



Northwest Iowa
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NEWS RELEASE

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NCC—already at a high school near you

By Loretta Berkland

Longer ago than I care to admit, I attended Nazareth Academy, a private Catholic girls' high school in Philadelphia. We were an elite group of high-achieving students who had the then-unheard of opportunity to take college classes and earn college credit before graduating from the 12th grade. I was able to take college level chemistry, organic chemistry, calculus and English composition and literature and then transfer those credits to an Ivy League university. Because of this unusual opportunity, I was able to earn my undergraduate degree in three years, saving my parents a year's worth of college tuition—amazing “back then.”

Today I have three sons who have taken advantage of this same amazing opportunity — now an everyday occurrence — because of Northwest Iowa Community College and its valuable educational agreements with our local high schools. NCC has made college classes available as dual-enrolled classes in our high schools, where students receive transferrable college credit while satisfying class requirements in their own school.

As an everyday occurrence, my children have done (or are doing in the case of my high school senior) what I once experienced as “unheard of” — earning and transferring college credits before the end of high school. Through the educational foresight of NCC, our students are graduating high school with college credits in biology (thanks, Mr. Kuehl!), chemistry, psychology, sociology, English composition and literature, western civilization, engineering, carpentry, welding, and public speaking, just to name a few.

Whether our students choose to further their education at NCC or at a four-year college, they have been graduating from our area high schools with 20-plus credits. That's close to a year's worth of college education gained with little to no cost to the student, thanks to NCC and our local school districts.

Northwest Iowa Community College continues to be an amazing resource for the students and families in its district. Reaching out to our K-12 schools to give our students a leg up on their college or technical education is only one of the directed missions of NCC. But it

may be the first experience any of our students encounter. What a phenomenal way to open the door to a college education—now appearing at a high school near you!

Dr. Loretta Berkland is a member of the Board of Trustees of Northwest Iowa Community College and is a practicing mixed-animal veterinarian from Sibley, IA.