

## Energized by the sun—Mankato Area Public Schools goes solar


By Edell Fiedler, public information

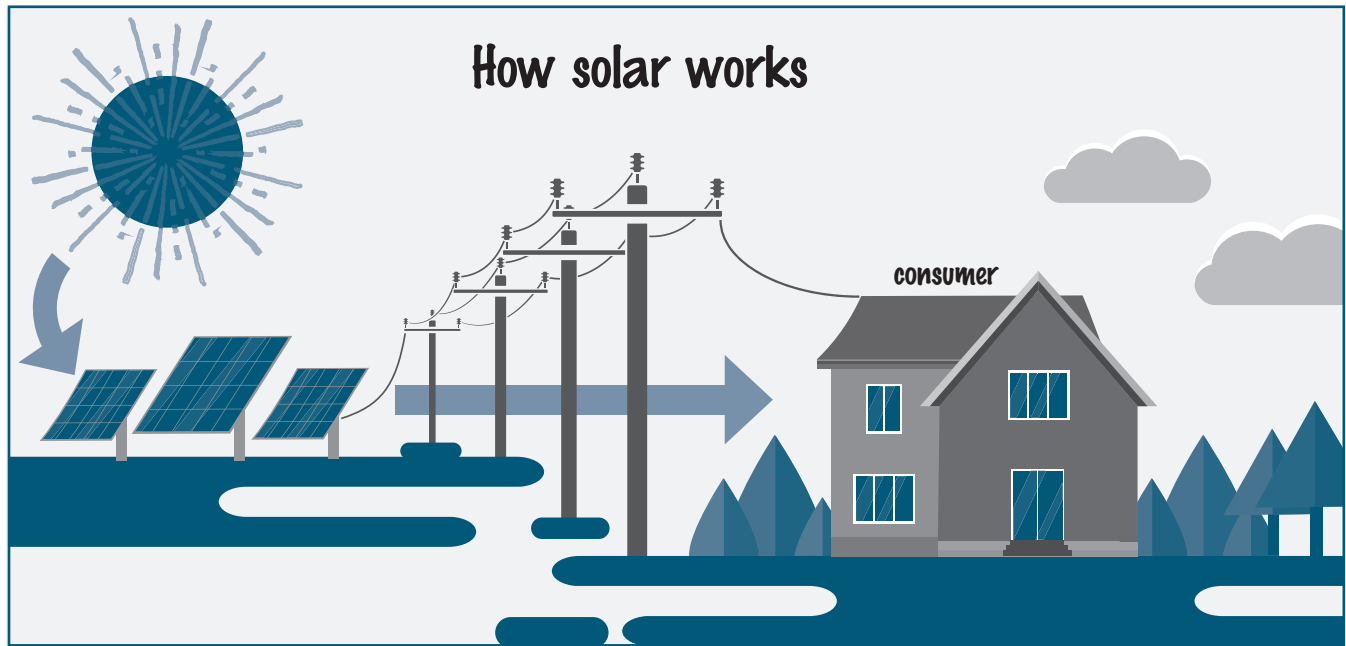
Solar electricity is now being used at most Mankato Area Public Schools’ buildings. A unique contract with Geronimo Energy, and in partnership with Xcel Energy, to use solar energy is expected to result in a savings of more than \$1 million over the next 25 years. With costs locked in with Geronimo, prices will not increase for the next 15 years, according to Scott Hogen, director of facilities for Mankato Area Public Schools.

“Fourteen years into the contract, we’ll review the subscription and evaluate savings,” Hogen says. “If expectations are met, the subscription review will be done every five years until the 25-year contract is met.”

While cost savings is an important factor in using solar energy, also significant is lessening environmental impacts and reducing the district’s carbon footprint.

“We continue to look for opportunities to extend solar electricity throughout the district and hope to expand this option to remaining school buildings,” Hogen says.

For more information contact Scott Hogen, director of facilities, at 507-345-5311 or [shogen1@isd77.org](mailto:shogen1@isd77.org). 



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## Educare Foundation enriches students


By Shelly Miller

Students at Mankato Area Public Schools (MAPS) benefit from generous grants the Educare Foundation awards schools every year. Since its inception in 1995, Educare has funded more than \$1.2 million in grants to MAPS through its Educator Initiative grants and Ed Waltman Mini-Grants.

Educare’s financial support goes beyond the school district’s general funding for programs and activities to enhance educational opportunities for students. “Educare funding supports ideas in innovation so staff can explore new ways to engage students in their learning,” says Sheri Allen, superintendent of Mankato Area Public Schools. “The Educare Board of Directors is a positive group of community members that have vision and are committed to Mankato Area Public Schools. Their decisions support a world of learning for our students that goes above and beyond our normal operating budget.”

Brian Corbett, chairperson of Educare Foundation, says starting with a solid foundation of curriculum and teaching allows for a strong learning superstructure. “We have a phenomenal top-tier school district in Mankato,” Corbett says. “We are thrilled to partner with Mankato Area Public Schools to help take learning to the next level. The grants we support enhance innovative instruction and enrich students to be even more college and career ready.”

Corbett says some of the highlights Educare has brought to the schools are acoustic guitars, biomedical science equipment, Heart Zone Systems, makerspace equipment including three dimensional printers and pens, Osmo kits and littleBits and SMART Boards.

For more information about Educare, visit [educarefoundation.com](http://educarefoundation.com), email [info@educarefoundation.com](mailto:info@educarefoundation.com) or call 507-387-1868. 



Students work with Osmo kits in the makerspace funded by Educare at Monroe Elementary School.



# SP TLIGHT

## Benefits of being busy

By Sara Frederick

There aren't many days that Stephen Schwartz doesn't have something to do. Schwartz, a junior at West High School, is involved in as many clubs, activities and sports as he can be.

He plays hockey and lacrosse; as a sophomore, he was one of the captains for the varsity lacrosse team. He's a student leader in Project 4 Teens (P4T), and he's on both Link Crew and Student Council, among other activities.

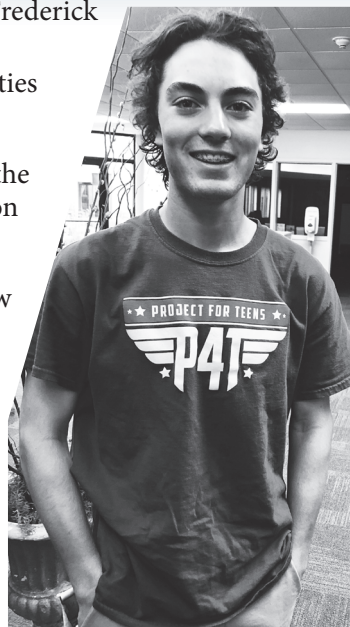
"Every time you get involved in something, you meet new people, develop new interests and make new friends," Schwartz says. "And when you get involved in things, you develop a stronger support system, too."

He admits that sometimes his schedule gets a little too full. When that happens, however, he knows which choices are the most important to make.

"I know when I need to buckle down and get homework done," he says. "If I keep up with that, then I also know I'll have time for things like Project for Teens."

Being busy has helped him learn how to manage his time and to understand the importance of working hard. "I've got to work hard if I'm going to succeed," he says. "But there's also fun in the things I'm doing, so there's a balance to it."

Schwartz is known as a student who is friendly and values getting along with others. "I try to say hi to everyone I see," he says.



One of Stephen Schwartz's many school-related activities is P4T, an organization that promotes healthy relationships.

## Keeping them on their toes

By Sara Frederick

As head custodian at Eagle Lake Elementary School, Terry Peterson is responsible for keeping the building and grounds clean and in good working order. He takes pride in making sure that's done well every day.

"I like everything done," he says. "When the public comes in and comments on how clean and organized everything is, that means a lot to me."

But then there's his other responsibility, which he also takes quite seriously: Keeping all of the students in the school "on their toes," as he says.

"I have a lot of fun with the kids," Peterson says. "I give them a hard time about this and that—and of course, they give it right back to me."

Getting to know the students is part of what he loves about his work. He appreciates that many of them want to help him out—the fifth graders collect the recycling every week, for example. He also enjoys the notes that

they leave for him in his mailbox. "They'll come down the hall and say thank you to me," he says. "It's fun to get to know them from being unsure and quiet in kindergarten until they get through fifth grade here."

Kory Kath, principal at Eagle Lake Elementary School, says that Peterson's role is critical to the success of the school.



Terry Peterson has been the head custodian at Eagle Lake Elementary School for the past 12 years.

"What Terry does is really promote the importance of having a space that is looking its best and ready for learning to take place each day," Kath says. "And the pride he takes in his work becomes infectious; it makes the students want to help keep it clean and ready for learning too."

"He's amazing," Kath adds. "Terry's such a critical part of our community here."

## Prairie Winds Middle School student sets example for peers

By Shelly Miller

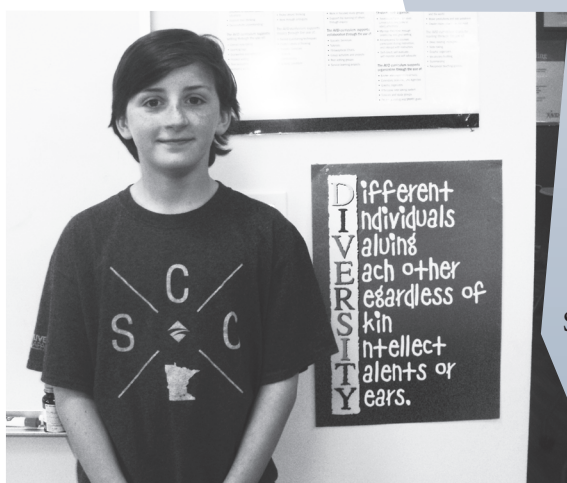
At Prairie Winds Middle School, student Cole Javens lets his actions do the talking. A confident, hard-working student who dares himself and others to be themselves even if that means being different.

"I try to have as much fun as I can and don't try to blend in," Javens says. "Many kids don't like to be the only ones doing something because they stand out, but I try and show that it is okay to be yourself."

Stephen Rustad, principal at Prairie Winds Middle School, agrees. "Cole is a courageous and confident kid that is not afraid to be himself," Rustad says. "He brings value to his peers with his positive attitude and willingness to show his individual style."

Javens says laughter is the best medicine. "I like to have fun with my friends and try to make them laugh," Javens says. "Laughter is always good."

At school, Javens loves math. In his free time, he enjoys gymnastics, scouts, jazz choir and cross-country running.



Cole Javens

## Proactive paraprofessional

By Sara Frederick

In her eight years as a paraprofessional at Dakota Meadows Middle School, Karla Boone has built relationships with hundreds of students. Now, as a success coach, she uses those relationships to help students solve problems and be more successful in school.

It's a role perfectly suited to Boone, according to Principal Carmen Strahan.

"She has such an ease when it comes to building relationships with students," Strahan says. "Students really feel comfortable coming

to her, asking for her opinion and working with her. She makes every moment a teaching moment."

Boone enjoys being able to help students process difficult situations before they escalate into bigger problems. "The key is to be proactive rather than reactive," she says. "You want to keep it positive and build a relationship with the kids who need that. We're trying to help them understand empathy and process a situation. These are really life lessons we're teaching them, and this is a good age to be learning that."

Boone says that she has a special fondness for middle school students. "They're flexible and want to learn," she says. "It's the little moments to appreciate."



Karla Boone is one of three success coaches at Dakota Meadows Middle School.



Dear parents/guardians,

Thank you for continued community support of our students, families and staff, which makes an important difference in positive educational outcomes for all. Our commitment of assuring learner success, sustainable systems and structures and a community culture of excellence is our work every day.

Communication with our families and community is a priority. The feedback form on this page is one of many opportunities to ask questions, share ideas, provide comments and give suggestions about our commitment to continuous improvement. Other ways to contact us include through the district's website at [isd77.org](http://isd77.org), by email at [maps@isd77.org](mailto:maps@isd77.org), or by telephone at 507-387-1868.

As our district mission states, "Assuring learning readiness and excellence for a changing world," is our commitment as we look at serving our students, families and community. We believe learners must be given choices, develop self-worth and be challenged to learn and grow. Please contact me if I can be of assistance.

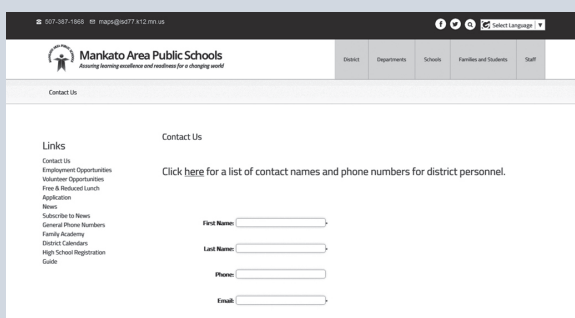
With the highest regard,

*Sheri L. Allen*

Sheri L. Allen, Ed. D., Superintendent  
Intergovernmental Center  
10 Civic Center Plaza ♦ Mankato, MN 56001  
507-387-1868 ♦ [sallen1@isd77.org](mailto:sallen1@isd77.org)



**Provide feedback online anytime:**  
**[isd77.org](http://isd77.org)**



## Mankato Area Public Schools

**Your comments matter most to our children's education.**

Mankato Area Public Schools is committed to providing quality education. Quality schools benefit our students, their families, the community and the region.

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Parent with child(ren) attending Mankato Area Public Schools
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I want the school board and administration to know \_\_\_\_\_

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I have a suggestion to positively impact the Mankato Area Public Schools \_\_\_\_\_

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Send completed form to:

Mankato Area Public Schools, 10 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato, MN 56001

**Thank you for your feedback.**

## Mankato Area Public School Board— how to reach



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## School Board meetings

The Mankato Area Public School Board typically meets at 5:30 p.m., the first and third Monday of each month.

School Board meetings are open to the public and are held in the:

Mankato room (first floor)  
Intergovernmental Center  
10 Civic Center Plaza  
Mankato, MN

School Board meetings can also be seen on KTV public access government and education channel 180—Charter and channel 8—Consolidated Communications at 6 p.m. on the Wednesday following the School Board meeting, and 6 p.m. on Saturdays. School Board meeting video and minutes are available online at [isd77.org](http://isd77.org).

## 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

The Public Information Office publishes Mankato Area Public Schools' Focus newsletter annually to share school news with parents and guardians.

Senior Editor: Shelly Schulz, public information director, 507-387-8516  
Editor: Edell Fiedler, public information specialist, 507-387-8692

Mankato Area Public Schools, Public Information Office  
10 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato, MN 56001 ♦ [isd77.org](http://isd77.org)





# Students help build a sustainable lunchroom one tray at a time

By Shelly Miller

Students at Mankato Area Public Schools are doing their part in the lunchroom one tray at a time to work toward a sustainable, environmentally friendly future. After a successful pilot program with input from students at Dakota Meadows Middle School and Roosevelt Elementary School, the school district decided to implement compostable trays at all school kitchens.

“Students at our pilot locations participated in a solution to find ways to increase recycling and decrease waste in the schools,” says Scott Hogen, director of facilities at Mankato Area Public Schools. “Students gave valuable feedback and helped select the tray that would work best for the district.”

Students tested five different compostable trays for sufficient compartment space for food choices and sturdiness. The tray that the schools currently use was the students’ top pick.

The move to compostable trays is part of the school district’s commitment to its “reduce, reuse and recycle program.” Students empty their waste from the compostable trays into proper separating containers.

“Compostable trays are an environmentally friendly option to help eliminate waste from landfills and incinerators,” Hogen says. “We look at waste savings and environmental benefits.”



After lunch, students at Roosevelt Elementary School sort recyclables and compostable trays.

# High school activities directors know teamwork

By Shelly Miller

Whether it’s on a sports field or at a VEX Robotics competition, there’s friendly competition across the district. East and West high schools’ activities directors work as a team to create an atmosphere of success for students.

Brian Fell, activities director at West High School, and Todd Waterbury, activities director at East High School, have a strong behind-the-scenes partnership to provide the best opportunities for students. The pair meets at least weekly to discuss scheduling, programs, busing, hiring officials and coaches, to name a few.

“Our goal is to encourage activities and increase participation and promote achievements and honors,” Fell says. “We try to reach as many students as possible and create an atmosphere where students are learning life skills through participating in those extracurricular activities.”

More than 40 activities are offered in the high schools that cover a wide spectrum of interests. Seventy percent of students participate in a school-sponsored activity.

Fell says involvement in activities pays off for students. “Studies show students have better academic performance, better attendance and more engagement in school,” Fell says.

Waterbury says activities help students prepare for the next step in life. “We try to develop well-rounded students, and extra-curricular involvement allows us to define success beyond winning and learn how to deal with adversity,” Waterbury says. “It is an opportunity to experience vulnerability and learn to grow from it.”



Activities Directors Brian Fell and Todd Waterbury.

# Recognitions

Mankato Area Public Schools recognizes the following employees for their years of service and dedication to students.

## 25 year awards

- Rebecca Brudwick – Hoover Elementary School
- Jane Brunz – Eagle Lake Elementary School
- Linda Coury – Human Resources
- Angela Davis – Washington Elementary School
- Theresa DeGezelle – Early Learning Center
- Keith George – East High School
- Lori Haman – Eagle Lake Elementary School
- James Hatleli – Rosa Parks Elementary School
- Becky Hebeisen – Washington Elementary School
- Kim Hermer – West High School
- Douglas Johnston – Franklin Elementary School
- John Lawton – Dakota Meadows Middle School
- Connie Long – Washington Elementary School
- Joe Madson – Prairie Winds Middle School
- Deborah Olson – Kennedy Elementary School
- Rachel Palmer – West High School
- Kristina Schemmel – Monroe Elementary School
- Sue Scruggs – Monroe Elementary School
- Julie St. Peter – Dakota Meadows Middle School
- Stacie VanOverbeke – Monroe Elementary School
- Brenda Walter – Eagle Lake Elementary School



## 30 year awards

- Brad Eggersdorfer – Monroe Elementary School
- Kathy Fitzloff – Washington Elementary School
- Sandy Hatlestad – Bridges Community School
- Darlene Hawker – Eagle Lake Elementary School
- Kevin Hermanson – East High School
- Leon Holmin – East High School
- Christine Larson – Futures
- Cindy Mendez – West High School
- Ann Murray - Early Learning Center
- Chuck Risser – Monroe Elementary School
- Jeff Rodriguez – Washington Elementary School
- Ron Schirmers - Food Service
- Tom Schueneman – Hoover Elementary School
- Judy Simonsen – Hoover Elementary School
- Paul Willaert – West High School

## 35 year awards

- Steven Jones – West High School
- Marilyn Solberg – Lincoln Community Center



## Hands-on learning with a career-based focus

### Educare Foundation grant benefits construction and woodworking students

By Edell Fiedler, public information

Construction and woodworking students at Mankato Area Public Schools' Central High School designed and built a newly renovated lab thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the Educare Foundation. The grant funds new tools and equipment. Local businesses Lloyd Lumber, Independent Paint and Flooring and The Home Depot donated project materials.

"Students gain hands-on experience through the lab project," says Caleb Watson, technology education teacher. "They also practice important workplace skills that include team and communications to help finish this project."



Haley Roberts uses new drill press on her project.

Students learn how to frame residential floors and walls, install sub-flooring, residential wiring and drywall. In addition, they place ceramic tiling, hardwood, vinyl and laminate flooring and design and install a tiled backsplash. This construction and woodworking course is one example of a learning choice that has a career-based focus. Opportunities like this help students practice and develop skillsets to help them now and in the future.



A student practices floor installation.

"Central High School is an important learning option available to students," says Director Kathy Johnson. "Staff help students develop individualized learning plans with accountability. Our goal is to prepare students for life."

For more information about Central High School, contact director Kathy Johnson at 507-387-3047 or [kjohns2@isd77.org](mailto:kjohns2@isd77.org).

## Focus on safety at Mankato Area Public Schools

By Edell Fiedler, public information

Mankato Area Public Schools keeps safety initiatives at the forefront. School entrance surveillance cameras help enhance safety and a communication device allows staff to talk with visitors to determine who they are prior to them entering the school. Once in the building, visitors sign in and are given a badge with their identification.

"All sites are equipped with security cameras that help monitor entrances and areas of the building," says Scott Hogen, director of facilities. "There's also a mobile safety platform that gives school officials immediate access to safety plan information when it's most needed."

Throughout the day, security staff along with the school resource officers, help monitor more than 600 cameras throughout the school district, check-in areas and the buildings. School resource officers placed within schools are also a

benefit. Mankato Area Public Schools' staff collaborates with area public safety professionals by conducting tabletop safety and emergency preparedness exercises.

Efforts help monitor, identify and address ideas to 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](mailto:shogen1@isd77.org).



A security camera at entrance of a Mankato Area Public School building.

## Mankato Area Public Schools' attendance areas online

By Edell Fiedler, public information

Find school attendance areas and busing eligibility by visiting [isd77.org](http://isd77.org).

An online search tool includes 24/7 access and convenience because it can be accessed from anywhere there's internet availability.

Not riding the bus? Go to [isd77.org](http://isd77.org) to determine school attendance area and eligibility for busing and see Safe Routes to School for Franklin, Jefferson, Kennedy, Roosevelt, Rosa Parks and Washington elementary schools.

Still have questions or need assistance? Mankato Area Public Schools' Central Registration office is another resource to help. Staff can assist with registration, attendance area and busing questions.

For more information, contact staff at 507-207-4037, 507-207-4038, [msolom1@isd77.org](mailto:msolom1@isd77.org) or [rhaycr1@isd77.org](mailto:rhaycr1@isd77.org).

## Answers to frequently asked questions about attendance exceptions and open enrollment

### Enrollment options

#### Q: What is open enrollment?

A: Open enrollment creates opportunities for those who live outside of district boundaries to attend Mankato Area Public Schools. Kindergarten through 12th grade students may apply to attend a school outside of their district. For example, if a family that lives in another community wants their children to attend Mankato Area Public Schools, they fill out an application to do so.

Open enrollment applications must be submitted by January 15 for fall enrollment. Students who are accepted agree to attend Mankato Area Public Schools for the upcoming school year.

### Attendance exceptions

#### Q: What are attendance exceptions?

A: Attendance exceptions are designed for those who live inside district boundaries and want their children to attend another school building outside of their neighborhood. To be eligible for an attendance exception, families must meet one of three criteria:

- ♦ childcare;
- ♦ legal matters;
- ♦ residential (family moves during the year and they apply to finish the school year at their respective school).

Kindergarten through 12th grade students may apply to attend another Mankato Area Public School building. Attendance exception applications are due by April 1 and need to be done annually. Exceptions depend on meeting criteria, space and availability. Families authorized for an attendance exception provide their own transportation to the school they've been approved to attend.

#### Q: Why are there criteria for open enrollment and attendance options?

A: Mankato Area Public Schools strives to provide a quality, well-rounded education to students at all 16 schools within the district. In fact, more than 95 percent of students go on to college, technical and trade schools, full-time employment or military service. When considering open enrollment and attendance exception options, it's important to balance family and district needs. The district works to avoid overcrowding at schools. Other considerations are expected growth within the schools and how to best meet needs across the district. Criteria encourage consistency and equity with quality education as the goal.

#### Q: How do I learn more about open enrollment or attendance exceptions?

A: Call the Mankato Area Public Schools' Central Registration office at 507-207-4037 or email staff at [maps@isd77.org](mailto:maps@isd77.org) for assistance.

### Education for life

If you know someone who wants their children to attend Mankato Area Public Schools, they can enroll by calling 507-207-4037. Detailed information about Mankato Area Public Schools is available at [isd77.org](http://isd77.org) and by telephoning 507-387-8516.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "School/Transportation Search". It includes a "Simple School/Transportation Search" section with three steps: "Step 1: Select a grade" (a dropdown menu), "Step 2: Enter address information" (fields for House #, Street, and Zip), and "Step 3: Start the search" (a button labeled "Find School/Transportation Info").

Find school attendance areas and busing eligibility online—  
**[isd77.org](http://isd77.org)**.



## Robotics teams build record of success

By Shelly Miller

VEX Robotics was first offered six years ago, and there was one team of six students. East and West high schools now have more than 200 students on 16 teams participating in the voluntary VEX robotics program. And, the schools have a state championship title together under their belt. A local “VEX Robotics Day” was recently declared in Mankato to honor and celebrate local student success and their ambassadorship at state and world competitions.

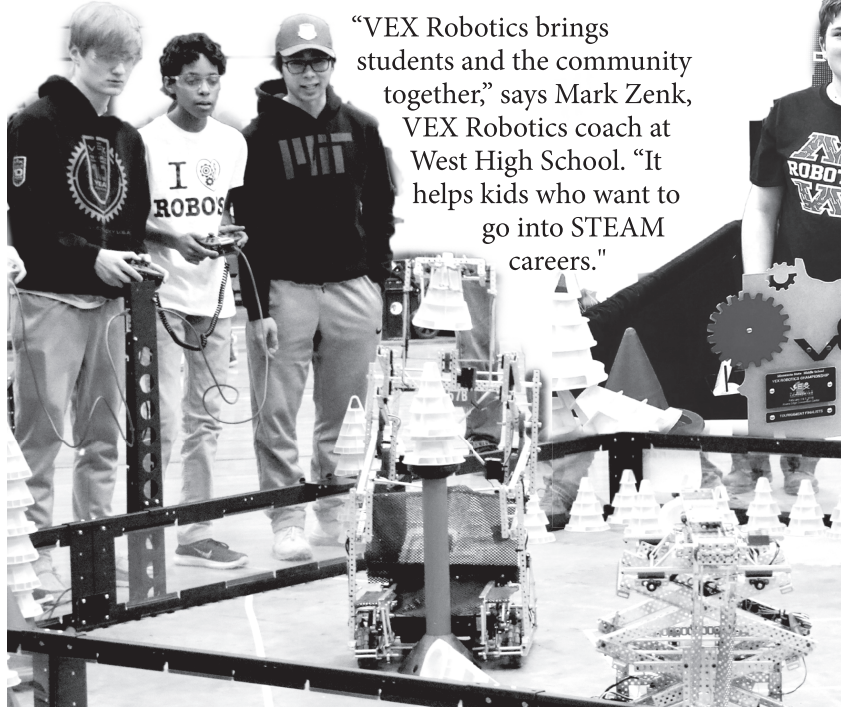
VEX Robotics teams collaboratively design and build robots from start to finish to compete against other teams in a game-based engineering challenge. They demonstrate ability in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM).

VEX Robotics offers students opportunities to be part of a team. “One of the goals of VEX is to get as many kids involved as possible,” says Dave Stahl, VEX Robotics coach at East High School. “Students in robotics develop soft skills like communication, problem-solving and team work. They develop relationships with other VEX students from competitions around the world.”



Dakota Meadows Middle School students Noah Willard, Brenden Gruber, Raymond Zhao, Blake Pipes, Wyatt Gaalswyk, Saaranish Agarwal and Tyler Hauer at a VEX Robotics competition.

“VEX Robotics brings students and the community together,” says Mark Zenk, VEX Robotics coach at West High School. “It helps kids who want to go into STEAM careers.”



East High School students Leif Stout, Jayden Siegle and Kenny Yu compete at a VEX Robotics competition.

## Technology makes a difference in student learning

Students across Mankato Area Public Schools are engaging in advanced technology, which helps them grow, learn and be successful once they leave the classroom. Information technology provides students opportunities to be prepared for the jobs of tomorrow and technology can help find solutions.



Teacher Lynn Matzke works with student Matthew Arndt.

“We listen carefully to what industry and post-secondary partners share with us about what is necessary for students to know in terms of technology,” says Kim Mueller, career and college readiness coordinator. “The understanding of technology has transferrable learning that can be used almost anywhere.”

Through technology, students can collaborate in unique ways as well as build problem-solving skills and critical thinking strategies that can be used in college, their careers and lives. Elementary

By Edell Fiedler, public information students are involved in a maker movement, which provides hands-on collaborative learning opportunities that focus on problem-based and project-based learning. Middle- and high-school students are using Fabrication Labs, also known as Fab Labs, allowing students to use a variety of resources to innovate and be creative with their learning.

“Integrating technology into the classroom is an effective way to deepen student learning and connect with students of all learning styles while supporting instructional goals and standards,” says Tracy Brovold, director of educational technology and information services. “It engages students and empowers them to be more creative and more connected with the world.”

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

## Education for all

Mankato Area Public Schools’ staff and faculty are committed to helping everyone succeed. Discrimination is prohibited in policies and practices regarding district personnel and students under section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act. Discrimination against anyone with a disability\* will not knowingly be permitted in any school programs or practices.

Staff and faculty work to effectively communicate with those who have disabilities to ensure they are given educational opportunities they have the right to receive. Staff and faculty will help eligible students by identifying, evaluating and providing access to needed educational services.

Parents/guardians who disagree with the district’s staff determination have a right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act provides parents/guardians rights related to educational records by allowing them to:

1. Inspect and review their child’s educational records.
2. Make copies of these records.
3. Receive list of individuals sharing access to these records.
4. Ask for an explanation of any item in the records.
5. Ask for an amendment to any report if it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child’s rights.
6. Receive a hearing if the school refuses to make the amendment.

*\*Qualified disability: Mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.*

For more information contact student support services at 507-387-1818.

## Retired couple spends free time giving back to students

By Shelly Miller

As former educators, Leroy and Lori Vetsch are no strangers to students. So when they recently retired from their teaching jobs, their decision to volunteer in Mankato Area Public Schools was natural. The

couple spends three days a week in the classroom at Prairie Winds Middle School sharing their experience, wisdom and talent with sixth graders.

“We wanted to continue to be a part of kids’ lives and help in whatever way we could,” says Lori Vetsch. “Coupling our love of math and science and our desire to mentor youth was a perfect way.”

They bring a unique set of attributes to students in the classroom. “We think we bring not only two more sets of hands to the classroom but a depth of life experience and wisdom that can be enlightening and meaningful to students,” says Leroy Vetsch. “Intergenerational connections are important. We show kids that there is another person in their lives that cares.”



Leroy and Lori Vetsch work with Prairie Winds Middle School student Damahntae Williams on math.

The Vetsches say volunteering in the schools is rewarding. “Spending volunteer time in the classroom gives us a sense of purpose and personal satisfaction,” says the Vetsches. “It makes us feel like we are accomplishing something, giving back and helping the younger generation.”

In addition to helping in the classroom, the Vetsches support Feeding Our Communities Partners Backpack Food Program by delivering food in the form of “Power Packs” to student lockers.

For more information about volunteering at Mankato Area Public Schools, contact staff at 507-387-5501.





Scott Hare serves as director of student support services for Mankato Area Public Schools.

## A passion for special education

By Sara Frederick

When Scott Hare saw an opening for the director of student support services at Mankato Area Public Schools, he knew he had to apply.

At the time, Hare was serving as the director of human resources for Shakopee school district. Although he enjoyed the opportunity to work in that position, he missed working in special education.

“It was the perfect opportunity to get back to my passion for special education and being an advocate for children,” Hare says.

Hare started his career in education as a high school social studies teacher. He decided to work with students who have special needs and then taught special education. He’s also served as a principal in middle and high schools before returning to special education at the director level.

His varied experiences give Hare a broader perspective on leading special services in Mankato. “I have a pretty wide lens,” he says. “I’m able to see things as a teacher, as a principal and from the district level, too. That really helps me navigate the world of special education and be creative in the way we look at things here.”

Hare can be contacted at 507-387-1818 or [share1@isd77.org](mailto:share1@isd77.org).

## Special education services helping students be successful

Mankato Area Public Schools serves students with disabilities from birth through age 21. Federal and state laws guide the school district in identifying, evaluating and serving students with disabilities. A team of special educators, general educators and families work together to develop an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for students who meet the criteria for services. The team considers the student’s present level of performance, identifies educational needs and develops goals to meet those needs in the least restrictive setting.

Mankato Area Public Schools provides a continuum of services for students with disabilities. Special instruction and services are provided in: autism spectrum disorders, blind-visually impaired, deaf-blind, deaf and hard of hearing, developmental cognitive disabilities, developmental delay, emotional or behavioral disorders, other health disabilities, physically impaired, specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairments and traumatic brain injury.

Prior to age six, a child who needs special instruction and services because of a substantial delay or identifiable physical or mental condition that hinders normal development is considered a child with a disability. Most students receive special education in their neighborhood school. The district also has specialized programs for students who need more support.

For more information on identifying, evaluating and providing service to students with disabilities, contact your child’s school principal or student support services at 507-387-1818.

## Students benefit from in-house resource team

By Edell Fiedler, public information

resources are available because every child needs support at some point in their lives.”

The emotional, social wellness and health of students and families continue to be a high priority because it’s center to student success.



Social Worker Molly Fox and Counselor Amanda Bomstad talk with a student.

Mankato Area Public Schools has an in-house team of social workers, psychologists, counselors and nurses who help students be successful. Social and emotional support is important while also serving as an important link to outside resources students may need. Molly Fox, named School Social Worker of the Year by the Minnesota School Workers Association, knows firsthand the positive impacts having a solid support system has on students.

“Having resources available to students at school is important because students are there most of the day,” Fox says. “If they can’t express themselves, are anxious, grieving, or need to work on social skills, it’s difficult to focus on learning.”

By being on the front lines with students, the team can help problem solve so students can grow socially and emotionally at a rate that’s best for them. Mankato Area Public Schools continues to look for ways to provide needed support.

Scott Hare, director of student support services, says, “As mental health support needs increase, it’s important to ensure

## Annual pesticides, asbestos and air quality notification

Emergency preparedness, including detailed emergency crisis management plans, air quality, pest-free environments and asbestos monitoring are all items staff teams prioritize for school safety.

### School year pesticide notice

In compliance with the Parents Right to Know Act of 2000, Mankato Area Public Schools has an integrated pest management plan designed to minimize the risk to human health and the environment as well as reduce use of chemical pesticides. Mankato Area Public Schools does not apply pesticides on school property unless all other measures have not worked. If insect control sprays and dusts need to be applied, it is done when students are not in the area during application and until product has dissipated. For questions, more information, or if there’s interest in being notified prior to an application, contact Scott Hogen, director of facilities, at 507-345-5311 or [shogen1@isd77.org](mailto:shogen1@isd77.org).

### Asbestos notification

Mankato Area Public Schools, in accordance with the Federal Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), has a stringent inspection and management program for all asbestos containing building materials. The district strives to maintain a safe and healthful environment for students and staff. Every three years, all buildings owned and leased by the district are re-inspected by an U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA) accredited inspector for asbestos content. All materials containing asbestos are surveyed every six months along with visual inspections to ensure a minimal level of health risks. Any materials needing repair or removal are done safely and responsibly under the district’s asbestos operation and maintenance program. Mankato Area Public Schools has a list of locations and types of asbestos containing materials found in its buildings. A copy of the asbestos management plan is available for review in the district’s facility office, 10 Civic Center Plaza. For questions or more information, contact Scott Hogen, director of facilities, at 507-345-5311 or [shogen1@isd77.org](mailto:shogen1@isd77.org).

### Indoor air quality notification

Mankato Area Public Schools is committed to providing and maintaining good air quality. Schools follow EPA guidelines to improve Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) by being proactive. Throughout the year, air quality is regularly monitored and air handling systems are maintained to ensure good quality. District health and safety department staff follow-up on any reported items. Mankato Area Public Schools has agreed to administer an IAQ Management Plan, which includes taking a team leadership role, coordinating emergency response and serving as an information resource. For questions or more information, contact Scott Hogen, director of facilities, at 507-345-5311 or [shogen1@isd77.org](mailto:shogen1@isd77.org).

## Right to know

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who attends Mankato Area Public Schools have a right to know about the professional qualifications of the teachers who instruct their child(ren). The Every Student Succeeds Act provides the right to ask for the following information about each child’s classroom teachers:

- ◆ Whether the State of Minnesota has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- ◆ Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency permit or other provisional status by which state licensing criteria have been waived.

- ◆ The teacher’s college major; whether the teacher has any advanced degrees and subject of the degrees.
- ◆ Whether any instructional aide or similar paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if they do, their qualifications.

To receive any of the above information, contact Eric Hudspeth, director of human resources and organizational development at 507-387-3017.





The newly renovated community pool at East High School, 2600 Hoffman Road.

## Renovated community pool makes waves of new learning opportunities

By Shelly Miller

Attend an open house to kick-off new gym and swim events at the East High School swimming pool, 2600 Hoffman Road, Mankato on Sunday, September 23 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. There is no cost to attend. Pre-registration (at [mankatocer.com](http://mankatocer.com), 507-387-5501 or at Lincoln Community Center, 110 Fulton Street) for Community Education and Recreation (CER) events is required for planning and because of size limitations.

Mankato Area Public Schools' recently renovated community pool and new locker room brings waves of new opportunities to the community through CER. The facility, located at East High School, now offers greater access to aquatic activities.

Audra Nissen-Boyer, director of community education and recreation for Mankato Area Public Schools, says upgrades at the community pool and locker room create more opportunities for all.

"We are thrilled to offer more aquatic opportunities through Community Education and Recreation that reach all, teach all and include all," Nissen-Boyer says. "Aquatic activities serve all populations. Our renovated and upgraded facility will allow more access and options that reach all age groups."

Some offerings include year-round swimming lessons, pool use for daytime fitness and a variety of family events including Gym and Swim. Access to the expanded locker room allows daytime fitness classes.

Gym and Swim includes time in the gym and pool. Swims are gender-specific, including parents and/or guardians and lifeguards.

Register for CER offerings online at [mankatocer.com](http://mankatocer.com), by phone at 507-387-5501 or at the Lincoln Community Center, 110 Fulton Street, Mankato. CER is also on Facebook.

### OPEN HOUSE

Attend an open house to kick-off new gym and swim events at the East High School swimming pool, 2600 Hoffman Road, Mankato on Sunday, September 23 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. There is no cost to attend. Pre-registration is required for planning.

#### Options for pre-registration:

- ◆ Online: [mankatocer.com](http://mankatocer.com)
- ◆ Phone: 507-387-5501
- ◆ In person: Lincoln Community Center, 110 Fulton Street

### Stay informed – subscribe to district news and events

Be one of the first to know about Mankato Area Public Schools' news and events. Subscribe to receive district email or text alerts at: [isd77.org](http://isd77.org). Subscribers are informed about district happenings:

- ◆ emergency information
- ◆ two-hour late starts
- ◆ school closings
- ◆ musicals
- ◆ plays
- ◆ concerts
- ◆ planetarium
- ◆ shows
- ◆ general reminders

Follow Mankato Area Public Schools' Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages at [isd77.org](http://isd77.org).

For more information contact public information staff at 507-387-8692.

## Private vs. public information—important to know

The following information is provided to raise awareness about data privacy practices regarding student information.

### Privacy rights

Education records are classified as private data on individuals by state law and accessible only to student's parent/guardian or a student who is at least 18 years old. The school district may not disclose private records or their contents except as summary data without prior written consent of parent/guardian or eligible student. In some cases, private records may not be accessible to parents/guardians. State law provides that certain information in a student's education records be accessible only to that student and to parent/guardian under special circumstances, if at all.

### Directory information

#### What is directory information?

Directory information includes student's name, address, telephone number, email address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, attendance dates, grade level, enrollment status, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of athletic team members, degrees, honors and awards received, most recent educational agency or institution attended by student, photographs of students taking part in officially recognized activities, sports, academic or nonacademic classes or programs and other similar information.

Note: Directory information doesn't include a student's religion, race, color, disability, social position or nationality.

### Is directory information public?

Yes. A school district may disclose this information from a student's education records. However, if a parent/guardian or student chooses, information will not be released without prior written consent except to school officials as provided under federal law.

### Disclosure of data to military recruitment officers

The school district will release names, addresses and home telephone numbers of secondary students to military recruiting officers within 60 days after request date unless a parent/guardian or eligible student has refused in writing the release of this data to military recruiters. Data released under this provision may be used only to provide student information about military service, state and federal veterans' education benefits and other career and educational opportunities the military provides.

### Do I have to release data to military recruiters?

A parent/guardian or eligible student has the right to refuse release of directory information to military recruiting officers and must notify Mankato Area Public Schools' director of human resources and organizational development in writing by September 15 of each year. Written notification must include names of student and parent/guardian, home address, grade level, school, parent's legal relationship to student and information that should not be released to military recruiters

without prior consent. Keep in mind that refusal to release information does not affect school district's release of directory information to the public, including military recruiting officers. To make any directory information about a student private, follow procedures under "How do I make directory information private?"

### How do I make directory information private?

A parent/guardian or eligible student must submit a written request that includes student's name, home address, school, parent's legal relationship and specific category or categories of directory information that should remain private to building principal within 30 days after date of last publication notice. If parents/guardians do not want their child's or eligible student's directory information released to military recruiting officers, the school district must be notified that directory information should not be released to

any member of the public, including military recruiters.

### How do I obtain nondisclosures of directory information?

A written notice from parent/guardian or eligible student should be sent to district's director of human resources and must include student's name, home address, school presently attended by student, parent's legal relationship to student (if applicable), specific categories of directory information not to be made public without prior written consent, which shall be applicable for that school year.

For more information contact Eric Hudspeth, director of human resources and organizational development at Mankato Area Public Schools, at 507-387-3017 or [ehudsp1@isd77.org](mailto:ehudsp1@isd77.org). Written correspondence may be sent to Hudspeth at 10 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato, MN 56001.

**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](http://www.educarefoundation.org).

We appreciate your generous support of Educare.

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MINNESOTA RIVER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

CHANKASKA CREEK  
RANCH & WINERY

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MEI-Total Elevator Solutions

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River Valley Woman

Schwicker's Tecta America

The Gretchen Rehm Agency, Inc. and Horace Mann





## Health services help start the year off right

### Immunizations

For the health and safety of all children in the schools, immunizations must be current to begin the school year. Children who cannot be immunized for medical reasons or whose parents are opposed to immunizations need to provide proof of legal exemption. The following immunizations are required to begin the school year:

Preschool	Kindergarten	Seventh grade
*1 Varicella (chicken pox) or documentation of disease	*2 Varicella (chicken pox) or documentation of disease	*2 Varicella (chicken pox) or documentation of disease
*1 Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	*2 MMR	*2 MMR
4 Diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis (DTaP)	**5 DTaP	3 DTaP 1 Tdap booster after age 11
3 Polio	**4 Polio	4 Polio
3 Hepatitis B	3 Hepatitis B	3 Hepatitis B
1 Haemophilus B (Hib)		
2 Hepatitis A		1 Meningococcal

\*Minimum age: on or after first birthday. \*\*Final dose: on or after age four.

### Health census form

Please complete an annual health census form indicating any life-threatening allergies or chronic health conditions, or if your child has a shunt or implant device.

### Consent for administration of medication during the school day

A medication consent form called "Consent Form for Administration of Medication During the School Day," must be completed and on file with Mankato Area Public Schools' Health Services before a student takes medications or uses an inhaler, insulin or EpiPen at school. Medication consent forms are provided by health services, area medical clinics or online at [isd77.org](http://isd77.org). A parent/guardian must provide and bring all medications in their original containers to the school.

Children should stay home if they have a fever of 100 degrees or more. They should remain at home until they are fever-free without the use of medications for 24 hours. If a child is vomiting or has diarrhea, he or she should remain at home 24 hours after the last episode. If a child has a rash or skin condition of unknown cause, it is important to check with a health care provider before sending him or her to school. If a child is ill, please call the school each day the child is absent.

For more information contact Mankato Area Public Schools' Health Services: East High School at 507-207-3730, or West High School at 507-387-3488. Information is available at [isd77.org](http://isd77.org).

## Check your student's progress in real time

A tool to help students be successful is one where parents are able to check on student information using the Infinite Campus® Parent Portal—an online resource that's available by app too, so it can be used on a smartphone or tablet. At the elementary level, parents view basic demographic information, food service balance and attendance; at the secondary level, parents can also check grades, schedules and grade book assignments 24/7. Students like the online grade book too, because it helps them keep tabs on how they're doing.

To learn more about the Infinite Campus parent portal, go to [isd77.org](http://isd77.org) and click on the "For parents" link under the Resources tab on the home page. To get started, visit one of your children's schools to pick up a GUID number that will allow you to register online.



For questions or more information contact district media and technology staff at 507-387-7698.

## Accident insurance option available

Parents/guardians have an option to purchase accident insurance for their children through Student Assurance Services, Inc. of Stillwater, Minnesota. This plan will provide benefits for medical expenses incurred because of an accident.

For more information contact Mankato Area Public Schools' administrative offices at 507-387-3167 or [maps@isd77.org](mailto:maps@isd77.org).

Mankato Area Public Schools does not provide health or accident insurance for injuries children incur at school.



MANKATO AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS • INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #77

## 2018 - 2019 Student Calendar

Online at [isd77.org](http://isd77.org)

JULY 2018						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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AUGUST 2018						
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MARCH 2019						
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31						

APRIL 2019						
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

☆ Classes begin for grades 9- 12/ end for grades K-12	★ No school K-5
★ Classes begin for grades K-8	● No school K-8
△ Two-hour late start	□ No school K-12
<b>Bold date</b> End of quarter 11/1, 1/18, 3/22, 6/5	



MAY 2019						
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JUNE 2019						
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30						



What’s new in nutrition and eating healthy?

By Edell Fiedler, public information

Food services’ staff at Mankato Area Public Schools stay on top of what’s new in nutrition to help ensure students get needed nutrition to be healthy and successful in the classroom. During the school year staff provide more than 1 million meals to students. Numerous studies by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) show that healthy students are more likely to attend school, are better able to focus in class, have longer attention spans, participate in class more often and have less behavioral problems.

What’s new in nutrition and eating healthy?

One trend is intuitive eating. With this trend, the focus is on how important it is to listen to one’s body. For example, if someone who is craving peanut butter thinks it has too much fat so instead eats oatmeal, they may not feel satisfied because they did not allow themselves to eat what their body was craving and even probably needed.

In addition to intuitive eating being good for the body, it’s also important for mental health because they aren’t constantly thinking a food they want is off-limits. Since a healthy diet is a balanced diet, it’s recommended to research or speak with a dietitian or physician about fad diets such as gluten free, ketogenic, paleo and plant-based before starting one of them.


Eating meals as a family has benefits as well. These small gatherings provides parents/caregivers an opportunity to role model healthy eating, which helps improve dietary intake and may lead to a reduced risk of childhood obesity in children and adolescents.

What’s new in school cafeterias?

Plenty of fruits and veggies

To help students eat healthy at school, they are able to take as much fruit and vegetables as they want or to go back for seconds. A variety of produce is offered throughout the year and staff try to take advantage of what is in season. Also offered are whole grain options and three low-fat milk choices.

More information about foods the CDC links to academic success can be found online at [cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health\\_and\\_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf)

For more information contact food services’ staff at 507-388-7442. 




Mankato Area Public Schools’ students are provided a variety of healthy food options to help them be successful in the classroom.

Meal plans

Three cost options for breakfast and lunch meals include free, reduced and regular. All kindergarten students can receive breakfast at no cost. Students who qualify for free or reduced meals based on an annual application process. Eligible students will receive meals at no cost to families. Students may apply for free or reduced-cost meals at any time throughout the year. Applications are available at [isd77.org](https://isd77.org).

MEAL COST		
	K-5 grade	6-12 grade
Breakfast	95¢ (no cost K)	\$1
Lunch	\$2.25	\$2.55

Meal payments can be added to student’s lunch account by cash or check at student’s school or the food service office or by credit card through the Campus Parent Portal. Another option is to set up automatic payments. Forms for automatic payments are available at [isd77.org](https://isd77.org). Once completed return form to student’s school or the food service office.

For more information contact food services’ staff at 507-388-7442. 


Area Schools—times and contact information

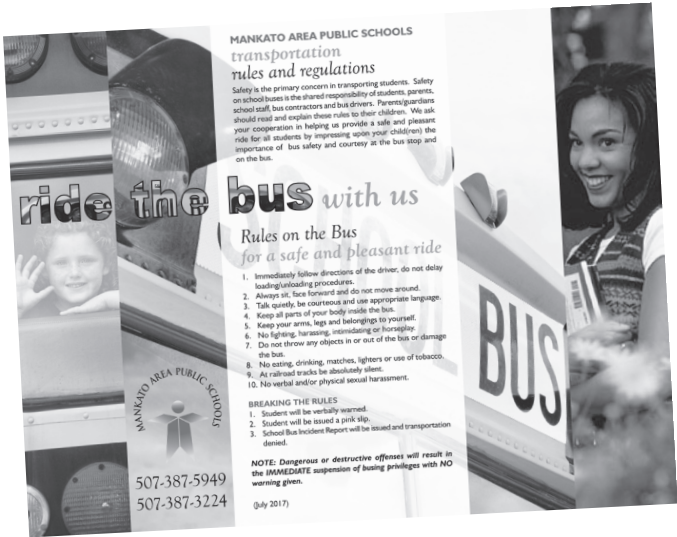
School	Grade(s)	Times	Contact	Phone
Bridges Community School	K–5	8:10 a.m.–2:40 p.m.	Robin Courrier	507-387-2800
Central Freedom School	9–12	8 a.m.–2:40 p.m.	Kathleen Johnson	507-387-3047
Central High School	9–12	8:10 a.m.–2:45 p.m.	Kathleen Johnson	507-387-3047
Dakota Meadows Middle School	6–8	8:15 a.m.–2:55 p.m.	Carmen Strahan	507-387-5077
Eagle Lake Elementary School	K–5	8:15 a.m.–2:45 p.m.	Kory Kath	507-257-3530
East High School	9–12	8:15 a.m.–3:05 p.m.	Jeff Dahline	507-387-5671
Futures	K-12	8:15 a.m.–2:45 p.m.	Sara McMonagle	507-387-1455
Franklin Elementary School	K–5	8:10 a.m.–2:40 p.m.	Travis Olson	507-345-4287
Hoover Elementary School	K–5	8:10 a.m.–2:40 p.m.	Dan Kamphoff	507-388-5202
Jefferson Elementary School	K–5	8:15 a.m.–2:45 p.m.	Scot Johnson	507-388-5480
Kennedy Elementary School	K–5	8:05 a.m.–2:35 p.m.	Jason Grovom	507-387-2122
Monroe Elementary School	K–5	8 a.m.–2:30 p.m.	Steve Johanson	507-387-7889
Prairie Winds Middle School	6–8	8:10 a.m.–2:55 p.m.	Steve Rustad	507-345-6625
Roosevelt Elementary School	K–5	8:05 a.m.–2:35 p.m.	Ann Haggerty	507-345-4285
Rosa Parks Elementary School	K–5	8 a.m.–2:30 p.m.	Michelle Kruize	507-387-7672
Washington Elementary School	K–5	8:15 a.m.–2:45 p.m.	Shane Baier	507-345-3059
West High School	9–12	8:15 a.m.–3:05 p.m.	Sherri Blasing	507-387-3461

Bus rules put safety first

Mankato Area Public Schools provides transportation services for public and non-public students in the district. Non-public students in each service area are transported to and from their respective schools. Seventh through 12th grade students who reside two miles or more from their school of attendance are within transportation service boundaries. Students outside of the busing boundaries may contact the bus operator that serves their area to inquire about purchasing transportation services.

Students being transported on a regular bus (not a mini bus) must have a bus pass to be eligible to ride a bus to and from school. Students must register each year for a pass by completing a transportation registration form at their school of attendance. A fee of \$5 (payable to the bus operator) is charged to replace lost passes.

Access more information about bus rules for a safe and pleasant ride online at [isd77.org](https://isd77.org). For more information, contact Tricia Baumgard in Mankato Area Public Schools’ transportation office at 507-387-5949 or [tbaumg1@isd77.org](mailto:tbaumg1@isd77.org). 



Palmer Bus Company – 507-386-0210  
Service area

Rural Nicollet County  
Upper/Lower North Mankato  
North Highway 169 to district border  
North of Main Street to Highway 22 and north of old Highway 14 to district border  
East from Minnesota River to district border beyond Madison Lake  
K-12 students in Eagle Lake north of Highway 14  
6-8 students in Eagle Lake south of Highway 14  
6-12 students Country Manor

Schools

Bridges Community School  
Central High/Freedom schools  
Dakota Meadows Middle School  
Hoover Elementary School  
Monroe Elementary School  
East High School  
West High School  
Eagle Lake Elementary School  
Prairie Winds Middle School  
Franklin Elementary School  
Washington Elementary School  
Special education students

Yaeger Bus Service – 507-345-5470  
Service area

South of Main Street to Highway 22 and south of old Highway 14 to district border  
9-12 students in Eagle Lake south of Highway 14  
West edge of district, south of Minnesota River  
Minneopa State Park area and South Bend  
K-5 students Country Manor  
K-12 students east of Agency Street in Eagle Lake to district border

Schools

Bridges Community School  
Central High/Freedom schools  
Dakota Meadows Middle School  
Prairie Winds Middle School  
Eagle Lake Elementary School  
Jefferson Elementary School  
Kennedy Elementary School  
Roosevelt Elementary School  
Rosa Parks Elementary School  
Washington Elementary School  
East High School  
West High School

Access more information about bus rules and safety online at [isd77.org](https://isd77.org).