

## Collaboration Leads to High School Entrepreneurial Skills Accelerator in New Berlin

New Berlin, Wis. - The School District of New Berlin (SDNB) is partnering with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Lubar Center for Entrepreneurship and The Commons to develop entrepreneurial skills as early as high school. SDNB's Advanced Innovation and Design students were joined by representatives from Generac, Harley Davidson, Concurrency, Dedicated Computing, Experis, Aurora, Humana, Action Coach, Global View Capital Advisors, Radom Corp., BrightStar Care, etc. for the reveal of this year's challenges Jan. 17.

New Berlin teachers, William Trudell and Shawn Upton, will guide students through a curriculum they developed in partnership with the UWM Lubar Center for Entrepreneurship based on the Stanford Lean Launchpad methodology. Students will work through a business model canvas to not only confirm the problem they are trying to solve but also pitch a unique solution based on each team's research. Business volunteers will act as team mentors and/or challenge advisors to provide all students with the opportunity to work with professionals outside of school.

UWM will provide a series of "pop up classes" to support the curriculum and connect students to college faculty. Students will develop portfolios which represent both individual and team work. The district's content specialists will assist students in researching or information the students might need along the way. Students will have the ability to submit their Advanced Innovation and Design portfolio for college credit through the UWM Lubar College of Business. All students will receive recognition for their participation in this program on their high school transcript.

"The School District of New Berlin strives to partner with programs, organizations, and post-secondary institutions in our region to make sure students know about all of the opportunities available to them," said SDNB Superintendent Joe Garza. "It is part of our collective work to make sure students graduate as informed consumers of post-secondary education and training in southeastern Wisconsin and elsewhere."

"UWM is growing an array of programs through the Lubar Center for Entrepreneurship that help improve the success of our graduates, and we're pleased to work with the School District of New Berlin in helping foster the next generation of entrepreneurs," said Brian Thompson, Director of the Lubar Center for Entrepreneurship.

Challenges were developed by The Commons in collaboration with industry partners within four innovation strands: tech, healthcare, engineering and global. This year's challenges will allow students to better understand the role of business in social change, the future of smart technology in community development, the impact of technology on patient care, and how to effectively launch a new product in competitive technology market.

"We were excited to have the opportunity to pilot these challenges with the School District of New Berlin's Advanced Innovation and Design program," said Joe Poeschl, The Commons program director. "We are hoping to expand this offering throughout southeastern Wisconsin to support additional districts."

According to a report released by the [Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation](#), start-up activity in the United States increased in 2016 for the second year in a row. But among the 25 largest states, Wisconsin came in either last or second-to-last in each of the three categories the foundation evaluated. Wisconsin's largest metropolitan area, defined as Milwaukee/Waukesha/West Allis, ranked second-to-last among metro areas nationally.

“We understand what mission critical is,” Garza added. “We need all students to graduate with the knowledge, skills and dispositions for success in the 21st century innovation economy. This program serves as a capstone learning experience where students get to apply what they have been learning in a real and relevant way and benefit from the mentorship provided by those organizations graciously willing to act as a resource for the teams.”

By and large, entrepreneurs take action to develop innovative solutions to problems in the world around them. This can result in a product, a business or just an improved way of doing things. Entrepreneurs collaborate and think critically and creatively. They take risks and see their mistakes as part of an important process of continuous improvement.

The Commons is an entrepreneurial skills accelerator serving students from 24 post-secondary institutions across southeastern Wisconsin. Through team-based experiential learning, The Commons helps students develop an ‘entrepreneurial mindset’ that will benefit them regardless of what they choose to pursue in their future. Over the past year, they have also been exploring ways to expand their programming to support public and private high schools.

“We simply could not launch programs such as these without local and regional collaboration along with the time and talents of our partners,” said SDNB’s Laura Schmidt, Strategic Advisor to the Superintendent. “We are all learning from one another. I believe the greatest challenge for students in this program will be letting go of the idea that there is one right answer to the problems they will be asked to solve in their future. Students in this program will be asked to exercise a number of critical life skills that will prepare them for whatever life throws their way.”

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