



2024

# EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

*Marquette and Alger Counties*

31st Annual  
Academic Achievement & Professional Development Awards



Grow & Lead  
Community and Youth Development

**Eagle Mine**

a subsidiary of **lundin mining**



**Blue Cross  
Blue Shield  
Blue Care Network**  
of Michigan

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# Congratulations

Congratulations, award recipients!

Tonight, we are honoring three sets of recipients:

- The top 47 graduating seniors in Marquette and Alger Counties. They have achieved great success and have bright futures ahead of them.
- Teachers who have been selected by students because of the influential role they played in their academic success.
- Outstanding educators that have been selected by their school districts to receive awards for additional education or special projects in their classrooms.

Our vision at Grow & Lead is for all Upper Peninsula youth to thrive. We work with schools, nonprofits and communities to create a culture that builds on the strengths of young people.

Excellence in Education Week was established in 1994 as one way to bring the community together to honor our young people and recognize the adults that support them.

Thank you, families and friends for supporting the efforts of these outstanding students and educators.



CEO, Grow & Lead: Community and Youth Development

# Agenda

Monday, April 29, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.  
Northern Center  
Northern Michigan University, Marquette

## **Opening Comments & Welcome**

Amy Quinn, CEO  
Grow & Lead: Community and Youth Development  
Olivia Lunseth, 2024 Negaunee High School Scholarship Recipient

## **Masters of Ceremony**

Robert Luke, Sales Manager  
Blue Cross Blue Shield Upper Peninsula  
Meagen Morrison, Social Performance Advisor  
Eagle Mine

## **Recognition of Donors and Sponsors**

## **National Anthem and Music Presentation**

Westwood High School Chorus  
Alex Polkinghorne, Middle/High School Choir Director

## **Educator Reflections**

Melissa Meldrum, Former Influential Award Recipient  
Ishpeming High School

## **Keynote Speaker**

Kristi Jacques  
1997 Marquette Senior High School Scholarship Recipient

## **Presentation of Student and Educator Awards**

Principals and Superintendents

## **Adjournment**

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STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT & INFLUENTIAL EDUCATOR SPONSORS



NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



# Keynote

## KRISTI JACQUES

Kristi Jacques was born in Escanaba, Michigan and raised in Marquette. She graduated from Marquette Senior High School in 1997. She used her Excellence in Education award to begin her education at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. After graduating from U of M in 2001, she attended Duke University School of Law. At Duke, she was the Articles Editor for the Duke Environmental Law and Policy Forum and attended the Duke-Geneva Institute in Transnational Law in Geneva, Switzerland.

She began her legal career in Atlanta, Georgia, working as a law clerk for a federal judge and then as an associate at a prominent law firm. She then transferred to the firm's New York office. Kristi started working at the law firm Epstein Becker Green in New York in 2016. She is a part of the firm's Labor and Employment law practice, which is ranked as one of the best in the country. She made partner late last year. Her practice is focused on the financial sector, and she works with Wall Street firms as well as financial technology companies.

Kristi lives in Brooklyn, New York. She enjoys spending time with her dogs, traveling, Pilates, and visiting her family in the UP when she can.



# Former Professional Development Award Recipient

## MELISSA MELDRUM

For 22 years, Melissa has been teaching in public schools. At Grand County High School, Melissa taught Honors English and French for 12 years in Moab, Utah. She regularly collaborated with Spanish, Art, Biology, and Special Education Teachers, and Counselors on environmental, recreational, social, and graduation projects and on regional field trips. 10 years ago, Melissa returned to the Upper Peninsula and began teaching at Ishpeming High School. She advises the Hematite National Honor Society, French Club, and their GSA, the P.R.I.S.M. Club. In addition to teaching English and French this year, Melissa has mixed in a class studying Locally Integrated Food Teams in the Upper Peninsula.

Between Moab, Utah and Ishpeming, Michigan, Melissa feels proudest of international travel with students, helping establish new high school clubs for greater student representation, and coaching 100 Seniors to full college scholarships through Sterling Scholar. She received an Excellence in Education Influential Educator award five times. Outside of the classroom, Melissa enjoys travel, gardening, exercise, and the outdoors. Her stories about whitewater rafting, trekking, and general adventuring keep her students entertained, and, as Melissa is hoping, motivated to get out there and explore this wonderful world.



# 2024 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

## BURT TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS



**Emma Bell**, child of Sarah Bell, is awarded the Scholarship in Honor of Frank and Ruth Mead and chose Jennifer Irvine, middle and high school English teacher, as most influential educator because she is nice, outgoing and an overall good teacher. Emma will attend Northern Michigan University to become an X-ray technician.



**Jessica Jerome**, child of Dwight and Connie Jerome, is presented with the William Olson Family Scholarship and selected Meghan Soucy, high school art teacher, as most influential educator sharing "She has helped me improve my art and explore new mediums, supported me in new opportunities, and being in her class influenced me to choose art and design as a major." Jessica will attend Northern Michigan University.



**Teagen Lawrence**, child of Devin Lawrence and Janet Zentner, is presented with the Munising Memorial Hospital Scholarship. Teagen chose Jennifer Irvine, middle and high school English teacher, as most influential educator. Teagen states "She encourages me to try my best." Teagen plans to get his commercial driver's license and become a law enforcement officer.



**Sara Vandevort**, child of Brian and Jean Vandevort, receives the AT&T scholarship. Sara chose LeeLa Heinzl, middle school pre-calculus, algebra and astronomy teacher, as most influential educator, sharing "She always made sure I had a chance, along with being supportive." Sara will attend Northern Michigan University and plans to become a forensic pathologist.



## GWINN AREA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



**Matthew Jenkins**, child of Colin and Heather Jenkins, receives the Catherine A. Kroll and Michael Prokopowicz Scholarship. Matthew has chosen Kyle Hantz, high school choir and drama teacher, as his influential educator stating, "He has been a positive influence and good friend throughout my performing arts career; I can talk and joke with him." Matthew will pursue a trade as a journeyman or become a physical therapist.



**Grace Woods**, child of Matt Woods and Micki Woods and John and Amy Kimsel, is awarded the Snyder Drug scholarship. Grace has chosen LeeLa Heinzl, high school algebra and pre-calculus teacher, as influential educator sharing "She challenged me to do my best and taught me so much." Grace will pursue a medical degree at Northern Michigan University or University of Michigan.



## ISHPEMING PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Emily DeMarois**, child of Arin and Kristin DeMarois, receives the Francis and Genevieve Tousignant Memorial Scholarship and honors Ashley Hoag, high school special education teacher and peer-to-peer advisor, as most influential educator, stating “Mrs. Hoag taught me to see the abilities, not the disabilities, in her students and the importance of inclusion for all children with (and without) disabilities. Emily will attend Northern Michigan University to pursue a degree in special education with minors in sign language and math to become a special education teacher.



**Rebekah Liimatta**, child of Andy and Karen Liimatta, is presented with the Scholarship in Honor of Dorothy and William “Bee” Sivula and honors Jennifer Klipp, middle school English teacher, as most influential educator sharing, “In her classroom, I felt particularly encouraged to do my best and truly grew in my confidence with my writing abilities.” Rebekah will finish the middle college program at Northern Michigan University and plans to write books and find a career in cyber security.



**Payton Manninen**, child of David and Linda Manninen, receives the Katherine Thurner Memorial Scholarship and selected Holly Letson, high school world history, civics, economics and government teacher, as most influential educator stating “Mrs. Letson is passionate about teaching and always puts her students first. I have learned so much from her. Words can’t describe how amazing she is.” Payton will attend Northern Michigan University to study nursing to become a certified registered nurse anesthetist.



**Addison Morton**, child of David and Sueann Morton, receives the Susan Chinn Memorial Scholarship. Addison selected Kaitlin Rich, fifth grade science teacher, as most influential educator sharing, “I am lucky to be one of many students she positively influenced. Within her classroom she creates a fun learning environment and encourages students to work together to meet challenges.” Addison will pursue an elementary education degree and play volleyball at Bay de Noc Community College and plans to teach in this area.



**Jaylyn Willey**, child of Daniel and Loretta Willey, receives the John and Ruth Marietti Memorial Scholarship and chose Caitlin Palomaki, high school choir teacher, as most influential educator. Jaylyn states “Through choir and the two musicals directed by Ms. Palomaki while I have attended Ishpeming High School, I’ve found a greater confidence in myself and inspiration to continue learning about music in my future.” Jaylyn will pursue a degree in nursing and explore the different opportunities in the medical field at Northern Michigan University.



## MARQUETTE AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Laura Barsch**, child of Jeff and Holly Barsch, receives the Marquette Community Federal Credit Union Scholarship and selected Stephen Atwood, high school biology teacher, as most influential educator, stating “Mr. Atwood is super nice, a great person to talk to, awesome teacher, overall, really funny, super smart and incredibly kind and caring for all his students.” Laura will pursue a degree in engineering at Michigan Technological University and plans to work for a company like Boeing, making new and sustainable materials.

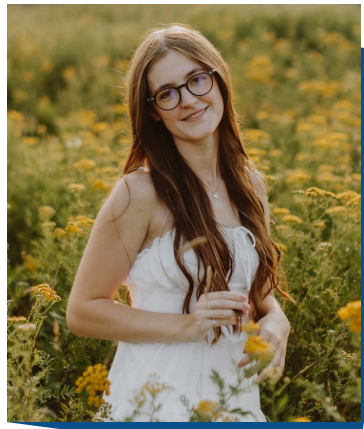




**Matthew Barsch**, child of Jeff and Holly Barsch, is presented with the Reijo Aho Scholarship and named Ben Smith, high school AP stats teacher, as most influential educator because he is funny, nice and always has a football tale and overall is a great person and teacher. Matthew will attend Michigan Technological University to study materials engineering. He wants to explore the world and work for a renowned organization like NASA.



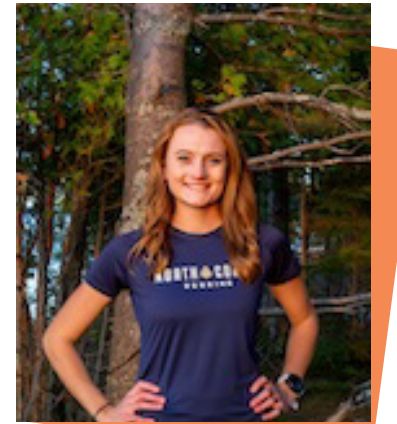
**Corbin Grim**, child of Ryan and Rachel Grim, receives the Mining Journal Scholarship and chose Nate McFarren, high school building and construction teacher, as most influential educator. Corbin shares "He helped to teach me math used in practical applications and encouraged me to challenge myself." Corbin plans to major in civil engineering at Michigan Technological University and would like to work for a company that designs and approves projects related to roads, bridges and buildings.



**Natalie Deneau**, child of Damion and Melissa Deneau, is presented the Range Bank Scholarship and chose Julie Nemacheck, high school health occupations teacher, as most influential educator as she is very helpful and a great teacher. Natalie plans to major in biology at University of Michigan and pursue a career as a physician assistant.



**Abigail Harma**, child of Ryan and Mary Harma, receives the Rotary Club of Marquette Exemplary Rotarian Burt Sparhawk Scholarship and selected Paige Dubois, cross country and track coach, as most influential educator. Abigail stated, "She demonstrates hard work and inspires me to work hard in all aspects of life." Abigail will run track and cross country and major in biology at Northern Michigan University, planning to become an endocrinologist or dietician.

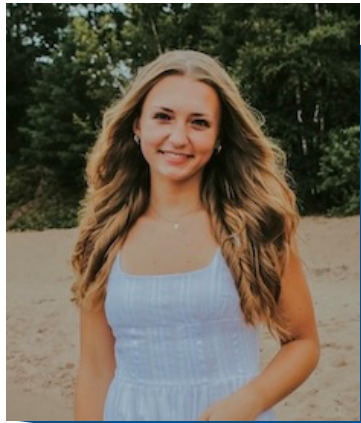


**Maxwell Dever**, child of Jeff and Rhea Dever, receives the Gadzinski Family Scholarship and is honoring Karl Thomsen, high school algebra teacher, as most influential educator because he always brought a positive and exciting energy to class and made school fun. Max will study movement science at University of Michigan with plans to open his own business as a physical therapist. He would also like to participate in research opportunities.



**Elena Henry**, child of Charles and Heidi Henry, is presented the Melanie J. Rohr, J.D. and Dr. Steven L. Pence, Jr. Scholarship and names Eric Marta, middle and high school orchestra teacher, as most influential educator. Elena states "He always pushes his students to be the best musicians they can and provides many opportunities to get involved with music outside of school." Elena will study biology and business at Northern Michigan University. Her long-term career goal is to open her own practice as a dentist.

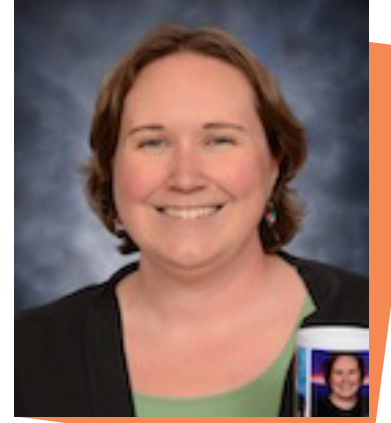




**Brianna Jarvis**, child of Jason Jarvis and Carlene Larson, is presented with the Peninsula Medical Scholarship and selects Natalie Messano, high school chemistry and AP chemistry teacher, as most influential educator and shares "Ms. Messano is always incredibly supportive to students and happy to help when you are struggling. She helped me realize how much I enjoy chemistry." Brianna will study biology with a focus on pre-med at University of Michigan and plans to become a surgeon.



**Josie Matheny**, child of Scott and Terri Matheny, receives the Thomas Baldini Scholarship and selected Katelynn Jensen, high school Spanish teacher, as most influential educator noting "She has always provided thought-provoking methods that have allowed for me to grow in confidence and social capabilities." Josie will attend Northern Michigan University to earn a degree in criminal science with a minor in psychology.



**James Kreag**, child of Keith and Holly Kreag, receives the Lincoln and Anne Frazier Memorial Scholarship and honors Matt Ludwig, high school band teacher, as most influential educator noting "Dr. Ludwig has consistently inspired success, both in music and life, creating a class environment I have looked forward to attending every day through my four years of high school." James will attend the University of Michigan's College of Literature, Science and the Arts and will pursue a career in computer science, software development or filmmaking.



**Cullen Papin**, child of Kayleen Papin, is presented with the William and Carol LaVallie Scholarship and chose Derek Marr, high school cross country and track and field coach as most influential educator. Cullen shared "Coach Marr has been a positive influence in my life, both on the track and beyond. Coach Marr is very passionate and truly cares about all his athletes." Cullen will attend the University of Michigan College of Engineering, exploring both mechanical and biomedical engineering to explore a career in those fields.



**Zach Lanciani**, child of Bart Demkowicz and Jodi Lanciani, is presented with the Joe and Pat Blake Family Scholarship. Zach chose Blythe Raikko, AP U.S. history and AP government teacher, as influential educator and shares "Mrs. Raikko is a positive influence for me. I enjoy and understand her class lessons. I am always learning new, cool things about history in her classroom." Zach will take a gap year, then pursue a degree in library science with a career as a librarian.



**Ella Pond**, child of George and Breanna Pond, is presented the scholarship In Honor of Reverend Monsignor Jed Patrick and chose Karla McCutcheon, physical education and max sports and fitness teacher, as most influential educator. Ella notes "Mrs. McCutcheon has always encouraged me to become the best woman I can be and is one of my biggest cheerleaders." Ella will pursue a degree in business at University of Michigan and would like a career in business, specifically the sports media/management world.





# MUNISING PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Johnathon Quinnell**, child of Zach and Katie Quinnell, receives the John M. Longyear Scholarship. Jack selected Brad Nelson, high school pre-calculus teacher, as most influential educator and states "I chose Mr. Nelson because he helped me become a better man on the court and in the classroom. I am thankful for him." Jack will pursue a degree in political science at University of Michigan, then plans to study law and become a lawyer.



**Alexandra Goss**, child of John and Svitlana Goss, receives the Richard and Mary Bowerman Scholarship and chose Heather Nayback, honors English teacher, as most influential educator sharing that "She is always willing to take time out of her schedule to help out and clarify questions." Alexandra will attend college to pursue a degree in biology and plans to become an orthodontist.



**Michael Reilly**, child of Patrick and Laura Reilly, is presented with the Scholarship in Memory of Reverend Monsignor Louis G. Cappo. Michael chose Matt Ludwig, high school band and marching band teacher, as most influential educator because he teaches the right mindset for success and is an expert in his field. Michael plans to attend University of Michigan or Michigan State University to earn a degree in the field of law, economics and business.



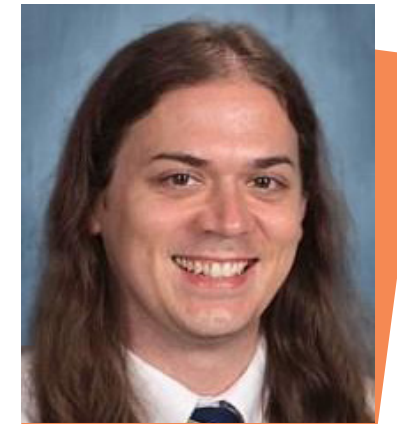
**Angus Horne**, child of David and Carol Horne, receives the Hiawatha Communications Inc. Scholarship. Angus selected Jim Cotey, high school chemistry and algebra teacher, as most influential educator as he is very professional, but not too much so, a great educator and role model, and always good to reach to out for any reason. Angus will attend Michigan Technological University to study mechanical engineering.



**William Salo**, child of Craig and Annemarie Salo, receives the George & Virginia Peters Family Scholarship and chose Diana Reeves, high school AP precalculus and calculus teacher, as most influential educator noting, "Mrs. Reeves is an incredible teacher who has made calculus a lot of fun and has me hoping to earn a STEM degree." William will attend University of Michigan to pursue a degree and career in chemical engineering.



**Cienna Schultz**, child of George and Amber Schultz, is presented with the Peoples State Bank of Munising Scholarship. Cienna chose Eric Lynch, middle and high school history teacher, as most influential educator. Cienna shared, "Mr. Lynch is kind, caring and makes his classroom a welcoming place. Having Mr. Lynch as a teacher made a difference in my life and helped me through high school." Cienna will attend Florida Gulf Coast University and will pursue a law degree.



# NEGAUNEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Blake Holmgren**, child of Thomas and Elizabeth Holmgren, is presented with the Scholarship in Memory of Saima Kuivila and has named Victoria Paupore, high school Spanish teacher and cross-country coach, as most influential educator. Blake states, "She has had life changing effects on how I perceive different actions and how to respond in different situations. Mrs. Paupore has helped teach me many things like essential life skills that I will utilize and remember far beyond my years of high school." Blake will attend the University of Michigan to major in mathematics and chemistry minor in Spanish. He would like to become a purchasing manager, chemist or engineer.



**Howard Johnson**, child of Aaron and Shelly Johnson, is awarded the Honor Credit Union Scholarship and selects Kyle Bell, middle and high school advanced CAD II teacher and bridge building competition advisor, as most influential educator. Howard notes, "Mr. Bell was excellent at teaching all of his classes, especially Advanced CAD II. He also made each class period into an interesting and entertaining workspace." Howard plans to study mechanical engineering at Michigan Technological University and wants to design improvements on mechanical components for heavy machinery.



**Sage Juntti**, child of Jeff and Karla Juntti, is presented with the Robert & Rena Koskey Scholarship and chose Gina Sorensen, high school English and poetry teacher, as most influential educator. Sage shares, "Mrs. Sorensen has made my life better in many different ways. She tailors her teaching to each individual in her class, and that's exactly what she has done for me. She goes out of her way to check in with me and talk about what's happening in my life. I can go to her with a problem and count on her to share her honest opinion, even if I might not like it. She has always been supportive of me and has encouraged me to be the best version of myself. Everything she has taught me has been taken to heart and helped make me a better person." Sage will attend Northern Michigan University or Michigan Technological University to pursue a marketing degree and plans to become an interior designer.



**Mick Kumpula**, child of Michael and Rebekah Kumpula, receives the Sydney W. Northey Memorial Scholarship and has named Cody Scanlon, third and seventh grade science teacher, as most influential educator stating, "He really helped me get interested in drums, science, and tennis. Super great teacher and coach who has a passion for teaching and it shows through his understanding and uplifting attitude." Mick will study physics at the University of Minnesota-Duluth and would love to go to space one day.



**Olivia Lunseth**, child of Christopher and Kelly Lunseth, is presented with the Renee Thomas Memorial Scholarship. Olivia chose William Ellerbruch, high school pre-calculus, calculus and physics teacher, as most influential educator sharing, "He has had only a positive impact on my education. He's at school early and he stays late to make sure that every student has an opportunity to ask questions. He does a phenomenal job teaching and has taught our whole class valuable life lessons. I will remember the things I've learned in his class for all of my education and beyond. He is the reason why I love calc and physics, something not many people can say." Olivia will attend Harvard University to study biomedical engineering, then medical school to become a doctor or surgeon.



**Grace Nardi**, child of Louis and Christine Nardi, receives the UP Health System - Bell Medical Staff Scholarship and chose Cynthia Benaglio, high school chemistry and advanced chemistry teacher, as most influential educator. Grace shares "I chose Mrs. Benaglio because I feel like she has pushed me as a student and acted as a mentor throughout my years at NHS." Grace will attend University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh to study nursing and become a nurse anesthetist.



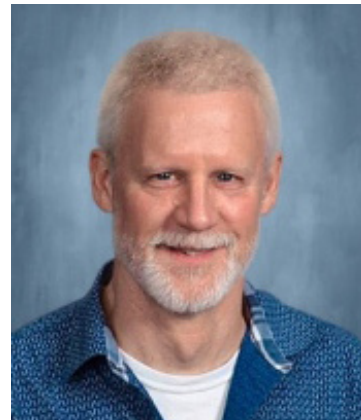
# NICE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



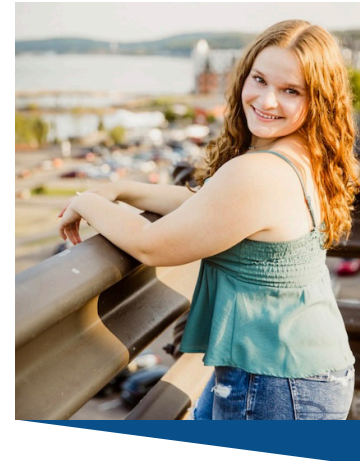
**Laretta Boburka**, child of Larry and Holly Boburka, receives the Brian L. Joseph Memorial Scholarship. Laretta chose Maria Young, high school English teacher, as most influential educator, sharing “She has always been my mentor and someone I could turn to since my freshman year, when she first coached me in cross-country.” Laretta will attend Michigan Technological University to study toward her master’s degree in civil engineering. She would like to work outside of Michigan for a few years, then return to the Upper Peninsula.



**Mason Hietikko**, child of Brandon and Lauren Hietikko, is presented with the Cory Nelson Memorial Scholarship and chose Steve Annelin, high school geometry and algebra teacher, as most influential educator as he sparked Mason’s aspirations to study mathematics and he is genuinely a nice guy. Mason will attend Northern Michigan University and plans to become a professor of mathematics.



**Patrick Klumpp**, child of Allen and Amanda Klumpp, is presented with the Scholarship in Honor of Charles and Lois Smith. Patrick selected Maria Young, high school English teacher, cross-country coach and counselor, as most influential educator sharing, “She has not only been a teacher who helped me learn self-confidence, but a great coach, and now, counselor for me. She is incredibly caring and thoughtful to everyone she has taught and meets.” Patrick plans to study aerospace engineering and work for a company that is developing space shuttles and advances in space technology.



**Sophia Marier**, child of Dave and Tammy Marier, is presented the Ishpeming Kiwanis Club scholarship. Sophia chose Vanessa Taavola, high school math teacher and forensics coach, as most influential educator and shares “She has been an amazing influence, always offered guidance and helped me realize my true potential.” Sophia will study criminal justice and psychology at University of Michigan and pursue a law degree and career, then open her own firm.



**Megan Marta**, child of Brad and Rachel Marta, receives the TruNorth Federal Credit Union Scholarship and chose Terri Balzarini, high school mathematics and chemistry teacher and student council advisor as most influential educator and states “She has exemplary commitment to helping students achieve academic growth and success. Her kindness, tact and dedication to her profession has helped me develop my leadership skills and succeed in mathematics and chemistry.” Megan will attend Northern Michigan University to study chemistry and pre-pharmacy and play basketball. She would like to become a Doctor of Pharmacy.



# NORTH STAR MONTESSORI ACADEMY



**Jacob Baumann**, child of Erik Baumann and Tracy Folske, is presented with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Scholarship. Jacob named Amy Andrews, middle school math teacher, as most influential educator, and states “She was always willing to assist me. She would help me when I was performing poorly, and she also supported me in my extra-curricular activities.” Jacob will continue to attend the middle college program at Northern Michigan University and is planning for a career in cyber security.





**Kayla Jewett**, child of Dorothy Teeple, receives the Nicolet National Bank Scholarship. Kayla chose Sarah Vickstrom, high school math teacher, as most influential educator. Kayla shares “She helped me understand math which was my least favorite class and made it one of my favorites. She is really good at explaining things and helped me out with other things too. She was always there to listen when I was having a rough day.” Kayla graduated in December and is currently working, while she considers her future options



## SUPERIOR CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



**Liam McDougall**, child of Daniel McDougall and Sarah Shilman, receives the Neenah, Incorporated Scholarship. Liam chose Shannon Hancock, middle and high school English, history and AP history teacher, as most influential educator stating, “She is exceedingly helpful and kind.” Liam will attend Michigan Technological University and plans to become a medical lab technician.



## REPUBLIC-MICHIGAMME SCHOOLS



**Keilee Gransinger**, child of Shellie Gransinger, is presented with the Cleveland Cliffs, Inc. Scholarship. Keilee selected Annette Gleason, high school geometry, trigonometry and statistics teacher, as most influential educator stating “Mrs. Gleason is very kind, understanding and puts the effort and emotion into helping me and my classmates to learn. She is the best!” Keilee will attend college to pursue a degree and career in grief therapy, to better understand and help others to cope with grief.



**Breanna Swajanen**, child of Timothy and Heidi Swajanen, receives the UP Health System Scholarship and chose Shannon Hancock, middle and high school English, history and AP history teacher, as most influential educator sharing “She has pushed me to do work beyond what I thought I was capable of and teaches in ways that make it easy to learn and remember. She sets goals which make me work harder. She is a very sweet, supportive person and I will miss her very much when I graduate.” Bree will attend Central Michigan University to earn a degree in education and become a secondary math teacher.



**Alexa Radcliffe**, child of William and April Radcliffe, receives the Wells Fargo Scholarship. Alexa chose Emily Harmon, middle and high school science and chemistry teacher, as most influential educator, sharing “She makes learning fun and teaches me more than just chemistry. She also takes the time to help every student do their best.” Alexa will attend Northern Michigan University to pursue a degree in radiography and become a traveling radiographer.



## EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPONSORS



## EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION SPONSORS



*Thank You!*

## 2024 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

### AUTRAIN-ONOTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Michele Lewis**, who teaches preschool and grades 3-5, receives the Au Train-Onota Public Schools Professional Development Award. She will use the award to create a quiet reading corner and sensory space for her classroom.



### BURT TOWNSHIP SCHOOL

**Jennifer Irvine**, who teaches art and English, receives the UP Health System Professional Development Award. Jennifer will purchase quality art supplies for her students and the necessary organization tools needed to help expand the school's art workspace.



## FATHER MARQUETTE CATHOLIC ACADEMY



**Antonio Caballero**, music teacher, receives the Dr. Elmer Schacht Professional Development Award. Antonio will attend the 2025 Michigan Music Conference in Grand Rapids.

## GWINN AREA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



**Amy Kimsel**, kindergarten teacher, receives the Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc. Professional Development Award. Amy will use this award to add new diversified literature to her classroom library; she will include books of various cultures, religions, special needs and lifestyles.



The Ruth Ann Marley Holmstrom Professional Development Award is presented to **Madeleine Weidner**, middle school social studies teacher. Madeleine's goal is to introduce more project-based learning to her class, utilizing student technology resources to create cross curricular projects.

## ISHPEMING PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Dan Champion**, math teacher, receives the Fred W. and June M. Schaefer Professional Development Award. Dan will plan a farm-to-school activity involving maple syrup processing. Through this endeavor the students will learn math, chemistry and business management.



The Ellwood and Idamae Mattson Professional Development Award is presented to **Morgan Kangas**, fifth grade middle school teacher. Morgan will attend the Science on the Grand 2024 STEAM Conference in Grand Rapids.

## MARESA



The John and Deborah Veiht Professional Development Award is presented to **Jennifer Krzewina**, director of mental health services. Jennifer plans to pursue licensure as a practicing psychologist to support the mental health needs of Marquette and Alger students who attend the Day Treatment program. The program is being developed by Marquette-Alger RESA, in partnership with Great Lakes Recovery Centers.

# MARQUETTE AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Kevin Harrington**, functional skills and special education teacher, receives the Carl and Lynne Hammerstrom Professional Development Award. Kevin will use this award to purchase supplies to remodel the kitchen for his functional skills class.



The UP Health System Administrator Professional Development Award is presented to **Kristen Peterson**, principal. Kristen is working on a special project called “Pages in the Park with Principal Peterson.” She plans to help eliminate barriers to book access for her students by providing summer literacy pop-ups in local parks and distributing high interest and diverse books to students over the summer.

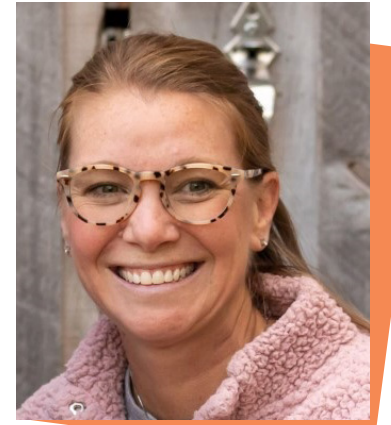


**Erin Porter**, social and emotional learning and art teacher, is awarded the Craig and Kristin Wilmes Professional Development Award. Erin will use these funds to purchase supplies for the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Family Night that will take place this spring.

The A. Felch Pendill Professional Development Award is presented to **Carissa Procc**, seventh grade math teacher. Carissa will purchase portable whiteboards for her classroom. Her students will be able to continue to learn and practice their teamwork skills of cooperation and collaboration by fostering the Building Thinking Classrooms philosophy.

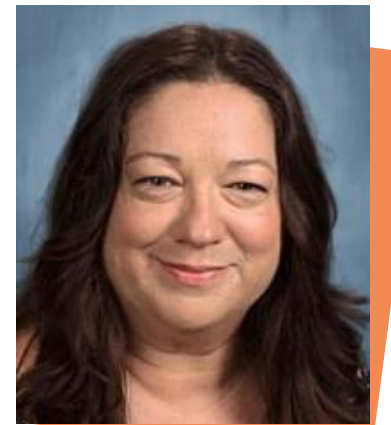


**Amy Pruner**, instructional coach, receives the Rotary Club of Marquette Professional Development Award. Amy will purchase wireless tools for teachers and students to use during reading instruction and slideshow presentations.



# MUNISING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Hilary Ludecke**, secondary science teacher, receives the Marquette Internal Medicine Associates in Honor of Donald R. Toti Professional Development Award. With this award, Hilary will purchase a new and complete skeletal model for her anatomy and physiology classroom.





The Peninsula Medical Professional Development Award is presented to **Kalee Martin**, fourth grade teacher. With this award, Kalee will be able to purchase Hi-Low (high-interest, low-readability) Books for the two fourth grade classroom libraries to appeal to readers at different reading and maturity levels.

## NEGAUNEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Derek Cardinal**, sixth grade teacher, is awarded the R.K. Richards Professional Development Award. Derek will enroll in the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) course Artificial Intelligence Explorations for Educators to gain insights into different AI types, explore upcoming AI technologies, and create tools to make AI tangible and applicable for himself and his students.



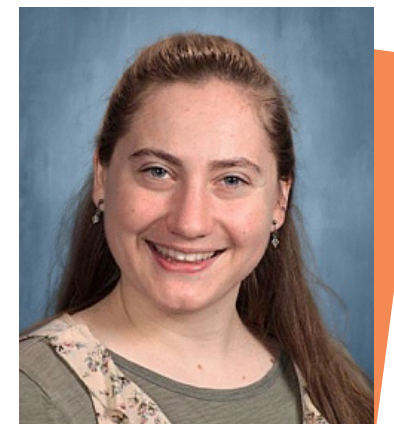
**Sarah Weaver**, Speech/Language Pathologist, is awarded the Phyllis and Max Reynolds Foundation Professional Development Award. Sarah is collaborating with five Lakeview Elementary teachers to purchase lesson specific materials and supplies for the Growing Gardeners after school gardening club at the recently established Lakeview School Garden.

## NICE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Brooke LeClair**, kindergarten teacher, receives the Professional Development Award in Honor of Louis and Joan Myefski. Award funds will be used to purchase supplemental math tools to introduce and extend new math concepts in fun and engaging ways.



**Juliana Patselas**, elementary music teacher, is presented with the Professional Development Award in Honor of Maxine Honkala. Juliana will use the funds to attend a 10-day graduate course in the Orff-Schulwerk Method of Music Education in Anderson, Indiana this summer.



## NORTH STAR MONTESSORI ACADEMY

The Fred W. and June M. Schaefer Professional Development Award is presented to **Amy Andrews**, middle school teacher. Amy's focus is geared toward the Genius Hour program which gives students the opportunity to create and explore their own hobbies and interests. The award funds will be used to purchase supplies for each student's passion project.





## POWELL TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS



**Becky Cookman**, first and second grade teacher is presented with the UP Health System Professional Development Award. Becky plans to revitalize the first and second grade classroom's literacy area to include more inclusive resources and interactive activities to cater to different learning styles.

## WELLS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT



**Andrea Abraham**, early elementary teacher, receives the Wisconsin Energy Corporation Professional Development Award. Andrea plans to take her students on a historical trip to Mackinac Island and Fort Michilimackinac. The students will also stop for a quick adventure at the Garland Zoo.

## REPUBLIC-MICHIGAMME SCHOOLS



The W.K. Kellogg Foundation Professional Development Award is presented to **Emily Harmon**, science teacher. Emily will purchase a hot plate with stirrer to be used in the science lab. This will allow students to directly explore science concepts that require temperature change.

**Luann Lohfink**, superintendent, is presented the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Professional Development Award. Luann will use this award in collaboration with Andrea Abraham to help cover expenses for this overnight field trip for third and fifth grade students.



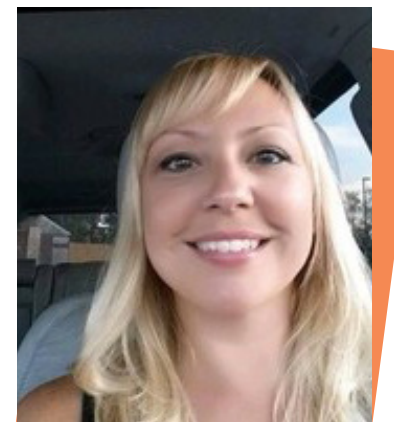
## SUPERIOR CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



**Shannon Hancock**, middle/high school English and history teacher, receives the David and Karen Bahrman Professional Development Award. Shannon will use the award to purchase new books and organization materials to update her classroom library.

## JUDY WATSON OLSON EDUCATION ENRICHMENT AWARD

**Stephanie Vittitow**, Superintendent, Ojibwe Charter School, Stephanie will use the awarded funds to take her 35 students, grades 10 through 12 on a trip to the lower peninsula to tour several colleges in mid-May, they will visit: Delta College, Wayne State University and Eastern Michigan University. Stephanie's goal is to expose her students to the choices and possibilities a career or college can offer for their futures, compelling them to work harder to be able to achieve their dreams



Gifts and pledges have been received from the following individuals, families, businesses and foundations for the **EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND**.

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## Endowing Excellence in Education Week

In 1998, Grow & Lead – in conjunction with Alger Regional Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of Marquette County – mobilized the community to build an endowment to provide scholarships and awards celebrating academic excellence. Each student honored receives a \$1,500 scholarship to be used to further his or her education. Each selected Professional Development Award recipient honored receives a \$500 award.

With a \$1 million lead gift from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, local businesses and individuals gifts help to ensure the future of Excellence in Education Week for years to come. Your continued gifts can help secure the fund during volatile financial times. Please contact your local community foundation or Grow & Lead for more information on how to contribute to the endowment and secure the future of this exciting program.

**Please consider including the Excellence in Education Endowment Funds as part of your annual, memorial and planned giving.**



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