## **INSIDE:** Fort Madison school officials review literacy, math data • See page 6

## PEN CITY CURRENT It's Black & White and Read all over

Thursday, October 5, 2023 | 6 pages | Volume 7 • Issue 165

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#### www.pencitycurrent.com

# **Council nixes parking request**

## **SCHOOL REQUEST:** District wanted city to relax 2-hour limitation near high school

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – With a \$36 million construction project happening in the middle of town there is going to be some parking problems.

We have a parking problem.

The Fort Madison City Council took up the issue Tuesday night after Fort Madison Community School District Superintendent Dr. Erin Slater sent the city a request to have a 2-hour parking restriction lifted to allow students to park along side streets including 21st Street, as well as Avenue B on the campus' west side.

Darrell Davolt, a property owner just west side of the school, said residents along Avenue B and 21st Street are having trouble getting in and out of driveways and getting down streets as students park cars along those streets.

The construction has temporarily eliminated parking on the east side of the school between the school and the tennis courts. There is still parking on the south side of the school and southeast of Richmond Stadium.

#### See STUDENTS, page 2

### OLD FORT PLAYERS

Melanie Emmett watches a couple of Old Broads ogle men with binoculars on board a cruise ship during dress rehearsal at Old Fort Players Tuesday night. The show takes the stage Friday. Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC



## **Old Fort Players brings out Four Old Broads this weekend**

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Don't bring the kids to this stage show.

It's raucous and a little raunchy and for 18 and older.

But when Four Old Broads Hit the High Seas all the gloves are off and that

in Rink takes the stage for the first time as Horace after spending time in the audience for multiple plays. Rink plays the affable husband of a wife who just can't hear how much she means to him.

Lori Amberger plays Edna, Horace's tag-along, hard-of-hearing wife. Amberger is the owner of Crafting with One Crazy Hen. She can be found in the lobby volunteering during shows and helping find and make props for the shows. This is her first time on stage, years, her most recent shows were "The Odd Couple - The Female Version", "Drinking Habits 2" and she played Beatrice in the first "Four Old Broads". She is a current board member, In the summer she runs the children's theater and is the owner of Z's Boba Tea.

Jennifer Pranger plays Maude and has been sharing her big smile at OFP for more than a year. She started with volunteering in concessions. Pranger appeared in "Drinking Habits 2" as Kate, and "The Odd Couple - Female Version" as Florence. Cathleen James - Judy (Cruise Director) and Stage Manager, made her OFP debut in August of 2022 as Alexia in "Four Old Broads" like many others

## IOWA NEWS IUB cancels Oct. 9 hearing for Navigator

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG PCC EDITOR

DES MOINES – A filing with Iowa Utilities Board indicates that Navigator Pipelines LLC, the company that has suspended activities around a CO2 pipeline project that would impact Lee County, could provide an update on the project in March.

According to a release from the IUP, it is suspending its final regular board meetings for the year due to heavier than normal docket proceedings.

The IUB has several public hearings and other contested cases pending, and canceling monthly public meetings also reduces the risk of improper communications under Iowa law. Iowa Code 17A.17 prohibits communications with board members about contested cases pending before the IUB.

The board is also canceling its Oct. 9 hearing which was to review scheduling procedures for the Navigator Heartland Greenway CO2 pipeline that would have run through Lee County.

Contractors for the company announced they would be suspending all pipeline activities in Iowa and South Dakota temporarily.

IUB filings in the case show that Navigator withdrew its motion for the hearing and requested the board cancel the Oct. 9 hearing and hold the case in "abeyance" or suspension, until Navigator files an update with the IUB.

In its motion, filed Sept. 29, Navigator stated "that it requires regulatory approval from the Illinois Commerce Commission, which is to issue an order by February 29, 2024. Navigator asserts its belief that it will be in the best interest of all interested parties to hold this docket until Navigator has completed its review of the Iowa route, technical specifications, and the Illinois Commerce Commission's decision. Navigator expects to provide an update to the Board in the docket, including any outstanding motions, by March 29, 2024."

happens starting Friday at Old Fort Players in downtown Fort Madison.

These old broads work the men and more aboard a cruise ship as they work out some of their wild oats in a wild ride with stints on the Fiesta Deck and dinner with the captain.

The cast is a who's who of familiar names to the Old Fort Players stage and some well-known newcomers.

Fort Madison City Councilman Kev-

RaCayla Adams' - Steven Dupree aka Miss Tequil Mockingbird, first show with OFP was "The Odd Couple - The Female Version", in May 2022. OFP has become her second family.

Veteran Richar' Abel plays Beatrice. Abel has been a part of OFP for 10

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#### WEATHER

THU 05 Oct	Mostly cloudy & cool, 77° F/ 46° F 🛛 🕴	Ö
FRI 06 Oct	Breezy & chilly, 60° F/ 40° F	Ö
SAT 07 Oct	Sunny & chilly, 59° F/ 39° F	0

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PICK 3 EVENING 10/03	747
PICK 4 MIDDAY 10/03	
PICK 4 EVENING 10/03	

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## From the Front

## **OFP fall production opens Friday**

#### **OFP** - Continued from Page 1

she kept on going and joined "Miracle on 34th Street" as the postal worker. She returned this past Spring for "The Odd Couple - Female Version" as Mickey the Cop. James loved the last Four Old Broads and thought this one would be just as much fun.

Melanie Emmett plays Imogene in her very first exploration on the live stage. She comes across as someone not playing their first role.

Suzanne Overberg - Eaddy Mae Clayton has been a part of Old Fort Players since 2015. She has acted in "Savanna Sipping Society, "You Can't Get There From Here", and "Dixie Swim Team". Overberg said, "This show looked like a fun time on stage. The cast is making the production come to life."

Ty Wayne Clute - Herbert & Jim Rockstone/Melvin - has been with OFP for more than 10 years. This is the first time in years he actually took the time to write his own bio. Clute has acted in more than seven plays, and he has directed and co-directed various plays throughout he years.

Kevin Zachmeyer - Captain Sterling, is also in his

first production as an actor but has been with OFP for three months.

Michael Reed Randolph is the Director and plays Sam. Randolph has been with Old Fort Players for close to six years now. He chose to direct this show because it's the sequel to a show from did last year and the script is hilarious. This is his first-time directing.

Beth Randolph will be playing the role of Captain Sterling, Friday October 6th and she will be playing the role of Steven Dupree on Sunday, October 15th. She was Alias in "The Lion in Winter". She's been in theater productions off and on since she was eleven years old playing Cinderella in "Cinderella", Shelby in "Steel Magnolias", and Lee in "Marvin's Room" to name a few.

Angela Sanford is the "unofficial" director of this fall's production. Sanford has been with OFP for almost six years. She has never been on stage, she enjoys co-directing shows.

The show starts at 7:30 on Friday and Saturday with a 2 p.m. Sunday showing. The same times apply next weekend as well. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for seniors and veterans. Visit <u>www.oldfortplayers.com</u> for more information.

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## Parking woes at FMCH

#### **STUDENTS** - Continued from Page 1

Davolt asked the council for patience and diligence.

"I'm asking you not to make a decision tonight. Table this and go talk to those residents, I will go with you," Davolt said.

But the council pushed back saying construction has been ongoing for more than a year and asked why is the situation turned bad suddenly.

The new construction will provide room to bring seventh and eighth graders to the campus starting with the fall 2024 school year. At that point, construction at the Fort Madison Middle School will also be complete and Prek- 6th grade will be educated at that campus. This will allow the shuttering of Richardson and Lincoln elementary schools.

"There's what - eight months of construction left? I'm just not understanding why it's a problem all of a sudden," said Councilman Rusty Andrews.

Davolt suggested the city look into a church on the turn at Avenue A for possible student parking in the interim or possibly using the library for parking.

Sara Clendineng, the Fort Madison Public Library director, stood against using the library's parking lot at the corner of 20th and Avenue E.

"I have a concern, and I understand that we need to be neighborly, but I have concerns that if it's significantly enforced in the short term, we're going to see increased use of high schoolers using the parking lot. I'm not sure how you mitigate that to provide parking lot access for library patrons vs. high school students," Clendineng said,

"And if they learn they can do that, even once this construction is completed, they might continue to park there and you create an on-going program to solve a short-term problem."

Andrews said the back parking lot will hold more than 100 spaces and its scheduled to be paved in the next few weeks.

"I don't think anyone would permanently make the library a parking choice," he said.

Clendening said students are already using the parking lot.

The issue in front of the council was to lift the temporary two-hour restriction on parking.. Mayor Mohrfeld said the two-hour limitation doesn't fix the problem but if they leave it at is the burden of the enforcement will fall on the police.







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#### Charles Vandenberg, Editor

(319).371.1670 charles.v@pencitycurrent.com PEN CITY CURRENT

Lee K. Vandenberg, Sales Manager

(319).371.4125 lee.v@pencitycurrent.com

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## **Sports/From the Front**

# NASCAR makes its way to Iowa

#### Hell froze over.

The sun rose in the west.

Death and taxes are the only members left in the sure-thing family.

NASCAR's Cup Series is coming to Iowa Speedway in 2024. Yeah, this news deserves ALL CAPS because of its unlikeliness.

NASCAR'S CUP SERIES IS COMING TO IOWA SPEED-WAY IN 2024.

Shocked? You should be.

When the construction folks cut into the farm fields outside of Newton to build the .875-mile oval in 2005, the hope was to get a Cup Series race. You don't build a track like that without wanting the best.

Sure, when the IndyCar Series came in 2007, it was cool. It was cooler still when NASCAR's Nationwide (now Xfinity) Series and Truck Series showed up two years later.

The Cup Series, you figured, was coming at some point.

But NASCAR had some wariness about the track's future, and even when the sanctioning body bought the track in 2013, a Cup Series date was too elusive. Ask a NASCAR official about it, and you'd get a shrug or a snarl.

And when the track lost its Xfinity and Trucks races in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and fell off NASCAR's schedules the following year, the chance of a Cup date was virtually nonexistent.

Times, though, change, and NASCAR is changing when it comes to rejuvenating a schedule that has felt stale in recent years. The series has revived an old track (North Wilkesboro), taken events to a football stadium (Los Angeles' Memorial Coliseum), and raced on a street course (Chicago).

NASCAR had holes in its schedule to fill. The track in Fontana, California, is off the schedule because of a proposed plan to turn it into a short track. The Cup Series was considering a race in Montreal, but that plan seems to have fallen through.

Now it's coming to a track in which its drivers have fondness for, along with some curiosity. During the height of its run in the Xfinity Series, Iowa Speedway would draw rave reviews from the Cup drivers who showed up, and would also have a similar reaction on social media from the drivers who weren't there.

Race tracks rarely get more than one life, and Iowa Speedway is on its third. The purchase by NASCAR saved the track from financial mismanagement that nearly shuttered the speedway the first time. Declining attendance as

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the Cup Series' hopes dimmed, followed by the pandemic, nearly killed it the second time. The Indy-

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Car Series, with help from sponsor Hy-Vee, put new life into the track. The 2022 and 2023 weekend were punctuated by packed grandstands for the racing and for the pre-race and postrace concerts in both years. Carrie Underwood and Kenny Chesney rocked the place during the Saturday race of this year's doubleheader, and Zac Brown Band and Ed Sheeran did the same the next day. The popularity has been such that the IndyCar Series will return next July, including the return of a Saturday night race.

It was clear those events, and the response from the ticket-buying market, made an impact on those watching from the outside. National media members who dismissed any sort of NASCAR return to the track started speculating about the Cup Series coming. Driver Kyle Busch, who has raced at the track and long touted it on social media, mentioned it as a place where he would like to see NASCAR go in the coming seasons.

Now, the Cup Series is coming.

You wanted it, you got it, so buy tickets. And then save money for the next year, and the year after that. NASCAR is taking a chance, and it's up to the market to respond accordingly. If the interest isn't there, NASCAR will go somewhere else.

Tell FOX or NBC to get the B-roll of corn-field video out for next season's telecast. Book your hotel rooms now, or reserve your spot in the campground.

A Cup Series race is on the schedule.

And Iowa Speedway's third life has the chance to be its best.

## **Two Supreme Court** cases in play with **Navigator project**

#### **IUB** - Continued from Page 1

There are also two cases pending before the Iowa Supreme Court regarding the pipeline project. Navigator Heartland Greenway LLC v. Martin Paul Koenig, Iowa Supreme Court Case No. 23-0739, and Navigator Heartland Greenway LLC v. William P. Hulse and Vicki Hulse, Iowa Supreme Court Case No. 23-1026.

On Monday, the Sierra Club filed a motion with the IUB opposing cancelling the hearing and instead asked for a status hearing that would required Navigator to update the board on any proposed changes that are being considered. However the board denied that motion citing Navigator's intention to file a formal update by the end of March.

The docket is being held suspended until Navigator provides an update to the board on projected changes.

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## **Classifieds/Public Notices**

# PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

## **PUBLIC NOTICES**

PUBLIC NOTICE LEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

The Board of Super-

visors of Lee County, lowa, met on Monday, September 11, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., at the County Administration Building, 933 Avenue H, Fort Madison, Iowa.

Present: Garry Seyb,

Ron Fedler, Chuck Holmes, Tom Schulz, and Matt Pflug

All votes are unanimous unless indicated otherwise.

The Board opened the meeting by reciting the

Pledge of Allegiance. Moved by Pflug, seconded by Holmes, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

The Board observed a moment of silence for those lost during the 911 Attack.

Public Input: Ryan Drenner gave the Board an update on the Nustar Pipeline Project. Moved by Holmes, seconded by Fedler, to

approve an amendment

to the FY24-28 Secondary Roads Five Year Program, Project number and funding sources of bridge replacement project on X32. Motion carried. Moved by Pflug, seconded by Holmes, to ap-

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## **Classifieds/Public Notices**

## **PUBLIC NOTICES**

prove Resolution #2023-96. Roll call: Pflug-aye, Holmes-aye, Schulz-aye, Fedler-aye and Seyb-aye.

#### **RESOLUTION # 2023-96**

WHEREAS, the Lee County Board of Supervisors have contracted with Commerce Bank to establish a county-wide credit card program,

WHEREAS, Lee County's GIS Department has requested to participate in this program, increasing the County's revenue share,

WHEREAS, the County's Credit Card Policy states that an amount over \$1,000 has to have the Board of Supervisor's approval,

#### HELP WANTED

Lee County IT has two open IT Technician positions, one based in our Keokuk office and the other in Fort Madison.

Work involves the coordination and monitoring of the County's information technology functions including the support of in-house or third-party computer applications and management of County's LAN/WAN network; computer hardware including PCs, printers, cabling; operating systems including Windows 10, Windows 11, various versions of Windows Server, and IBM i; and the Vertical telephone system.

Successful applicants will have three or more years of relevant experience; be well organized; possess excellent communication skills; and be disciplined, ambitious, and self-motivated. The Keokuk position will be based in our South Lee County Courthouse office after appropriate an amount of training in our Fort Madison office.

Competitive salary; IP-ERS retirement plan; health, vision, and dental insurance; and other benefits are offered.

The application form can be obtained online or at:

Lee County Auditor's Office

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Lee County Board of Supervisors approve the following credit limit: Lauren Bishop \$10,000

Dated at Fort Madison, lowa this the 11th day of September, 2023.

Lee County Board of Supervisors /s/ Garry Seyb, Chairman; /s/ Ron Fedler, Vice-Chair; /s/ Chuck Holmes, Member; /s/ Matt Pflug, Member and /s/ Tom Schulz, Member. Attest: /s/ Denise Fraise, Auditor. Motion carried.

Conservation Director Heather Huebner gave the Conservation Annual Report.

Moved by Pflug, seconded by Fedler, to approve the following Resolution:

Confirmation of Election of Commissioners to represent the State of Iowa on the Mid-America Port Commission

Whereas: The Mid-America Port Commission was created by a compact between the State of Iowa and the states of Illinois and Missouri, and

Whereas: the port commission district includes

#### HELP WANTED Public Works,

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the Iowa counties of Des Moines, Henry, Jefferson, Lee, Van Buren, and Wapello, and

Whereas: the compact creating the Mid-America Port Commission directs that one Commissioner from the State of Iowa shall be appointed by the governor, and

Whereas: the compact further directs that two additional Commissioners shall be elected by the Chairpersons of the County Commissions of these counties collectively

We therefore certify that the following individual has been duly elected to fill any unfilled portion of the respective term or one full 6-year term as MAPC Commissioners for the State of Iowa.

Shelley Oltmans is duly elected to fill a full term of 6 years formerly held by Joe Steil. Dated this 11th day of September 2023.

/s/ Garry Seyb, Chairman, Lee County.

Moved by Schulz, seconded by Pflug, to approve a contract with the lowa Finance Authority for the Homeowners Assistance Program. Motion carried.

Moved by Schulz, seconded by Holmes, to approve the Consent Agenda that included the September 5, 2023 Board minutes and the claims for payment for the week. Motion carried.

Moved by Pflug, seconded by Schulz, to approve a step increase for Sam Boyer, EMT, from \$19.20/hr. to \$19.58/hr., effective 9/25/23; a step increase for Kierra Huddleston, Paramedic, from \$22.97/hr. to \$23.62/hr., effective 9/26/23 and a step increase for Sammie Jones, EMT, from \$18.01/ hr. to \$19.17/hr., effective 9/26/23. Motion carried. Received and filed the

Treasurer's Report of

Fees Collected for the month of August 2023.

Committee Reports: Pflug reported on a Board of Health meeting. Schulz reported on a Keokuk Ambulance Building Committee meeting.

At 10:50 a.m. it was moved by Pflug, seconded by Fedler, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 18, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at the Administration Building in Fort Madison.

Garry Seyb, Chairman Attest: Denise Fraise, Lee County Auditor

#### Claims paid September 11, 2023

ABC Fire, svs...... 170.15 Advd Crctnl Hlth, svs Agrineed, splys....1511.25 Airgas USA, splys All Seasons Music, svs Alliant Enrgy, svs AP FBO Wrksrc, svs Ape & Sons, rock Applied Cncpts, equip J Baier, Parts ..... 20.50 Barr Mem Chpl, gas Bates Sntatn, svs.. 440.00 Benco dntl, svs ... 2599.48 Blades/Green, svs N Booten, exps..... 322.00 **BRINC** Drones, equip Brozen Hydrlc, svs CenturyLink, svs ...... 8.94

Cullen Pest Cntrl, svs

DM Co Auditor, svs

Dodd Prtg/Stat, splys

Donnellson Tire, splys

Harold Curtis, svs ... 57.50

Discount Tire, svs ... 75.95

Dubuque Co VA, edu

Electronic Engrg, parts EMSLRC, edu...... 92.00 FM Park/Rec, svs FMPD, svs...... 5812.50 GRRWA, svs..... 13382.00 S Hansen, svs ..... 175.50 Health Sol, svs.... 8728.94 Huffman Wldng, equip .....1159.94 IA Office St ME, svs IA Prison Ind, splys ..... 1030.37 T Jacobsmeier, svs Jays Auto, svs...... 266.50 Jet Gas, fuel ..... 17521.02 J Deere Financial, svs Karl Chevrolet, veh Karl Emerg Veh, veh T Keefe, exps ...... 86.00 Keltek, equip...... 267.00 Keo Med Equip, splys Keokuk PD, svs.. 2343.75 P Knustrom, exps Lee Co Auditor, CtrlPur LeeCoTreas, Costs Lutheran Jrnl, publ Lynch Dallas, svs.... 93.00 Madison Apts, rent Martin Equp, equp McFarlands, splys... 62.66 Mediacom, svs..... 255.02 MidAmer Enrgy, gas ..... 53.61 Mohrfeld Elect, svs

Mutual Wheel, parts O'Reilly Auto, parts OMG Midwest, svs Onmedia, adv ..... 600.00 Optum Phrmcy, splys Patterson Dntl, splys Phoenix Sply, splys Prairie Farms, splys Rathbun Water, svs RicohUSA, splys... 517.54 B Roberts, svs ..... 358.00 Sanofi Pasteur, splys A Schiller, svs ...... 500.00 Sec/State, ntry...... 30.00 SIACC, svs ...... 26594.60 SEIRMC, svs ...... 75.00 The Victoria, rfnd .... 50.00 Truck Repair, parts US Cell, svs...... 791.90 VB Co Chld Abuse, svs Van Mtr Instrl, splys Vertical Comm, svs Washington Co, svs L Wessel, gas ..... 1220.00 West Pt Utility, svs Windstream, splys Xiphos Tech Svs, svs Young Innvtns, mtrl B Zinnert, exps ..... 269.00

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## **Education News**

## Data shows FMCSD students start slow, finish strong

**BENCHMARKS:** Kindergarten numbers low at Richardson, but high as students reach high school

#### BY CHUCK VANDENBERG PCC Editor

FORT MADISON – Fort Madison school leaders painted a promising picture of student performance as local educators try to keep up with an ever-changing landscape of standard-ized testing for PreK-12 school districts.

Fort Madison uses a FAST assessment system which stands for Formative Assessment System for Teachers. It is an assessment tool designed for universal screening, monitoring, and evaluation as part of a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) for students needing intervention.

Iowa recently adopted the FAST model to assist school districts in implementing MTSS practices and meeting requirements of the Early Literacy Initiative as part of Iowa code.

Richardson Principal Todd Dirth started a data review with the board at a workshop Monday evening.

Dirth said Richardson's literacy data shows students are not coming into the district prepared for the FAST benchmarks as kindergartners.

Fall data for kindergartners in literacy at that school show that only 28% are reading at benchmark levels when they come to the school in the fall. That number improves to 37% by the spring, but then a regression hits over the summer because the same students come back as first graders at an even lower 27% at or above benchmark.

Those same numbers at Lincoln Elementary School are 51% in the fall, 49% in the spring and then 47% in the fall as first graders.

"When we start off that low - 28% and 27% - we have 72% to 73% of kids that aren't at benchmark. It makes it a huge challenge to try to intervene on that many kids, so we have committed to targeting preschool at Richardson and kindergarten at both schools," Dirth said.

"If you look all the way to the high school we get to a certain point and maintain scores, but when we start in that kind of a hole it makes it difficult to intervene."

He said he feels good that interventionists at the elementary schools have done a good job identifying the students that need help

Board president Josh Wykert asked Dirth if regression at the elementary schools from spring to fall is normal.

"I would say yes. We're not going to take any credit for the

kids making gains over the summer, and likewise not take a whole lot of blame for the kids not making gains over the summer," he said.

Dirth said Lincoln's literacy data shows only two elementary grades with gains from the spring of 2023 to the fall of 2023. Richardson showed regression at every grade level from spring to fall in literacy and math.

Kim Harmon, the district's curriculum director said the benchmark data needs to be kept in context and that it shows how kids are doing at this level and at this point in the school year.

"Particularly when we look at kindergarten this is very telling in how prepared kindergartners are coming to us. When you look at the buildings and the free and reduced meal rates in the buildings there's a correlation. Richardson's are significantly higher than Lincoln. We need to look and try to expand our preschool opportunities there," Harmon said.

But Dirth said over 90% of the students attended some preschool somewhere.

Board member Dianne Hope said if you look at the totality of the data, the students are making progress and it's tough to look at one data point at one point in time. She said you have to look at trends.

"Yes, we can look at one grade point and that one day kids were happy about something or upset about something else. We are making progress and I've seen that the last couple of years and I want to commend the administrators for that," she said.

"It's hard when you see things go backwards, but we have to expect that too."

Board member Brad Menke said it appears the students are coming in with deficit experience when it comes to the benchmarks, but then progress is seen in most areas as students age through the district.

Dirk Troutman, FMMS principal and Heather Lightfoot, assistant FMMS principal showed a reversal of the trend showing increases in all three grade levels.

Middle school literacy and math schools were above 50% to benchmark at most grade levels. Just before moving to the high school in 7th grade, 6th graders in the spring of this year tested at 60% efficient in literacy and 57% in math.

Troutman said when students come into the middle school in the high 30s or low 40s it does task intervention specialists there with an overloading of students needing support.

Data from the screening showed that 4th graders tested at 38% at benchmark in the spring of 2023. But the same students came back in the fall as 5th graders and tested at 43%, a 5% improvement in literacy.

"When you have scores where students come in at 40% proficient or 35% proficient, your support system gets overloaded.

# Prevent & Protect!



Now your interventionist can't laser in on the skills that will help the individual students because they are overwhelmed with how many students they have," Troutman said.

"The more upfront you can get that exponential growth, you start seeing grades four and five where you see 60-75% proficient. Now all your systems and great people in place can function very efficiently the way it's designed to."

The district's composite spring 2023 literacy score for grades K-6 was right at 50% to benchmark, while the Great Prairie Area Education Association's composite number was 59 and the state's was 65. In the fall of 2023, those numbers dipped across the board from the district's 48%, to GPAEA's 57% and the state's 64%.

In math, when the same K-6 spring numbers were collected, the district's numbers were 65%, while the GPAEA's was 50% and the state's was 65%. When fall numbers were tabulated the district was at 56%, while the GPAEA was 61% and the state was 68%.

Fort Madison High School co-principals Patrick Lamb and Adrian McKay were able to show student improvement is culminating at the high school level.

Some high school numbers in science eclipsed the 90% mark with spring numbers for 10th graders in science at 91% proficient to benchmarks. The 9th through 11th grade numbers combined in science were 85%. High school math marks in the spring of 2023 were the lowest of all the categories at 55%.

"I truly believe the inference I can make on the math, reading, and science, is that the numbers we're seeing are a true reflection of what our kids know and are able to do," Lamb said.

"By the time the kids get to the high school level, and this is a credit to the middle school instructors, they are ready for the fall screener."

Superintendent Dr. Erin Slater said in the district's system the students grow and learn.

"We may get them when they first come in and they are not at benchmark, but as you can see as they matriculate through our system, if they stay with us, they become highly successful academically and behaviorally," she said.

"As students stay with us they do grow."

According to the district website, standards-based grading communicates how students perform on a set of clearly defined learning targets called standards. The purpose of standards-based grading is to identify what a student knows, or is able to do, in relation to those learning targets - as opposed to simply averaging grades/scores over the course of the grading period, which can mask what a student has learned or not learned.

Compared to traditional grading, standards-based learning more accurately represents learning progress towards the proficiency of standards.



## Remember all the things we did to not get COVID?

- We washed our hands
- sneezed & coughed into our elbows
- stayed home when we felt sick
- kept our hands away from our face
- respected other's personal space
- spent time outdoors
- sanitized our workspaces and commonly used items
- and most importantly got vaccinated!

Right place. Right care. Right here.

It is time to put all those practices back in place to stop the spread of all the nasty germs that cause influenza, COVID, RSV and the common cold.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends everyone over the age of 6-months receive the annual flu vaccination - with September and October being the best time to get vaccinated. Ask your healthcare provider about other vaccines that are right for you. **Protect yourself and those you love and think prevention!** 



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