INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

728 HAPPENINGS

Our mission is to educate, inspire & empower

With schools in Elk River, Otsego, Rogers & Zimmerman

www.isd728.org

Winter 2018

Message from Superintendent Dan Bittman



It's a saying that dates back generations: "It takes a village to raise a child." Our "villages" rally around our children, and, in turn, our schools. When it comes to life as a parent, we often ask other friends and families, "How are the kids?"

We can ask ourselves the same question. How are the children in Independent School District 728? To help pave the way for our children to do well requires planning and commitment. So what is ISD 728 doing to support the children of our school communities? We have a Strategic Plan developed by our community to lead us into the future by providing our students with innovative learning environments, equitable opportunities, and access to programs and facilities. This plan includes commitments to achieve results for students in each of these areas.

We are reviewing our finances and our facilities to ensure we have the resources to support the Strategic Plan and provide the most appropriate learning environments for our kids in terms of spaces, programs and materials. Once we identify what we have and what we lack, we will need the commitment of our staff, our parents and our community to help fill the gaps.

We are fortunate that our 2018 community survey indicates strong resident support for the district in terms of educational quality, staff, academic programs, district leadership and financial management. In addition, the community's perceptions align with our Strategic Plan's values.

Residents also value maintaining our schools and keeping curriculum updated - both of which are challenges given inadequate state funding that has resulted in $10 million in budget cuts in the past six years.

The promise behind our Strategic Plan is a message to our community's children: "We believe in you enough to invest in you."

Learn more about this vision at **www.isd728.org/StrategicPlan**.

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ISD 728 Grads Maintain Edge on State, Nation in ACT Scores

High school graduates from ISD 728 schools continue to demonstrate high levels of performance on annual ACT exams, and are better framed for success in education beyond the high school level, according to the annual report prepared by the people who bring students the ACT exam.

"Meeting our World's Best Workforce tenet of having all kids prepared for college and career includes assessing students' readiness via tools such as the ACT," said ISD 728 Superintendent Dan Bittman. "ISD 728 students, families, staff, and community members work tirelessly to support one another, and student performance on the most recent ACT is just one more indication we are continuing in the right direction."

In ISD 728, students graduating in 2018 averaged an ACT composite score of 21.8, which is a half of a point higher than the state average of 21.3. The exam is often a key submission when students apply for college or university acceptance. The ACT score is often a standard for scholarship awards, as well.

Minnesota, again, led the nation with its state composite score average for states that assessed nearly 90 percent of their students with the ACT. It also led the country in the other areas measured by the ACT – Reading Comprehension, Math, English and Science. ISD 728 outscored the state in all of those fields. Graduates from the District scored an average of 20.5 in English, 22.3 in Math, 22.0 in Reading and 22.1 in Science.

2018 ACT COLLEGE READINESS SCORES

	DISTRICT	STATE	NATIONAL
ENGLISH	68%	60%	60%
MATH	54%	47%	46%
READING	52%	48%	40%
SCIENCE	49%	42%	36%

Students within the District performed nearly a full point higher in math, it's widest margin vs. the state average. As a result, the ACT states ISD 728 students are 54 percent more likely to score a C grade or higher in college-level algebra. And nearly 70 percent of ISD 728 students would score that well on a college-level English composition class.

ISD 728 has maintained a high level of performance while giving more students an opportunity to participate in the ACT – covering the cost for all junior to take the exam. The number of test takers has risen by more than 300 students, with a record 90 percent of the ISD 728 Class of 2018 taking the ACT.

Over the past several years, ACT has assisted school districts nationally with measurements in college readiness, according to graduates who have taken their ACT. The measurements also assess class choice in high school – showing that students who take three years of math, English and science typically score better on the national assessment than those who take two years or less prior to the exam.

Survey Shows ISD 728 Communities Support Schools, Values

Independent School District 728 recently conducted a community survey with the assistance of Morris Leatherman Company, the first survey of its kind in more than five years. The district, according to ISD 728 Superintendent Dan Bittman, wanted the survey to help assess if its new Strategic Plan is in harmony with community values as area schools take aim at a new decade of learning.

"It's one more data point for us to ensure we are meeting student, family and community needs while planning for our future as a district," Bittman said. "We see our new community-developed Strategic Plan as the foundation for that process as we aim to provide the most appropriate and functional learning environments for kids."

Peter Leatherman, co-owner of the Morris Leatherman firm, said the district has strong support among stakeholders and families in its mission to educate, inspire and empower all learners in ISD 728 communities. Leatherman's highlights were shared with the School Board and community at the November 26, 2018 meeting. While the complete presentation is available on the district's website, a few of the highlights Mr. Leatherman shared are provided below.

SUPPORT OF MISSION AND STRATEGIC PLAN



Nine out of 10 of those surveyed said the district is performing at "good" or "excellent" levels when it comes to areas such as educational quality, staff and academic programs. Survey responders also showed strong support for district leadership, financial management and student achievement levels. Residents value maintaining our school buildings, as well as keeping curriculum updated - both of which are challenges given inadequate state funding that has resulted in $10 million in District budget cuts in the past six years.

A GROWING DISTRICT

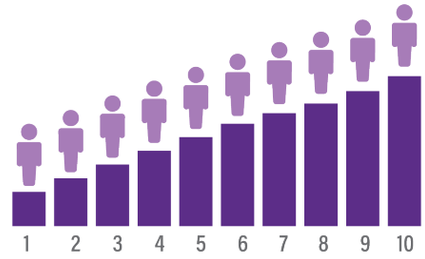


2,300 NEW HOMES IN THE NEXT **3 YEARS**

More than **2,300** new single-family homes are expected to be built within our district in the next **3 years**.

Leatherman reported that residents and stakeholders recognize the district is located in the heart of several growing communities. Those taking the survey shared that despite the continued growth, they continue to value small to medium class sizes, with half of the respondents recommending high school and middle school classes be kept at less than 30 students in a class. Participants support the district's mission to provide equity between buildings throughout the district and recognize the importance of having flexible learning spaces to meet individual student needs. More than 8 out of 10 community members believe there should be similarities across the district when it comes to cafeteria space, gym space, classroom design and other amenities.

Significant growth was also highlighted in a recent state demographer's report which was completed in collaboration with local city, county, and state officials and presented at the November 15, 2018 school board meeting.



2,000 NEW STUDENTS IN THE NEXT **10 YEARS**

The demographer, Hazel Reinhardt, shared that growth in terms of additional housing and student enrollment are projected to continue to increase, with the potential for 2,000 additional students in the next ten years. She noted further that school district enrollment has increased by 8% in the last 10 years, and is expected to grow more than that in the next ten.

This growth will create a space crunch in the north and south of the district, while having the most impact on elementary schools located in both Otsego and Rogers. She commented further, "the district would be wise to consider additional space in the south, as more will be needed."

"While growth is a good problem to have, it creates a need we are still working to get in front of and address," said Shane Steinbrecher, ISD 728 School Board Chair. "We'll be working closely with our community to make sure we have adequate resources to support families who are new to our district and those who have been with us in the past."

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

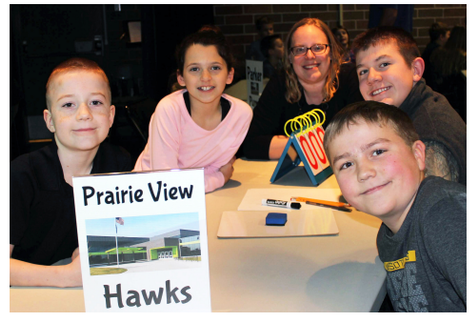
The survey showed many people get most of their information from district newsletters, the local newspapers (Star News and Crow River News) and from neighbors and friends.

Communication is a key tenet, Bittman said, as exciting things are happening in schools each and every learning day, including new community partnerships, innovative learning through technology and STEM, and an award-winning emphasis on the arts.

"It's a very exciting time in ISD 728, and we could not be more proud of our students, staff, and community. This survey gives us one more look at where we are in meeting community expectations and student needs, while making sure we are ready for the future."

Prairie View Takes Home ISD 728 Geography Bowl Honors

A fearsome foursome from Prairie View proved they knew their stuff when it came to maps and charts, taking the school's first ever Geography Bowl title. The team of Zach Greni, Jeff Dahl, Ava VonEschen and Dane Goodwin outlasted the top team from each elementary school around the district (grades 4 and 5) to take the championship.



ISD 728 Strategic Plan Takes Aim at Opportunity, Experience in Year One

The ISD 728 School Board approved the school district's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan prior to the start of the school year, giving the district a map to the next decade of learning as one of the top systems in Minnesota.

As the district implements Year One of this five-year plan, the halfway mark of the school year allows us to take a look at where we are, where we are going and how we got here.

A CAST OF THOUSANDS

Quite literally, the Strategic Plan approved by the school board last year was the result of thousands of hours of input. Teachers, staff members, community members, parents, administrators and students all provided feedback on the state of the school district so far, and what they'd like the school district to look like, achieve, and provide support for in 2020 and beyond.

District and community stakeholders, including the ISD 728 Core Planning Team, helped shape the plan through multiple methods of feedback, including surveys and meetings. Contributors stepped up and volunteered for various committees that addressed topics such as facility usage, continuous curriculum review, curriculum expansion, technology in schools, special education, and social and emotional health.

"We spent more than a full year taking input from stakeholders and members of our ISD 728 teaching community to stay true to our core values, and to our mission to educate, inspire and empower all learners, to shape their futures and accomplish their dreams," said Superintendent Dan Bittman. "It was important that this was a plan that represented our entire district, so we put in time and effort to make sure we heard and learned from ALL stakeholders along the way."

Those that couldn't attend planning meetings provided feedback and input in various other ways. Surveys were distributed throughout the 2017-2018 school year, and a series of roundtable discussions were hosted in three major communities – Zimmerman, Elk River and Rogers – to gather information and create a uniform vision.

"We heard and learned so much from so many," said Community Engagement Director Cory Franson. "During the process, staff was really involved. We're proud that ISD 728 employees were engaged in the process at the level they were. That shows a sense of pride and responsibility from everyone here."

IMPLEMENTING A NEW PLAN

The ISD 728 District Office (D.O.) has been a hub of activity since it opened, but it has been especially busy this year as Year One of the new Strategic Plan has been put in place.

"The atmosphere here has been really exciting," Bittman said. "The D.O. has been a great stage for a lot of collaboration and new ideas. It has also given me regular opportunities to learn with and from our staff, and to better understand how we, as a district, can best support each person and team."

From World's Best Workforce in the fall to Blended Learning Cohorts and Curriculum Review meetings, the District Office's training center rooms have hosted hundreds of teachers, administrators and staff members each week.

This month, for example, teachers and administrators met with the district's curriculum team to look at expansions to physical education programs, music programs, art, and world language. Other expansions are being considered in areas such as social-emotional learning, Special Education and blended learning – utilizing the district's 1-to-1 technology, as prioritized and outlined in the Strategic Plan.

In the meantime, the district is using the Strategic Plan to hold itself accountable. Two different strategies – each with several different tenets – will guide us as we seek results from the plan over the next five years. Key points include expanding and reviewing curriculum, as mentioned, as well as closing achievement gaps, expanding mental health services and availability, creating a diverse staff, and engaging our ISD 728 communities through communication and quality extracurricular programs.

MAKING THE GRADE BY 2023

The new ISD 728 Strategic Plan was designed to not only continue the success of the district as it is today, but to create new levels of excellence in the future.

"Without a doubt, the district is in a position to grow, adapt and achieve for our future learners," Franson said. "The new Strategic Plan is going to hold our entire community accountable – students, teachers, administrators and district staff. It's not just about test scores. It's about going beyond achievement in the classroom and helping kids realize their dreams."



How do we measure that? As a school district, ISD 728 is building new opportunities for students throughout all of our communities and the school district. And we're identifying new opportunities all the time, thanks to your continued feedback and engagement.

Students in Career and Technical Education are taking advantage of expanding internships and apprenticeships. Music educators are implementing a partnership with the world famous Met Opera. Extra-curricular activities are expanding in Zimmerman, Rogers and Elk River with new clubs and new activity spaces.

The district has defined measurement results in the plan. When students demonstrate awareness, empathy, cultural acceptance, adaption and achievement, ISD 728 knows it is succeeding outside of the classroom, as well as in the school walls.

"This is an exciting time to be part of ISD 728 and to make a difference in a child's life," Bittman said. "We know by being in our classrooms and schools, as well as from community and staff feedback, that ISD 728 is a great place to work and learn. With your help, it's only going to get better."

For more information about the ISD 728 Strategic Plan, visit **www.isd728.org/StrategicPlan**.

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ISD 728 Begins 2019-20 Budget Process

As winter winds down and spring looms around the corner, school districts around Minnesota begin to prepare their budgets for the 2019-2020 school year.

Preparation begins now thanks to an influx of information: Districts have a better handle on the number of students that will attend schools next fall; know how many teachers (approximately) they will need to educate and serve those students; have solid estimates on transportation costs and insurance fees for the upcoming year; and know the amount of revenue dollars they will receive from Federal and State government programs, such as Title I and compensatory education.

"All of this information, and much more data collected by our great staff in the finance office, allow us to make decisions for the upcoming year nearly six months ahead of time," said Superintendent Dan Bittman. "This allows our School Board to approve a budget that ensures student needs are met and is balanced in accordance with state law."

PROJECTED BUDGET SHORTFALL

Today, costs of education are continuing to increase, while the support received from the State and Federal Government, are not keeping pace. Continued disparity in Federal dollars, in particular, and the State of Minnesota not increasing funding to match the rate of inflation, have left many school districts struggling to make ends meet.

Despite those disparities, ISD 728 has remained an award-winning district, and an example of how to overcome challenges. The district's finance office has won both national and state awards over the past decade, demonstrating its commitment to being financially accountable.

"One of the ways we continue to be worthy of our ISD 728 community's trust is by being fiscally responsible, and transparent with our decision-making," said Shane Steinbrecher, ISD 728 School Board Chair. "Yet, even while cutting more than $10 million over the last six years, we anticipate a large shortfall in our 2019-2020 budget."

In fact, ISD 728 is predicting a need to make more than $10.2 million in budget cuts for the 2019-2020 school year, based on preliminary information. While that number could change pending the outcome of the Minnesota legislative session this spring, there is no denying reductions will be in store.

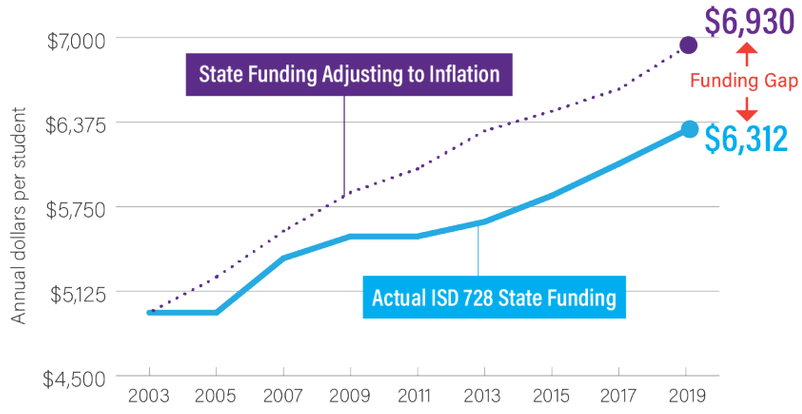
"We have been monitoring our budget situations for the last year very closely, and we knew this was a possibility we were facing. We shared that knowledge last fall at board meetings and in our monthly board videos, to make sure our constituents were informed of our financial struggles. And for those wondering why we didn't communicate how extensive the adjustments would be until now? We didn't have enough information to develop the budget in regards to student enrollment and insurance premiums, to name a couple of factors," Bittman said. "The bottom line is things are simply more expensive today than they were two or three years ago. Making an announcement on any shortfall without information that's up-to-date would have been premature."

Some items in the 2019-2020 budget that have seen the largest increases include:

- Insurance premiums (Up more than $2.4 million)
- Transportation costs (Up more than $2 million)
- Personnel-related costs (Up more than $3 million)
- Special Education services ($10.5 million in costs that should be covered by funding promised, but not delivered, by the State and Federal governments)

That - on top of state funding that has not kept up with inflation or increasing costs for more than 15 years - has the district in a financial situation where hard decisions will have to be made.

STATE BASIC GENERAL EDUCATION FUNDING PER STUDENT



If state funding had kept up with inflation since 2003, ISD 728 would receive nearly **$618** more per student, or a total of **$8,962,236** more this year.

DECISIONS TO BE MADE

What will the district do to combat these shortfalls?

First, ISD 728's Legislative Action Committee will continue to work with Legislators and advocate for necessary funding to support ISD 728 students.

The district will also consider whether to ask our ISD 728 community to increase their financial support for our schools and our students in the near future.

Finally, a review will take place to determine how best to provide adequate and ample resources for ISD 728 students with the educational opportunities our stakeholders expect and value.

"Right now, the ISD 728 School Board will be working with the administration as they review all budgets, evaluate current services – both wants and needs – and work to draft a balanced budget by April 2019, to be approved in June 2019. We'll also continue to work with our Legislative leaders to see what state funding will look like for the next biennium, and what impact, if any, that will have on ISD 728," Steinbrecher said. "Then, by June, we will approve a budget, in accordance with Minnesota Statute."

"Making cuts will be difficult, and is something that impacts students, staff, and programs, Bittman said." "However, the need to make cuts is understood and required. Fortunately, we have a community-developed Strategic Plan and extremely gifted staff to assist with and guide our work." "We will expend our energy on working together from a position of gratitude and transparency," he added. "And we know that sharing information and being transparent throughout this process will be important to our ISD 728 families and our staff."

REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

Bittman will be discussing the district's financial situation throughout the spring at various meetings and presentations. He said there's no reason the district can't deliver on its ambitious Strategic Plan, approved last year, and continue to be an award-winning school district at the state and national levels. "This is an amazing place to learn, work and serve, and nothing will change that," he said. "I'm proud to serve as your superintendent, and we will all work together to find solutions. Together, we will get through this and will continue to make great things happen for our community and our children."

ISD 728 Holds Annual Cultural Potluck at Prairie View

In what's become a fall tradition, ISD 728 celebrated its many cultures and our families at a new place Thursday, Nov. 8. The annual Cultural Pot Luck, celebrating its fifth anniversary, made its debut at Prairie View Elementary and Middle School. The colorful night was a huge success, featuring dozens of ISD 728 students, parents and families.











ISD 728 Teachers Make the Grade in MN Teacher of the Year Field

The 2019 Minnesota Teacher of the Year will be chosen from a field of 168 candidates, including six from ISD 728. These candidates have accepted their nominations and completed the required materials to become eligible for the honor. The number of candidates this year is the third-most in the 55-year history of the award.

ISD 728 nominees include:



CHELSIE CABAK
Kindergarten Teacher
Rogers Elementary School



LAUREN GENEROUS
Band Teacher
Salk Middle School



KATIE JOHNSON
First Grade Teacher
Prairie View Elementary School



SARA KLINGELHOFER
Band Teacher
VandenBerge Middle School



HEATHER MORTINSON
COMPASS Teacher
ISD 728 District Office



TONY WOLVERTON
Fourth Grade Teacher
Hassan Elementary School

This year's program will name the 55th Minnesota Teacher of the Year, celebrating the tradition of excellence in teaching in Minnesota. The 2019 Minnesota Teacher of the Year will be announced Sunday, May 5, at the Saint Paul RiverCentre. Over the coming weeks, a 25-member panel of community leaders will name a group of semifinalists and finalists.

Zimmerman High School Launches First Culinary Arts Team

For the first time this spring, Zimmerman High School will have representation at the ProStart Culinary Competition, marking the inaugural year for the program at ISD 728's northern high school. The school district has been a mainstay at the Twin Cities area's premier cooking competition for students, capped by a handful of state championships from the program at Elk River High School. Rogers High School, which started its program a couple of years ago, is already a defending state place winner. "We're kind of happy to just be here, but we really want to follow in that tradition," said teacher Katie Thomas, who is the lead adviser for the ZHS Culinary Team. "The opportunities for learning and the doors ProStart have opened for our district students is incredible. You have students from ISD 728 that are out there doing some amazing things in the real world, in real kitchens around the Twin Cities."

Leading the charge for Zimmerman High is a fearsome foursome – three juniors and a senior. Brandon Schnellman is the kitchen adviser and will help oversee all of the courses at the March competition. Junior Alie Fore will be handling the appetizer (crab cakes), Lauren Anderson will prepare the main course (pork chop) and Makena Hesley, also a junior, will handle the dessert (a mousse shooter).



"It's been in my dreams since I was little to be a baker or even own my own bakery, so this is a great chance for me to learn the ins and outs," Hesly said as she worked in the ZHS FACS room in January, preparing her dessert course. "We've had chances to meet some bakers and chefs and it's been really exciting. It's more than just the hands-on learning. You learn a lot from people who have already done it, as well." "So many of the places you need 'on the job' training. But you have to get a start somewhere to get 'on the job.' This is one way to do it, especially in our community," Thomas said. "So we're just excited to get the first year going, and see what we can do not only at this year's competition, but as a program going forward."

Veterans Day Celebrations Held Around ISD 728

Veterans enjoyed a breakfast, marched around the halls, gathered at the flagpoles and sang songs November 9-15, as ISD 728 schools welcomed America's heroes to our buildings for Veterans Day celebrations throughout the District.

Partners like the Rogers Lions Club served up breakfast and the Minnesota State Patrol, Sherburne County and Hennepin County Sheriff's Office provided Honor Guards, and American Legion and VFW members from around our communities offered poppy flowers and more.

"We appreciate all of the partnerships it takes for a week like this. The kids look forward to it so much every year. We're proud to welcome our friends and family who served our country," said Principal Heidi Adamson-Baer of Hassan Elementary.

















ISD 728 Swears in New School Board Members

It was a night to get work done and a night of celebration on Monday, Jan. 14 when the ISD 728 School Board hosted its organizational meeting at the District Office in Elk River.

Sarah Weis and Kim Michels joined the board for their first official meetings and were sworn in by ISD 728 Board Chair Shane Steinbrecher as part of the organizational meeting on Jan. 14. "We're excited to have their perspective and their ideas on the board," said Tony Walter, who was also sworn in for his new, four-year term. Walter will continue as the board's Clerk/Treasurer.

The board also retained Steinbrecher as Chair for the 2019 year, and selected Holly Thompson as Vice Chair for this coming year.



Pictured above, the ISD 728 School Board. Top left to right: Shane Steinbrecher, Joel Nelson, Tony Walter, Sara Weis. Bottom left to right: Holly Thompson, Christi Tullbane, Kim Michels.

Salk Middle School Named 2019 National Magnet School of Excellence

Salk Middle School has once again been recognized by Magnet Schools of America, after the national association for magnet and theme-based schools named Salk Pre-Engineering Magnet School a National Magnet School of Excellence. This is the SEVENTH year in a row that Salk has been recognized by Magnet Schools of America as a Merit award winning school.

Magnet School of Excellence Awards are given to a select group of magnet schools. Schools of Excellence are eligible to receive monetary awards and are eligible to be named the nation's top Elementary, Secondary, or New & Emerging Magnet School. One of the Schools of Excellence will also be selected to win $5,000 and the Dr. Ronald P. Simpson Distinguished Merit Award, which is considered the most prestigious magnet school award in the nation.

To receive a national merit award, members of Magnet Schools of America must submit a detailed application that is scored by a panel of educators. These schools are judged and scored on their demonstrated ability to raise student academic achievement, promote racial and socioeconomic diversity, provide integrated curricula and instruction, and create strong family and community partnerships that enhance the school's magnet theme.

A group of representatives from the school will head to Florida this spring to accept the national recognition.

Cornerstone, Donor Give ERHS Students the Keys to Hands-On Learning



The garage inside Elk River High School's east wing, home to the auto mechanics classes and a group of students ready to start the day, looked a bit more like a used car lot on the morning of Thursday, Jan. 17, than a repair shop.

"It's a pretty big day," said Paul Nelson, teacher at Elk River High. "It's not everyday we get three vehicles to work on. The kids are pretty excited."

Often in auto mechanics classes, Nelson added, kids are working on their own projects – within the parameters of Nelson and his team's curriculum. Trucks, cars and even snowmobiles owned by the students or families are in the bays at the school. Today, however, ERHS graduate Connor Mickelson, head of service at Cornerstone Ford in Elk River, had two used cars on which the students could now work their magic. A third vehicle – donated by Asst. Principal Julie Odegard's brother, Mike Keller – also was given to the class.

"The minivan [a Dodge Caravan] is probably one of the more technologically advanced cars you're going to have a chance to work on," Mickelson, who was excited to be back in his old garage, told the students. "This is such a great opportunity for you guys. We're glad we could team up with Ford and Cornerstone to make this happen for you."

Ford dealerships across the country are donating vehicles to high school and technical school auto mechanics programs, said Christopher Seebeck, Regional Technical Talent and Placement Specialist from Ford. Seebeck made his way to Elk River to see the donations first hand, and talk with ISD 728 Career and Technical Education Coordinator Amy Lord about his role with the Detroit-based giant.

High school students are the key to future service departments, Seebeck said. With a new emphasis on STEM in education, auto service and repair isn't a field that should be overlooked. Service stations are far beyond oil changes and tire rotations. Dealership service centers also need to know the ins and outs of cars that are as technologically advanced as anything on the market.

"Our goal is to create a path for these kids – some of whom are already taking the knowledge they've gained in their classes here and are working jobs in the auto service industry – and show them the career path they can have. There are great opportunities, good wages and, really, a true need for kids with knowledge and that are excited to work on these cars because they love it. And if you're doing this at 16 or 17, chances are it's because it's something you love to do."

Mickelson, who was reconnected with his former teacher, Nelson, said his work in the ERHS garage – which was a "bit smaller" back in his day – got him on the path to being a service manager. "There are a lot of opportunities out there. The auto groups in town are all talking about the future, and the type of people they'll need to work on these cars. They have so much technology in them now, and some of it is just second nature to these guys," he said.

The cars will offer plenty of hands-on opportunity in the second semester, Nelson said, as the work and lesson plans get more advanced. There will be some auto body repair, engine repair and getting into the deeper parts of the vehicle, such as the transmission and electrical systems.

Ford is doing more around the country to foster its relationship between the motor company and schools. Tools, auto parts and even new engines have been donated regionally to programs like the auto mechanics program at ERHS.

"Through these relationships we can close that auto technician gap, and really create a workforce that has hand-on experience when they first enter into the service area they're ahead of the curve," he said. "More than ever, we're changing the paradigm – the technicians we need aren't just working elbow deep in grease. Autonomous vehicles, navigation systems, entertainment systems and all of that technology are changing the game."

Nelson said he was grateful for the partnership with a local dealer like Cornerstone, and for Ford's participation in the donations. "It creates another level of learning for these guys. It's a good day."

Ivan Sand Students, Staff Create 'True North Poster' Business

It seems posters are plastered all over schools, doesn't it? Have an event to promote? Hang up a poster. Big tests coming up? Promote awareness with a poster. So, some students from Ivan Sand Community High are getting into the game. They've started their own business – True North Posters – thanks to the help of some staff at the school, including award-winning teacher Susan Yankowiak. "Really, it's a chance for us to work with them on starting this business from the ground up, and it's something the school can carry forward to help train the kids for life in the working world, and maybe spark some entrepreneurship in some of them," she said.

For now, the poster biz is limited to ISCHS, but Yankowiak is hopeful True North can become kind of a "go-to" place for poster needs all over the school district. "Everyone has all of their promotional materials out for this event or that program," she said. "It's definitely a need. Obviously these kids are all into the digital age, but the posters are still a great way for people to see what's going on in the school community."

Ivan Sand students Morgan Gjerdingen, Amyah Lett, Seth Myles, Cade Bottema and Andrew Gale are getting the program off the ground. The crew said they like working with the graphic design and marketing aspect of the poster business, and enjoy seeing the finished products when they hit the halls.

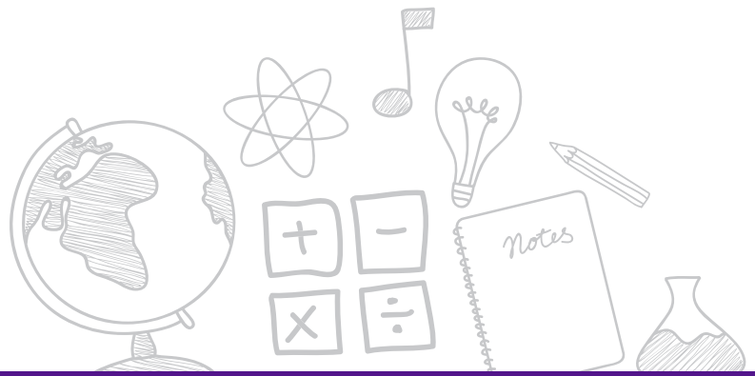


"I think it's something that's only going to grow," said one of the students. "It should be fun to see where it can lead us."

ISD 728 INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 728
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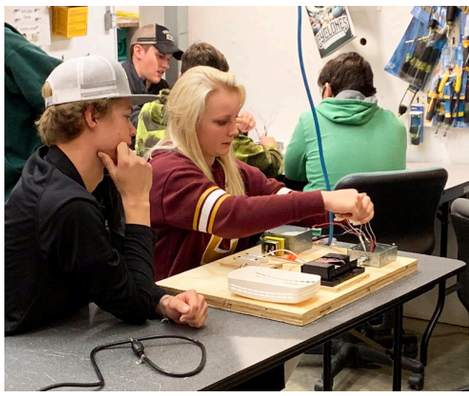
School is Cool! Photo Gallery



Celebrating the partnership between Caterpillar and Rogers High School! Caterpillar supplies over 3 tons of scrap steel every year so Rogers High students can learn how to weld.



Fifth grade Japan Club at Twin Lakes Elementary School! Students learned the Japanese alphabet, played games, did Origami and sampled some yummy Japanese snacks.



Zimmerman High School students learning about electrical components at St. Cloud Technical College.



Rogers Elementary STEM Magnet School students using Sphero Robots to learn about the water cycle.



Karaoke fun at Hassan Elementary School!