

## What's Inside



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## District to Seek New Schools

At a special meeting on April 7, the Indian River Board of Education approved the submission of Certificate of Necessity (CN) requests to the State of Delaware for a series of construction projects to address enrollment growth throughout the district.

The projects are as follows:

- The construction of a new elementary school on the Ingram Pond property in Millsboro;
- The construction of a new middle school on the Sussex Central High School property north of Millsboro;
- The construction of additional classrooms and the expansion of the cafeteria and

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# Indian River District News

*"A Model of Excellence"*

irsd.net

Spring 2016

## Grise Named IRSD Teacher of the Year

### Wins honor for 2016-17 school year

Melissa Grise of John M. Clayton Elementary School has been selected as the Indian River School District's Teacher of the Year for 2016-2017.

The announcement was made at the district's annual Teacher of the Year celebration on April 15 at The Clubhouse at Baywood Greens. Grise was chosen as the district's overall winner from a pool of 16 candidates, one from each school.

Grise has been a fourth-grade general and special education teacher at John M. Clayton Elementary School since 2010. Previously, she was a fourth- and fifth-grade teacher at North Georgetown Elementary School from 2003-2010. She was North Georgetown's Teacher of the Year in 2010. Grise holds a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood and K-4 Education from the University of Delaware and a master's degree in literacy from Wilmington University.

Grise is a member of the



*Melissa Grise addresses the audience at the district Teacher of the Year ceremony on April 15.*



*Grise accepts congratulations from local legislators.*

John M. Clayton leadership team, the Indian River School District implementation cadre team, the district's curriculum writing team for Grade 4 and

the IRSD math curriculum adoption committee. She is also a lead math teacher and a new teacher mentor for the school district. At Wilmington University, she currently serves as a cooperating teacher who mentors student teachers and helps them develop their teaching skills. In 2015, Grise was selected to represent IRSD at the Yale National Initiative in New Haven, CT. During the session, she developed a math unit that focused on problem solving. That lesson has been

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## From the Superintendent

**Dr. Susan S. Bunting**



Dear Parents,

On April 15, I had the great pleasure of attending the district's annual Teacher of the Year celebration. It always fills me with pride to see 16 talented educators, one from each of our schools, honored for their unwavering commitment to students and their profession. It reminded me of how fortunate we are to have some of the finest teachers in the State of Delaware serving our children. At the end of the evening, Melissa Grise of John M. Clayton Elementary School was named IRSD Teacher of the Year for 2016-2017. This is a richly-deserved honor for a truly gifted educator. I would also like to congratulate the school winners for their hard work and dedication. All of you have made our district proud!

On Page 1 of this newsletter you will also find an article outlining a plan to address our unprecedented enrollment growth during the past 10 years. This proposal, which includes the construction of two new schools, is the result of months of collaboration by Board of Education members, district staff and concerned citizens. I would like to thank everyone who participated in this process of shaping our district's future.

Have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Susan S. Bunting  
Superintendent

# SCHS Student Visits White House

Sussex Central High School senior Mikayla Ockels recently had the honor of presenting her science fair project to a very special person – President Barack Obama.

Ockels was one of more than 130 students from 30 states selected to participate in President Obama's final White House Science Fair on April 13.

Ockels' project, "Heritage Hens, Weighing in on Feed-to-Egg Conversion Rate" received the Practical Impact Award at the National BioGENEius Science Fair in Philadelphia and a first-place award at the Delaware State BioGENEius Science Fair in 2015. The project studied which laying hens of the Heritage Breed had the best conversion rate, or total amount of feed needed to produce an egg.

Since 2013, Ockels has earned awards, honors and scholarships at numerous competitions, including the Sussex County Science Fair, Delaware Valley Regional Science Fair,



**Mikayla Ockels at the White House Science Fair with Bill Nye, the Science Guy.**

International Science and Engineering Fair, NASA Science Fair, and state and national Future Farmers of America (FFA) agriscience fairs.

A student in Sussex Central's International Baccalaureate program, Ockels is ranked in the top 1 percent of her class and is a member of the National Honor Society. She has earned numerous awards and honors from FFA, Health Occupations Students of America, the International Equestrian Association, and Sussex

County and Delaware State 4H organizations. She also operates her own beekeeping, laying hen and goat raising businesses.

Mikayla is active in her community, performing a variety of volunteer activities across the state. She is also a member of the SCHS field hockey and track & field teams and was named WBOC-TV's Scholar Athlete of the Month for October 2015.

## Calendar Changes

The Indian River Board of Education has approved a series of changes to the 2015-2016 school district calendar.

The last day of school for students will now be **Wednesday, June 8**. The last day for paraprofessionals will be Thursday, June 9, and the last day for teachers will be Friday, June 10.

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



## Indian River Board of Education

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

## Certificates of Necessity

From page 1  
gymnasium at Sussex Central High School;

- The renovation and expansion of the cafeteria at Phillip C. Showell Elementary School in Selbyville;
- Repairs to a stairwell and mechanical room at Lord Baltimore Elementary School in Ocean View;
- The possible expansion of parking areas at Selbyville Middle School.

In addition, athletic fields at all schools will be evaluated, and the district will seek the replacement of the Howard T. Ennis School building in Georgetown. The Howard T. Ennis project will be a state-funded initiative and not in-

cluded in any major capital improvement referendum proposed by the Indian River School District.

Certificates of Necessity for the projects must be submitted to the State of Delaware prior to July 30. Cost estimates for the proposed projects will be provided by the district's architectural firm at a later date.

A major capital improvement referendum to fund these initiatives will be contingent on which construction projects are approved by the state during the CN process. This approval is not expected until November. The district would then likely host a referendum during Fiscal Year 2017.

The Indian River School District is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate or deny services on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, domicile, marital status or disability in its programs and activities.



# New NAF Program Coming Next Year

Indian River and Sussex Central high schools will implement a new finance and accounting curriculum for the 2016-2017 school year.

Beginning in September, both high schools will be offering a three-year program of study from the National Academy of Finance (NAF). Interested students who will be entering the 9th or 10th grade in 2016-2017 are being sought for the program.

NAF provides a rigorous, industry-validated and career-themed curriculum that incorporates current industry standards and practices, literacy strategies and STEM integration. The curriculum is created in partnership with industry professionals and is designed around projects that help students acquire valuable workplace skills. It further empowers teachers to expand the boundaries of the classroom in non-traditional ways that ensure lessons have real-world application to growing industries.

The three-year "Academy of Finance" pathway covers a variety of topics related to business, accounting and financial literacy. Courses are Fundamentals of Finance (Year 1), Principles of Accounting (Year 2), and Financial Services (Year 3).

Through this program, students will have to opportunity to earn NAFTrack Certification and become eligible for NAFTrack Certified Hiring.

Incoming 9th- and 10th-graders at Sussex Central High School should contact their guidance counselor if they are interested in enrolling in the pathway next year. Indian River students should contact Assistant Principal Justin Miller.

Spring 2016

# Therapists Hit Road in TOW Vehicle



*The Indian River School District's Therapy on Wheels (TOW) vehicle hit the road this spring to commemorate national Occupational Therapy Month. Beginning in April, the district's occupational therapists took the van to every elementary school in the district to provide on-site therapy to students. The TOW vehicle was purchased by the special education department several years ago to serve as an alternative location for occupational therapy services. The van was purchased through grant funding. From left, occupational therapists Jamie Messick, Dawn Steele, Kim Trout, Krystle Spencer and Karen Tinus prepare to roll out the TOW van on April 18.*

# Podcast to Highlight IRSD Events, Programs

The Indian River School District is producing a new podcast that can be accessed through iTunes or the district website at irsd.net.

Titled "IRSD Spotlight," the podcast allows parents, students and community members to learn more about the inner workings of the Indian River School District. It provides useful information about the programs, events and accomplishments occurring throughout the district while occasionally highlighting important topics impacting education in the community.

New podcasts featuring teachers, students and district

officials will be posted periodically throughout the school year. Check the district's Facebook page for notifications of when new episodes are available.

To access "IRSD Spotlight," go to irsd.net and click on the "Podcast: IRSD Spotlight" link under the Discover IRSD tab. The podcast is also available through iTunes and several mobile apps.

Please note that some users have experienced problems playing the podcast in Internet Explorer. If you encounter this issue, please access the podcast through Chrome or Firefox.

# SCHS, APELL Honored As Superstars

The Indian River School District has received two prestigious Superstars in Education Awards from the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce.

Sussex Central High School and the district's Accelerating Pre-Literate English Language Learners (APELL) program were among the 2016 Superstars winners announced on March 8. The Chamber selected six winners statewide from a pool of 42 nominees.

Sussex Central High School was honored for its efforts in providing professional development through Schoology, an online system that allows for better collaboration among teachers.

Founded in 2014, the APELL program at the G.W. Carver Center in Frankford currently serves approximately 80 students ranging in age from 14 to 18. This voluntary program accommodates English Language Learners (ELL) who require a more intensive form of instruction than the traditional ELL programs at the district's two high schools can provide.

All of the 2016 Superstars winners were honored at a special ceremony on May 9 at Wilmington University's Doberstein Admissions Center Auditorium.

This year's honors are the Indian River School District's 20th and 21st Superstars in Education awards.



*A student in the Accelerating Pre-Literate English Language Learners (APELL) program.*



**IRSD Teachers of the Year (from bottom to top):** Wanda Williams, Stephanie Wilkinson, Melissa Grise (overall winner), Emily Pettyjohn (finalist), Angela Wilson (finalist), Christina Hopkins, Jennifer Hitchens, Alyson Silva, Amanda Miller, Melody Oneschuk, Karen Atkinson, Christina Walls, Stefanie Riddle, Nancy Dickens, Anna Ruggiero and Corey Dietrich.

## Grise Named District's Top Teacher for '16-17

From Page 1  
published to the national YNI website.

"Melissa Grise is an administrator's dream teacher – informed, dynamic and reflective – and is the person you want as your team member, teaching your students, and helping to improve your school any way she can," said JMC Assistant Principal Allisa Booth. "As soon as you enter her classroom, it is clear that Mrs. Grise's number one concern is her students. She is focused on educating the whole student, which makes instructional time sacred to Mrs. Grise. She wants her students learning the skills they need in order to be successful in fifth grade, middle school and beyond."

"Melissa is an instructional leader that inspires each one of her peers to reach all of their students, no matter their academic ability or their socio-economic status," said Charlyne Hopkins, district Director of Leadership Development and the former principal of John M.



**From left, Board of Education President James Hudson, State Rep. Rich Collins, Superintendent Susan Bunting, IRSD Teacher of the Year Melissa Grise, State Sen. Brian Pettyjohn and State Rep. Ron Gray.**

Clayton Elementary School. "Melissa not only sets high expectations for herself but also for her grade level teachers and students. In the classroom she puts the students first and creates an environment that is safe, accepting and conducive to learning."

"Melissa has been able to establish an atmosphere of learning that allows her students to work successfully toward meeting Common Core

## 2016-2017 IRSD Teachers of the Year

**Karen Atkinson**  
G.W. Carver Academy

**Nancy Dickens**  
Georgetown Elementary School

**Corey Dietrich**  
Phillip C. Showell Elementary School

**Melissa Grise** (Overall winner)  
John M. Clayton Elementary School

**Jennifer Hitchens**  
Selbyville Middle School

**Christina Hopkins**  
Georgetown Kindergarten Center

**Amanda Miller**  
Lord Baltimore Elementary School

**Melody Oneschuk**  
Southern Delaware School of the Arts

**Emily Pettyjohn** (Finalist)  
North Georgetown Elementary School

**Stefanie Riddle**  
Millsboro Middle School

**Anna Ruggiero**  
Sussex Central High School

**Alyson Silva**  
Howard T. Ennis School

**Christina Walls**  
Long Neck Elementary School

**Stephanie Wilkinson**  
Indian River High School

**Wanda Williams**  
East Millsboro Elementary School

**Angela Wilson** (Finalist)  
Georgetown Middle School

State Standards," Board of Education President James Hudson said. "She has a clear vision of where she wants her students to be and is committed to the belief that all students can learn. Melissa provides quality standards-based instruction to her students, she communicates expectations to parents, and she continually seeks professional development opportunities to broaden her knowledge."

Hudson was North Georgetown Elementary School's principal when Grise taught there from 2003-2010.

As the district's Teacher of

### Did You Know?

A team of district middle school students captured a state championship at the Delaware Odyssey of the Mind competition on April 9. Team members were Kayla Harant, Madison Johnson, Kaila McCabe, Olivia Hudson, Ethan Rakes and Trinity Kelso. The team qualified for the OM World Finals at Iowa State University in May.

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