



# MAINE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL EAST

2601 West Dempster Street, Park Ridge, Illinois 60068-1177 847-825-4484 fax: 847-692-8260

**Dr. Michael W. Pressler**  
Principal

**Dr. Linda L. Rutschke**  
Associate Principal

**Dino F. Di Legge**  
Assistant Principal  
Students

**Allison M. Gest**  
Assistant Principal  
Teaching & Learning

**Michael C. Wartick**  
Assistant Principal  
Student Services

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## District 207's Best for Academic Achievement: Nicole K. Kasperek

On behalf of the faculty and staff of Maine East High School, I am pleased to name Nicole Kasperek as "District 207's Best" in the area of Academic Achievement.

A review of Nicole's transcript history will show that she has consistently taken a full schedule of accelerated and Advanced Placement courses all four years of school, and has earned an A or A+ in every one of those classes. Currently, she is taking AP English and Literature, AP US Comparative Government & Politics, AP Calculus AB, AP Biology, and AP Spanish Language. She is also an active member of the Gifted Lyceum program and an accomplished member of the school's orchestra program.

Time spent working with Nicole will show that she has an incredibly calm demeanor, focused work habits, and a strong interest in personal growth. Her counselor, Suzy Caliendo, notes:

*"As she has progressed through high school, Nicole has developed the ability to take academic and performance risks with confidence. As a sophomore student, she applied for a Spanish immersion program in Madrid. She accepted their offer to attend and came back to school that next fall excited to share her personal growth and experiences. As she began junior year, Nicole arrived with a new passion for immersive, experiential learning. She enthusiastically worked with her Polish School to plan an immersion trip to Poland over the Thanksgiving holiday, and also began to get excited about the summer Gifted Lyceum service trip. She is an engaged learner in all areas of her life. In her time at Maine East, Nicole has never settled for mediocrity or the path of least resistance. She continually challenges herself with our rigorous curriculum and takes every opportunity to explore new ground. She is a bright, articulate, and motivated young adult."*

Judy Tyler, Gifted Lyceum Coordinator and AP Biology teacher offered the following insights on Nicole:

*"I have known Nicole for a year and a half as a student in my AP Biology class and also my Gifted Leadership for Life class. Nicole is driven, yet also kind and gentle, and she works extremely well with others. I absolutely adore having her in class; and while she is extremely advanced academically, she is not intimidating to her fellow classmates and seems to truly enjoy interacting with her peers. She isn't pushy or forceful, but reflective and positive. Her joy of learning is contagious to her fellow collaborative group mates, and I often see her taking the lead in small group discussions and problem-solving efforts. Recently, one of her classmates was absent on a block day and Nicole made sure to include this student on google hangouts. I watched Nicole interact with this student (who is battling a chronic illness) fully in their group task and learning. I was inspired by her commitment to including and valuing the contributions that this student could provide. This desire to learn from others is what drives Nicole. She loves to listen to others' perspectives and revise her thinking about topics. We recently had a summative exam that covered six weeks of coursework. Nicole received a strong A on this challenging exam, but also came in on her free period to work on test corrections to fix up her thinking. She literally only got three*

*wrong on the test, but Nicole wanted to work on those questions to truly understand them deeply. She has a real desire to understand the concepts in Biology and is devoted to learning.”*

Nicole has been particularly impressive in her skills as a linguist, both in English and in the Spanish language. Greg Lundberg was her AP English Language teacher last year and stated:

*“Nicole is an absolutely top-notch writer: she's clear, thoughtful, detailed in the presentation of her ideas, and even philosophical at times. She is a careful reader of both fiction and non-fiction, and she has the power to express her ideas about what she reads with force and clarity. Grammar and mechanics matter to her as well; she understands the importance of getting the details right. I always felt she was working at a college level, even as a junior - and she earned a "5" on the English Language & Composition exam. Impressive!”*

Her current English teacher for AP English Literature & Composition, Dave Hessert, expressed a similar assessment of her work:

*“Nicole embodies the idea that excellence in her everyday practice translates into excellence in the big performance. Everything she does, she does to perfection. Her answers to questions on everyday homework are as sophisticated and careful as her essay writing. Her writing is very thoughtful, as well. Nicole never rushes through an assignment just to get it done, but rather, each piece of writing is a thoughtful reflection on the question at hand. She is a sensitive reader who is alive to nuance in language. I can always count on her for mature insights into any complex text.”*

Finally, Tomas Cintado, her Spanish language teacher last year simply stated,

*“Nicole is one of the most skilled linguists that I had the pleasure to teach at Maine East High School. She intuitively understands the nuances of the language and her pronunciation and understanding only need time abroad to fully develop into a native speaker level. On top of that, Nicole is hardworking, creative and an excellent person.”*

Math teacher Alaina Vasta echoes much of what has been stated above, adding that Nicole inspires her to be a better teacher:

*“Nicole is an exceptional student for many reasons. Not only is she academically successful, but she actively seeks out opportunities to assist her peers when they are struggling with new ideas, and is interested in understanding why an idea makes sense rather than memorizing ideas for the sake of a test. She is the type of student that only comes along once in a while, and truly pushes me to be a better teacher. It has been a true pleasure to have her as a student this year.”*

Nicole is on the cusp of great things. By all accounts, she is a reflective goal setter who uses her intuition to self evaluate and create meaningful change in her life. According to her teachers, Nicole’s drive to be her “best self” has been a cornerstone of her personality over the past year, and it seems that she is just getting started. We are extremely proud of Nicole’s accomplishments and proud to recognize her as one of “207’s Best”!

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael W. Pressler  
Principal