



# Urbandale Viewpoint

## PREMIERE ISSUE

**Welcome Urbandale** families to the premiere issue of *Urbandale Viewpoint*, a newsletter created by the district to help keep families informed. We know your time is valuable, thus we'll email you a link to the newsletter twice a year (mid-year and end-of-year) with all newsletters archived on the district website for review at your convenience.

As many of you also receive a newsletter from your school, the distinction between the two is content in the *Urbandale Viewpoint* will provide broader insight into topics and news pertaining to our entire district. We thank you for giving us



the opportunity to help your child learn, grow, and achieve success on the pathway of lifelong learning!

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

**Welcome to** the first edition of our semi-annual district update. It is intended to provide relevant information about the Urbandale Community School District; where we've been, where we are, and where we are going in the future. In addition to the great work that happens every day in our classrooms, we have been working to deploy our strategic plan, entitled "Transformation to Excellence: Our Moral Imperative." As we continue this work we will improve and transform our district in order to prepare our students to thrive and be successful in the 21st century.

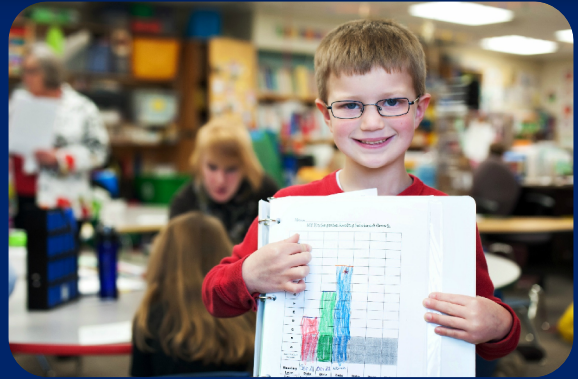
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**DISTRICT VISION:** *Urbandale will be a school district that brings learning to life for everyone.*



## NOTABLE SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENTS

### Jensen Elementary

- Second Grade Teacher, Mrs. Dottie Abrahamson, and several of her students presented for the UCSD Board Quality Update in the fall. The Board was quite impressed with the depth of understanding and poise shown by these second grade students.
- Jensen staff recently discussed school safety with Sergeant Dan Stein of the Urbandale Police Department. Sergeant Stein shared the most current thinking and strategies related to school safety. Staff were able to ask questions and discuss Jensen-specific needs; it proved to be both an informative and valuable session.
- We were thrilled to welcome over 100 parents and students who participated in the Jensen Curriculum Night! Attendees learned about Words Their Way, Everyday Math, Continuous Classroom Improvement, and how to support learning at home. Thank you to all parents, students, and staff that helped create such a memorable evening.

### Karen Acres Elementary

- Karen Acres made the growth necessary in the area of reading to be considered "SINA Year Two Delay". We are hoping to meet our growth goal again this year to no longer be considered a "School in Need of Assistance" in the area of reading. A strong focus has been made to improve literacy instruction, particularly in the area of guided reading, across all classrooms in a manner that engages and challenges all students. Professional development second semester will provide teachers with ideas of how to help students deepen comprehension through writing about reading in a variety of genres.
- Students meet once per month in their "Cougar Dens," which are similar to advisories, and participate in various activities that promote the pillars of character. They also had a food drive this fall, and learned about the unique characteristics of animals from the Blank Park Zoo, including a parrot, rabbit, snake and alligator.

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# NOTABLE SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENTS (CONT'D)

## **Karen Acres Elementary (Cont'd)**

- Students have taken on the responsibility of reading the morning announcements each day. They let others know about the lunch menu, birthdays of students and staff, and important character reminders. They'll add "shout outs" to the announcements in order to highlight all the great things they're doing both in and out of school!

## **Olmsted Elementary**

- Our beloved secretary of 25+ years, Joyce Westby, is retiring this month (January 2014). Joyce has been connected with Olmsted for 35 years: first as a parent and volunteer and then as a secretary. We will have a reception the morning of January 24th before school. She will be replaced by Gina Cain at the end of the month.
- The first day and weeks of school with 180+ Kindergarten students at Olmsted went great! Our "Kindergarten Center" has eight classrooms and is full of energy, joy, and learning!
- We held an Academic Awards Assembly in November where we awarded Gold, Silver, and Effort Awards and Attendance Awards for students in grades 4–5. Plus, our 5th grade students volunteered at the Urbandale Senior Recreation Center's Thanksgiving and Holiday luncheons in November and December. Attendees have shared that having our students volunteer brightened their day and students shared what a fun and special time it was for everyone!

## **Rolling Green Elementary**

- Third-grade students gave a comprehensive presentation to the PTO on the PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) Cycle and shared how collecting, tracking, and assessing their data helps them to know they are growing. Fourth-grade students presented their Iowa Unit and website that they developed this fall. Parents had the opportunity to ask questions and see the in-depth research and technology skills that students used to demonstrate their learning.
- Instrumental and vocal performances took place in December when the Rolling Green Student Chorus and Fifth-Grade Band members performed center court at Merle Hay Mall, as well as at First American Bank (our school's Bank Partner).
- Extraordinary volunteers! Paul Franklin and Linda Sibley: Paul comes each Thursday and pops 220+ bags of popcorn for students. Students LOVE 'Popcorn Thursday' and this provides a healthy snack for 25 cents. Linda comes twice per week for two hours each time to work one-on-one with students in achieving their fluency and reading accuracy. We love all our volunteers!

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# NOTABLE SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENTS (CONT'D)

## Valerius Elementary

- Valerius students participated in a week-long Scholastic fundraiser, All for Books™, which resulted in \$1,425 being donated to King Elementary in Des Moines. King Elementary used those funds to select and purchase books for their classrooms. By achieving such a large profit from total book fair sales, Valerius also earned \$855 back from Scholastic in order to buy books for our own library.
- We have a 'Running Club' at Valerius that consists of students running over the lunch hour with parent volunteers counting laps. The focus is on encouraging our students to exercise and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle. Our seven-week total (although it was only 29 days given the weather) was 20,974 laps or 2,097 miles. Those participating ran 80 marathons this fall!
- We're so proud to share that 100% of Valerius staff contributed to the district's annual United Way Foundation fundraising event!

## Webster Elementary

- Successful creation of a new Level III Special Education program at Webster that serves students with multiple disabilities. The program serves six students in grades K-5 and provides wonderful opportunities for educational support for students in both the general education and special education classrooms.
- Our Webster Elementary School PTO held a "RAW Race: Race Around Webster" (5K race) that involved all students in grades PK-5 and raised money to support our elementary PTO, and also raised funds for our proposed playground/park addition.
- Implementation of Continuous Classroom Improvement (CCI) boards in our classrooms (PK-5) that involve a Plan-Do-Study-Act approach to studying and improving student learning of key concepts in grade level subject areas. Plus, we were overjoyed to have 99% Parent Participation Rate for Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences!

## Urbandale Middle School

- Our Urbandale Middle School Student Senate conducted a "ReUse a Shoe" fundraiser this fall. UMS 7th Grade Social Studies Teacher, Lori Russell, and students in the Student Senate collected 241 pairs of shoes and received a check for \$241.00. The fundraiser was a meaningful experience for all participants and ideas are being vetted for the best way to apply the funds in order to make the most impact.

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# NOTABLE SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENTS (CONT'D)

## Urbandale Middle School (Cont'd)

- We won state! Our Urbandale Middle School Mock Trial team, "The S.U.I.T.S." captured the championship in the 2013 Middle School Mock Trial State Tournament on November 20, 2013. The team consisted of eight students and volunteer coaches. The S.U.I.T.S defeated teams from all across the state to take the top honors. This is the first time since 2004 that an Urbandale Middle School team has won the state competition, which is sponsored by The Iowa State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division.
- Our first annual staff/student volleyball game fundraiser was a hit...and a bump and a spike! We had 30 UMS students competing against 30 UMS staff to raise funds in support of our Physical Education Department. The funds raised will go toward enhancing equipment used throughout the course of the year during various P.E. units. Although someone somewhere was keeping score, all we seem to remember is the fun had by all!

## Urbandale High School

- Of the more than 1,000 student participants across Iowa, four Urbandale High School seniors, Lucas Delfs, Grant McDowell, Morgan Muell and Sarah Wueve were selected to be among the 100 finalists in The Iowa State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division 'Know Your Constitution' Project. The four UHS finalists, and their AP Government teacher, Linda Templeman, were honored at a luncheon at the West Des Moines Marriott Hotel on January 10, 2014.
- Gloria Peters, UHS Science Teacher, was selected by The National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS) as a Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction. Taylor Porter, junior at UHS, nominated Peters for her enthusiasm for student learning, dedication to student achievement, and compassion for helping students achieve success. NSHSS student members are given the opportunity to nominate an educator who has made the most significant contribution to their academic career.
- At UHS, we have continued to hear from our business partners the importance of learning quality presentation skills and the value of communication skills for getting a job, keeping a job, and being successful in the work place. The "Step UP" (UP stands for Urbandale Presentations) initiative focuses on providing the tools, knowledge, and experience necessary for students to deliver effective and engaging presentations as well as develop strong communication skills. Step UP is an initiative led by a team of high school administrators and teachers from a variety of content areas. We've worked with the UMS Step UP team to ensure the rubric is consistent for grades 6–12. Presentations will take place in early March!

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# ACTIVITIES ACHIEVEMENTS

## All State Band

- ▶ Brittany Schultz, Ivory Hanson, Brian Carrier, Bethany Schultz, Kate Newendorp

## Boys State Cross Country Meet

- ▶ Michael Eppink placed 50th

## Cheerleading

- ▶ Kina Gaskins, Anna Steggerda, and Emma Wilker were named to the 2013 Cheerleading Honor Squad

## Football – State Playoffs

- ▶ Allen Lazard – Elite All State Football Player, US Army All-American Bowl Selection
- ▶ Logan Augustine – 3rd Team All State Football Player, named Academic All State - Football

## Girls Cross Country – 8th at State Meet

- ▶ Evie Kammeyer named Academic All State – Girls Cross Country

### Individual Places:

- ▶ Ashley Norem - 11th
- ▶ Julia Noah - 35th
- ▶ Evie Kammeyer - 46th
- ▶ Nicki Bruett - 53rd
- ▶ Elyse Prescott - 60th
- ▶ Trina Moreno - 68th
- ▶ Mickey Cole - 74th



## Jaywalkers

- ▶ Placed 2nd at Iowa State Dance Team Competition in Lyrical Competition

## All State Vocal

- ▶ Joel Andrews, Nolan Brown, Sam Coon, Lizzy Erickson, Ryan Foreman, Michaela Gyure, Evie Kammeyer, Michael Madison, Morgan Muell, Elaine Tilly, Katie Twedt

## Volleyball – State Semifinals

- ▶ Kyla Inderski – Class 5A Player of the Year – Volleyball, Elite All-State Volleyball, IGCA All Star Game Selection

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## 2014 Iowa Educator of the Year Finalist: Jon Parrott

With over 26 years of outstanding contributions in teaching, leading, and facilitating learning, Jon Parrott, Eighth Grade American History Teacher at Urbandale Middle School, received the prestigious honor of being selected as a finalist for the 2014 Iowa Teacher of the Year Award. By utilizing proven quality learning tools, Parrott encourages students to learn at their own pace and be accountable for their learning. Students not only learn the content of the American History course, but also learn how to learn, learn how to manage their time, and learn how to effectively collaborate with other students; essential skills for success in college, business, and life.

"I'm honored to have been nominated for the 2014 Iowa Teacher of the Year Award and humbled by being selected as a finalist. We strive to not only improve the class average but also shrink the gap between the most and least successful students. Being a member of the UCSD means being a part of an organization that is truly forward-thinking as we seek continual, quality improvement for all learners," said Parrott. [View a video of Parrott's students](#) sharing how he has had a significant impact on both their learning and their lives.

## URBANDALE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The **Urbandale** Education Foundation (UEF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to enhancing the educational experience of all students in the UCSD by funding projects and initiatives not supported within existing school budgets. The UEF raises funds through grants and private donations and then invests in enhanced educational programming, innovative technology, scholarships for graduates, state-of-the-art facilities, and lifelong learning opportunities. Take a moment to visit the [UEF website](#) and learn more about how every donation counts!

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# STRATEGIC PLAN

After an entire year of planning, the formation of five goal work teams, and the involvement of more than 50 UCSD stakeholders, the UCSD Board of Directors approved the ["Transformation to Excellence: Our Moral Imperative" Strategic Plan for 2013-2018](#). During the 2013-2014 school year, the administrative team has worked to prioritize the initiatives contained in the plan and has been writing deployment plans for those selected initiatives. A few examples of initiatives being examined include the curriculum review process, mapping the core—unit design, new teacher onboarding, staff recognition and celebration, and the study of professional learning coach/teacher model. As we progress through the year, more and more initiatives will be addressed. By using the strategic plan as a guide for transforming education, we will continue doing what's best for our students, parents, and staff by exploring innovative ways for engaging, inspiring, and motivating lifelong learners.

## INTRODUCING ONLINE REGISTRATION

The **Urbandale** Community School District is excited to announce that we are moving toward online student registration for our Urbandale families! Soon you will have the convenience of registering new and returning students online. This spring you will not receive registration packets for returning students as all changes and updates of student information are anticipated to take place online. Once all details are finalized for this process, you'll be notified by email with specific instructions for how to register your student(s) online. If you'd like to confirm or change the email address we have on file for you, please contact your building secretary. If you have any immediate questions, please contact Sandy Schultz, Student Data Manager: [schultzs@urbandale.k12.ia.us](mailto:schultzs@urbandale.k12.ia.us) or 515-457-5011.

## QUALITY/CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

During August, all UCSD teachers received continued instruction in implementing Quality and Continual Improvement practices in their classrooms. Teachers are learning to implement the "Continuous Classroom Improvement" (CCI) steps with their students with the guidance of consultants from [Jim Shipley and Associates](#). CCI is a system for incorporating the categories of the [Malcolm Baldrige](#) criteria in classrooms. CCI uses a systems approach to continual improvement by helping teachers and students pay attention to the parts of their system (learning requirements, goals, instructional strategies, results) and how those parts work together to produce learning. Ultimately, these proven tools will create learning environments that increase engagement, improve achievement, encourage collaboration, and ignite a renewed passion for learning throughout the district. Learn more by visiting the [Quality/Continual Improvement Showcase](#).

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# DEPARTMENT NEWS (QUICK VIEW)

**Activities:** Work continues in J-Hawk Foundations to build an intentional culture centered on excellence.

**Business Services:** Implementing a new procurement card (pCard) program in order to provide efficient and effective use of district resources.

**Communications:** Developing a new district website that delivers more intuitive navigation, creates a visual hierarchy of information, and provides better ease-of-use for Urbandale families and staff.

**Community Education:** Currently accepting registrations for all Winter/Spring courses! Managing Winter/Spring Course offerings, coordinating Summer Course offerings, the Summer Camp Series, Team J-Hawk Track & Field, J-Hawk Theatre, and Urbandale Community Theatre.

**Curriculum & Assessment:** Continually working to improve student learning by implementing effective instruction. Multiple teacher committees actively working to continue to learn about the Iowa Core content (e.g. K-12 literacy, K-12 math, K-12 social studies, guidance) and also studying/learning about the best, most effective ways to design units and lessons to help students learn, grow, and achieve success.

**Human Resources:** A committee of building administrators, teachers, and central office staff are working together to develop a plan and application for the Teacher Leadership and Compensation Grant with the intent of submitting it on January 31, 2014.

**Information Systems:** Upgrading Data Center infrastructure, continuing our Google Apps for Education migration, and beginning to plan for next year.

**Maintenance & Construction:** Continuing to complete work orders, and concentrating on department improvement. Keeping up with weather events, snow removal equipment, repair and maintenance. Increased training on cleaning procedures and improving team cleaning procedures at UHS. 2014/2015 Proposal Requests for Lawn Maintenance due in March and for Fire Protection Testing due in April.

**Nutrition Services:** Continuing to change and modify menus according to USDA Guidelines while keeping in perspective the students' preferences at all grade levels. National School Breakfast Week is March 3-7, 2014. Last day for charging meals/à la carte at the elementary level is May 19th.

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# DEPARTMENT NEWS (QUICKVIEW CONT'D)

**Student Services:** Developing training for staff about economic diversity, its effect on student learning, and strategies teachers can use to decrease barriers therefore increasing learning. Continuing to enhance TAG program with supplemental curricular experiences to facilitate learning and maximize potential. Updating our District ELL Plan, planning for community health clinics, creating a nursing services procedure manual, scheduling student/college visits, collaborating with students on academic requirements, and enhancing services offered in special education program to foster greater independence and learning.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

**Remember  
Late-Start  
Wednesdays!**

### District-wide Dates:

January 20	No School (Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday)
February 3	Preschool Online Registration (for 2014-2015 school year) at 6:00 p.m.
February 3–7	Iowa Assessment Testing Week (3rd–11th grade students)
February 17	No School (District In-Service 'Cabin Fever' Day; Presidents' Day)
February 18	Kindergarten Parent Information Night (for 2014-2015 school year); Rolling Green at 5:30 p.m.; Olmsted and Webster at 6:30 p.m. English Language Learners (ELL): Iowa English Language Development Assessment (I-ELDA)
March 1	Due date for Open Enrollment applications (1st-12th grade students) 2014-2015 school year
Date TBD	First parent advisory meeting with the Coordinator of Special Education. If you are interested in participating on the advisory group please email Jason Volmer at volmerj@urbandale.k12.ia.us
March 14	No School (Recess day)
March 17–21	No School (Spring Recess)
Week of April 7	10th grade students taking District Math Assessment

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## DATES TO REMEMBER (CONT'D)

### **District-wide Dates (cont'd)**

April 8, 9, & 10	Iowa Comprehensive School Site Visit from Iowa Dept of Education
Week of April 14	10th grade students taking District Reading Assessment
Week of April 21	10th grade students taking District Science Assessment
Week of April 28	1st-8th grade students taking District Grade Level Math Assessments 6th-8th grade students taking District Grade Level Reading Assessment
April 28	Urbandale Middle School Orientation , 6:00 p.m. at UMS (for all incoming 6th grade students)
Week of May 5	K-5th grade students taking District Grade Level Reading Assessment
May 5	5th and 6th Grade Band Spring Concert, 7:00 p.m. at UHS Performing Arts Center
May 22	UHS Graduation, 7:00 p.m., Knapp Center, Drake University
May 26	No School (Memorial Day)
May 28	Last day of school for students* (*subject to change based on cancellations).
May 29	Last day of school for teachers* (*subject to change based on cancellations).



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