

# School Matters



Special Insert  
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School News for Residents of the Kimberly Area School District



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In this special insert edition I highlight the community-based building projects completed by the Building Construction 2 class at Kimberly High School. While the buildings they construct make a lasting visible impact in our community, the students gain even more valuable hands-on experience in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). They learn important employability skills, work with professionals in the field and will graduate better prepared for their future - all elements of our enhanced Academic and Career Planning (ACP) resources. These community projects involve the efforts of so many people; I am thankful for the help our students receive to reach their potential.

-- **Bob Mayfield**

## Kimberly Students are Constructing Their Future Through Community Building Projects

Students in the Building Construction 2 (BC2) class at Kimberly High School have been meeting at a construction jobsite instead of a classroom. Each school year, the BC2 class takes on one community-based construction project within the Kimberly Area School District. This year, the students are building a gazebo at Memorial Park in the Village of Kimberly. Past BC2 classes have built everything from residential garages, to concession stands and an outdoor learning classroom in their school's forest.

For students in the BC2 class, this project is an opportunity to apply what they are learning in school to a hands-on project. The community benefits from their hard work and the students will graduate better prepared for life after high school. This experience is an example of how Academic and Career Planning (ACP) in the District helps students explore careers and have real-world experiences that help prepare them for college, careers and life. By taking Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) coursework like BC2, the students are also developing an interest in high-demand jobs.



Lizzie and Emily Schimmers, twin sisters who are both juniors in high school, have each developed an interest in construction careers due to pursuing technology education courses.

Identical twins Emily and Lizzie Schimmers, juniors at KHS, are both currently enrolled in the BC2 class. According to Emily, she initially experienced some hesitations about taking a technology education course as a freshman, but has found that she really enjoys STEM courses. "My favorite part about this class would be the experience I am getting from it," said Emily. "It's so fun and learning hands-on is a lot better, I am learning something new every day."

The BC2 class is part of the curriculum for the Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) Academy. Called a school-within-a-school, students who participate in the ACE Academy receive a comprehensive education in a collaborative learning environment that fosters a link between classroom learning and real-world experiences. While it started only four years ago at KHS, there are now 38 students enrolled in the ACE Academy.

Students in the BC2 class have the opportunity to work alongside local construction professionals, such as concrete workers and welders, in order to learn from experts on each aspect

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of construction. “These classes help me gain some of the skills I need for after high school,” said Lizzie Schimmers. “It also gives me an idea of what each career is like and what skills are needed for each.”

Each community-based project has been different so the students develop a slightly different construction skill set. Steve Masanz, the technology education teacher and ACE Academy Coordinator, believes that while the construction skills developed at each construction site varies, the most important skills – those related to employability - are gained with every project. “My students are graded and provided with daily feedback on their performance relating to employability attributes,” said Masanz. “I believe high school is practice for real life and I am trying to instill positive habits in my students that will help them be successful no matter what their career choice is.”



Students work with a concrete professional while laying the foundation for the gazebo.

Youth Apprenticeships are also a component of the technology education department at KHS. Students work on-site at local organizations several hours each day as a Youth Apprentice. “It takes a village to raise a child and Youth Apprenticeship provides our students with experiences they would not be exposed to in the typical school setting,” said Masanz. “Past students who have participated in Youth Apprenticeship demonstrated improved technical skills and made professional connections that proved to be a bridge to their chosen career.”

As for the eight-sided gazebo students are currently working on in the BC2 class, they expect to complete it in January 2018. “Working together with Mr. Masanz and the Kimberly High School ACE Academy has been a pleasure,” said Holly Femal, community enrichment director for the Village of Kimberly. “Students working in the Kimberly parks system allows the community to view their progress but it also means park patrons will be able to enjoy the fruits of the students’ labor for many years to come.”

Memorial Park, located in downtown Kimberly, Wis., recently underwent significant renovations. The community is excited for the park, which features a new pond, walking trail and donated memorial park benches. While waiting for the gazebo materials to arrive, the students even helped out by installing the memorial benches. “The class has completed the installation of five memorial benches in the park; the final results are stunning and a true testament to the pride they take in their work,” said Femal. “The gazebo project is a unique opportunity for the class to build a structure that requires much attention to detail and precision to make sure each piece fits together. The Village of Kimberly is very thankful for the time and talents these students are sharing with our community.”



A rendering of what the student-constructed gazebo will look like at Memorial Park in Kimberly, Wisconsin.

Last year, the BC2 class rebuilt a concession stand at the KHS soccer field. Zachary Vander Hyden, a junior who took BC2 last year, reflected on the enduring impact their community building project had. “My favorite part about the project was being able to construct a building that will be able to be used for years and years.”

The purpose of Academic and Career Planning is not for students to have a plan set in stone at a young age, rather it is to help students learn about their interests and the types of career options available to them. To Steve Masanz, one fulfilling aspect of teaching construction related courses is encouraging the next generation to develop an interest in the field. “Construction is in my blood, so the most rewarding part for me is when my students start to show a passion for construction and pursue a career in the industry.”