



# CUSD 201 Newsletter

small schools **2019** February   
**LARGE OPPORTUNITIES**

*Serving families and students from Westmont, Clarendon Hills and Downers Grove*

The Community Unit School District 201 community may remember the school legislation commonly referred to as NCLB or No Child Left Behind. NCLB was enacted in 2002 and required that 100 percent of students in a school would meet the state standards by passing an assessment to demonstrate proficiency by 2014. The law was well-intentioned and designed to hold schools accountable for student learning, but it was flawed. Schools and school districts face a myriad of challenges, some not under their control. Some students may make significant growth, but not be able to pass the assessment. NCLB did not factor in student growth in determining if schools were meeting the needs of the students.

Educators and lawmakers agreed that a new law was needed that focused on preparing students for success in college and careers. In 2015, a new law was passed: the every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA, while not perfect, does focus on indicators other than performance on a standardized test and includes student growth as an indicator. States were given a couple of years to design a plan to implement ESSA.

In the fall of 2018, the ISBE released the new school report card under ESSA. Illinois has a new tiered rating system for the school report card. Using the new report card, schools can be rated as exemplary, commendable, underperforming or lowest performing. The ISBE looks at several indicators that are weighted to determine a school's rating. The academic indicators are proficiency and growth in English Language Arts and Math, English learner proficiency and graduation rates. In 2019-20, science will be added to



*District 201 Superintendent  
Kevin Carey*

## From the Superintendent's Desk

the academic indicators. The student quality/student success indicators are chronic absenteeism, ninth grade on target to graduate, climate survey and college and career readiness.

CUSD 201 is excited to report that Westmont High School has achieved the highest rating and has been designated as exemplary. High Schools that are exemplary must have a graduation rate greater than 67 percent and must perform in the top 10 percent on the SAT statewide. Manning, Miller and Westmont Junior High were all designated as commendable. Schools that are commendable have no underperforming groups of students, but are not in the top 10 percent. Overall, CUSD 201 schools outperform most schools in the State.

Community Unit School District 201 has an unwavering commitment to our students and school community. We are focused on maintaining a teaching and learning environment in which each student is expected to learn at high levels. We have adopted a growth mindset where there are no failures, only learning opportunities. CUSD 201 is proud of its accomplishments as we continue to provide the best education and school experience possible.



## School Breakfast is a Healthy Choice

*Grab and Go breakfast is available before school daily at all CUSD 201 schools*

Our commitment to good nutrition for children just keeps getting stronger!  
We are serving healthier meals to our kids — well-nourished kids do better in school.



## Westmont High School

### South School

#### Preschool Screening

If you reside in the attendance boundaries of CUSD 201, and you have a child who is between the ages of three and five, we encourage you to call the Office of Student Services to register your child for preschool screening. Our next two screening events for the 2018-2019 school year are February 7 and April 11, 2019.

While screening is not a requirement for admission into kindergarten, the screening process can provide information to families regarding early development and



school readiness. On the day of the screening, children are asked to participate in various age-appropriate activities related to readiness concepts, speech and language, and motor skills. While the children are engaged in the screening components, parents have the opportunity to meet with members of the preschool staff for individualized interviews and to address any questions or concerns.

Screening takes place at Manning School, by appointment, between the hours of 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. The contact number is 630-468-8015. We hope to hear from you!

### Kindergarten Registration

Registration in Community Unit School District 201 for incoming kindergarten students for the 2019-2020 school year will take place at both J.T. Manning Elementary School and C.E. Miller Elementary School beginning Tuesday, March 5, through Friday, March 8, 2019, and Monday, March 11, 2019, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. CUSD 201 offers a full-day Kindergarten program at both

Manning and Miller, as well as a full day Bilingual Kindergarten program (housed at Miller Elementary for all district kindergarten students). State law requires that children entering kindergarten must be five years of age on or before September 1, 2019. In order to be admitted to kindergarten, you must provide a notarized copy of your child's birth certificate with the embossed seal. Hospital birth certificates are not acceptable.





## Ready® Teacher Toolbox

### ELA and Math Curriculum Resource Adoptions and Year One Implementation

Manning and Miller have embarked on implementing new common resources for Kindergarten through fifth grade. These resources have enabled us to vertically align our learning targets, implement the level of rigor that Common Core expects, and offer a variety of resources for the purpose of differentiating our instruction in the classrooms.

### Standards Based Report Cards

K-5 is piloting Standards Based Reporting for the 2018 -2019 school year. This method of reporting gives students and parents a clear understanding of where an individual's learning is with regards to Common Standards. The standards written on the report card are the expectations that students should reach by the end of the school year.

### What I Need Period – WIN

All students will participate in a WIN period. Four days per week, students will work in groups that target specific ELA skills. Each grade level has three grade level teachers,

reading specialists, resource teachers, and possibly an ELL teacher, who are available to work with groups. The purpose of this intervention time is to give ALL students exactly what they need — whether it be intervention or enrichment. Another unique quality of this time is that groups will change throughout the year. Groups will be reorganized every four to six weeks after pre- and post- assessment data has been analyzed by the team. Using common assessment data, teachers will work together to regroup students based on the specific skills they are learning. A student who may have needed intervention with the first three skills, may need enrichment for the next three.



*Say No to Drugs Club works hard to make Red Ribbon Week a great success.*



*The Manning PTO and Frank Cyrus host another successful Dodgeball Tournament.*



## Miller School

### Standards-Based Report Card Pilot

Both parents and teachers worked together to make sense of the standards-based report card template during first semester. As we look at grading practices and improving the use of assessments, we are looking for ways to provide students with real-time feedback that drives their growth and academic performance in the classroom. After meetings with the community and inviting families in during parent teacher conferences, we are on our way to making a solid recommendation to the school board on what the report card will look like in grades K-5 next school year.

### Ready Math Curriculum Resources

We have officially had an entire semester of our new Ready Math resource! The shifts we are making with our elementary math instruction have been very positive. The number of opportunities for students to have quality conversations with their peers about mathematics has been an incredible thing to see.

### Benchmark Reading and Language Arts Curriculum Resources

Benchmark Literacy is a comprehensive, research-proven program that empowers teachers with tools for vertically aligned K-6 reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language instruction. It helps to build foundational skills, such as phonics, word study and fluency. It scaffolds ALL students to access complex informational and literary texts. It guides students to use text evidence in close reading. It provides opportunities for students to develop collaborative conversations and it develops writers by teaching writing process and writing to sources.

Benchmark Literacy supports best-practices in balanced literacy instruction with formal and observational assessment tools, professional development resources and instructional tools in the toolkits for teachers, coaches and administrators.

### Salt Creek Ballet

Dr. Kelly Stokes of Salt Creek Ballet held her final performance on Friday at the Westmont Public Library where students performed and she promoted the season favorite, "The Nutcracker."



### Student of the Month Awards

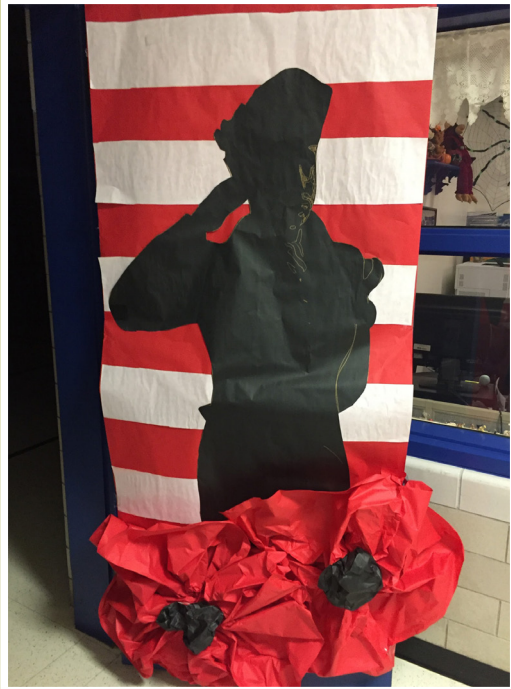
In an effort to become more aligned with recognizing students that go above and beyond our daily expectations at Miller Elementary School, we have created a fun way to recognize students in the building. We have instituted an award called Student of the Month. Each classroom teacher and some support staff announce the student they would like to highlight for the month. We announce their names during morning announcements, take a picture to beautify our hallways and award the student a certificate of excellence. The best part is that they get to be ambassadors of good behavior and academic achievement.

### Miller Incoming Kindergarten Information and Roundup

Miller's incoming kindergarten information meetings will be held on Monday, February 25, from 5:00-5:30 p.m. and again at 7:00-7:30 p.m. This is also Miller Open House Night when you can move about the building to see what Miller is all about from 6:00-7:00 p.m. Learn about our kindergarten program from Mr. Wyller and Mrs. Waszak, the building principal and assistant principal. We also offer a Kindergarten Roundup Day on Tuesday, March 5 from 1:30-2:30 p.m., to meet the kindergarten teachers while your incoming kindergartener will spend some time away from you in a classroom. This is a great experience for you and your incoming student(s). You will learn more about our programs and have the opportunity to ask any questions about getting your child ready for kindergarten.



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## Veterans Day and Class Talks

Miller staff cooked hot dogs, hamburgers and brats for the 20 veterans who visited the school this year. Our guests told stories about what it means to be a patriot and honor the country with their bravery and courage. Students were able to ask in-depth questions about personal experiences that related to what it means to be a soldier and a part of the American military.

## Barnes and Noble Night

Many Miller School students and their families attended Family Reading Night at Barnes and Noble in Oak Brook on Thursday, November 15. Students enjoyed fun activities, a mystery reader, and raffle prizes. Many families purchased books with a percentage of the proceeds going to Miller School. A great time was had by all!

## Miller Family Math and Game Night

Miller had over 75 people attend Family Math And Game Night. Families were exposed to a variety of games and activities they can do with their children at home. We ended the evening with a Rubik's Cube competition.



*Families enjoyed a variety of math-oriented games and activities at game night.*



## Technology Tools Enhance Learning In Fine Arts and Physical Education

The implementation of technology tools for teaching and learning continues to grow and have a substantial impact in the classroom. In addition to the classroom teachers leveraging Chromebooks, Google apps for education, and other technology-related resources, teachers in fine arts and physical education are also embracing the power of digital learning.

In this newsletter, Julie Graham, the K-5 visual arts teacher writes about the benefits of using a digital portfolio program called Seesaw with her students. Brett Urlaub and Zach Troyer, the vocal music teachers from Westmont High School and Westmont Junior

*The implementation of technology tools for teaching and learning continues to grow and have a substantial impact in the classroom.*



High School, are piloting a powerful game-based teaching tool called Tunelark. This program provides adaptive, personalized instruction to help students learn foundational music skills.

Additionally, the physical education teachers at Westmont High School and Westmont Junior High School will be implementing new, state-of-the-art heart rate monitors. These devices will provide real-time data and keep students engaged and motivated. Teachers and students are very excited about these powerful opportunities to connect technology in meaningful ways.

## Seesaw in the Visual Art Classroom



### More than a digital portfolio

*By Julie Graham*

The students at both Manning and Miller Elementary Schools have been sharing their visual arts work using an electronic portfolio program called Seesaw. Over the past two years, students have become more engaged in the learning process. Now that they're using Seesaw regularly to document their learning, students are motivated to share what they have learned and accomplished with their classmates, parents and teachers.

Seesaw has given our students the opportunity to show the progress of their studio work habits through different stages. Since the students know their peers, families and teachers can see their work, and students have become more motivated and accountable. Seesaw has also enabled students

to become teachers. They record videos about using certain art materials or creating specific artwork. This transforms the classroom into a student-centered and student-led environment. The platform is so easy to use and similar to social media; students love using it.

Seesaw has provided a space to explore new ideas, show growth, positively critique each other and share creativity. Seesaw also provides a space for the educator to put in the visual arts standards and skills to be assessed, making the transition to standards-based grading seamless. Seesaw has become a tremendous resource for both teachers and students.



*New Educational Assistance Dog Emmy is a favorite of the students, staff and community.*

### Emmy the WJHS Full-Time Educational Assistance Dog

On August 14, 2018, the CUSD 201 Board of Education approved to have Emily "Emmy" at WJHS on a full-time basis since she is trained to be an Educational Assistance Dog (EAD). As of December 2018, she is seven months old and has already had quite an impact on the students, staff and community!

Emmy is a Goldendoodle (F1B) and specifically chosen to be a school EAD. She is 75 percent Poodle and 25 percent Golden Retriever, therefore, she is super smart. She also has little-to-no shedding, and is allergy-friendly.

Emmy comes from a line of service/facility dogs. So far she has been trained locally with a basic puppy class with Aimee Busse at Dogz'n Harmony. She will be taking the Canine Good Citizen training and certification in January/February of 2019. Emmy's veterinarian is Dr. Jess Torok (Urban Veterinary Associates) in downtown Westmont. Her vet records are accessible to the CUSD 201 Board of Education and CUSD 201 District Office. Pet Supplies Plus in Westmont has sponsored Emmy by supplying her dog food and covering her grooming costs. They have also donated many other items, such as a Halloween costume, toys, and a crate to help keep Emmy comfortable and in style at WJHS!

As Emmy needs more training, we will be looking for more sponsors and fundraising opportunities. If you are interested, please reach out!

Emmy's induction into WJHS has been gradual and intentional. She started in the office, but has been seen in the halls, Commons and gymnasium. Due to her excellent temperament, she is able to positively interact while on a leash.

Parents/students have the opportunity to opt-out of the program. This means students do not have to be in contact with Emmy. Students may also opt to be more involved with Emmy, for which a special permission slip will be necessary. For instance, some students have been allowed to help reinforce some of her training.

Eventually Emmy may be used in school during counseling sessions, speech pathology sessions, incentive programs, de-escalation situations, regular education classes and special education classes. Emmy will always be leashed and have a trained adult with her.

Although this is a new program at WJHS, it is research-based to improve a student's learning experience. Schools in New York, California, Arkansas and even downstate Illinois, have experienced the benefits of this program.

If you would like to hear more about the program, contact John K. Jonak, principal of Westmont Junior High School.

### Lego Mindstorm Robotics Competition

On Saturday, December 15, 2018, a WJHS team, created out of a Lego Robotics E-Period, participated in a competition. The event included the elements of robot

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*Lego Robotics E-Period*



## Westmont Junior H.S.

continued

design and four trial runs for the students' robots as they attempted to complete a series of challenges. A presentation of Core Values and a team building project were also part of the competition.

### From the students' perspective:

*"The theme of this year's program was Into Orbit. We researched problems in space and tried to fix one of the problems that we found. We chose to focus on the lack of oxygen that is in space. The robot programming is about trying to do things that a rover might actually do in space."*

*"The Core values are the basis for First Lego League and how teams should work."*

*"Discovery – we strive to learn new things."*

*"Innovation – we find new ways to fix problems we identify or come across".*

*"Impact – we want to share our information with others."*

*"Inclusion and teamwork – we work together and do not leave anyone out."*

*"Fun – we have a great time and don't get discouraged if we have a bad run."*

*"Some important lessons learned from this e-period and competition is that teamwork is really important to make, construct and program a robot and have legitimate attempts to complete challenges. Without*

*teamwork, we would get nowhere and have difficulties completing challenges."*

*"Participating in this e-period and competition with other school groups helped us appreciate flexibility, problem-solving and to grow as a whole team. In the future, these are skills we will need to be successful at a job."*

### Memorable quotes:

*"When life gives you legos. You make robots." –Wyatt*

*"Push through the challenges to complete the mission" –Billy*

*"You are the most talented, most interesting, most extraordinary person in the universe. You are capable of amazing things." –The Lego Movie*

### WJHS SPEAKERS' CORNER

Eighth graders deepened their understanding of unique challenges faced by veterans through a five-week research study focused on Common Core standards related to Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking.

During this unit of study, students networked with high-level interviewees, including current and retired members of the military, and leadership from the Department of Veteran Affairs. Students utilized multiple media sources to dig into this challenging subject matter to determine if veterans receive adequate support when returning home from deployment.

For the culminating event on December 20, 2018, over 100 volunteers were invited into the doors of WJHS for a

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*Eighth graders deepened their understanding of unique challenges faced by veterans through a five-week research study focused on Common Core standards related to reading, writing, listening and speaking. One hundred volunteers were invited into the doors of WJHS for a Speakers' Corner where students shared their learning in small group settings.*



*New (donated) water fountain/fill station.*

Speakers' Corner where students shared their learning in small group settings. With the focus on a growth mindset, students received timely feedback and the opportunity to enhance their public speaking skills with the insights they gained from volunteers. The audience was filled with committed people who are invested in the learning of our students. Students were dressed to impress and used many public speaking skills practiced in class.

Students not only learned important skills, but were given a living picture of our community's commitment with their academic success.



*SSLC at Feed My Starving Children – seventh grade.*

### WJHS QUICK BLURBS

- A big THANK YOU to Elkay and the Nero Family for the generous donation of a new water fountain and fill station! We have already reduced the use of over 1,500 plastic water bottles!
- The seventh graders did an excellent job at Feed My Starving Children and received two hours toward their Student Service Learning Commitment. Keep it up, Panthers!

## Westmont High School Implements New Heart Rate Monitors

The WHS Physical Education Department is pleased to announce the purchase of Polar Heart Rate Monitors. After many hours of training and set-up, as well as a significant amount of help from the technology department, we are ready to implement the use of the monitors in January. The benefits of adding heart rate monitors to the curriculum include:

- More time spent exercising in student target heart rate zones.
- Improved scores on mandatory fitness assessments.
- Better classroom behavior, engagement and improved academic progress.
- Improved knowledge of cardiovascular health and fitness.
- Leveled playing field for all levels of fitness.
- Immediate and constant performance feedback.
- Opportunity for increased objective grading based on student performance.
- Wireless heart rate tracking that syncs with the teacher's display.
- Student account where parents and students can access student performance data.



## Westmont High School

The Westmont High School Boys' basketball team is on fire. They won the Lisle Thanksgiving tournament, the Wilmington Winter Classic tournament, and the Westmont Christmas tournament (16 excellent teams participated). They are currently 18-2 and on a real hot streak.

The Spring Musical is "The Wizard of Oz" and will be a most enjoyable production. The performances will be held on February 15, 16 and 17.

### Recent Accomplishments

- ✓ Westmont High School has the highest percentage of students designated for free/reduced lunch of any non-selective enrollment school that earned the "Exemplary" rating in Illinois.
- ✓ Westmont High School will be recognized as a model Professional Learning Community School during the 2018-2019 school year. Less than one percent of high schools in Illinois and the nation have received this designation.
- ✓ Westmont High School is ranked in the top one percent of all Illinois high schools for Advanced Placement inclusion, improvement and performance.
- ✓ Westmont High School for five years in a row has a graduation rate that is in the top one percent for Illinois and the nation. Only five students have dropped out in the last six years, and 100 percent of African-American and Latino students have graduated on time.
- ✓ Westmont is truly the most improved high school in Illinois, and one of the top performing high schools in our state and nation.

*Thank you for all your support!*

## Reimagining Learning Space in the Westmont High School Library

When you visit the Westmont High School Media Center, you will see a very different space from the one that existed a few years ago. While books and other print resources are an important component of the program, the school library is evolving as a center of technology and innovation.

Media Specialist Michelle Torrison and Media Center Aide Maria Schillinger have been collaborating with the CUSD 201 District Technology Team to redefine the school library space to create a student-centered media experience for WHS students that leverages technology and other critical resources to support learning and innovation.

"Our new space is designed to be flexible and allow students to adapt the space to fit their needs," says WHS Media Specialist Mrs. Torrison.

Wheels have been added to tables and chairs so groups can be formed naturally to meet their changing educational and

*The school library  
is evolving  
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innovation.*



social needs. Areas have been designed to support specific tasks, which allows multiple activities to occur simultaneously — creating a vibrant and authentic learning community for all students.

To ensure that the Media Center supports the WHS curriculum, the vision for the media center program is aligned with two sets of standards.

The National School Library Standards adopted in 2017 called on school libraries to focus on a set of shared foundations and key commitments, including (a) providing a space for students to engage responsibly

and ethically as a community of learners and (b) offering opportunities for students to build new knowledge through inquiry, critical thinking and problem solving. With the National School Library Standards as a foundation, the International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Students then outlined the skills students

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would need to leverage technology in the processes of inquiry, problem solving and critical thinking to become Innovative Designers, Computational Thinkers and Creative Communicators.

"We are committed to continuous improvement of the high school library program and are always seeking new ways to create space for programs that support the curriculum and prepare students for higher education and beyond," says Mrs. Torrise.

Each library space at WHS offers students a variety of tools and resources that allow them to explore, create and share: the green screen space can be used by students on a walk-in basis, a large classroom space can be checked out by teachers or small groups, and a Mac center that includes Adobe Creative Suite is available when needed. A "sound booth" with audio recording and editing tools and a separate programming area stocked with Arduino and Raspberry Pi's are both set up and ready for students to use. At the same time, the lower level continues to offer a traditional library space for quiet studying or reading. It's the best of both worlds.

When you visit the library at Westmont High School you might see students writing and producing videos using a green screen and video editing tools. The Media Center provides video equipment that can be used by students and has installed video editing software on designated Macs and PCs, providing a start-to-finish experience for students that allows for collaboration, creativity and the sharing of ideas.

Last month, Economics students created videos to demonstrate their knowledge of economic principles. Students from the IncubatorEDU class used the green screen and WeVideo, an online video editing application, to create commercials for products they are developing. Both groups demonstrated the ability to use technology to communicate and share information digitally, skills that they will be able to use in the workplace and other real world applications.

The "sound booth" was designed to encourage students to explore various forms of recording and editing audio to create and communicate. During lunch, you will often find students huddled around the "sound booth," recording music and beats. These students have mastered the use of Audacity and Logic and collaborate regularly to compose and publish music.

On other days, you might find Ben Padgitt, a senior at WHS, working on his new blog and podcast channel. From recording music to starting a school blog, students find the Media Center a vibrant and creative place to be.

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### *Congratulations!*



**W**e are proud of our Illinois State Scholars. These students are ranked in the top ten percent of all students in Illinois based on their grades and test scores. The WHS Illinois State Scholars for 2019 are:

*Front Row (left to right):* **Stephanie Tenorio Zavala, Mollie Johnson, Anita Vazquez**

*2nd Row:* **Andrea Krebbers, Katie Schultz, Ashley Liljeberg**

*3rd Row:* **Connor Duquette, Kyle Nguyen, Benjamin Boxell**

*4th Row:* **Benjamin Padgitt, Sean Walsh, Colin Larkin**

*5th Row:* **Adam Catris, Matthew O'Leary, Caden Anderson**

*Not Pictured:* **Luke Gifford**

## Westmont High School Library *continued*

The Media Center also offers students a dedicated area that focuses on developing programming skills to solve everyday problems. Here, students are starting to learn how to write code that can be downloaded to a small computer called an Arduino. Beginning students are learning about circuits and how to solder. More advanced students are learning how various components and sensors work with a programmed Arduino to create mechanisms that perform tasks, collect data, or solve problems.

While the WHS library continues to provide traditional library services, such as database support, readers' advisory services and tech support for the 1:1 program, it is continually changing to create new learning experiences for students. "In addition to creating lifelong readers and critical thinkers, we continually strive to make the library a place that inspires students to explore, create and share new ideas," says Mrs. Torrise.

Visit the Media Center website at <http://www.cusd201.org/srhigh/mediacenter> to learn more about their programs and resources.



*For the INCubatoredu program at WHS, students ideate, develop, and iterate their own product or service startup in an attempt to gain investment funds in a final shark-tank style pitch event*

### Incubator edu

The INCubatoredu program at WHS offers students an authentic approach to the entrepreneurship experience. Currently 16 students are enrolled in the course taught by Bridget Derwin and Sue Ellen Jacobs. The instructors combine their areas of expertise in business and digital media arts.

Throughout the program, students ideate, develop, and iterate their own product or service startup in an attempt to gain investment funds in a final shark-tank style pitch event.

The classroom teacher instructs and facilitates the course, while real world entrepreneurs and business experts serve as volunteer coaches and mentors, guiding student teams through the processes of developing a business concept, conducting market research and creating a business plan.

The businesses that the students build are real —not business cases or simulated experiences — which means students experience mistakes, take risks and learn to pivot based on market needs.

## Technology Enhances Music Education

At the High School we have been given the opportunity to try a new program called Tunelark. Tunelark is a fast, fun way to teach foundation music skills using technology. Students watch a short video that teaches them about a specific skill. They then apply what they learned in a game-based way. The program is designed like a game where students earn experience points and the level of difficulty increases as you succeed. Our touchscreen Chromebooks are ideal for this program since students learn music theory by using a keyboard. Students are able to touch the keys on the screen and essentially play the piano.

Tunelark is the program music teachers have needed for a long time. Every week we receive an email with the results of the past week's performances. We can see what skills, how many games, and how many experience points students earned. This will then direct future instruction. We are able to create assignments that target a specific skill set. In addition to creating assignments, students can continue to learn at their own pace and explore more difficult skills offered in the program.



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