

Des Moines Public Schools

DMP COMMUNITY REPORT

2011-2012 YEAR IN REVIEW



Welcome to the June Edition of the DMPS Community Report

One of the great strengths of Des Moines Public Schools, in my opinion, is its diversity: the people, the programs, and most of all the opportunities for our students.

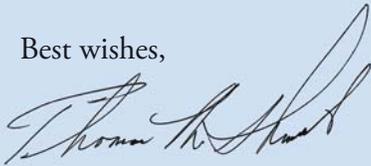
The strengths and benefits which result from this diversity are reflected in this special edition of our DMPS Community Report newsletter, taking a look back at the 2011-12 school year.

Throughout the year, our students and staff succeeded in a wide variety of areas. For example, students earned state and national recognition in everything from academics to athletics to the arts. Our graduation rate, assessment, and enrollment trends are all moving in the right direction. The district was honored for its operations in areas ranging from financial management to communications to environmental practices. Participation in our top-ranked Advanced Placement program increased 80% while at the same time we expanded access to Iowa's only International Baccalaureate schools. And from laptop computers to Learjets, student access to technology increased.

These accomplishments are possible thanks to the hard work and dedication of more than 31,000 students and nearly 5,000 employees, along with the support of families and community partners who recognize that both the hope for our future and the strength of our community rests in our schools.

I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as interim Superintendent during the 2012-13 school year, and look forward to supporting and continuing the success stories – big and small – that take place each and every day at Des Moines Public Schools.

Best wishes,



Tom Ahart
Interim Superintendent

Meet Tom Ahart: DMPS Interim Superintendent

On May 15, the Des Moines School Board voted unanimously to appoint Tom Ahart as the interim Superintendent of Des Moines Public Schools. He will serve in this role while a search is conducted for a permanent successor to Dr. Nancy Sebring.

Most recently Tom was the Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning for the school district and prior to that served as principal of Warren G. Harding Middle School in Des Moines. He has also served as the Director of Human Resources at the Ankeny Community School District, the Director of Instruction at the Marshalltown Community School District, and as a school improvement consultant at the Heartland Area Education Agency. Tom has also been a language arts teacher at high schools in Denison, IA and Glenwood Springs, CO.

Tom received a BA in speech and mass communications from the University of Denver as well as a Master's of Public Administration and Ed.S from Drake University. He is completing his Doctorate in Education Leadership at Drake University this summer, with a dissertation on student achievement factors in Iowa schools.



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2012!

Between May 26 and June 3, Des Moines Public Schools held eight commencement ceremonies to celebrate the graduation of more than 1,700 students at our five comprehensive high schools and our alternative programs. We congratulate these students ... as well as their teachers, parents, family and friends who supported them throughout their education. Best wishes to the Class of 2012 for success in the next stage of their lives.



JULY

1,500+ Students Attend Continuous Calendar Schools

On July 14, more than 1,500 students began the new school year at Capitol View, Moulton and River Woods, three of the district's continuous calendar schools. In fact, more students attend continuous calendar schools in Des Moines than 287 Iowa school districts have students in total. These schools represent just three of the unique educational choices available in Des Moines. ■



Secretary of Education Visits Carver Community School

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan was joined by Senator Tom Harkin and Congressman Leonard Boswell on a visit to Carver Community School in order to discuss the importance of providing students with access to quality early childhood education programs. The three officials observed an early reading lesson by teachers and students, and held a roundtable discussion with educators and policy makers from Des Moines and across the state. ■



Secretary of Education Arne Duncan makes a point about early childhood education as Senator Tom Harkin listens during a meeting at Carver Community School on July 24.

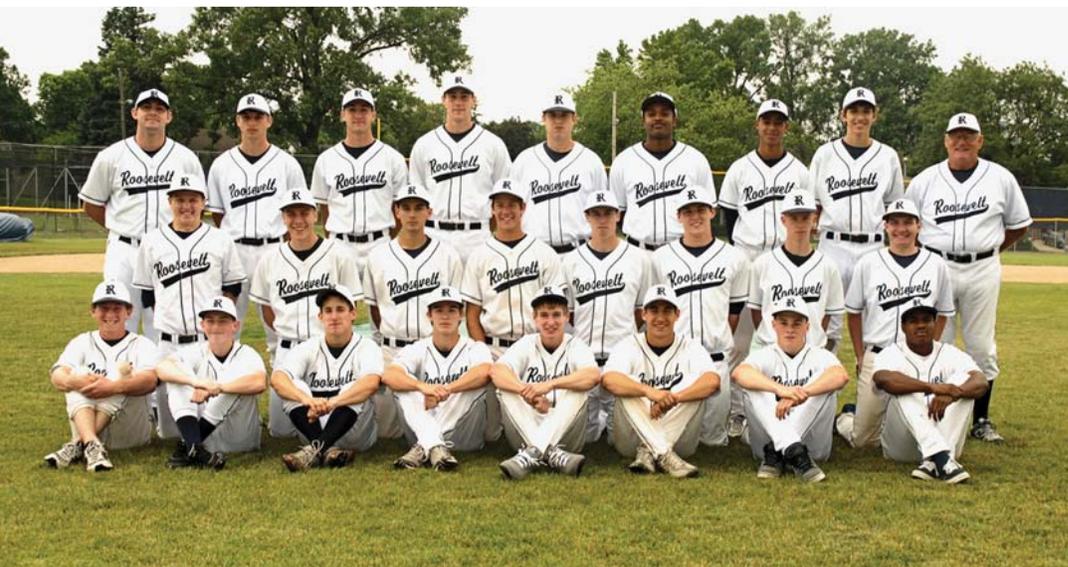
Scarlets are State Softball Champs

The East High Scarlets won the Class 4A Iowa State High School Softball championship, defeating Ankeny 6-3 in the final game at the tournament in Fort Dodge. The Scarlets earned a record of 39-5 on their way to the top spot in the state. ■



Roughriders Qualify for State Tourney

The Roosevelt Riders baseball team ended a successful season with a 29-13 record, a conference title, and the school's 3rd appearance in the state tournament. The Riders lost to #2 Mason City by a score of 6-1 in the first round of the tournament, held at Principal Park. ■



AUGUST

Renovations at Central Campus, Hoover, North, Roosevelt and Woodlawn? Check!

The new school year began with the completed renovations of more district schools, improving the appearance and functionality of school facilities, and more.

Operational costs are being reduced with the use of new windows and mechanical systems to provide greater energy efficiency. In addition, student and staff safety

was greatly enhanced with the inclusion of items such as security systems, fire sprinklers, and traffic drop-offs. Buildings which reopened for the start of the 2011-2012 school year with major improvements: Central Campus, Hoover High School, North High School, Roosevelt High School, and Woodlawn Education Center. ■



Back-to-School Health Fair Provides Free Services, Supplies to Kids

Families without adequate health insurance or access to health care were invited to East High School on August 3 for free physicals, health screenings, and school supplies. The program was made possible thanks to the Polk County Health Department and several area health providers. The health fair assists nearly 2,000 students.

“We want to make sure every student has a healthy start to the new school year, and are grateful for everyone who is making this opportunity possible again this year,” said Jean Phillips, Health Services Supervisor for Des Moines Public Schools. “Health issues that go unchecked impact not only a student’s ability to learn but everyone around them.” ■



A Quintet of Perfection

Five Des Moines Public School students achieved a perfect score of 36 on the ACT test – joining an elite group of less than one-tenth of one percent of all students nationally who take the test each year.

The five students — who all attended Roosevelt High School and Central Academy — were Jack Bequeaith, senior, the son of Mark Bequeaith and Suzanne Stewart; Corey Grief, senior, the son of Mark Grief and Mary Kelly-Grief; Matthew MacKay, senior, the son of Robert MacKay and Marina Gabourel; Megan Mansfield, senior, the daughter of Edward Mansfield

and Cathy Mansfield; and Luke Sheeley, junior, the son of John Sheeley and Cynthia James.

“Anyone who thinks Des Moines does not offer the best educational opportunities to students does not know Des Moines,” said Crista Carlile, the supervisor of Central Academy. “Our students...are not only preparing to compete in the world but to help lead the world. It is exciting to watch them learn, grow and succeed as they get ready for their next steps in life.”

Nearly 23,000 Iowa students in the Class of 2011 took the ACT exam. ■



New Leadership Takes the Helm

Four new administrators started their first year on the job for Des Moines Public Schools. They were: Tom Ahart, Associate Superintendent of Teaching & Learning; Thomas Harper, Chief Financial Officer; Scott Mikesh, Director of Human Resources; Phil Roeder, Director of Community Relations.

New principals for the 2011-2012 year included Crista Carlile, High School Extended Programs Supervisor at Central Academy; Brian Crook, Studebaker Elementary School; Nancy Croy, McCombs Middle School; Steve Johns, East High School; Dan Koss, Perkins Elementary School; Peter LeBlanc, King Elementary School; Mary Minard, Jefferson Elementary School; Tara Owen, Findley Elementary School; David Perrigo, Edmunds Elementary School; Audrey Rieken, Weeks Middle School; Maureen Taylor, Harding Middle School; Paul Williamson, Lincoln High School. ■

First-Ever Summer Graduation Ceremony

Thirty students, representing all five comprehensive high schools and Scavo Alternative High School, took part in the first-ever summer graduation ceremony on August 3. The commencement is another sign of the district's commitment to help all students earn the credit necessary to receive their high school diploma.



Graduates prepare to receive their diplomas during the school district's first summer commencement ceremony.

SEPTEMBER

District Reaches Out to Dropouts Again

The third annual Reach Out to Dropouts event was held on Saturday, September 24, 2011. As a result, 16 students walked back into Des Moines high schools and re-enrolled after 281 community and school volunteers walked door-to-door to encourage them to come back.

A total of 399 homes were visited. Seventeen students had already re-enrolled, 13 had enrolled elsewhere, 18 had earned a GED, 28 are pursuing a GED, and 51

requested follow-up information or contact.

Two years ago volunteers knocked on almost 500 doors during the inaugural RO2DO event. Since then the district's ongoing, year-round strategies for re-engagement and development of multiple pathways to graduation such as academic support labs at each of the five comprehensive high schools. This effort has reduced the number of students who are dropping out in the first place. ■



North ROTC Commemorates 9-11 Anniversary

The entire student body at North High, led by their classmates in the school's ROTC program, held a flag-raising ceremony in honor of Patriot Day and the 10th anniversary of the 9-11 attacks. Principal Matt Smith delivered remarks noting the many North alumni who serve our nation, and led students and staff in a moment of silence to mark the occasion. ■



Bill Howard



Cindy Elsbernd



Dick Murphy



Pat Sweeney

New Members Elected to School Board

Three new school board members were elected on September 12, 2011 to serve 4-year terms and one incumbent, Dick Murphy, was elected to fill a vacant board seat for the remaining two years of that term. New members are Cindy Elsbernd, Bill Howard, and Pat Sweeney. Incumbents Ginny Strong and Jeanette Woods did not run for reelection. Both served six years (two terms) on the board.

Also approved by voters was a measure to change the way the school board directors are elected. Beginning in 2013, three members will be elected at large and four members will be elected from director districts. ■

Accounting Awards: The Beat Goes On

Des Moines Public Schools was once again recognized by two national organizations – the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) – for excellence in financial reporting and governmental accounting. Both organizations recognized the school district for the fourth year in a row. ■



129 DMPS Students Named AP Scholars

One hundred and twenty-nine Des Moines Public Schools students, representing all five of the district's high schools, were identified in September as Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars for 2011. Among the honorees are 19 National AP Scholars as well as this year's male State AP Scholar for Iowa – Joel Schneider. Other awards include AP Scholars, AP Scholars with Honors, and AP Scholars with Distinction. ■

OCTOBER

North Takes the Lead in Laptops

North High School became the largest school in Iowa to implement a 1:1 laptop program in October. In conjunction with parent/teacher conferences, every student was issued a laptop computer for use both in and out of school.

It's just the latest in a series of energizing developments at the corner of 6th and Holcomb and will make a fitting capstone for the extreme makeover there, the bricks- and-mortar aspect of which was completed when the students returned in August.

Principal Matt Smith reported that the laptops have become a much-used learning tool, as well as a communication tool - providing greater communication between students and staff both during and outside of the school day.

North's ITED scores were up nine percent in math last year. As impressive as those results were, they were doubled by 19 percent gains in both science and reading. And the school's 98.5 percent participation rate was an all-time high.

Though the biggest, North was only one of about 80 Iowa schools with a 1:1 laptop program this year and as many as 200 may be involved next year.

The laptops were purchased using a School Improvement Grant, which will sustain the program for four years. By then it's expected that community groundwork already happening coupled with documented benefits will galvanize enough fundraising to sustain the program going forward. ■



Aviation Program Flies High With Learjet

Teaching science and technology reached a new height in October as the Des Moines Public Schools' Aviation Engineering Technology Program took possession of a Learjet Model 35. The aircraft is based at the program's lab, located at the Des Moines International Airport, and used as a teaching tool for high school students studying aviation technology and maintenance.

U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley helped the school district obtain the surplus military Learjet.

Des Moines Public Schools' Aviation Engineering Technology Program is one of only three high school programs in the nation certified by the Federal Aviation Administration to teach aircraft maintenance. In fact, the program in Des Moines is the only one of its kind among the nearly 4,000 school districts in the Midwestern states. ■



The aviation program welcomes its newest teaching tool, a Learjet, to its facility at the Des Moines International Airport.



Central Program Receives Elite Grant



The Iowa Energy and Sustainability Academy (IESA) at Central

Campus has been awarded a \$10,000 grant from Vernier Software & Technology to purchase

equipment and software that will enable students to do intricate weather, air, soil, and water quality testing.

Vernier awarded 10 U.S. high schools and 30 schools in total with a Vernier 30th Anniversary Technology Grant. A total of two thousand schools applied for the grant.

Vernier had this to say about IESA:

“To reverse the troubling trend of fewer and fewer students pursuing majors in STEM disciplines at the college level, the Iowa Energy and Sustainability Academy (IESA) cross-curricular class provides rigorous STEM education offerings.” ■

NOVEMBER

DMPS Lays Out Welcome Mat with New Website

In many ways, a website is the front door to an organization. It invites you in, welcomes you, and helps you find what you are looking for once inside.

For many years, Des Moines Public Schools has had a website, but it wasn't always the best front door for the largest provider of public education in Iowa.

On November 30, the district launched a new and much improved website. Since the new website was launched, the number of online visitors has increased by fifteen percent.

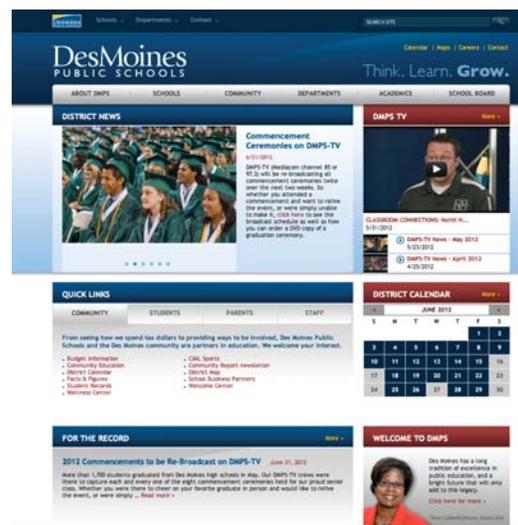
In addition to a new, cleaner design, the website now includes several features that make it a more useful resource, such as:

- A shorter address: www.dmschools.org. Fewer dots and numbers than our old address, but if you go to www.dmps.k12.ia.us, don't worry; you'll be automatically directed to the new website.
- For the first time, a district wide calendar of events is now available. From orchestra concerts to football games to hundreds of other activities, you can now make one stop to find out what's happening across the district.
- A better organized "Quick Links" section with the links and resources most frequently used by parents, students, staff and the community.

- A more prominent "District News" section, so from an emergency announcement to recognition of a student to new programs in our schools, it will be front-and-center.
- A more informative school directory, including not only contact information but also a photo and brief description of each school in Des Moines.
- A Google map noting the location of each school and district office.
- Easier access to DMPS-TV programming, which now is available not only on Mediacom Channel 85 or 97.3, but their most recent stories can be viewed right on the home page.
- Better descriptions and contact information about curriculum areas, departments and offices throughout the district.
- More integration with our social media sites, including a feed from our Twitter and Flickr pages embedded at the bottom of the home page.

Several school websites have already been revamped this year as well. Online visitors can view new websites for Findley, Hubbell, Gateway, Goodrell, Park Avenue, Stowe, and Walnut Street School.

New websites for the remaining DMPS schools will be launched throughout the next several months, along with ongoing improvements to the district site. ■



-  facebook.com/dmschools
-  twitter.com/dmschools
-  flickr.com/dmps
-  dmschools.tumblr.com
-  youtube.com/dmpstv
-  pinterest.com/dmschools/

Meals From The Heartland at Harding

Harding Middle School students participate in Meals from the Heartland on November 18. Approximately 5,000 meals were assembled and packaged by 160 student members of the school's leadership group called Wolf Pack. ■



Central Academy Takes First Place in Math Competition

Central Academy's math team made an impressive showing at the 39th Annual High School Mathematics Contest held at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville on November 2, 2011, placing first out of 49 participating teams from Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

Central Academy's team, made up of 101 students, won 36 of the 68 All-Academic team honors to beat Iowa City West, who had won first place in the contest for 17 years in a row. Five Central Academy students earned rare perfect scores at this year's competition. They were Edel Aron, Eric Chen, Max Pilcher, Luke Sheeley, and Ryan Utke. ■

Senator Harkin Visits Downtown School

U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions, visited the Downtown School at their new home in Central Campus on November 11. Senator Harkin visited classrooms, and then spoke about legislation recently approved by his committee to make significant changes and improvements to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. ■

Senator Tom Harkin talks about federal education reform during a stop at the Downtown School.



Cowles Gets Funding for Wellness Initiatives

Cowles Montessori School received a \$4,000 Fuel Up to Play 60 grant to help the school jumpstart and sustain nutrition and physical activity improvements. This program offers schools help to increase healthy foods and physical activity for students. Cowles used the funds to create an annual 5K run, which was held in May, to promote a healthy, active lifestyle for the school and surrounding community.

More than 70,000 schools across the U.S. are participating in Fuel Up to Play 60, now in its third year. Launched by National Dairy Council, local dairy councils and the National Football League, in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture. DMPS schools that received Fuel Up to Play 60 grants in the past include Brody, Callanan, Central Campus, East, and Goodrell. ■

DECEMBER

East High Rises to Top of Attendance Challenge

As their reward for placing first in the central region of the Get Schooled Attendance Challenge, East students walked the red carpet prior to loading onto a fleet of 30+ buses, chartered at MTV's expense, and caravanning to Wynnsong Cinema where they packed theaters, courtesy of Paramount Pictures, for the local premiere of the latest Mission Impossible blockbuster, Ghost Protocol.

Throughout the seven-week challenge online registrants received wake-up calls from celebrities like Tyra Banks. That was just one of the incentives to get more kids up and running to school in the morning. Local businesses got on board by providing gift cards which were passed out by random drawings among classes where everyone showed up on time.

Sharayah Devick, Stacie Post and Summer Weinman have been

through three principals in their four years at East and they see changes this year that will last beyond the hoopla of winning the attendance challenge. Daily announcements from Principal Steve Johns about the importance of getting to class and hallways that are more closely monitored will continue to make a difference in changing kids' attitudes, according to the three seniors. They say kids are getting out of bad habits and into good ones. ■



Dollar Doing Good at Merrill

Sixth graders at Merrill Middle School were each given one solitary dollar bill by the school's PTA and the assignment to pay it as far forward as they could within the community.

Science teachers at Merrill – one of the district's International Baccalaureate World Schools – challenged each sixth grade student to do as much good in the community as possible with their single dollar of seed money.

Community Youth Concepts provided training to help the students identify areas of need in the community and methods to execute a community service project.

Last year, this project generated over \$8,000 in cash donations, 1,700+ items, and over 200 hours of community service. This year, the project generated \$8,356 in donations and more than 2,600 items, and worked with more than 40 charitable organizations throughout Des Moines.

On December 20 the students shared in their science classes what they accomplished and a sixth grade celebration of the importance of community service was also held which included making holiday cards for families in need in Des Moines and for military personnel serving overseas. ■



Governor Terry Branstad and Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds hold a town hall meeting at Central Campus.

Governor Holds Town Hall Forum at Central Campus

Governor Terry Branstad and Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds presided at a town hall meeting about their blueprint for education reform on December 10 in the multi-purpose room at Central Campus. A standing-room-only crowd of concerned teachers, administrators, parents and community members was in attendance. ■

DMPS Enrollment Increase Leads State

Figures released by the Iowa Department of Education (DE) show that Des Moines Public Schools had the largest increase in student enrollment in the state for the 2011-12 school year. The DE released the certified enrollment report, which is used in the formula that determines state funding for public school districts. While overall K-12 enrollment in Iowa saw a very slight decline compared to 2010-11, Des Moines Public Schools saw an increase in enrollment of 571 students. ■

JANUARY

National Spotlight on Hillis Cookie Caucus

To paraphrase H.L. Mencken, democracy is based on the premise that the people know what they want and deserve to get it – good and fresh!

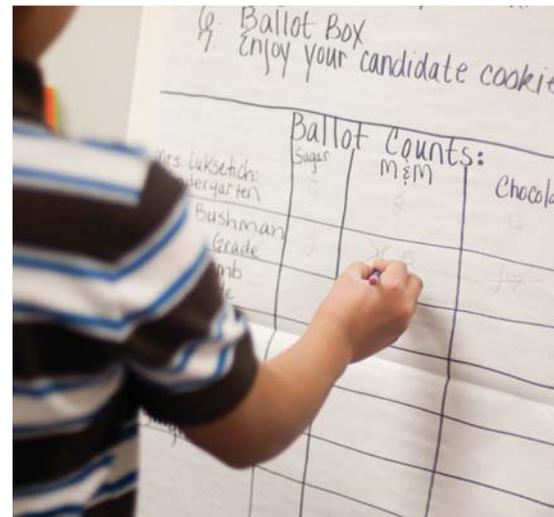
Iowa's first-in-the-nation presidential caucuses are dog-eat-dog but a more appetizing version was held at Hillis Elementary on January 3. The school's traditional "cookie caucuses" featured chocolate chip, M&M and sugar cookies vying for students' votes in an event that's best described as spirited. And seldom was heard a cynical word.

No sooner had the Pledge of Allegiance, National Anthem and Hillis Pledge been recited than Principal Beth Sloan yielded the intercom to cookie campaigners. Reiterating messages that were plastered on posters lining the hallways, representatives of each

candidate issued last-minute appeals for support. Sugar cookies were touted as the favorites of Justin Bieber and LeBron James. M&M's were hailed for being "so colorful they make rainbows jealous." And the early frontrunner, chocolate chip, was billed as "ooey-goopy and oh-so chewy."

At that point the polls opened in the 5th grade classrooms/precincts of Kellie Tu, Tammy Fastenau and Heidi Slinker. Their students were studying the presidential election process and they all had assigned roles such as precinct captain, recorder, delegate, ballot box officer or cookie distributor.

Some of the national media swarming the city for the main event took notice of the elementary version going on at Hillis, including NBC's Today Show. ■



White House Official Impressed by Visit to North

In President Barack Obama's State of the Union address, he reminded Americans that "the easiest way to save money is to waste less energy." So it's no coincidence that he dispatched the chair of his White House Council on Environmental Quality to visit Des Moines Public Schools.

Nancy Sutley spent the morning of January 26 touring the newly retooled and rejuvenated North High School and then sat down with a portion of the school's rapidly growing number of Advanced Placement students for a wide-ranging discussion of everything from renewed school spirit to renewable sources of energy. ■





Governor Unveils Legislative Proposal at Capitol View

Iowa Governor Terry Branstad visited Capitol View Elementary to announce his legislative proposal for education reform in the state. The governor was joined by Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds and Iowa Department of Education Director Jason Glass on his visit to Capitol View, where they also watched a brief performance by the 3rd grade readers' theater. ■

The 'Great Conversation' Begins

When Jamie Vollmer graduated from high school in 1967 he was offered \$3.83 an hour to work in a factory. Nobody even asked if he had so much as a high school diploma. It was an offer he couldn't refuse, with wages higher than what career teachers were then earning in his Philadelphia school district.

Since then a lot has fundamentally changed. Just about everything, in fact, except our system of public education according to Vollmer, who spoke to public school stakeholders on January 24 in the crowded Boardroom at Central Campus and encouraged them to fan out in the community to launch what he calls The Great Conversation.

Vollmer's perspective now is that of a former lawyer and CEO who was a harsh detractor of educators until a Road to Damascus epiphany converted him into a passionate advocate for schools, noted education consultant and author of the book, *Schools Cannot Do It Alone*. ■



Harding Students 'Share the Mic'

Three times throughout the school year students participate in "Share the Mic: Community Voices Creating Change," an event organized by Harding Middle School teachers Emily Lang and Kristofer Rollins that calls on kids to write their own poetry and perform it in front of the community, while simultaneously raising money to donate to local non-profit businesses and organizations. One of those events took place on January 27 at the State of Iowa Historical Building with proceeds being donated to the Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center. Lang and Rollins will accompany six DMPS students to the Brave New Voices International Teen Poetry Festival in San Francisco in July. ■



FEBRUARY

Roosevelt Wrestler Makes History

Among all of the interscholastic sports, wrestling may make the best metaphor for life. After all, everybody wrestles with someone or something at one time or another. But few of us make it through every encounter undefeated. That's what makes Roosevelt senior John Meeks' high school career so remarkable.

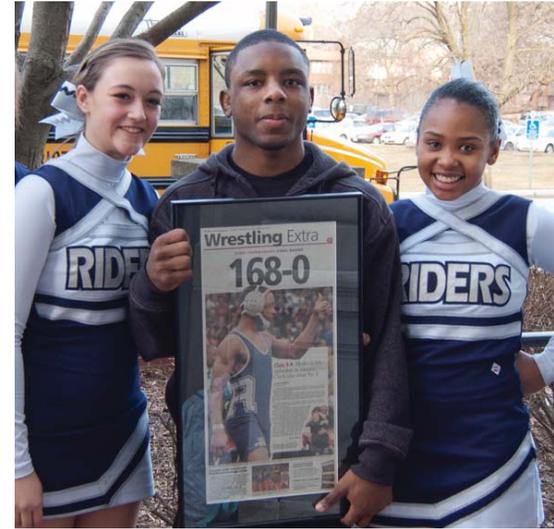
If you ran a highlight reel showing one of John's wrestling triumphs every hour it would take an entire week. After all, $24 \times 7 = 168$, and 168-0 was his record as a high school wrestler. The numbers are so overwhelming they overwhelm even John himself, who prefers to take folks on one at a time, not in packs the way reporters and photographers and fans were coming at him in the days following his final high school match.

On February 21 they only showed a video of that one match in

a celebratory assembly at Roosevelt High School because, in a way, with John Meeks it's almost true that if you've seen one of his matches you've seen 'em all.

His coach, Jay Groth, recalled two that stood out as John's closest calls. Both came in his freshman year. He fell behind in one 5-0 before rallying to win. In the other, he trailed until scoring a takedown with 10 seconds left to pull out a 3-2 win.

Coach Groth told the packed auditorium that day during the assembly that upwards of half a million kids have wrestled in Iowa high schools over the last 92 years. Until John Meeks came along, a grand total of five of them had achieved four state titles without dropping a single match. Ironically, there was a moment during the assembly which finally got to John in a way that none of his opponents ever could.



Surrounded by the teammates he'd summoned to the stage, John was trying to express his feelings about all the hoopla swirling around him. He seemed desperate for an escape maneuver. "We love you, John," a girl hollered from somewhere in the crowd.

"Now that's embarrassing," he said, and everyone laughed.

Even in the uncomfortable hold of the spotlight John Meeks came up with the perfect counter. ■

School Board Approves Bonds for More School Renovation

The Des Moines School Board approved the sale of approximately \$71 million in Sales Tax Revenue Bonds in order to proceed with the renovation of more than a dozen schools throughout the city, including construction of a new Edmunds Elementary School.

The board's action will save money by getting ahead of inflation and reducing operational costs,

accelerate work on several schools in the community, and support jobs in the construction trades.

The one cent sales tax is collected statewide and distributed annually to school districts each spring based on their annual enrollment. For the most recent fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2011, Des Moines Public Schools received sales tax revenue of \$24,120,171. ■

Central Campus Students Produce PSAs

Students in the Central Campus Broadcasting and Film Program were recognized by the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence for their contributions to "Dating Violence Awareness Month." Participants created public service announcements that acknowledged everyone's right to be safe in a relationship. ■

Merrill Students Fight Back Against Bullying

Students at Merrill Middle School aimed to create a positive environment for each other and raise awareness about bullying by inviting students and the community to a “Bullying Awareness Night” on February 27 in the school auditorium. Students were challenged to create anti-bullying public service announcements, documentaries, or short videos. Over 300 students participated in this project. ■

Student Artists Show Off at State Historical Building

Des Moines Public Schools’ annual student art exhibit kicked off on February 9 at the State Historical Building with a reception for artists at the State of Iowa Historical Building. Governor Terry Branstad, Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds, and Director of the Iowa Department of Education Jason Glass all helped open the event and the Hoover High School Jazz Combo also performed. ■

District Recycling Program Earns Hefty Rebate

The Metro Waste Authority presented Des Moines Public Schools with a rebate check for \$11,675.50 at a school board meeting as a reward for a 48% increase in the district’s recycling tonnage. One way the money will be used is to place additional recycling containers and make it handier for students, staff and visitors to pile it on. ■

Middle School Science Fair Continues Expansion

Des Moines Public Schools provides students with a wide variety of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) educational opportunities at all grade levels, and the results were on display at the annual Middle School Science Fair.

More than 175 students from nine DMPS middle schools participated in the event at the

Science Center of Iowa. The science fair has grown more than 150% since it began four years ago, from 50 projects during its first year to 125 projects in 2012.

Twenty-seven students earned medals in nine different categories and advanced to the State of Iowa Science Fair held at Hilton Coliseum in Ames on March 30-31. ■



More than 175 middle school students participate in a science fair at the Science Center of Iowa on February 16.



MARCH

DMPS Named National Energy Star Partner of the Year!

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) named Des Moines Public Schools as a 2012 ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year for strategically managing and improving the energy efficiency of its entire building portfolio.

Through its partnership with the ENERGY STAR program, Des Moines Public Schools has improved its energy performance, saved money and helped to protect the environment for future generations.

“The school district’s commitment to manage our energy use in partnership with ENERGY STAR has paid big dividends for our schools and the entire community,” said Bill Good, Chief Operations Officer for Des Moines Public Schools. “Making our buildings more energy efficient has saved us millions of dollars in resources at a critical time for education. We are honored to be recognized by EPA for our efforts.”

Forty-three public schools in Des Moines are currently ENERGY STAR-rated, with four

additional schools soon to be added to the list.

Key accomplishments by the school district’s award winning energy management program include:

- Install geothermal systems at 27 schools, with four more schools being added this summer as a part of renovation work
- Replace T12 lighting with high efficient T8 and T5 lighting
- Employ daylight harvesting techniques
- Integrate LED site lighting and motion-sensor lighting
- Replace inefficient windows and doors with more efficient substitutes
- \$1.7 million have been saved since the launch of the ENERGY STAR initiative in Des Moines Public Schools three years ago
- 70% of the districts ENERGY STAR buildings have a rating of 90 and above



- Between fiscal year 2007-08 and fiscal year 2009-10, Des Moines Public Schools reduced energy use by 60,913 mBtu, preventing the emission of almost 5,700 metric tons of carbon dioxide, or the equivalent to the annual greenhouse gas emissions from more than 1,100 passenger vehicles
- Established the Iowa Energy and Sustainability Academy, a college level instruction and work learning program about alternative energy and environmental science

EPA’s annual ENERGY STAR Awards honor organizations that have made outstanding contributions to protecting the environment through superior energy efficiency. The award winners are selected from about 20,000 partners that participate in the ENERGY STAR program and were recognized at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., on March 15, 2012. ■

District Represents at Legislative Hearing

DMPS was well represented at a public hearing on education held in the chambers of the Iowa House of Representatives at the State Capitol on March 5. Many

district educators took time to speak out, including Jessica Gogerty (North High School), Timm Pilcher (Hoover High School), Dave O’Connor (Merrill

Middle School), Cathey Sand (King Elementary), Jake Wager (Harding Middle School), and Andrew Rasmussen (Callanan Middle School). ■

Ag Program Grows Urban Farmers

The DMPS horticulture and animal science program was bustling on March 8 with tours of its facilities on County Line Road in observance of National Agriculture Day.

The curriculum includes a local chapter of Future Farmers of America (FFA), which was one of the first FFA chapters in Iowa to be awarded a “Planting a Seed” grant by the Iowa Food & Family Project, sponsored by the Iowa Soybean Association.

A menagerie of wildlife is raised on the grounds, located near Blank Park Zoo, a close partner that provides student internships among other resources.

The students enrolled in the program, numbering about a hundred, are used to doing chores for homework and extra credit. They take turns on evenings, weekends and throughout the summer feeding and grooming livestock and tending the flora in the greenhouse. The spring plant sale generates more than \$60,000 annually, proceeds that are plowed right back into the program. Director Cynthia Snell says students can earn accreditation as Certified Wildlife Educators, a credential that’s sought after by places such as zoos and theme parks for their employees. The program also features partnerships with fisheries and veterinarians and is a unique blend of classwork in the Career & Tech Ed Institute at Central Campus and fieldwork at the facilities on County Line Road. ■

Graduation Rate Continues Upward Trend

The Iowa Department of Education released graduation data, including the four-year rate for the Class of 2011 and the five-year rate for the Class of 2010. While figures show a slight decline in the four-year graduation rate both statewide and locally, the five-year rates increased, including nearly a six percent increase in the five-year graduation rate for Des Moines Public Schools. ■

DES MOINES PUBLIC SCHOOLS GRADUATION RATE

Four- and Five-Year Rates for 2009-2011



Top Oceanographer Calls Marine Biology Program “Tremendous”

It’s one thing for landlubbers smack dab in the middle of the country to be impressed by the marine biology and aquarium science facilities at Central Campus. But it’s quite another when a world renowned oceanographer like Dr. David Gallo tours them and his jaw drops like a shark’s at feeding time.

Dr. Gallo is the Director of Special Projects at the world famous Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute near Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Woods Hole is the largest private, nonprofit ocean research, engineering and education organization in the world. Dr. Gallo claims he sees something amazing every day in his work “and today it was this place,” the sort where careers like his can truly begin. “When I go back to Woods Hole I’ll be babbling about this for some time.” ■



Dr. David Gallo shares his research with students in a Marine Biology class.

APRIL

DMPS Gives Free College Entrance Exam

On April 24, hundreds of high school juniors throughout Des Moines Public Schools took the ACT college entrance exam, free of charge.

DMPS has been offering the ACT exam to all juniors since 2008.

The benefits are becoming evident. Enrollment in Advanced Placement and other college preparatory courses has increased dramatically. Students who otherwise may not have considered college are discovering they have what it takes. Colleges and universities open a dialogue with students, encouraging them to be college-ready and begin considering career options. And students are given a free shot at a test that can have a direct and positive impact on their futures.

DMPS is the first school district in Iowa to provide every junior the opportunity to take a college entrance exam, which has become a key element of the current debate over education reform.

Iowa's state universities currently require an ACT score as part of the admission process. For low income students, first generation college-goers and/or immigrant students, this requirement can create a barrier that may close the door to a college education. Providing the ACT to all juniors begins the application process early while the support of school counselors, teachers and administrators is easily accessed.

While not every student will go to college, every student should be adequately prepared for some type of post-secondary education. No matter what career a student



decides to pursue after high school, critical thinking skills, mathematical reasoning and higher levels of reading comprehension are the standards for the 21st century workforce.

Although some people are concerned about a short-term decline for Iowa in the ACT rankings when the pool of test-takers is expanded, that is more than offset by the improved quality of life for all Iowans that will result from students better prepared for their futures. Des Moines Public Schools is proud to be the first school district in the state to make this opportunity available to all students. ■

Roosevelt Girls Rewrite Drake Relays Record Book

Seven really was a lucky number for the Roosevelt girls' track and field team as they made history this year at the 103rd annual Drake Relays. The Roughriders earned seven titles, set two meet records and a new all-time state record at the 2012 edition of the nation's premier track and field event. The Roosevelt girls have a long record of success at the Drake Relays, winning 50 titles over the years. ■

Central Campus Named Green Ribbon School by U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, together with White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson, announced that Des Moines Public Schools' Central Campus is among 78 schools named U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools.

Iowa is among 29 states with schools receiving the first-ever awards. Central Campus is the only Iowa school honored as a Green Ribbon School.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools is a federal recognition program that opened in September 2011. Honored schools exercise a comprehensive approach to creating "green" environments through reducing environmental impact, promoting health, and ensuring a high-quality environmental and outdoor education to equip students with the 21st century skills and sustainability concepts needed in the growing global economy. ■

White House Tabs Findley for Prestigious Arts Initiative

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities announced that Findley Elementary School has been selected to participate in a new arts education initiative to help turn around low-performing schools, developed in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education and the White House Domestic Policy Council.

The Turnaround Arts initiative is a new public-private partnership designed to narrow the achievement gap and improve student engagement through the arts. Findley was chosen to be one of eight schools featured in the program through a highly competitive national selection process, and will receive intensive arts education resources, expertise and the involvement of high-profile President's Committee artists, including Academy Award-winning actor, Forest Whitaker, over the course of two years to support their educational reform effort. ■



Music and art programs at Findley will get a big boost thanks to the Turnaround Arts Initiative.



Central, Roosevelt, Hoover Earn High Marks on Iowa AP Index

Both Hoover and Roosevelt again made the list of the state's top 50 high schools on the 2012 Iowa AP Index. The rankings are based on the number of AP exams taken by students and the number of graduates from the spring of 2011.

The Iowa AP Index, compiled by the Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education at the University of Iowa, ranks how Iowa high

schools provide students with the opportunity to take high-level Advanced Placement courses.

Roosevelt is ranked sixth in the state, and has been among the top 50 high schools every year since the index was created in 2005. Hoover is ranked 49th this year, making the list for the fourth time in the past five years.

In addition, Central Academy had far and away the highest index

score of any school in Iowa. While magnet schools such as Central are not included in the formal rankings, it was once again singled out for special mention by the Belin-Blank Center. Central's index score of 7.62 more than doubled the 3.08 rating of Cedar Rapids Washington, the high school with the next highest score, and is the highest score Central has ever received. ■

MAY

East Centennial Ceremony Goes Back in Time

On a presumably cold day in January of 1912 some 700 students and faculty marched from a downtown campus that was later consumed by the MacVicar Freeway to the site where East High School still stands to start classes at what was then a brand new building. But first they paused outside for a ceremony to mark the occasion.

On May 10 another ceremony was held at that very same spot, this time to retrieve a time capsule that was tucked away a century ago in the building's cornerstone. Beneath

a canopy of old oaks that may have been saplings when the home of the Scarlet first opened its doors the school band played the fight song and an assembled crowd that was an appropriate mix of alumni and current students chanted along.

The ceremony and a banquet that followed later in the day were two of the keynote events during Alumni Week at East. During the banquet 63 members of the Class of 2012 were awarded scholarships that totaled in excess of \$100,000 by the East Alumni Association. ■



Governor Terry Branstad stopped by East High's centennial ceremony.

North High "Scholar Bears" Grab Regional Title in Academic Decathlon

Congratulations are in order for the North High School Academic Decathlon team after its most successful year in more than a decade of competition. The way things are going at the school they may have to change their name from Polar Bears to Scholar Bears!

Led by coaches Archie Cook and Mark Schmidt, North led Des Moines schools and the rest of Central Iowa in state and national competitions.

The North team placed first in regional competition held at Drake University, edging out Johnston High for the second year in a row.

North competed against 12 schools in Central Iowa in the large school category and came away with 35 individual awards. At the state competition, the team placed 5th and earned 15 medals, including eight for Julius Temble who placed third overall in the individual standings.

The team earned the right to compete in the national online competition by achieving the highest score of medium-sized schools at the state level. They finished 7th nationally in that division with six individual medals. ■



Ground Broken at Site of New Edmunds

The Edmunds Elementary community celebrated the soon-to-begin construction of their new school with a ceremonial groundbreaking on May 25. The \$10.25 million project will be the first entirely new school built in Des Moines since Carver School opened in 2007. ■



Hoover High School



Meredith Middle School



Gateway Secondary School

Three More International Baccalaureate Candidate Schools

Already the only school district in Iowa to provide students access to the highly-regarded International Baccalaureate (IB) program, Des Moines Public Schools is continuing to expand its IB offerings as three more schools become candidates for the program, including the state's first comprehensive high school.

Hoover High School, Meredith Middle School, and the Gateway

Secondary School have all been notified by the International Baccalaureate Organization that their applications to become candidate schools for the Middle Years Program (MYP) have been approved. The MYP is the IB program and curriculum framework for students in grades 6 – 10.

Seven schools in Des Moines are currently authorized to offer one of three different

International Baccalaureate programs (primary years, middle years and diploma). Those schools are: Central Academy, Goodrell Middle School, Merrill Middle School, Hubbell Elementary School, Park Avenue Elementary School, Stowe Elementary School, and Walnut Street Elementary School, which was notified in March of its certification as an IB provider. ■

AP Participation Skyrockets!

The number of Advanced Placement exams taken by DMPS students increased more than 80% in 2012.

“This year, the school district is in the midst of making AP courses available to more and more students throughout all five comprehensive high schools in Des Moines,” said Amber Graeber, humanities coordinator for Des Moines Public Schools. “We have seen a significant increase in AP course enrollment at each high school, providing hundreds of students with access to classes that will help prepare them for college and beyond.”

Students take the exams each May at the end of AP courses. Many colleges and universities provide students with college credit for exam scores of three or higher (on a scale of one to five).

In 2011, students in Des Moines took a total of 1,024 AP exams; two-thirds of those were taken at Central Academy. This year, students in Des Moines are taking 1,846 AP exams, an increase of 80.3% over last year. The vast majority of the increase is taking place at the five comprehensive high schools. ■

DMPS Approved for Major Grant

Des Moines Public Schools has been notified by the Iowa Department of Education that the district's application for a 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) grant has been approved

The 21st CCLC program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools.

Des Moines Public Schools will receive \$1.8 million over the next three years to support new programs at Brody Middle School, Capitol View Elementary School, King Elementary School, McKinley Elementary School, and Monroe Elementary School. ■

JUNE

Senator Holds Hearing on Bullying

U.S. Senator Tom Harkin visited East High School on June 8 to chair a hearing of the Committee on Health, Education and Labor on the topic of bullying. National experts along with educators and students from across Iowa testified about the impact of bullying as well as efforts to reduce the problem. East High School is the recipient of a Safe and Supportive Schools grant, a federally-funded effort to help schools identify and resolve bullying and other safety concerns. ■



East High School was the site of a congressional hearing on bullying held by Senator Tom Harkin.

WE ARE UNDROPPABLE

Stories of East Students, Teachers Featured in New “Undroppable” Documentary

After leading a national effort last year to increase student attendance, East High School is one of a half-dozen schools to be featured in a new film project titled Undroppable. The Undroppable project is both a documentary and social media campaign focused on raising awareness about the dropout rate in American high schools, and to highlight students, teachers and communities that are pushing on and persevering. Both students and staff from East, the largest high school in Iowa, are featured in the project. You can learn more about this project at www.undroppable.com. ■

First District-Wide Awards Banquet Honors Seniors

For the first time ever, students from all five high schools came together to celebrate their accomplishments in extracurricular activities in a banquet at the East High School cafeteria on June 10. In Des Moines, there are over 5,000 participants in high school extra-curricular activities.

Activities Directors and booster clubs at East, Hoover, Lincoln,

North and Roosevelt high schools collaborated to plan the event.

“It has been such a rewarding opportunity to plan a positive event to recognize seniors from all five high schools,” said Ric Powell, East High School Activities Director. “The athletes and the performing arts award winners at East High were hugging each other when they found out they won. It was fun to bring them all together to be honored.” ■

A male and female senior from each high school were chosen as winners in five categories:

- Athlete of the Year
- Iron Man and Iron Woman Award
- Outstanding Citizenship Award
- Outstanding Performing Arts Award
- Scholar Athlete of the Year

DMPS, DMEA OK Innovative Contract

While the Des Moines School Board annually approves compensation packages for school district employees, this year's agreement between DMPS and its teachers is a groundbreaking one that provides new teachers with greater support and the opportunity to earn an advanced degree.

Interim Superintendent Tom Ahart and Melissa Spencer, the outgoing President of the Des Moines Education Association (DMEA), spearheaded the negotiations and both characterized them as cooperative, amicable, and in the best interest of students and teachers.

The new contract includes an alternative contract for first-year teachers, which is innovative in several ways:

- New teachers start out at Step 4 on the district's salary schedule,

and receive pre-set raises of 1.5% in each of the next three years.

- In return, during each of their first four years teachers work an extra two days and 90 additional minutes per week. The extra time is devoted to professional development.
- During their first four years teachers are evaluated annually by a team comprised of their principal and two colleagues.
- Teachers may not transfer buildings during the first four years.

If successful during their first four years, teachers are renewed and awarded one percent raises in each of the next four with student achievement incentives that carry the potential to earn an additional half percent in each of those years. The affected teachers will participate

in the setting of those achievement benchmarks.

The alternative contract is designed to serve multiple purposes, including addressing anticipated state/federal education mandates, progressing towards a revised and enhanced standard contract, encouraging staff continuity and teambuilding within individual schools, facilitating the training of teachers specifically equipped to serve the needs of students in an urban, diverse district, and attracting and retaining the brightest educational talent at both the teaching and administrative levels.

In addition, new teachers who opt into the innovative new contract will achieve a Master's Degree in Effective Teaching after six years of service in the district and be incentivized to stay for at least an additional two and hopefully beyond. ■

Smouse Donation Was 80 Years in the Making

Before Dr. David Smouse, founder and namesake of the David W. Smouse Opportunity School, died in 1932 he was looking to the future and how he could continue to support the school. Eighty years later, thanks to a gift in his will of gas and oil rights on a piece of land he owned in Texas, Smouse school is receiving a payment of nearly \$1.2 million followed by monthly royalty payments.

"Dr. Smouse was a visionary in so many different ways, including helping to create a school to meet the educational needs of students with physical disabilities," said Leslie Timmerman, principal of Smouse Opportunity School.

In Dr. Smouse's will, he left to the school district a 1/16th interest in the net proceeds of gas and oil produced on land he owned in Texas. His will indicates the money is to be

used for the "maintenance, upkeep and/or expansion" of Smouse school.

Added interim superintendent Tom Ahart, "On behalf of Des Moines Public Schools, I want to give our deepest thanks to Mark Robeck of the Baker Botts law firm, whose pro bono work on behalf of the district helped us realize this gift. Our thanks also goes out to Choice Exploration, Inc. for their work and professionalism in ensuring that the benefits from this bequest were directed to Smouse school."

Smouse Opportunity School received an initial payment in the amount of \$1,176,052 as the result of production established by Choice Exploration, Inc. at two drilling units located in Liberty County, TX. For the past few years, wells drilled by Choice in the Kent/Spradley Unit have been producing oil and gas for which

the school district will receive \$771,536. The second tract, known as the Choice Exploration, Inc. Willis Ranch Unit, began producing gas and oil late last year, resulting in \$404,516 for the school district.

In addition to this initial payment, Smouse school will benefit from monthly royalty checks for production on each of the units.

The David W. Smouse Opportunity School opened its doors on March 5, 1931, and was a school unique for its time. Students with physical disabilities found a school with a range of facilities and equipment adaptable to their individual needs, including a resting room, hydrotherapy tank, sun and infrared lamps, tilted blackboards to prevent glare for the visually impaired, and rooms designed to carry vibrations for hearing impaired students. ■

DMPS RECOGNITIONS For the 2011-12 School Year

From academics to athletics to the arts and more, students at Des Moines Public Schools are state and national leaders in a many ways. These are just some of the recognitions they earned during the past school year:

Lincoln High School sophomore swimmer **Brittany Purscell** captured Lincoln's first girls' state swim championship, winning the 100 meter breast stroke event. Her time was the sixth fastest in state history and she is the current school record holder in the event. Her coach is Brayton Weber.

The **Lincoln High School football team** won the CIML Metro Conference and qualified for the state playoffs. Their coach is Tom Mihalovich.

The **Roosevelt girls cross country team** qualified for and placed ninth in the state cross country meet.

Seven girls competed at state: **Emma Huston, McKenzie Carney, Emma Buchanan, Megan Schott, Jordan Summers, Julia Robinson,** and **Carson Cary**. They are coached by Jacob Kaemmer.

Roosevelt High School senior **Matt Mackay** won the CIML Metro Conference cross country meet and qualified for the state meet. The Roosevelt boys are coached by Steve Brown.

Eight DMPS student-athletes signed letters of intent in November to play college sports next year. They are: **East softball players Riley Fisher/ Iowa State; Jessica Grochala/**

Grand View; Meredith Henriksen/ Indiana State; L.J. Putzier/Mount Mercy; Janie Smith/Missouri Western; Roosevelt wrestler John Meeks/Iowa State; Roosevelt baseball player Sam Norman/ Creighton University; and Lincoln softball player Chelsea Blaylock/ Drake University.

Central Academy received a \$7,917 grant from the Aviva Charitable Foundation to cover costs of Advanced Placement (AP) testing for low income students. The grant also will pay for transportation to the testing site for all students, facility rental, and test proctors.

Mark Schnurstein, Hoover High School ninth grade Earth Science Teacher, was recognized as Air Force Association General Horner Chapter of Des Moines Teacher of the Year.

Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation awarded a \$23,000 Lowe's Toolbox for Education® grant to **Hiatt Middle School** to support the renovation of the school's auditorium.

Becky Johnson, a veteran art teacher at Roosevelt High School, was named Outstanding Secondary Art Educator by the Art Educators of Iowa (AEI).



Congressman Leonard Boswell announced that Khashi (Paul) Reyes, Roosevelt High School senior, won the Congressional Art Competition for the state of Iowa. His art work will hang in the U. S. Capitol for one year.

Twenty-seven DMPS students were selected to participate in the 2011 All-State Festival in choir, band and orchestra in November.

Thirteen seniors at Central Academy were named as candidates for the 2012 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. They are **Jack Bequeaith** (Roosevelt High School), **Braden Edwards** (Lincoln High School), **Corey Grief** (Roosevelt High School), **Andrea Harlan** (Roosevelt High School), **Xiaoxue Liu** (Valley High School), **Matthew Mackay** (Roosevelt High School), **Megan Mansfield** (Roosevelt High School), **Sarah Mansfield** (Roosevelt High School), **Kathryn Marcus** (Roosevelt High School), **China Mauck** (Roosevelt High School), **Alisha Smith** (North Polk High School), **Augustine Villa** (Dowling High School), **Luchang Wang** (Valley High School).

Seventeen Central Academy students were chosen as winners in the Young Lawyers Division of The Iowa State Bar Association's "Know Your Constitution" competition. In addition, out of 1,500 essays submitted, Roosevelt High School junior **Nathan Leys** captured the award for the state's best essay.

The **North High School Robotics Team** won the prestigious FTC Inspire Award at a state qualifying meet held at North High School. This is the highest award in the competition.

Thayne Henderson, Chris Markle, and **Amra Softic**, members of Hoover High School's Real World Design Challenge Team coached by **Mark Schnurstein**, received second place at the Iowa Real

World Design Challenge held at the Science Center on February 18.

East High School freshman **Apple Jackson Amos** and Roosevelt High School sophomore **Lily Nellans** were selected to serve on a new student state advisory group to discuss key issues that impact students and schools.

Twelve high school seniors were chosen as 2012 Finalists for the National Merit Scholarship, placing them among the top young scholars in the state and nation. The Des Moines students were selected based on their strong performance on the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) test taken last year. They were:

- **Jack Bequeaith, Roosevelt**
- **Kayleigh Courard-Hauri, Roosevelt**
- **Braden Edwards, Lincoln**
- **Zoe Eagle, Roosevelt**
- **Rachel Jacobs, Roosevelt**
- **Margaret Long, Roosevelt**
- **Matthew MacKay, Roosevelt**

- **Stephanie Manivanh, Roosevelt**
- **Megan Mansfield, Roosevelt**
- **Sarah Mansfield, Roosevelt**
- **China Mauck, Roosevelt**
- **Danielle Ward, Roosevelt**

The Lincoln High School swim team sent 11 athletes to the 2012 IHSAA state swimming meet: **Luis Arias, Brady Edwards, Matt Friend, Mitchell Friend, Curtis Knapp, Hunter Hofmaier, Kort Kern, Michael Nachtigal, Chase Shumaker, Keaton Tripp, Carter Worth.**

Mitch Arends, Ian Baker, Ross Turner and **Max Ward**, members of the Roosevelt High School boys' swimming team competed in the 2012 IHSAA state swimming meet. Ward was the state champion in the 100 butterfly and Turner was named to the Academic All-State Swim Team.

Five DMPS wrestlers qualified for the 2012 IHSAA state wrestling tournament. They were East

Continued on Page 30...



Mike Walag, Lincoln High School choir director, received WHO TV-13's Golden Apple Award in February.

Continued from Page 29...

freshman **Josh Davis**, Roosevelt sophomore **Jake Kristensen**, Roosevelt senior **John Meeks**; Roosevelt senior **D'rice Shirley**; and North senior **Brian Warren**. Meeks was a 4-time undefeated state champion and will wrestle for Iowa State. Warren was a 4-time state qualifier and 2011 state champion and will wrestle for Grandview.

Brittany Smith, Lincoln High School junior, was the state champion in the 2012 IHSA girls' bowling tournament.

Roosevelt High School placed first in the 2012 All Iowa Speech Championships held at the University of Iowa. In addition, the Roosevelt debate team was runner-up in the All Iowa Finals Championship in Debate.

Harry Strong, Roosevelt High School speech/debate coach, was

named 2012 speech/debate coach of the year by the All Iowa Coaches.

Karen Birchmier, third grade teacher at Perkins Elementary School received the Golden Apple Award from WHO TV-13 in April.

The Rotary Club of Des Moines named five DMPS teachers Rotary Teachers of the Year: **Michelle Howe**, **Capitol View Elementary School Literacy Leader**; **Seith Monahan**, **Lincoln High School Special Education Teacher**; **Beth Olkiewicz**, **Brody Middle School Sixth Grade Reading/Language Arts**; **Laurie Phillips**, **Lincoln High School Visual Arts Teacher**; **Mary Simmons**, **McKinley Elementary School ELL Teacher**.

Thirty-five Des Moines middle school students from six different schools – **Brody**, **Cowles**, **Merrill**, **Meredith**, **Moulton**, and **Weeks** – took part in the 2012 Middle

School State Science & Technology Fair of Iowa held at Iowa State University.

Two teams of **Central Academy** science students competed in the TEAMS competition and received "Best in State" in the 9th-10th grade division as well as the 11th-12th grade division for the second year in a row.

Kristi Dusenbery, Callanan Middle School teacher, won the One Classroom at a Time Education Grant from ABC-5 and received \$1,000 which will be used to support the IHAD Summer School Program.

The Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Tolerance program named **Windsor Elementary** as a Mix It Up Model School for its exemplary efforts to foster respect and understanding among students and throughout campus during the 2011-12 school year.

The Central Academy academic team of **Danny Comito**, **Mark Gee**, **Jay Kakade**, **Luke Sheeley**, and **Vaibhav Srikanan** placed third in the High School Division of the first Computational Thinking Competition held on April 14, 2012 at Iowa State University, Ames. Their entry was entitled "Reaction Modeling."

Central Academy students earned a 7th-place finish in the 2012 Collaborative Problem-Solving Contest (CPSC), a national mathematics contest administered by National Assessment & Testing. Central Academy students who took part in the CPSC mathematic competition were:

DMPS Earns Honors for Communications

Des Moines Public Schools earned recognition for several of its communications efforts from the Iowa School Public Relations Association (ISPRA), including for the district's work to enhance its online presence with a new web site and use of social media.

Des Moines Public Schools earned the "Blue & Gold Award," representing top honors in a category, for several entries. These included the school district's new web site at www.dmschools.org; the district's integrated use of social media, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and Tumblr; the DMPS Community Report, a bi-monthly newsletter distributed to all families and employees; a new poster of the district's mission statement, distributed to every classroom in the district; and the district-wide map, which doubles as an informational brochure about the school district.

ISPRA also presented Des Moines Public Schools with an Award of Excellence for the news reports of DMPS-TV, the design of two new logos, and a new human resources brochure.

- 9th grader: **Kristina Smith**
- 10th graders: **Edel Aron, Granger Carty, Sophie Heatherington, Patrick Hiatt, Max Pilcher, Oliver Shimp, Vaibhav Srikanan, Justin Weeks**
- 11th graders: **Olin Carty, Eric Chen, Danny Deeter, Alex Lopez, Luke Sheeley**
- 12th graders: **Jack Bequeaith, Matt Mackay, Megan Mansfield, China Mauck, Chris Sherwood, Luchang Wang**

Roosevelt High School senior **Tyler Foley** was awarded the highest level of achievement – the Gold Key - for his personal essay, “Jenga” in the 2012 Midwest Region Scholastic Writing Awards. Roosevelt High School seniors **Jeannene Clark, Grace Payer,** and **Sarah Ramundt** received Honorable Mention for their works. The students participated in Central Academy’s Advanced Creative Writing class with teachers Jean Ellerhoff, Amy Finnegan, and Diane Morain.

Roosevelt sophomore **Lily Nellans** won the extemporaneous speaking category at the 61st annual Catholic Grand Nationals debate tournament in Baltimore, MD. It was her third win this year at a national tournament.

Five students in the Central Campus Culinary Arts program received gold medals at the FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America) state competition on March 26. They will represent Iowa at the national competition in Orlando, Florida in July. They are **Hannah DeVries** (Lincoln senior), **Hannah Dewey** (Lincoln senior), **Jordan Ouimet**

(Lincoln senior), **Jennifer Brooker** (Lincoln senior), and **Josh Cooper** (Roosevelt senior).

Six Central Campus students received gold medals at the Skills USA state competitions held April 26 and 27. They are **Cody DeLaRosa** (East senior), **Kimberly Wilkins** (Lincoln senior), **Austin Gruis** (Lincoln senior), **Hannah Dewey** (Lincoln senior), **Hannah DeVries** (Lincoln senior), **Allison Ross** (Lincoln junior), **Josh Cooper** (Roosevelt senior), **Jennifer Brooker** (Lincoln senior).

The Roosevelt High School girls were champions in several Class 4A Drake Relay events including:

- The 4×100 team of **Destani Welch, Agnes Sayeh, Jalynn Roberts-Lewis** and **Erin Hawkins** set an all-time Iowa high school record with a time of 47.55.

- Sprint medley relay team of **Destani Welch, McKenna Schnack, Agnes Sayeh** and **Erin Hawkins** (time of 1:46.20).
- **Destani Welch** in the 100-meter hurdles (time of 14.92)
- **Erin Hawkins** in the 100 meters dash in a time of 12.67
- **Jalynn Roberts-Lewis** in the long jump (17’ 9.5”)
- 4×200 relay team of **Jalynn Roberts-Lewis, McKenna Schnack, Agnes Sayeh** and **Erin Hawkins** (Drake Relays record time of 1:41.66)

Roosevelt High School junior **Alexa Hunt** was the state champion in the Class 4A shot put competition of the 2012 State Track Meet. Roosevelt High School senior **Emma Huston** won 1st place in the girls’ Class 4A 1500 meter run. ■



Roosevelt High School senior sprinter Erin Hawkins was named the 2012 Drake Relays Girls’ Athlete of the Year during ceremonies at the state meet. She will continue her track career on scholarship at the University of Minnesota.

A LOOK AHEAD TO THE 2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR

We will have more details on what's new for the 2012-13 school year in our August newsletter, but below are some key dates for the upcoming year. For more details on the calendar, especially for schools using an alternative calendar, please visit www.dmschools.org.

JULY

- 11** First day of school – Capitol View, Moulton, River Woods

AUGUST

- 15** First day of school – Downtown School
22 First day of school (adjusted early dismissal) – All other schools

SEPTEMBER

- 5** Holiday – no classes, offices closed
26 Staff development – no classes for students

OCTOBER

- 26** Staff development – no classes for students

NOVEMBER

- 21** No school for teachers or students
22-23 Holiday – no classes, offices closed

DECEMBER

- 24-31** Winter recess – no classes
24-25 Holiday – no classes, offices closed
26 Holiday – no classes, offices closed

JANUARY

- 1** Holiday – no classes, offices closed
2 First day of school after winter recess
16 First day of second semester
21 MLK Day – In-service day; no classes for students

FEBRUARY

- 18** No school for teachers or students

MARCH

- 18-22** Spring Recess – no classes

APRIL

- 23** No school for 9th and 12th grade students. 10th and 11th graders attend a.m. for PLAN and ACT testing
24 No school for 10th and 11th grade students. 9th and 12th graders attend a.m. only.

MAY

- 27** Holiday – no classes, offices closed
30 Last day of school for elementary and middle students; dismissal after half day
31 Last day of school for high school students; no adjusted early dismissal

JUNE

- 3-7** Reserved for inclement weather make-up days

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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 schools, news stories, data, contacts, and more on the DMPS web site at www.dmschools.org and at [facebook.com/dmschools](https://www.facebook.com/dmschools) and twitter.com/dmschools.

ON THE AIR

Tune in to **DMPS-TV on Mediacom Cable channels 85 and 97-3** 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.

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