

What's Inside



North Georgetown teacher recognized at Gov. Carney's address, Page 4

Indian River District News

"A Model of Excellence"

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Winter 2018

Three Schools Honored by State

SMS and Georgetown schools earn DOE Recognition Awards

Selbyville Middle School, Georgetown Middle School and Georgetown Elementary School were among 19 schools statewide to be honored for their students' academic achievements.

At a special ceremony on January 16, the Delaware Department of Education named 15 schools, including the three from the Indian River School District, as 2017 Recognition Schools. Each school will receive an \$8,000 award. Funding for the awards comes from the state's School Improvement funds. Additionally, there were four Schools of Continued Excellence that were honored as Recognition Schools last

year and had outstanding performance again this year.

IRSD Superintendent Mark Steele and representatives from all three honored schools were in attendance at the ceremony, which was held at Allen Frear Elementary School in Camden.

"I congratulate the students, educators and families whose hard work and support led to these achievements," Delaware Secretary of Education Susan Bunting said. "These school communities have provided educational programs and created school cultures that allow students to thrive. We must learn from what is working well in these



buildings and replicate these successes across our state."

Recognition School awards were created by legislation passed by the Delaware General Assembly in 2009. The awards are given to schools

whose students are performing at an exceptionally high level, particularly those schools with large percentages of students coming from low-income households, or to schools that

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From the Superintendent

Mark L. Steele



Dear Parents,

As we reach the halfway point of the 2017-2018 school year, I couldn't be more pleased with the accomplishments of our students and staff during the past four months. Our achievements this year have been simply tremendous, as you'll see by reading this newsletter. I want to thank everyone for their support, patience and understanding during what has been a successful school year thus far.

You will recall that last spring we faced not only a critical current expense referendum, but also state budget cuts that threatened to impact the quality of education provided to our students. I'm pleased to report that the passage of the referendum, along with IRSD's responsible financial management, has resulted in a projected budget surplus at the end of this fiscal year. We have fulfilled our pledge to spend taxpayer dollars wisely and residents can rest assured that this practice will continue into the future.

The district will soon begin examining space shortages at several schools and exploring possible solutions. I encourage you to stay informed on this issue as we move through 2018. As always, thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Mark L. Steele
Superintendent

MMS Teacher Wins Samsung Grant

Sarah Betlejewski, a sixth-grade science teacher at Millsboro Middle School, was Delaware's state winner in the 2017-2018 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest and won a \$25,000 technology prize package for her school.

Solve for Tomorrow is designed to boost interest and proficiency in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM). The nationwide contest challenges public school teachers and students in Grades 6-12 to show how STEAM can be applied to help improve their local community.

Betlejewski and her students are working on a project to assist students with physical disabilities. For those students, most daily tasks can be a challenge to perform independently, especially during the school day. Simple tasks like reaching for a tissue, carrying books or getting supplies can be difficult. The purpose of the project is to develop tools to add to students' wheelchairs or crutches to help make every-



Sarah Betlejewski with the team of students that formulated the Solve for Tomorrow project.

day life easier and make them more independent.

Students working on the project are Cameron Gathers, Angel Martinez Gonzalez, Jeremy Kramer, Jacob West, Andrew Orth, Franco Orobono, Joshua Cooke, Kiersten Ander-

son and Alyse Buchert.

Betlejewski is now in the running for the national award, which consists of a \$150,000 technology grant for the school. The national finalists and three national winners will be named in the spring.

Crooks Named Finalist for National Award

Georgetown Middle School counselor Erin Crooks was one of six finalists for the 2018 National School Counselor of the Year Award. She competed for the national award with other finalists from Colorado, Texas, Illinois, Missouri and Mississippi.

Crooks has been a counselor in the Indian River School District for 10 years, the last eight at Georgetown Middle School.

Last April, she was named Delaware School Counselor of the Year and became eligible for the national honor, which is sponsored by the American School Counselor Association. She was named a national finalist in October.

Crooks was interviewed by a review committee in November and will attend the ASCA School Counselor of the Year celebration in Washington, D.C. in late-January.



Did You Know?

Schell Brothers recently won a Silver Building Industry Community Service Award from the National Sales & Marketing Council for the Georgetown Elementary School playground project.

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Mark L. Steele,
Board Secretary and District Superintendent

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MVOL Celebration at North Georgetown



Jay Owens (left), IRSD Director of Special Services, and Board of Education member James Hudson with the NGE Knight mascot.

To help promote literacy in the school, North Georgetown Elementary School is partnering with The United Way for a program called "My Very Own Library." Through this program, students will build their own libraries and will receive 10 books by the end of the year. North Georgetown hosted a special kick-off celebration on December 7. Representatives from The United Way, Scholastic and United Healthcare were on hand to help first grade students pick out their books.



Clifford entertains NGE students prior to the ceremony.



Orrin White of The United Way.



Angelica Hardin of United Healthcare with the "Healthy Hound."



North Georgetown Principal Heather Cramer.



Student ambassador Tianna Davis.

Three District Schools Earn Recognition Awards

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have succeeded in closing the achievement gap for groups such as low-income students, students from minority groups and students with disabilities.

The winning schools have discretion in deciding how to spend their award money to benefit their students and school as a whole. Each school will appoint a committee consisting of administrators, teachers, support staff and parents to determine how the award will be used.

"Selbyville Middle School is most appreciative of being named a 2017 Delaware Recognition School for Exceptional Performance," SMS Principal Jason Macrides said. "This

honor serves as evidence of the strong support from the Selbyville community and the tremendous dedication and hard work of the students, faculty and staff in making Selbyville Middle School a model of middle level academic excellence in the State of Delaware."

This is the first Recognition School honor for Selbyville Middle School. Georgetown Elementary School and Georgetown Middle School were previously recognized in 2013.

"Georgetown Middle School staff and students are



Staff members from Georgetown Elementary School celebrate the Recognition Award.

thrilled to receive this recognition from the state," GMS Principal David Hudson said. "The GMS vision is to provide a rigorous learning environment where students succeed, excel and embrace 21st Century skills to become lifelong learners. The GMS staff and school community form a cohesive team that does whatever it takes to ensure that students succeed and ultimately fulfill our school vision. We are grateful that the state has chosen Georgetown Middle School and we feel it is awesome that the hard work of

our students, as well as our staff, parents and community members is being recognized."

"What makes me most proud is how the teachers and support staff dedicate themselves to our students' learning needs by collaborating with each other as they search for ideas and strategies that impact students the most," Georgetown Elementary School Principal Neil Stong said. "We have a great mix of veteran and novice teachers that openly share ideas and questions and they solve problems together. The entire staff holds our students to high expectations and they go above and beyond for our kids, and each other, every day."

Falconer Visits G.W. Carver

Rodney Stotts, a licensed falconer with Rodney's Raptors in Washington, D.C., visited the G.W. Carver Academy on December 18 to speak to students about falconry and living productive lives. Accompanying him at his presentations were an owl and a hawk.

Stotts is a mentor and community leader who creates transformative opportunities that connect youth to the environment and community. His falconry program is designed to educate and expose youth to "raptors," or birds of prey such as eagles, hawks, owls, falcons and osprey.



District Promotes Smart911

The Indian River School District is partnering with the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center to promote the Smart911 and PulsePoint initiatives.

Brochures promoting both programs were recently sent home with all district students. Parents are encouraged to review these materials carefully and consider signing up for these important services.

More than 70 percent of 911 calls nationwide, and approximately 80 percent in Sussex County, are made from mobile phones. In these instances, 911 operators have only a phone number and a general sense of the caller's location. Smart911 allows users to create a safety profile that provides valuable information about their home, family members, pets, vehicles and medical history to 911 operators. This information could shave valuable minutes off of emergency response times.

Smart911 users can go online to create a free personal safety profile that can be accessed by 911 operators during emergency calls. The Sussex County Emergency Operations is using this service for police, fire and medical emergencies. Residents can sign up at Smart911.com.

With Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) affecting more than 365,000 people each year and causing nearly 1,000 deaths per day in the United States, PulsePoint alerts CPR-trained bystanders to cardiac emergencies in their immediate vicinity. By downloading the PulsePoint app, individuals will be alerted to the exact location of an SCA emergency and the nearest Automated External Defibrillator so that they may perform CPR in the critical minutes before EMS teams arrive.

Hazzard Honored by Gov. Carney

Teacher and school recognized during annual address

North Georgetown Elementary School teacher Maria Hazzard was recognized during Delaware Gov. John Carney's annual State of the State address on January 18 at Legislative Hall.

"We want to target the resources toward schools like North Georgetown Elementary School," Carney said during his address. "There, I recently saw an amazing teacher, Maria Hazzard. She works hard every day to help a group of Spanish-speaking children move one step closer to becoming our state's next doctors, lawyers and teachers."

Carney then recognized Hazzard in the audience and she received a standing ovation

from members of the General Assembly. Carney visited North Georgetown on December 20 to promote Delaware's English Learner Strategic Plan.

In concluding his address, Carney again recognized Hazzard as being among a group of people who are "working hard and working together to make life better for their neighbors." These included National Guard, DEMA and DelDOT employees who were deployed to Puerto Rico, Texas and Florida to assist with hurricane relief; a grandmother in Wilmington who helps children get to school safely each day; and a probation officer who works to make the community safer.

"These men and women are my North Star," Carney said. "They make hard decisions every day in order to make life easier and better for



Maria Hazzard (center) with Delaware Secretary of Education Susan Bunting and Gov. John Carney.

somebody else. They expect us to do the same. They've put their trust in us and we cannot let them down."

Cordrey Charities Makes Donation for Clothing

A generous donation from Cordrey Charities, Inc. is allowing the Indian River School District to provide clothing to needy high school students this year.

IRSD Parent Center Coordinator Michele Murphy and District Recruiter Lori Hudson

recently used the \$1,000 donation to purchase a large supply of clothing for high school-aged students. Items included shoes, socks, pants, shorts, dresses and shirts. The clothing, which will be housed at the Parent Center and at Indian River and

Sussex Central high schools, will be made available to students in need.

The Indian River School District would like to offer its heartfelt thanks to Cordrey Charities for its compassion and generosity!

GKC Students Experience Train Exhibit



Students from the Georgetown Kindergarten Center visited the Georgetown Public Library on Dec. 7 and Dec. 19 to experience the Delaware Seaside Railroad Club's model train exhibit. Students enjoyed the model trains and were able to push buttons to make objects and trains move. Pictured above are Mrs. Kendrick's class and Mrs. Rubino and Ms. Anderson's class.

"Try It Tuesday" at Phillip C. Showell

The cafeteria staff at Phillip C. Showell Elementary School has implemented a "Try It Tuesday" program this year to increase meal participation and test new menu items for the district.

Each Tuesday, servings of new items are prepared for students to sample and response cards are handed out so they can provide feedback. Cafete-

ria staff review the results and report the success of an item to the district menu planner to determine if it will be offered at other schools.

PCS cafeteria staff research new items from School Nutrition Association magazine and consider the availability of receiving those foods from vendors.



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