

NEWS RELEASE

Online Heavy Equipment Classes Open for Enrollment for all MN High School Students Until August 30

8/11/2021

MN School Districts now able to apply for funding to offset budgetary impacts

MINNEAPOLIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Enrollment is currently open until August 30 for the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) **Local 49** high school pathway program.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210811005668/en/>

This program is in partnership with Minnesota Virtual Academy (**MNVA**) and offers high school students the ability to complete online courses that expose them to career opportunities in the heavy equipment industry. Courses are available to any high school student grades 9 – 12 enrolled in a Minnesota school district and will count toward high school elective classes, articulated college credit, and will make a student better prepared for the IUOE Local 49 Apprenticeship Program.

The Operating Engineers Career Pathway Program includes four semester courses that give an overview of skills needed to successfully prepare students for entrance into the IUOE Local 49 Registered Apprenticeship Program. These courses include construction exploration, basic grade and construction math, construction equipment fundamentals, and basic maintenance of mobile equipment. In addition to the online classes, students participating in this apprenticeship readiness pathway will have an opportunity on October 9th to visit the IUOE Local 49 Training Center located in Hinkley, MN where they will be able to operate heavy equipment. The October 9th event will be the first event of the year for those who are interested in the program to come check it out.

This program is now in its second year and has transitioned several students into the IUOE Local 49 Apprenticeship Program to begin their career as a heavy equipment operator.

“Out here you see a job from start to finish and you watch the progress the whole way, we are doing different things day in and day out,” said Darren Jorgensen, an Operating Career Pathway student who transitioned into the IUOE Local 49 Apprenticeship Program. “You get to see the work that you do, and you get to see it impact your community, and this isn’t a desk job where you do the same thing every day.”

High school students can enroll in these online courses from any school district in the state of Minnesota. They can be taken anywhere at any time at no cost to the student. IUOE Local 49 receives no funding for the pathway program and began this program as an investment in our future workforce. However, state lawmakers understood the significance of this opportunity and through our partnerships with bipartisan legislators and the MNVA we were able to secure \$100,000 during this past legislative session to help offset the budgetary impacts to school districts when students enroll in the Operating Engineers Pathway Program and become a shared student.

To utilize these funds, individual school districts will need to request dollars via application, specifically for pathway courses individual students register for during the 2021-2022 school year. The dollar amount to be awarded per course is equal to the online learning aid MNVA receives for part-time student enrollment. Awards to school districts will be based on a first come first serve basis and awarded for those students who earn a passing grade in the course.

Applications can be requested by emailing Leslie Lewandowski, CRE Coordinator for Stride Career Prep at MNVA, or on the MNVA website under **Stride Career Prep**.

Individuals interested in learning more about this career pathway program can visit **Local 49**.

About IUOE Local 49

The International Union of Operating Engineers Local 49 is the largest construction union in Minnesota and represents 14,000 members in many different industries related to infrastructure and construction throughout Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. For more information visit www.local49.org

About Minnesota Virtual Academy

Minnesota Virtual Academy (MNVA) is a tuition-free online public-school program of Houston Public Schools that serves students in grades K through 12. A Minnesota Department of Education-approved provider of online education, MNVA gives parents and families the choice to access the curriculum and tools provided by K12, a Stride

company (NYSE: LRN). Stride offers learners of all ages a more effective way to learn and build their skills for the future. For more information about MNVA, visit mnva.k12.com.

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