

Des Moines Public Schools

# DMPS COMMUNITY REPORT

December 2013

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## DMPS Continues to See Big Gains in Enrollment

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 last year.

Last year DMPS enrollment increased by 515 students and the year before that by 571 students, 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.

DMPS is the largest school district in the state, educating nearly twice as many students as the second largest district.

Under state law, certified enrollment is used in the formula that determines state funding for public school districts. Certified enrollment is based on the number of students living in each school district. It also includes the “weighting,” or additional funding for students in certain programs, such as students who are English Language Learners.

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# DMPS Continues to See Big Gains in Enrollment

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The certified enrollment count is taken by Iowa school districts on the first day of October each school year. Official numbers are confirmed by the Iowa Department of Education and will be reported later this year, meaning there may be small changes to these preliminary figures. ■

DMPS CERTIFIED ENROLLMENT 2009-10 to 2013-14				
<b>2013-14</b> 32,404	<b>2012-13</b> 32,062	<b>2011-12</b> 31,546	<b>2011-11</b> 30,975	<b>2009-10</b> 30,954
<b>Change 2012 to 2013</b> +342		<b>Change 2009 to 2013</b> +1,450		

## Hoover One of Four Iowa Schools To Earn STEM Grant

Hoover High School is one of the first four schools in the state to receive 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.

"We are excited both for the opportunity to improve our facilities to align with 21st century best practices as well as the opportunity to network with the Governor's STEM advisory group to gain knowledge about current best practices and technology support," said Hoover principal Doug Wheeler.

In its application for the STEM grant, Hoover noted that the funds will be used as part of an effort to increase interest and achievement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The award, which will be matched by DMPS, will help Hoover further develop its new STEM Academy within the school, which was begun in the fall of 2012 with a class of 52 female

and 50 male students. The STEM Academy is supported by six science teachers, three math teachers, one technology/engineering teacher, and a member of the Hoover administrative team. Funding from the grant and the district will also help upgrade classrooms used for STEM education.

Hoover has four main goals for its new STEM Academy:

- Create the ideal STEM learning environment;
- Empower teachers through collaboration;
- Build a STEM-focused community;
- Inspire the next generation of innovators.

"While the existence of our STEM academy was key in securing this grant, the infrastructure improvements are designed to impact all students taking science at Hoover," added principal Wheeler. "The STEM initiatives of the state fit well with our work as an IB MYP candidate school. The facility



upgrades will allow for more collaboration with technology and inquiry-based instruction."

In addition to its recognition for STEM education, Hoover is also in the process of becoming accredited for the International Baccalaureate program.

Other recipients of Iowa's new STEM grant were Davenport, Mt. Pleasant and Sioux Center. ■



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

## East High Leads the State During College Application Campaign

What better place than the library at East High School for Iowa Governor Terry Branstad's official proclamation on November 13 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 455 members 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 respective families with collegiate ambitions.

"Some students told me they wouldn't have applied for college if they didn't do it as a group," said 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. The Iowa College Student Aid Commission partnered with GEAR UP Iowa and the Iowa Association for College Admission Counseling to implement the statewide campaign throughout the month of October.

All five comprehensive 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 during the campaign.

When the formalities were over Governor Branstad invited questions from the throng of seniors sardined into the sunlit library and a lively quasi-press conference broke out where moments before a ceremonial recitation full of "whereas" and "therefore" had been.

The college-bound crowd respectfully peppered Iowa's longest-

serving governor with thoughtful expressions of concern about issues central to their futures: college costs, fine arts vs. STEM career paths, economic development, bullying, governmental gridlock...

Branstad seemed pleased by their engagement and waded in like he'd been invited to join a rousing game of conversational rugby.

East has been coming out on top in the Get Schooled Attendance Challenge in recent years and now it begins to appear that more and more who graduate from the Scarlet ranks are getting so in the habit of going to school that they can't stop, even after graduation.

The school district's mission statement reads, in part: The Des Moines Public Schools Exist So That Graduates Possess the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities to Be Successful at the Next Stage of Their Lives. Lest anyone doubt that mission is being accomplished there's an official proclamation that says otherwise. As soon as the ink dried on the governor's signature it was put on justifiably proud display at East High School. ■



### Senator Pays Visit to Cowles

U.S. Senator Tom Harkin's official reason to visit Cowles Montessori School was to get a first-hand look at how the Farm-to-School grant was being used. While he was there he visited every grade level at Iowa's only public Montessori School.

# 173 Students Earn AP Scholar Honors

One hundred and seventy-three students who take 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 following the results of the Spring Advanced Placement testing.

Among the 173 students are 16 recognized as AP National Scholars. To earn the prestigious AP National Scholar Award a student must take eight or more AP exams and receive a score of four or higher (on a scale of 1-5) on each exam.

Recipients of the AP National Scholar Award for the 2012-13 school year are:

## Seniors (class of '13):

- Olin Carty – Roosevelt (Bates College)
- Danny Comito – Roosevelt (Iowa State University)
- Daniel Deeter – Hoover (Drake University)
- Crystal Hou – Roosevelt (Carnegie Mellon University)
- Stephanie Hou – Roosevelt (Grinnell College)
- Maria Lai – Hoover (Harvard University)
- Luke Sheeley – Roosevelt (Cornell University)
- Julius Tembe – North (University of Iowa)
- Seth Van Helten – East (Grinnell College)
- Nathan Walton – Van Meter/Central Academy (Washington University)

## Juniors (class of '14):

- Edel Aron – Roosevelt
- Granger Carty – Roosevelt
- Connor Gillette – Roosevelt

- Lillian Nellans – Roosevelt
- Max Pilcher – Roosevelt
- Reid Wade – Roosevelt

*NOTE: The students' home high schools are listed, as well as the college members of the class of 2013 are now attending.*

In addition to the 16 AP National Scholars, 52 Des Moines students were recognized as AP Scholars with Distinction, 33 as AP Scholars with Honor, and 88 as AP Scholars. Since 1991, 2,394 DMPS students have earned AP Scholars awards, including 307 AP National Scholars.

In addition to Advanced Placement courses offered at Central Academy, DMPS has made significant expansions in the AP courses offered at all five of the district's comprehensive high schools as each now provides a wide range of AP courses in social studies, science, English, mathematics, world language, and the fine arts. As a result, participation in the AP exam has doubled among Des Moines students over the past two years.

Last year, for the first time ever, all five comprehensive high schools in Des Moines were listed on the Iowa AP Index. ■

## Veterans Day Commemorated by Students

From ROTC ceremonies to musical salutes to spaghetti dinners, schools throughout Des Moines celebrated in many different ways the men and women who have served our nation.

*Right: Studebaker Elementary students point to a special flag they created in honor of Veterans Day.*



# Making Middle School Matter

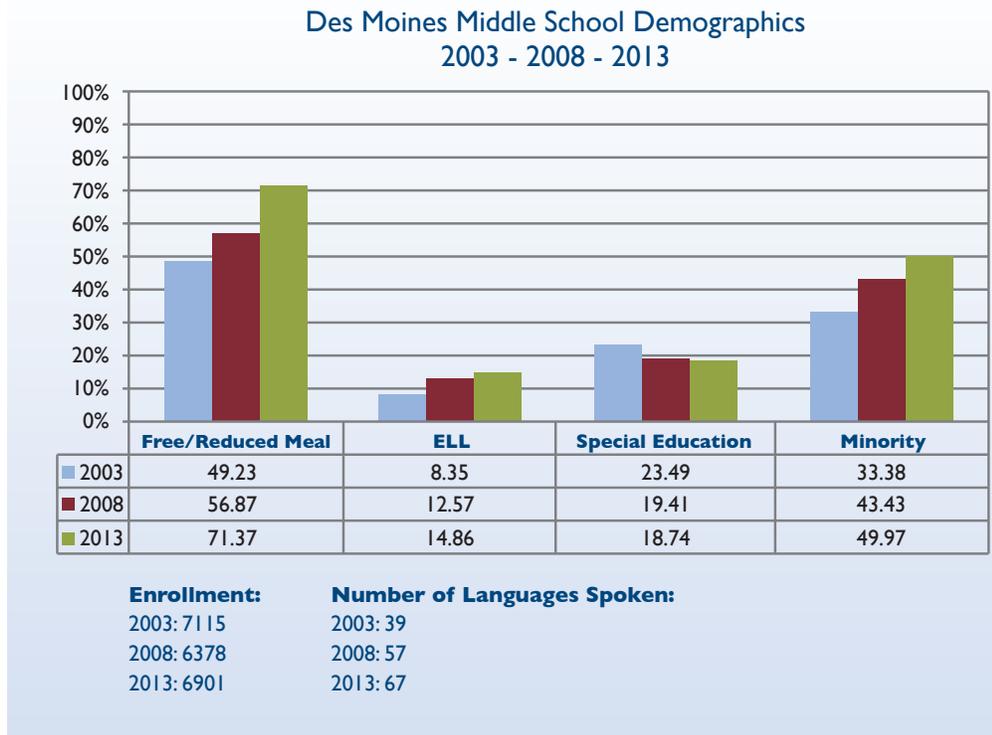
Des Moines Public Schools educates 6,901 students in the 6th through 8th grades. A renewed effort is in place to make these years more engaging for students.

The population of DMPS middle school students is a very diverse group, reflecting the workforce they will one day enter. In Des Moines, the gathering of people from varied backgrounds results in the combination of perspectives and ideas which produce new solutions, inventions, and strategies.

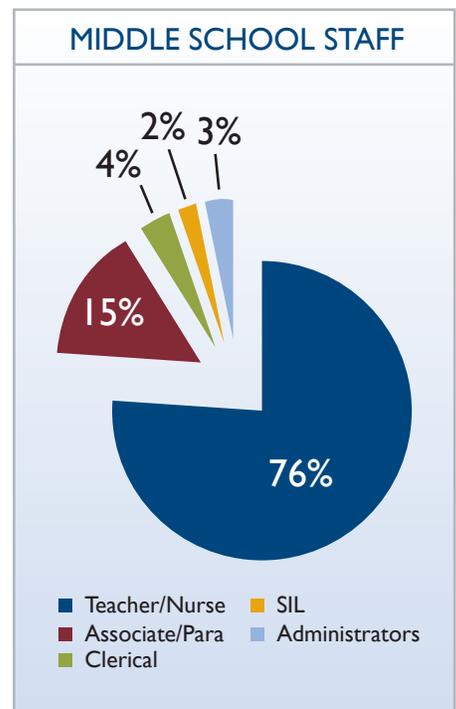
Middle school students are served across multiple programs. DMPS has 10 comprehensive middle schools which deliver a broad, general curriculum that meets the needs of the general student population. These schools serve almost 6,600 students. Smaller schools and programs have varied and narrower focuses including International Baccalaureate, Montessori, special needs, mental health and behavior modification. Collectively, these schools and programs are tailored to meet the needs of every student served.

The district has a talented, committed, and hard-working team of staff facilitating students' academic growth and social development. Six hundred and sixty-two employees support the work "in the middle." More than 80% of them work directly in the classroom with students. Since 2011 very specific areas have been targeted for improvement.

"The primary focuses have been increasing academic achievement and the eradication of achievement gaps between student demographic



Comprehensive Schools	Enrollment
Brody Middle School	747
Callanan Middle School	623
Goodrell Middle School	614
Harding Middle School	722
Hiatt Middle School	635
Hoyt Middle School	496
McCombs Middle School	655
Meredith Middle School	726
Merrill Middle School	704
Weeks Middle School	640
Smaller Schools & Programs	
Cowles Montessori (6-8)	62
District Wide Programs (6-8)	88
Gateway Secondary (6-8)	93
Moulton (8)	25
Orchard Place (6-8)	40
Ruby Van Meter (6-8)	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,901</b>



subgroups," said Tim Schott, the district's Executive Director of Secondary School Programs. "We pursued these objectives in very strategic ways."

On the academic front, there's been increased emphasis in the areas of math and reading. Curriculum guides were developed to ensure

that students are taught the same material in all content areas regardless of which school they attend. Additionally, guidelines were established to ensure that class offerings were more uniform across all of the schools. Socially, each comprehensive middle school

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# Making Middle School Matter

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was staffed with a Behavior Coach whose primary responsibilities are to provide targeted support for the most at-risk students, increase student engagement efforts, and provide interventions that will lead to better engagement in the classroom and decreased out-of-school suspensions.

Consequently, there have been academic gains on the Iowa Assessment at 8 of the 10 comprehensive middle schools in math and 5 of the 10 in reading. Out-of-school suspension days decreased by 52% and 2,191 instructional days were regained. Some of this is the result of finding better ways to engage students, including student leadership group being organized as schools such as:

- Wolf Pack at Harding Middle School

- Leader of the Pride at Goodrell Middle School
- Golden Eagles at McCombs Middle School
- W.E.B. (Where Everybody Belongs) at Weeks Middle School

“We continue to emphasize the academic growth and social development of our students this year,” according to Corey Harris, the district’s Director of Middle School Programs. “Our biggest new focuses are on increasing the presence of campus administrators in classrooms and changing the manner in which we evaluate student progress.”

All of the middle school campuses are involved in some level of standards-referenced grading which is intended as a better barometer of what students know

and are able to do at specific stages in their learning. More importantly, grades will be more uniformly determined district-wide. (See page 7 for an open letter to parent about Standards Reference Grading.)

Socially, the emphasis on increased student engagement is ongoing through improved teaching strategies and additional extra-curricular opportunities in athletics and student clubs.

“We agree with Max DePree who said, ‘We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are,’” said Harris. “Every day, we re-commit to the growth and development of our middle school students. We value the opportunity to serve them and appreciate the continued support and confidence in our ability to get each middle school student college and career ready. Together we are succeeding.” ■

## DMPS Teachers Receive High Marks



North High School Journalism teacher **Ben Graeber** was named the recipient of this year’s Rod Vahl Teacher of the Year award by the Iowa High School Press Association.



Hanawalt Elementary PE teacher **John Baker** was named this year’s recipient of the Steve France Honor Award by the Iowa Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (IAHPERD).



Meredith Middle School math teacher, **Jodi Osthus** received the University of Northern Iowa Yager Exemplary Teaching Award. The award is designed to highlight UNI graduates who have gone on to excellence as K-12 teachers in Iowa.



**Heather Anderson**, a teacher at Cowles Montessori School, is the recipient of this year’s Excellence in Education Award, presented by the Iowa State Education Association. Last year, she was a finalist to be Iowa Teacher of the Year.



## I-2-3-4...What are all these numbers for?

### An Open Letter to Parents of DMPS Middle Schoolers:

Des Moines middle schools have recently begun a transition to a more meaningful form of progress reporting. Let's review and explain the changes.

In the past, you received a letter grade every six weeks. They were intended to send a message about how students were doing in school, but as we dug deeper into what was behind these grades, we learned that there was almost no consistency from school-to-school, or subject-to-subject or even classroom-to-classroom as to what this letter grade actually meant. Did your student's 'B' grade come as a result of earning 80-89% of the total points available during that term? Would they have been an 'A' student if it wasn't for that one late assignment? Do they do a good job of completing all of their work on time? Are they helpful

in the classroom? These questions all represent various reasons why students in the past received the letter grades they did each term. In addition, grading scales varied across the district, with as many as 10 different scales in use within one school!

What's hard to determine from just a letter grade is exactly what students do well and what they still need to work on. A 'B' at the end of the term won't tell you that a student is really strong when working with fractions, but struggles when working with decimals and percentages – all important skills in math class and in life beyond school.

As we move toward a "standards-referenced" approach to grading, you can now expect to see how your child is doing on specific content and skills in each course. These are the "standards" for each course and they come from the Common Core State Standards, a national

framework of what each student should know and be able to do by grade level. Middle school students will receive scores based on the standards for some of their courses in this transition year, with full implementation next year.

As students start work on each new standard, teachers will track and report progress using 1's and 2's to designate beginning and developing work. With some practice, students will move on to 3-level work, which means they are performing as expected (proficient) for students at their grade level. Occasionally, students might even complete a 4-level task, which is an advanced demonstration of the skills they are learning in class. All students will be encouraged and supported to work toward 4-level tasks. At the end of the semester, students' scores on all of the standards they worked on will be averaged and a letter grade will be posted. Students who consistently score in the 3-level or higher on all standards will receive A's for the course and so on.

How does this help you? Well, it allows you to have conversations with your student about the types of work they are doing in school and to get more immediate snapshots of their progress. For all the reasons it helps you, it also helps their teachers. Teachers can work with groups of students based on their progress and avoid having to re-teach skills to students who've already mastered them.

Please visit our website at [grading.dmschools.org](http://grading.dmschools.org) to see a list of frequently asked questions and don't hesitate to contact your school with any other questions you might have. We're doing this for our students, and they are going to be our best messengers about this new approach to grading. ■

# Harding Wolf Pack Mentors 5th Graders About Middle School

One of the laws, or traditions anyway, of the kid jungle has long been that the bigger kids boost the younger, smaller ones over fences that get in their way. Crossing the boundary of one territory into the next can be both exciting and intimidating. It helps to get help from trailblazers who already know the ways around the wider world.

That's the principle guiding the latest leadership foray of the Harding Wolf Pack. 7th graders are returning to the neighborhood elementary buildings from whence they came to mentor 5th graders who will be joining them next year



A student from the Harding Wolf Pack talks with elementary students about preparing for middle school.

in the magical, mysterious land of middle school.

“Data and common sense both suggest that 6th graders can struggle making the transition to middle school,” said Harding Vice Principal Jake Troja. “After meeting with my team of teachers, we came up with a way to make our 6th graders feel welcomed and give them a sense of belonging in advance.”

Over the course of a week in late October the middle school vets visited the Harding feeder schools (Moulton, Findley, Cattell and Oak Park) to launch a process that will continue throughout the year.

At Cattell they broke into lots of small groups to administer a survey designed to identify the 5th graders’ chief apprehensions and uncertainties about what awaits them next year. Over the course of a series of return visits in the months to come those concerns will be addressed and calmed.

The survey covered a wide range of issues, from changes in routines like switching from class to class throughout the day to more

complex dynamics like bullying. There were also questions geared to identify particular areas of interest so that opportunities to pursue them can be explained later.

Justin Blietz teaches science at Harding and he went along on the Cattell visit. “This is all about building relationships,” he said. “For the 5th graders it takes some of the unknowns out of the transition next year and for the kids already at Harding it’s another great way for them to practice and model positive leadership.”

For now the wall dividing Moulton, Findley, Cattell and Oak Park from Harding may still look tall from the 5th grade side. But this reach back across it makes clear that it’s surmountable. By springtime the 5th graders will be straddling it and next fall they’ll make the jump safely to the other side. Thanks to a pack of friendly wolves who are discovering that those leadership muscles they’ve been developing make it much easier to leap back than it was to get over in the first place, way back when they were 5th grade cubs themselves. ■



## Artwork Installed at Wright

Things are looking up these days at Wright Elementary School, both figuratively and literally, after the installation of a student-created mural that represents the capstone of “Big Arts Week” at the school.

# Celebrating Our Achievements

This regular feature of the *DMPS Community Report* highlights awards and achievements of district students and staff. Please let us know if you have a notable achievement to share by e-mailing Mike Wellman at [michael.wellman@dmschools.org](mailto:michael.wellman@dmschools.org). Here are some achievements from the past few months.

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

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**North High School** was recognized as an Apple Distinguished School for 2013-2015 for its work at 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.

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**Central Academy** was the top team at the 41st Annual High School Mathematics Contest held at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville as DMPS students captured more than half of the individual honors presented.

Central students won 23 of the 45 Division I All-Academic Team honors at the contest, which was attended by more than 500 students representing 30 high schools from Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois. 9th grader Ankita Chatterjee, 10th

graders Zach Lin, Peter Oswald, and Jack Wahlig, 11th grader Harry Crane and 12th graders Granger Carty and Patrick Hiatt earned perfect scores. Lin earned a perfect score for the second consecutive year!

The following students earned All-Academic honors:

Edel Aron – Roosevelt, 12th grade; Granger Carty – Roosevelt, 12th grade; Ankita Chatterjee – Roosevelt, 9th grade; Akanksha Chilukuri – Roosevelt, 10th grade; Harry Crane – Roosevelt, 11th grade; Helena Gruensteidl – Roosevelt, 10th grade; Patrick Hiatt – Roosevelt, 12th grade; Allison Kochheiser – Lincoln, 10th grade; Shivani Kumaresan – Roosevelt, 9th grade; Abbott LaPrade – Roosevelt, 9th grade; Zach Lin – Roosevelt, 10th grade; Gabe Mintzer –

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East senior and bowling team member **Luke Fisher** rolled a perfect game in a recent match. 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 coolest moments I have seen at a high school event.”

# Celebrating Our Achievements

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West Des Moines Valley, 9th grade; Peter Oswald – Roosevelt, 10th grade; Chris Palmer – Roosevelt, 10th grade; Finn Pilcher – Roosevelt, 10th grade; Max Pilcher – Roosevelt, 12th grade; Nathan Rider – Hoover, 10th grade; Rachel Schneider – Roosevelt, 11th grade; Andrew Shumway – Roosevelt, 10th grade; Kristina Smith – East, 11th grade; Vaibhav Srikanan – Johnston, 12th grade; Matt Voss – Roosevelt, 9th grade; Jack Wahlig – Roosevelt, 10th grade.

The Central Academy math students are taught and coached by Michael Link, Lana Lyddon Hatten, Mike Marcketti, Joe Obrycki and Brian Reece.

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Student-athletes representing Hoover, North and Roosevelt high schools competed in the 2013 Iowa Girls' State Swimming & Diving

Championship, held on November 9 in Marshalltown. Student-athletes who qualified for the State meet, and their events, are:

## Hoover

- 200 medley relay
- 200 freestyle relay
- 400 freestyle relay

Seniors Taylor Williams, Kimberley Gonzalez and Anna Burriola teamed with junior Kerigan Torres to form all three of the Huskie relay qualifiers.

## North

- 200 IM – Moriah Ross, junior
- 100 breaststroke – Moriah Ross, junior

## Roosevelt

- 200 medley relay
- 200 freestyle relay
- 400 freestyle relay
- 200 freestyle – Mckenna Lynch, senior
- 200 IM – Emma Gaer, junior



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

- 500 freestyle – Mckenna Lynch, and Jordan Summers, seniors
- 100 backstroke – Katherine Bening, senior, and Claire Michelson, junior

Bening, Gaer and Summers swam on all three of the Roughriders relay teams; Lynch and senior Maddie Lorentzen each swam on one.

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## Roosevelt senior Jalynn Roberts

**Lewis** was named to the Des Moines Register's All-CIML Elite Volleyball Team. The following DMPS students received All-CIML Metro Conference recognition:

**First team** – Jalynn Roberts-Lewis, sr., Roosevelt; Hannah Goodwin, sr., Roosevelt; Riley Longden, so., Lincoln; Sidney Newton, sr., Lincoln.

**Second team** – Piper Mauck, fr., Roosevelt; Maggie Long, sr., East; Katie Nickel, sr., Lincoln; Cassie Harrington, jr., North.



**Roosevelt Art Honors Philanthropists:** For the past dozen years, students in the AP art classes of Roosevelt teacher Sam Chido have created specially-commissioned works to honor the area's top philanthropists recognized annually by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. The students/artists research the honorees to create a piece that is unique to them. This year student artists were Melissa Laure, Rachel Schneider, Keegan Walpole, Julia Nguyen and Lucia Ruppert.

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# Celebrating Our Achievements

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**Honorable mention** – Zakia Brown, sr., East; Haley Stoll, sr., East; Kathryn Garcia, sr., East; Maritza Knight-Beery, sr., East; Martine Graves, sr., Hoover; Lauren Provost, fr., Hoover; Lauren Twelmeyer, so., Lincoln; Jennifer Vang, so., Lincoln; Paige Campbell, jr., Lincoln; Mikayla Neal, so., North; Taylor Wisecup, sr., North; Asacia Edwards, jr., North; Reagan Clay, jr., North; Romazia Turner-Brown, sr., Roosevelt.

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**The Roosevelt's boys and girls cross county teams** qualified for the state meet. The Riders were the only XC team in Iowa to go from neither squad qualifying last year to both squads qualifying this year. Roosevelt junior Megan Schott finished 4th in the individual standings of the girls' race.

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Students from **Merrill Middle School and Cowles Montessori**



## Roosevelt Senior Breaks All-Time National Record

Roosevelt senior **Lily Nellans** set the new national record during the Patriot Games Classic speech and debate tournament at George Mason University, breaking the all-time National Forensic League's points record.

**School** turned in strong showings at the State Mock Trial Tournament, sponsored by the Iowa State Bar Association. Only 32 of 160 teams competing advanced to the state level.

The Merrill/Cowles Team Purple brought home the 12th place trophy and was awarded two top individual honors: Louise Bequeaith earned the Outstanding Witness Award and Chloe O'Connor was presented with the Outstanding Attorney Award. Merrill's Team Blue was presented with the Anthony Critelli Award for Sportsmanship.

**Team Purple**  
Bobby Briggs, Louise Bequeaith,

Alice Medick, Helena Anderson, Rachel McNerney, Oskar Kaut, Nyah Noyes, Ellery McAllister, Chloe O'Connor, Jane Romp

## Team Blue

Ellie Konfrst, Ellie Hildebrandt, Emma Hildebrandt, Maya Miller, Sarah Schott, Kate Saunders, Seth Kallestad, Dahlia Callistein

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The young poets of **RunDSM** were invited to headline an event at Woolly's in the East Village on November 7th in conjunction with Des Moines' annual Wonder of Words Festival. ■



## A New Offering at Central Campus

It's not just brainstorming and problem-solving that goes on at Central Academy and Central Campus. Every Thursday there's karaoke in the Commons, and whatever academic tension may hang in the morning air is blown away by the lunchtime songfest.

# History Comes Alive During Tinker Tour Stops at Harding, North

Most of the cultural icons from the 1960's have long since fallen. Tragically, many of them didn't even survive that tumultuous decade so fraught with American history: everything from assassinations to walks on the moon to a war in Southeast Asia.

But a few endure. For example, the Stones are still (rocking and) Rolling, occasionally.

And the Supreme Court's landmark ruling affirming students' first amendment rights in *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* has also withstood the test of time. Living proof of that was on display November 19 in a civics doubleheader at North High School and Harding Middle School that represented a rare opportunity for local students to mine primary historical sources, not to mention ones that were homegrown.

The Tinkers themselves, sibling plaintiffs John and Mary Beth, revisited both schools in a special Homecoming of their very own when their Tinker Tour of the nation's schools stopped here.

The tour's major sponsor was the Student Press Law Center, a Washington nonprofit advocate for student First Amendment rights.

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



Jon (left) and Mary Beth (second from right) Tinker with students at Harding Middle School.

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.”

One thing that's abundantly clear about the Tinkers is that time hasn't dulled their shared sense of citizenship, probably owing to the fact that they've exercised it rigorously throughout their adult lives. The assemblies at both of their former schools amounted to pep rallies for rights as promised to everyone by the Constitution.

John recalled how the student protesters met with opposition in many forms besides the school rule they ignored.

“People threatened us and splashed red paint on our driveway,” he said. “It got to be a wry joke of our mother's that ‘people say we're Communists, but we're not – we're Methodists.’”

But he also remembers the football player who stuck up for him and his right to express his opinion.

At Harding a hallway ceremony was held to retire a locker in Mary Beth's honor. #319 will still be used by Gabriella Andrade for the rest of this year but that's it. After that it will get a fresh coat of paint and a plaque will be mounted on the wall above it. A sort of time capsule will be stuffed inside consisting of Tinker Tour commemorative armbands, a copy of the Constitution, student newspapers gathered from around the country and other appropriate memorabilia.

There was plenty for students to think about after a day spent with people straight out of the pages of their textbooks. By what strange geometry is a circle drawn that begins in 1965 with suspension from school and closes in 2013 as guests of honor, besieged for autographs and photos?

Maybe that was one of the many questions posed to Mary Beth during the up-close and personal mingling that followed both assemblies. If so, she probably had an answer for it. As she told the kids at Harding during her remarks at the podium, she was always good in math when she went to school there. ■



## Crossing Guards Thanked for Service

“Neither rain nor snow nor heat ...” the creed of the US Postal Service could just as easily apply to school crossing guards. Last month DMPS administrators hit the road to say thank you to the unsung heroes who help our students safely to and from school each day. ■

## 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](http://www.dmschools.org). In addition, follow DMPS on the following social media sites:

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

**Dec 23-Jan 1** Winter Recess – no classes

**Dec 24** Holiday – offices closed

**Dec 25** Holiday – offices closed

**Dec 31** Holiday – offices closed

**Jan 1** Holiday – offices closed

**Jan 10-15** First Semester Finals (HS)

**Jan 16** Start of 2nd Semester

**Jan 20** Martin Luther King Day (no school for students, teachers, associates)

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