

MY FAVORITE RECIPE

McCollums ready for Hawkeye basketball season

BY MARY CULLEN

Coach Ben and Michelle McCollum and their family are looking forward to the upcoming University of Iowa basketball season. This will be Ben's first season coaching the Hawkeyes.

"We are very excited for this new opportunity," Michelle commented. "I can't say enough about how humbling it is when the people from our roots have shown us all their love. It means a lot. People have been very welcoming. GO Hawks!"

Here is their family: Peyton, 18, will play basketball at the University of Iowa where he will be a freshman, Tate, 16, will be a junior at Solon High School and Grace, who turns 12 in September, will be in sixth grade at Regina.

"It was a pretty good recruiting experience for me with Peyton," Michelle laughed.

She also mentioned that Ben went to Regina in his early school years until they moved to Storm Lake.

"So it's kind of a full circle moment," she noted.

When they lived in Maryville, Mo., Grace went to St. Gregory's Catholic School.

"We like the small town feel like Storm Lake and Albert City," Michelle remarked.

Ben's parents are Mary Timko of Storm Lake; his stepfather was the late Roger Timko. His father is John McCollum of Phoenix. Michelle's parents are the late Nick and Anita Ackerman of Albert City.

Michelle, a University of Northern Iowa graduate, spent 19 years in education. She taught first grade, was a special education teacher director and early childhood director in Maryville.

"Ben and I first met when St. Mary's was playing Albert City - Truesdale in basketball," Michelle explained. "Ben had a really good night. I was walking to my car and he was walking to the bus. I saw him and said, 'I think you

outscored our whole team.

"Later the Albert City and St. Mary's kids all got together and met as a group. Ben was there doing a card trick. We started dating between our sophomore and junior years of college. Then he went to NWMSU and I went back to UNI. (Distance does indeed make the heart grow fonder.) And the rest is history."

The McCollums were married 20 years ago in Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Albert City.

"My parents and grandparents were married there so I wanted to be married there, too," Michelle mentioned. "Father Matt was also there. At the reception, he did a card trick because Ben does card tricks."

The McCollums have had a busy summer. With Tate and Grace playing AAU hoops for Kingdom Hoops this summer, the family just recently got together again.

"We're just now starting to catch our breath, with trips all over," Michelle explained. "Grace played most of her tournaments in Des Moines and Kansas City. Tate was in Omaha, Kansas City, Indianapolis, Des Moines, Memphis and ended with 11 days in Augusta.

"The challenge was definitely when they both played on the same weekends and also almost missing Peyton's graduation because of a flight delay, but it all worked out somehow!" :)

In her free time, Michelle loves to exercise.

"I love walking my dogs," she commented. "Today Ben and I went for a morning walk with our dogs Curry and Sully on the trails."

She also loves to volunteer.

"I quit working after the 2021-2022 school year. After my dad passed away, the importance of time with who matters most became my priority. Then I volunteered at St. Gregory's and anywhere else that needed me in Maryville before we moved to Des Moines.

I wanted more time to be the best wife and mom I could be," she mentioned.

Michelle and I talked about all the school ties that the fans wear at the basketball games.

"When we were in Maryville all those years, the green ties never caught on," she explained. "Then when we went to Drake, everyone was wearing the white shirts with blue ties. When Ben signed on at Iowa, at the press conference, they had the black and yellow ties. I saved his ties from the games."

Michelle said that when she was thinking about their favorite recipes to share with our readers, it made her reminisce about growing up on the farm and the wonderful garden and farm fresh foods she took for granted

"Our neighbors, Karl and Masel Sweet, had the best gardens and were always very generous to share their harvest with us," she mentioned. "Ben and I love going to the Farmer's Market and finding locally grown farm fresh produce. We went today and came home with cantaloupe, corn, tomatoes, potatoes and green beans. There is probably nothing better than a grilled steak and all garden fresh sides. (And although that doesn't necessarily count as an official "recipe", it is definitely on our top ten list!)"

"I also grew up always sitting down together to eat meals as a family, which continues to be a priority for our family," she added. "We have a pretty crazy schedule and it doesn't always happen, but we try to make meals and sit together at the table to eat them. My mom was a really good cook and I miss being able to call her to ask how to make certain things.

"I am very thankful for all she taught me...especially in the kitchen. We love her Saucy Little Meatballs" and "Fried potatoes" and make this meal frequently."

These are the McCollums' favorite recipes:



Ben and Michelle McCollum with kids Peyton, Grace and Tate.

Meatballs

1 1/2 lb. ground beef
3/4 c. oatmeal
3/4 c. milk
1 egg
1/2 tbsp. onion flakes
Salt and pepper
Sauce
1 c. ketchup
3 tbsp. brown sugar
3 tbsp. mustard

Mix all of the ingredients together and shape into balls. Brown both sides of the meatballs and then put in a 9x13 inch baking dish. Mix sauce ingredients together and spread over meatballs. Bake for 45 minutes at 350 degrees. We usually pair these with fried potatoes.

Fried Potatoes

3/4 to 1 lb. of potatoes
1 onion
1 stick of butter
Lawry's seasoning

Slice and boil the potatoes

until they are fork tender. While they are boiling, thinly slice the onion and saute it in the 1/2 of the butter until the onion is almost translucent. Once potatoes are cooked, drain thoroughly. Add/melt the remainder of the butter and put potatoes in with onion/butter. Season with Lawry's and fry on both sides until they are brown and crispy. (Don't over flip/stir).

Breakfast pizza

This is one of our family's favorite weekend breakfasts that is also great to make ahead and eat for breakfast throughout the week. Pack of 2 Mama Mia Pizza crusts
1 jar of Ragu cheese sauce
1 bag of hashbrowns from refrigerator section
2 lb. of bacon
8 eggs
Shredded colby jack cheese

Spread cheese sauce on each crust. (I typically don't use the entire jar)
Cook hashbrowns until golden brown
Cook and crumble bacon
Scramble the eggs
Layer each crust with sauce, hashbrowns, half the bacon, and half the scrambled eggs. Top with shredded cheese and bake for 10 minutes at 425.

MacMosas

We drink these on game days. This fun drink started as brunch mimosas with my mother-in-law and sister-in-laws before a Bearcat basketball Elite 8 game in Evansville and became my favorite signature drink. Superstitious... maybe? LOL. But now something all of our family and friends have probably shared with me on game day!
Prosecco or champagne
Splash of orange juice

EDUCATION

UPDATES

‘Small Change’ dives into Iowa Core

21st Century Skills finance topics

BY CAROL EHLERS
Health and Human Sciences Educator

Iowa educators wanting to do a deep dive into finance topics but need flexibility have until October 21 to register for "Small Change: Building Financial Security for Educators."

This Iowa State University Extension and Outreach blended course starts Tuesday, October 28, 2025, with an introductory session from 4:30-6:30 p.m., followed by a four-week, self-paced, facilitator-led online learning experience that ends, November 25, 2025.

The self-paced Certification Course provides both teacher license renewal credit or audit options so you can participate at your own pace.

The course content is embedded in the financial literacy standards connecting participants with curricula, resources and school-based programs for elementary, middle and high school levels.

Educators can earn one Iowa License renewal credit. Registration is required by

Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 5:00 PM at ISEA web link: <https://cvent.me/YRw3E0>.

When the participant cap is filled, registration will no longer be available.

Course features

The "Small Change: Building Financial Security" course features vetted curriculum and resources. It has been accepted as an Iowa Board of Educational Examiners Endorsement Class for Financial Literacy and Business Teachers.

Participants explore gamified lessons that are timely and relevant to themselves personally and to their classroom.

Designed to help K-12 educators make more informed decisions about financial management and build greater confidence, the course topics include:

- Finance Fundamentals—getting organized, smart borrowing, estate planning.
- Insurance—life, health, disability, long-term care, auto, home, liability coverage.
- Investing—risk tolerance, investment choices, funding long-term goals.

- Retirement—preparing for retirement, building a nest egg, Social Security, IPERS.

Course requirements

The course format requires participants to:

- Participate in a live, virtual two-hour introductory workshop on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, from 4:30-6:30 p.m.
- Complete at least four of 12 gamified online lessons covering financial topics over the next four weeks.
- Complete assignments to promote financial literacy and connect with resources.

Course fees and registration information

The course fee is \$30 to Iowa State Education Association members and non-members. Those who do not need license renewal credit may register and audit the course for a \$15 fee.

Register online by October 21, 2025 at <https://cvent.me/YRw3E0>. Space is limited to 25 participants.

For more information, call 712-732-5056 or xehlers@iastate.edu or visit iastate.edu/humansciences/small-change.

Back to school virtual style

Iowa students statewide head back to school following high marks in the annual Parent Satisfaction Survey

ANITA, IA - Recently, Iowa Connections Academy, a tuition-free online public school serving students in grades K-12, welcomed new and returning faces across the state back to the virtual classroom, marking the start of the 2025-26 school year.

Serving approximately 1,500 students and families across the state, Iowa Connections Academy provides a high-quality educational experience that keeps students motivated and engaged with a strong circle of support and a deep sense of belonging.

The school's team of supportive and experienced educators, specially trained in online instruction, establish meaningful connections with students helping them achieve their full potential and reach their goals.

Parents and caregivers are involved in the learning journey as their child's Learning Coach, serving as their mentor and guide through the school day.

Middle and high school students enrolled in Iowa Connections Academy receive access to the school's College and Career Readiness program and Industry Recognized Certification (IRC) courses.

These courses are designed to prepare students for careers they're passionate about, offering practical skills and credentials highly sought after by employers.

Students can participate in career exploration and industry networking opportunities to build confidence, make connections, and find direction to prepare for their future.

Complementing these offerings is a partnership with Iowa Western Community College (IWCC), enabling students to engage in college-

level coursework, earn valuable college credits while still in high school, and prepare them for a future full of opportunities.

"We're proud to continue offering Iowa families high-quality educational opportunities and are overjoyed to welcome both new and returning students for another successful year," said Larry Hunt, school leader of Iowa Connections Academy. "With the support of our highly skilled teachers and dedicated Learning Coaches, students can look forward to another year of meaningful growth. I'm especially excited to see how they continue to engage with our college and career coursework and new Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) chapter."

Students are returning to school shortly after the release of the 2025 Parent Satisfaction Survey, an annual third-party survey that provides families with the opportunity to review their experience with Iowa Connections Academy.

According to the 2025 Parent Satisfaction Survey results:

- 96% of parents agree that the Iowa Connections Academy program gives them greater opportunity to be more involved with their child's education
- 95% of parents agree the Iowa Connections Academy curriculum is high quality
- 95% of parents say their child is satisfied learning at Iowa Connections Academy
- 95% of parents believe their child is receiving a quality education with Iowa Connections Academy

94% of parents agree that Iowa Connections Academy prepares their child for college or career success

Students enrolled in Iowa Connections Academy have access to advanced courses, extracurricular activities and flexible scheduling that helps them to take ownership of their own unique educational journey.

Enrollment for the 2025-26 school year is still open for families interested in learning more about the school's flexible virtual learning approach. Families are encouraged to attend an online information session to learn more, ask questions and discover if Iowa Connections Academy is the right fit for their student. For more information about Iowa Connections Academy or to begin the enrollment process, please visit, www.IowaConnectionsAcademy.com or call 1-833-591-0251.

About Iowa Connections Academy

Iowa Connections Academy is a unique, tuition-free, online public school for K-12 students. First opened in 2012 and operating in partnership with CAM Community School District, we create a high-quality educational experience that keeps students motivated and engaged in a safe, virtual learning environment. In addition to academics, teachers focus on building fundamental life skills, working closely with families to help students learn how they learn best. Here, students gain the skills and confidence they need to direct their own educational journey, learning to thrive in the real world by first learning how to be resourceful and resilient. For more information, call 1-833-591-0251 or visit www.IowaConnectionsAcademy.com.

Survey Methodology

Connections Academy conducts the annual Parent Satisfaction Survey to find out how parents, guardians and Learning Coaches grade the program in several key areas. The 2024-2025 School Year survey was conducted from January 15 to February 26, 2025 by Shapiro + Raj, an independent market research company that created the questionnaire, collected the data and tabulated the results. Parents and caretakers of all students enrolled at the time of the survey were invited to complete the survey online.

LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

Iowa Code 273.8 – Area Education Agency Board of Directors

Notice is hereby given that Northwest AEA will be accepting Statement of Candidacy submissions for the election of five AEA board members. The director district board positions open for election are:

District 1 - 4-Year Term

Boyden-Hull, Central Lyon, George-Little Rock, Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn, Rock Valley, Sheldon, Sibley-Ocheyedan, Sioux Center, West Lyon.

District 2 - 2-Year Term

Akron-Westfield, Cherokee, Le Mars, Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn, MOC-Floyd Valley, Remsen-Union, South O'Brien, West Sioux.

District 3 - 2-Year Term

Ar-We-Va, Charter Oak-Ute, Denison, Galva-Holstein, Hinton, Kingsley-Pierson, Maple Valley-Anthon Oto, OABCIG, River Valley, Schleswig, West Monona, Westwood, Whiting, Woodbury Central.

District 4 - 4-Year Term

Lawton-Bronson, Sergeant Bluff-Luton, Sioux City (split), 15 SC, 16 SC, 17 Lawton/Banner-Concord, 20 SC, 21 SC, 22 SC, 23 SC, 24 SC, 25 SC, 26 SC, 27 SC, 28 SC, 29 SC, 32 Woodbury Township.

District 5 - 2-Year Term

Sioux City (Split) 01 SC, 02 SC, 03 SC, 04 SC, 05 SC, 06 SC, 07 SC, 08 SC, 09 SC, 10 SC, 11 SC, 12 SC, 13 SC, 14 SC, 18, SC, 19 SC, Plymouth County

"While the full-term length for all seats is four years, due to redistricting they will have designated term ends dates of 2027 or 2029 for each of the five seats.

The board of directors of an Area Education Agency shall be elected by a vote of the members of the boards of directors of the local school districts located within the director district. The member of the Area Education Agency board to be elected may be a member of a local school district board of directors and shall be an elector and a resident of the director district, but shall

not be a school district employee. A member of an area education agency board shall not serve on the board of directors of a merged area.

A candidate for election to the area education agency board shall file a statement of candidacy with the Northwest AEA board secretary no later than October 15, 2025. The statement of candidacy form is available at the school board offices in the corresponding Director District and the administrative office of the Northwest AEA, 5800 Discovery Blvd., Sioux City, Iowa, 51111.

Board members shall serve on the Northwest AEA Board of Directors beginning the first regular meeting of December 2025.

Anyone desiring further information on the election may call or write to Sherri Wing, Northwest AEA Board Secretary, 712-222-6002, or email at swing@nwaea.org.

Sherri Wing, Board Secretary Northwest AEA (CT0905/L#78)