

## What's Inside



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## 3 Schools "Beating the Odds"

North Georgetown, John M. Clayton and Phillip C. Showell elementary schools have been designated by the State of Delaware as schools that are "Beating the Odds."

In August, Delaware's Educator Equity Plan completed its statewide analysis of schools with high percentages of minority students and children from low-income families. It determined which of those schools were performing best across a series of measures that included educator retention, educator experience, student academic performance, educator effectiveness and overall school climate.

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# Indian River District News

## "A Model of Excellence"

irsd.net

Fall 2015

## District Enrollment Tops 10,000 Students

### Committee to examine space issues

The Indian River School District reached a historic milestone this fall when its total enrollment in Grades PreK-12 exceeded 10,000 students for the first time ever.

The district's official enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year is 10,171 students. This represents an increase of 329 from last year and 1,385 since 2010. The district's total enrollment has grown by an average of 4 percent per year during the past decade.

With a total growth rate of 22 percent since 2005, Indian River is now the fifth-largest public school district in the State of Delaware.

"The current rate of growth in the Indian River School District is unprece-

#### Total District Enrollment

2005 - 7,885

2010 - 8,786

2015 - 10,171

2020 - 11,826\*

\* - Projected



*The crowded cafeteria at the Georgetown Kindergarten Center during lunchtime.*

dented," Superintendent Susan Bunting said. "This has presented a unique set of challenges, especially in regards to classroom space in our buildings. Many of our schools have come up with creative, albeit temporary, solutions to the space shortage. We have committed to exploring more permanent solutions to these challenges during the next few years."

This fall, the district reconvened its Futures Committee, which will study short- and long-term resolutions to the enrollment increase and space

shortage. The committee's work will continue through the 2015-2016 school year and beyond.

"It's imperative that the district be proactive in addressing the growth issue," Board of Education President James Hudson said. "The Futures Committee has some important work ahead in examining the reasons for the recent growth trend, analyzing future enrollment projections and brainstorming solutions to our space problem."

If the district maintains its  
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## From the Superintendent

**Dr. Susan S. Bunting**



Dear Parents,

The Indian River School District is growing at an unprecedented rate. When we compiled enrollment figures this fall for the annual state unit count, we discovered the total number of students in the district had increased to 10,171. It was the first time in history that we exceeded the 10,000-student mark. IRSD's enrollment has grown by a rate of about 4 percent per year for the past decade. That growth rate is expected to continue into the future, meaning we could be serving more than 11,800 children by the year 2020.

With growth comes a unique set of challenges, especially in the area of instructional space in our school buildings. Many of these issues are outlined in an extensive article that begins on Page 1 of this newsletter. The district's Futures Committee has taken on the task of studying the district's growth and formulating both short- and long-term solutions to these challenges. Its work will continue for the next few years. If you'd like more information, we have set up a special web page dedicated to the growth issue. It can be accessed at [irsd.net/growth](http://irsd.net/growth). Please take time to check it out.

I hope you continue to have a rewarding school year!

Sincerely,

Susan S. Bunting  
Superintendent

# Project VILLAGE Georgetown Earns Five-Star Recognition

The Indian River School District's Project VILLAGE preschool program recently received a prestigious Five-Star rating from the Delaware Stars for Early Success program.

Five-Star recognition is the highest rating a Delaware preschool program can receive. The honor went to Project VILLAGE's Georgetown location, which is housed at both Georgetown and North Georgetown elementary schools.

Delaware Stars is a Quality Rating and Improvement System administered by the Delaware Department of Education. It promotes high-quality early learning for young children and sets quality ratings that guide families seeking the best programs for their children.

Founded in 1997, Project VILLAGE is a comprehensive, developmentally-appropriate early childhood program for economically-challenged 3- and 4-year-olds. Its goal is to



*Project VILLAGE Georgetown was honored at the Sept. 21 Board of Education meeting. From left, Board of Education President James Hudson, Project VILLAGE teacher Jill Wells, Superintendent Susan Bunting, paraprofessional Patricia Otero, teacher Renae McCabe, paraprofessional Maria Rodriguez and Supervisor of Elementary Instruction Audrey Carey.*

provide students with the math and language readiness skills that will ensure their academic success in kindergarten.

The award-winning program currently has five locations in the district serving

about 175 students. The Georgetown site is the second to receive Five-Star recognition. The Selbyville location at Southern Delaware School of the Arts received the honor in 2014.

## Indian River Board of Education

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Susan S. Bunting, Ed.D.,  
Board Secretary and District  
Superintendent

## Three Schools Honored

*From Page 1*

The results of the study placed North Georgetown, Clayton and Showell among a top-tier of Delaware schools that are "Beating the Odds."

As part of the designation, North Georgetown received a site visit from researchers from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Researchers visited the school on Sept. 24 and 25 as part of their "Spotlight Project," which conducts a closer study of schools that have received the "Beating the Odds" designation. They interviewed about 12 staff members and conducted walkthroughs to observe what makes North Georgetown so special.



*North Georgetown was one of three schools honored for "Beating the Odds."*

"It's certainly nice to be recognized for all the hard work that folks put in here on a daily basis," NGE Principal Jeff Forjan said. "There's been a climate and culture here of no excuses, no exceptions. Teachers want to be here."

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# Phase Two Building Projects Progressing

Phase Two construction projects approved by district residents in a January 29, 2013 major capital improvement referendum should be completed by the end of the 2015-2016 school year.

Work at Phillip C. Showell Elementary School, which will receive four new classrooms, began in July and is scheduled for completion in mid-December. Exterior walls were constructed and roof trusses installed in early-October and the enclosure of the structure was anticipated by the end of the month.

Students and teachers should move into the new classrooms in January.

Site work has begun at the Georgetown Elementary School/Georgetown Middle School complex, which will receive eight new classrooms and a new kitchen. Foundations and exterior walls were to begin taking shape in late-October. Delays in obtaining permits have pushed the



**Phillip C. Showell Elementary School on Oct. 6. The project is scheduled for completion in mid-December.**

anticipated completion dates back to June 3 for the classrooms and June 10 for the kitchen.

The new facilities at Georgetown will be fully operational by the start of the 2016-2017 school year.

Phase One projects adding eight classrooms each at North Georgetown, Long Neck and East Millsboro elementary schools, and a Phase Two project adding two classrooms at Selbyville Middle School has been completed. The new facilities are now in use at each school.

# SCHS Wins Delaware Sportsmanship Award



*For the second consecutive year, Sussex Central High School has won the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) Sportsmanship Award. Each year, DIAA member schools compete against a set of 10 standards, not against other schools. The process is demanding and involves the total school community to be involved. Member schools submit an extensive application book that is judged by the Sportsmanship Committee to determine if each school has successfully met the standards. Sussex Central was honored at the Aug. 24 Indian River Board of Education meeting. From left, Nik Fair, Shawn Tidwell, Brian Parker, Board of Education President James Hudson, Karen Irvin, Arthur Uhlich, Superintendent Susan Bunting, Principal Bradley Layfield and DIAA Executive Director Kevin Charles.*

## Upcoming Events

### November 11

No school - Veterans Day

### November 13

No school - Teacher In-service

### November 25-27

No school - Thanksgiving holiday

### December 14-17

Parent conferences

### Dec. 23 - Jan. 1

No school - Christmas break

### January 4

School resumes

# Med Students Get Hands-On Training

A select group of Indian River High School students who have interest in the medical and engineering fields recently had the opportunity to perform mock orthopedic surgeries with support from prominent women surgeons and engineers. They were also able to learn about the many opportunities available to them in these fields.

The event was held on Sept. 19 at the Spencer Laboratory on the main campus of the University of Delaware. It was made possible through The Perry Initiative, founded in 2009 by Dr. Jenni Buckley, mechanical engineer, and Dr. Lisa Lattanza, orthopedic surgeon. The initiative is directed at inspiring young women to be



**From left, Madison Mercer, McKenna Burke and Erin Haden**

leaders in the orthopedic surgery and engineering fields.

Funding was awarded

based on essays submitted by students describing why they desired to work in STEM-based occupational fields. Three Indian River High School students, McKenna Burke, Erin Haden and Madison Mercer, submitted essays and earned spots among the 40 selected participants.

Participants repaired complex fractures, learned and practiced the casting of upper extremities and practiced suturing skills in the daylong program.

"I couldn't have gotten this experience anywhere else. It was the perfect combination of hands-on experimentation and hearing from women engineers and orthopedic surgeons," Haden said.

# District to Study Enrollment Growth

From Page 1

current rate of growth, enrollment will exceed 11,800 students by 2020. At that pace, most school buildings will exceed their student capacities in the next few years.

In addition to the growth in student enrollment, the number of teachers in the district has increased by approximately 13 percent in last 10 years. It now stands at nearly 800.

Since 2000, the district has completed several major capital improvement projects designed to increase instructional space and provide students with modern instructional amenities. Districtwide, 44 additional classrooms have been built at our schools in the last 11 years. IRSD has also built two new high schools; renovated nine other school buildings; expanded storage space at Selbyville Middle School; constructed a new kitchen, cafeteria and office suite at Lord Baltimore Elementary School; and replaced the roofs on three other schools. Construction of a new kitchen is



**The stage being used as a classroom at John M. Clayton Elementary School.**

also underway at the Georgetown Elementary/Georgetown Middle School complex.

The district spent more than \$95 million in voter-approved funding to complete these projects.

"None of our recent construction projects would have been possible without the support of our caring community," Bunting said. "The district has always had the best interests of our children at heart. It's obvious that the public shares and supports our mission of providing the best possible learning environ-



**The site of the new Hawthorne residential community near Georgetown.**

ment for students."

Despite the recent capital improvement projects, space is still at a premium in IRSD schools. Throughout the district, closets are being used as offices; teachers and specialists are being forced to "float" from room to room while carrying

their belongings on a cart; single classrooms are being divided into multiple classrooms; and counselors, specialists and instructional coaches are sharing offices. In some schools, it takes two and half hours to serve lunch to the entire student body. As a



**A crowded cafeteria at Georgetown Elementary School.**

result, some students must eat before 11:00 a.m. and others after 1:00 p.m.

The large number of residential communities being developed throughout the district and the possible addition of new jobs in the poultry industry are expected to keep the district's current growth rate steady during the next five years.

"The Futures Committee will take a 'realm of no bad ideas' approach to its task of finding solutions to the challenges created by our recent growth," Hudson said. "We welcome the public's input during this process and look forward to developing strategies that will responsibly carry our district into the future."

For more information on the district's enrollment growth, visit [irsd.net/growth](http://irsd.net/growth). Anyone with comments or suggestions on this issue is encouraged to contact his or her local Board of Education member. Comments can also be sent to [general.information@irsd.k12.de.us](mailto:general.information@irsd.k12.de.us).

## News and Notes

# Programs Receive Grants and Donations

The Indian River School District recently received several grants and donations from local businesses and non-profit organizations.

IRSD would like to offer a special thank you to Mountaire Farms for its donation of \$10,000 to the Project VILLAGE preschool program and an additional \$5,000 to assist homeless students.

In addition, the Carl M. Freeman Foundation awarded \$5,000 FACES grants to the G.W. Carver Academy for Positive Behavior Support initiatives and the TOTS program for the purchase of playground equipment.

On Aug. 16, Hocker's

Super Center in Clarksville and the Southern Sussex Rotary Club hosted a school supply fundraiser for students at the G.W. Carver Academy. This initiative has raised more than \$1,000 worth of supplies during the past two years.

The Rotary Club also supplies dictionaries for every third-grade class in the district and hosts an annual spelling bee for third-grade students. State Sen. Gerald Hocker and Hocker's Super Center have also donated food and bottled water for various events at Carver Academy during the past few years.

### Teen Driver Scholarship

Amber Edick of Sussex

Central High School won a \$1,500 scholarship in the Ford Driving Skills for Life competition held on Sept. 19 at Sussex Tech High School.

Amber completed a variety of activities as part of the Parenting Your Teen Driver event and earned a first place Teen Driver Scholarship. The goal of the event is to recognize the importance of responsible driving and to encourage parents and teen drivers to work together to develop skills for a lifetime of safe driving.

### Teacher Fair

The Indian River School District will host its second annual Teacher Recruitment Fair on Feb. 27, 2016 at the Clarion

Hotel in Ocean City, Maryland. This event is sponsored by the Indian River School District and Academic Partnerships, L.L.C. To register, visit [apllc.org](http://apllc.org).

### IB Graduate

Randy Short of Frankford was the first student from Sussex Central High School to earn an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma.

Short, who attends the University of Delaware, was also the only student from Sussex County to earn an IB diploma in 2015. Short graduated from Sussex Central High School in May and is attending UD on a full scholarship after winning the state Charles Heberner Memorial Scholarship.