

Des Moines Public Schools

DMPS COMMUNITY REPORT

February/March 2014

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Each year jurists from the Iowa Court of Appeals and the Iowa Supreme Court take part in a lesson on the judicial process in AP Government classes at high schools in Des Moines.

AP Continues to Grow at DMPS

Four New AP Courses to be Offered at Central Academy

Opportunities continue to expand for students to have greater access to college-level Advanced Placement courses throughout Des Moines, as the school district will be offering new courses at Central Academy while continuing other AP courses available at all five comprehensive high schools.

These changes result from significant enrollment increases the school district has seen in recent years in Advanced Placement courses as both students and teachers have stepped up to meet the challenge of this college-level curriculum.

DMPS is pleased to announce, for the first time ever, four new AP courses to be offered to Des Moines students through

Central Academy starting with the 2014-15 school year: AP Art History, AP Computer Science, AP Microeconomics, and AP Spanish Literature. These new AP offerings are unique, specialized courses that will be available only at Central Academy in order to provide access to all DMPS students. (Previously, AP Art History and AP Microeconomics were available only to students at Roosevelt High School.)

In order to facilitate the growth of our Advanced Placement program at Central Academy, DMPS will reduce some duplication of AP courses. Starting in 2014-15, AP Environmental Science, AP Statistics, and AP US Government will no

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AP Continues to Grow at DMPS

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longer be offered at Central Academy but will continue to be offered at all five comprehensive high schools.

“Des Moines Public Schools is a leader in Iowa and the nation when it comes to offering students access to high-level academic programs, such as Advanced Placement, and our students are to be commended for taking on these world-class educational opportunities,” said Superintendent Tom Ahart. “The school district’s effort to make AP courses available to more and more students throughout Des Moines is showing that our students and teachers are stepping up to the challenge. We are providing thousands of students access to classes that will help prepare them for college and beyond.”

Participation in Advanced Placement courses, high level classes accredited by the College Board, has seen a tremendous increase in recent years as more classes are offered at East, Hoover, Lincoln, North and Roosevelt high schools in addition to the nationally-recognized Central Academy. The expansion of AP courses in Des Moines aligns with the College Board’s mission to provide equitable access by giving all willing and academically prepared students the opportunity to participate. DMPS has worked to eliminate barriers that restrict access to AP for students who have been traditionally underserved; do more to reflect the diversity of our student population; and provide all students with access to academically challenging coursework before they enroll in AP classes.

A recent report issued by the College Board found that while Iowa

The following chart compares the number of students enrolled in AP courses today to the year prior to the expansion of AP offerings at all five high schools:

| School | 2010-11 AP Enrollment | 2013-14 AP Enrollment | Difference |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| East High School | 83 | 832 | +902% |
| Hoover High School | 107 | 325 | +303% |
| Lincoln High School | 164 | 554 | +238% |
| North High School | 37 | 353 | +854% |
| Roosevelt High School | 223 | 630 | +182% |
| TOTAL | 614 | 2,694 | +339% |

In addition to significant enrollment increases in AP courses, the number of AP exams has nearly doubled in the past two years. Depending on the result, exams scores transfer to credit at most colleges and universities. The number of AP exams administered at DMPS over the past three years is as follows:

| | AP Exams Taken | Difference from 2010-11 |
|---------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 2010-11 | 1,024 | |
| 2011-12 | 1,834 | +79.1% |
| 2012-13 | 2,036 | +98.8% |

As a result of this effort, for the first time ever all five Des Moines high schools are listed on the Iowa AP Index – released by the Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education at the University of Iowa – among the top 50 AP schools in the state. Roosevelt is ranked 7th among all Iowa high schools, Hoover 26th, North 28th, Lincoln 30th and East 36th. In addition, Central Academy received special recognition for having the highest score in Iowa on the AP Index.

overall lags the nation in providing students access to AP courses, Iowa students who complete an AP course and exam do better than the national average.

DMPS started to expand access to AP courses at all five Des Moines high schools starting in the 2011-12 school year. As a result, some schools have seen up to a nine hundred percent increase in AP enrollment today compared to four years ago, and overall the school district has seen more than a four-fold increase.

Advanced Placement is a program created by the College

Board to offer college-level curriculum and examinations to high school students. Colleges and universities often grant placement and course credit to students who obtain high scores on the course examinations. The AP curriculum is created for the College Board by a panel of experts and college-level educators. For a high school course to have the AP designation, teachers must successfully complete additional training and the course is audited by the College Board to confirm that it meets the high standards of the AP curriculum. ■

ATTENDANCE AREAS

attendanceareas.dmschools.org



For additional information – including maps, frequently-asked questions, or to submit a comment – please visit attendanceareas.dmschools.org.

Attendance Area Changes Considered for Elementary Schools

The year was 1987. Ronald Reagan was President. Hayden Fry coached the Iowa football team. The Simpsons premiered on TV. Michael Jackson was at the top of the music charts. The Berlin Wall was still standing. A gallon of gas cost 89 cents. And, Des Moines Public Schools did the last major change of its school attendance areas.

A lot of things change in more than a quarter of a century, both around the world and here at home.

To respond to change in order to better serve our students and meet the needs of our schools, Des Moines Public Schools is considering new attendance areas for our elementary schools. The most significant and positive result in almost every case, if this change is adopted, is that the attendance areas of our elementary, middle and high schools will now better align, creating a more consistent “feeder system” throughout the district.

What could this mean for elementary education in Des Moines?

Several good things:

- More neighborhood students will be able to attend their neighborhood school
- Enrollment will be better balanced between our school buildings
- Our school buildings will be better utilized
- Elementary schools will be more aligned with our secondary schools

If approved by the School Board later this spring, the changes would go into effect starting with the 2015-16 school year. However, for many students and families, the changes would have little or no impact as the plan would be “grandfathered” into place so that students would not have to change the school they currently attend.

For more information about the proposal – including an interactive map as well as a form to submit comments or questions online – please visit <http://attendanceareas.dmschools.org>. ■

Upcoming Iowa Assessments

Between March 31 and April 11, DMPS students in grades 3 through 11 will be taking the Iowa Assessments®.

Measuring student academic achievement with the Iowa Assessments provides information to help our students succeed. The Iowa Assessments make this possible by providing detailed information about student achievement in content areas including reading, mathematics, and science.

The Iowa Assessments measure student growth and progress from year to year. In addition, they provide information about students’ academic performance relative to their school, the district, and the nation.

Information gained from the Iowa Assessments helps teachers identify students’ strengths and areas that may need additional emphasis. The assessment data enable sound decision-making and provide a focus for teachers to review and improve their instruction. The results of the assessment will help prepare our students for the next steps on their educational paths. And you can help prepare them for the assessment by supporting them at home in striking a healthy, effective balance between homework, extra-curricular interests and activities, nutrition and rest.

For more information about the Iowa Assessments, please visit: <https://itp.education.uiowa.edu/ia/> ■

TEEN SUMMIT:

The fire at the firehouse!

Actually, it's not a firehouse anymore, it's the work-in-progress new headquarters of the Des Moines Social Club, a performing arts hub in downtown. And the fire there was the figurative but raging one that was our city's first annual Teen Summit on January 24-25, brought to you by the students in the Urban Leadership 101 class at Central Campus and delegations of their counterparts from each of the district's five comprehensive high schools.

The Social Club is only a block south of the DMPS administrative offices but the Teen Summit is even closer to the district's mission than that. It goes to the essence of training a new generation of community-minded citizens, educated and practiced in the ways of change agency.

The two-day event included a series of panels, town hall-styled meetings and workshops dealing with issues and art forms dear to the hearts of young people before culminating with student performance and celebration.

Kristopher Rollins and Emily Lang are the UL 101 teachers.



Students from all five DMPS high schools gathered at the Des Moines Social Club for the 1st annual Teen Summit.

But their vision for the event was only realized with a wide swath of community support.

Official sponsors besides the Social Club were Orchestrate Hospitality, Job Corps, Gateway Market and Raygun.

The idea started to come off the drawing board when the UL 101 students were asked to nominate like-minded teachers and students from their home high schools. Rollins and Lang followed up with the nominees and the district-wide critical mass of delegates was assembled. Then sponsors got behind it. And now that

it's happened questions beg as to next steps for this evolving community of student activists.

"The weekly writing workshop has already expanded to East (site of the last and next Share the Mic poetry events)," Lang said, prompting Rollins to add, "We can imagine all the high schools eventually competing versus each other in poetry slams," as this irresistible force called variously Movement 515, RunDSM, Share the Mic, Energetic Reciprocity and, now, Teen Summit, scales up and spreads. Like wildfire. ■

KCCI's Lewis Joins DMPS Communications Team

A long-time reporter and anchor with KCCI-TV, the CBS affiliate in Des Moines, will be joining the school district's Office of Communications and Public Affairs at the end of February.

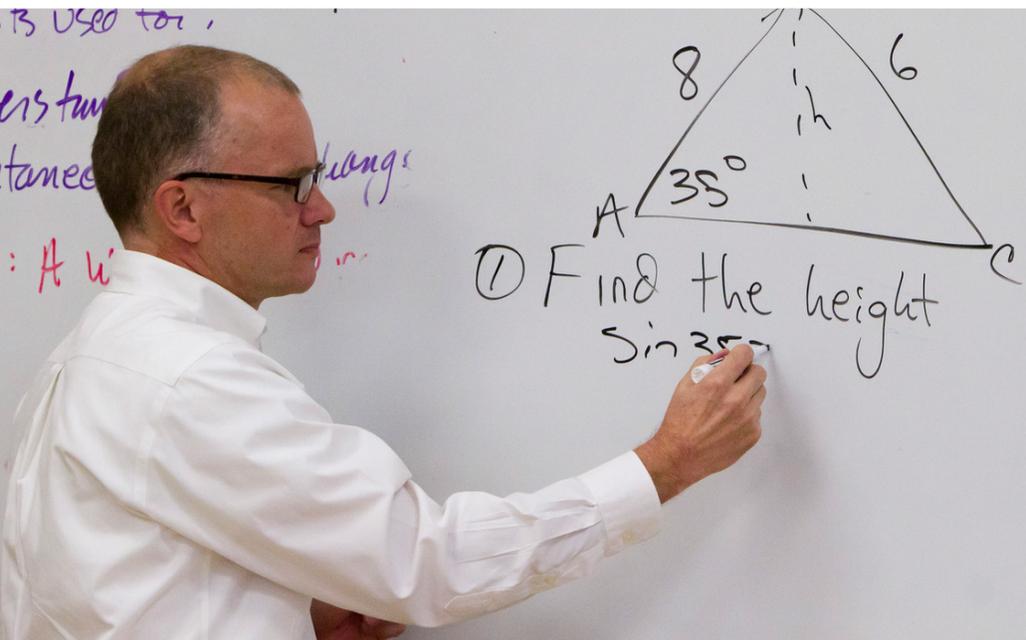
"I am very pleased and excited to announce that Amanda Lewis of KCCI-TV will be joining our communications staff at Des Moines Public Schools later this month. She's

a seasoned professional who's going to be a great addition to our school district," said Phil Roeder, Director of Communications & Public Affairs for Des Moines Public Schools.

In her new role, Lewis's responsibilities will include assisting with media relations, developing content for the district's communications channels, and coordinating new employee communication efforts. ■



Amanda Lewis will be joining the school district's Office of Communications and Public Affairs at the end of February.



A partnership between Drake University, Principal Financial Group and DMPS is designed to support students pursuing education and career opportunities related to science, technology, engineering and math.

New Partnership Gives Low-Income Students a Pathway to Higher Education and a Career

On January 16, Drake University President David Maxwell announced the university will partner with Principal Financial Group, Des Moines Public Schools, and the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines to implement a pilot program called the STEM Pathway Initiative.

The initiative will provide low-income Des Moines high school students a pipeline to higher education and employment in high-demand occupations. The proposal was featured at a White House summit hosted by President Barack Obama focusing on increasing college opportunity for low-income and disadvantaged students.

The initiative's first year will pair as many as 20 high school students from DMPS with Drake student

mentors and professional mentors at The Principal to explore a variety of professional opportunities including actuarial science, accounting, information technology, finance, and insurance. Participating students will have demonstrated ability in math based on eighth grade assessment scores.

Upon completion of high school, qualified students in the program will be admitted to Drake with necessary financial support. The students will be eligible for paid internships at The Principal during their studies at Drake and considered for employment upon completion of their degree and fulfillment of program requirements.

Drake submitted its proposal for the STEM Pipeline Initiative by invitation of White House officials, who asked colleges to commit

to plans for increasing college opportunity for low-income and disadvantaged students. The summit formally launched a plan of action by the National Economic Council, the Domestic Policy Council, and the Department of Education for improving college access, and included remarks by President Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

The Obama administration's call for partnerships catalyzed plans that Maxwell has been discussing with Principal Financial Group Chairman, President, and CEO Larry Zimbleman for some time.

"This summit provided the push that we needed to stop talking about this and take action," Maxwell said. "We've come together to launch a pilot project that is fully scalable and replicable. If it is successful—and we expect it can be—it can serve as a model for additional initiatives in Des Moines and in communities around the country."

Various entities at the federal, state, and local levels have identified a particular shortage of college graduates in the United States who are prepared to work in STEM fields, with the number of STEM-related occupations projected to increase at 1.7 times the rate of non-STEM occupations.

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

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New Partnership Gives Low-Income Students a Pathway

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Zimpleman, the current chair of Drake's Board of Trustees, said every young person should have access to higher education, regardless of family income.

"It's important for The Principal to have access to a well-educated pipeline of STEM students from Iowa high schools and universities," Zimpleman said. "About a third of The Principal's current Iowa workforce is in STEM positions,

so we have a strong interest in working to encourage students of all backgrounds to pursue education in the STEM disciplines. We look forward to partnering with Drake University, Des Moines Public Schools, and the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines to help support and encourage these deserving students."

Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines President

Kristi Knous said the initiative will improve the quality of life for Iowans now and in years to come.

"By making a commitment to support the professional goals of deserving students through education, mentorship, and financial assistance, we are investing in the future success of our community," Knous said. "We are so proud to join this initiative." ■

Moulton, ISU Partner on "Day of Action" in Honor of MLK Day

On January 16, Iowa State University President Steven Leath was in Washington for President Obama's summit on increased educational opportunities for minorities and disadvantaged youth.

Leath used the occasion to declare the school's intention to raise \$150 million over the next five years to fund scholarships for that express purpose. It's no coincidence that ISU Vice President for Public Affairs Thomas Hill told an auditorium full of youngsters at Moulton Learning Center the very next day that he will have "a boatload of money" for them when the time comes if they buckle down in school starting right away and come applying at Iowa State when they graduate from high school.

Dr. Hill's pledge of generosity was the keynote of the assembly that kicked off Moulton's MLK Celebration Day on January 17.

"Every last one of you in this auditorium," Hill said loudly and repeatedly after everyone stood

together for the Pledge of Allegiance, "has what it takes to go to college."

Following Hill's promissory speech the whole school, Pre-K through 8th grade, watched a short training video provided by Meals From the Heartland before taking a shift, grade by grade, in the gym where MFTH had set up one of their patented assembly lines for packaging lifesaving pouches of nourishment to be shipped, in this case, to starving people in South Africa and the Philippines. MFTH spokesman Joel O'Dell told his troops for the day that together they would assemble some 13,000 meals toward MFTH's 2014 overall goal of 10 million.

Besides Hill's rousing remarks he brought along a contingent of ISU staff members to pitch in and help the kids bag the chow. As he reminded the Moulton students, none of whom were yet born when Dr. King's birthday was observed as a national day of service by all 50 states for the first time in 2000, Dr. King's legacy remains community service and



Iowa State and Moulton joined forces in support of Meals From the Heartland.

activism in the face of inequality and injustice.

Moulton students wear black polo shirts with the school Tiger emblazoned on the chest but on that Friday in January the look was topped off with hairnets. There was also more than a splash of Cyclone cardinal and gold in the building. Without a program you couldn't tell the Moulton staff from the ISU. And in years to come the lines between students of the two schools will also blur.

That's a promise. ■



Annual Art Exhibit is a February Oasis

The local weather between February 6 and 12 was normal or worse but there was an oasis all that week downtown in the atrium at Capital Square. It's formally known as the Des Moines Public Schools Annual Art Exhibit but its many patrons usually refer to it as "Ooh" or "Aah."

Every school in the district was represented, elementary through high school. There were works in 2D and 3D and free takeaways in the form of pocket-sized "zines" (pronounced zeenz). And on opening night there was also live music courtesy of String Fusion and the Hoover Jazz Band. Between that and the wide-ranging gallery of works and the small kids nibbling at the edges of the atrium reflecting pool and the atrium's high sky, visitors could forget for a while that the temps outside were going from cold to worse. But February, for all its frigidity, is a great month for this event. What better antidote for the winter blahs than a cavalcade of exuberant, emergent, promising student art?

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

"Next year we hope to have big banners from all of our schools," according to Sara Dougherty, the district's Coordinator of Visual Arts Curriculum, "and there are plans in the works to actually create some pieces on site during the Exhibit. Eventually there may be some DMPS works that will be incorporated into permanent display here."

In the meantime there was plenty to catch the eye. Upstairs, a crowd gathered around a case that enclosed the 3D pieces. One lady was eager to point out a clay piece that featured the pink ribbon symbolic of breast cancer awareness and research. "See that, isn't that something?" she asked proudly. "My grandson made that." Beaming at her side was the artist, Pleasant Hill Elementary 5th grader, Jared Oliveira. A ribbon was pinned to his puffing chest. In a

brief chat with another onlooker she mentioned once that her name is Pamela Seipel. But she clearly prefers to be known as Jared's grandmother. She declared that status half a dozen times. Jared was very pleased to have so pleased his grandma.

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



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. Here are some achievements from the past few months.

TEACHERS

Josie Burg, who teaches math at the Downtown School, was named by President Obama as a recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Josie is the tenth DMPS teacher to receive this prestigious national award since its creation in 1983.

Larry Beall established the Iowa Energy and Sustainability Academy at Central Campus in 2010. This two-year program teaches topics related to environmental science, energy, sustainability, waste management, and related areas through hands-on field experiences

and students earn college credit in the process. For his efforts Beall was chosen as a Trailblazing Teacher for 2013 by the United States Green Building Council. Beall was instrumental in Central Campus being the only Iowa school included among the first cohort of Green Ribbon Schools selected by the United States Department of Education and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2012 and DMPS being named a Green Ribbon District in 2013 when that designation was established.

Four educators from Des Moines Public Schools - **Alex Hammer of Weeks Middle School, Anson Bonte of Callanan Middle**

School, Sara Earleywine of Hoyt Middle School, and Julie Goering of South Union Elementary School – are among 150 teachers chosen to participate in the new Teacher Leadership Initiative, a program sponsored by the National Education Association and other organizations to help develop a new generation of leaders in the teaching profession. The Des Moines teachers will join colleagues from six states in the pilot year of this program.

STUDENTS

Four seniors attending Hoover and Roosevelt high schools in Des Moines have been named by the U.S. Department of Education and the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars as candidates for the 2014 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program.

The DMPS students, who also attend classes at Central Academy, are:

- **Edel Aron** – Roosevelt High School
- **Lillian Nellans** – Roosevelt High School
- **Maxwell Pilcher** – Roosevelt High School
- **Ryan Utke** – Hoover High School

Lillian Nellans broke the all-time National Forensic League's points record in speech and debate and has been selected for the nine-member team representing the United States in World Schools Debate. The team will take part in debate competitions around the world, concluding in Thailand next summer. The Riders' debate team also won its third state championship in four years led by head coach Harry Strong.

Connor Gillette and Nick Biancalana were awarded and have accepted appointments to military service academies. Connor will attend the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis and Nick is headed for the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.



Inclusion in the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, now in its 50th year, is one of the highest honors bestowed upon graduating high school seniors. Scholars are selected on the basis of superior academic and artistic achievements, leadership qualities, strong character and

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Celebrating Our Achievements

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involvement in community and school activities.

Each year approximately 3,000 candidates – or about one-tenth of one percent of senior high school students – are named as candidates in the 2012 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. A total of 53 Iowa students were included.

Eleven Central Academy Creative Writing students received regional recognition in the 2013 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards with the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. The writing contest, sponsored by University of Iowa's Belin-Blank Center, "has an impressive legacy dating back to 1923. Over the years, the Awards have grown to become the longest-running, most prestigious recognition program for creative teens in the U.S., and the nation's largest source of scholarships for creative young artists and writers."

GOLD KEY: The highest level of achievement on the regional level. Approximately 7 – 10% of all regional submissions are recognized with Gold Key Awards and all are considered for national-level recognition.

- **Lillian Nellans**, *Being Called a Slut Is a Real Bitch* (Nellans is also an American Voices Nominee for having one of five works selected from all of the Gold Key award winners as the "Best of Show" for each region.)
- **Granger Carty**, *Blue Haze*
- **Montgomery Cason**, *Evoke, Prophetic, Starry Sky, Surreal*

- **Julianna Hauri**, *The City*
- **Madison McKibben**, *Broke*

SILVER KEY: Approximately 10 – 15% of all regional submissions are recognized with Silver Key Awards.

- **Sam Bates-Norum**, *The Belly Dancer's Putsch*
- **Eleanor McKinley**, *Countdown*
- **Emily Stavneak**, *Five*
- **Quinn Veasman**, *#3; Belle*
- **Quinn Veasman**, *O; You; This River*

HONORABLE MENTION: This Award recognizes students with artistic potential. Approximately 15 – 20% of all regional submissions receive Honorable Mention Awards.

- **Allison Rapp**, *They Call Me Steve*
- **Reid Wade**, *Corners*
- **Reid Wade**, *The Disease of Mental Illness*

The Independent Study Creative Writing class is facilitated collaboratively by Sherry Brooks, Amy Finnegan, Cate Miller, and Diane Morain. These students meet weekly during lunch and work collaboratively to explore their passion and submit to publications and competitions.

Mathletes from **Central Academy** brought home more hardware for their already bulging trophy case, winning first place in the "Math Madness" AMC/Interstellar High School Mathematics National Championship, sponsored by the Mathematical Association of America.

The tournament featured 64 teams from around the country in

head-to-head tournament matches in the style of the NCAA "March Madness" basketball tournament.

This marked the initial full season of the "Math Madness" contest, which was created with the goal of shining some of the competitive spotlight on academics. During this past season, nearly 10,000 students representing 500 schools across the nation took part.

District meets were held across Iowa on February 15 to determine qualifiers for the 2014 Iowa State High School Wrestling Tournament. Congratulations to five DMPS wrestlers who will be seeking state titles: **Chance Raleigh** of East (132 lbs), **Josh Davis** of East (152 lbs), **Nate Luna** of Lincoln (152 lbs), **Damonte Clark** of Hoover/North (160 lbs) and **Reggie Jones** of Roosevelt (170 lbs).

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Scholars from Central Academy also finished second in the 2014 Ames Laboratory/Iowa State University Regional High School Science Bowl on January 25.

Pictured: (front row l-r) Edel Aron, Max Pilcher, and Granger Carty; (back row l-r) Assistant coach Sarah Davitt, Luis Martinez, Vaibhav Srikan, coach Scott Schoneberg, and Ames Laboratory Assistant Director for Scientific Planning Cynthia Jenks.

Celebrating Our Achievements

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Twelve DMPS swimmers qualified for the Boys' State Swimming Meet on February 15 in Marshalltown:

- Hoover/North's **Corbin Faidley** qualified in the 500 yard freestyle and his teammate **Matt Schwarz** did likewise in the 100 yard breaststroke. Both are juniors and they joined seniors **Eric Markham** and **Andrew Gamble** on the 200 yard freestyle and 200 yard medley relay units.
- Lincoln made the field in the 400 yard freestyle relay with the quartet of senior **Carter Worth**, junior **Tom Chidley** and freshmen **Christian Belden** and **Cooper Worth**.

- Roosevelt senior **Oliver Shimp** competed in the 50 yard freestyle and was joined on the Riders' 200 yard freestyle relay by seniors **Sam Au** and **Connor Gillette** and junior **Davis Ward**.

The West Iowa National Forensic League Speech and Debate Qualifier was hosted by Lincoln High School the weekend of February 15-16, and nine students representing Des Moines qualified for the national tournament. Those students, and their schools and events, are: **Brett Dubois** and **Adrian Mitchell** (Lincoln - Public Forum Debate) **Phylcia Brown** and **Giovanni Bahena** (Lincoln - Duo Interpretation), **Murphy Burke** (Roosevelt - Dramatic Interpretation), **Max Pilcher** (Roosevelt - Domestic Extemporaneous Speaking), **Danny Drane** (Roosevelt - Domestic Extemporaneous Speaking), **Jacob Thompson** (Roosevelt - International Extemporaneous Speaking) and **Lily Nellans** (Roosevelt - International Extemporaneous Speaking)

ADMINISTRATORS

Students First, the school building renovation and improvement plan for Des Moines Public Schools, has been recognized for excellence by a top building publication. Building Operating Management, a magazine for building owners and managers, selected DMPS as one of six recipients in the nation for its annual FMXcellence Recognition award. The award recognizes facilities management teams that add significant value to their organizations' broader goals.



The annual district job fair was held on January 11 at the Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center. More than 700 applicants attended and applied for over 200 certified teaching positions for the 2014-15 school year.

Students First was honored for its proven track record of improving school buildings to create better learning environments while simultaneously improving safety and security, implementing technology upgrades, replacing obsolete equipment with efficient systems, and realizing operational cost savings.

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has presented **Des Moines Public Schools** with their Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, in recognition of the district's budget book for FY 2014. According to the GFOA, "The award represents a significant achievement... It reflects the commitment of the governing body and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting." ■

Crunching the Numbers:

As of the most recent monthly energy report card compiled by the district's Operations Department, overall energy consumption is down 5.5% for the months of July through January. If that rate holds for the rest of the fiscal year it would equate to a savings of more than \$200,000 compared to FY 2013.

Things we can't wait to report on:

March Madness, soccer, tennis, Drake Relays, school gardens, state track, A.P. Exams, commencement and baseball!



Record Numbers Take Part In District Science Fair

First it was the artists on parade at Capital Square from February 6-12. Then it was the scientists' turn at, where else, the Science Center of Iowa on February 13.

Education after all, is both art and science.

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

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

The event program made plain in black and white how kids' curiosities mature between grades six and 12 right along with the rest of their developing selves. For instance, one of the 6th grade topics, a very personally practical one, was What Beverage Best Cools Your Mouth After Eating Hot Salsa? Once that problem's been solved maybe that budding

scientist can move on to weightier conundrums such as Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms Found in Lung Cancer. You know how the band concerts change over the years? Same thing with science...

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

Ice in my Pipes was a timely topic, given the record-breaking number of local water mains that have burst so far this winter.

You know you're at a science fair when you see a man sporting an Albert Einstein/ $E=mc^2$ necktie. The young contestants dressed for the occasion, too. Once the judges had finished parading through

and penciling their notes there were beanpoles in blazers walking about while munching bags of chips and young Madame Curies in scholarly black dresses and braces carrying their flats to relieve the sore feet they'd been fidgeting on while getting peppered with judges' inquiries.

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

The space program from Callanan was represented. Now that this is out of the way those Science Bound cadets can get back to work on the launch later this semester of Weather Balloon II. They're going places.

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Record Numbers Take Part in District Science Fair

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

The suspense got thicker than the atmosphere some of the projects had examined by the time DMPS Science Curriculum Coordinator Kim O'Donnell finally strode to the podium to announce the medalists who now advance to the state competition on March 28 at Hilton Coliseum on the campus of

Iowa State University. But first she told the SRO crowd that there are multimillions of unfilled STEM jobs just waiting for qualified graduates to step up and do them.

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

HIGH SCHOOL WINNERS BY CATEGORY

| Physical Science | Place |
|---|-------|
| Nosa Ali & Shivani Kumeresan, Central Academy | 1 |
| Camille Juarez, Central Academy | 2 |
| Abby Espinosa-Gonzalez Bellolio, North High School | 2 |
| Erin Hammond, Jasmine Luangdetmalay, Ben Mueller, Central Academy | 3 |
| Life Science | Place |
| Frankie Schulte, Central Academy | 1 |
| Ankita Chatterjee, Central Academy | 2 |
| Andrea Squires, Central Academy | 3 |
| Annie Johnson, Central Academy | 3 |
| Earth Science | Place |
| Keely Stagner, Brooke Oliveira, Central Academy | 1 |
| Cha White, Central Academy | 2 |
| Allison Lumadue, Riley Dunlap, Central Academy | 3 |

7TH GRADE WINNERS BY CATEGORY

| Physical Science | Place |
|--|-------|
| John Goode, Brody Middle School | 1 |
| Faiza Naseer, Merrill Middle School | 2 |
| Natalie Worthington, Brody Middle School | 3 |
| Life Science | Place |
| Chloe O'Connor, Cowles Montessori | 1 |
| Natalie Chartier, Merrill Middle School | 2 |
| Evelyn Nelson, Merrill Middle School | 3 |
| Louise Bequeaith, Cowles Montessori | 3 |
| Earth Science | Place |
| Ashlyn Marie Miller, Brody Middle School | 1 |
| Helena Anderson, Merrill Middle School | 2 |
| Sam Berg, Brody Middle School | 3 |

8TH GRADE WINNERS BY CATEGORY

| Physical Science | Place |
|--|-------|
| Bridget Easler, Maddie Johnston, Cowles Montessori | 1 |
| Nadine Veasley, Callanan Middle School | 2 |
| Xavier Robles, Brody Middle School | 3 |
| Miguel Vazquez, McCombs Middle School | 3 |
| Life Science | Place |
| Max Sanders, Merrill Middle School | 1 |
| Maria Cruz, McCombs Middle School | 2 |
| Sophia Gustafson, Merrill Middle School | 3 |
| Earth Science | Place |
| Leon Urias, Brody Middle School | 1 |
| Jonathan Prateusack, Harding Middle School | 2 |

6TH GRADE WINNERS BY CATEGORY

| Physical Science | Place |
|---|-------|
| Ava Mason, Merrill Middle School | 1 |
| Risa Vandergrift, Cowles Montessori | 2 |
| Rezin Tempero, Merrill Middle School | 3 |
| Gary McCall, Cowles Montessori | 3 |
| Life Science | Place |
| Maddie Moody, Cowles Montessori | 1 |
| Harrison Eckard-Garrett, Merrill Middle School | 2 |
| Luke Beeman, Merrill Middle School | 3 |
| Earth Science | Place |
| Aleck O'Brien, Merrill Middle School | 1 |
| Anastasia Billington, Kayden Watts, Harding Middle School | 2 |

The Lulu Named Lolo

There were no stopwatches involved but Lolo Jones may have turned in one of her personal best events at Findley Elementary School on December 17 when the world-class hurdler partnered with Samaritan's Feet, a global nonprofit organization, and provided each and every Findley student with a new pair of shoes.

There wasn't always the Lolo Jones Foundation. There weren't always Olympic track sprints and bobsleds. She hasn't always been a celebrity.

Back in the days when she attended the now defunct Brooks Elementary, Weeks and Callanan Middle Schools and Roosevelt High School, there were times when Lolo needed shoes and lacked the means to get them for herself. Somebody was always there to help her out and she remembers how they felt, the



Olympian Lolo Jones signs autographs for young fans at Findley Elementary School.

needs and the deeds. So at Findley she paid back and forward the kindness that others showed her.

There's nothing like a new pair of shoes to put extra spring in a kid's step. They typically walk into shoe stores and skip out. Multiply that dynamic times several hundred and you've got the picture of the Findley gym that morning. A volunteer force some 70 strong, many of them employees of Findley's corporate partner, John

Deere, turned out to fit the kids.

Some weeks after the event Lolo was named to the US Olympic bobsled team, making her one of only ten athletes in American history to compete in both the summer and winter games. If she hears footsteps in the start house at Sochi this week and feels an extra push behind her sled, Lolo can just chalk the sensations up to the cheering section she enlisted back home in December. ■

Go, Connie, Go!

Talk about walking the walk!

Connie Sievers is the district's Health Curriculum Coordinator for the Career and Tech Ed Institute at Central Campus.

She's also a member of Sassy Six, a CNN select team that will compete at the Nautica Malibu Triathlon in Malibu, CA on September 14. But that's really just the latest chapter of a compelling personal story that goes back a ways. Let's rewind.

Eighteen years ago Connie lost her five year-old daughter to leukemia. Among the emotional consequences of that tragedy was a gradual weight gain of some 70 pounds which, try as she might, she couldn't undo. Then last year one of her two sons married a triathlete who became an inspiration that's rippled throughout the Sievers family.

Last September Connie rose to her daughter-in-law's encouragement and challenge, and began a regular workout routine that included pre-dawn swims, weights, biking and running. Shortly after that her sister tipped her off to CNN health guru Dr. Sanjay Gupta's initiative called Fit Nation. The program was calling for applicants to send in videos making their cases to be chosen for this year's triathlon team.

Right away Connie sat down and taped her story, before she lost her nerve. Around Thanksgiving she got a call from a CNN producer asking follow-up questions and talking like she was in the running, so to speak. Then on December 12 she got a call informing her that she'd been chosen as one of 15 finalists out of hundreds of applications for the six spots. Later that same day Dr. Gupta himself personally



congratulated Connie on being officially named to the team.

For more about Connie's continuing and inspiring story, and to learn how you can follow her progress between now and September, click the CNN links below:

- <http://www.cnn.com/video/data/2.0/video/health/2014/01/26/exp-fit-nation-kickoff-2014.cnn.html>
- http://www.cnn.com/2014/01/24/health/fit-nation-team-announced/index.html?hpt=he_t2 ■

Reminders

MARCH

14-21 Spring Recess – no classes

APRIL

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

MAY

26 Memorial Day - no classes

JUNE

- 2 Last day of elementary/middle school
- 3 Last day of high school

Coming Home... Celebrating Des Moines Schools

This inaugural event is sponsored by the DMPS Foundation and proceeds will support Fine Arts education in the district. Accordingly, it will feature live music provided by DMPS alumni and staff including Max Wellman, Megan Bobo, Peter Sloterdijk, Scott Davis, Scott Sutherland and the all-educator band, Faculty Lounge.



Saturday, March 8, 2014

6 – 10 p.m.

Iowa Historical Building in Des Moines

Tickets: \$40

Honorary Co-Chairs for the event include Governor Bob and Billie Ray, Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie and DMPS Superintendent Tom Ahart.

The event will also include silent and live auctions with a variety of upscale items like use of condos in San Francisco, Florida and Colorado, as well as artwork and other special items.

For more information or to purchase tickets in advance, click here:

<http://foundation.dmschools.org>

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More DMPS News and Information Available Online and On Air

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

ONLINE

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

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