## La Follette Introduces New Video Game Design Course Continued from Page 1



to join them.”

Game Design 1 introduces students to three core areas of the field:

**1. Game Design:** Students use Unity to build the visual world of a game, like laying out maps, environments and objects just like the designers behind

their favorite games.

**2. Coding:** Using C#, they learn how to script behaviors and mechanics. Recently, students completed most of a top-down driving game inspired by classic arcade racers, coding movement, collisions and collectible objects.

**3. 3D Modeling:** Later in the year, students will use Blender to sculpt their own in-game objects, from rocks and trees to custom collectibles, learning the same tools used in professional studios.

The course is intentionally structured so students with different strengths can find their place. Some, like Samsa, latch onto the coding. Others, like senior Daniel Inthachak Rivera, love the design work. His passion for photography and photo editing has him excited to explore 3D sculpting.

And next year, the opportunities will grow even more. As the course expands to Game Design 2, students will be able to pursue Unity industry certifications through Certipoint, credentials that can go straight on a resume and help them stand out to future employers.

For Pellien, though, the most important outcome isn’t just technical skill. It’s confidence.

“If they can take on a big challenge, like



designing, coding or creating, and stick with it, that perseverance will help them anywhere,” he said. “This is only the start, I’m excited to work with student feedback to continually improve the course.”

[www.madison.k12.wi.us](http://www.madison.k12.wi.us)





# Grant Extends STEAM Learning at Lombardi



*Green Bay Area Public School District*

Lombardi Middle School’s Technology and Engineer Teaching Department held its annual CO2 car races on December 19, 2025, but this year, thanks to a grant from the Green Bay Area Public Schools Education Foundation, the races had an added boost.

The Education Foundation funded a new electric starter and timer in a recent grant cycle. At the starting line, lights signify a countdown and an automated system propels the CO2 cars. And at the end of the race, the timing of the cars flashes on the display.

This allows the class to accurately see who designed and made the faster car, and the automatic starter ensures both dragsters start

at the same time. In addition, the class can participate in extension projects with the finishing times of the cars, such as finding the class average for time, and reflecting upon why certain cars fared better than others.

In addition to the starter and timer, the grant funding provided the program with additional track to make the races more realistic, and it allowed it to purchase five high-quality sanders, so the students can finish sanding their cars with newer equipment.

Lombardi’s Pathway to Engineering classes, both advanced and regular, used a design process to make CO2 dragsters. They learn and use the CAD program Onshape to design their cars.



In their design, students needed to think about aerodynamics and weight to make the fastest car possible. Once the car was designed, students cut their cars out of a block of wood. After sanding and painting them, a tournament-style race is held to determine the class champion.

Students use so many different components of learning in this project including science, math, art, engineering and construction.

The races are in honor of Clint Griffith, a Lombardi technology teacher who passed away. The track for the races is named the “Clint Griffith Memorial Raceway at Lombardi International Speedway.”

[www.gbaps.org](http://www.gbaps.org)



## Transform Your Classroom with REAL-WORLD STEM

eCYBERMISSION is a free, virtual STEM competition for 6-9 graders. Students form teams of 2-4, led by an adult Team Advisor, and select a community problem to investigate with science or solve with engineering. Register today at [www.ecybermission.com](http://www.ecybermission.com)!



## eCYBERMISSION Supports Teachers

**Teaching Resources**  
Access free teaching resources on our website, including lesson plans, videos, activities, and more.

**STEM Professionals**  
Students have access to Mission Mentors, STEM professionals available to help with projects.

**Mini-Grant Funding**  
All teachers are eligible to receive up to \$26/student to support the cost of project supplies and as a professional stipend.





## School District of New Berlin's Nursing Program



*School District of New Berlin*

### Program Objectives

Given the projected nursing shortage in the State of WI, the School District of New Berlin has developed an on-site Nursing Program to make it easier for students to explore coursework and careers in Nursing. In addition to traditional coursework in Health Science and Health Care Occupations, students are now able to complete a Certified Nursing Assistant course, including clinicals, and sit for the State CNA exam on-site.

In addition, we have developed secondary and post-secondary course planning resources to allow flexibility for students to earn transcribed credit, dual enrollment credit and AP experiences that will maximize entrance and expedite completion of a 2-year, 2+2, or 4-year post-secondary program in Nursing.

### Enrollment

Students in the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program will receive high school credit (.75) as well as credit through college credit through the local technical college



(3.0) in addition to their CNA certification by passing the State exam following completion of the course.

This program is open to School District of New Berlin students as well as students from other school districts through Course Options. With only 20 spots available, New Berlin students will be given first priority.

### Eligibility

Students must be 16 years of age by the beginning of the program start date.

### Course Overview

CNA coursework is comprised of 50 hours of discussion and 25 hours of skills training in our CNA lab. The course will be offered at Eisenhower. Students participating from New Berlin West will be provided transportation to New Berlin Eisenhower as needed. Once the course is complete, the students will be placed in a study hall for the remainder of the semester to be studying for their State exam.

Following completion of the discussion and skills training, participants will complete a clinical rotation at a skilled nursing facility in New Berlin. The clinical experience will take place outside of school hours on weeknights (likely 4:00–8:00 PM) and Saturdays (likely 6:30 AM–2:30 PM) to complete a total of 45 hours per State guidelines. The specific dates of this experience will be chosen based on the availability of the majority of participants. Participants will be required to commit to attend all clinical dates scheduled to stay registered for the class.

Following completion of their clinical rotation, students will register to take their State CNA exam. The SDNB is now a registered test site to ensure that students will be able to sit for the State exam shortly following completion of clinicals. It is very important that students make good use of their study hall to ensure they are prepared for the exam. Students who do not pass the exam will have the opportunity to sit at a future date at an additional expense.

### Industry Certifications

A CNA certification allows students to work in a health care setting as they complete high school, formulate their goals for their future, and evaluate options for their post-secondary education. A CNA certification is considered both an industry and college credential. Some post-secondary institutions consider the certification a prerequisite for certain majors and others provide scholarship money to students who attain it.

Students who have completed their CNA and passed the State exam are eligible to earn an additional credential through the WI DPI Skills Certificate and/or Youth Apprenticeship Program.

### Employment Opportunities

Students with an interest in applying what they are learning in school in a health care environment will be connected to the SDNB Career and Service Learning Program to find an opportunity that matches their interests. We have a variety of opportunities offered by our health care providers, some of which can be secured without a CNA certification.

Industry Mentorship, Post-secondary Education

Students enrolled in this program will be provided with access to industry mentors from our local business partners. Students will also be provided with opportunities to visit a number of different companies and post-secondary education providers throughout the year to enrich what they are learning in class and inform their Academic and Career Plans.

[www.nbexcellence.org](http://www.nbexcellence.org)



## Grants to Secondary Schools Aimed at Strengthening Rural Healthcare

This spring, rural school districts will have an opportunity to apply for grants of up to \$41,000 annually to develop new or expand career pathways in healthcare and human services. A pool of \$5 million over five years is being made available by the DPI from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Rural Health Transformation Program, an initiative by the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to strengthen and modernize healthcare in rural communities across the United States.

What can schools do with this funding?

- Launch new or expand existing healthcare and human services Career and Technical Education courses
- Create or expand dual-credit opportunities
- Develop or enhance work-based learning experiences in healthcare and human services settings
- Help students earn industry-recognized credentials aligned with rural workforce needs

- Establish or strengthen a local HOSA-Future Health Professionals chapter to engage students in leadership, community health initiatives, and competitive skill events

A minimum of twenty rural secondary schools will be selected to participate in this program. Selected schools must be committed to receiving funds for up to five years to build a sustainable program, ensuring lasting impact in their communities. The goal is clear: build a stronger, more resilient rural healthcare workforce pipeline by connecting students to education, training, and employment opportunities right in their communities.

More details, eligibility information, and application guidance are coming soon. Grant information and updates will be shared at: <https://dpi.wi.gov/cte/rhtp-grant>.

Questions? Contact [christina.patrin@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:christina.patrin@dpi.wi.gov)

# Bellin College Summer Camps



High school students entering their junior or senior year (and at least 16 years old) in Fall 2026 with a minimum 2.75 GPA:

Join us for a day camp and explore the fields of nursing or allied health by getting hands-on experience in our simulation labs and at a local hospital! Camps include a camp t-shirt, lunch or dinner, supplies and fun giveaways!

## Nursing Camp

Summer Nursing Camp is a great opportunity to explore different areas of the nursing profession, like labor and delivery, surgery, and more. Please join us for two days of hands-on simulations and learning to help narrow your future career options. Students will spend one day at Bellin College in our state-of-the-art Health Science Resource Center participating in different hands-on simulations relating to

the area of healthcare that interests them. The other day will be spent traveling to our nearby hospitals and shadowing healthcare workers for a day.



## 2026 Camp Dates (Two dates to choose from)

**Camp 1:** June 22–23, 2026

**Camp 2:** July 21–22, 2026

**Time:** Camp is held 8:00 am–3:30 pm

You will have an opportunity to:

- Practice hands-on nursing skills in Bellin College's state-of-the-art simulation labs (starting an IV, surgical nursing skills, CPR, wound care, general health assessment and more)
- Find out what a day in the life of a healthcare worker is like by shadowing healthcare professionals at a local hospital

- Discover opportunities available in the field of nursing
- Hear from alumni about their college experiences and career paths
- Learn about college planning from an admissions counselor



## Allied Health Day Camp

This is your chance to find out firsthand the roles, relationships and responsibilities that make careers in allied health professions so rewarding.

**2026 Camp Date: June 8, 2026**

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. \*subject to change\*

You will have the opportunity to:

- Learn about the fields of radiologic sciences, sonography, radiation therapy

and surgical assisting through hands on experience in our specialized labs

- Practice the basics of x-ray, CT, MRI, ultrasound, mammography, radiation therapy and surgical technology
- Dissect a synthetic cadaver
- Tour the imaging department at a local hospital and try some of the equipment
- Discover opportunities available in the field of allied health
- Hear from alumni about their college experiences and career paths
- Learn about college planning from an admissions counselor

## Questions?

Please call Bellin College Admissions office at (920) 433-6650 or [admissions@bellincollege.edu](mailto:admissions@bellincollege.edu).

For more information and to apply go to <https://www.bellincollege.edu/admissions/visit/summer-camps/#two>



**At Bellin College, you're not just a student.  
You're part of a community that cares.**

**"From the moment I started at Bellin, I've felt an incredible sense of pride and belonging. Bellin truly cares about me as an individual—not just as a student—and that feeling extends beyond the classroom to the administration and staff."**

**-Ashley Williams**

Bachelor of Science in Radiation Therapy Student at Bellin College

## 3-YEAR BACHELOR'S PROGRAMS

- Diagnostic Medical Sonography
- Nursing
- Radiation Therapy
- Radiologic Sciences
- Surgical Assisting

**Bellin College**

To learn more about our academic programs, schedule a campus visit, or connect with our Admissions team, visit [www.bellincollege.edu](http://www.bellincollege.edu).

## Wisconsin Associate Principals of the Year Continued on Page 23

The Wisconsin Associate Principal of the Year program recognizes associate principals whose leadership has resulted in improved student learning, instructional collaboration, and a safe and positive school environment. Nominations are accepted from teachers, parents, principals, and others across Wisconsin.

A committee representing teachers, superintendents, board members, parents, and the DPI reviews the applications and selects an APOYs. Considerable support comes from the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation.

### Ben Tashner Named Wisconsin Middle School Associate Principal of the Year



Left to Right: Stuart Russ, AWSA Board President, Ryan Vogler, Principal, Holmen Middle School, Ben Tashner, APOY, Holmen Middle School, Brady Turner, Associate Principal, Holmen Middle School, Jim Lynch, AWSA Executive Director, and Kristin Mueller, District Administrator, Holmen School District.

The Association of Wisconsin School Administrators has recognized Ben Tashner as its 2026 Wisconsin Middle School Associate Principal of the Year. The announcement was made during a surprise ceremony at his school.

Tashner, who serves as associate principal and activities director at Holmen Middle

School, has been dedicated to building a school culture where every student and staff member feels seen, supported, and valued. Over his four years as associate principal, he has helped lead a collaborative, student-centered environment rooted in the school's mission: "Belong. Serve. Succeed."

"Ben Tashner's leadership reflects the best of Wisconsin's middle school associate principals," said AWSA Executive Director Jim Lynch. "His work at Holmen Middle School demonstrates a deep commitment to belonging, collaboration, and continuous improvement. He leads with compassion and clarity, creating a culture where students and staff thrive together."

At Holmen Middle School, Tashner has strengthened systems that promote student safety, wellbeing, and growth. He is known for being a visible, approachable presence in hallways, classrooms, and lunchrooms, where he builds authentic connections and models the importance of respect and collaboration.

A former special education teacher, Tashner draws on his classroom experience to lead with empathy and equity. He has developed collaborative intervention systems that ensure students receive timely, individualized academic and behavioral support. Through data-driven decision making and strong relationships with staff and families, he has helped improve attendance, engagement, and overall school climate.

"Ben is a dedicated leader committed to collaborating with staff to ensure they have

the resources and support they need to help students grow and learn," said HMS Principal Ryan Vogler. "He works tirelessly to develop opportunities for students to get involved and create a culture where all students feel like they belong. HMS is lucky to have him on our staff."

"We are absolutely thrilled that Mr. Tashner has been named the Wisconsin Middle School Associate Principal of the Year," said School District of Holmen District Administrator Dr. Kristin Mueller. "This honor is a testament to the incredible energy he brings every day, creating a vibrant, engaging, and inclusive educational community. He is a master connector building strong bridges with our students, families, and community members, ensuring that everyone feels they truly belong. His exceptional leadership drives our mission forward and empowers all to succeed. We are proud of him and this statewide honor."

[www.holmen.k12.wi.us](http://www.holmen.k12.wi.us)



### Amanda Jamerson Named Wisconsin High School Associate Principal of the Year



Left to Right: Stuart Russ, AWSA Board President, Tim Kenney, Principal, Shorewood High School, Amanda Jamerson, APOY, Dr. Laurie Burgos, Superintendent, Shorewood School District and Yari Rodriguez, Director of Urban Leadership, AWSA.

The Association of Wisconsin School Administrators has recognized Amanda Jamerson as its 2026 Wisconsin High School Associate Principal of the Year. The announcement was made during a surprise ceremony at her school.

As associate principal at Shorewood High

School, Jamerson has served as a strong leader in cultivating a restorative, equitable, and innovative school culture that prioritizes the wellbeing and success of every student and staff member. She has also led initiatives that have transformed the school climate, improved student outcomes,

and strengthened collaborative leadership among staff.

"Amanda Jamerson exemplifies the leadership, compassion, and innovation that define Wisconsin's most outstanding assistant principals," said AWSA Executive Director Jim Lynch. "She empowers students and staff at Shorewood High School to thrive, and we are honored to recognize her as our 2026 High School Associate Principal of the Year."

During her tenure as associate principal, Jamerson helped design and implement a Restorative Actions Framework that reduced office discipline referrals by 69 percent over three years, while deepening student understanding of empathy and accountability. She also co-launched a comprehensive cell phone policy that promotes digital balance and has resulted in improved classroom focus and fewer peer conflicts.

As the school's Building Equity Lead, Jamerson also founded the school's Equity Leadership Team, delivering professional learning and coaching that has helped integrate culturally responsive practices across classrooms. She co-led the African American Youth Initiative, a regional program that supports mentorship,

leadership development, and college readiness for African American students throughout southeastern Wisconsin.

"Ms. Jamerson's impact on our school has been extraordinary," said SHS Principal Tim Kenney. "Her leadership has shaped a culture where safety, belonging, and achievement go hand in hand. She has empowered both staff and students to lead with empathy and excellence. I am thrilled to see her recognized at the state level in this way."

"Amanda Jamerson is an exceptional leader," said Shorewood School District Superintendent Dr. Laurie Burgos. "She elevates student achievement and wellbeing by cultivating relationships built on trust, dignity, and care. As a thoughtful collaborator, Amanda empowers others, strengthens teams, and nurtures a culture in which every student and staff member feels valued. This recognition reflects Amanda's commitment and the positive impact she makes every single day in the Shorewood School District."

[shorewood.k12.wi.us](http://shorewood.k12.wi.us)



# ONLINE TEACHER LICENSING ACCELERATED CERTIFICATIONS



## Program Benefits

- Course completion for licensure in 2 years.
- 100% online, with the exception of in-person clinical experiences.
- Master's in Education can be completed with an additional 3 credits.
- Free Foundation of Reading Test workshops and online training.

Ideal for those who have a **non-teaching bachelor's degree** and are either teaching with a license with stipulations (emergency license), or want a career change to impact students.



## Available Programs

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- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Special Education



University of Wisconsin  
**Stevens Point**

Learn more:  
[uwsp.edu/teachingtoday](http://uwsp.edu/teachingtoday)

## Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance Awards Continued on Page 23

### Wainwright Honored as Rural Administrator of the Year



The Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA) is proud to announce that Mitch Wainwright, Superintendent of the Mineral Point Unified School District, has been named the 2025 Administrator of the Year.

Wainwright, who has devoted more than 40 years to rural education, is recognized for

his student-first leadership, approachable style, and deep commitment to community.

Since becoming superintendent in 2018, he has successfully guided Mineral Point through multiple referenda, steady enrollment growth, and garnered statewide recognition for both academics and extracurricular activities.

Known for greeting students each morning, supporting staff, and even stepping into classrooms as “Zippy Zero” to make learning fun, Wainwright exemplifies servant leadership.

Beyond Mineral Point, he serves on local and state committees, and his career includes a Hall of Fame legacy as a girls’ basketball coach.

WiRSA is honored to celebrate Mitch Wainwright as a leader who truly “shows up” every day for students, staff, and families across rural Wisconsin.

[mineralpointschools.org](http://mineralpointschools.org)



### Clinton Principal Erika Stewart Named WiRSA Principal of the Year



The Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA) is proud to announce that Mrs. Erika Stewart, Principal of Clinton Community Junior/Senior High School, has been named the 2025 WiRSA Rural Principal of the Year.

Mrs. Stewart is recognized for her outstanding leadership, innovative practices, and dedication to rural education. She has led with vision and compassion, guiding students and staff to higher levels of achievement while fostering an inclusive and supportive school culture.

Among her many accomplishments,

Erika’s leadership was also instrumental during the district’s reorganization from three buildings to two, a complex transition she managed with clarity, collaboration, and care, uniting staff and students into a cohesive, high-functioning team.

“Erika brings out the best in her staff and students, combining strength, kindness, fairness, and compassion,” said Dr. Jim Brewer, District Administrator of the Clinton Community School District. “Her leadership has not only advanced Clinton Junior/Senior High School but has made a tremendous impact on our entire community.”

Stewart’s work extends beyond the classroom, as she consistently engages families, educators, and community members in the decision-making process. Known for empowering teachers and celebrating the potential of every student, she embodies the very best of rural education leadership.

WiRSA is honored to recognize Erika Stewart for her remarkable contributions to education and her unwavering commitment to students, staff, and the Clinton Community School District.

[www.clinton.k12.wi.us](http://www.clinton.k12.wi.us)



### Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance Celebrates Julie Korish as Teacher of the Year



The Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA) proudly announces Julie Korish, from the Turtle Lake School District, as the 2025 Teacher of the Year. Julie is recognized not only for her excellence in the classroom but for the joy, compassion, and inspiration she brings to every student and colleague she encounters.

With over 20 years of experience in education, Julie has built a reputation as a transformational teacher who makes learning engaging, personal, and meaningful. Her lead-

ership ensures that every student finds success. Her classroom is a place where students discover their potential, and they consistently honor her as their “Most Influential Teacher.”

Julie’s impact extends well beyond academics. She leads student council, organizes service projects, mentors new teachers, and serves as a trusted leader on her district’s RtI Committee and Leadership Team. Her presence at school events and her unwavering support for students make her a role model both in and out of the classroom.

Julie Korish embodies the heart of rural education. She inspires, encourages, and uplifts everyone around her. Her dedication to her students and her community is nothing short of extraordinary, and we are thrilled to recognize her with this award.

WiRSA proudly honors Julie Korish, the 2025 Teacher of the Year, for her unwavering commitment, boundless creativity, and the positive difference she continues to make in the lives of her students and in the future of rural education in Wisconsin.

[turtlelake.k12.wi.us](http://turtlelake.k12.wi.us)



### Judy Makovec Named WiRSA Support Staff Person of the Year



The Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA) is proud to honor Judy Makovec of the Riverdale School District as the 2025 Rural Support Staff Person of the Year.

Since beginning her career in 1959, Judy has been a cornerstone of the district, helping guide major transitions such as the move to a new high school, the consolidation of three

communities into the Riverdale School District, and the centralization of K-8 students into one building.

Judy has worked alongside every Riverdale administrator since 1959, supporting staff, families, and students with professionalism, confidentiality, and care. Her ability to adapt through decades of change, while building strong relationships across generations, has made her a trusted and beloved presence in the community.

“Judy is the symbol of dedication, commitment, and pride shown in many small rural schools,” said Sarah Ploeckelman, PK-6 Principal. “Her impact on Riverdale and rural education is immeasurable.”

WiRSA congratulates Judy Makovec on this well-deserved recognition and thanks her for her lifelong dedication to rural education in Wisconsin.

[www.riverdale.k12.wi.us](http://www.riverdale.k12.wi.us)



## Elizabeth Streubel Named Wisconsin Elementary Associate Principal of the Year



Left to Right: Sally Vliet, Herb Kohl Foundation, Dr. Jocelyn Sulsberger, Principal, Wilson Elementary School, Liz Streubel, APOY, Stuart Russ, AWSA Board President, Joe Schroeder, AWSA Associate Executive Director and Dr. Matthew Joynt, Superintendent, Mequon-Thiensville School District.

The Association of Wisconsin School Administrators has recognized Elizabeth Streubel as its 2026 Wisconsin Elementary Associate Principal of the Year. The announcement was made during a surprise ceremony at her school.

Streubel serves as assistant principal of

Wilson Elementary in the Mequon-Thiensville School District. She is known for her compassionate leadership, student-centered decision-making, and dedication to fostering a safe, inclusive, and joyful school community.

Over the past three years as an assistant principal, she has led initiatives that strength-

ened student well-being, improved attendance, and enhanced staff morale through intentional relationship-building and restorative leadership.

“Elizabeth Streubel is a shining example of the heart and skill that define Wisconsin’s elementary school leaders,” said AWSA Executive Director Jim Lynch. “Her work at Wilson Elementary demonstrates how empathy, data-driven collaboration, and creativity can transform school culture. She leads with integrity, optimism, and a deep belief in every child’s potential.”

At Wilson Elementary, Streubel has cultivated a culture rooted in connection and care—greeting students each morning with high-fives, hugs, and encouragement to start the day with joy and belonging. Her innovative Bus of the Month program celebrates bus drivers and students who model respect, responsibility, and readiness to learn, resulting in significant reductions in bus-related behavioral incidents.

A former special education teacher, Streubel brings deep expertise in behavior intervention and inclusive practices. She has collaborated with staff to implement individualized supports, create restorative behavior plans, and strengthen family partnerships,

helping reduce chronic absenteeism to just 3 percent—the school’s lowest rate in four years.

“Ms. Streubel is an indispensable part of the Wilson community,” said Principal Dr. Jocelyn Sulsberger. “She actively strives to cultivate an environment where all individuals feel safe, valued, and motivated to learn. Liz’s dedication to nurturing young learners and supporting educators has had a positive impact on our school, and we are fortunate to call her a Wilson Wildcat.”

“Liz Streubel exemplifies what it means to lead with heart,” said MTSD Superintendent Dr. Matthew Joynt. “Her compassion, commitment to students, and unwavering support for staff and families make Wilson Elementary School a place where every child feels seen, valued, and inspired to grow.”

[www.mtsd.k12.wi.us](http://www.mtsd.k12.wi.us)



*Courtesy of The Association of Wisconsin School Administrators*

## School District of Rhinelander’s Lexi Allen Honored with 2025 WiRSA Advocacy Award



The Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA) has announced that Lexi Allen, College and Career Counselor at the School

District of Rhinelander, is the recipient of the 2025 WiRSA Advocacy Award.

In just her third year in the position, Allen has become a driving force in rural education, creating innovative systems that connect students, educators, and community partners in meaningful ways. She has completely transformed the district’s Academic and Career Planning (ACP) program for grades 6–12, shifting it from a compliance-based checklist to a dynamic, student-centered process where every student develops a personalized roadmap for their future.

Her redesigned ACP framework includes reflection, job shadowing, work-based learning, and professional development for staff, ensuring that career readiness is embedded throughout the district. Every student in grades 6 through 12 now meets with Allen individually to design a personalized plan—whether their path leads to college, technical training, military service, or entering the workforce directly.

Allen’s advocacy extends into the Rhinelander community and beyond. She has

built strong partnerships with Northwoods employers, crafting a sustainable business engagement model that expands opportunities for job shadowing, youth apprenticeships, and career exploration. She also introduced Senior Signing Day, a district-wide celebration that honors every graduate’s next step and instills pride in all postsecondary pathways.

Her leadership doesn’t stop at Rhinelander. Allen is working with Rhinelander Partners in Education and other regional partners to expand dual credit opportunities and career readiness initiatives across northern Wisconsin—efforts that set a model for rural schools throughout the state.

“Lexi’s leadership in Academic and Career Planning has had a transformative impact on our students, our community, our employers, and our two- and four-year college partners,” said Superintendent Eric Burke. “This award is a reflection of her dedication and also the commitment of all staff in the School District of Rhinelander—not only through the courses you teach, but in the guidance and experiences you provide that help

students shape their futures. We are proud to celebrate Lexi and the collective efforts of our staff in supporting every student’s pathway to success.”

“Lexi Allen embodies everything this award stands for: advocacy, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to students,” said WiRSA in its announcement. “She is ensuring that rural youth are not only seen and supported, but also empowered to discover their passions and pursue their dreams.”

The School District of Rhinelander joins WiRSA in congratulating Lexi Allen, the 2025 WiRSA Advocacy Award Winner, and thanks her for her outstanding contributions to students, schools, and communities across northern Wisconsin.

[rhinelander.k12.wi.us](http://rhinelander.k12.wi.us)



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Access previous issues at

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# 67 Wisconsin Teachers Achieve National Board Certification — Congratulations!

## About the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Established in 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is an independent, nonprofit organization working to advance accomplished teaching for all students. The NBPTS certificate measures a teacher's practice against high and rigorous standards. The process is an extensive series of performance-based assessments that includes teaching portfolios, student work samples, videos, and thorough analyses of the candidates' classroom teaching and student learning. Teachers also complete a series of written exercises that probe the depth of their subject-matter knowledge, as well as their understanding of how to teach those subjects to their students.



National Board certification is voluntary and open to all educators who have a baccalaureate degree and three years of classroom experience in either a public or private school.

For more information and to apply go to <https://dpi.wi.gov/licensing/apply-educator-license/nbpts>

**Abigail Baldwin** — Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, *Oconomowoc Area School District, Oconomowoc, WI*

**Jennifer Beam** — Generalist/Early Childhood, *Wisconsin*

**Andrea Belka Van Buren** — Science/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *East Troy Community School District, East Troy, WI*

**Amanda Beuning** — Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood, *School District of Rhinelander, Rhinelander, WI*

**Samantha Bradshaw** — Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, *Racine Unified School District, Racine, WI*

**Emily Braun** — Generalist/Early Childhood, *Madison Metropolitan School District, Madison, WI*

**Joanne Charon** — Career and Technical Education/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood, *Racine Unified School District, Racine, WI*

**Amy Ciesielski** — Music/Early and Middle Childhood, *Hamilton School District, Sussex, WI*

**Elizabeth Cody** — Generalist/Middle Childhood, *Madison Metropolitan School District, Madison, WI*

**Kristen DeJong** — English Language Arts/Early Adolescence, *Hamilton School District, Sussex, WI*

**Monica Derks** — English Language Arts/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *Westby Area School District, Westby, WI*

**Danielle DeWaal** — Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood, *Ashwaubenon School District, Green Bay, WI*

**Kevin Doornek** — Mathematics/Early Adolescence, *West Bend School District, West Bend, WI*

**Hailey Dougherty** — English Language Arts/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *West Bend School District, West Bend, WI*

**Kelsey Duss** — Music/Early and Middle Childhood, *Platteville School District, Platteville, WI*

**Jessica Falkner** — Generalist/Early Childhood, *School District of Greenfield, Greenfield, WI*

**David Fitzpatrick** — English Language Arts/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *School District of Reedsburg, Reedsburg, WI*

**Alexis Ganos** — Music/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood, *Elmbrook School District, Brookfield, WI*

**Erica Gronley** — Generalist/Middle Childhood, *School District of Reedsburg, Reedsburg, WI*

**Alexander Grycowski** — Physical Education/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood, *Racine Unified School District, Racine, WI*

**Allyson Guzan** — Generalist/Early Childhood, *West Bend School District, West Bend, WI*

**Jodi Hacker** — Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, *Kimberly Area School District, Combined Locks, WI*

**Heidi Hartman** — Generalist/Middle Childhood, *Nekoosa School District, Nekoosa, WI*

**Joseph Hartson** — Music/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood, *McFarland School District, McFarland, WI*

**Joshua Hetzel** — Mathematics/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, WI*

**Janelle Hintz** — Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, *Racine Unified School District, Racine, WI*

**Jamie Hunt** — Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood, *Racine Unified School District, Racine, WI*

**Marnie Hyland** — Art/Early and Middle Childhood, *Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District, Middleton, WI*

**Jennifer Iverson** — Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, *Kimberly Area School District, Combined Locks, WI*

**Jennifer Johnson Robson** — Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood, *Racine Unified School District, Racine, WI*

**Rhiannan Johnson** — English as a New Language/Early and Middle Childhood, *School District of Greenfield, Greenfield, WI*

**Cassandra Kirkpatrick** — Mathematics/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *Racine Unified School District, Racine, WI*

**Kristen Koenigs** — Mathematics/Early Adolescence, *West Bend School District, West Bend, WI*

**Sarah Kranz** — Art/Early and Middle Childhood, *New Glarus School District, New Glarus, WI*

**Harmony Kroeger** — Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood, *Port Washington-Saukville School District, Port Washington, WI*

**Alexandra Madden** — World Languages/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood, *School District of Pittsville, Pittsville, WI*

**Jessica McElyea** — Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, *Racine Unified School District, Racine, WI*

**Jennifer Meacham** — Generalist/Early Childhood, *School District of Reedsburg, Reedsburg, WI*

**Angela Midthun-Hensen** — Career and Technical Education/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood, *Verona Area School District, Verona, WI*

**Margaret Morgan** — Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, *Racine Unified School District, Racine, WI*

**Jacqueline Morrow** — School Counseling/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood, *Racine Unified School District, Racine, WI*

**Emma Mundth** — Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, *School District of Reedsburg, Reedsburg, WI*

**Andrew Nelson** — Science/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *Waunakee Community School District, Waunakee, WI*

**Megan Oberstadt** — World Languages/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood, *Ashwaubenon School District, Green Bay, WI*

**Sarah Pagel** — School Counseling/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood, *New London School District, New London, WI*

**Jennifer Pulvermacher** — Music/Early and Middle Childhood, *Nekoosa School District, Nekoosa, WI*

**Melissa Rickey** — English Language Arts/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, WI*

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## 67 Wisconsin Teachers Achieve National Board Certification Continued from Page 24

**Sarah Riemer** — Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood, *Port Washington-Saukville School District, Port Washington, WI*

**Danielle Schumacher** — English Language Arts/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *West Bend School District, West Bend, WI*

**Nicole Schwedrsky** — Generalist/Middle Childhood, *Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District, Chippewa Falls, WI*

**Caitlin Seep** — Mathematics/Early Adolescence, *School District of Reedsburg, Reedsburg, WI*

**Sara Seidel** — Mathematics/Early Adolescence, *Beecher-Dunbar-Pembine School District, Pembine, WI*

**Laurie Sloma** — Mathematics/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *New London School District, New London, WI*

**Lindsay Smallwood** — Social Studies-History/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *Menomonee Falls School District, Menomonee Falls, WI*

**Rebecca Sohm** — Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood, *West Bend School District, West Bend, WI*

**Emily Sonnemann** — Career and Technical Education/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood, *Madison Metropolitan School District, Madison, WI*

**Max Thiede** — English Language Arts/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *Salam School, Milwaukee, WI*

**Elisa Trussoni** — Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, *De Soto Area School District, Stoddard, WI*

**Kailey Warrichaiet** — Music/Early and Middle Childhood, *Oconomowoc Area School District, Oconomowoc, WI*

**Katherine Weix** — Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood, *School District of Reedsburg, Reedsburg, WI*

**Leah Williams** — Science/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District, Middleton, WI*

**Thomas Wood** — Career and Technical Education/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood, *Racine Unified School District, Racine, WI*



**Alan Wunsch** — Career and Technical Education/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood, *School District of Reedsburg, Reedsburg, WI*

**Pam Xiong** — English as a New Language/Early and Middle Childhood, *Madison Metropolitan School District, Madison, WI*

**Erin Zetes** — Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood, *Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District, Middleton, WI*

**Kristin Zetting** — Music/Early and Middle Childhood, *Elmbrook School District, Brookfield, WI*

**Mitchell Ziesemer** — Science/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, *West Bend School District, West Bend, WI*

*Courtesy of the NBPTS*

<https://www.nbpts.org>

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# Wisconsin Honors Eight Schools for Excellence and Achievement



The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction today recognized eight schools across the state for exceptional academic performance and success in closing achievement gaps.

The recognition comes after the U.S. Department of Education ended the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, which had been in place since 1982, last year. These Wisconsin schools had already been nominated and completed the rigorous application process when the program was abruptly terminated.

“We’re proud to continue celebrating the hard work of Wisconsin’s students and educators,” the State Superintendent said. “These schools have shown remarkable results and a strong commitment to helping every child succeed.”

National Blue Ribbon Schools are honored in two categories: Exemplary High Performing Schools and Exemplary Gap Closing Schools. Wisconsin’s 2025 honorees represent a diverse mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Congratulations to these Blue Ribbon schools, their staffs and students!

## Shiocton Elementary School (School District of Shiocton)

**Gap Closing:** In a small district “where excellence is expected,” Shiocton Elementary focuses on the whole child — academically, socially, and emotionally — to prepare learners for future success.

## Crivitz High School (Crivitz School District)



**Gap Closing:** Offering challenging academics and rich extracurriculars, Crivitz High School combines community partnerships with a caring staff to prepare students for college, career, and life.

[www.shiocton.k12.wi.us](http://www.shiocton.k12.wi.us)

[chs.crivitz.k12.wi.us](http://chs.crivitz.k12.wi.us)

## T.J. Walker Middle School (Sturgeon Bay Schools)



**High Performing and Gap Closing:** T.J. Walker Middle emphasizes strong teaching, community engagement, and continuous improvement to support every student, every day.

## St. Croix Falls Elementary School (St. Croix Falls School District)



**High Performing:** St. Croix Elementary School provides a supportive, student-centered learning environment focused on academic excellence, character, and growth for every child.

[www.sturbay.k12.wi.us](http://www.sturbay.k12.wi.us)

[www.scf.k12.wi.us](http://www.scf.k12.wi.us)

*Courtesy of the WI DPI*

## Edgewood Elementary School (School District of Greenfield)



**Gap Closing:** A welcoming neighborhood school focused on both academics and emotional well-being, Edgewood builds strong family partnerships and provides all students with the support they need to thrive.

[www.greefield.k12.wi.us](http://www.greefield.k12.wi.us)

## Karcher Middle School (Burlington Area School District)



**Gap Closing:** Karcher empowers students to become confident, caring, and capable learners, while ensuring every staff member and family plays a role in student success.

[karcher.basd.k12.wi.us](http://karcher.basd.k12.wi.us)

## Forest Lane Community School (Montello School District)



**Gap Closing:** Forest Lane fosters a lifelong love of learning through teamwork among staff, students, and families in a positive, inclusive environment.

[montelloschools.org](http://montelloschools.org)

## Prairie Lane Elementary School (Kenosha Unified School District)



**High Performing:** Known for its culture of kindness and collaboration, Prairie Lane helps students think critically and solve problems while proudly serving as the district’s elementary program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.

[www.kusd.edu](http://www.kusd.edu)



## Elmbrook Music Teacher Receives Prestigious Recognition

*School District of Elmbrook*

Civic Music MKE has announced its 2026 Music Educator Awards, and Krista Witak, Orchestra Teacher at Pilgrim Park Middle School, has been named the Emerging Music Educator of the Year. Civic Music MKE annually recognizes outstanding music educators from the greater Milwaukee area for their dedication, leadership, and impact on students through music instruction.



“This tremendous recognition is greatly deserved,” said Jonathan Brooks, Elmbrook’s Music Coordinator. “Krista’s passion for music education, her commitment to student growth, and her leadership within our district are evident every day. She represents the very best of Elmbrook and the future of music education in our region.”

Krista is a proud Elmbrook educator who teaches middle school orchestra alongside fellow strings educator Alexis Ganos. This year, she co-presented a session titled Building a Culture of Learning Through Student

Agency at the Wisconsin State Music Educators Conference in Madison.

Since joining Elmbrook, Krista has prepared her ensembles for performances at the Beyond the Notes Festival in Wisconsin Dells, facilitated district-wide 4th-12th grade string festival concerts, supported the creation of a Middle School Honors experience celebrating the Wisconsin Arts Board’s 50th anniversary, and founded a mixed string ensemble club where

students explore alternative music styles such as folk and pop.

Krista’s dedication to inspiring young musicians and expanding opportunities in string education has made a lasting impact on students across the district.

[elmbrookschools.org](http://elmbrookschools.org)

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