



For Immediate Release

Urbandale High School Welcomes Former Iowa Hawkeye All-American And NFL Pro-Bowl Kicker, Nate Kaeding

As part of a series of motivational speakers supporting the J-Hawk Foundations program, Nate Kaeding presents valuable insights on goal setting, goal achievement and how attitude and effort lead to improvement

URBANDALE, Iowa – February 13, 2014 – On Thursday, February 13, 2014 the [Urbandale Community School District](#) welcomed former Iowa Hawkeye All-American and NFL Pro-Bowl Kicker, Nate Kaeding to Urbandale High School as part of a series of motivational speakers supporting [J-Hawk Foundations](#); a custom-designed, research-based program centered on building excellence, character and leadership development. Kaeding, a member of the Character Counts in Iowa Board of Directors, focused his presentation on several key 21st Century skill competencies of continuous improvement, including ‘Goal Setting and Goal Achievement’ and how ‘Attitude and Effort Lead to Improvement.’ All Urbandale High School students involved in activities were invited to attend.

“I really like J-Hawk Foundations because it brings together students participating in activities and athletics with a focused purpose—to become better leaders,” said Jessi Carver, Urbandale High School junior participating in soccer, softball and show choir. “We’re learning more about the importance of attitude and effort—it’s not one or the other, but the combination of both that leads to success.”



Logan Augustine, Urbandale High School senior and Nate Kaeding

In 2009, 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 [Character Counts In Iowa](#) and the [Institute for Excellence & Ethics](#) from 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 Urbandale community and schools have been focused on cutting-edge character development for over a decade,” said Scott Raecker, former State of Iowa Representative and current Executive Director at Character Counts In Iowa and the Institute for Character Development at Drake University. “The J-Hawk Foundations initiative brings character to life in a real-world way for Urbandale High School students. Through J-Hawk Foundations, Urbandale continues to be recognized as a model in the country for initiatives that positively impact the life of their students and the community.”

J-Hawk Foundations was introduced to Urbandale students involved in activities in the fall of 2013. To date, five sessions have taken place focused on exploring the ‘secret ingredient’—that intangible element that enables the greatest individuals and organizations to maximize their potential for excellence, while doing so in a state of mindfulness and gratitude. The program has introduced concepts such as the idea of integrity as ‘wholeness’—as a person with both moral and performance character, and the idea of learning to manage stress by developing a ‘growth mindset.’

Each session is followed by a high-profile speaker with real-world experience in the topical area. Past speakers include David Stark, President and COO of Blank Children's Hospital & Executive Vice President of UnityPoint Health-Des Moines and Dr. Matt Davidson, President of the Institute for Excellence & Ethics from New York.

J-Hawk Foundations program aligns with the district’s aim of transforming education in order to make it more relevant, meaningful and purposeful for all learners. To learn more about how Urbandale is transforming education, download the [district brochure](#) and visit <http://showcase.urbandaleschools.com/>

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 50 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: www.urbandaleschools.com

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