



# Brookings School District

Working Together...Educating with Excellence...Inspiring Learners for Life

## MICKELSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Todd Foster, Principal • Matt Christie, Assistant Principal

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TO: Board of Education  
FROM: Todd C. Foster, Mickelson Middle School Principal  
RE: Administrative Report  
DATE: April 4, 2025



### Great Place to Learn

#### Science Olympiads Compete at USD:



Mickelson Middle School Olympiad Science team competed in the state competition on March 23<sup>rd</sup> at USD in Vermillion. There were 11 students in grades 6-8 that participated. They finished 2<sup>nd</sup> overall as a team. Team members were Sinan Briddick, Virnichi Janaswamy, Tyson Springman, Kerrick Zhang, Eli Ellsworth, Charile Butzin, Madeline Enderson, Sanhita Tummala, Elizabeth Saunders, Catie Michna, and Katie Richter.

**Brookings Celebrates Outstanding  
Achievement at *FIRST*® LEGO®  
League State Championship**



(left to right looking at picture) (Not Pictured – Rayaan Ahmad, Charlie Butzin, Brody LaFleur, Trestin Johnson, and Katie Richter)  
Donovan Gloege, Liam Heiberger, Amanuel Gemechis, Noah Hamman, Isaac Haufschild, Noah Hansen

[Brookings, SD] – The robotics prowess of Bobcat Builders representing Mickelson Middle School (MMS) was in the spotlight during their competition at the recent *FIRST* LEGO League State Championship held in Sioux Falls, SD on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Hosted by EmBe at the Augustana University’s Elmen Center, the event gathered young innovators from across the state, showcasing exceptional creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.

The Bobcat Builders demonstrated remarkable innovation throughout the competition, achieving a remarkable victory by winning the Robot Performance Award of 1<sup>st</sup> Place. The event, known for fostering creativity and STEM excellence, brought together the brightest young minds from diverse communities.

The Bobcat Builders presented their Innovation Project, in which they created two different devices to remove trash from the ocean. In the Robot Game competition, the team achieved a high score of 245 points as their robot successfully completed missions on the challenge field. The event, known for fostering creativity and STEM excellence, brought together the brightest young minds from diverse communities across the state.

### **State Spelling Bee:**



Amanuel Gemichis, 8<sup>th</sup> grade student at George S. Mickelson Middle School, will represent South Dakota in the 2025 Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, DC. The 8<sup>th</sup> grader out-spelled 27 other elementary and middle schoolers on Saturday, March 28 at Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell. The winning word: meringue.

“I love the spelling bee,” Amanuel said afterward. “It helps me learn a lot. And at the national spelling bee I’ll just show off my skills, and I hope to do my best.”

Congratulations Amanuel!!

### **SDSU Jerome Norgren Poetry and Paul Witherington Prose Contest**

MMS had some local winners for the SDSU Jerome Norgren Poetry and Paul Witherington Prose Contest winners announced. From the 7<sup>th</sup> grade team, Piper Frericks place 1<sup>st</sup> in the poetry contest with “Watching From Above”, Samantha Nelson placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the prose contest with “The Wails in the Wall”, and Cody Spencer received honorable mention in the prose contest with “Billion Dollar Mystery”. From 8<sup>th</sup> grade team, Aworama Dwomoh placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the poetry contest with, “Trapped in an Unknown World”, Apollo Houch received an honorable mention in the poetry contest for “Something/Nothing”, and April Flores received an honorable mention in the prose contest for “Masquerade”. Great job!



## **State MathCounts:**

A group of four MMS students competed at the State MATHCOUNTS Competition on Saturday, March 8 in Pierre. Participants were Rayaah Ahmad (8th grade), Charlie Butzin (8th grade), Shinji Numata (7th grade), and Timothy Jin (6th grade). They competed against around 40 other students from around the state. Working together, the team of four students placed 3<sup>rd</sup> overall. Individually, Timothy placed 5th, Rayaah placed 7th, Shinji placed 8th, and Charlie placed 15th. All of the students worked extremely hard this season and positively represented MMS at the State Competition. Congratulations!



### **Mickelson Middle School Quiz Bowl Takes 1st at Madison Quiz Bowl Meet**

On March 13th, the Mickelson Middle School (MMS) Quiz Bowlers attended a quiz bowl competition in Madison, SD. There were 18 teams at this event and three of those teams were from MMS. Brookings Team 1, always striving to win first place, had lost a close round to Madison, but continued on to win the tournament with 1<sup>st</sup> place. Way to go Brookings Team 1 to never give up! Brookings Team 3 finished strong in 14<sup>th</sup> place with several close rounds. Finally, Brookings Team 2 took 16<sup>th</sup> place after some closes rounds and giving their ultimate effort. Great Job MMS Quiz Bowlers!

1<sup>st</sup> Place – Brookings Team 1



Noah Hansen, Donovan Gloege, Rayaan Ahmad, and Liam Heiberger

14<sup>th</sup> Place - Brookings Team 3



Elizabeth Saunders, Kate Gayne, Charlie Butzin, and Awurama Dwomoh

16<sup>th</sup> Place – Brookings Team 2



Kale Weiker, Trevor Gloege, Walker Hoffelt, and Ted Lin



### **Good Citizens Luncheon:**



Each quarter the Brookings Lions Club honors selected 8<sup>th</sup> grade learners as the Lions Club Good Citizens. Learners are nominated by the faculty and selected for demonstrating self-discipline, a commitment to health, respect for others, compassion, good judgement, responsibility, honesty, scholarship, trustworthiness, and involvement. The following students were named the third nine weeks Good Citizens:

### **Smarter Balanced Testing**

Mickelson Middle will be doing their Smarter Balanced state testing over the course of four days. We will be doing ELA on April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> for two hours each morning. Math will be April 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> during the same time. 8<sup>th</sup> grade will do their science test during this time as well. We will be testing in the mornings and then running a two-hour schedule for those days to be able to have all our classes.

### **Great Place to Work and Collaborate**

#### **Educators Rising Events**

Students from MMS and BHS attended the Educators Rising State Conference on the campus of Dakota State University in Madison on Feb. 24. Two students competed in events that demonstrate their skills as future teachers: Samantha Nelson (7<sup>th</sup> grade) earned bronze ratings in two events (a speech titled "My Ed Rising Moment" and an interactive bulletin board" and Lucille Gaalswyk (9<sup>th</sup> grade) earned a silver rating for her interactive bulletin board. The Ed Rising students are partnering with Mrs. Kelly Erickson to host an event during Disabilities Awareness Week: The family engagement event features adaptive PE activities for special needs students and will be held at MMS on Thursday, March 13.

### **National Civics Bee:**



The Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce hosted the first Civics Bee in the state on March 27, with 20 Mickelson Middle School students participating in the contest. Awurama Dwomoh was the 1<sup>st</sup> place winner of the local event. She and nine others will compete at the state finals which will be held on June 6<sup>th</sup> in Brookings. Other finishers in the top 5 were: 2<sup>nd</sup>—Charlie Butzin, 3<sup>rd</sup>—Ryann Ahmad 4<sup>th</sup>—Issac Haufschild, and 5<sup>th</sup>—Micah Stern.