

**Board Book: April 9, 2018**

Inspire Learning. Unlock Potential. Empower Achievement.

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>
Implement pathway and framework for PK-14 programming to ensure all students graduate future-ready.	Create effective and agile organization that is individually responsible to the needs of the whole child.	Become an excellent learning organization through a culture of continuous improvement.	Maximize achievement by increasing digital literacy utilizing 21 <sup>st</sup> century digital tools.	Enhance engagement opportunities through focused strategic partnerships.	Construct physical learning environments using fiscally responsible and sustainable practices.

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

## 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.

**Updates on Goal #1: Inspire Learning (Articulate)**

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

**33rd FFA Legislative Symposium & Day at the Capitol:**

Approximately 500 FFA (Future Farmers of America) students from 80 Iowa schools visited Des Moines in January to visit with legislators, share exhibits of what they have learned in their classrooms about agriculture, and to have the opportunity to experience first-hand the importance of citizenship. Their visit to the Des Moines was part of the 33rd Annual Iowa FFA Legislative Symposium and FFA Day at the Capitol. During the event, Governor Reynolds signed a proclamation declaring February 18-25 as FFA Week in Iowa.



**Future Ready Iowa Summit:** On April 3, Superintendent Shepherd, Director of Innovations Bob Read, and Director of High School Teaching & Learning Mark attended the Future Ready Iowa Summit. Also present were representatives from MEDCO's Community Promise, Iowa BIG, and Kirkwood Workplace Learning Center. Overall, the message of the summit was positive and Governor Kim Reynolds concluded the summit by signing House File 2458, an "Creating a Future Ready Iowa Act to strengthen workforce development by establishing a registered apprenticeship development program, a volunteer mentoring program, a summer youth intern program, summer postsecondary courses for high school students that are aligned with high-demand career pathways, an employer innovation fund, Future Ready Iowa skilled workforce scholarship and grant programs and funds, and to include effective date provisions." [Click here for more information on Future Ready Iowa.](#)



## 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.

## Updates on Goal #2: Inspire Learning (Support)

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

**Students Leading Social Change:** Students from the Excelsior, Oak Ridge, and the High School led a 17-minute walk out on February 26th in honor of the 17 students and faculty recently killed during the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and to raise awareness of stricter gun control. The students met outside their buildings for 17 minutes to honor: *Alyssa Alhadeff (14), Scott Beigel (35), Martin Duque Anguiano (14), Nicholas Dworet (17), Aaron Feis (37), Jaime Guttenberg (14), Chris Hixon (49), Luke Hoyer (15), Cara Loughran (14), Gina Montalto (14), Joaquin Oliver (17), Alaina Petty (14), Meadow Pollack (18), Helena Ramsay (17), Alex Schachter (14), Carmen Schentrup (16), and Peter Wang (15).*



While the district preferred that the students be in class learning, administrators and staff also recognized the importance of this action and applauded the students' efforts to make their voices heard in support of social change.

**Safety and Security:** Last Monday a memo was sent out to all Linn-Mar staff that focused on safety and security. [The letter can be found here.](#) Outlined within the letter are steps the district will be taking to improve safety and security. The first step is to complete a safety and security audit within our buildings. This audit will include all 10 schools, Learning Resource Center, Aquatic Center, Stadium, and Operations and Transportation. Once the audits are completed a Safety and Security Advisory Committee will begin to review the audits and dive into research around safety and security in schools. The committee will be made up of administrators, teachers, staff, parents, students, the Marion Police Department, the Marion Fire Department, and community members. The object of this committee will be to supply the school board with information in order to make an educated decision on improvements within the Linn-Mar Schools in the area of safety and security as well as to inform future board policy and/or procedures, as appropriate. We will share updates on the work of this committee in future Board Books.

**Board Visit:** The school board participated in their annual visit to Bowman Woods Elementary on February 23rd. The board enjoyed talking with the students and staff as well as participating in the classroom learning. The board also enjoyed their annual visit to Linn Grove Elementary on March 23rd.

**ALICE Training Provided During Upcoming Parent University:** The next Parent University will be held in the high school lecture hall on April 16th from 5:30-8:00 PM. The event will provide attendees with a greater understanding of school safety efforts through ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate).



Working in partnership with the Marion Police and Marion Fire Department, the district's certified ALICE trainers will provide an abbreviated training session that will include information on student ALICE lessons, breakout sessions, and an active training scenario conducted by the Marion Police Department.

*Those planning to attend the April 16th Parent University are asked to park in the south lot of the high school and enter via door #16. The lecture hall is the first door on the left once you have entered the building. [Click here for more information.](#)*

## 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
Becoming Deliberately Developmental about our staff as we shift from "Human Resources" to "Talent Management".	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.
	Reduce employee workers compensation claims from five-year average info.
	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.
	Explore opportunities to expand mentor programs for all employee groups and leverage their talent/knowledge to improve our overall performance.
	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.
	Research comprehensive and engaging performance management plans for classified and professional staff.
	Foster a positive, engaging, diverse and inclusive work environment while identifying and responding to the changing needs of the Linn-Mar community.
Cultivate a high achieving performance culture.	Revise recruitment strategy and branding program by late winter (2016-17).
	Always promote a school culture with the belief system of all students can learn.

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

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

### Year 1:

Strategic Initiatives	Measures of Success
Strengthen leadership capability throughout Linn-Mar to promote high levels of performance and productivity and sustain excellence.	Make school building-level communication the major focus of the communication efforts.
	Provide training to district leaders to address all aspects of the employee life cycle.
	Begin to develop a leadership ladder (succession planning) throughout Linn-Mar in all employee groups with a focus on recruitment and retention.
	Identify employee skill gaps, provide opportunity for improvement/workout plan or coaching out (coach up or counsel out).
	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.
	Board Policy Committee to develop and deploy board learning plan and work to strategically align all board committee work under the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> .



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

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

**Dr. Dana Schon Visit to Linn-Mar:** In early March, Dr. Dana Schon, Professional Learning Director of School Administrators of Iowa, visited the district to learn more about innovation at the secondary level. The Teaching & Learning Department provided an overview of instructional goals and current work at each instructional level. Mark Hutcheson, Director of High School Teaching & Learning, provided an overview of Blended Learning at the high school level. Dr. Schon visited with several teachers currently utilizing the Blended Learning model and toured the high school.

The afternoon portion of the Dr. Schon's visit focused on standards based grading and Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) at the middle school level. Erica Rausch, Director of Middle School Teaching & Learning; Excelsior Principal John Christian, and Oak Ridge Principal Travis Axeen provided insight into planning, implementation, and future work involving these two practices. Dr. Schon also toured both middle schools and visited with the teachers.

Members of this team will be presenting at the 2018 School Administrators of Iowa conference in August. The presentation will provide an overview of these practices and set the stage for the Linn-Mar Innovation Day which will be held in October.

**Elementary Homework Guiding Coalition:** The Elementary Homework Guiding Coalition had a meeting on March 26. Discussion occurred around the following four topics:

- Differentiation and personalized homework
- Feedback for homework
- Ten minutes per grade level, per night
- Parent participation/involvement and parent education

Prior to the team's next meeting, principals will meet with each grade level team and review board policy regarding homework. The purpose of the meeting will be to collect data on what teachers are currently doing that aligns with board policy.

## Goal #4: Unlock Potential (Success)

Maximize achievement by increasing digital literacy utilizing 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

## Updates on Goal #4: Unlock Potential (Success)

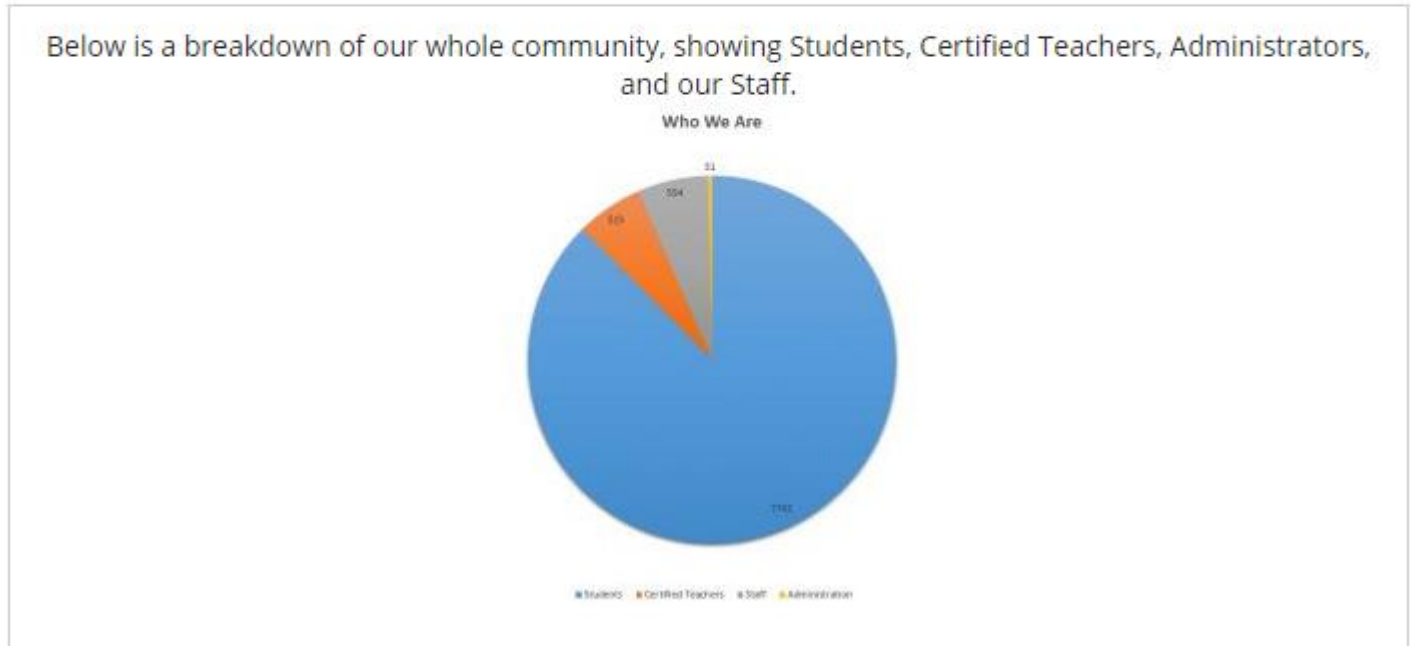
*Maximize achievement by increasing digital literacy utilizing 21<sup>st</sup> century digital tools.*

**Data Dashboard:** The district's data dashboard was launched on our website on March 5th. We are excited to present this as an evolving project as we work to provide information that is transparent, accurate, and accessible. As always, we welcome feedback and suggestions.

## Data Dashboard

This section of the website is intended to give people a quick glance inside some of the numbers. There are three main sections that you can explore. We have **Data About Our District**, **Data About Our Staff**, and **Data About Our Students**.

Click on images for a larger version.



## Google Expedition Glasses Provide Endless Adventures and Learning Opportunities:



Excelsior teachers recently participated in training on how to use Google Expedition kits and how to incorporate the devices in classroom learning. The virtual reality tools allow teachers to lead students on "trips" anywhere in the world. Students are able to visit and learn about historical landmarks, experience underwater diving to study sharks, and visit space. The district has 30 Google Expedition kits that were funded by the [Linn-Mar School Foundation](#).

## 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.

## Updates on Goal #5: Empower Achievement (Involve)

*Enhance engagement opportunities through focused strategic partnerships.*

**Accountability Leadership Opportunity:** The Linn-Mar ALO students were honored to have the chance to visit the Marion Police Department for an interactive conversation about the services they provide the community, a tour of the police station, and the chance to learn about a career in police work. A highlight of the visit was the chance to participate in a simulated experience to learn about de-escalation strategies to use in a crisis situation. [Check out additional photos of the day by clicking here.](#)



**Parent University:** Parent U was hosted on March 8th. The guest speaker for the evening was Libby Dunnigan, Licensed Master Social Worker with Mercy Family Counseling. Ms. Dunnigan shared how to recognize normal adolescent angst versus possible anxiety and how to determine when additional support or intervention is needed.

**Indian Creek Learning Opportunity:** Fifth graders in Mrs. Bauermeister's fifth grade classroom recently had the opportunity to discuss stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and other investment tools with a local financial advisor.



**LMHS Teachers Meet with Local Employers:** Helping students identify and pursue the futures they want. That was the focus of a tour taken by Linn-Mar High School instructors during the February 19th staff development day. The tour was conducted in cooperation with MEDCO. Teachers toured Marion Process Solutions, Hupp Electric Motors, Legacy Manufacturing, and the Marion Airport. Director of High School Teaching & Learning Mark Hutcheson said, "The tour was an opportunity for teachers to experience the application of their disciplines and allow connections of content to areas they may not have previously considered." Linn-Mar would like to thank everyone who helped make the tour a success as it provided our high school teachers a chance to learn more about where we live, what's going on around us, and the skills local employers are seeking for the next generation of employees.

## Stories Alive! Author Katherine Hannigan Visits District:

Stories Alive! Is a treasured literacy enrichment program hosted in our seven elementary buildings. For the last 27 years, the Linn-Mar School Foundation in conjunction with Hills Bank & Trust have hosted an author/illustrator for the week-long series. The goal of Stories Alive! is to ignite and enhance the love of reading and writing in our young learners. This year, Author Katherine Hannigan shared how she became a published author at the age of 40.



## 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.



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

*Construct physical learning environments using fiscally responsible and sustainable practices.*

**FY2019 Certified Budget:** Linn-Mar's fiscal year 2019 proposed certified budget is based on a 1% Supplemental State Aid (SSA) growth rate and a certified budget enrollment of 7,436.18 students, which is an increase of 123.6 students from the previous year. The primary purpose of the certified budget is to establish a maximum tax rate for the district. For FY2019, the district is proposing a tax rate of \$17.37 per \$1,000 of valuation, which is consistent with the last three fiscal years. A public hearing and final approval of the FY2019 certified budget is set for April 9th. Iowa law requires the budget to be approved and filed by April 15th.

**High School Renovation Update:** After +2 years of construction, the final payment related to the high school renovation is scheduled to be approved by the school board on April 9. The estimated budget for the project which included construction costs, furniture and fixtures, technology, security, etc., was established at \$26,230,263. With the final payment, the total cost of the project was \$26,273,102, or \$42,839 (0.16%) beyond the estimated budget. Change orders for the construction portion of the project totaled \$669,580, or 3.4% of the original construction contract. A combination of SAVE funds and PPEL were used to finance this capital project.

**Historical Buildings Restrooms Renovation Project:** On February 27th the district received bids from five contractors. The bid results were as follows:

■ G.L. Stockham & Sons, Inc.	\$894,793
■ Unzeitig Construction	\$740,000
■ Garling Construction	\$653,000
■ Sheets Design Build	\$618,500
■ TriCon Construction	\$570,000

OPN Architects and the district recommend awarding the contract to TriCon Construction as the lowest, responsive bidder. Note that the original cost estimate for this project was \$860,000 to \$920,000. Project costs will be paid using PPEL funds.

**Indian Creek Electrical/Switchgear Upgrade:** As part of phase I of the renovations to the historical buildings, Indian Creek is scheduled to get upgrades to its electrical system. The district worked with Design Engineers on the project scope and solicited competitive quotes for the project. The results of this process are as follows:

● Community Electric	\$79,800
● ACME Electric	\$93,863
● Nelson Electric	\$143,727

Design Engineers and the district recommend awarding the work to Community Electric as the lowest, responsive bidder. Note the original cost estimate for this project was \$100,000 to \$125,000. Project costs will be paid using PPEL funds.

**Excelsior Corridor Flooring Project:** The district is currently working with OPN Architects to compile a competitive quote package for replacing the carpet in the corridors and pod areas at Excelsior Middle School. It is anticipated that this package will be released in late March and reviewed by the board in April.



**Facilities Advisory Committee:** The Facilities Advisory Committee met with representatives from OPN Architects on February 20th to discuss several components of the anticipated bond vote on September 11, 2018. The committee reviewed a bond referendum task list, discussed the tax impact of the bond request for building two, new, 5th-6th grade intermediate buildings, and planned renovations. The committee also reviewed the district's 10-Year Capital Plan, noting the timeline of various projects and associated funding. The plan is fluid, as the scope of projects and/or timing of projects could change based on enrollment growth, economic conditions, or other variables.

**Second Modular Classroom:** Due to capacity concerns, administration is recommending a three-year operating lease arrangement (approximately \$1,746 per month) with Innovative Modular Solutions for a two-classroom unit to be placed at Indian Creek Elementary over the summer. The unit will be similar to the modular classroom that is currently at Indian Creek. District administration is currently finalizing placement location and other logistics regarding this additional unit.

**Transportation GPS Software Upgrade:** As detailed in the January 22nd Board Book, Transportation Manager Brian Cruise has been researching GPS solution services and narrowed down the vendor search to Synovia Solutions and Zonar Systems, of which both would integrate with our Transfinder routing program. After several product demonstrations and making reference contacts with several transportation managers around Iowa and the rest of the country, Mr. Cruise is recommending moving forward with Synovia Solutions. Benefits of this GPS solution services include process efficiencies within the department, value-added safety, and enhanced communication with stakeholders (e.g. students, parents, and staff). Synovia is offering a free 30-day trial of their software to ensure Linn-Mar's satisfaction. Assuming this trial period is successful, the recommendation would be to engage in a long-term lease agreement with Synovia. Estimated annual cost is approximately \$21,000, and would be paid from the PPEL fund.

**ASBO International Financial Reporting Award:** The district received word from the Association of School Business Officials International that Linn-Mar has been awarded ASBO's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting for the fiscal year ending 2017. This is the 14th year in a row that Linn-Mar has received this award, which is given to school districts that have a high commitment to fiscal integrity and high-quality financial reporting.

## Achievements and Honors

**STEM News:** Congratulations to the following high school students and their teacher, Chris Patterson, for representing the district's Project Lead the Way program during STEM Day at the Capitol: Abby Van Rheenen, Savannah Barnes, Andrew Szvec, Andrew Grant, Sammi Smith, Nagisa Carolin, and Delanie Williams. The event is designed to showcase hands-on, interactive, and student-focused learning innovations occurring in schools throughout Iowa. STEM is curriculum-based learning in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.



**Middle School Community Outreach:** Operation Backpack is a program sponsored by the Hawkeye Area Community Action Program (HACAP) that provides bags of food to children/families in need throughout the community. Operation Backpack serves more than 2,700 children from 79 schools in the HACAP service area which includes Linn, Johnson, Benton, Jones, Iowa, Cedar, and Washington counties.



Last year, Mrs. Meyer's classroom at Excelsior Middle School packed over 200 food bags for Operation Backpack. This year, Excelsior students decided to also support Operation Backpack by donating money from their School House Brew program. The students recently presented a check to HACAP in the amount of \$100.

**TAG Community Outreach:** The LM Talented and Gifted students recently spearheaded a community outreach project during the Linn-Mar home athletic events. The students offered attendees a chance to write inspirational notes to cancer patients. The notes were then delivered to the Helen G. Nassif Community Cancer Center.



**Show Choir News:** Congratulations to the 10th Street Edition show choir for being named grand champions at the Davenport Great River Show Choir Invitational! Additional honors included best vocals, best choreography, and best female soloist (Melena Holm). Congrats also go out to In Step for placing first in the prep division! [Click here to visit the LM Show Choir Twitter page!](#)

**Authors' Tea:** Congratulations to the "published" authors of Echo Hill Elementary! The second graders wrote short stories that were "published" in a hardcover book. The stories were then shared by the young authors during the event with family members and fellow classmates!

**STEAM Olympics:** The students at Bowman Woods Elementary recently went for the gold during STEAM Olympics. STEAM is educational learning that focuses on science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics to guide student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. Congrats to the Bowman Students for achieving gold in learning!



**Varsity Wrestling:** Congratulations to Linn-Mar Junior Wrestler Jacob Wempen! Jacob beat a senior from Sioux City North in his final match for fifth place (170 lbs/Class 3A) during the state wrestling tournament in Des Moines. Linn-Mar came in 28th overall in Class 3A.

**Best in Iowa:** Congratulations to the Linn-Mar POMs and Coach Jennifer Hammes for placing second during nationals in Orlando, Florida. This is the highest finish for any high school POM team in Iowa! Way to go!!

**News from the Arts:** Congratulations to Rachel Schultz (*Pour Your Heart Out*) and Molly Chmelicek (*Hazel*) for having their ceramic arts projects chosen to be on display during the Ceramic Arts Conference in Pittsburgh in

March! The conference is sponsored by the National Council on Education and included 1,200 entries nationwide with only 150 chosen to display.



**Marion Times Student of the Week:** Congratulations to Madison Bradley for being selected as the *Marion Times* Student of the Week! Madison is a senior and her academic interests are in the areas of math and science. Madison has been involved in many student activities including POMs and SODA/TRY and has received academic honors with distinction. During her college career she hopes to major in pediatrics.

**Boys Basketball:** Congratulations to Varsity Boys' Basketball for defeating sixth-ranked Pleasant Valley in the Class 4A substate semifinal game 55-47. It was their fifth straight win. The team faced Muscatine in the substate final on February 27th with a loss of 58-55; but we are proud of our team and coaches! Go Lions! Congratulations go out to Trey Hutcheson (first team) and Jacob Robertson (second team) for being named to the All-Conference and All-Metro Boys Basketball teams!

**Wrestling News:** All Metro honors are out! Congratulations to the following wrestlers: Bryce Parke and Isaiah Garman (first team), Jack Nauman, Jacob Wempen, and Tanner Shultz (second team), and Abass Kemokai (honorable mention).



**Robotics Dean's List Finalist:** Congratulations to Evan Walter, who has been selected as one of four students from the state of Iowa as a FIRST Dean's List Finalist in the FIRST Tech Challenge program. A Linn-Mar sophomore and a second-year member of the Linn-Mar Robotics Program FTC Team 4150, Dark Matter, Evan will be in the running for the FIRST Dean's List Award at the FIRST Championship in April. Evan is shown to the left with Linn-Mar instructor Dan Niemitalo.





**All-State Speech:** At the All-State Speech Festival held at Iowa State University, the critics were impressed by the group mime performance of *Casper the Friendless Ghost* by Maddie DeJong and Cheyenne Mann. They also gave glowing remarks for the choral reading entitled *The Good Body* as presented by Allie Mersch, Katie Andreasen, McKenna Flood, and Zoey Marciniak. Congratulations Large Group Speech.

Congratulations also go out to the High School Speech Team and the students listed below on their participation at the Individual All-State Speech Festival held at UNI on March 26.

- Solomon Groothuis: Improvisation Acting
- Allie Mersch: Literary Program and Acting
- Erin O'Hara: Literary Program
- Ruthie Gustason: Poetry
- McKenna Flood: Solo Musical Theatre
- Cheyenne Mann: Storytelling and Poetry



**Student of the Month:** Congratulations to Selena Killham for being chosen as one of KCRG's Student of the Month finalists for March. Selena is a 7th grader at Excelsior Middle School. One of Selena's passions is volunteerism. Selena has supported hurricane victims by supporting Operation Underground Railroad, teaching sign language, and making scarves for the homeless.

**Humanitarian Honor:** High School Senior Kaleb Cook was chosen for the 2017 Future of Good Program. Kaleb is the president of Linn-Mar Buddies, a student-run, extra-curricular organization that creates events for special needs students and provides dance therapy sessions. Kaleb is among 15 young humanitarians chosen for the honor by corporate sponsor, US Cellular. The company contributed \$1,000 to Kaleb's Dancing Away the Stigma organization to benefit Camp Courageous. The Future of Good includes a mobile giving campaign wherein people can text the word "courage" to 2-0-2-2-2 and each text translates to a \$10 donation to Camp Courageous.



**Future Health Professionals Honored:** The Linn-Mar HOSA Club spent their spring break competing in Des Moines. The team brought home several honors. In Medical Math, Vicky Wang took 2nd place, Akash Gururaja was 5th and Arnav Bhushan came in 6th. In the category of Medical Law and Ethics, 2nd place went to Kevin Drahos. Arnav Bhushan took 6th in Nutrition. Akash Gururaja received first place honors for his Extemporaneous Health Poster. Vicky Wang took the top spot in the category of Research Persuasive Writing and Speaking. Devanshee Patel and Ally Jernigan took first for their Career Board. Taylor Streff was elected as the HOSA historian for the state of Iowa!



HOSA is an international student organization recognized by the US Department of Education. Its mission is to promote career opportunities in the healthcare industry and to enhance the delivery of quality health care to all people.



**Middle School Students Advance to State:** A pair of teams from Oak Ridge Middle School are advancing to state (April 30th in Des Moines) for the National History Day Competition.

- Shanmukh Boggarapu and Yuxuan Qian are advancing for their documentary, "The Korean War Armistice".
- Paige Guthrie and Nick Reuben are also advancing for their documentary, "Confinement Reassignment: The Conflict of Solitary Confinement in Prisons Across America".

**FBLA Students Take Top Honors:** The following Future Business Leaders of America students brought home first place honors during the state conference and will have a chance to compete at the national level in Baltimore in June:

- Business Plan: Sudeep Gadde and Roshan Gokul
- Journalism: Ashley Kendrick
- Network Design: Akash Gururaja, Morgan Lu, and Srikar Vanavasam
- Public Speaking: Anusha Gopalam
- Vocabulary Relay: Ashwin Nathan, Srikar Vanavasam, and Arnav Bhushan
- Who's Who in Iowa FBLA: Morgan Lu



**Future Farmers of America Top Honors:** Congratulations to Chase Krug for being named the winner of the Plant Systems Division during the state FFA Agri-Science Fair. Chase will compete in the national FFA competition in October. *Chase previously earned an honorable mention in the same division during the state Science and Technology Fair.*

**Iowa Choral Showcase:** Congratulations to the Novak Notes and their director, Jennifer Walker, for being selected to perform at the Iowa Choral Showcase to be held at the University of Iowa on April 18th (6:00 PM). The Novak Notes were one of six choirs chosen to perform out of 26 blind auditions! *Way to go Novak Notes!*

If you plan to attend, please visit the [Hancher Auditorium box office](#) for ticket information.

