

What's Inside



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SMS Facts

One of only two Title I public middle schools in the U.S. to be awarded the Blue Ribbon for Exemplary High Performance.

The first Title I public middle school in Delaware to be named a Blue Ribbon School for Exemplary High Performance.

One of 22 middle schools recognized out of 349 National Blue Ribbon Schools in 2018.

More than 130,000 schools are eligible to earn a National Blue Ribbon.



Indian River District News

"A Model of Excellence"

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Fall 2018

SMS Recognized as Blue Ribbon School

First secondary school in IRSD to be honored

Selbyville Middle School was one of three schools in Delaware and 349 nationwide to be named a National Blue Ribbon School for 2018.

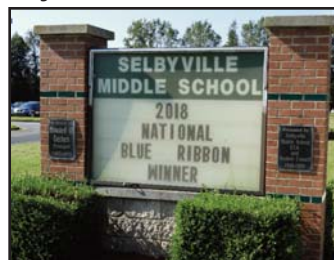
SMS is the first secondary school in the Indian River School District to receive this honor. Overall, it is the district's 10th National Blue Ribbon Award since 2001.

"To be named a National Blue Ribbon School is a tremendous accomplishment made even more special by Selbyville Middle's designation as the first secondary school in our district to receive this honor," IRSD Superintendent Mark Steele said. "The hard work and dedication required of students and staff to receive Blue Ribbon recognition is simply remarkable. My heartfelt congratulations go out to the entire SMS community for making the Indian River School District and the State of Delaware proud."

The National Blue Ribbon Schools program honors public and private elementary, middle



From left, Selbyville Middle School Principal Jason Macrides, Austin Grise, Travontay Bagwell, Sarela Canseco, Grace Bowman, Aniyah Blake, Jack Jestic and SMS Assistant Principal Jeff Forjan.



and high schools where students achieve high learning standards or are making notable improvements in closing the achievement gap. This coveted award affirms the hard

work of educators, families and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging and engaging content.

National Blue Ribbon Schools are honored in one of two performance categories based on overall student scores, subgroup student scores and graduation rates:

- **Exemplary High Performing Schools** are among their state's highest

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From the Superintendent

Mark L. Steele



Dear Parents,

It's hard to describe the pride I felt in October when I learned that Selbyville Middle School had been named a National Blue Ribbon School. This is the 10th time an IRSD school has received Blue Ribbon recognition, but SMS is the first secondary school to be honored. I am extremely proud of all SMS students for their hard work in being recognized as an Exemplary High Performing School. I also want to commend Principal Jason Macrides and his entire staff for setting high academic standards and challenging students to reach their full potential. Congratulations on this prestigious honor!

Last summer, the district submitted Certificate of Necessity (CN) requests to the State of Delaware for a variety of major capital improvement projects, including the construction of a new Sussex Central High School. A decision on our CN applications will be made this fall and will likely be followed by a major capital improvement referendum in 2019. We encourage parents and community members to stay informed on this issue in the coming months.

As always, I am honored to serve as your superintendent. I hope you all have a great school year!

Sincerely,

Mark L. Steele
Superintendent

"Mystery" Production for Take II

Sussex Central High School and the Take II Drama Club this fall have the exciting opportunity to be the first high school theatre program in Delaware to present a groundbreaking international hit show by special arrangement with the licensing agency holding the rights to the play.

"The show is so hot that it's still in circulation with professional national and international touring companies," said Take II advisor and SCHS drama teacher David Warick. "As part of our agreement letting us do the show, Take II is contractually not allowed to mention the play by name in the press."

Working with these extraordinary stipulations has been a challenge for the club, but Warick has a solution.

"We will refer to it in the press as our Fall Mystery Play,"



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Mark L. Steele,
Board Secretary and District Superintendent

LB Teacher Named Finalist for PAEMST

Jennah Truitt of Lord Baltimore Elementary School is one of five Delaware teachers that have been named finalists for the 2018 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, which is the highest recognition that K-12 math and science teachers can receive in the United States.



PAEMST finalists earn a chance to be named a 2018 math or science awardee by the U.S. Department of Education.

Awarded each year by the White House, PAEMST is given to mathematics and sci-

ence teachers from each of the 50 states and four U.S. jurisdictions. In addition to honoring individual achievement, the goal of the PAEMST

award program is to exemplify the highest standards of mathematics and science teaching. Awardees serve as models for their colleagues, inspiration to their communities and leaders in the improvement of mathematics and science education.

Truitt is also Lord Baltimore Elementary School's Teacher of the Year for 2018-2019 and a district Special Education Ambassador.

he said. "I invite people to ask me about it at david.warick@irsd.k12.de.us. That way, people interested in finding out what this amazing show is called can learn about it in detail in person from me."

Details about the play, including the name, were revealed in a special district-sponsored podcast in September. To listen to this episode, visit irsd.net and go to the Podcast link under the Discover IRSD tab. From there, access "Episode 40: Take II Drama Club Season Preview."

The "mystery" play will be presented at the Centre for Visual and Performing Arts at SCHS on Friday, December 7 at 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, December 8 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Ticket prices are \$10 for general admission; \$7 for seniors, students and military; and \$7 at a special two-for-one rate for all middle school students. No one will be turned away for inability to pay, but all donations and proceeds support future Take II/SCHS drama productions.

Ables Nominated to All-Star Band

Sussex Central High School student Zachary Ables has been nominated to the All-Eastern Band on French Horn. The band is comprised of top students from 11 Northeastern states of the United States – Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hamp-



shire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and the District of Columbia – and the Department of Defense School in Europe. Zachary will now complete the audition process with the hope of earning a place in the band for its performance in Pittsburgh, Pa. in April.



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Food Pantry Opens at NGE

A new emergency food pantry and clothing locker was established this fall at North Georgetown Elementary School through the generosity of the Food Bank of Delaware, The Harry K Foundation and the Georgetown-Millsboro Rotary Club.

The food pantry and clothing locker officially opened on Sept. 21.

Indian River School District families can visit the pantry once a month by appointment. The pantry is open on Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. when school is in session. Visitors must register in the main office. The pantry is closed on holidays and teacher inservice days.

IRSD families can visit the pantry once a month to receive 30 pounds of food and five pounds of household products. Families can call (302) 855-2430 to schedule an appointment.

School counselor Meghan Blades has been instrumental in setting up and maintaining the food pantry and clothing



locker.

The Food Bank of Delaware will refill the pantry on a monthly basis with food

items funded by the Harry K Foundation. The Rotary Club has provided clothing and food racks along with new winter coats from its Operation Warm program. The Rotary Club will also be providing food items for the pantry.

Anyone interested in donating food or clothing to the pantry should contact Rotary Club President Ray Bryant at (607) 215-1427 or Raybrook-loj@hotmail.com.

How Do You Restore a Phone Number to BlackBoard?

The Indian River School District has recently been contacted by several parents who have accidentally opted out of our automated phone notification system. If you have opted out by mistake and want your phone number restored to the system, please call **1-855-502-7867**. This automated hotline can return your contact information to the Blackboard Connect system.

Additionally, Blackboard offers a message replay service. Simply call **1-855-473-7529** to hear replays of any recent messages that were sent to your phone number.

Parents who change their phone number during the school year are encouraged to provide the updated contact information to their child's school so they can continue receiving automated messages from the school and district.

District Launches New Web Menu App

The Indian River School District is pleased to announce a new mobile menu app that allows parents to view breakfast and lunch menus and nutritional information from their smart phones.

The new Web Menus mobile app features:

- Interactive nutritional menus – daily menus, menu item nutrient information, menu item descriptions, menu item photos, menu item allergens
- PDF documents
- Link to Online Payment Provider
- Link to IRSD Nutrition Services website
- Info section "All About

School Lunch"

The mobile app is a part of the district's efforts to continually improve the quality of the menus offered to students and to raise the bar on the standards of school meals. The focus is on enhancing the diet of students with more nutritious choices at school and providing nutrition education that will help students form healthy habits that last a lifetime.

"We are excited to offer this new mobile app service to our students, parents and

staff," said Clifton Toomey, IRSD Supervisor of Nutrition Services. "This project is a part of our continuing efforts to promote healthy lifestyles and provide important nutritional information about the food served in our school cafeterias. I encourage parents to download the Web Menus app to their smart phones and begin taking advantage of this valuable resource."

Key nutritional improvements made in recent years include offering a variety of

more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free and low-fat milk. Schools are also reducing sodium and saturated fat levels and have eliminated added trans fat. The district strives to meet the nutrition needs of students within their age-specific calorie requirements.

The free Web Menus app is available through the App Store and Google Play. The app is powered by the School Nutrition Network.

The Indian River School District Nutrition Services Department has also launched a new website, which can be accessed at irsd.net by clicking on the blue Lunch Menu button on the homepage.



Visit the Indian River School District on Facebook and on the web at irsd.net

PCS Kicks Off *One School, One Book*

Phillip C. Showell Elementary School kicked off its first-ever *One School, One Book* program this fall.

During the first half of the school year, students in all grades will read "The World According to Humphrey" by Betty G. Birney. It is the story of Humphrey, a classroom hamster who narrates his adventures with students and the teacher.



The book reveal was held on Oct. 10 during a special Title I Family Night that attracted more than 280 parents and students for a special dinner, book fair and reading and math activities.

The goal of *One School, One Book* is to not only improve literacy, but to build a culture of community at the school. Every Friday, the entire



school will engage in learning activities centered on the novel. Several guest readers from the community will also read passages from the book.

"The World According to Humphrey" is one of two books that will be read as part of *One School, One Book*. The novel for the second half of the school year will be revealed in January.



SMS Wins Blue Ribbon School Award

From Page 1

performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests.

• **Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools** are among their state's highest performing schools in closing achievement gaps between a school's subgroups and all students over the past five years.

Selbyville Middle School was a winner in the Exemplary High Performing Schools category.

"Recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School would not be possible without highly-talented teachers and support staff, hardworking and dedicated students, supportive and engaged parents and community, and strong district support," SMS Principal Jason Macrides said. "Recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School for Exemplary High Performance is an honor and testament to the amazing community we serve."

Now in its 36th year, the National Blue Ribbon Schools



From left, SMS students Paige Psaroudakis, Daisey Dominguez, Anahi Parada and Selina Andrade collaborate during social studies class.

program has bestowed recognition on more than 8,800 schools. U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and the Department of Education will honor Selbyville Middle School and all of the other national winners at a special awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. on Nov. 7-8.

The district's other Blue

Ribbon Award winners are Lord Baltimore Elementary School (2001), Phillip C. Showell Elementary School (2003), John M. Clayton/Frankford Elementary School (2004, 2014), Long Neck Elementary School (2005, 2011), North Georgetown Elementary School (2006) and East Millsboro Elementary School (2008, 2017).

Program to Emphasize Safety and Security

The SafeAbility Series is a new component to IRSD's school safety initiatives that addresses one of its most critical populations – students with disabilities at the Howard T. Ennis School in Georgetown.

As a partnership with the Georgetown Police Department, the SafeAbility Series will provide important information so that learners at a variety of developmental levels can become confident and empowered to maintain their safety and security in a dynamic and ever-changing world. Pairing highly-trained educators with law enforcement will provide the most comprehensive method of instruction for Howard T. Ennis students.

The SafeAbility Series focuses on three primary areas:

School Safety – Students learn ways to stay safe in the event of various emergencies that may occur in the school building. In addition, students will learn fire safety tips, intruder preparation guidelines and steps to take when encountering someone unfamiliar within the school building.

Social Safety – Students learn ways to protect their safety online. Topics will include social media awareness, prevention of cybercrimes and cyberbullying, and general web/media safety.

Life Safety – Students learn ways to stay safe in their physical environment. Topics will include financial safety tips, how to store personal information, safety awareness in public places and ideas on how to enhance their comfort in various social environments.

The SafeAbility Series will kick off during IRSD's Special Education Week (Oct. 22-26).