



A Message from Dr. Nancy Sebring



Welcome to the back-to-school edition of the DMPS Community Report. We are counting down the days until the start of the 2011-12 school year. Be sure to see pages 10-11 for information on school registration.

Looking back at the past year, there's a lot to be proud of when it comes to the work of our students and teachers. For example, our graduation rate increased 5.6 percent, more than tripled the statewide increase, and was the biggest gain among the state's 25 largest school districts. And the proficiency of our students continues to increase in most categories. In fact, the reading and math abilities of our fourth grade students are at the highest levels in a decade. See inside for more examples of some of the honors and recognitions earned by our students and teachers.

Looking ahead to the new year, Des Moines Public Schools will continue to be the state's leading school district when it comes to providing students and families with the most educational choices. We are home to the state's top Advanced Placement program, the only International Baccalaureate schools, the only public Montessori school; and we offer the most foreign language classes, the most year-round schools, and nationally recognized programs from the Downtown School to our Career and Technical Institute.

Education in Des Moines is not one-size-fits-all — it's the right size for the needs and interests of our students.

While public education faces many challenges today, the support from and involvement of our parents and the community keeps us moving forward.

Thank you for your interest in Des Moines Public Schools, and have a terrific school year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Sebring".

Nancy Sebring
Superintendent
Des Moines Public Schools

Des Moines Public Schools

DMPS

COMMUNITY REPORT

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The Most Choices for Students and Families

One of the persistent misconceptions about public schools is that they take a one-size-fits-all approach to educating kids. That may have once been commonplace, but if it ever was here in Des Moines, it is no longer. There are a lot of different strategies at work in the field, but not many cities offer more within the bounds of one school district than Des Moines does.

Consider: Central Campus and Central Academy comprise one of the finest magnet programs in the country, Phillips and Jefferson provide traditional elementary curricula, the Downtown School and Capitol View, River Woods and Moulton elementaries offer continuous calendars, and Cowles Montessori is the only public Montessori school in the state. In addition,

DMPS is home to the first and only International Baccalaureate schools in Iowa — now in place at all grade levels. Other options include Casady, McKee, and SCAVO Alternative Schools, Smouse and Ruby Van Meter Schools (serving kids with disabilities from K-12), and the Des Moines Public Charter School. Howe and Wright elementaries feature the art-infused and research-based Artful Learning School Improvement model.

The term “school choice” has been over-simplified to mean providing vouchers for parents to send their kids to private schools. But that issue clouds what is being done to offer meaningful choice within innovative public school systems like DMPS — choices reflecting the notion that learning environments should be as varied

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The Most Choices for Students and Families

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as the different ways kids learn.

Central Academy, according to the renowned Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development, “is in a class by itself” as a college preparatory school.

Central Campus offers career and technical training that is rare at the high school level. Examples of opportunities not typically available to public school students include the aviation, graphic design, broadcasting, culinary arts and marine biology programs, all of which take instruction out of the classroom and textbook and into the hands-on real world.

Phillips and Jefferson elementaries have dress codes and feature increased emphasis on basic academic skills, even as they also stress personal respect, responsibility and discipline as cornerstones of a place where academic achievement can be maximized. Phillips is one of only two schools in Iowa that employ the Core Knowledge Sequence, a curriculum designed to extend elementary teaching of basic skills by 20 percent.

The district’s continuous calendar schools are in session the same number of days per school year as the ones that take the customary break in the summer months, but their breaks are spread more evenly across the seasons. The option of continuous calendars enhances retention of material for some students and also has logistical advantages for some parents. In addition to its continuous calendar, the Downtown School also is a non-graded classroom environment; that is, students are not separated into distinct cohorts strictly on the basis of age.

At Cowles, the Montessori model also results in the blending

of age groups and children’s natural curiosities are exploited to the fullest as they advance at their own pace. Students are recognized as key stakeholders in the educational process and involved in the management of the classroom. Teachers typically stay with a group of students for multiple years, fostering relationships based on mutual, deeper understanding. The Montessori focus on global perspective is particularly relevant in a district as diverse as DMPS.

As of the 2010/2011 school year, the district boasts schools authorized as International Baccalaureate providers at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Those authorized are Hubbell, Stowe, Park Avenue, Goodrell, Merrill, and Central Academy. The Gateway Secondary School, Meredith Middle School, and Walnut Street School are working toward authorization.

As for Smouse and Ruby Van Meter, there’s nothing new about their approach. Smouse’s distinguished history in the Des Moines schools dates back 80 years. Jointly, Smouse and Van Meter are the district’s provider of quality instruction to physically and mentally disabled kids. There are no better examples of the DMPS commitment to the principle that every child is entitled to help in reaching their potential, and that we all share in the responsibility to provide it.

There is something for every student somewhere in DMPS. And there is quite a lot to choose from in an educational catalogue comprised of 60+ schools and special programs staffed by 3,000+ teachers serving 31,000+ students.

So go ahead and be choosy! ■

There is something for every student somewhere in DMPS. And there is quite a lot to choose from in the brick and mortar catalogue comprised of 60+ schools and special programs staffed by 3,000+ teachers serving 31,000+ students.



Students at Phillips work on an activity.



Central Campus welding.



A Cowles student practices violin.

DMPS Sees Jump in Student Proficiency

Students in Des Moines are becoming more and more proficient in reading and math, according to preliminary results from the ITBS and ITED tests for the 2010-2011 school year.

“There are many encouraging signs in the results we are seeing to indicate improvements in the quality education our students receive in Des Moines,” said Dr. Sebring, superintendent. “While we have seen changes ranging from more students living in poverty to regular state budget cuts, we are adapting to meet our promise to prepare every student for their future.”

The ITBS and ITED exams are administered to fourth, eighth, and 11th grade students to measure proficiency, which is defined by federal education rules as a national percentile rank of 41 or above.

Factors contributing to increases in proficiency include professional development for teachers, shifting focus from remediation to prevention, implementing more dropout prevention programs, aligning curriculum to Iowa Core and Common Core standards, and expanding early childhood education.

“While there are many positive signs, these results also bring focus



McCombs students celebrate their academic success.

to our efforts so we can support improvements and success for all students,” added Dr. Sebring. “One example is doing more to increase student attendance. Those students who are in school 90 percent of the time or more consistently show far greater proficiency than students who attend school less often or who attend more than one school during a single academic year. That’s a great compliment to our teachers and their ability to teach students in their classrooms. We simply need to make sure that every student – along with their parents and guardians – understands the importance of simply showing up if they are going to succeed in school and beyond.”

Read some of the highlights from the 2010-2011 ITBS and ITED results in the sidebar to the right. The final report on the district’s assessment data will be available later this summer. ■

2010-2011 ITBS AND ITED HIGHLIGHTS

4th Grade Reading

Proficiency for African American, Latino and White students increased by 11.7 percent, 7.7 percent, and 5.9 percent, respectively, since last year, reaching the highest levels in the past 10 years.

ELL students saw proficiency improvements of 9.4 percent over the past year, also reaching the highest level in the past 10 years.

4th Grade Mathematics

The proficiency of African American, White and Latino students increased by 10 percent, 1.2 percent and 5.5 percent respectively, and are higher than they were 10 years ago.

8th Grade Reading

Proficiency for all but two student subgroups is higher today than it was five years ago.

8th Grade Mathematics

Proficiency for Latino students has shown a consistent upward trend, increasing eight percent in the past five years.

11th Grade Cohort

Every student subgroup increased over the past five years in reading, with the exception of Asian and ELL students.

| READING | | 2007 | 2011 |
|------------|----------|------|-------|
| 4th grade | Overall | 65% | 68% ▲ |
| | Minority | 51% | 60% ▲ |
| | White | 75% | 77% ▲ |
| 8th grade | Overall | 54% | 58% ▲ |
| | Minority | 41% | 47% ▲ |
| | White | 62% | 71% ▲ |
| 11th grade | Overall | 57% | 63% ▲ |
| | Minority | 41% | 50% ▲ |
| | White | 65% | 73% ▲ |

| MATH | | 2007 | 2011 |
|------------|----------|------|-------|
| 4th grade | Overall | 70% | 67% ▼ |
| | Minority | 60% | 60% |
| | White | 77% | 76% ▼ |
| 8th grade | Overall | 55% | 61% ▲ |
| | Minority | 43% | 52% ▲ |
| | White | 67% | 72% ▲ |
| 11th grade | Overall | 54% | 56% ▲ |
| | Minority | 41% | 43% ▲ |
| | White | 64% | 66% ▲ |

Expanding in a Shrinking World

Walnut Street School Chinese teacher Jessica Rieper grew up in the middle of America in a household that spoke only Mandarin. Her grandparents fled mainland China during the Communist revolution there and her parents came to America from Taiwan in the 1970's.

Jessica drew deeply upon the roots of her own heritage and life experience while adding to the district's Chinese program.



Walnut Street School Chinese teacher Jessica Rieper with her students.

Next year she'll be joined by an experienced language teacher from China for the entire academic year because Walnut Street has been named a recipient of a U.S. Department of State award through the Teachers of Critical Language Program for 2011-2012.

"We are one of only 24 schools selected nationally," declared Principal Craig Leager. "We are excited about the capacity that this program will provide us in strengthening our language and culture program."

Walnut Street is not the only school where the DMPS menu of world languages is expanding. The district also is adding Spanish at Meredith Middle School, Spanish and Chinese at Gateway Secondary School and Arabic at Lincoln High School in 2011-12.

"Most districts offer options such as Spanish, French, and German, but few in the Midwest offer Japanese, Chinese, Italian and Arabic," said Amber Graeber, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator. "Our world language options try to reflect the growing diversity of our local population and the need to prepare our students for a globalized world."

Globalization is also a theme that's reflected in the district's growing International Baccalaureate Programme. After three years of implementation, Walnut Street School is scheduled for its IB authorization site visit next year, a milestone achieved by Goodrell and Merrill for the Middle Years Programme, and Hubbell, Park Avenue and Stowe Elementary Schools for the Primary Years Programme — making them the first IB schools

in the state, along with Central Academy, the first school authorized in 2009. Gateway Secondary School and Meredith Middle School are entering the first year of implementing the IB Middle Years Programme.

"Students as young as the age of four have opportunities to begin studying new languages as part of the established IB pathways in the district," commented David Johns, the district's IB coordinator. "This allows for our students to not only develop speaking, reading and writing ability over several years of study, but to also develop intercultural understanding."

Four times a week, Rieper spends 15 minutes a day four times a week with her Pre-K students. That hour per week escalates steadily as the kids advance through school until she is spending two hours per week with the fourth and fifth graders who will be handed off to the program at Gateway starting next fall. Besides her instruction in reading and speaking conversational Mandarin, she employs a cross-curricular strategy in the students' other classes. It is part of the IB approach to learning.

"I try to tie my units to their IB units," she explained. "Kindergarten did a human bodies unit, so after they completed their full body unit I did a unit on body parts in Mandarin. This gave the kids knowledge of the body parts in both languages, close together, for better retention."

She really knows what she's talking about, in any language. ■



Lincoln High School principal Paul Williamson.

New Lincoln Principal's Goal: Continued Improvement

There's a new Railsplitter in town who is eager to carry on the rich tradition at Lincoln High School and lead the school and community efforts for continued improvement.

Paul Williamson took over the reins at Lincoln on July 1, following one year with interim principal Joan Roberts. Williamson, who moved to Des Moines from Colorado Springs, Colo. is anxious to dive right in and become part of the tradition at Lincoln.

"During the first year, I hope to develop positive and collaborative relationships with the staff, students, and community, and be able to understand and support the long-standing tradition of Lincoln High School," Williamson commented. "I want to completely understand the direction and desire the staff and the district want to take Lincoln — including the career academies — and would like to develop a short- and long-term action plan to address the school's goals."

Lincoln High School implemented career academies in 2009 that allow students to explore personal career interests and prepare for postsecondary education and employment. Studies show that such

academies have a 10 to 19 percent lower dropout rate than non-career interest schools.

Prior to coming to Des Moines, Williamson was assistant principal at Roy J. Wasson High School in Colorado Springs, where career academies were also used.

"Allowing students to explore and pursue their passion is a key piece to increasing the graduation rate and daily attendance rate, as well as providing relevance for our students to prepare them to be successful citizens in the Southside community and beyond," added Williamson.

Williamson served as dean of students for one year at Roy J. Wasson before becoming their assistant principal, and was the school's band/orchestra director for three years. He also has taught band/orchestra in Tulsa, Okla.

Williamson has been married to his wife Lori for 11 years. They have five children — two adult sons, a son who will be a junior at Lincoln, a son who will be in third grade at Jefferson, and a four-year-old daughter. They also have an infant grandson. Williamson and his family are excited to become involved in the Southside community. ■

New principals for the 2011-2012 school year are:

Crista Carlile, High School Extended Programs Supervisor at Central Academy — Crista previously served as the district's Science Curriculum Coordinator and last year was a School Improvement Leader at East High School.

Brian Crook, Studebaker Elementary School — Brian previously served as Dean of Students at Morris Elementary School.

Nancy Croy, McCombs Middle School — Nancy previously served as Principal of Lombardi Middle School in Green Bay, Wisc.

Steve Johns, East High School — Steve previously served as Vice Principal/Activities Director at North High School.

Dan Koss, Perkins Elementary School — Dan previously served as a School Improvement Leader at Weeks Middle School.

Peter LeBlanc, King Elementary School — Peter previously served as Assistant Principal at Aldine Independent School District in Houston, Texas.

Elizabeth Mashek, Cowles Montessori — Elizabeth previously served as School Improvement Leader at Callanan Middle School.

Mary Minard, Jefferson Elementary School — Mary previously served as Dean of Students at South Union Elementary School.

Tara Owen, Findley Elementary School — Tara previously served as a School Improvement Leader at Hiatt Middle School.

David Perrigo, Edmunds Elementary School — David previously served as Dean of Students at Edmunds.

Audrey Rieken, Weeks Middle School — Audrey previously served as Vice Principal at Weeks.

Maureen Taylor, Harding Middle School — Maureen previously served as a School Improvement Leader at Harding Middle School.

Paul Williamson, Lincoln High School — Paul previously served as assistant principal at Roy J. Wasson High School in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Former Harding Principal Ahart to Serve DMPS in New Role

After serving as principal at Harding Middle School for three years, Tom Ahart will step into a new role as the district's Associate Superintendent of Teaching & Learning. His duties will include overseeing the curriculum, assessment, ELL, early childhood education, special education, and gifted and talented departments.

"I hope to learn as much as I can about the departments I will oversee and find ways that central office — especially the teaching and learning departments — can be of better service to each of our schools," commented Ahart.

Ahart's past experience includes Director of Human Resources for the Ankeny Community School District, Director of Instruction for the Marshalltown Community School District, and school improvement consultant at Heartland Area Education Agency. He also has been a language arts teacher at high schools in Denison, Iowa and Glenwood Springs, Colo. He is currently completing his dissertation to fulfill the requirements of his doctorate in educational leadership at Drake University and is active on the board of directors for the Iowa Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Ahart's family includes his wife, Kira, and four sisters and one brother who all work in either education or medicine. In his free time, he enjoys music, reading and home renovation projects, is an avid runner, and also is involved in theater as both an actor and director.



East High School principal Steve Johns.

Veteran Principal and Marathoner Ready to Go the Distance at East High

When the 2,270 students of East High School return in August, they'll be greeted by a new principal who is enthusiastic about leading Iowa's largest high school toward increased improvement in 2012 and beyond.

Steve Johns not only has more than 20 years of experience as a high school principal, he is also a 10-time qualifier for the Boston Marathon. So he knows the importance of looking down the road and mapping out a winning strategy. Johns is thrilled to have the opportunity to now be a part of the East High School community.

"This is an exciting opportunity to work with a terrific group of students, teachers, and staff, as well as a community that cares deeply about the school," commented Johns. "The history of and pride in East High School is well known not only throughout the city but across the state, and I am excited to be a part of such a storied school at a time when so much good work is taking place to help our kids succeed."

Johns began his assignment at East High School in July. He was the 7-12 principal for Williamsburg Community Schools from 1989 to 2007, and was also a high school principal in the Colo-Nesco school district. Last year he served as vice principal and activities director at North High School, where they saw huge increases in student achievement and underwent a major building renovation. Prior to coming to DMPS, Johns spent three years with Heartland AEA as a District Partnership Director, working with multiple school districts on programs including special education and professional development.

Johns' wife, Rene, was a special education teacher for over fifteen years before succumbing to ALS. She passed away five years ago. His son, Brian, is currently a doctoral student in mechanical engineering at the University of Iowa. His daughter, Stacia, was a swimmer for the University of Iowa Hawkeyes, including two years as team captain, and is beginning her second year at the University of Iowa College of Law. ■

New and Improved Facilities Ready for a New School Year

The work to upgrade and renovate schools in neighborhoods throughout Des Moines continues, and the results will be evident to thousands of students and teachers returning to school next month.

“These renovations are among some of the most significant the district has undertaken, and we believe will contribute not only to the education of our children but also the strength of our community,” said Bill Good, chief operations officer for Des Moines Public Schools.



Renovations at Central Campus.



Renovations at Central Campus.

This year also marks a milestone in that all five high schools in Des Moines will have seen many of their major renovations completed.

“Because of their size, our high school renovations usually take a couple of years to complete, and so it’s rewarding to see our students and staff be able to return to facilities that are now ready to meet our needs for many years to come,” added Good.

Beyond improving the appearance and functionality of school facilities, the renovations bring several additional benefits. For example, operational costs are reduced with the use of new windows and mechanical systems that provide greater energy efficiency. In addition, student and staff safety is greatly enhanced with the inclusion of items such as security systems, fire sprinklers, and traffic drop-offs.

Highlights of significant school renovations being completed in August include:

Central Campus: With nearly a half-million square feet – and home to schools and programs serving students from kindergarten to high school – Central Campus will be the biggest renovation project the district has undertaken once it’s complete. The past couple of years saw the installation of new windows throughout most of the building, two new stair towers on the building’s south side, and a completely renovated 3rd floor for Career and Technical Institute programs such as fashion design, film and broadcasting, graphic arts, photography, and marine biology.

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Renovations at Central Campus.

How School Renovations are Funded

Polk County voters began the process of funding facility improvements in each of the county’s school districts by approving a one-cent local option sales tax in 1999. The local option sales tax (Schools First) expired in June 2010, investing more than \$240 million to improve 32 schools throughout Des Moines.

After all 99 counties approved a local option, the Iowa legislature made the one-cent sales tax for school improvements statewide. In September 2009, Des Moines voters approved the district’s plan (Students First) for the use of sales tax funds, which included improving buildings that had not already received major improvements; improving safety and security; replacing obsolete, inefficient or worn-out systems; installing air-conditioning; and upgrading technology. For the most recent fiscal year, Des Moines Public Schools received a little more than \$24 million from the statewide sales tax.



Thomas Harper, Chief Financial Officer.

New CFO to Oversee DMPS Finances

Thomas Harper is the new Chief Financial Officer for Des Moines Public Schools. Harper, a Certified Public Accountant, comes from Billings Public Schools in Billings, Mont. where he was the district's CFO for seven years and managed an annual budget of \$150 million. He is excited to take on a new venture here in Des Moines.

"I can't wait to start my new position," said Harper. "I see it as a new beginning and a new challenge, and I am anxious to meet everyone and start working for Des Moines Public Schools."

Harper's background includes extensive management and financial experience with Fortune 500 companies. Prior to his role at Billings Public Schools, he was the president of Harper & Associates, LLC in Billings from 2001 to 2004. The Billings Public School district has been recognized nationally by the Association of School Business Officials International and the Government Finance Officers Association for excellence in budget preparation and presentation and financial reporting.

Harper calls work his hobby, but also enjoys reading, playing golf and following sports. He and his wife of 35 years have three adult children and nine grandchildren.

New and Improved Facilities

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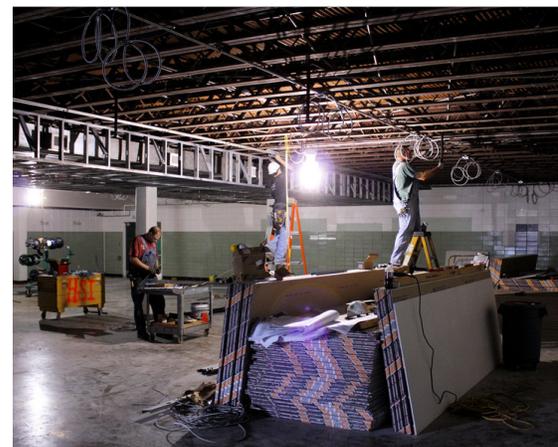
This year, most of two additional floors will look like new. On the first floor, Des Moines' nationally-recognized Downtown School will have a new home; many of the large classrooms look out across the Raccoon River and towards Water Works Park. The second floor will include additional new space for career and technical programs, such as a biotechnology lab and health services classrooms, as well as a state-of-the-art facility for the award-winning culinary arts program. In addition, Central Campus will open a new multi-purpose space that will serve as the culinary arts café as well as provide space for conferences, work groups, and School Board meetings. Finally, new student drop-off areas are being created for better safety and convenience.

Hoover High School: The first improvement at Hoover High School that catches the eye is an iconic addition to the building: the new library and media center that will be used by students from both Hoover and the adjoining Meredith Middle School. But that's not all. The current \$4.25 million renovation also includes new office space at the school's main entrance, providing not only improved work space for teachers and administrators but also a better welcome to visitors. Students also will enjoy a remodeled and enlarged cafeteria and commons area, along with technology upgrades throughout the building.

North High School: Three years ago, North High School was surrounded by flood waters. Today, \$14 million in upgrades and additions have made the school a revived landmark on the



Renovations at Hoover High School.



Renovations at North High School.

community's near north side. The most noticeable change from the outside is a new addition that moves the school's offices immediately adjacent to the school's main entrance. On the inside, a new commons area will provide students with open space for everything from eating lunch to studying. And mechanical and technological upgrades have been made, which will support North in becoming the state's largest one-to-one laptop school later this year.

Roosevelt High School: The renovation of Roosevelt High School could be described as A triple-plus: academic, arts and athletics. The

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New and Improved Facilities

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two-year, \$28.5 million project is upgrading classrooms throughout the 1920s building, creating space for six additional classrooms and an expanded café area, improving the lighting, climate control and technology, and enhancing the auditorium. In addition, parent and alumni fundraising efforts have paid for a new fine arts wing, which opened last year, along with improvements to the athletic wing of the school, such as additional locker room space and upgrades to existing facilities.

Woodlawn Education Center:

Several years ago, when students from Woodlawn and Samuelson joined together at a single location, the Woodlawn School was used as a “swing school,” providing a temporary location for students whose home schools were undergoing renovation. This year the building will see new life serving two purposes as the Woodlawn Education Center. First, eight classrooms have

been remodeled to provide new space for early childhood programs. Second, part of the building will provide office and work space for special education programs, which saves money by no longer leasing space. In addition, the entire building has been outfitted with new, energy-efficient windows as well as heating and cooling systems.

In addition to the above renovation projects, several schools throughout the community are undergoing improvements this summer. For example, Brody, Harding and Merrill middle schools, along with Cowles Montessori School, will be air conditioned. Brody and Merrill will also have remodeling work completed that will reduce and eventually eliminate the use of mobile classrooms. And in a continuing effort to improve safety, Cattell, Findley and Jefferson elementary schools are all having new student drop-off areas completed this summer. ■



Renovations at North High School.



Renovations at Woodlawn Education Center.



Renovations at Woodlawn Education Center.

Roeder Returns to Community Relations Post

Phil Roeder returned to the district on June 1, 2011 as Director of Community Relations and Legislative Liaison.

He previously served in this role in 2007-2008 and during that time coordinated the district's centennial recognition, oversaw upgrades to the district's cable television station, managed several new community outreach efforts, and earned top honors from the National School Public Relations Association for writing and marketing projects. Roeder also was a member of the Des Moines School Board from 2004-2007, serving one term as president. He is glad to be back

at work informing the community about the district.

“In the coming months you will see a bigger and better online presence from Des Moines Public Schools,” stated Roeder. “From our new website to the use of social media, we want to make sure parents, staff and the public have easier access to a range of news and information about our community's schools.”

Roeder left Des Moines Public Schools to serve as Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications in the office of Governor Chet Culver. Before returning to DMPS, he was a Special

Assistant at the Iowa Department of Education, where he helped Director Jason Glass organize a new media and communications bureau. In addition, Roeder has been Public Information Director for the Polk County Manager's Office and was a spokesperson for several public officials including U.S. Senators Tom Harkin (IA) and Max Baucus (MT) and former State Treasurer Pat Quinn (IL).

A native of Maquoketa, Roeder attended the University of Iowa and Arizona State University. He and his wife are the parents of three children who graduated from Roosevelt High School. ■

2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR

JULY

- 4 Holiday - no classes, offices closed
- 12 School Board Meeting

AUGUST

- 2 School Board Meeting
- 16 School Board Meeting
- 18 First-year teachers report
- 22 All teachers and associates report
- 25 First day of school

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Holiday - no classes, offices closed
- 6 School Board Meeting
- 20 School Board Meeting
- 23 Staff development - no classes for students

OCTOBER

- 4 School Board Meeting
- 12 Conferences - 90-minute early dismissal for all students
- 13 Conferences - no classes
- 14 No classes
- 18 School Board Meeting

NOVEMBER

- 1 School Board Meeting
- 15 School Board Meeting
- 23 No school for teachers or students
- 24-25 Holiday - no classes, offices closed

DECEMBER

- 13 School Board Meeting
- 22-31 Winter recess - no classes
- 23 Holiday - no classes, offices closed
- 26 Holiday - no classes, offices closed
- 29-30 Holiday - no classes, offices closed

**IMPORTANT NOTE –
Adjusted dismissal for
professional development
every Wednesday.**

**High School will end at 1:05
Middle School will end at 1:00
Elementary check with the school**

Back to School: How to register for the 2011-2012 year

To ensure a smooth beginning to the fall semester, all Des Moines Public Schools students must register before school starts. Some schools offered an early registration period for students. If you did not register early and cannot attend registration, please call your school prior to the registration date.

What to Expect at Registration

Registration is the time for families to take care of a number of things to make sure every student is ready for the start of a new school year. Middle and high school students will be given their class schedule at registration, and any schedule changes can be made at that time. High school students also will have their yearbook photos taken. Parents should be prepared to pay any fees, if applicable, as well as update their contact information. Students who ride the bus to school will receive a tentative bus schedule. If you have further questions about registration, please call your school. A directory of schools can be found at www.dmschools.org. ■

REGISTRATION DATES

Welcome Center

All new families and ELL families should register at the Welcome Center, 1301 2nd Avenue, throughout the summer by appointment. Hours during the day are between 8:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. On July 26 and July 28, the Welcome Center will have extended hours until 7 p.m. for parents who need to come during the evening. You may make an appointment by calling 242-7371 or 242-8102 (ELL Program).

All schools will hold registration during the week of July 25-29 with the exceptions noted below. Please call your school for scheduled days, times, and locations.

** Exceptions:

1. **Brody Middle School** will hold registration on Aug. 8 and Aug. 9 from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Jefferson Elementary due to renovations at Brody.
2. **Harding Middle School** will hold registration on Aug. 15 and Aug. 18 from Noon to 7 p.m.
3. **Lovejoy Elementary School** will hold registration on July 19 from 1 to 7 p.m. and July 20 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
4. **McCombs Middle School** will hold registration on Aug. 8 and Aug. 9 from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
5. **North High School** will hold registration on Aug. 16 and Aug. 17 at 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. each day.
6. **Wright Elementary School** registered returning students by mail and will register new students by appointment.
7. **Traditional schools** register students by application.
8. **Schools following a continuous calendar** started the school year on July 14.

Future Pathways

July 25 and July 27: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and July 26 and July 28: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Gateway Secondary School

Registration for the new Gateway Secondary School is July 26 – 29 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Central Campus main office. Registration is for any student from Park Avenue Elementary or Walnut Street Elementary or any student that has been approved for open enrollment to the Gateway Secondary School.

Back to School

ORIENTATION DATES

Central Campus & Central Academy High School

Tuesday, Aug. 23: 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Central Academy Middle School

7th Grade Prep Academy - Monday, Aug. 22: 6 to 7 p.m.

8th Grade - Monday, Aug. 22: 7 to 8:15 p.m.

Gateway Secondary School (6th – 8th Grade)

Monday, Aug. 22: 6 to 8 p.m.

ORIENTATION FOR SIXTH GRADE

Brody: Wednesday, Aug. 24: 9 to 10 a.m.

Callanan: Tuesday, Aug. 23: 6 p.m. (also 7th/8th grade Meet Your Teachers Night)

Weeks: Wednesday, Aug. 24: 9 to 10 a.m.

(Note: Hiatt, Hoyt and Meredith held orientation for sixth graders in May. Merrill will not hold 6th grade orientation due to building renovations. Harding and McCombs are TBD.)

ORIENTATION FOR NINTH GRADE

East: Tuesday, Aug. 23: 9 to 11 a.m.

Hoover: Wednesday, Aug. 24: 9 a.m.

Lincoln: Thursday, July 28: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Lincoln Main

North: Tuesday, Aug. 23: 6 p.m.

Roosevelt: Wednesday, Aug. 24: 8 to 11 a.m.

2011-2012 SCHOOL HOURS

Elementary Schools

Group 1: 8:15 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Group 2: 8:35 a.m. to 3:20 p.m.

Perkins: 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Middle Schools

7:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

High Schools

7:40 a.m. to 2:35 p.m.

Early Childhood Programs

For information about early childhood programs, please call one of the following numbers:

- Preschool: 242-7234
- Head Start: 242-7588
- Special Education: 242-8213
- Montessori: 242-7818

Start times vary by school.

Metro Kids Care

Metro Kids Care hours will be from 6:30 a.m. until 5:45 p.m. on days when school is in session. Regional day care is available on nonschool days, Monday through Friday, from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except on legal holidays.

The annual registration fee is \$25 and weekly fees are \$50 for a.m. only; \$61/week for a.m. only and Wednesday early outs only; \$20/session for Wednesday early outs only; \$58 for p.m. only; \$72 for a.m./p.m. Full-day regional care is \$130 per week.

For more information on Metro Kids Care, call 242-7951.

2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR

JANUARY

- 2 First day of school after winter recess
- 3 School Board Meeting
- 13 End of first semester
- 16 MLK In-service day, no classes for students
- 17 First day of second semester
- 17 School Board Meeting

FEBRUARY

- 7 School Board Meeting
- 20 Staff development for teachers only – no classes
- 15, 21, 23 Elementary Conferences 4 to 8 p.m. - classes will be held
- 21 School Board Meeting

MARCH

- 13 School Board Meeting
- 14 Secondary Conferences – classes will be held
- 15 Secondary Conferences – no elementary or secondary classes
- 16 No classes
- 19-23 Spring Recess - no classes

APRIL

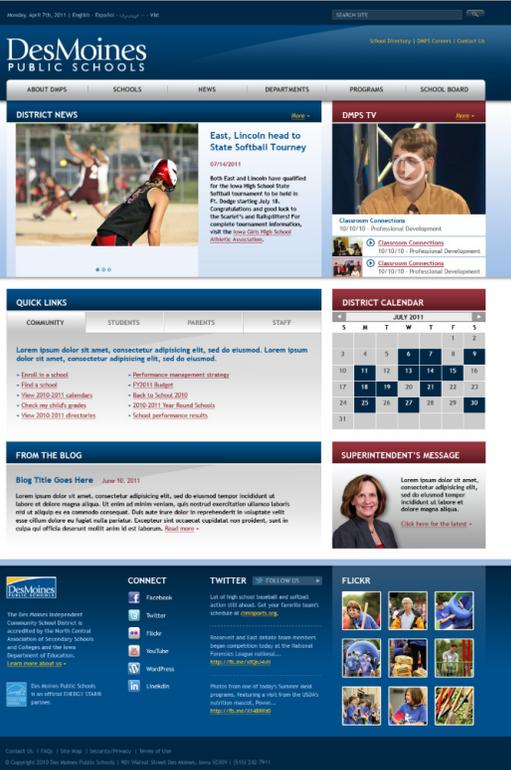
- 3 School Board Meeting
- 17 School Board Meeting
- 24 No school for 9th, 10th, and 12th grade students. 11th graders attend a.m. for ACT testing.
- 25 No school for 11th grade. 9th, 10th, 12th graders attend a.m. only.

MAY

- 1 School Board Meeting
- 15 School Board Meeting
- 28 Holiday - no classes, offices closed
- 31 Last day of school for elementary and middle schools

JUNE

- 1 Last day for high schools
- 4-8 Reserved for weather make-up days
- 5 School Board Meeting
- 19 School Board Meeting



Coming Soon: DMSCHOOLS.ORG

DMPS Expands, Improves Its Online Presence

For the past decade Des Moines Public Schools has been renovating school facilities throughout the community. Now the district is finishing up the renovation of its virtual “front door” with a new and improved website.

Later this school year Des Moines Public Schools will have a mobile website and smartphone application to make basic school district information more easily accessible away from a computer.

This summer, Des Moines Public Schools also joined the world of Facebook and Twitter, using the two social media tools to share news and information about the district, post announcements and reminders on events and activities, provide facts and figures about district benchmarks, recognize teachers and students for their work and accomplishments, and offer a place for people to raise questions and share ideas.

In August, the district’s new website will go online. In addition to a new look, some changes to the district’s website include:

- A new, shorter website address: www.dmschools.org. (NOTE: if you use the district’s current address – www.dmps.k12.ia.us – you will be automatically directed to the new address.)
- A comprehensive calendar that will include information on not only school and academic-related dates but also school concerts and plays, athletic events, school board meetings, and other public events.
- An interactive Google map of the district including links to individual school websites.
- Links to the district’s social media tools.

The online presence of any organization is its ‘front door’ to the community.

The school district also can be found on other social media sites: YouTube, where videos from the district’s cable station, DMPS-TV, are posted; Flickr, which offers an online photo gallery of scenes throughout the district; and LinkedIn, for people who work for or are interested in careers at DMPS.

“Today, people should be able to expect information when they want it, where they want it, and how they want it, and we’re working to meet that expectation,” added Roeder.

All of these social media sites are free to join. Please see the sidebar story at left for details on the different places you can find Des Moines Public Schools online. ■

Where You Can Find DMPS Online

Des Moines Public Schools is accessible several places online, from our new website to several social media sites.

If you currently belong to any of the social media sites listed below, feel free to add the school district to your contacts. If not, they are all free to join.

-  facebook.com/dmschools
-  twitter.com/dmschools
-  linkedin.com/company/des-moines-public-schools
-  flickr.com/dmps
-  youtube.com/dmpstv

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 Sarah Taylor at sarah.taylor@dmps.k12.ia.us. Here are some achievements from the past few months.*

Jeff Bock, Central Campus Graphic Communications teacher, was awarded Educator of the Year by the Printing Industry of the Midwest.

North High School senior **Cole Lopez** was honored in May as Science Bound Student of the Year and received a \$1,000 scholarship.

Kacia Cain, Anatomy and Physiology and Biotechnology instructor at Central Campus, was named Outstanding Biology Teacher of the Year for the state of Iowa, as selected by the National Association of Biology Teachers.

Roosevelt High School sophomore **Nathan Leys** finished fourth in Extemp Commentary at the National Forensic League's National Debate Tournament in Dallas last month – the first Des Moines national place winner since 1999.

Jason Danielson, a social studies teacher at Hoover High School, received the 2011 Iowa James Madison Fellowship and will receive his Master's Degree in American History funded through the James Madison Foundation.

Caleb Peterson and **Bailey Johnson**, Lincoln High School juniors, were selected to participate in the All-State Jazz Choir to be held in July.

Rotary Teachers of the Year for 2011 were **Kitty Crandell**, Capitol View Elementary School Title Reading teacher; **Tricia McCarty**, Stowe Elementary School fourth grade

teacher; **Jenie Olson**, Hiatt Middle School sixth grade reading teacher; Sara Halbur, Brubaker Elementary School teacher (special education); and **Jeff Mullin**, Lincoln High School ninth grade world history teacher.

The Des Moines **Central Campus JROTC Raider Team** competed at the Pony Express High School JROTC Raider Challenge in St. Joseph, Missouri in March, winning first place in three events and second place in three events, including All-Around Champions.

Hoover Huskies head boys basketball coach **Courtney Henderson** was named 4A Coach of the Year by the Iowa Basketball Coaches Association.

Lincoln High School senior class president and basketball stand-out **Caitlin Wilson** participated in the Coaches vs. Cancer Charity All-Star basketball game in March.

Amy Hayes, special education teacher at Monroe Elementary School, won the Teaching in Iowa Incentive Award from the University of Northern Iowa.

North High School senior **Amanda Prescott** received a \$2,500 scholarship from the North Community Business Community Education Foundation.

Leading national education nonprofit ASCD has selected **Stefanie Rosenberg Wager**, Curriculum Coordinator for the Teaching American History Grant and Pre-AP Programs and

Professional Development, for its 2011 class of Emerging Leaders.

A team of 11th and 12th graders at **Central Academy** finished fifth out of 907 high school teams at this year's Junior Engineering Technical Society (JETS) competition.

North High School girls track coach **Jana Edwards** was named CIML Metro Coach of the Year.

Roosevelt High School Senior **Catherine Chiodo** was named the Iowa Speech and Debate Senior of the Year by Iowa Speech and Debate coaches.

Linda Revell, kindergarten teacher at Hanawalt Elementary School, was chosen to receive the Golden Apple Award presented by Allied Insurance in cooperation with WHO Channel 13 News.

Joel Schneider, a 2011 Roosevelt High School graduate who also took classes at Central Academy, recently achieved scores on a series of tests that place him in the top 50 of all chemistry students in the country, according to the U.S. Chemistry Olympiad sponsored by the American Chemical Society.

Roosevelt High School was ranked second in Iowa when it comes to preparing students for college, according to the Washington Post's High School Challenge Index. Only seven percent of the nation's high schools even qualified for the Index, and Roosevelt was in the top quarter of that elite list.

* Only awards received before July 1, 2011 have been included here.



North sprinter Agnes Sayeh (left) and Roosevelt sprinter Erin Hawkins (right).

State's Top Sprinters Call Des Moines Home

Roosevelt High School junior **Erin Hawkins** played a lead role in the Roosevelt girls' track team second place finish at the state track meet in May. She took first in the 100 and 200 meter sprints and helped Roosevelt win the 4x100 meter relay and sprint medley relay.

Another of the state's top sprinters is also a Des Moines student. North High School sophomore **Agnes Sayeh** placed second in the 100 and 200 meter sprints.

DMPS Teacher Receives Presidential Award

Barb Leise, a teacher at the Downtown School, received the 2010 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). She has been teaching in Des Moines Public Schools for 20 years and is completing her 13th year at the Downtown School where she teaches a multiage group of kindergarten through first graders.



Downtown School's Barb Leise.

Eighty-five mathematics and science teachers were recipients of this prestigious award and were honored by President Obama in Washington, D.C. in May. They also receive a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation to be used at their discretion.

Reflecting on her trip to Washington, D.C., Leise said it was an amazing opportunity to listen to the experiences of Nobel Peace Prize winners, who talked about teachers who had made an impact on their lives.

"Every one of those presenters talked about a teacher that influenced them strongly or led them to choose their current career path," she commented. "A casual comment

from a teacher often changed the presenter's perspective about the possibilities for their future."

Leise was one of three mathematics teachers from Des Moines Public Schools who were named state finalists for the award in October. The PAEMST is awarded annually to outstanding K-12 science and mathematics teachers from across the country. All of the 2010 awardees teach kindergarten through sixth grade.

"I often tell people that I have the best job around," Leise said. "It is so gratifying to see young children grow into independent, flexible problem solvers through the course of a year. I love being part of their journey." ■

2011 School Board Election

The next school board election will be held Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2011. Voters will elect four school board members this year. School board elections are now held every two years, so three board members elected on Sept. 13 will serve four-year terms along with the other

members of the board. One vacant seat also will be filled until the next election in 2013.

The deadline for filing candidacy papers to run for school board is Thursday, Aug. 4, by 5 p.m. Completed papers must be returned to Sarah

Taylor at the DMPS administrative offices, 901 Walnut St.

Polls will be open on Election Day from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. We encourage everyone to get out and vote to elect the members of your Des Moines School Board!



Volunteers Build New Playground for Wright

On a rainy day in June, more than 200 volunteers from the Dr Pepper Snapple Group, Des Moines Public Schools, organizers from KaBOOM! and residents of the local community joined forces to build a new playground at Wright Elementary School. The new playground's design was based on drawings created by Wright students. The project was part of Let's Play, a community partnership led by the Dr Pepper Snapple Group to get kids and families active nationwide.

Back-to-School Health Fair

The annual Back-to-School Health Fair — sponsored by several area providers — will be held on Wednesday, August 3 from 1 to 7 p.m. at East High School (815 E. 13th St.). The Health Fair provides health screenings, physicals, and immunizations free of charge to children ages preschool through 12th grade in the Des Moines community. Children also will take away a backpack full of school supplies. Last year's health fair served nearly 2,000 metro area children.

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 website at www.dmschools.org, and at 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.

It is the policy of the Des Moines Public School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age (employment only), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (students/program only) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact the District's Equity Coordinator at 901 Walnut Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309, 515.242.7911.

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