

Des Moines Public Schools

DMP

COMMUNITY REPORT

2013-2014 YEAR IN REVIEW



Greetings:



For the third year in a row, I am pleased to provide you with a copy of this special edition of the DMPS Community Report, providing a look back at some of the many accomplishments from this past school year.

With more than 32,000 students and nearly 5,000 employees there are countless success stories throughout our district each and every day. This report simply scratches the surface of the great work, both in and out of the classroom, by our students, teachers, staff and volunteers.

Highlights from this past year include:

- Our graduation rate continues to go up and our dropout rate

continues to go down. In fact, both figures are at their highest and lowest level, respectively, in the past five years.

- Student achievement on assessment exams saw growth across every grade level and among nearly every demographic group in Des Moines.
- Enrollment at Des Moines Public Schools continues to increase at a time when many large districts are seeing a decline. Over the past five years, DMPS had the 3rd largest enrollment gain in Iowa.
- DMPS continues to be Iowa's leader in Advanced Placement courses. Central Academy was the state's top-ranked AP program, for the second time ever all five of our comprehensive high schools were listed as Top 50 schools on the Iowa AP Index, and a record number of students took AP exams.
- The federal Turnaround Arts program, which has contributed to the success of Findley Elementary School, was expanded to include

Cattell, Harding, Madison and Oak Park schools.

- Two more schools – Meredith Middle School and Hoover High School – were accredited as International Baccalaureate schools.
- The new Edmunds Elementary School opened in the heart of our city, the first entirely new school building to open in Des Moines since 2007.

It is my great honor to serve as Superintendent of Des Moines Public Schools. There is never a day that goes by when I don't appreciate the opportunity to work with so many people dedicated to providing every student the best possible education.

Best wishes,

Thomas Ahart, Ed.D
Superintendent

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2013-2014 Board of Directors

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More DMPS News and Information Available Online and On Air

Des Moines Public Schools is the largest provider of public education in Iowa, which means one newsletter alone cannot provide all of the information or share all of the stories about everything taking place in your school district. More news and information is always available online and on air.

ONLINE

You can find information on our schools, news stories, data, contacts, and more on the DMPS web site at www.dmschools.org. In addition, follow DMPS on the following social media sites:

- Facebook: [facebook.com/dmschools](https://www.facebook.com/dmschools)
- Twitter: twitter.com/dmschools
- Pinterest: [pinterest.com/dmschools](https://www.pinterest.com/dmschools)

ON THE AIR

Tune in to **DMPS-TV on Mediacom Cable channels 12.1 and 85** at any time to see stories about programs and events from throughout the school district. If you do not subscribe to cable television, you can still view stories online at www.dmschools.org. And if you're in the mood for interesting talk and music, tune into Des Moines Public Schools' own radio station - **KDPS 88.1** - where your hosts are students from Central Campus and GrandView University.

The Des Moines Independent Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the district's Office of Human Resources, 901 Walnut Street, Des Moines, IA 50309; phone: 515-242-7911.

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2014!

Between May 21 and 25, hundreds of students marked the completion of high school and celebrated earning their diploma at eight commencement ceremonies. Congratulations to all of the members of the Class of 2014, along with their parents, teachers, family and friends who supported them along the way. To view any of our 2014 commencements, visit www.youtube.com/dmpsty.



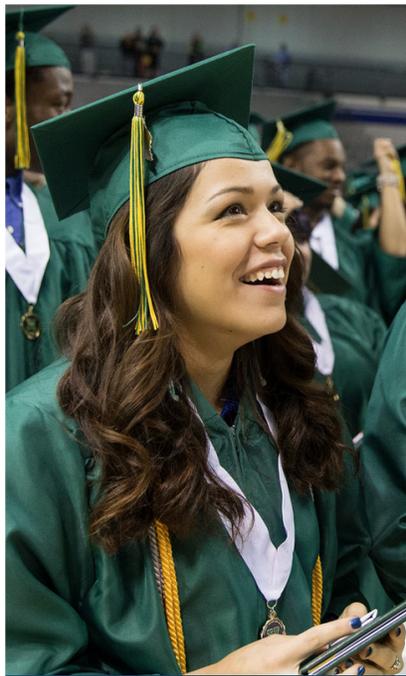
District-Wide Programs



Scavo High School



East High School



Hoover High School



Lincoln High School



North High School



Roosevelt High School



Ruby Van Meter

BUILDINGS **Magazine: DMPS** **“A Grade Above** **the Rest”**

What do the Empire State Building and Des Moines Public Schools have in common?

Both the iconic skyscraper in NYC and the largest school district in Iowa were featured in *Buildings* magazine for ongoing work to manage facilities in the most efficient way possible.

Buildings highlighted several of the tactics employed at Des Moines Public Schools to be more



energy efficient, such as the use of Portfolio Manager to monitor utility consumption at our 60+ schools and facilities. The magazine notes

that DMPS spends an average of \$111 per student on energy costs, \$70 below the national average of \$181.53 per student! ■



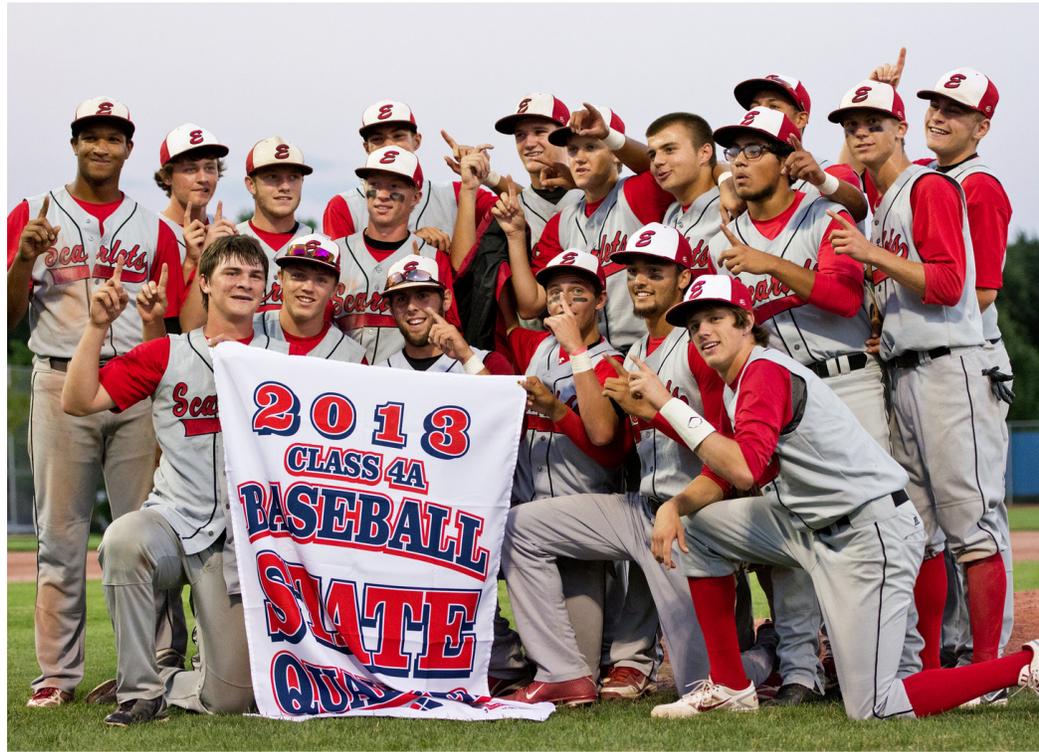
1,500 Students **Begin 2013-14** **School Year in July**

While most students across the state were still enjoying a summer vacation, nearly 1,500 Des Moines students returned to school on July 18 at Capitol View, Moulton and River Woods schools.

Des Moines Public Schools' continuous calendar schools begin the school year in mid-July and end in early June. Breaks are spread throughout the year to optimize teaching and learning. In addition to a six-week summer break, students have a three-week fall break, a one-week winter break, a two-week spring break, and a week-long break in April. More students attend continuous calendar schools in Des Moines than the total enrollment at more than 280 Iowa school districts. ■

Scarlets Return to State Baseball Tourney

The East High baseball team compiled a glossy 37-5 record, rising to 3rd in the state rankings and advancing all the way to the semifinals of the state tournament before losing to eventual 4A champion Johnston. Hopes remain high for the summer of 2014 as the team lost only two seniors and four returning members (juniors Colby Carmichael, Robert Hansen and Malique Ziegler, and sophomore Chino Alcala) were named to the 2013 Class 4A All-State first team by the Iowa Newspaper Association. ■



Health Fair Helps Hundreds Prepare for School

The annual Polk County Jumpstart Back to School Health Fair was held on July 27 at East High School and again piled up some impressive numbers getting kids prepped and ready to go. Marci Cordaro, DMPS Health Services Supervisor, reports that 1,800 backpacks were distributed filled with school supplies and 1,189 physical exams were administered, not to mention 560 dental screenings, 107 mental wellness checkups and 250 immunizations. All of the services were provided free of charge! ■



AUGUST 2013

New Edmunds Opens to Serve Students, Community

In August, the ribbon was cut at the new Edmunds Elementary School, less than 15 months after groundbreaking.

The red-bricked structure was built just north of the old building, located on the edge of downtown Des Moines in the historic Sherman Hills neighborhood.

“The building is remarkable!” Principal Jaynette Rittman said. “It is providing our community with a new beginning, which is a wonderful opportunity. We are able to bring back our neighborhood students.”

The school had a construction budget of \$10.25 million and is the first new school built in Des Moines since George Washington Carver Community School opened in 2007.

Once a magnet school for fine arts, Edmunds now aspires to be a more traditional neighborhood school serving the Sherman Hills, Oakridge and Drake Park communities. The total square footage of the new Edmunds nearly doubles the old building and the design of the interior space incorporates many features suggested by Edmunds teachers. ■



DMPS Partners with Drake, DMACC on 3D Alliance

Leaders from Des Moines Public Schools, Drake University and Des Moines Area Community College partnered to recruit, train and hire more minority teachers for Iowa's capital city.

The goal of the new partnership – called the 3D Coalition – is to identify aspiring minority teachers in Des Moines.

In 2012-13, minority students at Des Moines Public Schools, the largest school district in Iowa, made up 53.4% of enrollment. During that same time, only 10% of administrators and 4.5% of certified teachers were minorities.

DMPS, Drake, and DMACC recognize the efficiencies of working together to strengthen the urban community and they continue to work to identify other potential allies and revenue sources.

The new program will develop an academic plan for each student, customized according to their educational background. Other support for students will include educational pathway development and advising; financial planning, including the identification of grants and financial aid opportunities; mentoring and seminars; technology assistance; tuition assistance, including



books and fees; flexible work schedules and student teaching stipends.

After completion of the program, graduates will be hired as DMPS teachers and work in the district for at least as many years as they were supported by 3D. ■



Urban Leadership 101

DMPS took the first team from Iowa to the Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Festival in Chicago. They returned bearing treasure in the form of experience, memories and the seeds of future growth. Those seeds were nurtured with the curriculum of Urban Leadership 101, a new course that was launched this year at Central Campus by teachers Emily Lang and Kristopher Rollins. ■



May is the traditional month of commencement but Pomp and Circumstance always has a nice ring to it, even in August. Fifty-one more students were added to the DMPS Class of 2013 when they received their diplomas in the district's third annual summer commencement ceremony on August 13 at Hoyt Sherman Place. Superintendent Tom Ahart was the guest speaker and he reminded the better-late-than-never grads that the ceremony was called a commencement because it marks the beginning of something – their lives as independent persons. ■

School Board Election Results in Two Veterans, Two Newcomers

In September, Des Moines residents elected four board members; two veterans and two newcomers. Connie Boesen and Teree Caldwell-Johnson were the incumbents and Rob Barron and Toussaint Cheatom were elected to their first terms.

The seven members of the Des Moines School Board are elected to four-year terms at elections held on the second Tuesday in September in odd-numbered years. The next school board election will be in September, 2015. ■



Des Moines School Board (left to right): Pat Sweeney, Teree Caldwell-Johnson, Bill Howard, Cindy Elsbernd, Superintendent Tom Ahart, Rob Barron, Connie Boesen and Toussaint Cheatom.

Student Achievement Shows Growth at All Grade Levels

Students all across the district are working hard in school and the latest results from the Iowa Assessments prove it.

The annual Iowa Assessments are the statewide tests that measure student proficiency in reading and math. Students in grades 3-8 and 11 are tested. Test results showed student growth across every grade level and among nearly every demographic group in Des Moines.

In grades 3-5, students saw an overall increase of 2.4%. In

fact, all student demographic groups, with the exception of Asian students, saw growth. In grades 6-8, the overall increase was 1.2%, including growth among every student subgroup. And in grade 11, the overall increase was 4.5% with growth in every student subgroup at that level as well.

The growth in mathematics was nearly as impressive, with increases at all grade levels. In grades 3-5, students overall saw an increase of 1.7%. In addition, all student demographic groups increased



with the exception of students with disabilities, who remained the same, and Asian students, who registered a slight drop. ■

AIB College of Business and Des Moines Public Schools launched a new athletics partnership with a groundbreaking ceremony at the Lincoln High School baseball/softball fields. AIB's new softball and baseball programs will use the Lincoln South softball and baseball fields for practice and home games. The school district will be responsible for most maintenance of the fields, and AIB will contribute to the cost of renovating them.



11 Students Named National Merit Semifinalists

Eleven high school seniors in Des Moines were chosen as 2014 Semi-Finalists for the National Merit Scholarship, placing them among the top young scholars in the state and nation.

The DMPS students were selected based on their strong performance on the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) test they took in the fall of 2012. National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists were Edel Aron, Granger Carty, Patrick Hiatt, Austin Lin, Lillian Nellans, Lydia Phillips, Maxwell Pilcher, Cianna Rothwell, Ryan Utke, Quinn Veasman and Reid Wade. ■

Graduation Walk Renews Route to Diploma

On September 21, the annual search and rescue mission known as the Graduation Walk (formerly Reach Out to Dropouts) hit the streets of Des Moines for the fifth time and cast the widest net yet. Their goal was to re-engage not only students who officially left school, but also to reach kids who fell behind in credits and get them caught up.

Three hundred volunteers knocked on 782 doors, a record number of

home visits since under-credited students were targeted as well as actual dropouts. Not everyone was home, in which case a door-hanger was left to explain who'd been there and why, along with some contact info. But the troops did have 391 conversations and preliminary results indicated that 111 kids scheduled follow-up appointments to explore alternative pathways to the all-important diploma.

The event's corporate sponsor was Wells Fargo and the other



community partner was United Way which has been a driving force behind RO2DO/Grad Walk since the event's inception.

Save the date: this year's Grad Walk is scheduled for August 23, 2014. ■

OCTOBER 2013

Hoover One of First Recipients Of Iowa STEM Grant

Hoover High School was one of the first four recipients in the state of a new \$50,000 grant award by the Governor's STEM Advisory Council in support of advancing education in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The award, which will be matched by DMPS, will help Hoover further develop its new STEM Academy, established in the fall of 2012 with a cohort of 102 students. The funding from the grant and the district will help tailor classrooms for STEM education. ■



Ten Schools Honored by HealthierUS School Challenge

Hillis Elementary School is making news and realizing success through their work to support and improve the health of our children and our community.

As part of their effort, healthy items are featured on menus and physical education and activity are emphasized. Hillis was one of ten Des Moines schools recognized by a federal program for their success.

The initiative at these ten schools is part of the HealthierUS School Challenge, a voluntary national certification initiative for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. Sponsored by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the initiative encourages all schools to



take a leadership role in helping students make healthier eating and physical activity choices that will last a lifetime. HUSSC schools work hard to change their nutrition environment in order to (1) improve the quality of the foods served, (2) provide students with nutrition education, and (3) provide students with physical education and opportunities for physical activity.

Hillis was honored for their success with the Healthier US School Challenge Silver award. The recognition included a \$1,000 award along with a plaque and banner to display at the school.

Hillis was joined by nine other DMPS schools receiving HealthierUS School Challenge awards this year: Brubaker, Garton, Jefferson, Lovejoy, Monroe, Stowe, Studebaker, Windsor, and Wright elementary schools. ■

DMPS Honored by National Organizations for Excellence in Financial Reporting

For the seventh year in a row, Des Moines Public Schools was recognized by two national organizations for financial excellence.

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) recognized DMPS

for excellence in governmental accounting in October, 2013. DMPS then won recognition from The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for excellence in financial reporting in May, 2014.

According to ASBO, the award “confirms the school business

office’s commitment to financial accountability and transparency.”

GFOA presenters said their award is made to organizations that demonstrate a “spirit of full disclosure to clearly communicate its financial story.” ■



Kristi Wickre, Smouse Opportunity School



Chef Elaine Wolf, Central Campus



Brian Reece, Central Academy



Jeff Marks, Roosevelt High School

DMPS Teachers Finalists for State, National Honors

In October it was announced that two of Iowa’s five finalists for Teacher of the Year were from Des Moines Public Schools: Kristi Wickre of Smouse Opportunity School, and Elaine Wolf, head of culinary arts at Central Campus.

Also in October it was announced that two of the state’s three finalists for the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching were DMPS educators: Jeff Marks and Brian Reece, who both teach math at Roosevelt High School and Central Academy, respectively. ■

NOVEMBER 2013

Enrollment at DMPS Continues To Grow

While larger, more urban school districts across the nation have seen a decline in student enrollment in recent years, Des Moines Public Schools continues to buck that trend with a third straight year of triple-digit enrollment increases.

Preliminary numbers reported by DMPS to the Iowa Department of Education indicate a total of 32,404 students enrolled for the 2013-14

school year, an increase of 342 over the previous year.

DMPS enrollment increased by 515 students in 2012-13 and the year before that by 571, the largest increase of any school district in Iowa.

To put the enrollment increase in perspective, the gain of 1,450 new students at DMPS over the past five years is larger than the total enrollment at more than 280 school districts in Iowa. ■



History Relived During Tinker Tour at Harding And North

The Supreme Court's landmark ruling affirming students' first amendment rights in *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* has withstood the test of time.

The Tinkers themselves, sibling plaintiffs John and Mary Beth, revisited North High School and Harding Middle School during their nationwide Tinker Tour. In a sense the tour began around Christmastime in 1965 when a handful of DMPS students defied



a district rule by donning black armbands and wearing them to school in silent protest of the escalating war in Viet Nam. They were suspended, whereupon the ACLU took up the cause of those who chose to appeal their suspensions, first to the local school board and ultimately all the way to the highest court in the land which famously ruled, by a resounding vote of 7-2, that neither students nor



teachers “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.”

John Tinker recalled how the student protesters met with opposition in many forms besides the school rule they broke: “People threatened us and splashed red paint on our driveway. It got to be a wry joke of our mother’s that ‘People say we’re Communists, but we’re not – we’re Methodists.’” ■

One Hundred and Seventy-Three Students Named AP Scholars

One hundred and seventy-three students who took Advanced Placement classes at Des Moines Public Schools earned AP honors from the College Board, the second most ever recorded by the school district. Students from East, Hoover, Lincoln, North and Roosevelt high schools, as well as Central Academy, were represented among the honorees.

“The success of these students is an inspiration, and their nationally recognized accomplishments in the classroom are testament to their talent and intelligence as well as to the great teachers and educational opportunities available here in Des Moines,” said Superintendent Tom Ahart.

The College Board annually releases the AP Scholars list for each

school district based on the results of Advanced Placement testing from the previous spring.

Among the 173 students were 16 recognized as AP National Scholars, 52 AP Scholars with Distinction, 33 AP Scholars with Honor, and 88 AP Scholars. Since 1991, 2,394 DMPS students have earned AP Scholars awards, including 307 AP National Scholars. ■

East Leads the State In College Application Campaign

What better place than the library at East High School for Iowa Governor Terry Branstad’s official proclamation commending all of the Iowa high schools that were part of this year’s Iowa College Application Campaign?

Not only is it in the same neighborhood as the governor’s office, but East racked up some of the most impressive numbers among the 33 participating schools across the state. Three hundred and sixty Scarlet seniors, or 80% of the Class of 2014, completed at least one college application during the campaign, more than any other participating school could boast, and many of them represent the first generation in their family with collegiate ambitions.

“Some students told me they wouldn’t have applied for college if they didn’t do it as a group,” said



Governor Terry Branstad displays a proclamation he signed at East High commending schools for participating in the Iowa College Application Campaign.

East counselor Roxanne Kucharski. “They said it helped to be guided through the process because they didn’t know how to go about it as first-generation college applicants in their families.”

The Iowa College Application Campaign is part of a national effort to inform students about the college application process. The purpose is

to build awareness and encourage high school students, especially those from underserved populations, to complete college applications during their senior year. All five high schools in Des Moines participated in the College Application Campaign, and in all five more than 50% of the seniors completed at least one college application. ■

DECEMBER 2013

Central Academy Math Team Wins National Championship

Students from Central Academy won first place in the “Math Madness” AMC/Interstellar High School Mathematics National Championship, sponsored by the Mathematical Association of America.

The tournament featured 64 teams from around the country in head-to-

head tournament matches in the style of the NCAA “March Madness” basketball tournament.

This marked the initial full season of the “Math Madness” contest, which was created with the goal of shining some of the competitive spotlight on academics.



During this past season, nearly 10,000 students representing 500 schools across the nation took part. ■



East Senior Rolls Perfect Game

East senior and bowling team member Luke Fisher rolled a perfect game during the season. Luke bowled a 300 in a match against Southeast Polk at Premiere Lanes in Pleasant Hill on December 2. According to East AD Lyle Fedders: “The crowd at the bowling alley was cheering and clapping with every strike. It was one of the coolest moments I have seen at a high school event.” ■



Roosevelt's Lily Nellans Selected for USA's World Schools Debate Team

Two weeks after breaking the all-time National Forensic League's scoring record in speech and debate, Roosevelt senior Lily Nellans was selected for the nine-member team representing the United States in World Schools Debate.

The team takes part in debate competitions around the world,

concluding in Thailand this summer.

Nellans is also a National AP Scholar, a National Merit Scholarship semi-finalist, and a member of the Iowa Department of Education's Learning Council, an advisory committee of high school students from around the state. ■



Josie Burg of the Downtown School being honored as a PAEMST finalist by Judith Spitzli of the Iowa Department of Education. ■

President Obama Names DMPS Educator Recipient of Math and Science Teaching Award

Des Moines Public Schools math teachers are being recognized as some of the most talented in their field. In December, the White House named Josie Burg, a math teacher at the Downtown School, a winner of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

Burg is a native of Decorah who has taught in Des Moines Public Schools for the past eight years. She holds a bachelor's degree from UNI and a master's degree from Drake University. Josie received an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, DC for a recognition ceremony and a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation.

Josie is the tenth DMPS teacher to receive this prestigious national award since its creation in 1983. ■

“Students First” Program Earns National Award

Students First, the school building renovation and improvement plan for Des Moines Public Schools, was recognized for excellence by a top building publication.

Building Operating Management, a magazine for building owners and managers, selected DMPS as one of six recipients in the nation for its annual FMXcellence Recognition award. The award salutes facilities management teams

that add significant value to their organizations’ broader goals. Students First was recognized for its proven track record of improving school buildings to create better learning environments while at the same time improving safety and security, implementing technology upgrades, replacing obsolete equipment with efficient systems, and realizing operational cost savings.

In addition to DMPS, the honorees included The George



Washington University, Leon County Department of Facilities Management, Ohio Department of Transportation, The Westminster Schools, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

This year’s honorees were judged by the editorial staff of the magazine. All of the winning projects will be covered in the August issue of BOM. ■

DMPS Earns National Honors for New Budget Book

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) presented Des Moines Public Schools with their Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, in recognition of our most recent budget publication.

For the just-completed fiscal year, DMPS developed a newly formatted budget and financial statements book. The new format includes better organized information and a more descriptive narrative about the financial goals and objectives of Iowa’s largest school district.

According to the GFOA, “The award represents a significant

achievement by the entity. It reflects the commitment of the governing body and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting. In order to receive the budget award, the entity had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation.”

The award guidelines assessed how well the DMPS budget book served as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide, and a communications device.

In order to receive the award, the DMPS budget book had to be rated “proficient” in all four of the above categories and meet fourteen mandatory criteria within those categories.



“Our staff is very dedicated to making sure our school district’s budget is accessible and comprehensible, and spent a great deal of time and effort last year to develop this new document,” said Thomas Harper, Chief Financial Officer for Des Moines Public Schools. “For those of us in public finance, it is always a great honor to be recognized by GFOA for our good work.” ■

New STEM Partnership Creates Path To Opportunities for Kids in Poverty

Drake University President David Maxwell announced the university will partner with Des Moines Public Schools, Principal Financial Group, and the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines to implement a pilot program called the STEM Pathway Initiative.

The program will provide low-income Des Moines high school students with a pipeline to higher education and employment in high-demand occupations. The proposal was featured at a White House summit hosted by President Barack Obama that focused on increasing

college opportunity for low-income and disadvantaged students.

SPI's first year will pair as many as 20 high school students from DMPS with Drake student mentors and professional mentors at PFG to explore a variety of professional opportunities including actuarial science, accounting, information technology, finance, and insurance. Participating students will have demonstrated ability in math based on eighth grade assessment scores.

Upon completion of high school, qualified students in the program will be admitted to



Drake with necessary financial support. The students will be eligible for paid internships at PFG during their studies at Drake and considered for employment upon completion of their degree and fulfillment of program requirements.

Drake submitted its proposal for the STEM Pipeline Initiative by invitation of White House officials, who asked colleges to commit to plans for increasing college opportunity for low-income and disadvantaged students. The White House summit formally launched a plan of action by the National Economic Council, the Domestic Policy Council, and the Department of Education for improving college access, and included remarks by President Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

“As Iowa’s largest school district, we have made providing greater access to STEM educational programs a priority across all grade levels,” said Tom Ahart, Superintendent of Des Moines Public Schools. “The new STEM Pathway Initiative provides another exciting and rewarding opportunity for students in Des Moines to see firsthand how the things they learn in school can translate to college and careers.” ■



McCombs and Lincoln alum Dr. Vuong Naiyama, a 3rd year medical resident at Iowa Methodist Hospital, shows students a human brain during McCombs' STEM Career Day.

Record Number of Students Take Part in DMPS Science Fair

In this its sixth year, the science fair is not just for middle schools anymore.

In 2009 the event launched with 50 entrants. This year there were 205 projects, 65 of them in the newly added high school division. What accounts for the dramatic growth? Hmm – maybe that’s a topic for someone’s project in 2015.

The event program made plain in black and white how kids’ curiosities mature between grades six and 12 right along with the rest of their developing selves. For instance, one of the 6th grade topics, a very personally practical one, was What Beverage Best Cools Your Mouth After Eating Hot Salsa? Once that problem’s been solved maybe that budding scientist can move on to weightier conundrums such as Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms Found in Lung Cancer. You know how the school band concerts change over the years? Same thing with science...

Roaming the exhibits one of the patterns that emerged was the ingenuity displayed in merging daily interest and activities with the temporary disciplines imposed by a focused science project. There was lots of research done on sports; basketball, volleyball, softball, you name it. And foods; soda pop and chewing gum, for instance, besides salsa. Ever wonder about the variables that impact the speed of rollercoasters? You shoulda been there.

“Ice in my Pipes” was a timely topic, given the record-breaking number of local water mains that burst last winter.

You know you’re at a science fair when you see a man sporting an Albert Einstein/ $E=mc^2$ necktie. The young contestants dressed for the occasion, too. Once the judges had finished parading through and penciling their notes there were beanpoles in blazers walking about while munching bags of chips and young Madame Curies in scholarly black dresses and braces carrying their flats to relieve the sore feet they’d been fidgeting on while getting peppered with judges’ inquiries.

Speaking of judges, they were an assortment of practitioners in scientific disciplines from the community. In other words, they knew what to look for and how to rate what they saw on the rubric they were provided that included components like creative ability (science and art are one!), thoroughness, dramatic value, clarity (mumbo jumbo didn’t fly) and technical skill.

The Iowa Energy and Sustainability Academy was represented. And if that sounds like a source for judges, guess again. IESA is an already award-winning two-year curriculum at Central Campus that’s kicking out the kind of kids who will restore the planet their ancestors fouled up.



The suspense got thicker than the atmosphere some of the projects had examined by the time DMPS Science Curriculum Coordinator Kim O’Donnell finally strode to the podium to announce the medalists who advanced to the state competition on March 28 at Hilton Coliseum on the campus of Iowa State University. But first she told the overflow crowd that there are millions of unfilled STEM jobs just waiting for qualified graduates to step up and do them.

“Judging by all that we see here tonight,” O’Donnell said, “I’d say we’re well on our way to getting those positions filled.” ■

“Ooh” and “Aah” Best Describe DMPS Student Art Exhibit

There was a midwinter oasis in the atrium at Capital Square in downtown Des Moines last February.

It was formally labeled the Des Moines Public Schools Annual Art Exhibit but its many patrons call it “Ooh” or “Aah.”

The show kicked off with a welcoming ceremony and artists’ reception on February 6. Every school in the district was represented, elementary through high school. There were works in 2D and 3D. There were free takeaways in the form of pocket-sized “zines” (pronounced zeenz). There was also live music courtesy of String Fusion and the Hoover Jazz Band.

Between that and the wide-ranging gallery of works and the small kids nibbling at the edges of the atrium reflecting pool and the atrium’s high sky visitors maybe

forgot for a while that the temps outside were on their way back down. But February, for all its frigidity, is a great month for this event. What better antidote for the winter blahs than a cavalcade of exuberant, emergent, promising student art?

Inspiring as the event traditionally is, it continues to evolve and expand. This was its second year at Capital Square and it fits naturally into the public space there where daily foot traffic may weave throughout the displays.

“Next year we hope to have big banners from all of our schools,” according to Sara Dougherty, the district’s Coordinator of Visual Arts Curriculum, “and there are plans in the works to actually create some pieces on site during the exhibit. Eventually there may be some DMPS works that will be

incorporated into permanent display here.”

In the meantime there was plenty to catch the eye. Upstairs, a crowd gathered around a case that enclosed the 3D pieces. One lady was eager to point out a clay piece that featured the pink ribbon symbolic of breast cancer awareness and research. “See that, isn’t that something?” she asked rhetorically; proudly. “My grandson made that.” Beaming at her side was the artist, Pleasant Hill Elementary 5th grader, Jared Oliviera. A ribbon was pinned to his puffing chest. In a brief chat with another onlooker she mentioned once that her name is Pamela Seipel. But she clearly prefers to be known as Jared’s grandmother. She declared that status half a dozen times. Jared was very pleased to have so pleased his grandma.

Oh, to be the apple of at least one very special beholder’s eye. ■



The atrium at Capital Square served as an impromptu gallery as it hosted the DMPS Annual Art Exhibit.

MARCH 2014

DMPS Sees Continued Increase in Graduates, Drop in Dropouts

The Iowa Department of Education released data on the four-year graduation rate for the Class of 2013 and the five-year graduation rate for the Class of 2012.

Des Moines Public Schools had increases in both rates, as well as a decrease in the dropout rate.

The Class of 2013 at Des Moines Public Schools had a graduation rate of 79.36%, an increase of 0.21% over the previous year and the highest since Iowa began using its current graduation rate formula in 2009.

Des Moines Public Schools also saw an increase in the five-year graduation rate to 82.89% for the Class of 2012, up from 81% for the Class of 2011.

This is the fifth year that Iowa graduation rates have been calculated using a formula established by the U.S. Department of Education. Unique student identification

numbers are assigned to ninth-grade students, allowing school districts to account for all students as they move through high school. At the state level, the method helps determine when a student graduates, even if the student has moved to a different district in Iowa during high school.

The graduation rate for Des Moines has increased nearly seven percent since the State of Iowa first started using this formula for the Class of 2009.

In the fall of 2009, DMPS implemented the Early Indicator System (EIS) to help identify students who may be at risk of dropping out of school. The EIS tracks attendance, class performance, and discipline/behavior issues at the elementary and secondary levels. In addition, each high school now has an Academic Support Lab to help serve students who are identified through the EIS as at-risk for dropping out of school.



The Iowa Department of Education also released dropout rates for school districts across the state.

Des Moines Public Schools saw a decline in the dropout rate last year. The grade 7-12 dropout rate for 2013 was 4.16%, down from 4.73% the previous year. The grade 9-12 dropout rate for 2011-12 was 6.3%, down from 7.05% in 2012 and the lowest dropout rate at DMPS under the new formula. ■



Scarlets Back At State

The East High Scarlets competed in the 2014 Iowa High School Girls Basketball Championship, adding to the school's recent history of being a perennial top team in the state. The Scarlets have competed in the state tourney four of the past five years.

Work of RunDSM is Rising to New Heights

It's a "dream come true," according to the teachers who created the creative monster.

It's RunDSM in all of its many-splendored forms, the extracurricular offshoot that sprouted four years ago from a cutting edge class at Harding Middle School and is now poised to branch out across the district.

The program's second annual Teen Poetry Slam happened on April 3rd at the Temple for Performing Arts, an event where the team was chosen that will represent the district at the Brave New Voices Youth Poetry Festival later this month in Philadelphia.

They're always high-powered, but this particular RunDSM production was extra energized thanks to the fresh news that beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, Des Moines Public Schools will officially adopt RunDSM.

With the help of a team of visionary teachers (Kayla O'Connor, Kortny Williamson, Mindy Euken-Cadenillas, Hannah Harmsen, Tiffany Strim, Alex Caskey, Melissa Daniels and Cassie Kendzora), program founders Kristopher Rollins and Emily Lang will transition from teaching at Harding Middle School to teaching half-time at Central Campus and otherwise serving as the district's Urban Arts Coordinators. The task force they've assembled is charged with establishing RunDSM programming at each of the DMPS high schools.

RunDSM is comprised of the Minorities on the Move summer program, weekly Movement 515 writing workshops and a series of Share the Mic spoken word poetry events that allow the kids to be heard "getting free" on subjects that matter most to them while also benefiting area nonprofit organizations. And

this year Lang and Rollins began teaching a class in Urban Leadership at Central Campus aimed at training a generation of community change agents. That led to January's Teen Summit event at the downtown Des Moines Social Club.

Now the writing workshops will be scaled up to include each of the high schools and a new one in street art will be added. The Urban Leadership curriculum will offer internships to students in nonprofits and at district elementary schools where they will lay the groundwork for a half-pints poetry program. You can almost hear and feel it all happening already.

"All of that is just in year one," Rollins said. What then? "Stay tuned. We have many exciting ideas in the works to incorporate urban arts within the school day."

For a glimpse of things to come, look here for more: <http://runds.org/> ■



“Three-peat” For DMPS as Energy Star Partner of The Year

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy selected the Des Moines Public Schools for the 2014 Energy Star Partner of the Year Award for Climate Communications and Sustained Excellence.

Fifty-three DMPS schools received an Energy Star rating. This marks the third consecutive year the school district has received a partner award.

As one of the country’s 10 Climate Communications winners, Des Moines Public Schools has raised the awareness of students, teachers, families and the community to the impacts of climate change. DMPS has created communications that encourage



their customers to combat climate change with the help of Energy Star and emphasize how energy-efficient behaviors have a positive effect on the environment.

The school district was also one of the 72 Sustained Excellence winners that continue to exhibit exceptional leadership year after year in the Energy Star program while remaining dedicated to environmental protection through superior energy efficiency.

Through projects large and small, and educating staff and students about energy conservation, DMPS has reduced its overall energy expenditures by \$2.8 million over the last five years.

The winners were selected from 16,000 Energy Star partners, including manufacturers, retailers, public schools, hospitals, real estate companies, and home builders, for their dedication to protecting the environment through greater energy efficiency. ■

DMPS to Purchase Lottery Building

The school district’s purchase of an office building will open up more educational choices in downtown Des Moines. Des Moines Public Schools made an offer of \$1.6 million to purchase the current headquarters of the Iowa Lottery, located at 2323 Grand Avenue in Des Moines, to serve as the administrative offices for the school district. Moving the district offices

will allow the Walnut Street School to expand in its current location, providing more educational choices for parents as both housing and corporate offices continue to expand in downtown Des Moines. Both the current DMPS offices and the Walnut Street School, an International Baccalaureate school, are located at 901 Walnut Street. ■



All Roads Lead to DMPS at World Languages Festival

Central Campus hosted the district's inaugural International World Languages Festival on April 10.

A more informal name for the event would be Around the World in 80 Minutes, Give or Take. The Iowa International Center was a co-sponsor of the bazaar that, for all its diversity, was barely a tip of the cultural iceberg that is DMPS, a school district that's home to nearly one-hundred native tongues and dialects.

The student commons was converted into a mini-cosmopolis as the main staging area for the festivities. There were Chinese dumplings, Latin American fruits and French cuisine, for appetizers. The Soten Taiko Drummers from the Japanese American Society were

thumping away. Salsa Des Moines demonstrated some spicy footwork and there were French folk dancers, too. More quietly, in the library there were presentations on the art of furoshiki (Japanese fabric folding), and topping it all off, literally, was a nearly completed Japanese tea house that's been erected on the 5th floor in part of the space that houses the district's home construction program. Giving it a distinct local touch are materials recycled from old wooden bleachers at the Roosevelt High School gym and Drake Stadium and the walnut tree in the backyard of Central Campus teacher/foreman Ben Molloy and his wife, Yurika. There isn't a nail in the place and once it's finished the tentative plan is that it will be disassembled for permanent



relocation to the gardens at the Des Moines Botanical Center.

Countries and schools with display tables in the commons included Germany, Italy, France, China, Spain, East High School, Walnut Street School, Hoover High School, Meredith Middle School, Goodrell Middle School and the hosting venue, Central Campus.

Yes, it is a Central Campus indeed. Events like this inaugural one make it feel as though all roads lead here, a place where the universal languages of food, music and goodwill are blended into another; world class education. ■



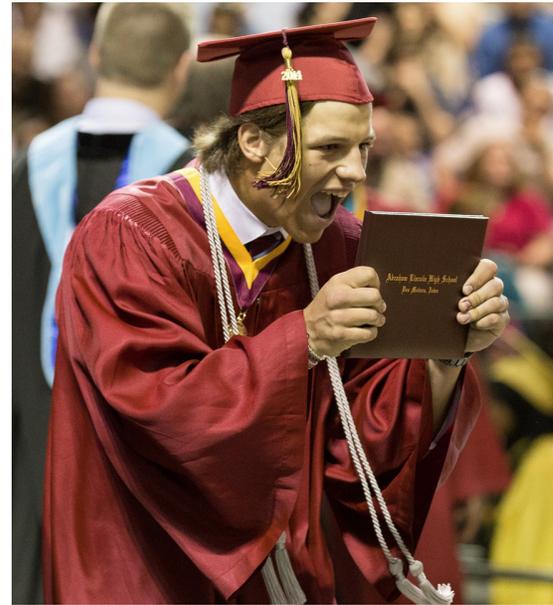
Commencement Completes Banner Year for DMPS High Schools

For the second year in a row all five comprehensive high schools in Des Moines were listed among the state's top 50 high schools on the Iowa AP Index, and Central Academy remains the top-ranked Advanced Placement program in the state.

No wonder the nearly 1,800 graduates in the DMPS Class of 2014 reported cumulative

scholarship offers in excess of \$18.5 million!

The Iowa AP Index, compiled by the Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education at the University of Iowa, ranks how well Iowa high schools provide students with the opportunity to take rigorous, college preparatory Advanced Placement courses. The rankings are based on the number of AP exams taken by students compared to the number of graduates. ■



Turnaround Arts Expands to Five DMPS Schools

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) announced the expansion of PCAH's successful Turnaround Arts initiative – a program designed to help turn around low-performing schools, narrow the achievement gap, and increase student engagement through the arts. The program will include four additional Des Moines schools starting in 2014-15.

Turnaround Arts is funded through a public-private partnership, receiving more than \$5 million over the next three years from the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment of the Arts, the Ford Foundation, and other private foundations and

companies to bring arts education into low-performing schools. Local program partners will provide an additional \$12 million to hire new arts and music teachers; bring teaching artists, art supplies and music instruments into schools; and support arts integration into other core subject areas such as reading, math and science.

First Lady Michelle Obama, Honorary Chair of PCAH, said, "The Turnaround Arts program has exceeded not just our expectations, but our wildest hopes and dreams. With the help of this program... math and reading scores have gone up in these schools... attendance is up, enrollment is up... parent engagement is up... suspensions have plummeted. And today, the



students in these schools are engaged in their education like never before."

In Iowa, Des Moines Public Schools will continue to be the local partner for Turnaround Arts. Findley Elementary was included in the original cohort two years ago. DMPS schools selected for the program's expansion are Cattell Elementary, Oak Park Elementary, Madison Elementary, and Harding Middle School. ■

Hoover & Meredith Achieve IB Authorization

Already the first school district in Iowa to offer students the highly regarded International Baccalaureate (IB) program, and the state's only district to offer the IB curriculum at all grade levels, Des Moines Public Schools is continuing to expand its IB offerings as two more schools – Hoover High School and Meredith Middle School – are now authorized as IB World Schools. They will join seven other Des Moines schools currently offering IB programs.

Hoover and Meredith were notified by the International Baccalaureate Organization that they have been authorized to offer the



Middle Years Program (MYP). MYP is the IB program and curriculum for students in grades 6 – 10.

The schools – which are physically connected at their location in northwest Des Moines – have worked together for more than two years to offer the IB program to their students. As the International

Baccalaureate Organization noted when the schools' application was approved: "These are schools that share a common philosophy: a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that Hoover High School and Meredith Middle School believe is important for our students." ■



The School Board adopted new attendance areas for elementary schools that will go into effect for the 2015-16 school year. The new attendance areas will bring several advantages, such as more students being able to attend the school closest to their neighborhood, better balancing of enrollment between our school buildings, and making elementary schools more aligned with secondary schools. Because this change is being "grandfathered" into effect, short-term changes for families are minimized while long-term benefits for schools are implemented. For more information visit our web site at attendanceareas.dmschools.org.



The Roosevelt Roughriders' girls' track team finished 3rd at the 2014 Iowa High School Track & Field Championship. They were led by Jalynn Roberts-Lewis who won state titles in the long jump, 100 meters and 200 meters, and was a member of the winning 4x100 meter relay unit that included McKenna Schnack, Teanna Lewis and Briyanna Carter.

Spotlight Shines on DMPS Performers at Theater Awards

In 2012, Des Moines Performing Arts launched the Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards, a year-long education initiative that honors young musical theater artists for their outstanding achievements. Throughout the school year, performing arts professionals and educators served as adjudicators to review musical productions and offer constructive feedback to each of the participating high schools.

On June 2, the eve of the last day of the year for DMPS high schools, the second annual awards showcase was staged at the Des Moines Civic Center and the hometown team made its presence felt. ■



The following DMPS schools and students were recognized for musical productions during the 2013-14 school year:

Roosevelt High School Pippin

Honors: Outstanding Musical Production, Outstanding Ensemble

Lincoln High School Footloose

Honors: Outstanding Scene – “Let’s Hear It for the Boy”

Hoover High School Anything Goes

Honors: Outstanding Scene – “Friendship”

East High School Disney’s High School Musical

Honors: Outstanding Scene – “We’re All In This Together”

Outstanding Performance in a Leading Role

- **Emma Shafer** as “Leading Player” in Pippin, Roosevelt High School
- **Emily Sherwood** as “Gabriella Montez” in Disney’s High School Musical, East High School
- **Max Tensen** as “Moonface Martin” in Anything Goes, Hoover High School

Outstanding Performance in a Supporting Role

- **Caleigh O’Donnell** as “Bertha” in Pippin, Roosevelt High School
- **Jade Peterson** in Songs for a New World, Ankeny Centennial High School
- **Travis Reinders** as “Lewis” in Pippin, Roosevelt High School
- **Emma Wellman** as “Catherine” in Pippin, Roosevelt High School

Outstanding Performance as a Featured Dancer

- **Isabel Allaway** and **Julian Gruber** in Pippin, Roosevelt High School

Outstanding Achievement in a Creative or Technical Role

- **Isabel Allaway**, Assistant Choreography, Pippin, Roosevelt High School
- **Emily Stavneak** and **Emma Wellman**, Costuming, Pippin, Roosevelt High School
- **Addison Williamson**, Set, Pippin, Roosevelt High School

Special Recognition for Student Orchestra

- **Footloose**, Lincoln High School

Special Recognition for Performance in a Leading Role

- **Roselin Anukam** as “Rusty” in Footloose, Lincoln High School
- **Connor Bredbeck** as “Pippin” in Pippin, Roosevelt High School
- **Julian Gruber** as “Pippin” in Pippin, Roosevelt High School
- **Jacob Her** as “Troy Bolton” in Disney’s High School Musical, East High School
- **Jennifer Martin** as “Reno Sweeney” in Anything Goes, Hoover High School
- **Sam Sides** as “Reverend Shaw Moore” in Footloose, Lincoln High School
- **Emily Wiese** as “Ariel Moore” in Footloose, Lincoln High School

Special Recognition for Performance in a Supporting Role

- **Justine Auen** as “Vi Moore” in Footloose, Lincoln High School
- **Giovanni Bahena** as “Willard Hewitt” in Footloose, Lincoln High School
- **Fatima Fadel** as “Taylor McKessie” in Disney’s High School Musical, East High School

AP Exam Participation Increased 30% at DMPS in 2014

Records are meant to be broken: after Des Moines Public Schools students took an all-time high of nearly 2,000 Advanced Placement exams in 2013, the total rose to more than 2,500 this spring.

DMPS students took a total of 2,581 AP exams in May, up from 1,986 in 2013, 1,759 in 2012 and 1,071 in 2011. The number of AP exams taken by DMPS students in 2014 is 30% higher than last year and 140% higher than four years ago.

Enrollment in AP courses at DMPS has tripled since 2011 as

course offerings have expanded at all five high schools as well as Central Academy.

“Des Moines Public Schools has proven itself to be a leader in Iowa and the nation when it comes to offering students access to high-level academic programs, such as Advanced Placement,” said Superintendent Tom Ahart. “Our approach to AP is a win-win, providing thousands of students access to these college-level courses at their home high schools while maintaining Central Academy



as one of the premier AP programs in the nation.” ■

Wallace Foundation Awards DMPS \$3 Million to Strengthen School Leaders

On June 24 The Wallace Foundation announced that it will invest about \$3 million in a significant five-year effort to help Des Moines Public Schools improve the effectiveness of its principal supervisors so they can better work with principals to raise the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

The local grant is part of Wallace’s new \$30-million national Principal Supervisor Initiative involving 14 urban school districts across the country.

“This grant provides significant support to the work underway

at Des Moines Public Schools to enhance and improve the support provided to our principals,” said Superintendent Tom Ahart. “The funding from the Wallace Foundation will help us ensure that every district administrator is actively contributing to student results in a systematic way while at the same time growing our own pool of leadership talent.”

This past year, Des Moines Public Schools created the Office of Schools, which in large part was designed to provide better and more direct support for principals. The Wallace grant will allow DMPS to get to the recommended number



of principals that each principal supervisor supports. At DMPS, the initiative will finance training and support for principal supervisors and help them reduce the number of principals these supervisors oversee. DMPS currently has four principal supervisors, and each oversees an average of 16 principals. Support from the Wallace Foundation will also help DMPS develop better principal supervisors, central office support systems, and establish a pipeline for principals and central office leadership. ■

2013-14 AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Each year students, teachers and staff at Des Moines Public Schools earn many recognitions and honors at the state and national level. The following are just some of the many awards earned during the 2013-14 school year.

Colby Carmichael, Chino Alcala, Robert Hansen and Malique Ziegler of **East High's** state semifinalist baseball team, were all named to the Iowa Newspaper Association's Class 4A All-State First Team.

Sarah Dougherty, who teaches half-time as an Arts Integration Specialist at **Findley Elementary** and is also the Visual Arts Curriculum Coordinator for Des Moines Public Schools, was named the 2013 Outstanding Elementary Art Educator for the state of Iowa. **Lisa Jorgensen**, who was in her first year of teaching art classes at **Findley** in 2013-14, was named the 2013 Outstanding Middle School Art Educator for the state of Iowa for her work at Webster City Middle School.

The **Lincoln High Marching Rails** earned the overall Grand Champion honors at the North Central Iowa Marching Band Invitational in Fort Dodge in September. The Rails also earned top individual honors in the categories of best marching, best brass and best percussion.

After qualifying for the first time in 17 years by winning the District Tournament on October 8, the **Roosevelt Roughriders** golf

team finished fifth in the team competition at the state golf meet.

The **Hoover Huskies** advanced to the Class 4A state football playoffs for the first time in 19 years.

North High School was recognized as an Apple Distinguished School for 2013-2015 for its work in implementing programs to make computer technology available on a 1:1 ratio to all students. The designation is reserved for programs that meet criteria for innovation, leadership, and educational excellence, and demonstrate a clear and consistent vision of exemplary learning environments.

Roosevelt senior **Jalynn Roberts-Lewis** was named to the Des Moines Register's All-CIML Elite Volleyball Team.

Several DMPS students were selected to participate in the All-State Music Festival concert held on November 23rd at Hilton Coliseum on the campus of Iowa State University. Only 17% of the musicians who auditioned were selected for the All-State ensembles:

ORCHESTRA:

Vaughn Hommerding (Roosevelt, Violin); Patrick Hiatt (Roosevelt,

Violin), Mila Kaut (Roosevelt, Violin), Shana Liu (Roosevelt, Violin), Madison Helton (Roosevelt, Viola*), Joe Wandro (Roosevelt, String Bass*), Hannah Marks (Roosevelt, String Bass)
**four-time All-State qualifier*

BAND:

Geneva Gaukel (Roosevelt, String Bass)

CHORUS:

David Best (Lincoln, Tenor), Nick Parker (Lincoln, Tenor), Briar Worley (Lincoln, Tenor), Bryan Richter (Lincoln, Bass), Sam Sides (Lincoln, Bass), Dakota Valen (Lincoln, Bass)

Larry Beall was chosen as a Trailblazing Teacher for 2013 by the United States Green Building Council. Beall was instrumental in Central Campus being the only Iowa school included among the first cohort of Green Ribbon Schools selected by the United States Department of Education and the Environmental Protection Agency in 2012 and DMPS being named a Green Ribbon District in 2013 when that designation was established.

Four seniors attending Hoover and Roosevelt high schools in Des Moines were named by the U.S.

Department of Education and the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars as candidates for the 2014 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. The DMPS students, who also attended classes at Central Academy, are: **Edel Aron (Roosevelt)**, **Lily Nellans (Roosevelt)**, **Maxwell Pilcher (Roosevelt)** and **Ryan Utke (Hoover)**. Inclusion in the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, now in its 50th year, is one of the highest national honors bestowed upon graduating high school seniors.

Connor Gillette and **Nick Biancalana**, both seniors at Roosevelt High School, accepted appointments to military service academies. Connor will attend the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis and Nick is headed for the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

East's Roichelle Marble, senior, and **Roosevelt junior Meredith Burkhall** were named to the Des Moines Register's Elite all-CIML girls' basketball team.

North High School was the team champion at the 2014 JROTC Eastern U.S. Regional in Camp Perry, Ohio on February 20-22. **Dakota Lupkes** was the individual winner.

North senior Teyontae Jenkins was named to the Elite all-CIML boys' basketball team and tabbed as the CIML's most valuable player by the Des Moines Register. His teammate, senior **Terrance Bush**, was named to the 2nd team. Jenkins was also named to the Register's Class 4A All-State 1st team and Bush to the 3rd team. Both were named to the Iowa Sports Spotlight's Class 4A All-State team

and head coach **Chad Ryan** was the ISS Class 4A Coach of the Year.

Four Des Moines Public Schools teachers were named 2014 Educator of the Year award winners by The Rotary Club of Des Moines: **Amy Erwin**, a first grade teacher at **Madison Elementary**; **Amelia Kissell**, a seventh grade science teacher at **Brody Middle School**; **Mindy Euken**, a Spanish teacher at **Roosevelt High School**; and **Karen Sissel**, a theatre arts teacher at **Lincoln High School**.

Roosevelt High School has a long legacy of top female track and field athletes, which continues to grow as **Jalynn Roberts-Lewis** was named the 2013-14 Gatorade Iowa Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. ■

DMPS Earns National Honors for Communications Efforts

Des Moines Public Schools has earned recognition for its communications efforts in several categories from the National School Public Relations Association. DMPS received a district-record ten awards in NSPRA's annual Publications and Electronic Media Awards competition and, for the first time ever, earned three Awards of Excellence, the highest honor awarded in any category.

The district earned the top honor in the Brand/Image category, for the new DMPS Brand and Graphic Guidelines; in the Finance category, for the district's newly formatted budget publication; and in the Video category

for a report by DMPS-TV on North High School's Bears Den.

NSPRA also presented Des Moines Public Schools with three Awards of Merit for the school district's billboard campaign, social media program, and a DMPS-TV story on milk carton recycling. The district also received four Honorable Mentions for a guest editorial on the new alternative teacher contract, our DMPS Community Report newsletter, a brochure on middle school mathematics, and a DMPS-TV story on a visit by Lolo Jones to Findley Elementary School.

"With more than 32,000 student, 5,000 employees and 60 schools, a

top priority is to always make news and information about DMPS readily available to the public in a variety of formats, and it's an honor to be nationally recognized for our effort," said Phil Roeder, director of communications and public affairs for Des Moines Public Schools. "We have a great team at DMPS working on our communications efforts and are always dedicated to making sure we do better in the future than we've done in the past." ■

