



School and business partnerships take many forms, offer different levels of support, either financial or otherwise, and can benefit students inside and outside the classroom. In this article, we highlight some of the school-business partnerships recognized by the 2015 WASB Business Honor Roll.



Partners for EDUCATION

Schools and businesses work together to strengthen public education and offer more opportunities to students

Shelby Anderson



Baraboo School District *MSA Professional Services, Inc.*

Engineers in the Classroom

MSA Professional Services, a Baraboo-based company, has been a longtime supporter of the Baraboo School District. This past school year, the company increased their commitment by connecting some of their engineers with classrooms in the district.

MSA engineers worked with fifth-grade students over a five-week unit in which students designed and presented a city plan. Students learned how engineers and other professionals work together to implement big projects to solve community

issues. Engineers also visited fourth-grade classrooms to help students design and build musical instruments out of everyday materials. The students first designed their instrument on paper with the goal of it being able to make three different sounds. After their first attempt at building the instrument, they collaborated with a MSA engineer to adjust their designs.

Lori Mueller, district administrator, said having the professional engineers in the classroom made a positive impact on students.

“It brings a different level of relevance to students to work with real-life engineers,” Mueller said. “It promotes a classroom and

community connection.”

MSA engineers also visited eighth-grade science classrooms to teach students about bridges, and then participated in a bridge building competition. Using only paper and tape, students competed against the engineers to see whose bridge could hold the most weight when suspended between two chairs. Engineers collaborated with students to reassess their designs and alter and improve their bridge designs.

The partnership has also extended to the high school where the company has supported the school’s engineering and manufacturing programs through significant financial donations.

The company's engineers have worked with Baraboo educators in developing lessons and projects that align with the Next Generation Science Standards.

"There's an investment that MSA has made in the school district," Mueller said. "They're invested in the school district and in the Baraboo community." ○

Goodman – Armstrong Creek School District

Wild Rivers Forestry; Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association

Forestry Day

Thanks to partnerships between businesses and the Goodman – Armstrong Creek School District, students from across northeastern Wisconsin had an opportunity to learn about sustainable forestry management. The district worked with a number of businesses and



organizations including Wild Rivers Forestry and the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA) to put on the 2015 School Forest Harvest Day.

About 250 students from six school districts in the area visited Goodman-Armstrong Creek High

School where about a dozen stations were set-up to teach students about forest management.

"Students gained an appreciation for the great renewable resource and natural environment that sustains our schools and communities in so many ways, and provides for many of the

MAKING THE GRADE

PRESCOTT SCHOOL DISTRICT

"After 25 years in construction, I still get excited about projects like this.

Sure, I do this every day, but for the Prescott Schools and community, this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. This new high school will make a positive impact on every student in the community for decades to come. I'd consider that a pretty important contribution."

Sean Pierce
Project Superintendent



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products we consume and use on a regular basis,” said Ben Niehaus, former Goodman — Armstrong Creek School District superintendent.

Students from area school districts got to watch as Wild Rivers Forestry harvested trees from the district’s school forest. At other locations on the grounds of the Goodman-Armstrong Creek High School, the students learned how forests grow and are managed, how a log cabin is built, how to identify trees, and among, other opportunities, learned how the forest system in northern Wisconsin benefits its communities. The different stations were each run by a different business or organization, which was coordinated by GLTPA.

“GLTPA and their staff were instrumental in using their network to solicit numerous expert presentations for the students and staff of six different school districts,” Niehaus said.

Thanks to the help of the business partners, the district was able to donate a large share of the revenue from the school forest harvest to the Children’s Miracle Network, which raises funds for children’s hospitals and medical research. ○



Neenah Joint School District

Plexus, Corp.

Boosting STEM Learning

Technology and manufacturing education has developed in leaps and bounds in Wisconsin school districts. Business partners have proven to be crucial in the success of these programs, providing equipment, expertise and opportunities. Students in the Neenah Joint School District benefit from a partnership between the school district and Plexus, which provides electronic design, manufacturing and

aftermarket services to companies worldwide.

At Neenah High School, Plexus has been especially instrumental in supporting the school’s Manufacturing and Engineering Academy. The mission of the academy is to connect students interested in manufacturing careers to opportunities in the industry. Plexus has provided on-site educational experiences at its state-of-the-art facilities and allowed staff to give presentations at the academy and work with students on projects. In addition, the corporation has donated materials, equipment, and funding.

The partnership also offers a youth apprenticeship program to students. The program combines school-based and work-based learning to instruct students in employability and occupational skills as defined by Wisconsin industries. Through the partnership with Plexus, students are instructed by qualified teachers and skilled worksite mentors. Participating students are simultaneously enrolled in academic classes to meet high school graduation requirements and are employed by a participating employer under the supervision of a skilled mentor.

Neenah High School’s Project Lead the Way program and related STEM classes have also benefitted from this partnership. Plexus provided funds that allowed the high school to purchase a laser engraver, 3-D printer, CNC milling machine, a robotic arm and robotics classroom equipment. Without the help of Plexus, the school

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would not have been able to provide this equipment for its students.

The partnership continues to expand and provide more opportunities for students. This school year, Plexus will be working with Project Based Learning classes at Neenah High School. ○

Stoughton Area School District and Mineral Point Unified School District

Cummins

Support Inside and Outside the Classroom

Both the Stoughton Area School District and Mineral Point Unified School District recognized Cummins as a valued partner in supporting their schools and providing learning opportunities for students.

2015 WASB Business Honor Roll

The following businesses have been nominated by their partner school districts to the WASB Business Honor Roll. For descriptions of each partnership, visit wasb.org. Select "Communications" and then "Business Honor Roll."

Algoma School District

John Dettman, head of strength and conditioning, UW-Madison

Baraboo School District

Flambeau, Inc.
MSA Professional Services, Inc.

Clintonville Public Schools

Clintonville Tribune-Gazette
Klein Automotive
ThedaCare

School District of Durand

Ntec

School District of Fort Atkinson

Fort Atkinson Chamber of Commerce
Frostie Freeze
Badger Press

Howard-Suamico School District

Klemm Tank Lines (Greg Klimek, executive VP)

Goodman – Armstrong Creek School District

LEAF
Great Lakes Timber Professional Association
Wild Rivers Forestry

Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District

Cross Plains Area Chamber of Commerce
Crossroads Coffeehouse
Hilton Garden Inn
North American Mechanical, Inc.
T.A. Miller Electric

Mineral Point Unified School District

Cummins

School District of Mishicot

Cedar Springs Dairy Farm
Eis Implement
Manitowoc Motor Machining & Parts, Inc.
Main Street Coffee Haus & Bistro
Wilfert Farms

Neenah Joint School District

Bemis, Inc.
Plexus, Corp.

Stoughton School District

Cummins
McFarland State Bank
Stoughton Lumber
Stoughton Trailers

River Valley School District

Culver's
Lonesome Stone Milling, LLC
Kraemer Brothers Construction
Grandma Mary's Café & Brisbane Hall
Wisconsin Riverside Resort

Tomah Area School District

Ho-Chunk Nation
TORO
Unimen
Tomah Memorial Hospital

Unity School District

Lakeland Communications

In Stoughton, where Cummins operates a research and development campus, the company provided \$100,000 in 2012 to help jump start Stoughton High School's Fab Lab. The company continues to provide logistical and financial support to help maintain and improve upon the Fab Lab.

Cummins has also been involved in boosting classroom learning across the grades. In middle school engineering and design classes, the company's employees work one-on-one with individual students and teach them how to use a 3-D design program. Jessie Hager, a middle school science teacher, said her students are learning real-world skills.

"They really enjoy working with the engineers," Hager said. "The software they are learning to use as sixth graders is the same software that engineers are using in the field."

The company's engineers have also worked collaboratively with

Stoughton students on a number of special projects, including the construction of a full-sized LEGO model of a Cummins engine.

Cummins has hired several students from the district for summer internship and coop programs, including one student with disabilities through the Let's Get to Work program. "Cummins is a company that not only preaches the need for public service but ensures that its employees live that mission," the Stoughton Area School District wrote on its nomination form.

In the Mineral Point Unified School District, Cummins has been essential in implementing and supporting the district's Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program. Mineral Point Elementary School was one of only 24 schools in the nation selected to pilot a PLTW robotics program. The company helped support the pilot program with a large grant.

"This would not have been possible without the support of Cummins," said superintendent Luke Francois. "Our students are benefiting from hands-on project-based learning in STEM areas because of Cummins."

In addition to financial support, the company also has a presence in the district's elementary and high schools. Employees visit classrooms and work with students to enrich their STEM curriculum. Additionally, Cummins, which is a global company with employees from across the world, helps teach global literacy. Employees teach elementary students about the history and customs of their home countries.

"Students and staff continue to invite Cummins into the classroom to share in the learning experience," Francois said. ■

Anderson is editor of Wisconsin School News.

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