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NEWS RELEASE

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ACE ACADEMY AT KIMBERLY HIGH SCHOOL RECOGNIZES SIX YEARS OF SUCCESSFULLY PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THEIR FUTURE

Kimberly, Wis. – March 29, 2019 – Now in its seventh school year, the Architectural, Construction and Engineering (ACE) Academy at Kimberly High School provides opportunities for students interested in construction-related fields. The school-within-a-school was developed with the goal to introduce students to the variety of career choices within the construction industry and teach them skills for high-demand fields while they are in high school.

Steve Masanz, Technology Education Teacher and ACE Academy and Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator, reflects on the progress they have seen during the last six years, “When we started the process of creating the ACE Academy in 2012 we knew we had strong industry support, which is a critical component of our success. The construction industry has been great to us,” said Masanz.

“However, more importantly, we also knew that we needed student, staff, parent and community support as well. I would say that has been the biggest progress I have witnessed. It’s truly a collaborative effort.”

On a broader scale, there are currently 400 students enrolled in a construction-related class at KHS, which is nearly a quarter of all



The Building Construction 2 class, part of the ACE Academy, completed a new park shelter at Sunset Park in Kimberly, Wis.

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students at the school. This year, there are 98 students enrolled in the ACE Academy, including 18 seniors who will graduate this spring.

ACE Academy classes are structured around rigorous academic standards that prepare high school graduates to transition either into the workforce or post-secondary education (such as apprenticeship programs, technical college and college). Past graduates have pursued a variety of related careers such as



Students in the Building Construction 2 class, part of the ACE Academy, working on a new park shelter at Sunset Park in Kimberly, Wis.

joining the workforce in manufacturing and as carpenters, and pursuing apprenticeships in sheet metal, pipe trades and as electricians. They have also pursued higher education in a variety of engineering and construction fields.

Elective coursework is available in a variety of technology education subjects, such as electricity or metals, to



A student cutting materials for the park shelter their class is building.

help students learn more about their options and make connections to career areas that could be a good fit for them. The Youth Apprenticeship component gives students the opportunity to explore careers at local companies. Students also have the potential to be paid while earning credit through those experiences.

In addition to technology education courses, the ACE Academy collaborates with other core academic disciplines, like English and math, to offer hands-on learning that shows a correlation between what they learn at school and their future job.

Students can also earn dual credit from the Fox Valley Technical College through several ACE Academy courses, including architectural design, construction management and principles of accounting.

The students in the ACE Academy also develop their soft skills, such as written and spoken communication, teamwork and collaboration, and effective listening. Graduates from the Academy will also have experienced being graded on employability skills such as work ethic, quality of work and safety.

“One exciting project on the horizon for the ACE Academy is a new partnership with Habitat for Humanity where we will remodel an older home in Kimberly,” said Masanz. “We also had 19 juniors participate in an industry-supported job shadow program where the students were able to spend five half-day sessions learning about various construction careers.”

Linking classroom learning with real-world experiences is an important aspect to the curriculum of the ACE Academy. To provide these types of opportunities outside of the classroom, the school relies on industry connections. “Local contractors provide support in many ways,” said Masanz. “They have provided material, equipment and monetary donations, guest speakers, field trips, career fairs and Youth Apprenticeship placements.” Industry partners also afford students the opportunity to work alongside their skilled trades professionals and access to training sites where students can earn their OSHA 10 Construction Industry and First Aid certifications. Several local industry leaders are also involved in the ACE Academy by serving on their advisory board.

ACE Academy is an industry partnership with the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Wisconsin. Kimberly High School is one of only seven Wisconsin high schools that offer an ACE Academy, with the others being in Burlington, Tomah, Fond du Lac, La Crosse, Marshfield and Racine.

Perhaps most important to educators and businesses alike is encouraging students who have an interest in architecture, construction and engineering to gain more skills and experiences in their field of interest to be better prepared for life after high school.

About the Kimberly Area School District

The Kimberly Area School District is a progressive public school district committed to providing the best possible education available to students. Its responsibility is to help lead the way in developing well-rounded students and future citizens. The District wants every student to be given the opportunity to reach their potential through academics, the arts and co-curricular activities. It encompasses approximately 17 square miles and serves over 5,100 students in one 4K center, four elementary schools (5K-4), two intermediate schools (5-6),

one middle school (7-8) and one high school (9-12). To learn more about the Kimberly Area School District, call (920)788-7900 or visit www.kimberly.k12.wi.us.