The 2015-2016 school year is off to a great start and is progressing very quickly! We started the new school year with a celebration of the opening of our Morningside Elementary STEM School. This school is the District’s fourth specialty elementary school and replaced Washington and Whittier Elementary Schools. We also celebrated the start of our new Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (J.R.O.T.C.) program. The District was one of only two districts selected nationwide by the United States Air Force to start a J.R.O.T.C. program this school year.

We are truly thankful to have the opportunity to educate our students. Please know we will do everything we can to ensure that 2015-2016 school-year is successful for you and your family. We have remarkable staff members who work diligently to provide the best educational setting possible for our students.

During the school year we invite you to become an active participant in your child’s education. There are many ways for you to become involved: whether it is reading at night with your child, helping with homework, volunteering in the classroom, or serving on a parent or district committee; we welcome your support. Have a great school year!

Sincerely,
Dr. Paul R. Gausman
Superintendent of Schools
Introducing Morningside Elementary

The District’s newest school, Morningside Elementary, opened its doors this school year. Built on the previous Washington Elementary School site, the new school replaces Washington and Whittier Elementary Schools.

The $17.6 million facility utilized the same architectural plans as Spalding Park Elementary and is the 15th construction project completed using funding from the one-cent sales tax.

“As beautiful as the building is, it wasn’t truly a school until the staff and kids were here learning. It is very rewarding to be able to provide a technology enhanced learning experience to our students,” said Dawn Stansbury, principal of Morningside Elementary.

The new building was designed to meet the needs of students with interactive projectors and new computers in each classroom, and laptop carts containing 30 laptops for use throughout the building. There is also a media center, separate gym and lunchroom, air-conditioning, and student lockers.

In addition, Morningside Elementary is a STEM Specialty School. Core subjects are taught through the lens of science, technology, engineering, and math.

“We have done some amazing things already this school year, and we are proud of everything that our staff and students have done to move towards a STEM focus,” said Stansbury. “We are changing the future by encouraging creativity, independent thinking, and unlimited possibilities.”

District Debuts Air Force J.R.O.T.C. Program

Members of the community were on hand to celebrate the official opening of the Sioux City School District’s Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (J.R.O.T.C.). The District was one of two districts selected nationwide by the Air Force to establish a J.R.O.T.C. program for this school year.

Taught by Lt. Col. Larry Brockshus, a retired United States Air Force officer, the J.R.O.T.C. curriculum is comprised of aerospace science subjects that include the history of aviation; meteorology, navigation, principles of flight, and aerospace industry. In addition, cadets in the program focus on practical application leadership subjects.

“The AF J.R.O.T.C. program is about providing tools for the young men and women to make them more successful in their high school career and beyond,” said Brockshus.

The AF J.R.O.T.C. program adds to the district’s Sioux City Academy offerings that allow students to learn core curriculum through the lens of a possible career path. The new program has been well-received with over 300 students applying for this school year of which there is a maximum of 150 seats.
Sunnyside Elementary Awarded 2015 National Blue Ribbon

The U.S. Department of Education named Sunnyside Elementary as a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recognized 335 schools as National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2015 based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Sunnyside’s selection marks the first time a school in Sioux City or the immediate area has been selected for the prestigious honor.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students either achieve very high learning standards or are making notable improvements in closing the achievement gap. In its 33-year history, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has bestowed this coveted award on more than 8,000 of America’s schools.

All schools are recognized in one of two performance categories, based on all student scores, subgroup student scores and graduation rates:

• Exemplary High Performing Schools are among their state’s highest performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests. Student subgroup performance and high school graduation rates are also at the highest levels.

• Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools are among their state’s highest performing schools in closing achievement gaps between a school’s subgroups and all students over the past five years. Student subgroup performance and high school graduation rates for each subgroup are at high levels.

East High Principal Named IHSSA Fine Arts Administrator of the Year

East High School Principal Richard Todd was named this year’s Iowa High School Speak Association (IHSSA) Fine Arts Administrator of the Year. The IHSSA presented the award on October 9, 2015 at the Gateway Hotel and Conference Center in Ames, IA.

The award is presented to a distinguished individual of statewide reputation and outstanding accomplishments. This is the highest honor the IHSSA may confer on an administrator. The contribution and service given by the inductee stem from dedication and commitment to the IHSSA and other arts activities in their school beyond normally expected and superlative identification.
Revamped Middle School Exploratory Course Offerings

The District recognized the importance of a seamless transition between our specialty elementary schools (STEM, A+, Dual Language, and Computer Programming) and the expanded career pathway programs (Sioux City Academies) offered in high school. Therefore, middle school exploratory courses were modified and expanded prior to the beginning of the school year.

“The focus was to make sure that the middle school level was realigned so that it was a true K-12 articulation throughout the District,” said Jim Vanderloo, Director of Secondary Education & Activities.

The new “project based learning” exploratory courses now have six strands that directly align with the career pathways offered at the District high schools: Art & Design, Business and Marketing, Computer Technology, Digital Music, Family and Consumer Science, and STEM.

“Middle school students want to be able to design, innovate, create and build,” said Kari Webb, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for the District. “Students become deeply engaged in learning when the classroom content engages them with a real-world, relevant challenge.”

Each of the courses are designed to incorporate the essential elements of project based learning, connected with the Iowa Core standards. The courses are student-based and focused on 21st century skills.

“The goal is to allow our middle school students an opportunity to envision themselves in a wide variety of career pathways, opening the door to many different options,” said Webb. Visit our website to learn more.

SCCSD is Listening! Let’s Talk!

We are starting the school year on the right note and giving you more opportunities to talk with us about our schools. We want each school to be an inclusive, positive environment, where you know you make a difference and your voice is heard.

Let’s Talk!

Sioux City Community Schools offers Let’s Talk!, an innovative communications channel that allows all parents, students, employees and community members to be a part of critical school and district discussions. Now, you can ask questions or submit comments about the issues that matter most to you whenever it’s convenient because Let’s Talk! is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Have something to share about our school? Click the Let’s Talk! link on the District website, www.siouxcityschools.org.
District 8th grade students celebrated with the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) for National GEAR UP Week, Sept. 21-25, 2015. The celebration highlighted Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), a federally-funded college access program that provides students and their families with college planning resources. GEAR UP Iowa goes beyond the classroom, encouraging community and parental involvement that help school districts create and sustain a college-going culture.

"Being part of GEAR UP Iowa has provided a great opportunity for our district and our students," said Amber Kilburn, Sioux City Community Schools GEAR UP Grant Coordinator. "Through GEAR UP we are able to give our students greater exposure to college at a younger age. We have been able to provide extra assistance with tutoring and mentoring and have worked to create a college going culture within our middle schools."

Sioux City was one of only 12 school districts in Iowa chosen for the program last school year. The grant follows current District 8th grade students as they progress through school, all the way through college. The goals of GEAR UP Iowa are:

- Help students succeed in middle and high school.
- Encourage students to attend college.
- Increase knowledge of college education options, as well as how to pay for college.
- Upon enrollment in a college, GEAR UP Iowa students will receive a modest scholarship for up to four years.
Successory Project—Honoring those Making a Difference

Students in the District honor people making a difference by completing Successory notes. The note recognizes “someone who has helped me on my way to success.” Example from our latest round of Successory notes include:

“I want to thank Mr. Newburn at West Middle School for helping me through my 8th grade year and continuing to check up on me now. You believe in me and you know that I am a good kid! You are the best! THANK YOU!”

“I want to thank Ms. Madsen at Bryant Elementary for being my teacher and correcting me when I was wrong. And for not yelling at me when I did something wrong. Thank you so much for being there for me, when I needed you and when I didn’t.”

Want to stay in touch with your child’s education while you are on-the-go? Now you can! You can use your mobile device to access Canvas, Infinite Campus, My School Bucks and the District’s mobile apps.

Access calendars, grades, sign-up for push notifications and more. Watch the Mobile App video on our YouTube channel to find out more. Visit our communication channels page on the District website to learn about the ways you can stay connected!

Upcoming Events

October 28 - End of First Quarter

November 25 - One Hour Early Dismissal

November 26 - 27 - Thanksgiving Holiday (No School)

December 24 - 31 - Winter Holiday Break (No School)

January 4 - School Resumes

Find Us Online!

All the resources you need are a click away. Lunch menus, forms, handbooks and calendar are just a few things that can be found at www.siouxcityschools.org.

Follow Us!

The Sioux City Community School District is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. It is an unfair or discriminatory practice for any educational institution to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, age (for employment), disability, socioeconomic status (for programs), marital status (for programs), or veteran status in its educational programs and its employment practices. Inquiries or grievances may be directed to Jen Gomez, Director of Student Services & Equity Education at 627 4th Street, Sioux City, IA 51101, (712) 279-6075, gomezj2@live.siouxcityschools.com.