

Students Step into Action to Promote Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates Program

Written by Laurie Phelan

Tuesday, 11 October 2011 13:33

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At-risk students walk to highlight the importance of increasing Iowa's high school graduation rate

DES MOINES, Iowa – Oct. 10, 2011 – Dozens of at-risk students will lead their communities in the Walk Across Iowa event Tuesday, Oct. 11. The purpose of the walk is to increase awareness for Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates, a program that helps students graduate from high school.

iJAG helps students at the highest risk of dropping out to stay in school, graduate, and ultimately increase graduation rates in communities across the state. Since iJAG began in Iowa 12 years ago, the program has helped more than 7,000 students graduate, with an average 93% graduation rate, compared to Iowa's 89% statewide average. Approximately one-sixth of iJAG students are the first in their family to graduate.

"The iJAG program is an amazing resource for high school students in danger of dropping out of school," said Sue Cheek, iJAG board member and director of talent management for MidAmerican Energy Company. "MidAmerican Energy has been a sponsor of the program for several years. We value the continuous economic impact iJAG has on the state, not only today, but for years to come. The program truly changes lives."

The iJAG program partners with 13 Iowa communities to support 26 iJAG in-school programs.

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iJAG programs allow specialists to work with students during the school year and summer months on academics, career skills, leadership and career guidance. The program helps students to graduate and provides assistance one year after high school as they transition to college or enter the job market. More than 43% of iJAG graduates have continued on to college.

Concluding the Walk Across Iowa event, students and business leaders will join Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, iJAG Board Chair, at 3 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 11, on the west steps of the Iowa State Capitol. The students will present signatures collected from communities supporting iJAG to Gov. Terry Branstad and Lt. Gov. Reynolds. The Governor will sign a proclamation in support of the students' efforts and iJAG's mission. A Student Success Reception will follow at the State Historical Building, 600 E. Locust St., from 4 to 6 p.m.

More than 1,000 students are expected to take part in the iJAG walk. In each community, iJAG students tell their success stories to local business owners, legislators and community leaders along the walking route. To learn more about iJAG, visit www.ijag.org.

Schools with iJAG programs:

□

Cedar Rapids Jefferson

Cedar Rapids Washington

Council Bluffs Abraham Lincoln

Council Bluffs Thomas Jefferson

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Council Bluffs Wilson

Creston

Davenport Central

Davenport Kimberly Center

Davenport North

Davenport West

Des Moines East

Des Moines Hoover

Des Moines Lincoln

Des Moines North

Dubuque Hempstead

Dubuque Senior

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DMACC

East Moline United Township

Keokuk

Marshalltown

Ottumwa

Perry

Sioux City North High School

Sioux City North Middle School

Waterloo East