

SCHOOL NEWS



isd77.org

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Stay in the loop while watching online

By Michelle Laven

Mankato Area Public Schools (MAPS) continues to take steps to make school board meetings easy to view. Both live and previously recorded meetings are available through the district's website at isd77.org. Interested users can also browse upcoming agendas, past meeting minutes, and special meeting sessions from the same web page.

Knowing that viewer interest in board activity is as varied as the individual, MAPS technology specialists continue to hone navigation and interaction features for a variety of users. For example, parents of young children may want to know more

about their child's future school. "With a young child, I don't want to have to make her sit through a meeting in person," says Jessica Lanes. "She's not in school yet, but I want to be an informed parent for when she does start." Parents like Lanes can view activities and reports related to their specific school, at a time that fits their schedule.

Sharon Taylor doesn't have children enrolled in MAPS, but knows school board decisions affect her community. "I am not interested in attending a meeting in person, however, since I vote for people who serve on the School Board, I find

value in watching," explains Taylor. Site search features allow community members like Taylor to search meeting minutes for hiring, wage, and other expenditure decisions.

To watch a MAPS school board meeting live, or to access the school board pages, users can go to isd77.org (click on menu, select Discover MAPS and then "About MAPS." Meetings are generally scheduled at 5:30 p.m., the first and third Mondays of each month. For more information contact Mankato Area Public Schools' staff at 507-387-1868. 📺



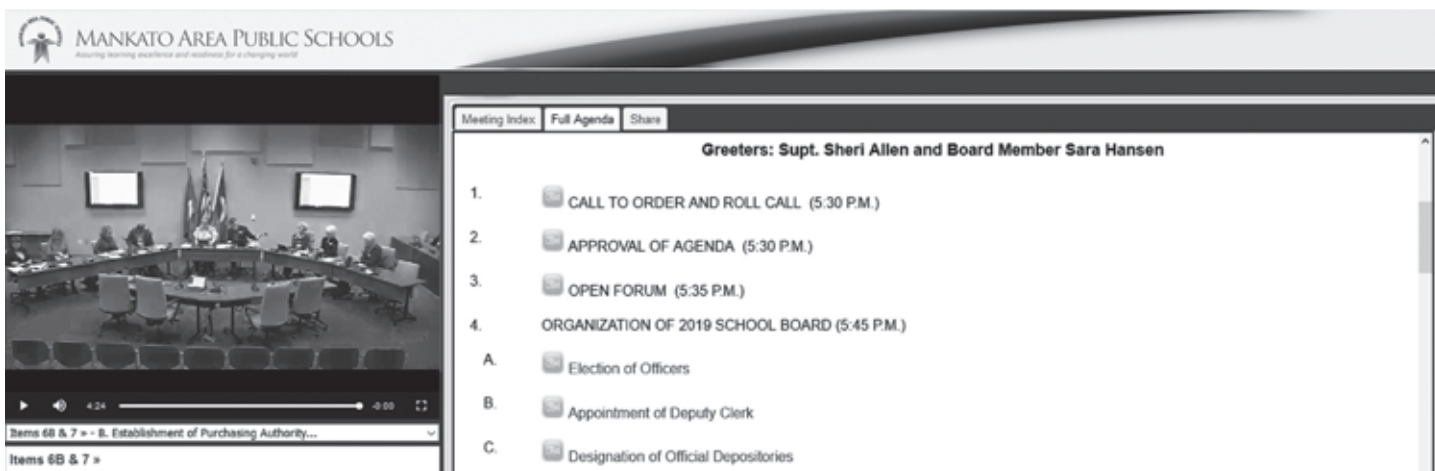
*Exclusions include away events, tournaments, section or state play.

Complimentary "VIP Gold Card" to experience Mankato Area Public Schools

By Shelly Schulz, public information

Mankato Area Public Schools' complimentary "VIP Gold Card" is exclusively for seniors—age 62 plus—who live within school district #77. It's a great way to enjoy no cost admission to enjoy concerts, athletic and academic events, plays and planetarium shows. To obtain a "VIP Gold Card," simply contact Mankato Area Public Schools' district office at 507-387-1868; or the activity offices at East High School (507-387-5671) or West High School (507-387-3461).

Students benefit from audience attendance, intergenerational and community involvement. Quality schools positively influence quality of life, economic development and home values. 📺



Mankato Area Public School Board meeting videos are divided into agenda topics, enabling viewers to go immediately to the section which interests them.

Follow Mankato Area Public Schools on social media

By Sara Gilbert Frederick

Earlier this year, the Mankato Area Public Schools Facebook feed was filled with photos of Vex Robotics teams at competitions, Math League teams, kindergarten classrooms—and weather-related announcements.

Although no school days and late starts qualify as essential information to share with area families, the district generally uses its social media presence to tell parents, students and the community about the great things happening in its schools.

"We want to tell our story, build relationships, empower learning and engage with community," says Tracy Brovold, director of Educational Technology and Information Services for Mankato Area Public Schools. "Social media allows us to connect with stakeholders by delivering real-time information on student achievements, sharing innovative learning, news and updates."

The larger community, Brovold says, is critical to student success. When schools, parents, families and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer and enroll in higher level programs. 📺



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POSTAL PATRON

SPOTLIGHT



East High School graduate Katie Kortuem Olson unites love of gymnastics with love of teaching

By Shelly Miller

Madison Lake native and graduate of East High School, Katie Kortuem Olson, grew up loving gymnastics. She evolved into an elite, competitive gymnast attaining many titles and is now sharing her love of the sport with youth around her hometown.



Katie Kortuem Olson

In high school, Olson lettered four years in a row in gymnastics, placed second at State two years in a row and won the state championship on bars as a ninth grader. She was also a Hall of Fame gymnast and National Honor Society member.

After high school, Olson attended Gustavus Adolphus College and earned a degree in elementary education. While there, she represented the gymnastics team and was a seven-time All-American gymnast and National Collegiate Gymnastics Association Gymnast. Upon graduation, Olson attended St. Mary's College to obtain her master's degree in education.

Olson combined her love of gymnastics with her love of teaching and is now co-owner of K&G Gymnastics in Mankato. In 2011, Olson joined Gabe Essay, a former elite gymnast for West High School, and launched the new gym. Today, the gym houses nearly 900 gymnasts and 55 coaches each session. Its 32,000-square-foot facility is the largest in southern Minnesota.

Olson's objective is not only to provide a fun, exciting and safe place for area youth to stay fit but to teach life lessons through gymnastics. "It's not about turning out Olympic gymnasts, but teaching life skills like perseverance, hard work ethic, teamwork and comradery as well as physical wellbeing," says Olson. "Success comes from learning these skills."

Tenth grader Grace Morgan has great ideas

By Shelly Miller



Grace Morgan

When East High School tenth grader Grace Morgan sees an opportunity, she takes it. She, her peers and teachers consider this her life motto and words she lives by every day.

East High School Counselor Andy Vander Linden agrees. "As a rising student, Grace impresses with her academic dominance and forward-thinking," Vander Linden says. "She is a passionate person driven by her interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). I am excited to see what she brings to our world."

Morgan's passion for STEM courses comes from her desire to create ideas and help solve problems. In her engineering design course, she is able to dig deeper in the engineering design process and apply math, science and engineering to hands-on projects. "One of my ideas was inspired by seeing my cousin with attention deficit disorder struggle to concentrate without fidgeting," Morgan says. "I am working to develop a pen that is quiet, yet a person can fidget and help them pay attention at school or any task-at-hand."

Michael Sipe: Impossible to define in a single word

By Michelle Laven

Pay attention to the text of one of his assignments, and it's easy to understand why students find Michael Sipe, a U.S. History and Psychology teacher at Mankato Area Public Schools (MAPS) West High School so special. Says Sipe, "I ask my students to make a personal observation on each person in class, and I have two stipulations: stay in alphabetical order so I can compile them afterwards, and use more than one word. Because no one can be defined in a single word."



Ben Stevens reviews his chapter vocabulary with his psychology teacher, Michael Sipe.

In addition to his daily presence at West, Sipe invests time teaching Social Studies at MAPS Central High School during the summer. "The district does a good job of trying to offer different environments for students who need a more personal structure," says Sipe. "I want to be someone who can walk with them and give them credit for what they know."

When tables are turned, and students are asked to describe their teacher they describe him as a teacher who talks with them, not at them. West Principal, Sherri Blasing says. "They will tell you they learned authentic life lessons in his classroom, along with history and psychology."

Brady helps students take first steps into school

By Michelle Laven

"When students come to me they are so excited for school, I know I want to be a part of that excitement and keep it going when they move on," says Abby Brady, Kindergarten Teacher at Mankato Area Public Schools Washington Elementary.

Brady works closely with Washington's three other kindergarten teachers to meet student academic needs while generating enthusiasm for learning. Every month they have a themed kindergarten celebration where they invite families into the classroom for two hours. Each teacher has an activity which kids and parents rotate through. "It's one important way we try to connect adults with their kids' academic development," Brady says.

Principal Shane Baier feels Brady's success stems from the way she comes to school believing she will make a difference in the lives of her students. "If you spend five minutes in her classroom, you realize how special she is to her students," says Baier. "She represents everything students, families, and schools want to see in a kindergarten teacher."

For more information contact staff at Washington Elementary School at 507-345-3059.



Washington Elementary Kindergarten teacher, Abby Brady, listens and guides students as they read aloud during small group time.

Monroe Elementary School third grader Chloe Geer does the right thing

By Shelly Miller

Third grade student Chloe Geer stands out as a leader amongst her peers at Monroe Elementary School.

Monroe Elementary School Principal Steve Johanson says Geer is a student who stands out. Angie Eccles, Geer's third grade teacher at Monroe Elementary School concurs. "Chloe is an outstanding student," says Eccles. "She works hard, cares for others and does what is right."

Geer believes she sets an example by doing the right thing. "I really like to help people," says Geer. "Either on the playground or in the classroom I just do it because I know that's what I would want someone to do for me and it's the right thing." And, Geer says in the classroom she listens and works hard to do her best which she hopes rubs off on others.

Geer enjoys math because it is a good challenge. She particularly has fun computing problems on the calculator that make words when turned upside down. When she comes up with a good one, she is happy to share it.



Chloe Geer

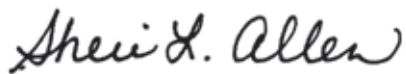
Dear residents,

As I look back over the 10 years I have been a part of Mankato Area Public Schools, community support of our students has made a difference. That support helps lead to positive outcomes for students, families and business. Thank you for your continued support of education because schools are a vital part of community success. I am honored to have served Mankato Area Public Schools' communities.

Students are a top priority for our district. We continue to look for opportunities to engage them in learning and skill development across a variety of areas to help benefit them beyond high school. A goal is to help prepare them for life. Mankato Area Public Schools' commitment is to continuous improvement toward assuring learning excellence and readiness for a changing world, being progressive and setting high expectations which includes openness and a culture of civility and excellence.

Please contact us any time we can be of service.

With the highest regard,



Sheri L. Allen, Ed. D., Superintendent
Intergovernmental Center
10 Civic Center Plaza
Mankato, MN 56001
507-387-1868
sallen1@isd77.org

*Assuring learning excellence and
readiness for a changing world.*



How to reach
Mankato Area Public Schools'
Superintendent

10 Civic Center Plaza
Mankato, MN 56001
Phone 507-387-1868
Fax 507-387-4257
sallen1@isd77.org

Receive Mankato Area Public Schools updates—*Subscribe at isd77.org*

By Shelly Schulz, public information

Stay informed about Mankato Area Public Schools' by subscribing to news and information via email and/or text messages. It's easy—go to isd77.org, and simply click on "subscribe to news" to stay informed about school district news, information and events. Another option is to stay connected with Mankato Area Public Schools on Facebook and Twitter @isd77news.

Quality schools help drive economic well-being, including favorable home values. Businesses, jobs, schools and economic stability have interrelationship. Importantly, public schools are designed to serve all students and outstanding education is often one of the key factors for families in deciding where to live, and for businesses when determining where to invest and reinvest.

For more information about Mankato Area Public Schools, contact staff at 507-387-8516.

**Provide feedback
online anytime:
isd77.org**

Mankato Area Public School Board— how to reach



Darren Wacker
312 Tranquility Trail
Mankato, MN 56001
507-340-4708
dwacke1@isd77.org

Chair



Jodi Sapp
20588 Old State Hwy 66
Mankato, MN 56001
507-351-6597
jsapp1@isd77.org

Vice-Chair



Sara Hansen
2034 Sundance Lane
North Mankato, MN 56003
507-469-1414
shanse1@isd77.org

Clerk



Judi Brandon
10 Crown Hill Lane
Mankato, MN 56001
507-387-4945
jbrand1@isd77.org

Treasurer



Kristi Schuck
730 South Broad Street
Mankato, MN 56001
507-382-4951
kschuc1@isd77.org



Abdi Sabrie
537 Linda Drive
Eagle Lake, MN 56024
507-654-0036
ksabrie1@isd77.org



Ann Hendricks
133 Ichabod Lane
Mankato, MN 56001
507-351-7503
ahendr1@isd77.org

School Board meetings

The Mankato Area Public School Board typically meets at 5:30 p.m., the first and third Mondays of each month. School Board meetings are open to the public and are held:

Mankato Room (first floor)
Intergovernmental Center
10 Civic Center Plaza
Mankato, Minn.

School Board meetings can also be viewed live on public access KTV online at accessktv.org or on cable television channel 180 (Charter) and 8 (Consolidated Communications), and replayed in the same locations at 6 p.m. on Wednesdays. School Board meeting video and minutes are available online at isd77.org.

For more information, contact staff at 507-387-1868.

MISSION
Assuring learning
excellence and readiness
for a changing world.



VALUES

Integrity
Respect
Excellence
Adaptability
Responsibility
Engagement
Collaboration

Mankato Area Public Schools'

24-Hour School Help and Information Line

507-386-4777

This newsletter is published to keep citizens well informed.
Many articles were written in response to questions.

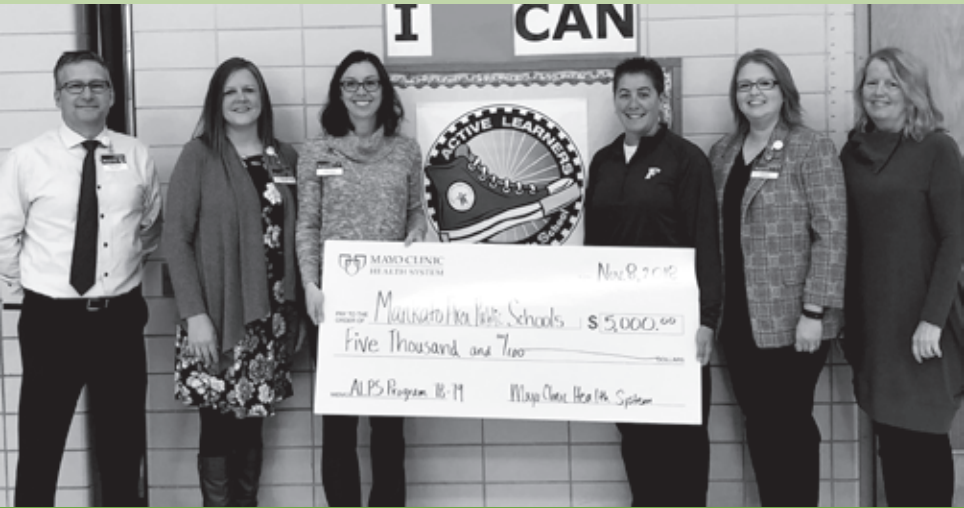
Senior Editor: Shelly Schulz, director of public information and customer service,
507-387-8516, sschulz@mankatomn.gov, Fax 507-388-7530

Editor: Edell Fiedler, communications and engagement coordinator,
507-387-8692, efiedler@mankatomn.gov, Fax 507-388-7530

Mankato Area Public Schools and City of Mankato Public Information Office
10 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato, MN 56001
isd77.org or mankatomn.gov

Your support counts!

The generosity of individuals and businesses helps enhance students’ education by supporting Mankato Area Public Schools’ programs. To make a contribution to Mankato Area Public Schools, contact Superintendent Sheri Allen at 507-387-1868 or sallen1@isd77.org. Following is a list of contributions during the recent school year:



Mayo Clinic staff present a \$5,000 donation to Mankato Area Public Schools. Mayo employees with school district staff pictured left to right: Medical Doctor Graham King, Angie Vidden, Christi Wilking, Dianne Johns, Mankato Area Public Schools, April Lanz and Superintendent Sheri Allen.

Adopt-A-Classroom.	\$196-elementary school	Wanda and Michael Lloyd	\$200-high school dance program
American Engineering Testing Inc.	\$100-high school robotics	Matt and Jennifer Mangulis	\$1,000-high school robotics
American Legion Post 518 North Mankato	\$200-elementary school	Mankato Area Zero Waste	books-elementary schools
Linus and Staci Anderson	\$250-high school robotics	Mankato Clinic	\$150-soccer program
L & N Andreas Foundation.	\$10,000-daycare	Mankato Clinic Foundation	\$2,500 grant-middle school
Anonymous.	\$2,125-elementary school field trip		\$2,500 grant-Project Lead the Way
	\$1,000-high school program	Mankato Mental Health Associates	\$100-high school robotics
	\$750-girls' high school swimming and diving	Mankato Motor Company -	\$500-high school activities
	\$200-early learning field trips	Mankato Symphony Orchestra	90 symphony tickets, \$450 value, high schools
	\$45,390-high school kitchen renovations	Mankato/North Mankato Youth Football	\$150-high school football
Arnold's of Mankato.	\$50-soccer program	Maschka Riedy & Ries	\$100-high school business program
Austin's Auto Repair	\$100-high school business program		\$100-high school dance program
	\$100-soccer program	Mayo Clinic Health System	\$5,000-elementary schools
Bemis	\$750-girls' high school swimming and diving	Midwest Art Catalyst	\$1,065-middle school art program
Big Dog Restaurant	\$50-high school dance program	MICO Inc.	\$1,000-high school robotics
Blinds & More	\$50-high school dance program	Minnesota Elevator Inc. (MEI)	\$250-high school robotics
BLK Electric	\$500-soccer program	MinnStar Bank	\$100-high school prom
Josh Braam	VW Sedan, \$150 value, high school technology education	Alyssa Moffitt	\$500-soccer
Andrew and Devan Brand	\$150-elementary school field trip	Minnesota State University, Mankato	\$175-high school robotics
Braun Intertec Corporation	\$500-high school robotics	City of North Mankato	\$1,000-elementary schools
C & N Sales	\$100-high school business program		\$500-middle school
C.A.B. Construction.	steel, \$390 value, high school technology education		\$500-community education and recreation
Robero and Mario Cancino	school supplies, \$50 value		\$500-music program
Capstone Publishing	books, \$48,827 value, elementary school and early childhood		\$500-student activities
Captain Planet Foundation	\$2,500 grant-high school wildlife ecology and school forest project	North Mankato Civic and Commerce Association	\$600-high school dance program
	backpacks and school supplies, \$175 value	North Mankato Firefighters Relief Association	\$50-high school prom
Cars-N-Credit		Northern Comfort	\$100-high school dance program
Casey's General Store	\$100-high school robotics	Northern Energy Homes	\$50-soccer program
CHS	\$2,750-high schools	Oleson + Hobbie Architects	\$500-high school robotics
Chuck's Body Shop	\$50-high school dance program	Jeremy and Heather Olson	Rifton supine stander, \$2,912 value, special education
Tom Clements	\$100-high school drama club	Orthopaedic & Fracture Clinic	\$250-girls' high school swimming and diving
David Collins	\$50-soccer program		\$50-high school dance program
Commerce Drive Dental Group	\$100-soccer program	Overhead Door Company of Mankato	\$100-soccer program
Community Bank	\$100-soccer program	Papa Murphy's Pizza	300 gift certificates, \$1,200 value, community education and recreation
Community Charities of Minnesota	\$4,500-high school activities		\$2,000—high school scholarship fund
Compeer Financial	\$1,000-high school robotics	George Patchin (in memory of).	
	15 backpacks filled with school supplies	Parent Teacher Organizations, Parent Teacher Associations and booster clubs.	more than \$312,000-districtwide
Condux International	steel for welding, \$50 value, high school technology education	Pioneer Bank	school supplies, \$175 value
Condux Tesmec Inc.	\$100-high school business program	Ploog Electric	\$100-high school robotics
Consolidated Communications	\$250-soccer program	Prairie Ecology Bus Center.	\$11,700-elementary schools
	\$500-high school dance program	Quality 1 Hr Foto	\$1,845-high school poster, mural and wall
Cornerstone State Bank	\$1,000-elementary school	William and Amy Radichel.	\$200-high school club
Cross Country Underground	\$100-high school dance program	Mary Roach	educational puzzles and materials, \$971 value, early learning
Dairy Queen West	\$100-high school dance program	Ruth's Baked Goods	cupcakes, \$48 value, volunteers
Dance Express	\$100-high school dance program	Scheel's	\$50-high school dance program
Jerry and Beatrice Demaray	\$100-high school	James and Susan Schindle	\$150-girls' high school swimming and diving
Nic and Crystal Dubbelde.	school supplies, \$50 value	Schmidt Siding and Window	\$100-high school robotics
Dunkin Donuts.	certificates, \$87, volunteer awards	Schwickerts Tecta America	\$750-high school dance program
Eagle Lake American Legion Post 617	\$200-elementary school		\$200-soccer program
Eagle Lake Fire Department	\$500-elementary school	SEI Private Trust Company	\$50-elementary school
ECS-Your Wiring Pros	\$500-high school robotics	Sertoma of Greater Mankato	\$2,000-deaf/hard of hearing program
Educare Foundation	\$82,395 grants-districtwide	Skogen Mechanical	\$100-high school robotics
Eide Bailly	\$250-high school dance program	South Front Networks	\$200-high school business program
Electrical Production Services Inc.	\$500-high school robotics	Southern Minnesota Orthodontics	\$100-soccer program
Express Care	\$50-high school business program		\$100-high school dance program
Flexible Plastics Inc.	\$250-high school robotics	Edwin Starks and Linda Boylan-Starks	\$125-high school lacrosse
Andrew Foster	\$100-high school football	Joel and Susan Sullivan	\$137-girls' high school swimming and diving
Suzanne Froelich	\$100-high school robotics	Timeless Interiors	\$100-high school prom
FUN.com	\$500-soccer program	True Real Estate	\$250-high school robotics
	\$250-high school dance program	True Value	school supplies, \$150 value, elementary school
Jon Gaalswyk	\$50-high school robotics	Yea-Ling Tsao	\$500-high school dance program
Gish Electric	\$250-soccer program	Tweeten's One Stop	\$100-high school dance program
Lesley and Mark Grout, Jr.	\$200-elementary field trip	United Team Elite	\$746-soccer program
Rebecca and Ronald Gruenes.	\$100-high school football		\$100-high school robotics
Samuel L. Hanson.	\$250-high school hall of	US Bank	\$500-high school robotics
Christopher and Victoria Hart.	\$1,000-elementary school	Valley News	\$100-soccer program
HyVee Downtown	school supplies, \$240 value		\$200-high school dance program
	books, \$500 value	Verizon Wireless	backpacks and school supplies, \$250 value
I & S Group Inc.	\$1,500-high school robotics	Volk	\$100-soccer program
	\$1,000-soccer program	Walmart	\$1,000-high school family/consumer science classes
	\$250-high school dance program	Wealth Enhancement Group	\$1,000-adult basic education
Ignition Fitness & Sports	\$200-soccer program	(Ryan McKeown and Danielle Mehia team)	
Industrial Fabrication Services, Inc (IFS)	steel, \$300 value, high school welding	Mark Weingartz (Dan's Barber Shop)	\$100-high school robotics
David and Courtney Ireland	mobile stander, \$225 value, special education	Darrell Wolf	\$300-high school dance program
Forrest G. James Marine Corp Auxiliary	school supplies, \$75 value		
Basil and Linda Janavaras	\$2,000 to John Basil Janavaras Memorial Scholarship Fund		
Jewison & Associates Inc.	\$50-soccer program		
Johnson Outdoors Inc.	\$500-high school robotics		
Jones Metal Inc.	welding metal, \$250 value, high school		
Junior Achievement of Upper Midwest	\$100-high school business program		
John Just, Sr.	\$5,000, Bunny Just Financial Support to middle school music		
	\$5,000 for Fred Just Sr. Gift-high school activities		
Kato Engineering	\$500-high school robotics		
Kato Escape Room	\$200 to high school business program		
Katter, John	\$1,460-girls' high school swimming and diving		
Keinz Electric	\$50-high school dance program		
Keystone (Tim Rees)	vehicle fenders \$250 value, high school technology education		
Kiwanis Builders Clubs	\$450-middle school recreation equipment		
Kiwanis Club of Mankato	\$150-high school club		
Knutson + Casey	\$500-soccer program		
Knutson Brothers	\$1,000-high school robotics		
Amanda Kozitza Family	backpacks and school supplies, \$300 value		
Lake Washington Improvement Association	\$2,000-high school robotics		
Barbara Langworthy	\$50-high school robotics		
Leonard, Beth Leonard	\$200-girls' high school swimming and diving		
Lindsay Windows	\$200-high school business program		
Lloyd Lumber Company	\$50-high school business program		



Educare
FOUNDATION for
Mankato Area Public Schools

Support the wonder of learning

The Educare Foundation has provided more than \$1.2 million in financial support to Mankato Area Public Schools to fund programs and activities that go beyond the normal operating budget. Through this funding, teachers are enabled to enhance educational opportunities for all students, explore new ways of learning and provide a vital link between the community and the classroom.

For more information about the Educare Foundation, call 507-387-1868 or visit www.educarefoundation.org.

We appreciate your generous support of Educare.

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Lowell and Nadine Andreas Foundation

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MANKATO RIVER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

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ISG

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MEI – Total Elevator Solutions

Orthopaedic & Fracture Clinic

Schwickert's Tecta America

WEB Construction



Zeinab Nur (far right) works with Adnan Ahmed and Garret Cox.

Mankato Area Public Schools' Early Learning program helps set the stage for student success through programs designed to help children transition to kindergarten and school. A common tie within all program offerings is the embedded opportunity for family engagement. Programs aim to partner with parents/guardians and provide resources and supports they need to feel confident in providing their child with experiences that will build a solid foundation for learning.

is happening at home and parents are their child's first teacher."

Programs available:
Early Childhood Family Education
Early Childhood Family Education partners with families to provide information and support to assist them in creating the best possible environment for a child's healthy growth and development.

Ready! for Kindergarten
READY! For Kindergarten helps close the achievement gap by engaging

Helping set the stage for student success

By Edell Fiedler, public information

parents/caregivers in a child's learning up to age five through annual workshops, take-home materials and learning tools.

Preschool
Mankato Area Public Schools' Preschool Program, which has a four-star rating from Parent Aware, is designed to help children ages three to five build the foundation for learning that will prepare them for their transition to kindergarten.

Early Childhood Screening
Early Childhood Screening, required by the state of Minnesota, checks a child's growth and development before they enter kindergarten.

Early Childhood Special Education:
Includes early intervention (up to age two) and preschool special education (up to age six years and 11 months).

"Our youngest learners are making connections every day that will influence their future learning and success," Gag says. "We are excited to partner with families throughout our community to provide experiences that will enhance their child's development to build a foundation for learning readiness and excellence."

For more information contact Katie Gag, assistant director, at 507-625-4620. 📞

Head Start in hospitality

By Sara Gilbert Frederick

Graduation requirements in Minnesota do not include cake decorating, food art or culinary skills. For students interested in a career in the hospitality field, learning such skills in high school gives them a head start on their careers. That's where ProStart, an advanced placement culinary arts and restaurant management course offered at East High School, comes in.

ProStart is a curriculum available through the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. In addition to teaching culinary skills and the principles of restaurant management, it includes soft skills such as communication, teamwork, professionalism and time management.

At East, where Nicole Hed teaches and advises ProStart students, it also includes the help of professionals in the hospitality industry who serve as student mentors.

"Mentors who share life experiences provide students with another helpful dimension to their education," Hed says.

Mentors also help prepare the students for competitions, like the April contest at Southwest Minnesota State where students focus on cake decorating, food art and culinary skills.

Hed encourages anyone interested in serving as a mentor to contact her directly at nhed1@isd77.org or by calling 507-387-5671. 📞



East High School ProStart students Kody Kesselring (left) and Sojourner Ryne compete in a culinary competition.

High schools honor alumni with Hall of Fame

By Shelly Miller

Mankato Area Public Schools' East and West high schools are rich in tradition and accomplishments. In celebration of the many talented and successful alumni who have been a part of and given back to these high school communities, the two schools recognize selected nominees in a Hall of Fame.

After going through a selection process, the schools host an induction ceremony for inductees during Homecoming Week. Each is presented with a personalized plaque that is hung permanently in the school's Hall of Fame as examples to students past, present and future. Past inductees include physicians, CEOs, armed services members, college coaches, athletes, authors and influential community members.

"A Hall of Fame at West High School was started for the purpose of providing current students, staff and community with information about outstanding alumni legacies," says Brian Fell, activities director at West High School. "It gives us a chance to celebrate the successes of those from our school and we hope their examples serve as role models for current students."

Todd Waterbury, activities director at East High School, says there is a lot of pride in what the community brings, and seeing where these alumni have been helps forge the future for students. "The Hall of Fame is an opportunity to honor a tradition and recognize alumni who have not only accomplished wonderful things at school but also beyond high school," Waterbury says. "Their success gives a sense of pride, tradition and self to our students, staff and community members." 📞

For more information or to nominate, visit www.whs.isd77.org/activities/hall-of-fame or www.ehs.isd77.org/activities/hall-of-fame.

West students turn up the music with new ensemble equipment

By Shelly Miller

Mankato Area Public Schools' West High School students with an interest in music have an opportunity to experiment with the latest technologically-advanced electronic equipment at school and at home thanks to the Educare Foundation. A generous \$28,000 Educare grant funded two new musical ensembles with the purchase of electronic musical instruments, hardware and software.

The new equipment brings the next generation of musical technology to students' finger tips. It includes tools such as MIDI controller digital keyboards, Roli keyboards and the revolutionary Pearl malletSTATION which is an adjustable range electronic mallet controller for percussion.

The equipment's portability gives students the opportunity to check it out and take it home. "Students will be able to study and compose independently or collaboratively and share their creations with peers," says Brady Krusemark, band director at West

High School. "Any interested student may check the equipment out, take it home and gear composition toward their interests. Students may then bring their creations back to school and share them during our weekly meetings."

Principal Sherri Blasing says the grant offers students new ways to express their musical talent. Blasing says, "These instruments enable students to experiment with composing and arranging music, allowing them to dig deeper into music theory and use their creativity in ways not available to them before."

Both Blasing and Krusemark see this opportunity building pathways in music not only in performance but in music theory, composing and arranging. They also hope the new portable equipment will allow them to give back to the community through public performances.

For more information contact staff at West High School at 507-387-3461. 📞



West High School student Thomas Lauer shares his recently arranged percussion section feature for a pops concert using the Roli keyboard funded by the Educare grant.

A plan for student success

By Edell Fiedler, public information

At Mankato Area Public Schools' student achievement is a priority. Efficient budget management is a way to help ensure students succeed through funding needed programs and services, with at least 80 percent of total resources directed to these two items. By restructuring existing debt, local taxpayers were saved more than \$2 million. The district's budget aligns with its strategic roadmap, which helps plan for the future. Federal, state and local funding impacts make it important to ensuring there are enough available resources as the student population grows.

Mankato Area Public Schools' strategic roadmap focuses on strategic direction and serves as the foundation for Mankato Area Public Schools mission—Assuring

learning excellence and readiness for a changing world—and its core values of integrity, respect, excellence, adaptability, responsibility, engagement and collaboration.

“Our community supports Mankato Area Public Schools,” says Superintendent Sheri Allen. “That support helps continue to serve our students in the best way possible, contributing to their overall success. How we budget and prepare for the future is important—we're committed to helping students succeed.”

For more information contact staff at 507-387-1868 or maps@isd77.org. 

Making more MakerSpaces

By Sara Gilbert Frederick

Over the past several years, Shelly Makela has seen dozens of students at Eagle Lake Elementary come alive using tools provided in the school's MakerSpace, from legos and tanagrams to robots and 3D printers.


“Kids who may struggle in a traditional classroom come in here and you just see them light up,” Makela says. “This makes sense to them and so they succeed. It builds them up.”

Makela was instrumental in helping secure grants that allowed Eagle Lake Elementary to start the first MakerSpace in the district. Now a \$17,000 Educare grant made possible by Jack Links is outfitting MakerSpaces in the rest of the district's elementary schools with the same tools that Makela uses.

“Once we had it put together here, we started talking about how we could share it with everyone,” Makela says.



With 3D printers in all of the district's elementary schools, students can create creatures like this.

To do so, Makela is sharing her ideas and expertise with media specialists at all the schools. She's also building a website where MakerSpace-related curriculum, much of which has been integrated across the district's curriculum, can be posted. “Our goal is to help everyone,” Makela says. 

How to find school attendance areas, busing eligibility and walking routes

By Edell Fiedler, public information

Finding school attendance areas and busing eligibility is as easy as 1, 2, 3. Simply go online to isd77.org/discover-maps/district/boundary-map. Click the “Determine attendance area” box, which opens to a search page.


Once there:

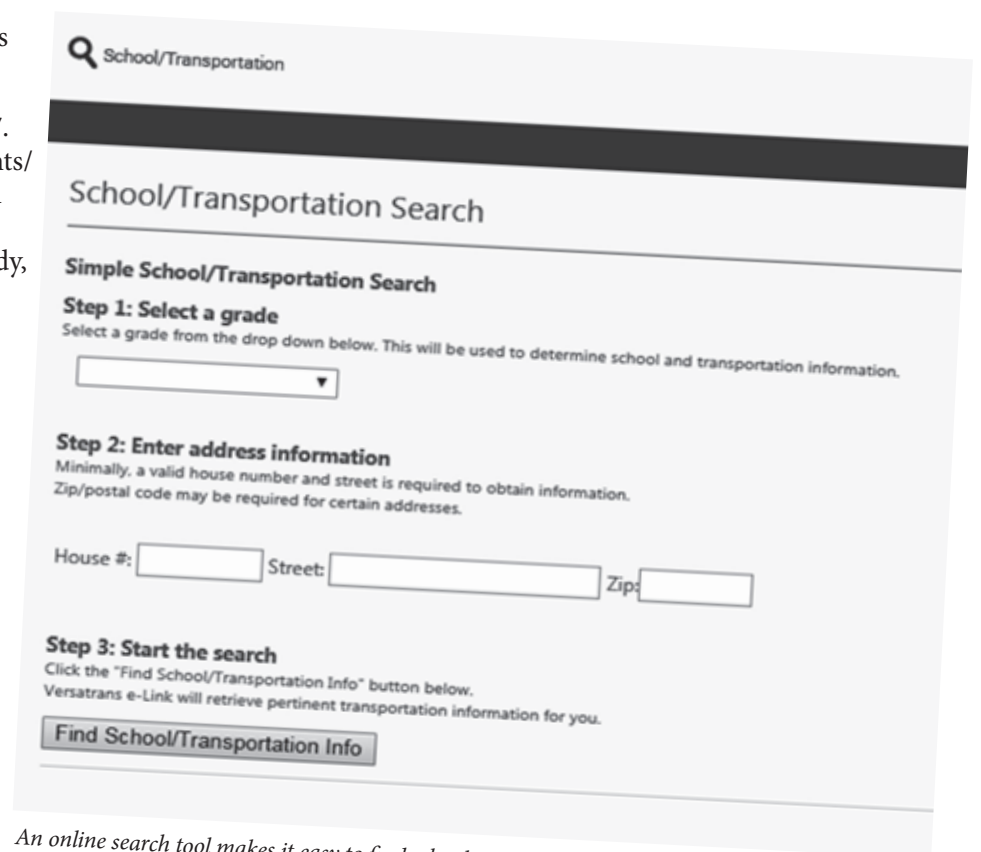
1. Select student's grade.
2. Enter address.
3. Click Find School/Transportation Information button to start the search.

Access the online search tool 24/7 from anywhere internet is available.

Not riding the bus? Visit isd77.org/discover-maps/departments/facilities/safe-routes-to-school to view Safe Routes to School for Franklin, Jefferson, Kennedy, Roosevelt, Rosa Parks and Washington elementary schools.

Mankato Area Public Schools' Central Registration Office personnel in the Intergovernmental Center, 10 Civic Center Plaza, is another resource to help. Staff can assist with registration, attendance area and busing questions.

For more information contact staff at 507-387-2125. 



An online search tool makes it easy to find school attendance areas and busing eligibility.


Education Day at annual Mahkato Wacipi earns award


By Shelly Schulz, public information

Scott Hare named Special Education Administrator of the Year



Scott Hare

The Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE) has named Scott Hare, Director of Student Support Services of Mankato Area Public Schools, as the 2019 Special Education Administrator of the Year. Hare received this award for his dedication to students with disabilities and their families, and his active involvement in professional and community affairs. 

Mankato Area Public Schools' received an award through the Humphrey School of Public Affairs local government innovation awards, which honors activities where creative ways to deliver service are provided with great impact and at reduced cost. In the Native nation category, Education Day at the Mahkato Wacipi is an award winner and done cooperatively between the Mahkato Mdewakanton Association, Mankato Area Public Schools and Minnesota State University, Mankato. 



Megan Heutmaker, director for American Indian Affairs, Recruitment and Retention, Minnesota State University, Mankato; and Mankato Area Public Schools' Superintendent Sheri Allen. Photo by Steve Foley.



East High School students Peyton Keech, Jessie Lin and Madison Davis measure landmarks of human remains to identify race, gender, age, height and more.

Biomedical programs get a boost

By Shelly Miller

Students at Mankato Area Public Schools’ East and West high schools have seen an expansion in Project Lead the Way biomedical sciences programming through a grant and support from the Educare Foundation and Mayo Health System Foundation. The grant allowed the purchase of human bodies systems, dissection equipment and hands-on application of medical anatomy. It also provided new course opportunities including principles of biomedical science, human body systems and medical interventions.

Biomedical courses are in high demand and show records of success. A large percentage of jobs involve healthcare and the demand is increasing says Kim Mueller, career and readiness coordinator for Mankato Area Public Schools. “These courses give hands-on, engaging experiences into what real professionals do and provide authentic learning that inspires excitement,” Mueller says. “They help build critical-thinking and problem-solving skills which are important in the biomedical field.”

“The course provides specific hands-on skills experience for crime scene investigation, DNA studies or any healthcare profession,” says Greg Summers, biomedical teacher at East and West high schools. “Students learn about the human body as well as make connections between the body and themselves. For example, they may connect a nervous system unit with a family member with Alzheimer’s.”

Sarah Summers, biomedical teacher at East and West high schools explains the courses are fun. “Students experience super cool lab activities that apply to real life situations like a respiratory unit relating specifically to a student athlete and their sports performance,” “It really peaks their interest.”

Tracking activity for heart health

By Edell Fiedler, public information

The Heart Zones System proved to be a successful pilot project at Mankato Area Public Schools’ Monroe and Rosa Parks elementary schools. Thanks to a \$32,000 grant from Educare, the Heart Zones System has been brought to Eagle Lake, Franklin, Hoover, Jefferson, Roosevelt, Washington and Kennedy elementary schools and Bridges Community School.



Brynn Stone, a student at Rosa Parks Elementary School, shows where a heart zone band is placed.

The Heart Zones System, which uses fitness technology and wearable devices, is used during physical education classes to monitor students activity levels.

Feedback shows heart rate range which is identified by color: blue (resting); green (light activity); yellow (moderate activity); and red (vigorous activity). The system also counts students’ steps. Combined, the tool’s features help students become aware of how important it is to be active and what it takes to get their heart rates to a level that can help them be stronger and healthier.

“The earlier we can teach heart health, the more students can reflect and hopefully make good decisions about their health and activity levels,” says Dianne Johns, physical education teacher at Franklin Elementary School. In addition to Educare, Johns shared that parent teacher organizations and staff were important to helping the Heart Zones System become a reality.

For more information contact Dianne Johns at djohns4@isd77.org or 507-345-4287.

Hands-on experiences

By Sara Gilbert Frederick

When students go into the digital fabrication labs at either West or East high school, they eventually come out with something they’ve created.

“Students are able to design, build and test products that they create,” explains Mark Zenk, a Technology Education teacher at West. “They print them with a 3D printer, cut them out with a laser and add signage with the vinyl cutter.”

Zenk and Dave Stahl, who teaches Technology Education at East, were able to enhance the equipment their students use thanks to a \$3,800 grant from Educare. The dollars allowed them to purchase vinyl cutters, which create new opportunities for creativity in the classroom.

“This new equipment also opens the door for interdisciplinary opportunities,” Stahl says. “Students taking classes in other disciplines can collaborate with our engineering students on projects in areas such as math, science, foreign language, music and art.”

The hands-on experiences prepare students for both college and careers. “Students need to be able to understand how things are created and built,” Zenk explains. “Providing hands-on experience in high school will make them all the more rounded upon graduation.”



West High School student Terry Moore loads vinyl into the vinyl cutter while working on a project.

Superintendent Sheri Allen inaugural recipient of Leadership Pathfinder Award

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Board honored Mankato Area Public Schools’ Superintendent Sheri Allen with the Leadership Pathfinder Award. The inaugural recipient, Allen was recognized for significantly moving Mankato Area Public Schools in the direction of Dr. King’s dream of an inclusive and diverse community, relationships with all.”



Superintendent Sheri Allen

Training and technology important when partnering for safety

By Edell Fiedler, public information

Mankato Area Public Schools' generally serves families in the cities of Mankato, North Mankato, Eagle Lake and Madison Lake. When it comes to school safety, partnerships between all of these jurisdictions is important. Training and exercises provide hands-on learning and show what works and what needs to be changed or addressed. At times, when needed, follow-up exercises are scheduled to continue to improve efforts.

In addition to hands-on training and exercises, safety features are important parts of the partnership, and technology helps enhance security. School buildings are equipped with surveillance cameras to help visually monitor inside and outside areas. Security staff help monitor the more than 600 cameras located throughout district buildings, and on-site radios provide direct contact with public safety during emergencies.

Devices located at main entrances of school buildings enhance safety. Visitors sign in. See something, say something is a practical way for everyone to participate in community safety.

"By working together in conversation or through technology, we can be proactive in addressing emergency situations and help keep each other informed about safety topics," says Scott Hogen, director of facilities for Mankato Area Public Schools. "We continue to look for opportunities to enhance security for students, staff and visitors."

For more information contact Scott Hogen, director of facilities, at 507-345-5311.



A surveillance camera and communications device located outside the main entrance of a Mankato Area Public Schools' building.

Prepared for safety even when on the go

School officials can access safety plan information quickly thanks to a mobile safety platform. This simple to use and secure app helps empower faculty and staff by providing immediate access to safety plan information when it's most needed. Tool like this app, along with emergency planning, help keep learning environments safe and productive for all.

For more information, contact Scott Hogen, director of facilities, at 507-345-5311 or shogen1@isd77.org.



Partnering for efficiencies