

Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals



Star of Innovation Award Application Form

School Name Cambridge-Isanti High School Grade Levels 9-12
Name of School District Cambridge-Isanti Schools
Name of Principal Dr. Steve Gibbs
Application Submitted By Elizabeth Young, Assistant Principal
School Street Address 430 NW 8th Avenue
City, Zip Cambridge, MN 55008
Telephone Number 763-689-6008
MASSP Division Central
Name of Program Character Crew

Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet/s of paper.

- Description of the program.
- How has it impacted your school?
- What difficulties did you encounter in its implementation?
- What issue/s might another school encounter in replicating this program?
- Do you have any data to show the impact of this program? If so, please share it with us.

Applications must be submitted to MASSP offices by March 1.

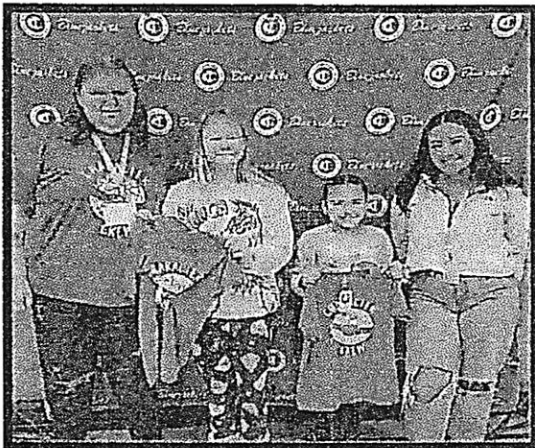
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MASSP • 2 Pine Tree Drive • Suite 380 • Arden Hills, MN 55112

Questions? Please contact:
Bob Driver, Executive Director
612-361-6159

**Star of Innovation Awards 2024
Cambridge-Isanti Schools
Cambridge-Isanti High School
Principal, Dr. Steve Gibbs
Assistant Principals, Elizabeth Young and Jeremy Miller
Special Education Coordinator, Courtney Karas**

“Character Crew”

Character Crew is a program started at CIHS in 2023-2024 with the goal of district wide promotion of our PBIS 5 Character Traits, referred to as “The Bluejacket Way,” in order to support consistency and ownership of expectations among students of all ages. In the program, our high school student members attend assemblies, recess, lunch, and several other activities at our younger buildings. The high school students interact with students and talk about how/when they notice the students using or modeling the 5 Character Traits, and also are continuously and overtly modeling the traits themselves. In specific events, the high school students directly talk to the younger students about what it means to follow “The Bluejacket Way” and how those traits are something that connect our kindergarteners to our seniors, and every student in between. They also identify several younger students at each event who demonstrated “The Bluejacket Way” throughout the event. The older students announce to the group why those particular younger students were selected and name them as the “newest members of the Character Crew.” The younger students are awarded a matching Character Crew t-shirt.



Character Crew has had a positive impact on the students in our high school who are able to serve in leadership roles for the first time, and fosters self confidence and ownership of their educational environment. Administrators from the younger grades have shared that their students think following expectations is “cool” because the older kids were the ones telling the rules, and they want to replicate their actions. Having matching shirts with high school students was a highlight as well, and the younger students often would approach the high schoolers at community events, wearing their shirts with pride. There is also a unified message and

cross-district buy-in from students that begins in the earliest grades and stays with them through their entire experience in C-I Schools. The language staff can use is common and consistent as well, when discussing expectations, and they can refer to the high school students when working with younger students.

The greatest hurdle is the frequency in which students from the high school are able to visit the younger students. Currently, Character Crew students go to the events during their study halls, or on their own time before the high school day begins. Transportation during the school day has also been an obstacle we have encountered and continue to problem solve into next year. If another district wanted to implement a "Character Crew" of sorts, it would be wise to consider the selection process. The goal would be to be inclusive to ensure the greatest yield of student buy-in, but the challenges occur when students are selected to represent the high school are also students who struggle to interact with younger students, and maybe were selected because they are simply a "good student." Additionally, funding the reproduction of the tshirts is a challenge that our district overcomes with grant opportunities and allocation of PBIS funding.