



PATHWAYS		TECHNOLOGY		FACILITIES	
Goal #1 Inspire Learning	Goal #2 Inspire Learning	Goal #3 Unlock Potential	Goal #4 Unlock Potential	Goal #5 Empower Achievement	Goal #6 Empower Achievement
<i>Articulate</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Challenge</i>	<i>Success</i>	<i>Involve</i>	<i>Build</i>
<i>Implement pathway and framework for PK-14 programming to ensure all students graduate future-ready.</i>	<i>Create effective and agile organization that is individually responsible to the needs of the whole child.</i>	<i>Become an excellent learning organization through a culture of continuous improvement.</i>	<i>Maximize achievement by increasing digital literacy utilizing 21st century digital tools.</i>	<i>Enhance engagement opportunities through focused strategic partnerships.</i>	<i>Construct physical learning environments using fiscally responsible and sustainable practices.</i>

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Goal #1: Inspire Learning (Articulate)

Implement pathway and framework for PK-14 programming to ensure all students graduate future-ready.

Year 1:

Strategic Initiatives	Measures of Success
Develop a framework for students to experience and successfully pursue post-secondary career offerings.	Begin baseline tracking and reporting of % college acceptance rates (2017-18) and graduation rates (2011-2017) in order to establish reliable benchmark targets and enhance program offerings. {Improve college acceptance and college graduation rates (post-secondary student success metrics)}
Review policies to ensure the district's theory of action for teaching and learning is articulated.	By summer 2017: Administration will work with Policy Committee to review, edit, and recommend policy changes, if necessary (Instructional Consistency).
Curricular alignment to essential knowledge and skills supported by a coherent and aligned assessment system.	K-4: In 2017-18, in the area of literacy (reading, foundational, literature, and informational text and writing) we will document unwrapped standards, student "I can" statements, and identification of priority standards (on report card). Once priority standards are determined, we will begin to work on developing assessments and rubrics that ensure priority standards are being learned by students.
	Grades 5-7: In 2017-18, common assessments will be created for each unit of study in all subject areas. The creation of a middle level report card based on standards will be developed. Common assessments and the middle level report card will be used for reporting purposes in the 2017-18 school year.
	Grades 10-12: By the fall of 2017, identification of priority standards will be documented (via PowerSchool) to ensure priority standards are being learned by students.
	High School: By 2017-18 the Linn-Mar High School Program of Studies will be updated to include Innovation Center/Iowa BIG. This allows for a more aligned curriculum for core courses, AP coursework and Kirkwood offerings.
	Special Education Programming: By the end of 2017-18, using Iowa's Specially Designed Instruction Framework, a core special education group will analyze the recommended key components and critical features to operationally define specially designed instruction in our district.

Refer to the [Strategic Plan](#) for Year 2 Strategic Initiatives and Measures of Success.

Updates on Goal #1: Inspire Learning (Articulate)

Implement pathway and framework for PK-14 programming to ensure all students graduate future-ready.

Learning Inspired: Mrs. Henricksen's sixth grade language arts class (Excelsior Middle School) recently had an assignment that inspired one of her students (Gage B.) to write a letter about one of his biggest dreams, to become a fighter pilot. Gage sent his letter to Boeing Defense and the results were inspiring. Boeing not only surprised the class with a video message taped from an aircraft in flight, but a surprise visit from Boeing's Chief Pilot, Steven Schmidt. Way to go Mrs. Henricksen and Gage...*Inspire Learning. Unlock Potential. Empower Achievement.*

[Click here to view the video message sent from Boeing.](#)



Goal #2: Inspire Learning (Support)

Create effective and agile organization that is individually responsible to the needs of the whole child.

Year 1:

Strategic Initiatives	Measures of Success
Individualized and data-driven instruction.	During the 2017-18 school year, all schools will plan for individualized academic interventions (priority standards/content) for all students regardless of need based on an understanding of child development and learning theories within PLCs 100% of the time as measured by team notes. PLCs will develop and implement differentiated classroom instructional opportunities (in specified areas per grade level) for all students. Measure: The use of common formative assessments to differentiate instruction.
	Explore opportunities to better communicate pathway opportunities for students through better articulation during instruction.
Each student enters school healthy and learns about/practices healthy lifestyle.	Develop a Health Curriculum Committee to review health education guidelines and determine district needs. Final recommendations will be made by June of 2017.
	Work with Community Relations on a communications plan to engage parents prior to students entering school regarding wellness and wellbeing of children to be completed in spring 2017.
Each student learns in a physically and emotionally safe environment.	Staff, students, and family members establish and maintain school and classroom behavioral expectations, rules, and routines that teach students how to manage their behavior and help students improve problem behavior.
	Schools teach, model, and provide opportunities to practice social-emotional skills, including effective listening, conflict resolution, problem solving, personal reflection and responsibility, and ethical decision making.
	Mental Health Needs: In 2017-18, continue partnerships and continue to explore additional family/staff education opportunities as they arise.
	Throughout the 2017-18 school year, Board of Education members will serve as PBIS "School Champions" and report school successes as part of regular board meetings in order to facilitate district-wide communication and support of the program.
	In 2017-18, schools will report goals, benchmarks and outcome data regularly through the Board Book to the school board and community.
	As a district, focus on making connections with kids. Progress will be tracked via Gallup Poll and Olweus.
	ALICE Trainings: begin classroom lessons, communication on training w/ staff, families, and community, active trainings to begin spring or early fall.

Refer to the [Strategic Plan](#) for Year 2 Strategic Initiatives and Measures of Success.

No updates at this time.

Goal #3: Unlock Potential (Challenge)

Become an excellent learning organization through a culture of continuous improvement.

Year 1:

Strategic Initiatives	Measures of Success
Promote understanding of total compensation at Linn-Mar and recognize compensation as a competitive tool to drive organizational results.	Conduct a thorough job analysis for each certified and classified position over the 2017-18 school year.
Provide ongoing professional development for teaching staff that supports core instruction, interventions and curriculum implementation.	Create and implement a three-year flexible, professional development plan; thoughtfully allocating state categorical funding to support PD plan. This plan will be shared with the Board of Education in the winter of 2016-17.
	Throughout the 2016-17 school year, provide professional learning at each PDD on measuring the success of specific teaching strategies in an effort to identify and know how to utilize the most 'high impact' learning strategies. (Many resources can be used to do this including Hattie's Visible Learning and Marzano's Art and Science of Teaching).
Effective and efficient use of data.	By March 2017 we will develop a foundational understanding of Smarter Balanced Assessments with staff, students, and community and be prepared to implement Smarter Balanced for the 2017-18 school year.
	Explore dashboard (performance metrics) possibilities for % of students in AP/honors/IB; % of students who show academic growth on NWEA, FAST, Iowa Assessment; % of students who achieve IEP Goals; and other relevant "predictive gateways" for academic success.
Curriculum, instruction and assessment demonstrate high expectations for all students.	Using relevant achievement gap information, identify opportunities to increase the number of students performing at or above grade level in math and reading.
	Expand early literacy within the early childhood programs by using creative curriculum assessment information to drive instruction.
	Provide substantive support to enhance math and reading skills PreK-5.
	During the 2016-17 school year, identify all level 3 and level 4 questions used on all common formative or summative assessments within each course at the high school level.
	During the 2016-17 school year we will closely monitor and update our stakeholders as appropriate, federal and state initiatives including Smarter Balanced, ESSA, ELI and CASA.
By the end of 2016-17, develop a K-8 standards based report card.	

Goal #3: Unlock Potential (Challenge) *Continued*

Become an excellent learning organization through a culture of continuous improvement.

Year 1:

Strategic Initiatives	Measures of Success
<p>Becoming Deliberately Developmental about our staff as we shift from "Human Resources" to "Talent Management".</p>	<p>Research well-being and insurance models/best practices and explore community partnerships (Ex. Blue Zones) to improve Linn-Mar and community health and well-being, reduce health care claim costs from five-year historical averages, and enhance productivity.</p>
	<p>Reduce employee workers compensation claims from five-year average info.</p>
	<p>By spring 2017, develop integrated marketing and communications programs that position Linn-Mar as the district of choice for world class teaching, learning and student achievement. Develop and begin to execute and assess integrated strategic marketing and communications programs, both internal and external, to strengthen, promote and protect Linn-Mar’s brand identity, relevance, accomplishments and excellence.</p>
	<p>Explore opportunities to expand mentor programs for all employee groups and leverage their talent/knowledge to improve our overall performance.</p>
	<p>Work to create and maintain a predictable, respectful, compliant, labor relations environment, alignment and consistency with the overall employee relations strategy based on proactive and open communications.</p>
	<p>Research comprehensive and engaging performance management plans for classified and professional staff.</p>
	<p>Foster a positive, engaging, diverse and inclusive work environment while identifying and responding to the changing needs of the Linn-Mar community.</p>
<p>Cultivate a high achieving performance culture.</p>	<p>Revise recruitment strategy and branding program by late winter (2016-17).</p>
	<p>Always promote a school culture with the belief system of all students can learn.</p>

Goal #3: Unlock Potential (Challenge) *Continued*

Become an excellent learning organization through a culture of continuous improvement.

Year 1:

Strategic Initiatives	Measures of Success
<p>Strengthen leadership capability throughout Linn-Mar to promote high levels of performance and productivity and sustain excellence.</p>	<p>Make school building-level communication the major focus of the communication efforts.</p>
	<p>Provide training to district leaders to address all aspects of the employee life cycle.</p>
	<p>Begin to develop a leadership ladder (succession planning) throughout Linn-Mar in all employee groups with a focus on recruitment and retention.</p>
	<p>Identify employee skill gaps, provide opportunity for improvement/workout plan or coaching out (coach up or counsel out).</p>
	<p>School Board, district leaders, and building administrators continually seek to improve knowledge of upcoming trends in education and research on school improvement by having memberships to professional organizations, attending relevant conferences, and networking with other administrative professionals.</p>
	<p>Board Policy Committee to develop and deploy board learning plan and work to strategically align all board committee work under the Strategic Plan.</p>

Refer to the [Strategic Plan](#) for Year 2 Strategic Initiatives and Measures of Success.

Updates on Goal #3: Unlock Potential (Challenge)

Become an excellent learning organization through a culture of continuous improvement.

Elementary Homework Guiding Coalition: The Elementary Homework Guiding Coalition met on February 12th. The meeting started with a discussion on takeaways from their recent presentation to the school board and questions that came up afterwards from board members or staff.

Takeaways from BoE Presentation:

- 1) Overview of last year's work
- 2) Sharing of where we are now
- 3) Big ideas from the literature we have read
- 4) Update on Middle School Homework Guiding Coalition
- 5) A committee member inquired if any questions were asked of the group that presented to the board. It was shared that two questions were asked, one in reference to homework being evaluated on the report card and the other in regard to punitive actions if students do not return homework. The committee was also advised that a board member indicated there are varying philosophies, amongst the staff, on homework and the committee needs to keep this in mind as they move forward.

Questions from Staff after BoE Presentation: It was reported there was no feedback or questions received.

The committee also discussed if each building has, or plans to, share the BoE PowerPoint presentation with staff and PTOs. It was shared that most buildings have presented the committee's work-to-date to staff and a couple of buildings have shared the committee's work with PTOs.

Additional board policy information was shared with the committee and it was noted that the following information should be considered as the committee moves forward:

- Board policy review (additional policy that pertains to homework):
 - Under board policy, *Wellness 504.12* it states that the committee will develop a plan. In the plan/guidance there are three goals listed.
 - Under *Goal 2: Provide physical activity that promotes wellness is a bullet and it states: Physical Activity and Punishment - Employees may not use physical activity (e.g. running laps, pushups, etc.) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g. recess, physical education) as punishment*

The following thoughts on reasons why teachers give homework were shared:

- Reinforce skills taught and reading
- An ah-ha thought: So parents know what students are learning in the classroom

Finally, the committee reviewed Big Rock ideas and generated a survey which all committee members will complete. The purpose of the data collected from this survey will be to help the committee determine agreed-upon items and items that require further discussion.

Updates on Goal #3: Unlock Potential (Challenge) *Continued*

Become an excellent learning organization through a culture of continuous improvement.

Staff Professional Development Day Update: During the professional development day on February 19th Linn-Mar teachers will be participating in the following staff learning opportunities:

- **Elementary:** Mental health training, unwrapping curriculum standards, and prioritization of language arts standards.
- **Middle School:** Review curriculum standards in each content area, review and update common assessments, and create pacing guides to standardize instruction.
- **High School:** Learner management system training, course mapping, standards alignment, and proficiency scales. The afternoon will be spent touring Marion businesses and industries. Thank you to MEDCO for partnering with Linn-Mar on this tour!

2018 LIONS & Volunteer Awards: Nominations are now being accepted for the 2018 LIONS and Volunteer Awards. A completed nomination form and cover letter can be submitted by 4:00 PM on March 9th to [Casey Fasselius](#) in the Human Resources office. [Click here for more information.](#)

- **L** – Living Legend Award for Excellence in Leadership
- **I** – Innovator Award for Excellence in Positive Change
- **O** – Optimizer Award for Excellence in Teamwork
- **N** – Newcomer Award for Excellence in New Ideas
- **S** – Service Award for Excellence in Superior Performance
- **Lion Pride Award** – Going the Extra Mile
- **Shirley Pantini Award** – Excellence in Equity

Goal #4: Unlock Potential (Success)

Maximize achievement by increasing digital literacy utilizing 21st century digital tools.

Year 1:

Strategic Initiatives	Measures of Success
Digital Content	Explore and clarify LM working definitions related to digital learning (blended learning, digital content, etc.) to establish a shared vision.
	Identify specific areas to provide district, building, and instructional support for technology integration and implementation.
	Review, update and curate our PreK-12 digital curriculum to ensure it is rigorous and relevant.
	Identify and develop an online course option, aimed primarily at LMHS 11th and 12th grade students, in each department area that may or may not be a required course.
Digital Citizenship	During 2016-17 explore PreK-12 Digital Citizenship Curriculum (i.e. CommonSense Media).
	2016-17 TICs provide professional development on digital citizenship.
Digital Equity	Review technology equity procedures to inform future policy decisions.
	Establish a uniform, digital checkout process for students who do not have Wi-Fi or computer outside of school.
	Using assessment information, implement the appropriate assistive technology tools for students with special needs in the general education classroom.
	By increasing understanding of assistive technology, promote a culture of individualizing learning needs.
Digital Pedagogy	Begin a process to ensure all faculty have the qualifications and training necessary to deliver courses in a variety of modes; specifically regarding online instruction.
	Create a faculty mentor program or peer review system as a way to improve online/hybrid courses.
	Explore potential resources and processes for future curriculum.
	Utilize Technology Instructional Coaches (TICs) to provide coaching support for teachers integrating technology into their instruction.
Digital Communication	Use annual staff/student/parent/community survey data to determine effective use of school website for consistent district and building level communication.
	Explore possibilities for better alignment and integration of systems used by parents (i.e. PowerSchool, TouchBase and Total Access).
	Promote current electronic communication services for staff to access relevant information regarding resources.

Refer to the [Strategic Plan](#) for Year 2 Strategic Initiatives and Measures of Success.

Updates on Goal #4: Unlock Potential (Success)

Maximize achievement by increasing digital literacy utilizing 21st century digital tools.

Career & Technical Education Advisory: The CTE Advisory met on January 31st to continue their discussion on CTE program improvement. The discussion focused primarily on evaluating high school course offerings, student participation demographics and recruitment, and connection of students and courses to community partners. Linn-Mar CTE service area groups include:

- Agricultural, Food, and Natural Resources
- Applied Science, Technology, Engineering, and Manufacturing
- Business, Finance, Marketing, and Management
- Human Services/FCS

Future of Educational Technology Conference: Executive Director of Technology Jeri Ramos and Director of Innovations Bob Read attended this conference on January 23-26.

For nearly 40 years, the Future of Education Technology Conference has gathered the most dynamic and creative education professionals from around the world for an intensive, highly collaborative exploration of new technologies, best practices, and pressing issues. Its impact has been felt by thousands of districts, schools, educators and, ultimately, students.

Sir Ken Robinson was the keynote speaker and was excellent. If you have not heard him, [click here to view his recent YouTube video about the Learning Revolution](#). Unfortunately, the keynote he gave last month is not available yet. Robinson expressed concern about standardization, discussed the "industrialization" of education where increased output is the primary goal, and shared a compelling comparison to the industrialization of farming and how the "increased output" has not produced better quality food.

Other sessions attended included:

- What IT Approaches Help Control Costs and Maintain Growth
- IT Essentials: The Plumbing
- Building IT Infrastructure for Learning
- Leadership Competencies: Legacy of Learning (www.internationaledtech.com) seeking to establish recognized standards in the blueprint for technology education
- Configuring Modern Classroom: Easy MDM with InTune
- AWS: Bring the Cloud to School IT
- Tech Titans: FAAMG means Future of IT (Fascinating market brief regarding the influence of Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, Google)
- CoSN CyberSecurity Framework
- Future of EdTech: IT Track
- CETL: What is it (Ramos will be co-presenting at the ITEC-IT conference in February on CETL and CoSN resources)
- Essential Azure: Discover the Click to Deploy Cloud

Goal #5: Empower Achievement (Involve)

Enhance engagement opportunities through focused strategic partnerships.

Year 1:

Strategic Initiatives	Measures of Success
Internal Partnerships	Investigate and research district administration practices and processes to enable principals to focus more on instructional leadership.
	Promote opportunities for district employees to volunteer in classrooms.
	Explore and clarify the purpose and structure of district leadership meetings to align with Strategic Plan.
External Partnerships	Create conditions to provide transparent, accurate and accessible information through dashboards.
	Broaden opportunities for local businesses and historically underutilized businesses to work with the district.
	Explore opportunities for the city and local districts to share costs for shared services.
	Develop/nurture relationships and work with community partners and media to define, promote, expand and market signature programs.
	Begin to establish a network of information ambassadors.
	Enhance established partnerships with the business community, as well as nationwide, to broaden recruitment, wellness, volunteer and diversity initiatives.
	Promote external partners to join district committees and district staff participate in outside committee groups.

Refer to the [Strategic Plan](#) for Year 2 Strategic Initiatives and Measures of Success.

Updates on Goal #5: Empower Achievement (Involve)

Enhance engagement opportunities through focused strategic partnerships.

Mane Event: The Linn-Mar School Foundation will be hosting their annual Mane Event on Friday, March 2nd at the Cedar Rapids Marriott. The theme for the evening is: *Kentucky Derby...Racing for Education*. Proceeds from Mane Event fund K-12 classroom, curriculum and enrichment grants for Linn-Mar students and staff. Help support the Linn-Mar classrooms by attending Mane Event 2018! [Click here to learn more and purchase tickets.](#)



Board Visit: The school board enjoyed their visit to Oak Ridge Middle School on January 26th. The group shared school lunch with students and staff and toured the building. These visits are a highlight for board members as they get to see students and staff active in their learning environment.

IASB Day on the Hill: Superintendent Shepherd and Board Members Nelson, Lausen, Weaver, and Wall attended the January 30th Iowa Association of School Boards legislative Day on the Hill event. The group had the opportunity to listen to Governor Reynolds, meet with Education Director Ryan Wise, and also meet with several local legislators to advocate for Supplemental State Aid and extending SAVE. The group also shared with legislators the potential deleterious impact of education savings accounts on public schools.

Here are the key dates for this legislative session:

- Feb 16th First Funnel: bills can only move forward if they have been passed out of committee in their own chamber
- Feb 19th-23rd: Senate and House can only consider their own bills
- March 16th Second Funnel: bills can only move forward if they have been passed out of committee in the opposite chamber
- March 19th-23rd: Senate and House can only consider bills from the opposite chamber
- April 17th: 100th day of session and traditional end of the session



Career Explorers: The middle school students had an opportunity to visit Legacy Manufacturing in Marion to learn about various career opportunities. The visit was sponsored by MEDCO's Career Explorers program. Information on careers in engineering, information technology, graphic design, customer support, quality control, and manufacturing was shared. [Click here to learn more about Career Explorers.](#)

Goal #6: Empower Achievement (Build)

Construct physical learning environments using fiscally responsible and sustainable practices.

Year 1:

Strategic Initiatives	Measures of Success
Facilities Restructure	During the 2016-17 school year the Board of Education, with feedback from community patrons, will approve a long-term facility structure plan that benefits all Linn-Mar students.
	Determine what the most appropriate and cutting edge learning environments look like at each of the grade level configurations and prioritize goals for the physical components for each of the environments.
	Establish a communication campaign to foster support and approval of district restructure needs.
	Develop a funding plan to support 10-year restructure plan, including the outline of a possible bond campaign strategy.
	Engage architects, engineers, demographers and other applicable services to assist in the planning and implementation of the facility restructure plan.
	Identify an off-site facility for Linn-Mar extension of Iowa BIG.
	Occupy Westfield Elementary addition.
Facilities Preservation	Address priority needs to improve district facilities by actively maintaining 10-year facilities and preventative maintenance plan, including identifying energy-saving opportunities.
	Develop a funding plan to support 10-year preventative maintenance schedule.
	Complete walkthroughs with principals, Crisis Committee members, and Operations & Maintenance to determine building needs in reference to safety and security.
Operational Resource Allocation	Work to optimize resources (buildings, personnel, programs, etc.) to ensure they are utilized efficiently and effectively.
	Explore procedures to effectively evaluate programs from a financial aspect to ensure resources are being utilized to full potential.
	Continually review categorical funding streams to ensure resources are being properly spent and that all expenditures are properly allocated.

Refer to the [Strategic Plan](#) for Year 2 Strategic Initiatives and Measures of Success.

Updates on Goal #6: Empower Achievement (Build)

Construct physical learning environments using fiscally responsible and sustainable practices.

Update on Bond Vote: During the January 22nd school board meeting, board members decided to pursue a bond vote on September 11, 2018. The board was also in agreement that the bond vote should focus on the construction of two, new, fifth/sixth grade buildings. A review of the scope of the bond will proceed with recommendations from the Facilities Advisory Committee and OPN Architects.



GovDeals: The district offers the public the ability to purchase used school equipment through the online auction site, GovDeals. Items for sale can vary from furniture, electronics, vehicles, and maintenance equipment. If interested in purchasing items be sure to visit [the GovDeals website](http://theGovDeals.com) to learn more.

Historical Building Work Phase I: Facility improvement costs to the historical buildings (Bowman Woods, Indian Creek, and Wilkins) were previously included in the 2017 bond referendum that was unsuccessful. Since the 2018 bond referendum will focus solely on the fifth/sixth grade intermediate buildings, the scope of work for the historical buildings is now scheduled to occur in three annual phases beginning in 2018. Phase I is projected to cost \$1.75 million and be funded through PPEL/SAVE dollars. The tentative details of Phase I are as follows:



Bowman Woods:

- Upgrades to 12 restrooms
- Replacement of corridor flooring
- Partial roof repair
- IT network upgrade
- Interior/exterior door replacements
- Drinking fountain replacement
- Playground blacktop resurface



Indian Creek:

- Upgrades to 9 restrooms and health office
- Replacement of electrical switchgear and obsolete panels
- Drinking fountain replacement
- Clock upgrades
- Interior/exterior door replacements



Wilkins:

- Upgrades to 6 restrooms and workroom/staff lounge area
- Corridor cove base replacement
- IT network upgrade
- Interior/exterior door replacements
- Door access controls installed
- Drinking fountain replacement
- Playground blacktop resurface

Updates on Goal #6: Empower Achievement (Build) *Continued*

Construct physical learning environments using fiscally responsible and sustainable practices.

Finance/Audit Meeting: The following items were discussed at the February 15th Finance/Audit Committee meeting:

- Key dates for the historical buildings' restroom project: public hearing and approval of specifications on February 19th, pre-bid meeting on February 19th, bids received on February 27th, and awarding of contract on March 5th.
- Auditing services proposals were reviewed. The district received proposals from four firms: 1) Nolte, Cornman, & Johnson, P.C., 2) RSM McGladery, 3) Clifton, Larson, & Allen, and 4) Bohnsack & Frommelt LLP. Cost of proposals ranged from \$22,550 to \$40,000. The committee is recommending a three year agreement with Bohnsack & Frommelt LLP.
- Committee members reviewed a draft of the 10-Year capital projects plan. The plan outlines various capital projects by location with funding amounts attached to each project and year. Funding sources include general obligation bonds, sales tax bonds and cash, PPEL notes and cash, and PERL funds. This first draft is meant to serve as a conversation starter for planning purposes as this plan will evolve over time.
- A brief update on the FY2019 certified budget was given noting that the overall tax rate will remain stable at around \$17.37 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation. More details about the FY2019 certified budget will be shared at the next committee meeting in March.

Achievements and Honors

LEGO League News: Congratulations to the Oak Ridge LEGO Blasters for being chosen as one of three teams in the region to advance to the next round of the LEGO League Global Innovation Competition. The students received a first place award for overall project during the state contest. The team is currently preparing an Ecommode urine collecting toilet and, if selected, will advance to nationals in San Jose, California in June.



Oak Ridge LEGO Blaster Members: Eli Norris, Sam Greiner, Braeden Dupree, Caiden Abbott, Anjali Addagarla, Jacob Yeareous, Joel Silcox, Zack Kendrick, Kaleb Wesselink, and Ethan Norris.



Speech News: Congratulations to the choral reading team for advancing to the state competition! The team took the top spots at districts in one-act play, reader's theatre, two varsity radio broadcasts, TV news, ensemble acting, two short films, group mime, varsity improve, and freshman ensemble acting. Congrats also go out to the following teams for receiving a division II rating: freshman one-act play, varsity group improv, varsity group mime, freshman group improv, and freshman radio.

During the state competition, *82 state teams were hosted at Linn-Mar*, our speech teams participated in 13 events and received 6 top honors from the trio of judges in the areas of choral reading, varsity ensemble acting, group mime, radio broadcasting-KSRN, television news, and freshman ensemble acting. The following groups also received top honors from two of the three judges: reader's theatre, group improv, radio broadcasting-KZOM, and musical theatre. Congratulations to Choral Reading and Group Mime on being chosen to perform at the All-State Speech Festival in Ames February 17th! , Varsity and Freshman Ensemble Acting will receive a special recognition during All-State even though they were not chosen to perform.



Band News: Congratulations to our four jazz bands for earning a division I (superior) performance at the Iowa High School Music Association Jazz Band Festival!

Congratulations to the Oak Ridge Middle School 8th Grade Band and Director Brett Dupree and the Wind Ensemble directed by Aaron Nuss for being invited to perform at the Iowa Bandmasters 91st annual conference in May where over 1,200 musicians will perform.

Invention Convention: Congratulations to the following elementary students for being selected as Invention Convention finalists and for moving onto the state Invent Iowa competition on April 16th!

- Garrett Bauermeister (Indian Creek): No Chew Necklace
- Kathryn Delsing (Echo Hill): Feed Your Fish
- Tate McEowen (Novak): Christmas Tree Quencher
- Harris Meggers (Indian Creek): Ginger Brick House
- Brevyn Morrissey (Bowman Woods): The Super Switch
- Rita Mossman (Bowman Woods): Buckle Up Buttercup
- Audrey Peterson (Bowman Woods): The Easy Sleeper 2000
- Josiah Prebil (Westfield): The Bean Buddy
- Katelyn Schaul (Linn Grove): Backlastic Bag
- Lauren Weber (Echo Hill): The Twist and Turn Dance Bag



Boys' Swimming: Congratulations to the Aquatic Center for hosting the district competition for boys' swimming and to the Linn-Mar boys' swim team for placing second overall. A special shout out to senior Matt Peng for being named District Swimmer of the Year! The following swimmers advanced to the state competition: Matt Peng (50 freestyle and 100 butterfly), Nick Cavanah (200 freestyle and 100 backstroke), and Brycen Snell (100 and 200 freestyle). The team also qualified for the 200 and 400 freestyle relays. Five members of the squad have been named to the MVC All Division First Team. They include Matt Peng, Brycen Snell, Alex Cochrane, Austin Cochrane and Nick Cavanah.

State Competition Update: Congratulations to the boys' swim team for placing 10th in the state swimming competition. Matt Peng tied for 5th place in the 100 freestyle and took 3rd in the 100 butterfly, which is a new school record! Brycen Snell took 8th in the 100 freestyle (another school record) and broke the current school record in the 200 freestyle. Matt Peng, Brycen Snell, and Nick Cavanah set a new school record in the 200 freestyle relay placing 5th!

Scholastic Art & Writing Awards: Congratulations to the following high school students for earning regional awards in the Scholastic Art & Writing competition: Matthew Behnke earned a gold key award for his critical essay entitled, *Who is in the Driver's Seat*. Matthew's essay will advance to the national level. Elizabeth Pauley earned two silver key awards for her artwork in painting and drawing/illustration. Sarah Velazquez received an honorable mention for her digital artwork. All three students were invited to the Scholastic Celebration in Three Acts to be held at the Iowa Memorial Union on Saturday, March 10th.

Middle School Mathletes: Congratulations to the Oak Ridge and Excelsior MathCounts teams for placing first and second, respectively, in the Cedar Rapids MathCounts Chapter Competition. During the competition five Oak Ridge team members and three Excelsior team members participated in the Countdown Round; which is a competition between the top 10 mathletes from the competition. During the Countdown Round, the following Oak Ridge competitors took the top three spots: David Ammons (1st place), Nikhil Anand (2nd place), and Janet Weng (3rd place). Kudos go out to the following Excelsior students as well for also placing in the Countdown Round: Aadark Kumar (4th place), Shourya Sing (6th place), and Nahom Fikreselassi (7th place). Both MathCounts teams will advance to the state competition.



Iowa Youth Volunteer of 2018 Finalist: Kaleb Cook has been named one of Iowa's top two youth volunteers of 2018 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. As a state honoree Cook will travel to Washington, D.C., where he will join the top two honorees from each of the other states and the District of Columbia for four days of national recognition events. During the trip, 10 students will be named America's Top Youth Volunteers of 2018. Cook, a senior at Linn-Mar High School, created an organization that facilitates inclusive dance therapy for people with special needs and has raised thousands of dollars for a year-round camp for people with disabilities.

POMs News: Congratulations to Varsity POM for their great performance during the 2018 UDA National Dance Team Championship in Orlando! The team placed second in medium varsity POM and fifth in medium varsity jazz.



Wrestling News: Congratulations to Bryce Parke, Cole Kraklio, Jacob Wempen, Ryan Plummer, and Isaiah Garman competing in the 2018 state wrestling tournament!

Young Musicians Honor Band: Congratulations to the following band students for being selected to participate in the 2018 Young Musicians Honor Band:

5th Grade Band Members: Directors are Kevin Makinster and Amy Sams

- Brynlie Perry (Bowman Woods - flute)
- Kyle Earnest (Echo Hill - alto sax)
- Joseph Schafer (Bowman Woods - alto sax)
- Luke Sowers (Indian Creek - cornet)
- Austin Schornhorst (Linn Grove - trombone)
- Grant Dupree (Novak - baritone)
- Dale Nuss (Novak - tuba)
- Maverick Stapley (Echo Hill - tuba)
- Sujan Shadrak (Echo Hill - percussion)

6th Grade Band Members (All from Oak Ridge): Directors are Stephanie Nuss and Brett Dupree

- Sophia Askelson (flute)
- Evan Shanley (clarinet)
- Maddox Elliott (trombone)
- Gavin Gates (trombone)
- Kyle Langston (percussion)



Linn-Mar Alum Recipient of IGHS AU First Lady Award: University of Iowa Head Women's Basketball Coach Lisa Bluder has been named the recipient of the Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union's First Lady Award. Coach Bluder will be honored Saturday, March 3rd at the 2018 Iowa Girls' State Basketball Tournament. Bluder is the 13th recipient of the award which is given to a daughter of Iowa and recognizes girls and women who carry the tradition and training of a sport into their careers and for their most memorable accomplishments. Bluder is a member of the Linn-Mar High School Hall of Fame and the Northern Iowa and St Ambrose Athletic Hall of Fame.