



MAINE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL EAST

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District 207's Best for Achievement as a Technology Leader/Innovator: Mansoor Syed

On behalf of the faculty and staff of Maine East High School, I am pleased to name Mansoor Syed as "District 207's Best" for his achievement as a Technology Leader/Innovator in our school.

Mansoor Syed | Maine Township High School East | Chrome Depot, Intern | Technology Department, Technician Intern | Tech Genius President | JV and Varsity Tennis Manager | MERC President | Sci-Fi Executive Vice President | Election Judge 2018 |

At East, we have talked about branding and optics for several years; typically as an institution, and increasingly for individual students as they start to create their own brand during their time in school in preparation for life after graduation. I noticed the signature block above in a recent email I received from Mansoor, and it struck me how elegantly he is communicating his passions, achievements, and involvement as a student in our school.

A review of his transcript will show that he has consistently taken challenging classes including accelerated, Advanced Placement, and Dual Credit courses over the past four years. These have included AP Psych, AP Calculus BC, AP Biology, AP US/Comparative Government & Politics, AP English Literature & Composition, AP Physics 1, AP U.S. History, AP Language and Composition, Cybersecurity, Virtual Enterprises International (VEI), AP Computer Science A, and Computer Programming. His GPA is very strong and he has consistently made Honor Roll, which is particularly noteworthy in view of two significant life experiences: Mansoor describes himself as having been raised in a strict and traditional Asian family, teaching him to always do his best. He explained that during the second semester of his freshman year family commitments required him to travel to Pakistan for the entire third quarter of second semester, which resulted in all of his grades dropping to Fs by the time he returned for fourth quarter. Despite this, he worked hard to bring nearly all of his grades back to A's. More recently, serious health conditions of a family member resulted in many absences, and once again he demonstrated responsibility in communicating with his teachers and counselor, and a disciplined approach to completing class requirements with virtually no negative impact on his grades - and rave reviews from his teachers. According to Mansoor, "Simply giving up for me is not an option - I take as many tries as I need to in order to get a concept correct."

In addition to his strong academic performance and commitment to honor family, Mansoor has found time to be active in the co- and extracurricular life of Maine East. The following is a list of his activities:

- Maine East Recreational Club, Founder and President
- National Honor Society, Member
- Mu Alpha Theta
- Rotary Interact (4 years)
- JV & Varsity Tennis (Member and Manager - 4 years)
- Tech Genius, Executive Vice President and later President (4 years)
- Chrome Depot Volunteer (4 years)
- Robotics Club
- Assistant Building Computer Technician
- Ping Pong Club

Most of these are familiar organizations, with one exception: MERC - the Maine East Recreation Club, for which Mansoor is the Founder and President. I believe he would describe this as his most meaningful achievement based on his vision, initiative, and perseverance to create and promote the organization where students gather to play games, compete in various tournaments, and casually hang out after school. Faculty sponsor Dale Lasky shared that, "Mansoor has been an organized leader who encourages students to get involved. In fact, there were over 50 students who competed in the last tournament. In addition to his tremendous marketing skills, he has also been able to structure successful fundraising events - and he has done all of this on his own, with little help from his friends or classmates." Mansoor stated that the experience taught him how to be more responsible, how to manage his time, to understand how deadlines should be worked toward, and how to move a large group of students towards a common goal.

John Schwan has been influential in Mansoor's educational experience at Maine East and offered the following remarks:

As a teacher, I have been privileged to recommend many deserving Maine East (ME) students for college admission and scholarships. As I reflect on these exceptional young women and men, they all displayed academic and personal character traits that allowed them to be effective students...some were well organized, some were creative, some were strong academically, etc. Mansoor, however, is different from any of these students. He truly represents the "total package." Mansoor is one of those student leaders who bring a blend of technical skills, creativity, organization, and high intelligence combined with an energy level that is unmatched.

Mansoor is a former member of the Capstone Business/IT Virtual Enterprise International (VEI) Class. In this class, he was one of my best-ever students. The class is taken by students that have a serious interest in majoring in business or Information Technology at the college level. As a result, I have become very familiar with Mansoor's academic skills, his character, as well as how he relates to his fellow students. VEI is an experiential class taught around the world where students create and manage a global online business in the classroom. Mansoor interviewed for the Chief of Information Technology position with VEI's Board of Directors which is composed of successful industry executives who volunteer their time to guide the students in this innovative class. The Board selected Mansoor as the IT Chief due to his extraordinary technology, leadership, and communication skills, with one of the Board members commenting that Mansoor displayed a technical problem-solving thought process during the interview that would benefit any technology business. Mansoor went on to lead his IT department to national and international prominence. VEI recognized a mobile app, website, and social media strategy that Mansoor and his team created as exemplary compared to others produced by students in over 5000 VEI classes taught worldwide. This year Mansoor gave his time to mentor our new VEI IT team. None of the current IT team members had used Firebase technology in the development of a website or mobile app. Mansoor provided some in-depth guidance resulting in a First place finish at this year's VEI Great Lake Regional Trade Show. In addition to excelling in my classroom, Mansoor has used his skills to make Maine East a better place for students, staff, and the community.

Another of Mansoor's significant achievements centers on his work over the past several months with the District 207 Education Foundation to help them reimagine and launch a new and improved website. I received detailed and glowing letters from three of the Foundation's board members, Sandy Deines, Scott Williams, and Carolyn Uhlig. The following is Carolyn's letter which summarizes Mansoor's work with the Foundation:

Last spring Scott Williams had been asked to sit in on John's VEI class to give students feedback on their presentations. Scott was blown away by these kids and suggested to the foundation board of trustees that we could possibly ask John if he could recommend a few students to help us rebuild our website page by page. We had an existing Google site that wasn't being regularly updated and was really only used for our benefit dinners. John introduced us to Mansoor and two of his student colleagues. We met with the three students during their regular class time and told them about our site, how we struggled to update it,

and that we were looking for help; they were receptive and seemed excited about the prospect of working on updating our site.

Mansoor soon became the lead website guy. He was AWESOME!! We had no idea what we needed and how to do it, so the students slowly guided us into what they would need to do to make our site more up to date. I think we met with them at least once a week for a month to go through page by page of what we wanted our site to look like. They gave us homework and we turned it back so that they could produce a finished product. The few things that impressed me so much about Mansoor was his gentle personality, his responsiveness, and his overall enthusiasm to help us figure this out. If we didn't have answers about the site he would help us find it out. He worked with Google, and a few of the district "tech" guys and - most importantly - he worked with us during the summer months to get this done. Mansoor was the constant in all this work. In fact this year we were looking for more help to add things to our site for our Anniversary dinner and we called on Mansoor, who responded quickly and enlisted the assistance of another student to help. The two of them met with us after school two times to get our benefit invitation and payment online. I cannot tell you how much this experience has meant to me. I have been volunteering within my kid's school districts for years and part of that is to be involved in my children's educational journey and to meet their peer group. Maine East has some terrific kids. I cannot tell you how impressed I have been with Mansoor and his dedication and work ethic during this whole process. Mansoor is a great reflection of Maine East and D207 in general. Our future is bright with students like Mansoor!

Several of Mansoor's past and current teachers were consistent in their descriptions of him as upbeat, positive, diligent, and capable - a terrific student, tech genius, and human being who possesses a work ethic that is truly admirable. Social Science teacher Jen Conlon encapsulated it in this statement: "Mansoor is understated. He's the guy who can fix the LCD projector or the glitches in the classroom computer, and with a smile, as easily as he can make a meaningful contribution in an AP Comparative Government and Politics class." Everyone commented that Mansoor is their personal "IT guy" prompting me to wonder how we'll get along next year when he's no longer here! The breadth of Mansoor's technology, academic, and community service accomplishments is impressive. We are proud of his accomplishments and the outstanding manner in which he represents himself, his family, and our entire school. We are honored to recognize Mansoor Syed as 207's Best!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael W. Pressler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being more prominent.

Dr. Michael W. Pressler
Principal