



Lena Bergo Awarded University of Wisconsin LaCrosse School of Education Early Career School Psychologist



Lena Bergo, HVED School Psychologist, serving Rushford-Peterson Schools

Upon being asked permission to acknowledge this award, Lena stated, *“I would really like extra emphasis to be put on our team here as a whole, as this award speaks to that more than anything. We all work very hard, support each other, and show up every day with gratitude and hope, with the goal of aligning with the truth and making choices that are in the best interest of all the humans we affect. That sets the foundation for all the progress and positive outcomes we’ve experienced, and every one of us plays a critical role in that. I am just a very lucky team member who focuses on grace and compassion above all else.”*



To Whom it May Concern,

It is with great enthusiasm that we submit this letter of recommendation for Lena Bergo for the UWL School of Education Early Career School Psychologist Award. Since joining our team, Lena has distinguished herself as a cornerstone of our student services department, demonstrating a level of professional maturity and impact that far exceeds her years in the field.

Lena has consistently met—and exceeded—the criteria for this award in the following ways:

Positive Impact on Schools and Community

Ms. Bergo immediately fostered strong relationships with students, families, and staff. These connections are grounded in her deep care for students and her level-headed, thoughtful approach to data collection and analysis. She is trusted, approachable, and respected across our school community.

Innovation in Addressing Student Needs

Her ability to analyze data and apply research-based interventions is second to none. I have worked with many school psychologists who value data, but I have never worked with one who can translate that data into practical, actionable strategies for staff as effectively as Lena. She has a rare gift for making complex information accessible and meaningful in real classrooms.

Lena is also not someone who works only from behind a keyboard—she is deeply embedded in the daily learning of students and staff. Her presence in classrooms, meetings, and problem-solving conversations ensures that her work is grounded in the realities of our schools.

Advocacy for Students

Ms. Bergo is a strong and unwavering advocate for students and student learning. She understands that students must feel safe and secure before meaningful learning can occur, and she has helped guide our district toward continuous improvement in this area. Without Ms. Bergo, we would not have been able to implement many of the changes that have already led to improved student outcomes.

I have never worked with a more competent and caring school psychologist. Lena Bergo embodies the excellence that the UWL School Psychology program is known for. She has been a transformative addition to our district, and we can think of no more deserving recipient for this early-career recognition.

Thank you for the opportunity to nominate such an outstanding professional.

Sincerely,
Ben Bernard
Ben Bernard, Ph.D.
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Educate the difference makers of tomorrow.



HVED is proud of you!



Itinerant Staff Serve Member District and Charter School Staff and Students Across HVED

I have been dedicating an inordinate amount space in my Highlights over the past year or two focusing on the progress HVED has made on our renovation project to bring our programs under one roof. This project is nearing its completion for the SAIL and SPECTRUM programs and will be joined by the River Valley Academy Area Learning Center staff and students over the summer months. Now, I will focus on itinerant staff.

Hiawatha Valley Education District
EMBRACING PARTNERSHIPS & POSSIBILITIES TO IMPROVE LIVES

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- Ridgeway Community
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- Rushford-Peterson
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Vision Statement
Embracing partnerships and possibilities to improve lives.

See your school's itinerant service providers in four simple steps: Step 1: Go to the HVED website at www.hved6013.org Step 2: Click on the tab called "Schools We Serve" and choose your school. For example, I selected "Wabasha-Kellogg and Falcon View Online." Step 3: Click on "Member District Photo Service Sheet." Step 4: See your school's itinerant service providers.

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The work that continues within our member districts and charter schools is supported by our **itinerant staff**. These are the individuals that travel all around HVED to provide the services that your students need while attending your schools. These individuals are in and out of your schools in a sort of stealth-like manner. So, to be sure we know who we're talking about, we wanted to show you how to find them—on the internet—to start.

Once on our website at www.hved6013.org go to *Schools We Serve* and find your school on the drop-down list. Select your school, which will open up a lot of information for your school including your mascot, school name, site address, phone number, ISD number, school directory, member district photo service sheet, member district

Wabasha-Kellogg and Falcon View Online
2113 Hiawatha Drive East
Wabasha, MN 55981
651-565-3559

District #: 811
School Directory
Member District Photo Service Sheet
Member District Employee Service Sheet
Member District Service Sheet
2025 - 2026 Calendar

Wabasha-Kellogg Public Schools
<https://www.hved6013.org/page/2789>

employee service sheet, member district service sheet, and your current year school calendar, and your next year's school calendar, if it is available. The *Member District Photo Service Sheet*, on the right, shows the individuals who serve the students at Wabasha-Kellogg and Falcon View Online. These professionals make connections with your staff and students in meaningful ways. It's a strong team effort! Go, Team, Go!

Zach Selnes, Ed. D. Director of Special Education	Karen Polyard Special Education Coordinator	Megan Dawson Behavior Interventionist	Eden Leshner School Psychologist/Behavior Support	Rhean Perkins School Psychologist virtual	Sarah Payne School Psychologist MTSS	Stacie Ruskell Physical Therapist	Laura Clemence Audiologist	Heather Twine Speech and Language Pathologist Resource Early Intervention	Mikki Tuma Speech and Language Pathologist Early Intervention
Andrea Murphy ASD Consultant	Emily Dahm Occupational Therapist	Sandy Gorham Orientation and Mobility Consultant	Terril Kersting Blind/Visually Impaired Teacher	Pandy King Deaf/Hard of Hearing Teacher	Crystal Schroeder Work Based Learning Coordinator	Renee VanderPins SpEd Teacher/Academic Tester	Julie Cunningham-Meeks Assistive Technology PWD Consultant	Paula Swell Early Intervention Evaluator	Judy Schenhardt Early Intervention Teacher

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Strategic Plan Oversight Committee (SPOC) Encourages Engagement and Action Throughout HVED

SPOC established an electronic spreadsheet to track work completed throughout HVED as the Strategic Plan is implemented under the leadership of SPOC and the purposeful action from the Strategic Plan Action Committees (SPAC) and all HVED staff and Board of Directors together with member district and charter school staff.

You are welcome to engage in the work by reviewing and contributing to the spreadsheet at:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18HjJmGYCVXQN6WzZl6rrACcrrNxOYzl3fRiKlJp3yec/edit?gid=611947850#gid=611947850>



Pillar 1: Work Teams and Culture

Pillar 2: Talent Retention, Development, and Recruitment

Pillar 3: Effective Communication

Pillar 4: Impactful Services and Support

The SPOC Committee meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month

via zoom from 4 – 5 PM. Meeting minutes and attachments are available at:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cHkUYz7otPFNiJUtN5AiMozBV7dwb_tv

Property for Sale at 51 Red School Lane, Kellogg, MN – SOLD!

Anchor Point Church in Wabasha, MN purchased the former River Valley Academy and SAIL Program location from HVED for \$160,000.00. Closing was held at noon on Wednesday, March 25, 2026.

We are excited that our former school will continue to serve the Kellogg community well into the future. Congratulations, APC!



Location: 51 Red School Lane, Kellogg, MN

Open House for SAIL, SPECTRUM, and River Valley Academy - ALC



1213 Gilmore Avenue, Winona, MN Wednesday, August 26, 2026 from 2 – 6 PM

- Celebrate the journey of transitioning programs to one central site
- Tour the entire facility
- Recognize individuals who have dedicated time and effort to the project
- Program time to be announced
- HVED regular Board meeting at 6:30 PM

FORWARD TOGETHER Grant Apprenticeship Program potential for a new cohort for the spring semester!



The Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$3.5 million per year (ongoing) for a registered teacher apprenticeship competitive grant program. This program is open to paraprofessionals throughout HVED who would like to work in their current role and earn a bachelor’s degree to become a fully licensed special education teacher in EBD, ASD, or ABS through Minnesota State University – Mankato. The cohort for this virtual program begins this fall. If interested or to learn more, contact Deb Marcotte at dmarcotte@hved.org or via text or cell phone at 507-429-1721.

River Valley Academy Area Learning Center Students Attend Career Force Winona Job Fair

Work-based Learning Coordinator, Lori Pagel, who serves the RVA ALC Program, has collaborated with Autumn Herber, Workforce Development Supervisor for MN DEED Winona Career Force, to provide a guest speaker for students in preparation for individual mock interviews for RVA students with Career Force Staff on the campus of Minnesota State College SE. This Work Seminar experience was followed by a real-world career investigation event at the Winona Job & Career Fair on March 24. Kennedy Ness, ALC Teacher, and Ariel Birkel, ALC Paraprofessional chaperoned the students. d provided insight into the students’ experiences at the job fair. See the insights and photos on page 4.



A special thank you to Lori Pagel, Autumn Herber, Ariel Birkel, and Kennedy Ness.

We appreciate your extra efforts!

Embracing Partnerships and Possibilities to Improve Lives



How did the students respond initially and at the conclusion?

When we first arrived, the students were very nervous and visibly overwhelmed. I reminded them to stay calm, trust the preparation they had been doing for months in class, and believe in themselves. I noticed that *Career Force* was the first table near the entrance, and because students were already familiar with their staff through prior school visits and interviews at their office, I guided our group to start there. After introducing the group, I asked the representative to help the students get started. She reviewed key strategies with them, which helped ease their anxiety. By the end of the event, every student expressed that they were genuinely glad they had attended. Each one identified a favorite booth, and several shared they were surprised by opportunities they hadn't known existed. They appreciated that some positions were immediate entry-level jobs while others felt more like long-term career pathways.

What did students learn that can be applied to future employment opportunities?

Students learned the importance of confidence, preparation, and self-advocacy when engaging with potential employers. They practiced approaching professionals, asking meaningful questions, and making a positive first impression. Many realized that exploring a wide range of booths—even those they didn't initially think they'd be interested in—can reveal unexpected opportunities.

How did the business representatives respond to the students?



Business representatives were very interactive and encouraging. As I checked in at various booths, all of them shared positive feedback about how our students presented themselves. One event organizer sought me out specifically to commend a student who found a phone in the bathroom and took the initiative to turn it in so it could be returned to its owner. This reflected well on our students' maturity, problem-solving abilities, and integrity.

Feedback from Autumn Herber, Workforce Development Supervisor with Winona Career Force

Autumn was excited to see our students and expressed that her prior connection with them contributed to their comfort and success at the job fair. She was pleased with their engagement and proud of how confidently they navigated the event.



Advice from students for future RVA attendees

Students would encourage their peers to attend next time and make the most of the experience. Their main advice was to keep an open mind and visit as many booths as possible—because you never know what opportunity might “surprise you” if you give it a chance.

Text provided by: Kennedy Ness, General Education Teacher, River Valley Academy – ALC, Hiawatha Valley Education District

Top right: Amber, Mylee, Helena, and Gavin stop at the *Express Employment* booth and discover a wide variety of career opportunities.

Center right: Dee interacts with the *MN Department of Transportation* representatives.

Bottom right: Landyn, Anesia, and Autumn check out *McNeilus Steel, Inc.* from Dodge Center. Top left: Olivia makes a connection with *Families First of Minnesota* who shared career opportunities in the early childhood education field.

Bottom left: Anesia, Autumn, Landyn, and Ms. K demonstrate their appreciation. Well done!

