

# Chippewa Valley CTE programs succeed in competitions

By Nicole Tuttle For MediaNews Group

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Chippewa Valley Schools auto tech students recently earned first place in the Macomb Engine Challenge at Macomb Community College. Pictured back row left to right Tommy Varilone, Jose Gordillo, Amanda Hofmann, Alister Smith, and Tom Vachon. Pictured front row left to right Joe Hart, Al Hoover, Andrew Kenaan and Sargon Nasser.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPH HART, CLAIRE BRISSON

Chippewa Valley Schools students soon to compete in the job market are already making their occupational mark through career and tech ed programs, earning state, local and nationwide recognition in recent months.

The finals in a Bank On It Tournament at a recent Business Professionals of America National Leadership Conference came down to two competitors out of approximately 40 students: Chippewa Valley High School's Matthew Miller and Dakota High School's Joseph Bednar. Miller took first place in the national championship and Bednar second. Miller and Bednar, both 18-year-old seniors, ended up competing against each other through the bracket process in the tournament.

The Business Professionals of America (BPA) is the nation's leading career and technical student organization for students pursuing careers in business management, information technology, finance, accounting office administration and business-related careers.

The BPA 2019 National Leadership Conference was held in Anaheim, Calif. May 1-5. Chippewa Valley High School and Dakota High School each have their own BPA team. The CVHS team has 21 members and Dakota 25 members.

“Our students had to place at the regional competition, January 2019 and state competition, March 2019 to qualify for the national conference,” CVHS BPA advisor and business teacher Kristy Walker said.



Dakota High School student Joseph Bednar won second place and Chippewa Valley High School student Matthew Miller won first in a recent Bank On It Tournament, earning prizes.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KRISTY WALKER

Bank On It is an interactive game designed to challenge students on accounting fundamentals and offer real-world scenarios. The tournament was held on May 2 during the national conference, Walker said. Students reached the Bank On It Tournament by registering to compete in an extra competition before leaving for California, according to Walker.

“The students who competed would have prepared through coursework, done in their accounting classes at their home schools,” Walker said.

The construction trades program is another of the Chippewa Valley Schools district CTE programs to earn recent recognition. This program was one of just 14 CTE programs statewide chosen to participate in the CTE Capitol Showcase on April 25 in Lansing.

At this event, about 75 students and teachers statewide demonstrated skills to showcase how CTE prepares the state's students for high-demand and high-tech careers.

"We were given limited space but demonstrated our partnerships with Macomb Habitat for Humanity as well as our involvement in the Michigan Industrial and Technological Education Society, MITES," Chippewa Valley Schools construction trades teacher Adam Carr said. "Students had the opportunity to speak with legislators and the governor about every aspect of the construction process, from foundations to trusses and everything in between. They were also given the opportunity to talk about their career goals."

Chippewa Valley Schools' construction trades program is located on the Dakota school campus inside a separate facility, west of the school stadium. It serves both CVHS and Dakota students. Sixty or more students attend classes for construction trades each year according to Chippewa Valley Schools Director of Career and Technical Education Claire Brisson.

In addition, the Chippewa Valley Schools auto tech program recently received a \$51,000 grant from the Margaret Dunning Foundation. The grant will be used to purchase new equipment for the program such as a new lift, welding equipment and more. The program, held at CVHS, is open to both Dakota and CVHS students. There are currently 58 students in the course.



Chippewa Valley Schools construction trades program was selected as one of 14 CTE programs statewide to participate in a recent CTE Capitol Showcase. Pictured are Katelynn LaCroix, Donny Accardo, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, Jack Winarski and Adam Carr.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ADAM CARR

Seven students in the program placed first in a March 23 Macomb Engine Challenge competition at Macomb Community College South Campus in Warren. The timed event required students to disassemble and reassemble a small block Chevy engine, then successfully test-fire it on the engine stand. The Chippewa Valley Schools' team completed the project in 98 minutes.

“The competition was split into three parts. First students had to take a written certification style engine exam, second they had to be active members in SkillsUSA and participate in the SkillsUSA Regional Competition in February, again at Macomb Community College Auto Lab. By doing these portions they qualified for the hands on final competition,” CVHS automotive teacher Joseph Hart said.