

## Eastridge honored for paying students' way

**JUSTIN MURPHY**

@CITIZENMURPHY

Malcolm Knight-Tyler has a challenging schedule for his senior year at Eastridge High School: International Baccalaureate courses in English and Spanish and dual-credit Monroe Community College economics, among others.

Keeping up with that work is enough of a worry for him and his classmates, so the East Irondequoit Central School District has removed a second worry: paying for it.

Eastridge High School last week received a "School of Opportunity" designation from the National Education Policy Center. It was one of 17 schools in Colorado and New York to get the honor, which is intended to highlight schools that are succeeding in ways that cannot be measured by test

See **EASTRIDGE**, Page **10A**



**Spencer Cole, Yakira Coleman and Nina Swart watch Kristen Wakulchuk leap through the air while rehearsing her dance solo during an International Baccalaureate dance program at Eastridge High School.**

PHOTOS BY MAX SCHULTE/@MAXROCPHOTO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

---



**Aryanna Anderson rehearses her dance solo during the dance program at Eastridge, which received a “School of Opportunity” designation from the National Education Policy Center.**

## Article Continued Below

---

[See Eastridge on Page A10](#)

### Eastridge

Continued from Page 3A

scores. The awards will be expanded to the entire country next year.

Knight-Tyler is among about 500 Eastridge students who take either IB or Advanced Placement courses. Those are recognized as highly rigorous and come with a tough exam at the end of the year.

It costs \$91 to take an AP exam. Registering for IB is \$160, plus \$110 per subject. Those costs can add up quickly and discourage high-performing students without the means to pay for them.

The organizations that offer the programs offer price reductions for students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, and some districts offer further help to some students. But East Irondequoit is uncommon in paying the entire cost for all students.

“We decided years ago we were going to make sure that no matter the economic background of a kid, we were going to give them the same access as everyone else,” Eastridge principal Tim Heaphy said. “One of our goals is to push kids as far as they can. The kid who’s thinking of taking (an advanced course), that knocks down the barrier for them to try it out.”

The district spent about \$35,000 on AP tests this year and about \$38,000 on IB registration. Of that, it anticipates being reimbursed about \$5,400.

Fifty-three percent of its students are economically disadvantaged, according to state data, the highest rate of any suburban district in Monroe County. By comparison, 38 percent of the students in IB classes are economically disadvantaged.

Though the proportion isn’t quite equal, it’s far ahead of what many districts have been able to accomplish. Getting poor students into high-level courses that will prepare them for college is a vexing issue for schools across the country.

Knight-Tyler, who received a scholarship to attend Keuka College next year, said the district’s decision makes students more likely to tackle challenging courses.

“It builds more interest for kids in the lower grades because they can get high-level credit and they don’t have to pay for it,” he said. “It helped me to see what the work will be like (in college).”

Eastridge also has an agreement with Monroe Community College for its students to take dual-credit classes in the high school. The relationship includes guest speakers and other initiatives.

“They understand the expectation is that they take rigorous classes,” Heaphy said. “What we don’t want is for a kid to worry about

whether this will put a strain on Mom.”

[JMURPHY7@Democratand Chronicle.com](mailto:JMURPHY7@Democratand Chronicle.com)

Powered by TECNAVIA

Copyright © 2015 Democrat and Chronicle 05/12/2015