

Indian River School District

“A Model of Excellence”

irsd.net

Fall Newsletter 2019

IRSD Upgrading School Security

Grant funding to assist with new safety measures

The Indian River School District is utilizing grant funding from the State of Delaware to upgrade school security measures during the next three years.

In 2019-2020, the district will be installing new entrance cameras, improved door locks and communication boosters for enhanced cell phone coverage in its schools. It has also purchased new radios that allow certain staff members to implement lockdown procedures with the push of a button.

The district will also be utilizing the RAVE Panic Button app, which allows employees to rapidly notify emergency services in the event of an active shooter, fire or medical emergency, or incident requiring a police response.

During the next year, IRSD will be working with Special Agent Michael Alimenti of the U.S. Bureau of Diplomatic Security to enhance security in schools and redesign building entrances to



State grant funding will allow the district to purchase new entrance cameras and enhanced radios for staff (below).



improve safety. Mr. Alimenti has prior experience implementing security procedures for U.S. embassies abroad.

State opportunity grants will provide the district with approximately \$400,000 per year to fund these initiatives.

In addition, the district is in its sixth year of employing armed safety monitors at each of its schools. The program has expanded in 2019-2020 to

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The new Howard T. Ennis School will be built on Patriots Way across from Sussex Central High School.

Plans for New Ennis School Progressing

After being delayed for a year due to state budget concerns, the Indian River School District has received the necessary additional funding to build a new Howard T. Ennis School near Millsboro.

The school will be located on a parcel of property on Patriots Way across from Sussex Central High School. Ownership of the property was transferred from the State of Delaware to the Indian River School District in May.

The state approved the district's Certificate of Necessity request for the new school two years ago but additional funding was needed to combat rising costs related to site elevation concerns and the cost of construction materials. The new Ennis School will be fully funded by the state and a property tax increase will not

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From the Superintendent

Mark L. Steele



Dear Parents,

I recently had the opportunity to compile a comprehensive list of the district's accomplishments from the past couple of years and I must admit I was nearly overwhelmed at how our students and staff have excelled on the local, state and national levels. The numerous academic, athletic and professional accolades we've earned in recent years give new meaning to the motto "A Model of Excellence." Parents should feel fortunate to send their children to schools that set such high standards for student performance. The full list of accomplishments has been posted online at irsd.net. I hope you'll take the time to check it out.

This fall, the State of Delaware granted our Certificate of Necessity request for the construction of a new Sussex Central High School. This means the district will be hosting a referendum in February to raise funding for the local portion of the project. The new building is desperately needed to relieve serious overcrowding in our schools and I encourage you to stay informed on this issue as we move through the fall and winter.

Thank you for supporting our schools and I hope you have a rewarding school year!

Sincerely,

Mark L. Steele
Superintendent

Sen. Pettyjohn Donates New LED Sign to SCHS

The grounds of Sussex Central High School are a bit more colorful this school year thanks to a new LED sign donated by State Sen. Brian Pettyjohn.

The new sign contains a video screen that rotates a series of informational messages to the Sussex Central community. It also touts Sussex Central's status as an International Baccalaureate World School.

"Sussex Central is extremely thankful for Senator Brian Pettyjohn's generosity, along with several other Sussex County legislators who represent our attendance zone, for procuring the Community Transportation Funds to erect this sign," SCHS Principal Bradley Layfield said. "It is representative of our



State Sen. Brian Pettyjohn (right) and Principal Bradley Layfield show off the new LED sign at Sussex Central High School.

school's motto, 'Success with Class.' This new addition will help us better promote and communicate all the great accomplishments and current events involving our fantastic students."

Shultie Inducted Into HOF

Former Sussex Central High School wrestling coach Phil Shultie was inducted into the Delaware Wrestling Hall of Fame in September.

Shultie guided the Sussex Central program for 41 years before retiring

in 2017. He is Delaware's all-time winningest coach with 434 dual meet victories.



He also led the Golden Knights to dual meet state championships in 2008 and 2017.

Shultie's wrestlers won 38 individual state titles, with seven winning multiple championships.

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Mark L. Steele,
Board Secretary and District Superintendent

School Security Upgrades

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include two safety monitors at each high school. All safety monitors have previous law enforcement experience and are licensed as constables by the State of Delaware. There are also five school resource officers stationed at schools throughout the district.

"The Indian River School District has been at the forefront of school security in the State of Delaware for the past five years," Assistant Superintendent Jay Owens said. "No mission is more important than ensuring the safety of our students while they are on school grounds. The new security initiatives funded through the opportunity grant, coupled with the presence of armed constables in our buildings, have made our schools some of the safest in the country. However, we are continually evaluating

our security measures and making improvements where necessary. We are committed to our ongoing efforts to provide the safest possible learning environment for our students and staff."



All school entrances are now equipped with intercoms, cameras and enhanced locks.

The Indian River School District is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate or deny services on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, creed, religion, veteran status, sexual orientation, marital status, citizenship status, pregnancy, age, ancestry, disability, gender identity, genetic information, military status or any other characteristic protected by law.

Jennah Truitt Wins Presidential Award

LB teacher honored for math and science teaching excellence

Jennah Truitt of Lord Baltimore Elementary School is a 2018 recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST).

This is the highest award given by the U.S. Government to kindergarten through 12th grade teachers of mathematics and science. Winners are selected based on their distinction in the classroom and dedication to improving science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education.

Truitt, a kindergarten teacher, was one of four PAEMST winners from Delaware and 215 nationwide. The winners were announced on October 15.

"To receive the Presidential Award is an incredible and humbling honor," Truitt said. "Igniting a passion and love for learning in each student's heart as they uniquely bloom is gratifying. This award validates dedication to providing students with tools to persevere

and kindle a deeper level of learning to unlock endless possibilities. It inspires me to continue providing rigorous instruction and collaborating with a village of support so students can succeed beyond our expectations."

PAEMST awardees came from schools in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity schools and schools in the United States territories of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. A panel of distinguished mathematicians, scientists and educators at the state and national levels assessed the applications before recommending nominees to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Truitt is Lord Baltimore's lead science teacher and a

member of the writing committee that introduced a schoolwide cross-curricular writing initiative. She also led the STEM activity for the school's Title I Family Night in which families were engaged in hands-on lessons, taught about

the importance of STEM integration and given the tools to implement activities at home.

Truitt is a member of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the National Association of Young Children.

"We are so proud of Jennah being awarded this prestigious honor of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching," said Lord Baltimore Principal Pam Webb. "Miss Truitt is an exemplary educator that sets high expectations and settles for no less than each student's best. She encourages her young learners to collaborate with one another to discover various ways to solve problems

which empowers them to generate ideas and solutions not typical for kindergarten students. Miss Truitt plans real world experiences that promote high student engagement and allow them to 'drive their learning,' which results in both social and academic growth. Being in her classroom puts a smile on your face because you observe students of all levels striving to be the best thinkers and problem solvers that they can be."

Truitt is the sixth IRSD teacher to win the PAEMST award. The others were Jan Parsons (1994), Barkley Melber (2003), Mary Jane Short (2004), Jeanine Moore (2012) and Christa Ferdig (2016). Truitt was also Lord Baltimore's Teacher of the Year for 2018-2019.

Truitt traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities from October 16-18. As a PAEMST winner, she also receives a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation and a certificate signed by the President of the United States.



Jennah Truitt

Piano Donated to JMC

John M. Clayton Elementary School received a special gift on October 3 with the donation of a Baby Grand piano for its music room.

The piano was donated by Vincent Pavone of Allentown, Pa., who is a former resident of the area. Delivery and set up of the piano were coordinated by Creative Concepts Furniture of Ocean View and Lewes.

Creative Concepts owners Steve and Gail Lednum have two grandchildren who attend JMC. They attended a musical performance at the school last year and were impressed with the enthusiasm of music teacher Michael Williams and his talented group of student



A moving crew delivers the piano to the school.

performers. When Mr. Pavone decided to donate his piano when he was moving from the area, the Lednums suggested he give it to JMC.

A crew from Creative Concepts delivered the piano to the school and set it up in the music room, where it will be used by Mr. Williams for individual and group music instruction.



JMC music teacher Mike Williams plays the donated piano.

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Ashley Makes Donation to E. Millsboro

Ashley Homestore recently made a \$1,000 donation to East Millsboro Elementary School. Principal Karen Clausen and IRSD Superintendent Mark Steele were presented with the check during the grand opening celebration for the new Ashley Homestore in Millsboro on October 23. The funds will be used for instructional supplies at the school.

The Indian River School District offers its deepest appreciation to Ashley Homestore and the Barnes family for their generosity.



Mark Steele and Karen Clausen at the Ashley grand opening celebration.

Ennis Plans Progressing

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be needed to fund a local share of the project.

The Indian River Board of Education approved the design plans for the new school in October. Those plans were presented to the public prior to the vote and final approval will come once bid documents are presented. The design plans are now subject to state agency review. Once all necessary approvals have been received, the district is expected to solicit construction bids in the spring of 2020. Groundbreaking for the new school would follow in the spring or early-summer of 2020.

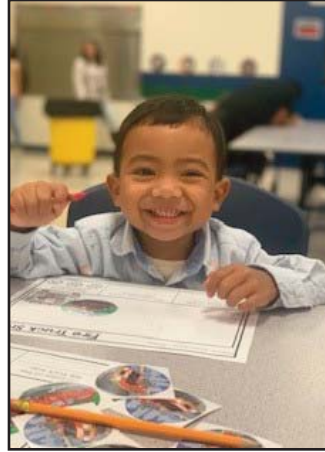
Construction is expected to take two years with the new school opening in the summer of 2022.

Family Night at ELC

On October 10, the IRSD Early Learning Center hosted its first family night of the year.

Representatives from the Delaware Fire School were on hand to provide families with insight on fire safety. They also provided information on how to make their homes "kid proof," as well as procedures to put in place in the event of a fire.

There were also stations where students made their own fire truck from construction paper. They also made cookie/marshmallow fire hydrants and graham



cracker/licorice fire engines. Each student received a free book and a fire prevention coloring book and sticker.

Educators Rising Steps Up to Help SC Staff Members



The Sussex Central High School Educators Rising group hosted a babysitting event for staff members' children during parent conferences on October 22. There were pumpkin- and coco-themed crafts, scavenger hunts, pizza, story-time, treats and even a movie. The mini-Knights were well behaved and had a blast with the future teachers who were grateful for the experience of planning and implementing their activities!



Podcast Drops New Episodes

A new season of the IRSD Spotlight podcast is in full swing.

Produced by the Indian River School District, the podcast provides useful information about the programs, events and accomplishments happening throughout the district. It also highlights important topics impacting education in our community.

Recent episodes have focused on Unified Sports at Indian River High School (Episode 51) and featured a retrospective on school consolidation and the formation of the Indian River School District in 1968-1969 (Episode 50).

In addition, the Back to School episode (No. 49) posted in August contained a "Why Did You Become a Teacher" segment featuring teachers Dara Callaway, Christa Ferdig and Michael Williams.

To access these and all other IRSD Spotlight episodes, visit irsd.net and go to the Podcast link under the Discover IRSD tab. This page also contains photos and bonus content related to the episodes. The podcast is also available through iTunes or through several mobile podcast apps by searching "IRSD."

