

**Urbandale High School Receives Award For Excellence Inside And Outside The Classroom**

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**URBANDALE, Iowa – August 25, 2016** – In addition to students recently receiving top awards in support of the exemplary Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) program, students partnering with leading industry experts to solve business challenges and students achieving numerous division, regional, district and state team titles, [Urbandale High School \(UHS\)](#) has yet another reason to celebrate the exceptional accomplishments of students inside and outside the classroom. Out of 364 teams, Urbandale High School placed third in the Bank Iowa Traveling Challenge Cup Competition for the 2015–16 school year. The statewide competition, which began in 2007, is designed to recognize Iowa high school students for academic excellence and outstanding achievement during state competitions, combining scores for academics, athletics, music, speech and debate.

“Receiving this recognition is a reflection of our students' hard work and dedication to accomplishing both their academic and co-curricular goals,” said UHS Principal Dr. Brian Coppess. “The entire UHS team puts a tremendous emphasis on student learning and academic achievement. I'm proud of the comprehensive focus on learning we've created here at UHS as it's one that truly prepares students for college and career.”

Critical thinking, collaboration, ingenuity and leadership are fundamental 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that are integrated throughout the UHS curriculum in order to better prepare students for success in an increasingly competitive, global workforce. With the escalating costs for higher education, UHS students have the opportunity to earn college credit through the partnership with the DMACC concurrent enrollment program. Last school year, 592 UHS students earned 1,651 college credits—a potential savings of over \$450,000 for families. UHS student composite ACT scores rank above both the Iowa and national average, and the high school celebrates a graduation rate of 98%.

While all of this impressive work is taking place within the classroom, UHS students are also excelling at remarkable levels in their chosen activities. In 2015–16, UHS students won state team titles in Girls Cross Country and Boys Bowling with numerous teams achieving division, regional and district titles. Five students were recognized by the Des Moines Registers' All-Iowa team in their respective sport and 333 students earned Academic All-Conference accolades.

“The Bank Iowa Travelling Challenge Cup encompasses all the elements we stress to our students and staff when we talk about Activities,” said Urbandale Community School District (UCSD) Director of Activities and Community Education Dr. William Watson. “First and foremost, the competition takes into account the efforts of students in the classroom. Second, it recognizes performance on the field, court, track and stage. Finally, it recognizes the efforts of our entire team collectively. Our approach has been and continues to be that we have 26 Activities and one Team in Urbandale.”



UHS students have the opportunity to participate in 26 activities throughout their high school years. No matter which activities they choose they are always members of one team: Urbandale J-Hawks.

Several years ago, the Urbandale Activities Department began researching and assessing leadership development programs that could be implemented within the activities program. However, most programs were strictly preventative programs for drug and alcohol abuse and did not fully encapsulate the core values and tenets required to support a successful leadership program for students. This lack of an existing program became the catalyst for the Urbandale Activities Department to collaborate with Drake University's Robert D. and Billie Ray Center and the Institute for Excellence and Ethics in Manlius, New York, in order to build the J-Hawk Foundations program which is based on similar programs at the collegiate level, but unlike any existing high school programs. The J-Hawk Foundations program will be entering its fourth year in the 2016–17 school year and focuses on character and leadership development for students in activities.

Since 2010, the UCSD has been embedding Quality & Continual Improvement (Q/CI) theories and practices throughout the district in order to increase engagement, improve achievement, encourage collaboration and ignite a renewed passion for learning. Educators across the district are redesigning learning environments in order to adapt methods of instruction that meet the unique learning styles of every student. UCSD knows there is no one-size-fits-all solution for learning and empowers students to determine the strategies and methods that work best for them to learn the content of their courses. Educators partner with students to help them discover, define and develop their innate capabilities in order to reach their full potential. To learn more about how Urbandale is transforming education, visit: [UrbandaleSchools.com](http://UrbandaleSchools.com) and follow on Twitter [@UrbandaleSchool](https://twitter.com/UrbandaleSchool).

#### **About Bank Iowa Corporation**

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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 47 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](http://UrbandaleSchools.com) and follow on Twitter [@UrbandaleSchool](#).

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