

What's Inside



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ExCEL Wins Superstars Accolades

The Indian River School District's ExCEL program has received the prestigious Superstars in Education Award from the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce.

ExCEL, which stands for Exceptional Cognitive Enrichment Learning, was among the 2017 Superstars winners announced on February 24.

ExCEL is a differentiated enrichment program for fourth- and fifth-graders who demonstrate, or have the potential to demonstrate, superior intellectual abilities and academic aptitudes. Participating students engage in small, flexible part-time grouping and/or multi-age group

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Indian River District News

"A Model of Excellence"

irsd.net

Spring 2017

Richardson Named Teacher of the Year

MMS reading teacher wins top honor for 2017-2018

Lisa Richardson of Millsboro Middle School has been selected as the Indian River School District's Teacher of the Year for 2017-2018.

The announcement was made at the district's annual Teacher of the Year celebration on April 26. Richardson was chosen as the district's overall winner from a pool of 16 candidates, one from each school.

Richardson has been a reading teacher at Millsboro



Lisa Richardson



Lisa Richardson with IRSU Superintendent Mark Steele at the district Teacher of the Year celebration on April 26.

Millsboro Middle School since 2010. She was previously on the staff of East Millsboro Elementary School, where she served as a second-grade teacher from 2000-2010 and a first grade special education teacher in 1996-1997. She was East Millsboro's Teacher of the Year in 2010-2011.

Richardson was also a second grade teacher at Long Neck Elementary School from 1997-2000 and a second grade special education teacher at Frankford Elementary School from 1994-1996.

Richardson holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Old Dominion University and a master's degree in education from Wilmington University.

During her seven years at Millsboro Middle School, Richardson has been a member of the Instructional Leadership Team, an English Language Arts department chair, a teacher mentor, a Vision 2015 member and an IRSU middle school curriculum writer. She has also been an English Language Learners resource

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From the Superintendent

Mark L. Steele



Dear Parents,

On March 27, I had the honor and privilege of being named the permanent superintendent of the Indian River School District. I thank the Board of Education for this opportunity and look forward to serving the students, parents and residents of our district. Dr. Susan Bunting left some big shoes to fill when she accepted the appointment as Delaware's Secretary of Education, but I pledge to perform the duties of superintendent to the very best of my abilities.

I am committed to being a community superintendent and will strive for openness, accessibly and transparency in all district operations. I have enjoyed serving the IRSD community in various capacities during the past 36 years and am excited to continue doing so in this new role.

Despite the recent passage of a current expense referendum, challenges still lie ahead due to proposed reductions in state funding for education. We are committed to addressing these budget cuts in a manner that has the least possible impact on classroom instruction. Anyone with questions or concerns should not hesitate to contact my office.

I look forward to serving as your superintendent!

Sincerely,

Mark L. Steele
Superintendent

Erin Crooks Named Delaware School Counselor of the Year

Erin Crooks of Georgetown Middle School has been named the 2017 Delaware School Counselor of the Year.

The award was given on April 10 by the Delaware School Counselor Association during its annual spring conference. Prior to winning the overall state award, Crooks was named Middle School Counselor of the Year by the DSCA in February.

Crooks came to Georgetown Middle School as a school counselor in 2009 after spending the previous two years as a counselor at Georgetown Elementary School. She is a member of Georgetown Middle's Instructional Leadership Team and is the school's AVID site team coordinator. One of her priorities during the past nine years has been taking GMS students on visits to college campuses. During that time, she has accompanied more than



Erin Crooks

350 students on visits to the University of Delaware, Delaware State University, Morgan State University, Delaware Technical & Community College, Rutgers University and the University of Maryland.

Crooks is co-chair of the Sussex County Inter-Agency

Council for Children and Families and a middle school representative for the Delaware Goes to College Advisory Council. She also served as an adjunct professor at Wilmington University in 2015-2016.

This is the second consecutive year, and third overall, that an Indian River School District counselor has won the state award. Other state winners were Cheryl Carey in 2016 and Lisa Hunt in 2005. It is also the fourth consecutive year that an IRSD counselor has won either the elementary or middle school Counselor of the Year award. Other district winners were Carey (2016 and 2007), Jan Bomhardt (2015), Cathy Showell (2014), Dawn Brasure (2009) and Hunt (2005).

Referendum Approved

Indian River School District residents approved a current expense referendum on Thursday, March 2. The official vote totals were 7,091 votes for and 5,298 votes against.

"We are extremely grateful for the public's support of this important initiative," IRSD Superintendent Mark Steele said. "In my 36 years as a teacher and administrator in the Indian River School District, I have never been more amazed and overwhelmed by the generosity of our parents

and community members. It is that generosity that has allowed us to build a world-class system of public schools and become one of the finest school districts in the State of Delaware. On behalf of our students, staff and Board of Education, I would like to thank everyone who supported this referendum. Because of you, the Indian River School District can continue providing students with exemplary instructional programs into the future."

Last Day Moved to June 9

At its regular meeting on April 24, the Indian River Board of Education approved a series of changes to the 2016-2017 school district calendar.

The last day of school for students will now be **Friday, June 9** and will be a full day of school. The last day for pre-

school students will be Friday, June 2. The last day for teachers and paraprofessionals will be Tuesday, June 13.

The changes are the result of unused surplus hours built into the calendar to compensate for weather-related school cancellations.

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Mark L. Steele,
Board Secretary and District
Superintendent

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Another Perfect Season for SMS Volleyball Team

The Selbyville Middle School volleyball team finished with a perfect 10-0 record in the 2016 fall season. It was the team's second consecutive undefeated season. After finishing 10-0 in their first-ever season in 2015, the Lady Indians stepped things up in 2016 by not only winning every match, but by not losing a single game the entire regular season.

Team members were Raychel Ehlers (co-captain), Brandi Mitchell (co-captain), Ursula Barrientos, Izzy Binko, Lauren Cannatelli, Camryn Ehlers, Alex Johnson, Skylar Kneller, Tobi LaRusso, Valeria Levia, Logan Marvel, Kelsie Morin, Nicole Woody, Scarlett Dunn and Mya Macdonald.

Coaches were Sally Craig (head coach), Lisa Stetler, Tanya Ehlers and Bill Croal.

ExCEL Program Wins Superstars Award

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instruction provided in resource rooms within the school. The program is designed to foster the development of higher mental processes, creativity, independent study and problem solving. District ExCEL teachers Cindy Isaacs and Dawn Keenan provide this STEAM-based (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) curriculum in the district's elementary schools.

"Our mission to provide the best possible education for every student includes the goal of meeting the unique educational needs of gifted and talented students," said Audrey Carey, IRSD Supervisor of Elementary Instruction. "We are thrilled to receive this prestigious award and be recognized

with some of the top educational programs in the State of Delaware."

The ExCEL program was developed in the 1980s to provide enrichment opportunities for high-achieving gifted and talented elementary students. Since that time, the program has been redesigned several times to reflect the ever-changing needs in the educational world. For the past four years, the focus has been on STEM-related content.

In November, Isaacs and Keenan took second place in the elementary school category of the STEM Educator Awards during the Delaware STEM Symposium. The awards recognize teachers or teams of teachers at the elementary, middle and high school levels who demonstrate STEM inno-

vation and excellence through teaching, academic collaboration and student engagement.

Funded by the local business community, Superstars in Education is a statewide awards program that seeks to promote and share programs and best practices in education that show measurable results and raise student achievement. Since its inception in 1989, the program has honored more than 260 educational programs in the State of Delaware.

All of the 2017 Superstars winners were honored at a special ceremony on May 8 at Wilmington University's Doberstein Admissions Center Auditorium.

This year's honor is the Indian River School District's 22nd Superstars in Education award.

Luis Garcia Osorio Honored by LACC

Sussex Central High School student Luis Garcia Osorio won the Hispanic Student of the Year Award at the Delaware Latin American Community Center's Hispanic Student Recognition Ceremony on Saturday, April 8.

A graduating senior, Osorio is currently ranked third in his class and was nominated for the award by SCHS staff members.

The Hispanic Student Recognition Program highlights the achievements of exceptional Hispanic students in Delaware. Awards are presented to high school students in the areas of academic excellence; the arts; athletics; Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM); and school/community service. Attended by more than



Luis Garcia Osorio

400 students and parents annually, the program is a statewide undertaking and a unique event of the Latin American Community Center.

New Podcast Episodes

The Indian River School District is continuing to produce new episodes of its "IRSD Spotlight" podcast. These episodes can be accessed free of charge through iTunes, the district website (irsd.net) and several mobile podcast apps.

Recent episodes have featured a conversation with Sussex Central High School wrestling coach Phil Shultie, profiles of some of the district's best and brightest students and a retrospective on the 1983 Indian River-Sussex Central football game.

Check the district's Facebook page for notifications of when new episodes are available. To access episodes from the district website, go to irsd.net and click on the "Podcast: IRSD Spotlight" link under the Discover IRSD tab.

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



IRSD Teachers of the Year for 2017-2018. Seated (from left): finalists Nicole Morey, Lisa Richardson (overall winner) and Jill Young. Standing (from left): Noel Lenhart, Dori Camper, Jennifer Taylor, Meredith Wallace, Daniele Squillante, Alison Walt, Jill Oliva, Laurie Hall, Ashley Collins, Irene Retzos, Linda Hockman and Justin Stoeckel.

IRSD Teacher of the Year

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teacher, a Scholastic administrator and a member of the One School One Book committee, school safety team and CARE team.

"When you walk into Mrs. Richardson's classroom you immediately feel a sense of confidence that stems from the welcoming environment she has created; one where she exudes the confidence that 'we' are all in this together and that failure is not an option," Millsboro Middle School Principal Renee Jerns said. "On a daily basis, you will find Mrs. Richardson and her students engaged in reading and writing tasks applicable to the real world in an extremely well-structured environment of high expectations. Without a doubt, Mrs. Richardson embodies the very qualities all administrators search for in master teachers."

"Lisa embodies the strength and character of the Indian River School District," said former IRSD administrator Gary Brittingham. "She is a teacher with a broad background of knowledge and experiences in the teaching profession. Lisa has been able to combine what her years of successful experience has shown her to work with what research in best teaching practice has shown raises student achievement. This formula has

proven successful for her and the Indian River School District.

"Her story is in many ways the story of the Indian River School District. She is product our school district who returned to give back and has done that in many capacities and done it well. Both inside and outside the classroom, she is and has been a role model for



Lisa Richardson embraces Delaware Secretary of Education Susan Bunting after being announced as the district Teacher of the Year.

others. Every school and district needs a Lisa Richardson," Brittingham added.

Brittingham was East Millsboro Elementary School principal during Richardson's 12 years on the school staff.

Richardson is now eligible for the state Teacher of the Year Award, which will be announced in October.

More photos from the Teacher of the Year celebration are available on the district Facebook page.

2017-2018 IRSD Teachers of the Year

Dori Camper

Southern Delaware School of the Arts

Ashley Collins

North Georgetown Elementary School

Laurie Hall

Phillip C. Showell Elementary School

Linda Hockman

Georgetown Kindergarten Center

Noel Lenhart

G.W. Carver Academy

Nicole Morey (Finalist)

Georgetown Elementary School

Jill Oliva

Sussex Central High School

Thomas Peet

Howard T. Ennis School

Irene Retzos

John M. Clayton Elementary School

Lisa Richardson (Overall winner)

Millsboro Middle School

Justin Stoeckel

East Millsboro Elementary School

Daniele Squillante

Long Neck Elementary School

Jennifer Taylor

Georgetown Middle School

Meredith Wallace

Selbyville Middle School

Allison Walt

Indian River High School

Jill Young (Finalist)

Lord Baltimore Elementary School



Lisa Richardson with (from left) State Reps. Ron Gray, Rich Collins and Ruth Briggs King; Delaware Secretary of Education Susan Bunting; Board of Education President Charles Bireley and IRSD Superintendent Mark Steele.