

Governor’s Celebration of Excellence Conference Honors Urbandale Schools With Top Award
The Urbandale Community School District is the first district in Iowa to receive the notable Silver Leadership Level award at the Governor’s Recognition of Performance Excellence Celebration and Conference

URBANDALE, Iowa – April 7, 2016 – On March 31, 2016, Governor Terry Branstad, Iowa Recognition for Performance Excellence (IRPE) Executive Council and the Iowa Quality Center honored the [Urbandale Community School District \(UCSD\)](#) with the prestigious Silver Leadership Level award at the [Governor’s Recognition of Performance Excellence Celebration and Conference](#) held at the Meadows Conference Center in Altoona. The IRPE is Iowa’s National Baldrige-based process designed to recognize role-model organizations in education, manufacturing, nonprofit, healthcare and business. Of the 103 applications that have been received over the past 15 years from Iowa school districts, organizations and businesses, UCSD is the only Iowa school district to be recognized at the Silver Leadership Level. Other award recipients include Firestone Agricultural Solutions, Iowa Donor Network, D & B Agro Systems, Ltd, Americas Small Business Development Center Iowa and Fairfield Community School District.

“The purpose of the state of Iowa Recognition for Performance Excellence process is to recognize role model organizations that complete a rigorous organizational assessment leading to sustainability and maintaining a future focus on performance excellence,” said IRPE Executive Director Gary Nesteby. “The leadership in these businesses has made a commitment to attaining higher levels of performance by receiving feedback from volunteer examiners willing to spend over 140 hours of assessment time to help build quality and competitiveness in Iowa-based organizations.”



Urbandale Community School District Board members, administrators, educators and students with Governor Terry Branstad as the District receives the 2015 IRPE Silver Leadership Level award. Photo courtesy of [Draeger Photography](#).

Six years ago, UCSD began the exceptional and challenging journey of implementing a systems approach for continual improvement in order to re-engage learners, help them to feel a sense of purpose in their learning and provide them the tools they need to become independent learners. By adhering to the rigorous standards established by the Baldrige framework, standards that the most successful organizations across the nation use to achieve high performance, Urbandale is able to more fully align goals throughout the entire District—from the student level, to the classroom level, to the building level, to the district level, to the Board level—with one clear aim: to systemically advance student achievement.

“The IRPE process and Baldrige Framework have been instrumental in creating and sustaining UCSD’s systemic approach to continual improvement,” said UCSD Director of Quality and Continual Improvement Denise Wood. “The reports from the examiner teams have provided UCSD with the feedback necessary to continue our system improvement efforts.”

Receiving the Silver Leadership Level award in 2015, marks the third consecutive year UCSD has been recognized for achieving greater and greater levels of performance excellence. Although the awards are indeed a great honor, they are not the reason the District maintains its focus on continual improvement—that reason can only be found in the positive impact continual improvement is having on student engagement, achievement and success. The District is tracking a trend in improved Iowa Assessment scores, among other indicators of student proficiency, which coincides with the District-wide implementation of continual improvement.



Urbandale High School students Maya Sims, Cameron Canada and Zaiyah Quirk presenting at the Governor’s Recognition of Performance Excellence Celebration and Conference. Photo courtesy of [Draeger Photography](#).

“The work and initiatives we implement in the Urbandale Community School District create a unique way of operating a school system,” said UCSD Superintendent Steve Bass. “We continue to see higher achievement and engagement rates as our students and staff connect more closely with this innovative approach.”

In addition to receiving the Silver Leadership Level award, the District was invited to present at the IRPE conference. UCSD led a presentation entitled, “Creating Opportunities for Employees to Enhance an Organization’s Leadership System,” while Urbandale students led a presentation entitled, “Iowa Quality Center Student TEAMS” sharing about their recent experience learning and implementing critical

problem-solving and continual improvement tools in order to determine the best approach for solving an existing business challenge with executives from Bridgestone and Heartland AEA. As District educators and students will tell you, continual improvement is much more than a set of tools, it's a paradigm shift in education that empowers students to try, to fail, to learn, to make changes, to try again and to continually improve on their personal pathway to performance excellence. To learn more about how Urbandale is transforming education, visit: UrbandaleSchools.com

About Iowa Quality Center

The Iowa Quality Center (IQC) is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was established more than 20 years ago as a result of collaboration between Kirkwood Community College and Grant Wood AEA (Woods Quality Center). The IQC was established as a result of being named the administrator of the Iowa Recognition for Performance Excellence (Baldrige based state award program) by the Iowa Business Council and the largest employers in the state of Iowa. The mission of the IQC is to provide leadership for performance excellence by connecting individuals, organizations and communities. While the IQC staff is based in Marion, its networking groups, consultation and membership activities take place throughout the state. For more information, visit: www.iowaqgc.org

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About Urbandale Community School District

The Urbandale Community School District includes portions of Des Moines and Urbandale, Iowa. The District serves over 3,900 students in six elementary schools, one middle school and one comprehensive high school. The Urbandale District supports an increasingly diverse student population where 51 languages are spoken. Building on the existing foundation of excellence in education, Urbandale is transforming education throughout the District. By implementing innovative [Quality/Continual Improvement](#) strategies that create learning environments that more fully engage, challenge and motivate students, Urbandale is taking transformation from theory into practice. Urbandale prepares students for becoming lifelong learners and is a school district that brings learning to life for everyone. To learn more, visit: UrbandaleSchools.com and follow on Twitter [@UrbandaleSchool](#).

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