

SDNB's Commitment to STEM Prepares Students for High-Demand Career Fields

District Unveils Remodeled STEM Classrooms, Recognizes Master Teacher & Accepts Safety Grant

New Berlin, Wis. – In demonstration of its commitment to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programming, the School District of New Berlin (SDNB) is celebrating newly remodeled classroom spaces, a nationally-recognized Project Lead the Way Teacher, and a grant award it received to ensure students in STEM courses are safe.

The developments are the latest moves by SDNB to expand programming to help students pursue high-demand careers in STEM fields. STEM jobs are expected to grow 17 percent by 2018 - nearly double the growth for non-STEM jobs, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. But more than 1.2 million STEM jobs are expected to be unfilled by 2018 due to a shortage of skilled workers.

“Our school district believes STEM instruction benefits all students by helping them understand the world around them,” said Superintendent Joe Garza. “Through STEM curriculum, students learn project-based collaboration skills that serve them in whatever path they choose after high school.”

New Project Lead the Way Space in the District

Upgrading STEM classrooms has been a key priority with the school district's Long-Range Facilities Plan. [Project Lead the Way](#) (PLTW - the nation's leading provider of STEM programs), physics, chemistry and construction labs were recently renovated at New Berlin Eisenhower to support high-quality instruction.

Classroom space was expanded into a large multi-function lab space with breakout rooms and supporting resources for varied approaches to learning. Flexible learning spaces provide the opportunity for students to collaborate and communicate; using their knowledge and background to engage in creative problem solving and project development activities.

Gateway Master Teacher Brings National Knowledge & Skills back to SDNB

Devin McKinnon, who teaches engineering and technology at New Berlin Eisenhower Middle/High School and co-advises the [NB Blitz Robotics Team](#), was selected to serve as a Gateway Master Teacher for the national PLTW program.

Master teachers help facilitate core training sessions for fellow PLTW educators, collaborate with university faculty and other master teachers nationwide, and demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the full scope and breadth of PLTW curricula.

“I am very proud to represent the School District of New Berlin as a Master Teacher nationwide,” said McKinnon. “I appreciate bringing the knowledge and skills I learn as an educator at a national level back to the students in New Berlin.”

SDNB provides the PLTW's Gateway to Technology curriculum at its middle schools and a full PLTW strand at its high schools. The district annually operates at least one section of every offered PLTW class to ensure that interested students have access to the full course progression. If New Berlin Eisenhower and New Berlin West are not both offering a class, the school district provides student transportation between the two schools.

To continue expanding STEM programming, SDNB will be evaluating the integration of PLTW engineering in elementary curriculum as part of its K-6 science alignment next year. The district has also recently increased course offerings in the area of computer science.

Keeping STEM Course Students Safe with Safe Saw Initiative

The [Waukesha County Medical Society \(WCMS\)](#) has awarded SDNB with a \$2,500 grant to help fund the purchase of a SawStop® table saw for its technology education/construction classes.

WCMS has launched a Safe Saw Initiative aimed at reducing the prevalence of table saw accidents by encouraging local high schools to use finger-sensing technology saws.

Sixteen Waukesha County schools applied for four available grants, which were awarded to New Berlin Eisenhower High School, Brookfield East High School, Waukesha South High School and Oconomowoc High School.

“We are extremely thankful to partner organizations like the Waukesha County Medical Society for supporting our schools,” said Garza. “This grant will allow our students to use safer equipment in our construction classes.”

Table saw injuries result in emergency room visits for nearly 40,000 Americans annually, with about 10 percent requiring amputations. Injuries can be prevented when saws are properly equipped with blade guards. SawStop® is the only saw with finger-sensing technology that shuts down the machine when it comes into contact with skin, but the product can be cost-prohibitive for many schools.

WCMS is a professional membership society for more than 800 physicians, residents and medical students working and living in Waukesha County. It is the local affiliate of the Wisconsin Medical Society and the American Medical Association.

##