

## Wildcats host, excel at state speech contest

by Taylor Saunders

A couple of weeks ago our Individual Contest Speech Team hosted this year's Individual State Speech Contest. It was quite the day! Many of us stayed late after school Friday night to set up. Then proceeded to spend all day long on Saturday at school, helping things run smoothly, setting up, tearing down, and performing. Though we had an amazing time! All of our students' events did extremely well. We received 43 overall I ratings and 6 overall II ratings.

Abby Nieman: Poetry: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Abby Nieman: Public Address: Division I, II, I Overall: I

Abram Nolan: Prose: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Addie Wilson: After Dinner Speaking: Division II, I, I Overall: I

Addie Wilson: Storytelling: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Alaina Connolly: Storytelling: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Arianna Nolan: Expository Address: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Arianna Nolan: Original Oratory: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Athena Bradley: Original Oratory: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Athena Bradley: Public Address: Division I, I, II Overall: I

Aubrie Althoff: Public Address: Division II, I, II Overall: II

Ava Holtz: Public Address: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Carly Dirks: Prose: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Carly Dirks: Improvisation: Division II, II, II Overall: II

Cecilia Charles: Reviewing: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Cecilia Charles: Storytelling: Division I, II, I Overall: I

Ella Reicher: Spontaneous Speaking: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Emily Rudd: Improvisation: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Eva Mensen: Poetry: Division I, I, I Overall: I



Lylah Billmeyer rehearses her storytelling piece before school. She earned All-State honors in this category.

Eva Mensen: Radio News Announcing: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Ever Botos: Prose: Division I, I, I Overall: I

*Continued on next page*

## FFA students compete in district contest, aim for State

by Kayla Hoeger, FFA reporter

On Saturday, March 7th, FFA members traveled to East Buchanan to compete in District contests. Results are listed below:

- Ag Impact: Advance to State (Annie Langel, Brody Ries, Layne Trenkamp, Cooper Schulte, and Jaron Hoofer)

- Ag CSI: Alternate to State-Gold Rating (Kinley Hoeger, Maggie Hoeger, Kendall Ronnebaum, Carly Burr, and Kyra Knipper)

- Conduct of Meetings: Gold Rating (Linken Stansberry, Tyler Beitz, Ava Holtz, Anna Feldmann, Ethan Crowley, Jayce Leytem, and Billy Krapfl)

- Parliamentary Procedure: Silver Rating (-Natalie Ries, Ty Hoeger, Lukas Chestnut, Jeff LeGassick, and Kyle Engelken)

Kourtney Hatfield, Emma Wheets, and Ryan Sands went to take the Green-hand test. Eight members went to take



Middle schoolers Annie, Brody, Layne, Cooper, and Jaron will represent MV in the Ag Impact event at the state competition in April.

the chapter quiz. Alison placed 9th overall with a gold, and members others received a gold rating. Olivia Ronnebaum, Braden

Gardner, Braden Ronnebaum, and Griffin Honkomp competed in the Farm Business Management test.

# Speech results, cont.: 10 entries earn All-State nods

Gracin Harris: Radio News Announcing: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Jeanie Teymer: Expository Address: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Lucy Hucker: Reviewing: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Lucy Hucker: Videocasting: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Lylah Billmeyer: After Dinner Speaking: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Lylah Billmeyer: Storytelling: Division I, I, I Overall: I

MaryEllen Smith: Videocasting: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Maya Smith: Original Oratory: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Maya Smith: Radio News Announcing: Division I, I, I Overall: I

McKayla Weber: Radio News Announcing: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Morgan Clemen: Acting: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Morgan Clemen: Reviewing: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Olivia Begle: Reviewing: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Ollie Hunter: Solo Musical Theatre: Division II, I, II Overall: II

Owen Salow: Improvisation: Division I, II, I Overall: I

Owen Salow: Storytelling: Division I, II, II Overall: II

Owen Smith: Expository Address: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Preston Salow: Improvisation: Division II, II, II Overall: II

Preston Salow: Spontaneous Speaking: Division I, II, I Overall: I

Rylee Reed: Acting: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Rylee Reed: Literary Program: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Ryleigh Moriarity: Literary Program: Division II, I, I Overall: I

Sellah Ambundo: Poetry: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Sellah Ambundo: Solo Musical Theatre: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Taylor Saunders: Acting: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Taylor Saunders: Original Oratory: Division I, I, I Overall: I

Tommie Cole: Literary Program: Division II, I, II Overall: II

Trish Dietiker: Prose: Division II, I, I Overall: I

Everyone who participated in the 2026 IE speech team has done some

amazing work and truly put their best effort forward. However, we'd like to give a special congratulations to those who were nominated for the Mar. 30 2026 IE All-State Festival:

## Performing

Arianna Nolan: Original Oratory

Ella Reicher: Spontaneous Speaking

Lucy Hucker: Reviewing

Lylah Billmeyer: Storytelling

Morgan Clemen: Reviewing

Olivia Begle: Reviewing

Sellah Ambundo: Poetry

Abram Nolan: Prose

## Non-Performing

Lylah Billmeyer: After Dinner Speaking  
Sellah Ambundo: Solo Musical Theatre

These students performed yesterday at UNI and received feedback from guest critics.

Congratulations to those who were nominated. Everyone who participated in Individual Contest Speech this year should be very proud of themselves. We all worked very hard and represented Maquoketa Valley well. Thank you to all of our coaches and staff who continue to support us. We would like to also thank all of those volunteers for making the 2026 State Speech Contest as special as it was here at

# FCS students compete at state event



MV students competing at the FCCLA state competition were, front: Noah Whalen; back: Aubrie Althoff, Kallie Freiburger, Magdalena Petermann, Macee Nolan, Morgan Clemen and McKenna Conrad.

## by MaryEllen Smith

Seven Maquoketa Valley students participated in the FCCLA State Conference, March 22-24 in Cedar Rapids. This year marked the first one that MV has competed. Iowa schools are now required to have co-curricular organizations that support the CTE classes, and this competition was provided the FCS students an opportunity to showcase their talents.

While this was the state competition, there were no district competitions to make them eligible for state. In order to prepare for the judging at this event, MV students participated in a judged simulation last month at Keystone AEA.

Placing contestants were Magda Petermann and Noah Wahlen. Magda took home the second place title in the category Toys that Teach. Noah Whalen entered in the Pride of Iowa competition, winning 1st place. His entry involved making a tenderloin from start to finish in front of the judges.

Macee Nolan competed in the cake decorating contest. Together both Morgan Clemen and Kallie Freiburger also competed in cake decorating. McKenna Conrad made an appearance in Fashion Sketching and Aubrie Althoff competed in the \$20 clothing challenge.

## A glimpse of some fine arts activity



Olivia Hunter sings “At Once” with the jazz band providing accompaniment at the Mar. 12 Night of Jazz.



Above: The jazz band competed at NEIBA jazz at Union High School Mar. 6. Maya Smith, trombonist, received a soloist award. Above: Olivia Begle, Alex Lewin and Owen Smith play in the rhythm section. Left: Various groups, like this sextet, performed at MV’s Got Talent.



## FFA members lunch, listen and learn



by Kayla Hoeger, FFA reporter

On Tuesday, nine FFA members attended the 43rd Annual Manchester Area Chamber of Commerce Ag Appreciation Luncheon. Members started the day with a

career fair where they talked to many representatives from the area ag businesses. Members also got to visit with other area FFA chapters. Then members listened to keynote speaker Dr. Kohl from Virginia

Tech, and enjoyed lunch. Members had a full day and took some words of wisdom from the career fair representatives and Dr. Kohl.

# Sports Connection

## Wildcats prepare for spring sports season

### Boys golf

The boys golf team is coming off of second place finish at the conference meet and a third place finish at the district meet last year, and the team hopes to keep that momentum going.

“We will have a lot of depth on this year’s team,” stated Coach Conner. “We got a great experience getting to play with that caliber of competition and competed very well against them. I expect our guys to build off that experience last season.”

Some key returners to the golf team include seniors Zach Leytem and Anderson Holtz and juniors Eli Dougherty, Trevor Grimm and Dalton Africa. Coach Conner noted that senior Braden Gardner and junior Wes Schermann will also be early contributors to the team.

“I think our first goal should be to win the TRC Conference Meet this season,” coach noted. “We have been right there the past two seasons and I think this is the year that we can get it done. I expect our guys to continue to improve throughout the season and as the conditions improve, we should be playing our best golf with a chance to advance in the postseason again.”

They is scheduled to play its first meet at Backbone with Starmont Apr. 7.

### Girls golf

The girls golf team is loaded with some experience, and they hope

Coach Zietlow returns for his third year as head coach, and he’s joined by key returners seniors Maya Smith and Morgan Clemen and junior Ever Botos. Coach Zietlow noted that senior Macee Nolan, and sophomores Olivia Begle and Eva Mensen will also provide some early support to the team. There are 14 girls out this year.

Coach Zietlow stated that he’s optimistic about this year’s team. “If everyone takes that next step like they did last year we’ll be in good shape and that’s not including newcomers to the team.”



Seniors on the boys track team include, front row from left: Colin Smith, DaShawn Strickland, Macoy Stone an Dylan Knipper; back row: Kash Hunt, Brady Wall, Preston Salow and Kenyon Baker.

As always, a concern for the team will be the amount of practice they can get i before the season starts. “The weather hasn’t allowed us to practice outside right away unlike the previous two years,” Coach Zietlow added.

He stated that East Buchanan and Ed-Co will be some tough conference teams this year, but that MV should also be in the hunt.

The girls team is also scheduled to

play its first meet at Backbone against Starmont Apr. 7.

### Boys track

The boys track team is loaded with experience, and Coach Huber is optimistic about his team: “Our team should be able to score high in many events for both the conference and district meets. We are looking forward to competing against tough competition.”



The girls golf team includes seniors Macee Nolan, Morgann Clemen and Maya Smith.

## Spring sports preview, cont.

The team finished third in the conference last year.

Some key returners that Coach Huber noted were Colin Smith, 12th, Sprints; Kash Hunt, 12th, Sprints; Macoy Stone, 12th, Sprints; Brady Wall, 12th, Sprints; DaShawn Strickland, 12th, Mid-Distance; Preston Salow, 12th, Throws; Dylan Knipper, 12th, Throws; Kenyon Baker, 12th, Distance; and Carter LeClere, 11th, Mid-Distance.

Other promising team members whom Coach Huber indicated are Owen Smith, 10th, Distance; Keegan Rahe, 10th, Sprints; Gabe Helweg, 11th, Throws; Jaxson LeGassick, 11th, Sprints; and Owen Salow, 9th, Mid-Distance.

Coach Huber mentioned he feels his team is well rounded for numbers in the sprints, mid-distance, and distance events. He expressed concern about the team's mental component regarding attitudes towards opponents and general outlook for the season.

The team plans to open its outdoor season tomorrow night at West Delaware.

## Girls track

The girls track team celebrated a fifth place finish at the state meet last year, and many important pieces to that puzzle are returning.

Coach Dunlap, now in his 14th year as head coach, noted many strengths in this team: "We have great numbers for a 1A school and will fill out a roster well. We have some good leadership and experience and this group will work hard to improve and learn skills. We have a very large group of sprinters and are fairly talented. We will



Braden Gardner, Zachary Leytem and Anderson Holtz are the seniors on the boys golf team.

fill out the hurdles and the field events as well and should be much improved. We will be a strong team all around."

Some key returnees include Lanni Beaman, 12th, Sprinter, Sprint Med state Champ 2025; Taryn Burbridge, 12th, Mid Distance, 3rd in the 4x200m 2025; Macee Nolan, 12th, Thrower; Camryn Paris, 11th, Sprinter, 3rd in the 4x200m 2025; Lilly Kraft, 11th, Sprinter, Sprint Med state Champ 2025; Sellah Ambundo, 11th, Thrower, Qualified shot 2025; Khloe Glew, 10th, Sprinter, Qualified 4x400 2025; Audra Burbridge, 10th, Sprinter, Sprint Med state Champ 2025.

Newcomers who are showing early promise include Grace Richter, 12th, Thrower; Anna Feldmann, 9th, Mid Distance; Mallori Ambundo, 9th, Sprinter; and Payton Lanning, 9th, Sprinter.

Coach Dunlap sees great potential in this team. "We have a lot of talent and experience coming back this season with a total of 40 athletes out. We are well-rounded except for the longer distances with only a couple athletes that will run beyond an

800m this season sophomore Breanna Bush and freshman Anna Feldmann. These two runners are both hard working and had some great success in cross country this year. They both should provide some significant help for our team in the distance events.

"We have a great group of sprinters and mid-distance athletes returning this season to include some very successful relay athletes as well as school record holders in the 4x100m relay, 4x200m relay, Sprint Medley relay, and senior Lanni Beaman in the open 400m and sophomore Audra Burbridge in the open 800m.

"We should have some big improvements in the field events and the hurdles this season. We have a very large group of throwers with senior Macee Nolan and sophomore Sellah Ambundo returning who both scored a bunch of points for this team in 2025. Ambundo qualified for the state meet last season but just missed the podium and has worked hard to get herself in a position to be better this season. We have seven very solid hurdlers this season that I think will surprise everyone with how improved we are. Lastly, we will have a strong group of jumpers returning in both the long jump and the high jump. In particular sophomore Taylor Salow is looking to improve on her great freshman high jump season."

Coach Dunlap noted that a gap in the team is in depth and experience of the 1500M and 3000M runners.

He added that some top competitors for MV in the conference this year will be Edgewood-Colesburg, Starmont, East Buchanan and Lisbon.

The team plans to open its outdoor season Mar. 31 at West Delaware.

The seniors on the girls golf team are, front row: Carly Dirks, Taryn Burbridge and Trish Dietiker; back row: Grace Richter, Lanni Beaman and Macee Nolan.



# Freiburger, Richter plan to take athletic skills to the next level



Two MV athletes recently signed their letters of intent to play collegiate ball. Kallie Freiburger has committed to Loras to play softball, and Grace Richter has signed to play basketball at Wartburg.

## All-State Basketball

The Iowa Print Sports Writers Association 2026 All-State Teams

### 2A Third Team

Audra Burbridge  
Grace Richter

### 1A First Team

Brady Wall

## Wildcats compete at TRC indoor meet

Both teams traveled to the University of Dubuque Thursday night to compete in the Tri-Rivers Conference indoor meet.

Events placing first and second for the girls were:

Shot put: Sellah Ambundo, second, 38-0  
4x400 Relay: Taryn Burbridge, Khloe Glew, Alaina Mead and Lanni Beaman; second, 4:30.82

55M Dash: Camryn Paris, second, 7.70  
4x200 Relay: Payton Lanning, Khloe Glew, Audra Burbridge and Camryn Paris; second, 1:53.25

400M Dash: Lanni Beaman, first, 1:01.86  
800M Run: Audra Burbridge, first, 2:27.56

For the boys, events that placed in the top two include:

55M Dash: Kash Hunt, first, 6.81  
4x200 Relay: Kash Hunt, Jaxson LeGassick, Brady Wall and Macoy Stone; first, 1:36.08  
200M Dash: Macoy Stone, first, 23.46  
Shot put: Preston Salow, second, 48-7 (PR)



Lanni Beaman pushes herself in the 400M run. She finished first. (photo by Aubrie Althoff)

## Red Cross Blood Drive

Maquoketa Valley Middle School Multipurpose Room

Thursday, Apr. 9

12:00 pm to 5:00 pm

See the QR code on the posters around school to signup.

## Comedy Corner

—compiled by Grace Richter

The madness has started! Hawkeye and Cyclone men made it to the Sweet Sixteen, to keep you in the spirit here are some jokes just about as crazy as March basketball.

My bracket strategy? Vibes, colors, and which logo looks cooler. Analytics who?

Nothing brings people together like collectively realizing your bracket is already trash by Day 2.

I love Cinderella stories—until they eliminate my championship pick.

“Upset alert!” Yeah, I’m upset too. My bracket is in shambles.

I don’t always watch college basketball... but when I do, I suddenly become a full-time analyst who’s wrong about everything.



# One at a Time: ICE: Melt or Maintain?

by Arianna Nolan

Meet Alejandro, a junior in high school who was born in the United States in 2009. His parents came to this country in 2001 to escape the crime, gang, and drug-filled life in Mexico. Due to the long naturalization process, his parents haven't been able to naturalize themselves as legal citizens, which hadn't been too much of a problem until the new presidential administration. After a long day of school, prom planning, and basketball practice, he comes home and expects some warm, homemade food made by his mother and a story of the day from his father. Instead, he sees police officers' cars parked outside the house. His heart sinks, and his stomach drops. He runs to the door, rushes inside, and sees officers in vests with the word ICE splashed across them. They are manhandling his parents. His mother sees him and screams his name, "Alejandro!" One of the agents pushes him to the floor while another one holds him down. Seeing this, his father yells to the agent, "No toques a mi hijo!" (Don't touch my son!). An ICE agent makes a comment that only Alejandro can understand clearly- "Damn Mexicans." Alejandro tries to kick away from the agent, but is met with a fist to his forehead instead. The final thing he can hear is his mother's sobs and his father's screams before his world fades to black.



ICE agents are becoming more common in larger cities, but little is truly known about what these officers do. In the state of Iowa, legislators are trying to pass a bill that allows ICE agents to cooperate with local law enforcement to expand the actions they can take to increase deportations. This will increase ICE's power in Iowa and allow it to be here in general. When it comes to the topic of illegal immigration, most of us will readily agree that citizens should come to this country legally. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of immigration control, specifically ICE. Whereas some are convinced that ICE should be maintained and is beneficial to immigration control, others, including myself, maintain that ICE should be abolished and is not an efficient immigration control. Melting the Mystery of ICE

To understand the argument of abolishing or maintaining ICE, we have to understand who ICE is and what it does. I.C.E is a sub-department of the Department of Homeland Security. The acronym stands for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. They are a body of different agents that can work with the police force and other agencies. However, they have different powers than the police force. ICE

was formed in 2002 after the attacks of 9/11 in response to terrorism. ICE's mission is to protect the American people by providing public safety and national security. However, more recently, the goal set by the Trump Administration is to deport as many illegal immigrants as possible. ICE is allowed to detain and arrest anyone it believes is in the country illegally (Epstein, 2026).

But there are some restrictions with this, and people have their rights when it comes to ICE agents, depending on the scenario. ICE isn't allowed to enter a house without a warrant (Epstein, 2026). ICE agents are allowed to stop someone on the street (also known as pedestrian stops) and question them if they believe they came to the country illegally ("How ICE Went Rogue", 2026). But, as mentioned before, people do have their rights and don't have to give up their rights for the agent. The ICE agent is only allowed to make the arrest if they are sure the person is in the country illegally. ICE agents are not allowed to conduct traffic stops unless they have a valid reason to believe that the person is an illegal immigrant ("How ICE Went Rogue", 2026). ICE agents are only allowed to use force when they are in danger or when absolutely necessary. The Trump Administration has changed the game a little bit by allowing ICE agents to arrest anyone they suspect is an illegal immigrant and bring them to a second center to question them more, then they either get ready to deport them or release them. ("How ICE Went Rogue", 2026).

## The Slippery Immigration Problem in Iowa

Some people believe that ICE should be maintained because there is an immigration problem in America. Right now, there are 187,300 immigrants in Iowa. Out of these 187,300 immigrants, 31% of them are undocumented, or in other words, illegal ("Immigrants in Iowa," n.d.). These people have come to our country without going through the naturalization process that they need to go through to become legal citizens. They are living in our country without people knowing that they are even in our country. People believe that if they want to come to this country, they need to do so legally. While this is a fair point, we have to consider the other side: how difficult the naturalization process is. It can take 5-25 years for a person from Mexico to become a naturalized citizen, and it can take even longer in other countries. The previous citizenship test has been changed to be more difficult and lengthier (Cruz, 2025). This makes it almost impossible for these immigrants to come to the country legally if they need to escape quickly from crime or danger.

## The Cold Treatment of ICE

While ICE is only authorized to take some actions, they usually work their way around the system to get what they want. Or, the Trump Administration excuses these actions

that were previously banned. To get around the barriers, ICE agents often partner with local police enforcement, specifically in the cases of traffic stops. They have the police officer pull the person over and then have the immigration agent question them- technically cheating the system. This goes against the unreasonable search law stated in the Fourth Amendment ("How ICE Went Rogue", 2026). ICE also uses racial profiling to determine if someone is an illegal citizen, as found in a lawsuit against an ICE agent in 2018. In the case of pedestrian stops, ICE agents make it very difficult for the person who has the right to remain silent and walk away to do so. They can sometimes object with aggression or retaliation- not only to the people being questioned but also to the protesters or bystanders nearby ("How ICE Went Rogue", 2026).

As mentioned before, these pedestrian and traffic stops can lead to the person being arrested. This can lead to hours of someone wasting their time being profiled as an illegal immigrant when they are actually a legal citizen. When people are arrested and taken to another location, the processing leading up to being questioned can take up to hours. U.S citizens who have been racially profiled sit here for hours for absolutely no reason. ("How ICE Went Rogue", 2026).

The most important, and vile treatment has been through the use of force and violence. ICE agents have been commonly using aggressive and violent force against people. In traffic stops, they break windows to remove the people inside. For pedestrian arrests, they push them to the ground. For people observing or nearby the arrests, they use chemicals for crowd control. Several people have been shot and killed by ICE agents ("How ICE Went Rogue", 2026). With all of this in mind, this begs the question of whether we should even use ICE? Or should we reform? In my opinion, there are many better ways to control illegal immigration, like making the legalization of becoming a natural citizen easier, which would make it plausible for immigrants to be legal instead of having to come here illegally. ICE is outdated and is turning into a weapon of destruction instead of a way of control. It should be abolished, not reformed.

Situations like Alejandro's are happening all over our country because of the organization ICE. Some people believe that ICE should continue because it is a solid form of immigration control for keeping illegal immigrants out of our country. However, due to the mistreatment and irrelevance of ICE, we need to melt this ICE that is freezing our country back to 1940s Germany, and move forward to being the country of freedom and justice for all.

# Deep Dive by Arianna Nolan



Welcome back, Divers, to another edition of Deep Dive! This week, we will be taking a look at a small but interesting creature of the sea: the Bigfin reef squid! Compared to most squids, this squid is very small and can only grow up to about 13 inches in length. It resides in the coastal waters of the Indo-Pacific Ocean. A fun fact about this squid is that it can use its skin cells to change colors! This helps them hide from predators and mating. Specific patterns and colors help males attract mates. Once they mate, the female can lay up to 400 eggs! That's a lot of babies.

The Bigfin reef squid tends to snack on crustaceans and fish. To capture its prey, it uses two tentacles, then it uses eight tentacles to hold its prey while it eats. This squid has to take very small bites due to its tiny beaks, but it eats a lot! This leads to them being able to grow up to six percent of their body length a day! But, unfortunately, these squids don't live long, and some of their longest lives are only up to 11 months.

These squids have been appearing more often than not recently, which is an indicator of warming water since these squids thrive in the warmth. This can lead to overpopulation and mess up the coastal ecosystem. The warming of the water is also a danger to other species that thrive in the cold. With this in mind, we must consider our conservation efforts and what we are doing to protect not only the ocean but also our planet. If you would like to find out more about this creature, please visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium website, which is where all the information for this article was provided! I hope you all have a fantastic weekend and I will see you all next time!

# Jaelyn's Journeys



photo by Jaelyn Butikofer

Where in the school can you find this object? Be the first one to correctly name the place to Mrs. Temple to win something from the prize box!

## Fantasy Fiction: The battle of many but few A series by Abby Nieman

As what I think is a ceremony finishes, the forest goes back to normal, except for one thing: the new spirit is still sitting on a rock. "What's on your mind?" I ask as I take a seat on the ground next to the spirit and look up at the leaves covering the view of the sky.

"There is someone that I want to see one last time, not that I am going anywhere, but I don't think that they can see me."

"Who would that be?"

"I don't know their name, but I do know that she was brave and always willing to do as much as possible... I wish that Merdric could help me remem-

ber, but that could take forever."

"It is ways worth a shot to try, if you don't know your name, maybe try and go where they live." The spirit looks at Lyra, rethinking what she said, adding, "If is possible."

"It could be possible, everything from my past life is all fuzzy." The spirit gets up and walks in the forest. I stay and look at the little that I can see of the sky as the sun sets.

The forest at dusk is peaceful before all of the monsters come out.



# School board minutes: March 23, 2026

Budget Hearing One– March 23, 2026 – 5:30 p.m. – High School Library, Delhi, Iowa

The Board of Directors of the Maquoketa Valley Community School District met in the High School Library on Monday, March 23, 2026, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the 2026-2027 Proposed Budget. All motions carried unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Board Members Present –Feldmann, Kunde, Overman, Smeins, Zietlow  
Board Members Absent – None  
Staff Present – Supt. Troy Osterhaus, Erika Vanderloop, Brian Mangold, Brenda Becker and Craig Wilson  
Visitors Present – Mike Putz and Deb Knake

Motion was made by Zietlow, seconded by Feldmann to approve the meeting agenda as presented. All ayes. Carried.

In a motion by Overman, seconded by Smeins the Board entered into a public hearing on the 2026-2027 Proposed School Budget. All ayes. Carried.

Erika Vanderloop discussed the proposed property tax rate in relation to the current rate. The current levy rate is \$9.69834 and the proposed levy rate is \$9.66563 which is a decrease of \$.03. Mrs. Vanderloop also shared some data regarding the FY26 levy rates from districts across the state and Maquoketa Valley currently holds the 15th lowest levy rate.

Deb Knake asked a question regarding if any part of the levy rate is voter approved. Mrs. Vanderloop explained that the levy rate is made up of a funding formula and other various levies, some of which are approved such as the voter approved PPEL levy.

Supt. Osterhaus took some time to explain how property tax rollbacks work for agricultural, residential and commercial property.

Hearing no other comments or questions, Zietlow made a motion to close the public hearing on the 2026-2027 Proposed School Budget which was seconded by Overman.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m. in a motion by Feldmann, seconded by Overman. All ayes. Carried.

Regular Board Meeting – March 23, 2026 – 5:30 p.m. – High School Library, Delhi, Iowa

The regular meeting of the Maquoketa Valley Board of Education was called to order

by President Donna Kunde at 5:41 p.m. in the High School Library in Delhi, Iowa. All motions carried unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Motion was made by Feldmann, seconded by Overman to approve the meeting agenda as presented. All ayes. Carried.

In a motion by Overman, seconded by Zietlow the consent items were approved. All ayes. Carried.

Preschool round-up is scheduled for April 22nd. ISAP testing for grades 3-5 will be held the week of April 13th. ISAP testing for grades 6-11 will be held on Wednesday's in the month of April with the first testing day being April 8th.

The following open enrollment requests were approved in a motion by Feldmann, seconded by Overman:

Alana Ungs – 11th, MV resident to Iowa Connections Academy  
Lorraine Smith – JK, Monticello resident to MV

Harper Klaren – JK, Western Dubuque resident to MV

Macey Klaren – JK, Western Dubuque resident to MV

All ayes. Carried.

The following personnel recommendations were approved in a motion by Overman, seconded by Zietlow:

Mandy Pasker – employed as Yearbook Sponsor

Jody Montz – resignation as High School Library Paraprofessional

Danielle Schuman – employed as High School Business Teacher

All ayes. Carried.

The Board approved the 2026-2027 AEA Cooperative Purchasing Agreement in a motion by Feldmann, seconded by Overman. All ayes. Carried.

At 6:13 p.m., President Donna Kunde declared this the time and place to hold a public hearing on the proposed 2026-2027 school calendar in a motion by Zietlow, seconded by Smeins. The documents were reviewed and there being no comments, the Board President declared the hearing closed at 6:15 p.m. in a motion by Feldmann, seconded by Overman. Motion by Zietlow, seconded by Feldmann to approve the 2026-2027 school calendar as presented. All ayes. Carried.

In a motion by Feldmann, seconded by Overman the contract between Dyersville Events, Inc. and Maquoketa Valley CSD for the high school baseball game which

will be held on June 26, 2026 was approved. All ayes. Carried.

In a motion by Overman, seconded by Smeins the 2026-2027 Morningside Agreement for Teacher Education Clinical Experience was approved. All ayes, Carried. The Board approved the 2026-2027 Iowa Local Government Risk Pool Commission Natural Gas Program Participation Agreement in a motion by Feldmann, seconded by Overman. This allows the district to contract natural gas prices for the school year and pay this out of the Management Fund. All ayes. Carried.

The following transfer of Activity Fund Account Revenue was approved in a motion by Zietlow, seconded by Feldmann:

\$1500 from Wildcat Golf Classic to Girls Basketball

\$1500 from Wildcat Golf Classic to Boys Basketball

\$1500 from Wildcat Golf Classic to Golf  
\$285.75 from Baseball to Middle School Baseball

All ayes. Carried.

In a motion by Overman, seconded by Smeins the contract letters from Infrastructure Technology Solutions for access points and licenses as well as a firewall at the Delhi campus were approved. These contracts letters were awarded to Infrastructure Technology as part of our E-Rate process. All ayes. Carried.

The following board policies were reviewed:

202.02 – Oath of Office

406.06 – Licensed Employee Tax Shelter Program

501.15 – Open Enrollment Transfer – Procedures as a Receiving District

Motion by Overman, seconded by Feldmann to waive the second reading and adopt these policies on the first official reading. All ayes. Carried.

Supt. Osterhaus gave a brief legislative update.

Supt. Osterhaus discussed 5-Star nominations. Further discussion will take place at the April meeting. Pam Overman and Mike Feldmann will serve on the March audit committee.

The April board meeting will be held on April 22nd and begin at 5:00 p.m. due to the elementary concert being held that evening.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m. in a motion by Feldmann, seconded by Zietlow. All ayes. Carried.

# Willow Fuller



**Activities involved in during high school:** Choir, Band, Jazz Combo, Musical (Willy Wonka), Play (Puffs, Alibis, Current; Just Another High School Play)

**Which activity affected you the most?** All of these activities have impacted who I am as a person and how I think equally. Each activity holds a special place in my heart and my conscience. They have taught me how to be more responsible, how to work hard, and so much more.

**What advice do you have for freshmen?** You need to keep going. No matter what stops you, who hurts you, who leaves you. You need to push through everything or you will never see the other side.

**What do you appreciate most about Maquoketa Valley?** I appreciate the teachers the most. They all have pushed me in one way or another to be the best version of myself I can be. They have helped me, listened to my

troubles, and always been there if I need them.

**If you could relive any moment in high school, what would it be?** I would choose to relive every moment I have spent with my best friends. I want to be able to relive every second that I have shared with them. Even if not every moment was a happy one.

**What class have you enjoyed most in high school?** I think one of my favorite classes I have taken is 60's America. While we always remain in the same decade, the topics that we talk about are almost always changing. I get to learn new songs, new words, and so much more. Beyond that, the class is just fun to be in.

**Who is your most inspirational high school teacher? Why?** Out of all the teachers I have had in high school, one of the most inspirational has been Mrs. Montz. She has always been there for me both academically and emotionally. She listens when I'm frustrated or upset, and celebrates when I'm happy. She is always willing to help out, and I strive to be a person who is always willing to help as well.

**Who is your most inspirational elementary or middle school teacher? Why?** Mr. Casutt was by far the most inspirational teacher for me during Middle School. He was my favorite teacher, and I hated disappointing him. However, I tended to have a lot of late work. Oftentimes the fear of disappointing the cool teacher who loved to talk about the coolest topics would make me do my homework sooner than I would normally.

**What is a favorite elementary/middle school memory?** One of my favorite memories from middle school was when my best friend, Carly, had been really frustrated with somebody and began stomping down the hallway. She fell over doing this, hitting her head on the ground. Me and my friend Trish couldn't stop laughing.

**What does your future (college and career) look like?** I plan to go to Kirkwood Community College to earn an associates degree in Digital Arts. From there I will use transfer credits to get me into a film school. Using the skills acquired from both of these places, I will begin to work towards creating my own animation studio. With said studio I will begin production of my very own television show.

**What's your favorite school lunch?** Meatball Sub. It's always so delicious, the lunch ladies truly are incredible.

**What song will always remind you of high school?** "Did I Mention" from Descendants. I sang this during MV'S Got Talent one year. Hearing that song will now forever be associated with that night, and therefore will always remind me of high school.

**When you're not in school, what are you most likely doing?** On the weekends, and Fridays, I usually spend my time at my job at Casey's. However, this is only for 4 - 5 hours of the day. During the other time I will most likely be cuddling with my cats watching YouTube videos.

**What event from high school do you hope your classmates still talk about at your five-year class reunion?** While this did not happen to me, I hope the name "Carly Dicks" lives on far longer than just our five-year class reunion. That was the highlight of senior year marching band season. It's one of my favorite nicknames for my best friend now.

# Macee Nolan



**Activities involved in during high school:**

During high school I was involved in volleyball for 4 years, basketball for 4 years, track for 4 years, golf for 2 years, softball for 4 years,

FCCLA for 1 year, and TEL for 2 years.

**Which activity affected you the most? How?**

The activity that has affected me the most throughout high school was definitely basketball. It has taught me so many life lessons, as well as allowed me to create many new friendships. Basketball has made me into the person I am today, because of the people I was surrounded by for the past 4 years.

**What advice do you have for freshmen?**

Don't take high school very seriously, spend time with your friends while you can, have fun and be involved.

**Who is your most inspirational high school teacher? Why?** My most inspirational high school teacher would be Mrs. Downs. She is someone you can go to for everything, and gives some good advice when needed. She made this last year of high school a great experience. I am forever thankful for the opportunities Mrs. Downs gave me through her classes.

**What does your future like?** My future after high school is undecided, but I think that is exactly what I want. I will try new things and figure out what I want to do with my life. The best part of it all is that I won't be in debt like most of my other classmates :)

**When you're not in school, what are you most likely doing?** If I am not in school I am most likely hanging out with my friends, working, doing sports or taking a fat nap.