

School District of New Berlin Students, Teacher Earn State Recognition Through National Center for Women & Information Technology

New Berlin, Wis. - Nine School District of New Berlin students have been selected for recognition by the Wisconsin Affiliate of the National Center for Women & Information Technology organization. Each of these students were endorsed by a member of the district's technology team.

The following students were selected as a winner of the Wisconsin NCWIT Aspirations in Computing award:

- Naisha Bepar, New Berlin Eisenhower (endorsed by Aaron Chamberlain)
- Emily Cebasek, New Berlin West (endorsed by Aaron Chamberlain)
- Megan Choy, New Berlin Eisenhower (endorsed by Aaron Chamberlain)
- Kayla Kugel, New Berlin West (endorsed by Saghar Homayounpour)
- Anja Schwobe, New Berlin Eisenhower (endorsed by Devin McKinnon)

The following Eisenhower students were endorsed by Aaron Chamberlain and selected as a 2018 honorable mention in the award program: Faith Derengowski, Kate Martino, Melissa Tharaniyil and Emma Torres.

The NCWIT Aspirations in Computing award program recognizes young high school women for their computing-related achievements and interests as part of an effort to encourage more young women to choose careers in technology. Award winners were selected from high schools across Wisconsin for their outstanding aptitude and interest in information technology and computing, solid leadership ability, good academic history, and plans for post-secondary education.

The teachers that provided an endorsement reflected on some of the qualities that stood out for those selected as state winners this year.

"Naisha is a very creative and a naturally collaborative learner which will help her achieve success in any endeavor which she commits to," said Aaron Chamberlain, a computer science teacher at Eisenhower. "Emily has a natural talent for computer programming and learns to write and understand code as if already fluent in the language; moreover, she combines her talent with a steadfast work ethic. Megan works tirelessly to learn, expend, and excel with an ever-present growth mindset and displays a perfect synergy of creativity and technical acumen."

"Kayla is hardworking, responsible, and conscientious with a positive attitude and high motivation," said Saghar Homayounpour, a computer science teacher at West. "She finds ways to apply her skillset in other areas at school. For example, she serves as the drama club's technology specialist."

"Anja has strong communication, problem-solving, and multitasking skills and has taken advantage of as many number STEM related experiences as she can including AP Computer Science Principles, printing and publication, intro to engineering, green engineering, and electricity and robotics. Her future is bright," said Devin McKinnon, an engineering teacher at Eisenhower.

Additionally, Eisenhower's Aaron Chamberlain was selected as the NCWIT State Educator of the Year. Aaron transitioned from the private sector to start his teaching career in 2013. He currently teaches eight computer

science courses for the district as well as additional courses for Wisconsin Virtual School to serve students who may not otherwise have access to computer science.

“Aaron demonstrates a true passion for the value of computer science education in support of the development of students who are truly ready for college, career, and life in an increasingly digital and innovation economy,” said Laura Schmidt, Strategic Advisor to the Superintendent. “He literally wrote the book on how to succeed in AP Computer Science A (Java) and was recently awarded a grant by the Northwestern Mutual Foundation for his willingness to incorporate agile methodologies into the instructional model for his AP Computer Science Principles.”

“Encouraging young women’s interest in technology careers is critical; our workforce needs their creativity and their innovation,” said Lucy Sanders, CEO and co-founder of NCWIT.

NCWIT works to correct the imbalance of gender diversity in technology and computing because gender diversity positively correlates with a larger workforce, better innovation, and increased business performance. Increasing the number of women in technology and computing also has the potential to improve the design of products and services to better serve a more diverse population, and increase economic and social well-being by providing more women with stable and lucrative careers.

The SDNB has significantly increased technology offerings over the past few years to help prepare students for the needs of the projected economy.

“Understanding the environments that our students will learn and work in someday is a critical part of effectively preparing them for life after high school,” said SDNB Superintendent Joe Garza. “Technology is pervasive and presents both risks and opportunities to every industry. Being recognized through the NCWIT award program makes these students a role model for other young women and shines a spotlight on women and computing.

“We are so proud of Aaron’s accomplishment as well. High quality educators inspire and motivate our students to excel in everything they do.”

Aaron and the selected students will be honored at an awards celebration to be held April 22 at Alverno College. The girls recognized will receive prizes from top technology companies and universities, and are also eligible for scholarship awards. Recognized students join a growing community of like-minded women who can challenge and support each other as they pursue their shared interest in technology.

For more information about NCWIT Wisconsin or the awards ceremony, please refer to www.aspirations.org/aspirations-community/wisconsin.

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