

# ROLLING OUT the RED CARPET for Public Education

WASB Business Honor Roll highlights successful partnerships between businesses and school districts

Shelby Anderson

**T**his past summer, the WASB accepted nominations from Wisconsin public school districts for its third annual WASB Business Honor Roll. School districts from across the state submitted excellent examples of businesses supporting

and promoting public education in their communities. The complete WASB Business Honor Roll can be viewed at [wasb.org](http://wasb.org). Here's a look at some of the successful partnerships that help support Wisconsin schools.

## MISHICOT SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Dowco and Jagemann

#### *"Career Ready"*

The Mishicot School District prides itself on its student portfolio process, which helps students pursue career interests while still in school. A couple of years ago, 13 percent of Mishicot seniors said they didn't know what they wanted to do after high school. In 2013-14, only 1 percent of seniors said they were undecided.

"A lot of that is because businesses have opened their doors to our students," said Superintendent Colleen Timm.

Two businesses in particular, Dowco and Jagemann, have worked closely with Mishicot students.

Dowco is a Manitowoc-based business that, among other things, is known for manufacturing canvas covers for boats and saddlebags for motorcycles. The company partnered with and sponsored Mishicot High School's Mini-Chopper Team. The mini-chopper program is a county-wide initiative in Manitowoc County that pairs businesses with teams of students to build a mini-chopper motorcycle and give students real-world manufacturing skills.

Timm said the program is intense. Students must follow detailed speci-

fications for the manufacturing and building of their mini-chopper. They work closely with engineers and professionals from a local business partner. Then, at the end of the school year, the team of students presents the finished product to other students and businesses from across the county.

"It's a life-changing project for some students," Timm said. "You manage a budget, work as a team, and then get on a stage and present."

Timm said one of her students — a girl that participated in the mini-chopper program several times — was approached by businesses with job offers.

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Mishicot High School's Mini-Chopper team worked with Dowco, a Manitowoc-based manufacturer, to build a mini motorcycle. The Mini-Chopper program is a county-wide competition that introduces students to real-world engineering and manufacturing work.

“Once these businesses work with our students and see what they can do, a lot of them offer them a job on the spot or tell our students to go to college and come back and work for them,” Timm said.

Jagemann, a metal stamping and plastic-molding manufacturer based in Manitowoc, has worked extensively with the Mishicot School District — offering youth apprenticeship positions, helping with mock interviews, and offering other career support and expertise to students.

“They’ve really embraced the youth apprenticeship program,” said Tom Ellenbecker, principal at Mishicot High School.

This past school year, two Mishicot students who worked at Jagemann were offered summer jobs after their youth apprenticeship ended. Timm remembers another student, who, despite several personal challenges, showed promise. Jagemann worked with the school district to get the student set-up with a youth apprenticeship. The partnership worked great and the student, now graduated from high school, works full time at the company.

Students can earn extensive college credit at the local technical college by working on projects such as the mini-chopper or working with manufacturing and engineering firms such as Jagemann. Ellenbecker says he knows several students who decided to attend the local technical college after earning credit in high school who otherwise wouldn’t have gone to college. One student from this past school year was not plan-

ning on going to college, but after he saw how many credits he’d earned, he changed his mind.

“That student told me, ‘How can I not go to college, I’m almost done with my degree,’” Ellenbecker said. “His experience working with our business partners and earning college credit was the reason he is going to college.” □

**TOMAH AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Marcus Ho Chunk Cinema**

*“Stars for a Day”*

Whether they know it or not, Tomah Superintendent Cindy Zahrte says the Marcus Ho Chunk Cinema contributes to the positive behavior of students within the Tomah Area School District. The theater has long donated movie passes to the school district, which are used as incentives for students in the district’s successful PBIS program.

**2014 WASB**  
**Business Honor Roll**

**View the complete 2014 WASB Business Honor Roll at [wasb.org](http://wasb.org).**

Select “Communications” and then “Business Honor Roll.” The WASB thanks the participating school districts and businesses for their work on behalf of their students and communities.



Thanks to a partnership with Marcus Ho Chunk Cinema, students at Tomah Middle School were treated like stars on the first day of school.

For the past couple of years, the theater has also provided the middle school with velvet ropes and decorations for the first day of school. When students arrive, they get the red carpet treatment with teachers and administrators outside greeting them and giving them high-fives as they enter the middle school.

“I think all of our students really enjoy it,” principal Steve Buss said. “It’s a true demonstration of how doing the small things can really go a long way.”

The Marcus Ho Chunk Cinema has also served as a venue for the high school’s post-prom party. Owner Kathy Vroman lets students commandeer the theater after midnight. Students have the entire place to use for playing games and cards, socializing, eating, and enjoying a selection of popular movies.

“Our partnership with the Marcus Ho Chunk Cinema has been in place since the theater opened its doors in Tomah,” Zahrte said. “They were willing to assist us right from the start with reduced rates and special showings for our students and they continue to expand opportunities in assisting the school district as needs arise.” □

**MUSKEGO-NORWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Inpro Corporation**

*“Making a Better Place”*

Inpro Corporation, an indoor environmental facility company based in Muskego, provides support to nearly every school in the Muskego-Norway School District. They have donated and mounted signage for the middle and elementary schools, they donated furniture to the high school, and, among other efforts, they provide mentors and opportunities for the high school’s Project Lead the Way

(PLTW) program.

Muskego High School’s PLTW senior capstone class, Engineering Design and Development, has especially benefited from the partnership with Inpro Corporation. This past school year, the company engaged the class in a “prototyping challenge.” Students had several meetings with Inpro personnel on an actual problem. Inpro gave the students some materials and parameters and challenged them to help come up with solutions. The students took the materials back to the classroom and worked on solutions for an intense two weeks and then made a presentation to Inpro executives.

“It changed my students’ point of view,” said Karen Lindholm-Rynkiewicz, technology teacher at

The Inpro Corporation has helped the Muskego-Norway School District in many ways, including providing special projects and opportunities for Muskego High School’s Engineering Design and Development class.





Tom and Bill Halquist of Halquist Stone Company are recognized by Hamilton School Board President Gabe Kolesari for their financial support.

Muskego High School. “It helped students understand what engineering in the real world is all about.”

Inpro also provides mentors and judges for PLTW events and has given tours to middle school students. Last year, they gave a scholarship to a senior attending college pursuing an engineering career.

As a company focused on indoor environmental quality and products, Inpro also works closely with the school district’s facility manager, sharing best practices and information regarding vendors and contractors. In fact, the partnership between the district’s facility manager and Inpro played a key role in a donation of more than \$10,000 in furniture to the school district.

School Board President Rick Petfalski said Inpro executives are looking to help in any way they can, as evidenced by a recent \$5,000 donation to the football boosters club.

“They just believe in making Muskego a better place and they recognize that one of the best ways to do that is to support their local schools.” □

**HAMILTON SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Halquist Stone Company**

*“Rock-Steady Support”*

For more than 20 years, Tom Halquist, owner of Halquist Stone Company in Sussex, has quietly supported the Hamilton School District through various partnership activities and financial contributions.

Halquist assisted in the establishment of the Hamilton Education Foundation, which has contributed more than \$1 million in grants and opportunities to promote rigorous instructional practices in the school district.

Last school year, the Halquist family hosted Dozer Day, which served as the Hamilton Education Foundation’s premier fundraising event. For this special event, the Halquist stone quarry was turned into an amusement park for children

of all ages. Profits from the fundraiser supported grants and innovative programming which increased student achievement in the Hamilton School District.

Recently, Halquist Stone Company pledged to construct new athletic fields for school and community use on Hamilton School District property. The donation, which exceeds \$200,000, will enable soccer, softball and baseball fields to be constructed.

“Halquist Stone Company has been an outstanding business partner of the Hamilton School District for over 20 years,” said Superintendent Kathleen Cooke. “The company serves as a role model for community service because of partnership activities and financial contributions which support students.” ■

*Anderson is editor of Wisconsin School News.*

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— Hamilton Superintendent  
 Kathleen Cooke

