



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

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. 📞

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.

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.

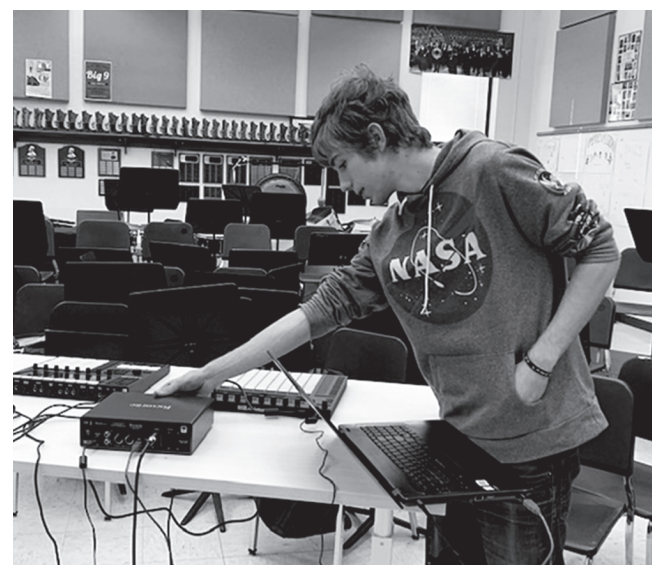
The equipment's portability gives students the opportunity to check it out and take it home. "Students will be able to study and compose independently or collaboratively and share their creations with peers," says Brady Krusemark, band director at West

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.