



Our Marion Independent School District School Year 2017-18 began with the District's student body continued growth to serve 3,249 students. The Marion High School opening enrollment reached the highest enrollment in the history of the District. The preschool opening enrollment achieved the highest level of preschool school enrollment and featured an "all day preschool" opportunity for families who wished their children to have full day preschool learning. Included in our enrollment progress rests the acknowledgement that the number of students in Marion Home School Assistance Program (MHSAP) is the highest it has ever been and now serves over 1,039 children from across the State - the largest and we believe the best Home School Assistance Program in Iowa.

We are proud to note that the Marion Independent School district opened the year with 177 certified teachers and leaders focused on our vision: "All MISD learners believe in their power to embrace learning, to excel, and to own their own future." And as we opened school with twenty-two new faculty and thirty-three new staff members, we also celebrated improvements to the Hipple Athletic Complex Tennis Facility, the refurbishment of the Francis Marion Intermediate School, new looks at the Marion Football Stadium, and the opening of Longfellow Elementary School. The Starry Staff put a new shine on their building and Vernon Middle School forged a new landscaping look around the school. Additionally, the Marion Home School Assistance Program (MHSAP) started work to envision a new future at our proud and historic Emerson Elementary School with a community plan to repurpose Emerson ES into the Emerson Learning Center as a new home for MHSAP.

The opening of school professional learning continued the teachers and staff summer professional development that included additional blended technology learning, curriculum reviews, math instruction practice, and Professional Learning Community (PLC) learning for our leaders and teachers. The Fall Quarter, a new "quarter" planning academic schedule now common in all schools, focused professional development work within all curriculum areas and our PLCs. We shared the new curriculum at our schools with parents. We added a link to our website allowing parents and community members the opportunity to view our curriculum content learning standards "live" on each of our school's active websites. We continue to review our standards-based grade level curriculum to ensure alignment to the Iowa Core Curriculum.

The integration of technology for student and adult learning and for communications continues to expand. Each school's active commitment to support the District's Vision for

learners "to embrace learning, to excel, and to own the future" is regularly communicated with parents through shared examples of school to family social media. This year our schools' teachers and teacher leadership communications specialists continue to enhance outreach of home to school classroom "SeeSaw" videos displaying student classroom work. The expanded communications application of technology only overshadowed by the increased technology usage in instruction. This year all students have been provided daily in-school technology access by iPads in K-4 grades or Chromebooks in grades 5-12. Next year, every child 5-12 will again be provided a Chromebook for one-to-one assignment for both in and out-of-school learning.

This school year the elementary and middle school classrooms are equipped with additional technologies, with collaborative reading and writing instructional strategies installed through Teacher Leadership Compensation School Improvement, and with comprehensive literacy learning initiatives. There is one iPad device for each two children in our elementary schools. Professional learning for teachers and staff in technology, literacy instruction, assessment, and data analysis, are integrated within each content. Professional learning time has been scheduled to allow all Professional Learning Teams, every two weeks after school, additional time to collaborate and to improve instructional practices and student assessment. These efforts shared with parents on campus, via standard based grading, and via digital media. The message has been that our mission's work to enhance the professional capacity of teachers, associates, and leaders, within the District's Professional Learning Community model is in action. WE remain true to our purpose: "the Marion Independent School District (MISD) in partnership with parents and with the community will create a safe learning environments where each learner is nurtured to become successful."

The record of academic accomplishments include Marion High School's January 2018 recognition award with the 8th consecutive Annual AP District Honor Roll. This award attested to increasing student participation in Advanced Placement (college level) classes while increasing the number of students succeeding in such course work with end-of-course examination successes. Marion High School ACT results reflected student scores exceeded the State average. Graduation rates continue to be above the State average. The continually increasing number of students enrolled in Kirkwood college level classes; the annual expansion of AP college course offerings; and the increasing number of annual Career and Technical Education Trades / Internships / Work Study Opportunities awarded, again note success. With over 181 children in Show Choir and 135 in our High School Band this year, all Arts programs are recognizable as significant achievements with well - designed and rewarding educational opportunities.

We have over 1100 students enrolled this year in elective music program courses and 800+ students in musical instrument instruction. Annual State and regional accolades attest to the band, music and ARTS programs' successes. Our successful late summer athletic programs carried our baseball team to the State Tournament. This Fall's successful State qualification for our boys and individual girls in State cross country competitions continues to reflect outstanding running programs. Our highly successful volleyball and football programs received regional recognition and demonstrated the

"spirit" that reflects Marion pride in excellent athletic performances. Basketball, wrestling, bowling, robotics, cheering, and archery teams are enjoying super winter seasons. Our success and quiet-pride rests in the high school student participation rate in co and extracurricular activities that continues to reflect that 9 out of 10 of our students participate and compete well in school life.

The prideful fact that almost 90% of our high school students participate in teams, activities, or clubs demonstrates that Marion is a truly strong family and community school district. Student community service continues to grow as evidenced with the Marion High School Marching Band's Fall Open Air Concert to our Marion Crestview Nursing Home residents. The holistic and well - rounded development of our children is without doubt the strength of our school district. Academics, social-emotional development, the Arts, physical and mental health, community service, and athletics, are focused for each child's learning success.

When we look at progress, the story is continuous and ongoing. We look at what we "can do" to enhance the lives of our students, faculty, families, staff, and community members. This includes working with the Marion Community and City to expand and to repurpose our facilities for all to benefit, offering recreation and physical fitness enhancements, and creating learning opportunities that are technology enhanced and professionally delivered.

We remain proud of our students and our continuous efforts to improve the quality of educational service to our Community. You are always cordially invited to visit and to observe the successes that are Marion Independent School District.

Respectfully,

Chris Dyer