

Dear Alumni,

Greetings from your alma mater. Twenty sixteen is shaping up to be another stellar year in academics here in Gilbert. We recently received our ratings from the Department of Education in the state of Iowa, as did all schools in the state. The rating scale goes from priority, which is given to a school in need of assistance, to exceptional, which is only given to 3% of the high schools and 4% of the middle schools. Our high school and our middle school were both rated exceptional. Our other two buildings were unable to be rated: the intermediate because it is a newly formed building, and the elementary because they only test second graders. If you would like to read more about Gilbert (or any other school in the state) here is the link:

<http://reports.educateiowa.gov/schoolreportcard>.

We were also very excited to be featured in an article on the Iowa Department of Education website. Our work with MTSS, which is a program designed to fill in gaps for struggling students, in the elementary building was highlighted as a very effective tool to helping students become proficient in their schoolwork. If you would like to read this outstanding article, here is the link:

<http://tinyurl.com/zj3sras>

Along with the good news, we also have some sad news to relay. The Gilbert district lost two pillars of the community late this fall with the passing of Doug Williams and Lindsay Ellingson. Many of you will recall Mr. Williams as the longtime superintendent here in Gilbert. He was an active member of the community and did many things to set the district up to be prepared for the growth we have experienced in the last ten years. His son, Chris, was a graduate from here. Lindsay Ellingson was a member of the Board of Education for a number of years and worked closely with Mr. Williams to keep Gilbert a vital, growing district, unlike so many other small town Iowa schools. Mr. Ellingson was a larger than life character who helped me tremendously when I took over the superintendency here. I will miss his wise counsel and great sense of humor. His daughters, Jill and Kate, were also alumni and all five of his grandchildren attend school here. We owe these two men a great debt of gratitude and are so appreciative of all they did to help make Gilbert an exceptional place of learning.

Please feel free to stop and visit any time you are in the area. We are always happy to show off our facilities or come enjoy one of many extra curricular activities going on in the school. It would also give you a chance to visit with some of our former teachers who are still in the district. Wishing you a very happy 2016 and looking forward to sharing additional stories about your alma mater's successes in the future.