

THE DISTRICT CORRESPONDENT

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BUILDING THE FUTURE



January Launch!

At the November board meeting the Board of School Trustees approved the launch of a new Esports curriculum at Madison Junior High School. “If you hear Esports and think it’s only about gaming, that’s where the real discussion begins,” shared Janet McCreary, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Director for the district. “While short for Electronic Sports, there is so much more to offer than gaming competition - it is about developing career pathways for students in areas we are creating as a result of thinking outside of the box.” Starting in January, students will be able to enroll in the elective courses offered at MJHS and students at both the junior high and MCHS will be able to participate in the Madison Esports Club as an extracurricular activity.

“We know that gaming is a huge piece of the social aspect for students,” shared MJHS Principal Jordan Warner. “We want to provide a space for them to come together but we also want to incorporate it into larger-scale learning and help them see the possibilities. When you start to look at things through a different lens you see that learning can be engaging and something students should and can enjoy. We are hoping this invigorates our students, creates a unique opportunity that students come to our school to be a part of, and creates career pathways that invite students to blend something they are passionate about with something that can be a rewarding career.”



The space has been completely renovated with new carpet and lighting. At left are artist renderings of the state of the art gaming equipment is ready for installation. Also pictured, are images of new gaming furniture, which will be branded to match our logo, also on order and is scheduled to arrive shortly after the first of the year. The sectional sofa has arrived and will face a wall of large screen TVs for in-person game play and socializing.

Story continued on next page...



Esports continued...

A team from Madison recently visited Butler University to tour their Esports program and facility. "What we quickly learned is how many different directions this type of curriculum can take you in terms of career exploration," McCreary continued. Similar to the way that Cub Enterprises provides access to career pathways in manufacturing, engineering, culinary, agriculture, and business - the new pathway career field exploration will include things like Cloud technology, broadcast journalism, journalism, entertainment, and digital production and marketing. "When you think about gaming, you may tend to think about kids huddled in dark places, somewhat introverted or secluded, and wasting time," shared Warner. "To the contrary, the Esports of today is a blend of skills, strategy, and spectacle that make the world a much smaller place as kids are online, working together with others (sometimes across the world from one another) to find successful ways to win."

The world of gaming came to light in arcades in the 80s as friends would gather around the large console games and watch as they competed against one another, one at a time. Today, in what has become a billion-dollar industry, Esports may look much different but the same principles apply... passionate people, playing a game they love, in front of (now) huge crowds for millions in prize money. "As we think about up-and-coming careers, Esports is exactly what we think will set us apart from other area schools," Warner continued. "If you search for careers around the gaming industry, you get results like Game Developer (coding), Esports Hosts/Shoutcasters (broadcast journalism), Team Owner/Manager, Esport Admin, Marketing, PR (business), Streamer, Production Crew/Broadcaster (production), or Legal/Finance experts. They may not be traditional in the minds of our parent's and grandparent's generation but they are on the short horizon and we want to be able to help our students prepare accordingly."

Colleges and universities are giving scholarships for Esports and recruiting students to their campuses to compete. "One of the things we learned about at Butler was the prevalence of their gaming team and community," shared McCreary. "Butler has a Division I Esports team that competes in a state-of-the-art gaming lounge on the outskirts of their campus. Butler University offered a minor degree in Esports education which is similar to a sports business minor." There are over 200 colleges or universities, ranging in size from large to small, that offer opportunities in Esports and use the curriculum to prepare students for a number of career fields supported within this quickly growing, billion-dollar industry.

Through grant funding, Madison has invested in technology to mirror the equipment used at Butler. "As we began to explore this option, we realized that we are able to fund the initiative through grants," shared Shaun Pennington, Grants & Compliance Specialist for the district. "The more we researched, the more we discovered and are excited to be able to offer this one-of-a-kind experience for our students." Work has begun on transforming a former computer lab into a gaming lounge at MJHS. There will be fifteen gaming stations on one end of the space and a sectional couch with large-screen TVs and gaming consoles on the other end. "The space was designed with the students in mind," Warner continued. "From the technology to the lighting to the seating, it is designed for comfort, socializing, and interaction - whether that is learning or competing, we are setting the standard."

The [IEN \(Indiana Esports Network\)](#) offers students state-level competition and is the equivalent of the IHSAA to athletics. "We look forward to expanding opportunities for competition to our club students," shared Warner. The visit with Butler came with an invitation to create opportunities for Madison students to compete with Division I teams. The facility is ADA compliant and hopes that it could one day become a part of Unified Sports team offerings. "Esports is here to stay," stated Warner. "What was once a niche hobby has now turned into a cultural and entertainment mega-platform and we want to bring a piece of that to Madison."

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National Merit Scholar Semi-finalist



Madison Consolidated High School senior, Alex Wang, has been identified as a semifinalist in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program. As one of more than 16,000 students acknowledged for their academic excellence, Wang has the opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,140 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$28 million that will be offered next spring. To be considered for a Merit Scholarship Program award, Semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the Finalist level of the competition.

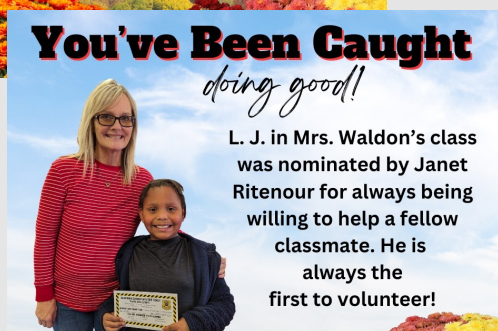
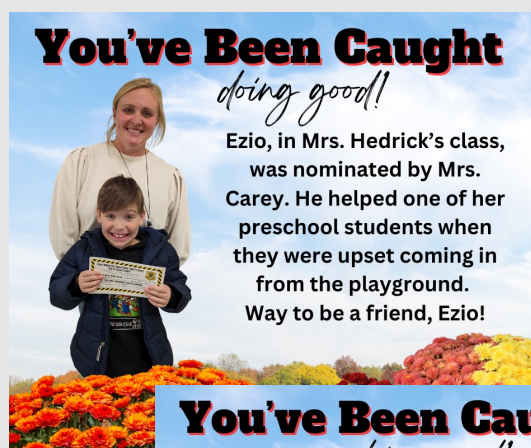
Over 1.3 million juniors in about 21,000 high schools entered the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2022 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), which served as an initial screen of program entrants.

Three types of National Merit Scholarships will be offered in the spring of 2024. Every Finalist will compete for one of 2,500 National Merit® \$2,500 Scholarships that will be awarded on a state-representational basis. About 840 corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards will be provided by approximately 160 corporations and business organizations for Finalists who meet their specified criteria, such as children of the grantor's employees or residents of communities where sponsor plants or offices are located. In addition, about 160 colleges and universities are expected to finance some 3,800 college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards for Finalists who will attend the sponsor institution.

National Merit Scholarship winners of 2024 will be announced in four nationwide news releases beginning in April and concluding in July. These scholarship recipients will join nearly 375,000 other distinguished young people who have earned the Merit Scholar title.

Two other seniors, Jack Heckler and Jackson Schwartz, were named as Commended Students but will not be moving forward to semifinalist status.

Congratulations to all on this impressive achievement. Good Luck to Alex moving forward!



CAUGHT YOU!

Anderson Elementary SRO Launches *You've Been Caught Doing Something Good* Campaign to recognize students.

Anderson Elementary SRO, Officer Monica Lohrig, has launched a local campaign to catch kids at school...doing GOOD THINGS! As part of the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) national campaign, the goal of the program is to cultivate a positive, helpful culture in the school.

"I want to be a positive presence and really enjoy seeing the kids be a part of something larger," shared Lohrig. "The response has been overwhelmingly positive and I think the staff have gotten just as much out of it as the kids have!"

When a student is 'caught' doing something good, they receive a 'ticket' from Officer Lohrig and get their photo taken with the individual who caught them in the act. "If you haven't followed our Facebook feed, you might want to join us to see how we are recognizing our students," Lohrig continued. Each ticket earns a House Point for the student and they are then entered into the monthly drawing. "By tying it back to our school-wide House System we are teaching the kids that they can and do have a direct impact on others with their attitude and behaviors through the kindness and respect they show to their classmates and staff members."

Each certificate along with their photo is also submitted for an opportunity to be featured on NASRO's social media feed and/or in the Journal of School Safety!

Check our [Anderson Elementary on Facebook!](#)

Sources of Strength Model Implemented

In October, approximately 150 students in grades 5 - 11 and 44 staff members from both MJHS and MCHS were selected to participate in a training facilitated by Sources of Strength. As part of the district's ongoing student and staff well-being initiative, this program is part of a growing library of resources for suicide prevention, inclusion, and positive encouragement for all students. As stated on the website, Sources of Strength "is a strength-based, upstream suicide prevention program with shown effectiveness in both preventative upstream and intervention outcomes." As a strong evidence-based program, it "is considered the first suicide prevention program to demonstrate effectiveness using Peer Leaders to enhance protective factors associated with reducing suicide across a school population."

"We have worked closely with teachers and counselors from both schools to help identify a wide variety of students who were invited to participate," shared Lori Slygh, Assistant Director of Programs for the district. "We are committed to providing as many opportunities as possible to build peer-level training and support for our students so that they can work together to make our schools safe, engaging, and an enjoyable place to be together."

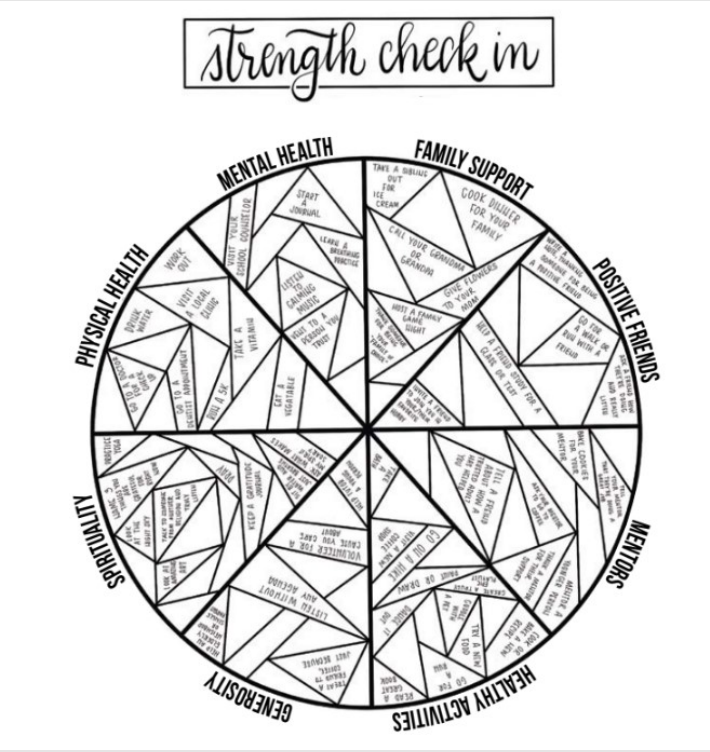
One of the most powerful pieces of the program model leverages the positive influence each Peer Leader has within their social networking circle. Supportive adult advisors (who are caring, connected, and positive) work with diverse peer leaders (who have influence within their social group) all work together to create positive messaging campaigns, school activities, and a support network to drive a positive cultural change within their school building and ultimately their community. "This is a student-driven program," Slygh stated. "Our adults are there to help guide, remove barriers, and assist when questions arise but overall the students will drive and lead the work."



Students from MCHS (top) and MJHS (above and left) were pictured during various group activities throughout the training sessions.

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Sources cont.



“We had students from all aspects of our student population who had been identified as a leader in some capacity by a teacher, counselor, or building administrator. In bringing them together, they learned tools and strategies to break down social barriers, stigmas, and labels, and began to see each other as peers who cared a great deal about their friends, their school, and their communities. Together they had some incredibly inspiring conversations and ideas about how they can collectively improve their schools and community overall. It is powerful to watch as young people realize they have a voice and can take action to move things forward in a positive way!”

The Sources program was selected #bydesign as another resource for teachers, students, and (hopefully) families to begin having conversations around mental health awareness. “We selected this program because it comes from a place of positivity,” Slygh explained. “There are some big and scary things some of our students deal with and that is sometimes very overwhelming. We chose the Sources of Strength model because the goal is to positively impact the culture so that we are able to identify and work through things or connect with other professional resources well before anyone gets to a place where they feel hopeless and alone. The statistics around suicide are staggering, sad, and overwhelming. Our goal is to equip more and more students to be aware, use their positive influence, and work to create a culture where if we help one person, it has been well worth it.”

Teams at both MJHS and MCHS completed the initial training, have had or have planned their first follow-up session, and will begin work on their first campaign. Be on the lookout for things coming from school over the next several weeks and be sure to ask your student what they are seeing and learning!



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It is the policy of Madison Consolidated Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, or age, in its programs or employment policies as required by the Indiana Civil Rights act (I.C. 1971, 22-9-1); Public Law 218 (I.C. 1971, Title 20); Titles VI and VII (Civil Rights Act 1964); the Equal Pay Act of 1973; Title IX (1972 Education Amendments); Public Law 94-142; and Public Law 93-112, Section 504.

MADISON FARM STOP PROJECT

SEEDLING LAUNCHED!

Madison Consolidated Schools has announced a new partnership with the local non-profit organization Madison Youth Unlimited. Madison Youth Unlimited (MYU) is committed to improving the quality of life for Madison area youth and their families. The Madison Community Grocery Project (MGGP) is a program of the non-profit with a specific mission to build an equitable and sustainable local food system that grows community through education and access to delicious, nutritious food.

“When discussions began with the school last summer, we were in a different place as a community,” stated MYU board president Laura Arico. “We were searching for a solution to fill the grocery store void in downtown Madison. Now that we know there will be a grocery store available, we’re able to focus more specifically on building our local food system through farmer support and improved access to fresh food. Working together, we have created a student-led initiative that will provide more youth leadership and food access opportunities than we ever anticipated and will fit perfectly within the scope and mission of our work.”

MCS students will design, implement, and manage a fresh food store, known as a “farm stop,” that sells fresh local and regional food. The farm stop movement is growing nationwide as communities turn to local farms as a buffer against global supply chain and price fluctuations. Farm stops sell fresh food from a variety of local and regional growers and can take various forms, from indoor marketplaces that operate on a near-daily basis to mobile markets to weekly box programs.

Nestled under the College & Technical Education (CTE) umbrella at MCHS, planning work on the *Farm Stop* project is in full swing. “We have recently formed our student leadership team who will develop all elements of this initiative,” stated John Schutte, CTE Coordinator for the district and project mentor for the group. “The students who have come forward to lead this project are very excited, have various life experiences and strengths which will be valuable to have at the table, and are able to envision the long-term impact a project like this will have on our community, as well as, embrace and create learning opportunities for students of all ages moving forward.”

The student leaders on this project are Lilly Cox, Ava Armbrrecht, Avery Clayton, Anni Kempton, Laken Dickerson, Emma Wynn, Reilly Kuppler, and Sophie Guirguis all Juniors at Madison Consolidated High School. “I am very excited to work with this group of students and our CTE teachers to create an entrepreneurial experience from the beginning,” shared Schutte. “This particular group of students has already brought an incredible amount of energy and passion to our project. In addition, they also bring a wide breadth of knowledge and perspective, proven leadership, and experience from their other course work, and extracurricular activities that will be extremely beneficial to the overall planning and success of this unique opportunity for our students. We will be the first in the state to offer this opportunity for our students and community.”

The group has met three times with the last being a field trip to nearby Bloomington Farm Stop Collective to see their operation first-hand. “We have now taken some of our administrative leadership and steering committee members, as well as, our student leaders to see what this looks like in another community,” shared Schutte.

Story continued on next page...



Members of the MCHS Farm Stop leadership team traveled to Bloomington Farm Stop Collective for a visit to see a working business and learn more about how it has impacted that community.

Pictured L to R: Laken Dickerson, Lilly Cox, John Schutte, CTE Coordinator and project mentor, Avery Clayton, Emma Wynn, Sophie Guirguis, Ava Armbrrecht, Reilly Kuppler, and Anni Kempton.

SEEDLING CONT...

"Our student leadership team, along with Dr. Teresa Brown, were able to interact, ask questions, and get a better understanding of what we are trying to do." Armed with first-hand experience and some answers, the team will dive in the next few weeks to wrap up their mission, vision, and value statements, conduct a SWOT analysis, and begin thinking about the business plan foundation.

The work will eventually include curricular areas of business, marketing, personal finance, economics, culinary, agriculture, engineering, and manufacturing.

"Our plan is to build this business from the ground up, creating both hands-on and managerial opportunities (immediate and future) for students," stated Schutte. "As part of the overall academic opportunity exploration process, we have worked with Mrs. Janelle Smith, MCHS School Counselor, and Mr. Jared Kempton, MCHS Select teacher, to create an opportunity for these students to get credit for the work they do after school hours as part of the overall business planning process," Schutte shared. "We spend on average 3-4 hours per week outside of school working in the morning or evening on things and thanks to our innovative team at MCHS that time will now be counted towards class credit in our new Business Entrepreneurship pathway." The work the students will contribute with align with state standards to earn the credit which will be verified by Kempton as the teacher of record. When asked about what they were most looking forward to as part of this project, Junior Lilly Cox shared, "I am most excited about closing the gap between producer and consumer and providing a healthier (fresher, local) alternative to shopping at a chain grocery store."

"As the work came together we (MYU board) were able to see that the school shared our passion and desire for homegrown solutions," shared Arico. "In fact, when we proposed the idea of a student-led farm stop to MCS, they came back with a bigger vision than we had thought possible. They are committed to guiding and empowering students to take on this community leadership role, making youth leadership a vital part of building a thriving local food system that improves food access across income levels. We are very excited to see how this partnership continues to grow!"

While groundwork has begun, the real work will come later this year and into the next school year with further curriculum developments and additions for the 2024-2025 school year. "We are committed to creating educational and real-world value through a hands-on experience that will provide our students with an advantage as they enter college and careers," shared Dr. Teresa Brown, Superintendent. "As we sit around this table and have discussions about solving barriers to food access for students and families in our community, it is powerful. For our students to step up and lead initiatives such as this, speaks to their hearts and more to their abilities and desire to be change agents."

Be on the lookout for more information as this partnership blooms and things take root!



FFA Forestry Team Advances to State

Both the MJHS and MCHS FFA Forestry Teams will move on to the State competition in December. Both teams competed on November 9th at the Area Contest and will be the nineteenth appearance for a Madison team at the State level.

The high school team placed First with Michael Briggs placing 4th High Individual. The high school team (bottom right) includes Sydney Huff, Abby Ferguson, Michael Briggs, and Ayden Liter.

The junior high team also placed First overall as a team. Ben Copeland was named the 1st place overall individual. The junior high team (top right) includes Daylee Smith, Ben Copeland, Lauren Schafer, Maddie Palmer, and Eli Copeland.

Both teams were coached by Amanda Briggs, Madison Agriculture teacher and MCHS FFA Advisor.



Community Partnerships & Career Exploration

This fall students at both MCHS and MJHS were given the opportunity to interact with and explore a variety of different career options and meet employers from various local businesses, industries, and service providers across a variety of sectors.

MCHS Students Network with Local and Regional Employers

In October students at MCHS were invited to participate in the 2023 Employment Fair where nearly 40 regional employers and higher education programs visited for the day. The event was designed to encourage and help students better understand the wide range of careers and educational opportunities available throughout our area. "There were three primary purposes for the event," shared John Schutte, CTE Coordinator and event planner. "Employment now, employment for the summer or as a job shadow, internship, etc., and career readiness for post-secondary education.

Seniors were given priority access during the morning session. As an incentive to network with employers, students were given a card where they could get stamps as they talked about opportunities available to them. Depending upon the number of stamps they collected, students were entered into a drawing. Nineteen students interacted with nearly 75% of the vendors and received a \$15 McDonald's gift card. Five seniors, Karson Couch, Logan Ferris, Andre Howard, Iyana Phelps, and Jenna Ginn each won a \$200 Amazon gift card for networking with each of our visitors!

Juniors and Sophomores attended the event in the afternoon following their PSAT test and members of the Freshman class participated in the annual Cub Service Day, where students are part of a community service project with their classmates. This afternoon of service counts toward a portion of the graduation pathway requirement.

"We are very grateful for the interest and participation we had for this event," Schutte shared. "After a debrief with our team internally and some feedback from the employers, we are already working on ways to improve next year's event. I would like to extend another thank you to these organizations for their support of our students. It is relationships like these that we work to develop that create win-win opportunities for our schools and our community."



MCHS Senior Gift Card winners: Karson Couch, Logan Ferris, Andre Howard, and Iyanna Phelps. Not pictured - Jenna Ginn

Junior High Students Begin Exploration Early

Students at MJHS were treated to a full day of career exploration as each grade level spent thirty minutes touring through various vendors in the morning and spent the afternoon in break-out sessions chosen by students. "We have worked closely with our teachers and counselors to help determine areas of interest and align those with our career partners," shared event coordinator Danielle Hawkins, district Literacy Coach. "Our goal is to get a wide variety of interests in front of our students to help them begin to think about what they might be when they grow up!" The afternoon break-out sessions gave visitors the opportunity to share their knowledge, and experiences, and answer questions about their careers with small groups of students. "All of our teachers have taken time to speak with students about what to expect, how they might interact, and help them think through questions they might consider as they participate in the event," Hawkins continued. "We are very excited to offer students the opportunity and hope it sparks their interest and they learn something new about themselves and some of our area's professionals."



MADISON THEATRE
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WORX Radio
Beth McRobers Photography

The JOY of Giving...



During the month of November, students at MJHS and MCHS combined to gather donations to assist those less fortunate during the holiday season. "This was the 25th food drive at MJHS and we thought it would be fun to make it a competition with the high school," shared Jeanna Carter, MJHS teacher and event organizer. "All of the donations collected were given to the Jefferson County House of Hope. As an additional incentive, MJHS honored the upcoming retirement of long-time teacher Ms. Judy Demaree by designating November 30th as 'Ms. Demaree Appreciation Donation Day' and students honored her by bringing in 839 donations in one day in celebration of her time at MJHS!"



MJHS won the contest with 4,502 total donations!

