

THE DISTRICT
Correspondent

December 2018 – VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3 – A Free Publication of Madison Consolidated Schools

Ceremonies honor those who've served



Above, Madison Consolidated High School students in the FFA and the Fine Arts Academy honored local veterans on Friday, Nov. 9. The annual event began with a breakfast followed by a program featuring performances by the concert band and show choir, along with dramatic readings. At right, second-graders at E.O. Muncie Elementary School saluted veterans during a student-led ceremony on Wednesday, Nov. 14.



Photos by Phyllis McLaughlin

**Creating
a culture
of hope**

Research-based
strategies focus on
student engagement

By Phyllis McLaughlin
Correspondent Editor

Taking cues from research-based books such as “Building a Culture of Hope” by Robert D. Barr and Emily L. Gibson, and the basic tenets of the Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta, Ga., Madison schools are working to build an inclusive school environment for all students. With more than half of the nearly 2,600 students enrolled in Madison Consolidated Schools living in poverty – based on the number of students eligible for the free and reduced lunch program – MCS is considered a high-poverty district, said Angela Vaughn, the district’s director of special education and student services. High-poverty districts often have lower-performing schools, in terms of test scores, graduation rates and the number of students who go on to post-secondary education or certification, and, ultimately, to good-paying jobs. But there are some high-poverty districts in the United States that also are high-performing.

See HOPE, Page 7

Forum was real-life civics lesson for MCHS students

By PHYLLIS McLAUGHLIN
Correspondent Editor

This year’s election served as a real-life civics lesson for student leaders at Madison Consolidated High School. The Student Council, which had been dormant about a decade until this school year, worked together with sponsor and social studies teacher Tim Whitaker to present a Candidates Forum for the seven people running for the MCS School Board of Trustees. Held Oct. 29, the forum was open to the entire community and included six of the seven candidates who were running to win three open seats on the board in the Nov. 6 election. Attending were incumbents Carl Glesing and Rob Kring, Ken Brunner, Gina Lawrence Freeman, Larry Henry and Jodi Yancey. Candidate Greg Bentz was unable to attend due to a previous out-of-town commitment. (Elected were Kring, Henry and Yancey.) MCHS students wanted to take on the project, said senior Isaac Hanson, president of the council.

“We thought this would be a good project to undertake,” Taylor Lynch, president of the freshman class, said the goal was to bring the students and the community together with the candidates to discuss important topics. The idea was to bridge a perceived communications gap in recent years between the public and the board, she said. “We thought this needed to be a bigger event, so holding it at the high school in the auditorium and advertising it more would be important,” Lynch said. Under Whitaker’s direction, students were involved in every aspect of planning the forum, as well as moderating the event, Hanson said. Weeks before the forum, students and teachers were asked to submit questions that they wanted answered by the board candidates, he explained. “There were over 200 questions [submitted], with many perspectives from students. We had to filter them down to questions that would be good for the forum.” After providing one minute for



Candidates who ran for three open seats on the Madison Consolidated Schools Board of Trustees in November are briefed on the set up of the student-run pre-election question-and-answer forum by teacher Tim Whitaker, center left, and Isaac Hanson, center right. A senior, Hanson is student council president and was moderator of the Oct. 29 event at the high school.

each candidate to introduce themselves to the estimated 125 people attending, Hanson served as moderator and asked each candidate six questions – three from the student body and three from the faculty and staff. Each candidate had two

minutes to give their answers. Additionally, 12 questions were emailed to the each if the candidates for written comment. Those were posted on the district website at madison.k12.in.us “It was a chance for the candi-

dates to address the concerns that are on the minds of our students and teachers,” Whitaker said. “We addressed topics from hiring and retaining staff, to the role of

See FORUM, Page 8



Madison Consolidated Schools operates one high school, one middle school and four elementary schools (each including preschool) serving approximately 2,700 students and their families in the Madison/Jefferson County, Ind., area.

Our goal is to inspire success, boost confidence through critical thinking and problem-solving, and encourage collaborative learning. Our rigorous academic curriculum includes a diverse curriculum path into our Fine Arts Academy, multi-faceted college-and-career-readiness programs, and work-based learning opportunities.

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From the Superintendent's Desk

Not resting on 2018 laurels: MCS won't lose its stride in the New Year

As the end of the year and the holiday season are upon us, it's a good time to reflect on the many amazing events of the past year.

In the spring, we graduated another senior class...many of whom have gone on to have outstanding experiences in both the workplace as well as in colleges around the country. One of those students, Clate Winters, received a Wells Scholarship, providing him a full ride at Indiana University ... the first one ever awarded to a Madison Consolidated High School student.

Madison also was fortunate to have made several great hires. Our new band director Katie Zolvinski led the Marching Cubs to their best year ever, which culminated in an appearance at the ISSMA Scholastic State Finals this fall.

In August, Gov. Holcomb paid us a visit to see for himself the amazing work being done with the partnership between Madison Consolidated

High School, Ivy Tech and SuperATV, which serves nearly 200 Madison students each day.

Thanks to our partnership with SuperATV and the Board of Education's decision to change the payment structure for our Preschool program our numbers have increased dramatically across the District.

And to top off the semester, Deputy Elementary School received an "A" rating from the Indiana State School Board!

While all of these recent successes are worthy of note and praise, there is still much work to do and many hurdles to clear. The path to success has not been easy, and we are far from the finish line. In the coming months, a series of committees will be formed to focus on the components of the district's new Strategic Plan. Some of these committees will be asking for input from



Dr. Jeffery Studebaker

We are looking forward to many positive things to come in 2019. Of course, there will be some difficult moments that may cause us to question our resolve and our very reason for continuing to fight against the mediocrity and idiocy that too often gets in the way of helping all of our students learn and grow.

parents and the community at large. Please consider applying for a role in this process, once we begin to recruit committee members to help us shape the future of our district.

We are looking forward to many positive things to come in 2019. Of course, there will be some difficult moments that may cause us to question our resolve and our very reason for continuing to fight against the mediocrity and idiocy that too often gets in the way of helping all of our students learn and grow. In those times, I use and will continue to use the following words of advice which have been shared with me:

Don't Lose Your Stride. "When you're in a race and something negative happens that knocks you down or off stride, get up and get back in the race. Whatever happens can be overcome if you believe in your preparation and ability to continue to run. No matter what, get back on stride!" This first was told to me by a former

coach of mine, and retold to me by the wife of a former school board member a few years ago.

Stand Up. "When something or someone has knocked you down or is getting to you, stand up and raise your head. Just stand up, raise your head, and move forward. Keep the faith and know that right will persevere." This is paraphrased from a sermon given recently by a local pastor.

Peace and Joy. "The peace and joy of the holidays serve as a reminder of what is good and right with the world. Embrace it, and use it as a source of strength and light in days of struggle and darkness." This was from a former colleague from Lafayette.

May the peace and joy of the holiday season find its way into your homes and hearts. Have a wonderful holiday season and take time away from the daily stress of routine. Have a wonderful Christmas and a happy new year!



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Madison Schools made holidays fun this season

From *Spooky* themes ...



Clockwise from top, Madison Junior High School cheerleaders hosted a face-painting booth during Lydia Middleton Elementary School's Family Fun night on Friday, Nov. 2. There were plenty of games for the kids – even those dressed as hot dogs, right – in the gymnasium, and bouncy houses galore in the front playground. Below, one future Lydia Middleton student gets a chance at Plinko.



Clockwise from top: Meanwhile, at Rykers' Ridge Fall Fest, also held Friday, Nov. 2, a volunteer prepares the courageous who are about to enter the Haunted Hallway; two boys throw themselves down the slide at the end of the inflatable obstacle course; and another young man tries his hand at one of the games.

... to *Santa Claus* dreams



Dr. Jeff Studebaker, superintendent of Madison Consolidated Schools, watches as children enjoy the train at Madison's Winter Wonderland event at Bicentennial Park on Saturday, Dec. 8. Partnering with the city, MCS donated the funds to pay for the ride, which turned out to be very popular. Other activities during the event included making s'mores, an ice-skating rink, a life-size snow globe and, of course, a chance to visit with Santa Claus. Dr. Studebaker and his wife, Emily, volunteered at the event. Other district personnel and National Honor Society students also volunteered Saturday and Sunday.

Photos by Phyllis McLaughlin



Lock: Experience at MCHS helped to launch his theatre career

Costume design wasn’t on Bradley Lock’s radar when he was a freshman at Madison Consolidated High School. The 2005 MCHS graduate actually saw himself as an actor. But as a student in the theater program at the University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, Lock was required to take classes in all aspects of theatre. “I took a costume-design class with my now mentor, Shan Jensen, and fell in love,” he said. “I had no clue I had a passion for design. Shan saw something in me, and helped fan the flames. ... For the next three years, I was glued to her side learning everything I could and professionally assisting her outside of school.” In 2009, Lock moved to California to begin graduate school. With Jensen’s guidance, and with his impressive portfolio and skill level, he received a full-ride scholarship to California State University, Fullerton. While there, “I designed over 15 productions in three years, and I enjoyed every minute,” Lock said, who earned his master’s in fine arts in 2012. “It was extremely hard work, but the cool thing about grad school is you are deeply immersed in something you love. So, all the hard work feels totally worth it.” After a stint with the Torrence Theatre Company and working as part-time faculty and costume shop manager at Cerritos College. Lock is now a designer at Cypress College. According to the Internet Movie



Bradley Lock, Class of 2005

Database (imdb.com), he has worked as costume assistant on the set of the independent film “The Thinning: New World Order,” released in 2018, and was costume supervisor on the set of “The Suite,” another independent film released in 2017. “Since moving to California, I haven’t had a single job that was not in theatre, television or film. There are many ups and downs in life and in the theatre. It’s a constant struggle; searching for your next gig is hard work. There isn’t always the stability in this career that some of my other friends have, but every single one of my friends is so jealous that my job is fun. I wake up every day excited

about my career,” he said. “People want to escape to the theatre, and my job is to help them relax and take them to another world,” Lock continued. “In 10 years, I want to be doing the exact same thing. ... I truly love what I do and hope I’m still designing costumes, but with huge budgets.” Lock attributes his love for theatre work to Aaron Kelsey, who leads the Fine Arts Academy and is the theatre adviser. “He had a drive and motivation that made me want to work just as hard,” Lock said. “I also had an amazing group of friends in theatre at MCHS, and we all supported each other and pushed ourselves out of our comfort zones.” Lock said he enjoyed his entire experience at MCHS. “Every single teacher I had ... encouraged me to go further with my art and with my acting. I was never told to change, never doubted and always pushed.” His advice to today’s students is to “always work hard and kill people with kindness. The reason I am constantly working is because I work hard for my clients. I put my heart and soul into everything, and people appreciate it. And I always do so with a smile on my face. “Remember, theatre is a collaborate art,” he added. “We all depend on each other to make the final product as amazing as it can be. Put your ego to the side and work together to achieve the best production you can.”

Fine Arts Academy inspires artistic talents of MCHS students

By PHYLLIS McLAUGHLIN
Correspondent Editor

Six years in, the Madison Fine Arts Academy at Madison Consolidated High School continues to inspire student interest in the performing arts. Though at this point, there is no state-approved credential for students who complete the academy, the designation is applied to their high school diploma, said Aaron Kelsey, who has led the program since its inception. “It’s like majoring in the arts,” said Kelsey, who also teaches visual arts and serves as director and advisor for the Madison Theatre program. Choral music teacher Teresa Grayson, band director Katie Zolvinski, fine arts teacher Melanie Torline and dance teacher Adrienne Dwyer round out the academy staff. Students who are accepted into the academy are required to complete 10 credits by graduation. Eight one-semester courses are offered in visual arts, including 2- and 3-dimensional art, drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture, digital design and photography. Instrumental courses include beginning and advanced concert band, jazz band, piano and applied music, most of which are full-year courses. Choir courses include beginning, intermediate and advanced choir, and an advanced course in music appreciation, which also counts toward college credit. Theatre courses include production, theatre arts and advanced theatre arts, advanced acting, technical arts and dance choreography. Every student in the academy also is required to take at least one AP course in studio art, art history or music theory. Cross-curricular courses that also count toward the designation include dramatic literature, journalism/publication and graphic arts.

Most courses can be repeated for additional credit at an advanced level, as well. Students also are required to commit to three hours of community service per semester and must complete a senior project, some of which have included directing plays, giving instrumental lessons, coordinating solo art shows, and performing solo or group vocal concerts. While not all students who complete the program go into arts-related careers, Kelsey said these courses teach many skills that easily transfer to other pursuits – creativity, problem-solving, collaborating with others and self-reliance. Kelsey said his ultimate goal with the program is to make it regional, similar to a magnet school, recruiting students in from districts in surrounding counties and beyond. “I want this to be THE arts school in the Eastern Indiana region,” he said. “There’s no limit to the number of students who could attend the academy.”

Discovering new passions

Along with 2005 graduate Bradley Locke (featured in the Alumni Spotlight at left), others have gone on to establish careers in the arts. “Abby Walburn is now a working actor,” Kelsey said. Students currently in the program see themselves pursuing various careers in the arts, or at least hope to stay involved with local theatre even if they plan to take another career path. “I want to go into fashion design, so I thought that would be a great thing to have on my resume,” said senior Aubre Carter, who hopes to attend the University of Cincinnati next year, majoring in fashion design and minoring in costume design. “They have a really good program.”

See ACADEMY, Page 7

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CUSTER ORATORY CONTEST SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT

In 1911, A.S. Custer gave \$1,000 to Madison High School in order to create the annual Custer Oratorical Contest. That tradition has spanned over a century and will have the 108th contest in 2019. In the spirit of Custer, participants, their family members, and past coaches have joined together to create this endowment, which will grow the scholarships awarded to contestants for many generations to come.



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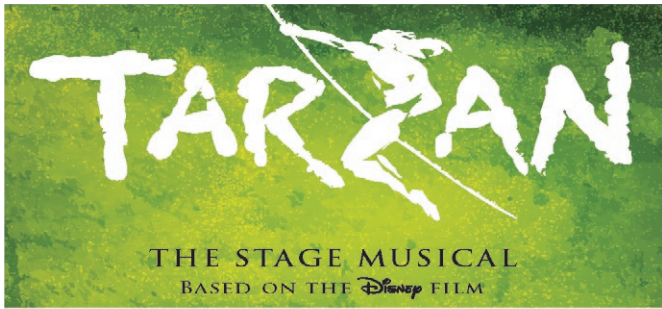
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March 1-3, 2019



April 12-14, 2019

Classroom learning meets the real world

At Select PLACE, students are required to take the lead in their own education

By **PHYLLIS McLAUGHLIN**
Correspondent Editor

As technology continues to change everything in our lives, from how we communicate to how we do our jobs, Ronnie Lawhead and Jared Kempton are working to build a learning environment that better reflects these changes and empowers students to not just learn, but apply what they’ve learned to real-world scenarios.

That’s the goal of Select PLACE, an initiative that has evolved out of the Independent Learning Academy introduced at Madison Consolidated High School two years ago.

“PLACE” stands for Personalized Learning Academy for Connected Education, which promotes self-paced student-driven learning that also teaches soft skills students will need when they leave school and enter the workforce.

Lawhead is a language arts teacher and Kempton teaches science, but the students accepted into the program are expected to reach specific learning targets in all Common Core areas, including math, social studies and Spanish.

The classroom itself presents a more relaxed setting, where students have their choice of seating options – couches, tables both low and high, individual desk space and even the floor. The special glass desks can also be used as dry-erase boards where students can work out complex math equations.

Depending on the day and the

assignment, students work either independently or on group projects. Though they do provide instruction in the various subjects, Lawhead and Kempton mostly are there to guide students, answer questions, and quiz them to ensure they are hitting all of their expected targets.

In the traditional classroom – which is teacher driven with lectures, homework and testing – “what we see, especially with literature, is that students learn that if they don’t say anything during class, then we tell them what we want them to know,” Lawhead said. “They don’t have to think. They just sit and wait, write down what we tell them and then spit it all back out on a test. They never really learn how to analyze.”

In the Select PLACE, students are expected to analyze what they’ve read “and they actually sit down and talk to us about an assignment. We have to know that they know what they’re talking about.”

Students do not receive credit until they have completed a course, Lawhead explained. “We are rigorous.”

To complete a course, a student must score a 3 or better on each target. Scores of 3 to 3.49 fall in the “B” range; scores of 3.5 and higher is in the “A” range. Nothing below a “B” grade is accepted.

Using knowledge to address real-life issues

This year, Kempton introduced a environmental science course.



Sophomore Devin Banks, left, said Select PLACE “has made a lot of things easier for me. I know more than I used to, especially with English. I was really bad at English.” Devin said he gets to explore more of his interests in the program, such as World War II history. The requirement of giving presentations on things, he said, has led him to a better understanding of topics, such as cell biology and energy. “I’m doing a lot better in school.”

Students taking the course are required to complete five projects: One to improve water quality, one to address energy conservation, one to grow food, one addressing waste disposal and one to improve transportation.

“The idea is that, while they will learn about environmental science, at the end of the year – instead of just knowing a bunch of facts – they will be able to look back and say that they [used what they learned] to complete five projects that were planned to make the environment in Madison better,” Kempton said.

One student project involves planting a pollinator garden along the creek that runs between the high school and middle school, which helps provide food for bees, butterflies and other insects and would curb soil erosion, Kempton said.

Brianna Schwartzkopf, a sophomore, is working on plans for a rain garden that she wants to create in the area near the outside doors of the Select classroom.

The area she selected collects rain water that often ends up seeping into the classroom, she explained. On her own, Brianna presented her idea to both MCHS Principal Michael Gasaway and Director of

Operations Mike Frazier, who is in charge of building and site maintenance for the district.

Both gave her their approval.

The project will include preparing the site where rain collects and plant a garden of flowers, finished with mulch, that will better allow the rainwater to soak into the ground and eventually reach the groundwater system, she explained.

Brianna said she has logged hours and hours of research time to determine which plants native to Indiana would be best for the project.

“When students are engaged with a real-world problem, then they have that motivation to actually learn something and take the time to dig in deeper,” Kempton said.

“Brianna’s learning quite a bit about plants right now, and growing seasons. And, she spent a ton of time on the phone today, calling nurseries and getting prices for the plants she wants to buy.”

As part of the project, Brianna also had to write a grant request to the Educational Foundation for funding to purchase the plants. She was awarded \$334 for the project, and the exercise counts as one of her writing targets, Kempton said.

Additionally, she plans to seek donations for mulch and other

materials she will need to complete the project.

Once Brianna has laid the ground work for her project, she can recruit other students in the environmental science class to help her bring her plans to fruition.

“She will then take the role of leader, to get her team to work together and reach their goal,” he said. At this point, the team may end up doing most of the physical work under Brianna’s leadership, but it balances out because of all the time she’s already committed to the project.

“A lot of people think we don’t have deadlines and just sit around in here, especially since [learning programs] are online,” Brianna said. “Be we have a lot of work.”

Under her leadership, which will require keeping her team on task, everyone involved will get credit for having completed that one required project, Kempton said, adding, “That’s real life.”

Outside of school, life “is not all homework, review and test,” he said. Because of project-based learning, Select PLACE students are better prepared for what will be expected of them in the workplace. “They will already know how to collaborate, participate and contribute.”



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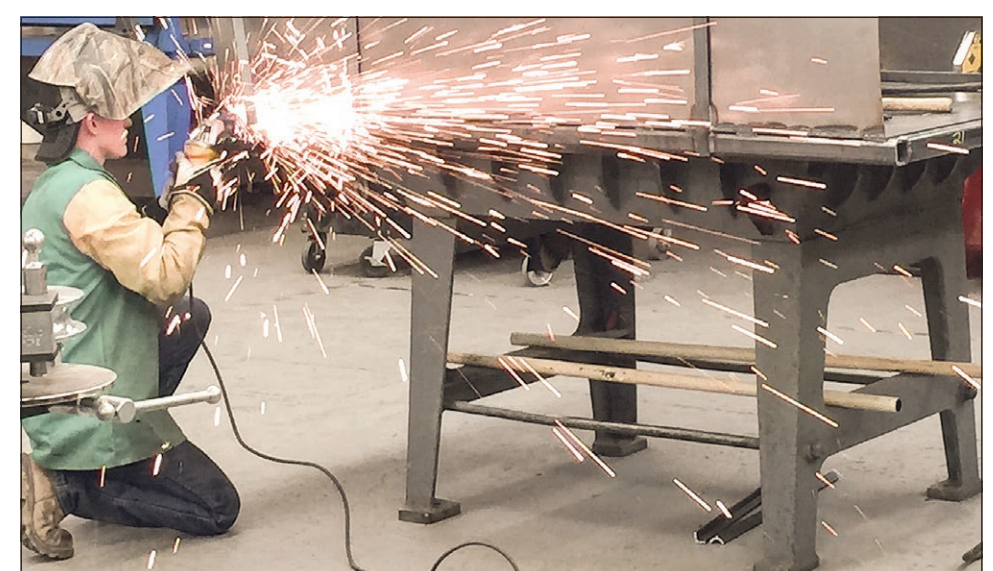
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WINTER SPORTS PREVIEW

Wrestling, swim teams prepared to compete

By CLARE WILBER
Madisonian Staff Reporter

While basketball receives much of the limelight, the winter sports of wrestling and swimming also includes athletes committed to putting in the effort needed to achieve athletic success.

WRESTLING

The wrestling program is built up from the elementary level, where coaches use simple drills and tactics to teach the young athletes. Coach Tyson Skinner explained that the team this season has already given him the second-best atmosphere that he has coached so far at Madison Consolidated High School. The best was the 2013-14 squad, which won the regional championship, he said.

Eric Leach, the sole senior on the squad, “has taken a leadership role” on the entire team, Skinner said, but added that the rest of the team has been amazing, too. “They work their tails off, with no complaining,” Skinner said of his athletes. The MCHS team has the fewest members of any team in the HHC, but they have kept a positive mindset throughout their season thus far. Though they are a young team, they focus on fundamentals and conditioning, and hope to achieve some of last year’s success, Skinner said. Last year, Madison sent 10 wrestlers to regionals and six to semi-state. Sophomore Kelsey Bilz is extremely passionate about her sport. Wrestling, she said, brings out her competitive side more than any other sport in which she has participated. “Whether you’re a girl or not, the sport is difficult,”

Bilz said. “But as a girl, the sport becomes more difficult mentally when you hear the words ‘He got beat by a girl,’ (or) ‘Don’t get beat by a girl,’ and many more.” These words help to motivate Bilz, rather than bring her down. She hopes to go to regionals and, simply, become a better wrestler. Another goal for the team is to recruit at least 15 football players, Skinner said. “Both sports help each other out, and after surveying on our football schedule, I found out those teams average about twenty football players that also wrestle.” The first wrestling meet of the season was hosted by Madison against Southwestern High School on Nov. 12.

SWIMMING

The Madison swim program is poised for success over the next several years. The team typically has a core group of multi-sport athletes who return each season. Most swim, and love it, because it complements conditioning for other fall and spring sports. They find it’s a great way to keep in shape and continue to compete for MCHS. “Swimming is a very different, demanding sport,” Head Coach Ashley Schutte said. “You have to really enjoy the work and be committed to finding a way to stay in the water as much as possible in order to maintain swim shape.” The H2O Swim Club, for kids as young as 5, is an exceptionally strong feeder program, which prepares swimmers for both the MJHS and MCHS teams, Schutte said. Schutte said she expects her MCHS teams to be very competitive this year.

“Our ladies team is small, but super-competitive and ready to go,” she said. Swim practice began in October. Schutte said the girls are not afraid to work hard, push further and faster each day, and believe they can and will win – a dream team situation for any coach. With just nine members on the ladies team, competing against larger schools that have enough athletes to fill each event, Schutte said she still expects her team to finish in the top three with every splash. Junior Anne Grady said that swimming brings balance to her life.

“Whatever problems I have, whatever I’m feeling, washes away the second that water hits my body,” she said. “It also helps that the team is united, and we always get along so well.” The first meet for the girls team this season was Nov. 13 at New Albany. The boys team this year has some incredible opportunities. Schutte said she is looking to the freshman to hit the ground running and make immediate contributions. “In the off season, I think our guys realized what is possible if they work together and commit to putting in the work,” Schutte said, adding that they’ve found “if they work hard in summer conditioning, during fall sports the transition to swim season is more enjoyable.” That work ethic continues to pay dividends into their spring sport season, she said. As an individual sport, swimming is mentally and physically challenging. Each swimmer is responsible for his or her own success. The clock doesn’t lie. The swim team’s first co-ed meet was Nov. 20 at Seymour High School.



From left: MCHS Principal Michael Gasaway, JAG Specialist Whitney Mathews, senior JAG student Taylor Rowlett, National Guard Spc. Tres Holt, and Jennifer Hensler, College and Career Readiness coordinator and senior counselor.

Jobs for America’s Graduates prepares MCHS students for life after high school

By WHITNEY MATHEWS
JAG Specialist

From pathways, partnerships, and preparation to enrollment, employment, and enlistment, our local Jobs for America’s Graduates program, also known as JAG, at Madison Consolidated High School is doing it all. What once was recognized as an “at risk” program has been revolutionized by the state of Indiana and at MCHS as the “JAG Advantage,” a growing, dynamic program that provides valuable youth opportunities for immediate real-world life application. The program started out as a Work Based Learning Internship sponsored by the Indiana Department of Education and Fleck Education. Today, it has now evolved to so much more. This summer, I participated in a work-based learning opportunity, during which I shadowed local National Guard recruiters

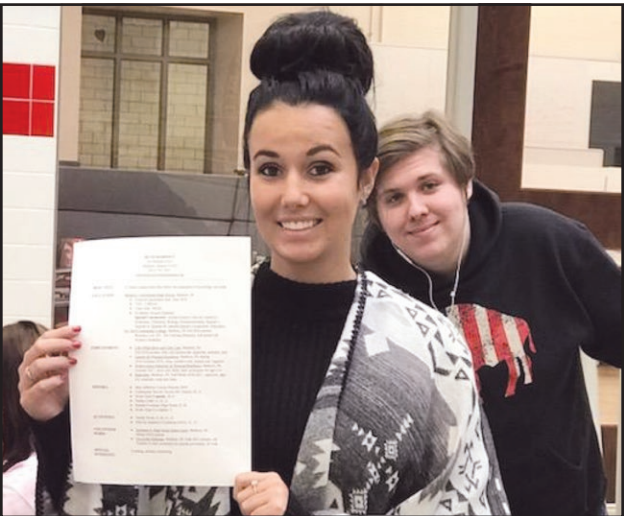
and was introduced to the admissions pathways at Ivy Tech Community College – Madison Campus, and the full employment spectrum of human resources at the college. These allowed me to establish relationships that have resulted in multiple partnerships, opening up pathways have opened up creating additional opportunities for all MCHS students. Taylor Rowlett, MCHS JAG’s Outstanding Senior representative and president of the MCHS chapter of the Career and Leadership Club, attended the National Student Leadership Academy Conference in Washington, D.C., thanks to our partnership with the National Guard. “It made me realize that every student is all the same, and everyone is going through something,” Rowlett said of her experience. “It’s not about what you’re going through, but how you come out on the other side.”

She described it as a “once in a lifetime” experience. NSLA “taught me to be a leader inside and outside the classroom.” She said she met many people through networking, forming relationships that will last a lifetime. Since Rowlett’s Washington trip, members of the local Guard have come to the JAG classroom as guest speakers and have substituted when I have been out for professional-development training. They also assisted with the ASVAB test at MCHS. This partnership has become a huge benefit for everyone. The students now see National Guard Spc. Tres Holt as a confident leader and mentor, not just a recruiter, and respect him and his opinion. In this partnership, Sgt. Morat and Spc. Holt have been integral to the program’s success. The future looks very bright for the Guard and JAG, and that’s what we call the “JAG Advantage.”

JAG teaches communication, leadership skills

Senior Beth Mahoney is in her second year with the JAG program. “It has really helped me as a student and growing adult to learn about not just college, but life and the work force after high school,” Mahoney said of the JAG Advantage. “I have prospered in many skills such as communication and leadership, because it teaches me to be my own kind of person and leader – in and out of the classroom.” Mahoney plans to attend college in the fall. “I am much more experienced when it comes to becoming independent, educated in financial responsibility, and being prepared mentally for what the real world brings,” she said. “Joining JAG is one the best experiences of my high school career, and I thoroughly encourage others to join.” Through the JAG program, Mahoney has worked as a volunteer at the Lide White Memorial Boys and Girls Club. She and one of the members worked hard to raise money for the club’s Christmas Program, which provides families with food, items they need, and toys for the children. “Beth is a prime example of how the JAG Advantage works, by using the competencies, partnerships and preparation JAG offers to her advantage,” said JAG Specialist Whitney Mathews.

— By Beth Mahoney



Senior Beth Mahoney, who is in her second year as a member of the JAG program at Madison Consolidated High School, shows off her resume, above, and poses with a member of the Lide White Memorial Boys and Girls Club, as they work to raise money for the club’s Christmas Program.





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ACADEMY

from Page 4

Before finding theatre in her freshman year, she had wanted to become a marine biologist. “But, I’ve known how to sew my entire life, because my grandma and mom do it. So, just bing in theatre and having Mr. Kelsey ask me about costumes, and being a costumer for some of the shows, has been really influential.” Senior Simon Knox agreed. Knox said he had been enamored with engineering and had never taken an arts class until high school. “Myth Busters” and other shows about how things are made were the shows that influenced him the most, he said. “But halfway through my freshman year, by best friend Molly had started theater and kept trying to get me to join,” he said. “I joined two days before the first show, ‘Mary Poppins.’” Ironically, stepping directly into the center of the mayhem of a theatrical production did not scare him away.

“I fell in love with it,” he said. This year he is the prop master. “I help design the set pieces and changes. I hand-build most of the props, and if I can’t build them, I search for things online.” Like his classmate Carter, he doesn’t see himself onstage. Rather, Knox, who will graduate with honors, also hopes to attend UC, but hopes to be accepted into the UC College-Conseratory of Music to earn a degree in stage design and production. Until then, he will continue working with this year’s productions. “It’s a family.” Though she doesn’t see herself pursuing a theatrical career, senior Destiny Gorrell said she would like to minor in the arts in college while she prepares to become a registered nurse. “My older sister, Angie, was in the program and actually did stage crew for ‘Thoroughly Modern Millie’ and ‘Peter Pan,’” Gorrell said. “She brought me to some of the shows, like when they performed “The Phantom of the Opera,” that was the first show I’d ever seen live.”

“It does take a lot more to put into these productions than most people think when they come to a show. They see all the costumes, the musical numbers, the scenery. We put so much time in, and our crew puts a lot of time in, to do all of it.”

— Autumn Hedgepeth, sophomore

Gorrell, also, was drawn to the production side of the program, rather than performing. When she saw “Phantom” with her sister, she recalled thinking “the acting was cool, but I paid attention to the scenery and the props and wondered how does all that happen? So, when I came to high school, I auditioned for ‘Mary Poppins.’ I didn’t get in the show and was kind of upset about that, but I did stage crew and that was so much fun.” Her favorite part? “Creating and the interaction between the people in the crew and the cast, and how much work we all put into it,” she said. Even after she’s finished her education, Gorrell said she plans to stay involved with theatre, in some

form. “I enjoy it a lot.” Sophomore Autumn Hedgepeth entered the academy as freshman last year. Like Gorrell, she was drawn into the performing arts by an older sibling. “My brother did theater when he was in high school, and even now we still compete over things,” Hedgepeth said. “So, he was like ‘You won’t be as good as me in theater.’ And I was like, ‘Watch me.’ That also paid off with show choir, too.” Performing onstage has helped Hedgepeth become more confident when it comes to public speaking. And, “it’s helped me become a more social person.” The commitment of not just the students, but also the faculty, is one

of the best things about being in the academy. “It does takes a lot more to put into these productions than most people think when they come to a show. They see all the costumes, the musical numbers, the scenery. We put so much time in, and our crew puts a lot of time in, to do all of it,” she said. “Ms. Grayson, Ms. Torline and Mr. Kelsey – they put in a lot of after-school time, too. But they put in all this time and effort to make our shows good. They don’t have to do that, but they want to.” Though she still has a couple of years to think about her future, Hedgepeth said she wants to continue in the arts. “Not necessarily with a huge company, like on Broadway, but an aspect of it, maybe teaching performing arts because I do like music and acting,” she said. Her career choice, she added, “will depend on where I’m at when I graduate. Looking at my entire life performing until I die, I don’t think it’s likely, unless I become that A-list celebrity. And you never know.”

HOPE

from Page 1

“There are not a lot of those (schools), but the research looks at what is consistent about those schools that gets students to perform at higher levels,” Vaughn said. Focusing on the research in the book, MCS has been working for several years to build that culture of hope in its elementary schools, as well as its junior high and high schools. “We want that ‘Culture of Hope’ to be the culture of our buildings,” Vaughn said. The goal is to help faculty and staff at every level build relationships with all students. “It’s one of the most impactful instructional strategies that there is.” In the book, Barr and Gibson outline the four “seeds of hope” that can lead to building a school culture of optimism and opportunity. To be successful, each build-

ing in a district must provide students with a sense of optimism, a sense of belonging, a sense of pride and a sense of purpose. By planting these seeds, even students from the most impoverished families can begin to value education, find academic success, graduate from high school, earn post-secondary education or credentials and, ultimately, find a pathway out of poverty.

Houses help provide sense of belonging

To facilitate a sense of belonging, the district has adopted the concept of creating “houses” in each building. The concept was developed by the Ron Clark Academy to “foster an atmosphere where students, parents, staff and community members work together to create a family environment,” according to the

academy’s mission statement. Using a spinning wheel, like in a game show, students are assigned to various houses at the beginning of each school year. Themes for the houses vary from building to building. At each building, the houses include students from every grade level, with older students serving as mentors for the younger students. Teachers also play a vital role, working with the students in house-related projects and activities. Competitions and other schoolwide activities are held throughout the year. The competitions can be to determine which house in a building has the most school spirit, or which one can perform its chants the loudest. Recently at MJHS, the students went to the parking lot where they performed their chants for three judges. One of the houses, Vaughn said, had its band students play

music and the other students created a dance routine to go with it. “This gives students a chance to feel as though they are part of a team, across all grade levels,” Vaughn said. Because faculty and staff also are involved, it helps the schools meet the goal of adults building interpersonal relationships with every student. “All of these activities go back to supporting the student’s success at school,” Vaughn said. “They are not isolated one-day events, and there’s always a purpose behind them.” Positive reinforcement, which includes the district’s participation in the PBIS program, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Rather than punishing students for poor behavior, PBIS is a system that is geared to call attention to students who do good things for other students, or even teachers and staff. All adults in each building can give students points for achieving goals and exceeding expectations. These points are converted to an economy system that allows students to purchase rewards, which include candy or snacks, screen time on their devices during school, homework passes and other fun stuff. Students also can save up to pay for end-of-year reward field trips.

Vaughn said this system has been effective in creating more positive environments in each school. “Before, a common disciplinary consequences was for a student to lose their recess time if they didn’t turn in homework or missed an assignment,” Vaughn said. “But from a health standpoint, especially when we’re dealing with obesity in children, recess is the one time of the day that they can get up an move.” Plus, that process only addressed the symptoms of poor behavior, rather than the root cause. “Losing recess, for most kids, didn’t fix the problem,” Vaughn said. “We decided, instead, to look at what’s missing in teaching students to turn in their homework. Some kids may not have an adult at home to help them with homework, so one thing was to teach them how to organize their time and work.” Looking at the symptoms, she said, also helps teachers and administrators to see the indicators that can predict – as early as sixth grade – students who are disengaged and are at risk of dropping out of school before graduation. “It gives us a chance to provide interventions for those students and keep them engaged.” Many MCS teachers have been sent to two-day train-

ing sessions at Ron Clark Academy, where they can see first hand how teachers there keep students engaged during class, Vaughn said. The academy’s high-energy methods focus on student engagement, as well as providing rigorous education in a positive culture and climate. “There are clear expectations for students, but in a very unique atmosphere,” she said. The Ron Clark Academy is set up so that classrooms include theater-style seating for visiting educators and school administrators, who are able to observe full class periods in various subjects. “They then meet up with the teachers afterward, to break down all the strategies used, why they used them and how they are implemented.” One strategy that has been brought back to several classrooms is the “call back,” designed to get the students’ full attention back on the teacher at any point during a class period. In Amy White’s sixth-grade classroom, for example, she will shout out the words “Track your teacher!” Immediately, in unison, students chant back to her: “T-r-a-c-k-i-n-g Your Way!” “It gets their focus, and they like it,” Vaughn said. “They get a bit of energy out, it lets them be loud for a moment, and then they are focusing on their teacher again.”



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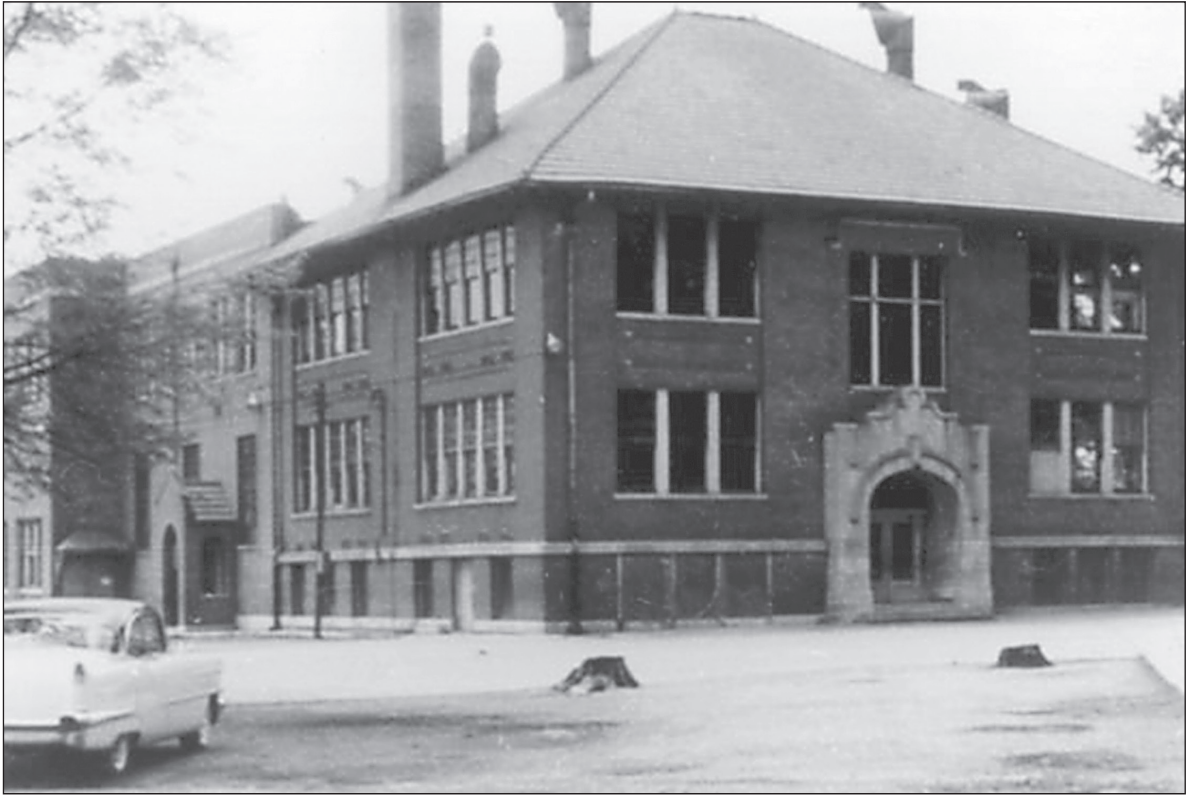
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Senior Isaac Hanson, president of the Madison Consolidated High School Student Council, serves as moderator for the student-organized School Board Candidates Forum held in the auditorium Oct. 29. Candidates present were, from left: Larry Henry, Jodi Yancey, Ken Brunner, Rob Kring, Gina Lawrence Freeman and Carl Glesing. On Nov. 6, Henry, Yancey and Kring won the available seats on the board, with terms starting Jan. 1.

FORUM

from Page 1

the school board and its members,” he said, along with districtwide preschool and other programs. One of the biggest discoveries, “was how much we didn’t know about the

school board.” “It was easy to see that most students, and even the teachers, didn’t really understand the purpose of the school board,” Whitaker said. Overall, it was the group effort made in the school, as a whole, that made the

event a success, Whitaker said. “I was very happy and proud of our student body, with the questions they asked.” “I would hear students in the school talking about these things, and it was nice to see students taking part in it,” and seeing

how it sparked discussions, Lynch said. Hanson said the project also helped him prepare for voting in his first election. “I’m 18, so I was able to vote. And as a new voter, it was helpful for me, personally, to be informed about the candidates.”

Email threat caused lockout at MCHS, MJHS campuses

Madison Consolidated High School and Junior High Schools initiated lockout protocol at 10:50 a.m. Monday, Dec. 3, after a threatening email was sent to administrators at MCHS. During a lockout, no unauthorized students or personnel may enter a building, but classes and activities continue uninterrupted. School officials and local and state law enforcement immediately conducted a campus security sweep.

Once a safe exterior perimeter was established, MCHS students coming from and going to off-campus classes or work-related activities were permitted to come and go as they were identified by officials. Students entering the building were taken to a secure location where their belongings were searched before they were granted access to the rest of the building. After investigating the incident, authorities deter-

mined that the threat was not credible, and students were dismissed at the normal times. Extracurricular activities were held as scheduled. On Monday evening, families of students at MCHS and MJHS were notified that both campuses would follow a normal schedule on Tuesday, but with increased security on site as a precaution. According to law enforcement officials, the investigation into the email threat

directed at MCHS administrators is ongoing. Additionally, information about an unrelated incident, received during this investigation, led to the arrest of an MJHS student Tuesday, Dec. 4. MCS is committed to keeping our campuses safe. Anyone with information about suspicious activity is encouraged to contact us through the School Messenger Quick Tip link, located on the home page of each of the district’s school websites.

Indiana School Boards Association

Code of Ethics

A School Board member should maintain desirable relations with the superintendent of schools and other employees by:

- Striving to procure the best professional leader available for the head administrative position.
- Giving the superintendent full administrative authority for properly discharging the professional duties of the position and the responsibility to achieve acceptable results.
- Acting only after consideration of the superintendent’s recommendations on matters of school governance.
- Having the superintendent present at all meetings of the Board except when his or her contract and salary considerations are under review.
- Respecting proper communication channels, referring all complaints to the proper administrative office and considering them only after failure of an administrative solution.
- Providing adequate safeguards around the superintendent and other employees so that they can perform their responsibilities.
- Presenting criticisms of an employee directly to the superintendent.

A School Board member should maintain a commitment to the community by:

- Developing and adopting a mission and a vision statement for the school corporation.
- Conducting all school business transactions openly.
- Vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the schools.
- Refusing to use the school board position for personal gain.
- Refusing to discuss confidential board business anywhere other than when attending a properly advertised board meeting.
- Earning the community’s confidence that all is being done in the best interests of school children.

More information about the role of board members representing Indiana public school districts can be found at www.isba-in.org.



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