

Mason-Lake and Oceana ISDs Awarded Middle College Grant

Mason-Lake and Oceana ISDs, in conjunction with West Shore Community College and Manistee ISD, have been awarded the Middle College Partnership Grant. The intent of the grant is to provide students interested in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Careers the opportunity to extend high school for another year in order to earn an associates degree or an equivalent number of college transferrable credits. The program will incorporate many college success strategies and will link with local businesses and industries to provide students with on-the-job exposure to future career interests. The Academy of Science, Mathematics and Technology (named ASM Tech and pronounced “Awesome Tech”) is planning to start with its first class of incoming Juniors in the fall of 2011.

There are other middle colleges already in existence around Michigan. Many of these middle colleges are centered in larger metropolitan areas. ASM Tech is unique for both the rural setting and the proposed design model. As stated in the award letter, the grant reviewers “were impressed by the strong partnership that was developed.” West Shore Community College, Martin Marietta Magnesia Specialties, the Mason County Manufactures Association, and all of the local schools in Lake, Manistee, Mason, and Oceana Counties came together to support this grant proposal.

For students, this grant could mean two years of college at West Shore Community College with virtually no tuition or textbook fees. It will also provide students with direct access to many of the college services, such as scholarship and financial aid awareness, career counseling, and tutoring services.

The amount of the grant is \$398,487 for the first year. The grant is renewable for up to three more years for a total grant sum of 1.1 million dollars.