

# Passion Projects Support Real World Learning for WIN Academy

WIN Academy principal, Stacy Delcour, and WIN teachers Susan Brown and Hayley Rayburn, continue to implement new ways for students to thrive. The most recent brainchild of the instructional team is called a Passion Project. Introduced this year, Passion Projects are one of the many shifts the small staff at the alternative learning program has implemented since the program opened during the 2022-2023 school year. The project aligns with WIN's alternative learning model that extends learning beyond traditional classroom settings. For sophomore Mark Oboznyy, Passion Projects opened the door for a real-world video collaboration with Cheney Public Schools.

"When we were approaching our year anniversary of passing the November 2024 bond package, we were brainstorming ideas about how to share updates on construction and highlight completed projects with our greater community," said district communications coordinator Jenna Larson. "Video was going to be the best modality, but to really showcase the completed bond projects, we needed to get up in the air."

A drone was the most realistic choice to produce quality shots from above. Cheney Public Schools owns a drone for use among CTE programs across the district, but Larson was hard-pressed to find someone to operate the drone during the typical school day. Delcour recognized this was a perfect opportunity for Oboznyy's Passion Project to take flight.

"We as an instructional team had been talking about, how can we give students the opportunity to earn competency-based credits through different projects that they can come up with," Delcour said. "What was really cool was the timing of us sitting down and talking about what it might look like, came at the same time that [Mrs. Larson] was looking for somebody that could do some drone footage for the district, and Mark had randomly brought his drone to school and he's like, 'Hey! Check this out! This is super fun!' And, we all kind of put it together and were like, why not? Why not try it?"



*WIN Academy sophomore Mark Oboznyy poses with the drone he used to capture footage for the Cheney Public Schools bond update video on Nov. 12, 2025.*

Oboznyy had previous experience operating a drone, having picked it up as a hobby a few months prior. He taught himself how to operate his drone, download files, and edit short videos on a mobile device. The hobby aligned perfectly with WIN's Passion Project.

"He asked if he could make a video for us, and for our school," Rayburn said. "To see his interest come into the classroom was great. Then our principal, Stacy Delcour, knew that [Mrs. Larson] was looking for somebody to help with drone footage across the district. So, getting him to connect to that and set that up, and see his excitement because this is something that he really wanted to dive into but didn't necessarily have someone to lead him through that experience quite yet."

Delcour and Rayburn connected Oboznyy with Larson, beginning with an initial project kickoff meeting on Oct. 30 to set parameters, expectations, and goals. Further planning included video shot lists, locations, schedules, and permission from buildings for filming.

"My perspective, through email and everything, I learned how to talk with a contractor," Oboznyy said. "[This process] showed me how to properly talk to a contractor. That's something I learned."

The film crew, which included of Oboznyy,

his brother Matthew, Rayburn, and Larson, spent about four hours on Nov. 12 to capture video at Salnave Elementary, Cheney High School, Windsor Elementary, Sunset Elementary, and the construction site of the new Airway Heights elementary school off of Craig Road. It was nearly perfect filming weather, with sunshine and no wind, ideal for operating a drone.

But in mid-November, it was cold, and that presented some unforeseen challenges.

"When you're moving the [joysticks], if your fingers shake a bit, it ruins the whole process," Oboznyy said. "So, you have to be super slow with every movement. When it was cold outside, my hands were shaking, so it was super hard. You're using like, six fingers at one time, so you have to know where you're moving them. That was pretty hard, but it was fun."

"I think it's what we all dream of, right?" mused Delcour. "Being able to bring the real world to the kids and have them see that what I like to do is actually something I could do for the rest of my life if I'm intentional about it, and if I learn skills that go into it. They get the opportunity to get their hands dirty with it, which I think is so important. We forget that students really have that need at all levels of their education."

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## Passion Project

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Once filming was complete, Oboznyy was responsible for uploading the footage to a shared drive so Larson was able to access it for the final video. The drone videos were of such high quality—think 600 thousand to one million kilobytes—it took quite a bit of time to upload. Then, it was time to tackle the next step in the project: editing.

Oboznyy's editing experience was limited to phone applications, so he was eager to learn more about the program Larson uses in her position, Adobe Premiere Pro. After shadowing Larson during an editing session, he had a better idea of the start-to-finish production process for a professional video.

"I think it went well, and plus, editing the video with [Mrs. Larson] was pretty fun," Oboznyy said. "It showed me how it works and different [programs] and everything."

The final video included the drone footage that was shot by Oboznyy, along with interviews and supporting video footage that were produced by Larson. For his contributions, Oboznyy was credited in the video, story, and subsequent social media posts. Plus, the video is a nice addition to his growing professional portfolio. As it relates to course progression, completing the Passion Project earns a half credit toward an elective course. In Oboznyy's case, the Passion Project provided a different and exciting avenue for learning.

"I like that we're doing a Passion Project, and doing something that I actually like instead of doing something that's not really fun, but I'm doing just for the grade," Oboznyy said. "I like that I got to do droning. It was a pretty long project; I've been doing it for a pretty long time. That's pretty cool."

For a look at the final video that Oboznyy helped film and produce, please visit [youtube.com/@cheneypublicschools](https://youtube.com/@cheneypublicschools), and click on the Bond Update: One Year Later video. For a fun look at Oboznyy's experience filming, scan the QR code below!



*Mark Oboznyy prepares his drone for the first flight during filming on Nov. 12.*



*A closer look at the drone controller.*