

# INDIAN RIVER DISTRICT NEWS

INDIAN RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT, 31 HOSIER ST., SELBYVILLE, DELAWARE 19975  
(302) 436-1000 • www.irsd.net

## COLLEGE PREP

### Preparing for the Future

#### New programs make college a reality in IRSD

Graduates of the Indian River School District are enrolling in college in large numbers each year thanks to a variety of innovative programs in local middle and high schools.

Sussex Central High School had 80 percent of graduates from the Class of 2012 accepted at two- and four-year colleges. Indian River High School Principal Mark Steele estimates that, on average, 70 percent of IRHS graduates are accepted to college each year. The school's rate topped 80 percent two years ago.

As a whole, the Indian River School District had one of the highest graduation rates (84.4 percent) and lowest dropout rates (1.9 percent) among non-technical school districts in Sussex County for the 2010-2011 school year.

New and innovative programs in the district's secondary schools are not only preparing students to attend college but also helping them be successful once they get there.

Indian River High School's efforts to prepare students for postsecondary education have been enhanced by the new STEM Academy Pre-Engineering Pathway, which features foundational courses in engineering design, the principles of engineering and digital electronics. There are also elective



*Students collaborate on STEM projects in Indian River High School's Introduction to Engineering class. Top (from left): students John Douds, Victor DeGeorge and Hannah Davis. Bottom (from left): students Sarah King, Jack Saxton and Davina Baine.*



courses in civil engineering, architecture and computer-integrated manufacturing. The pathway will culminate with a senior capstone project. The goal of the pathway is to de-

velop student interest in design and engineering in preparation for postsecondary education and careers in STEM-related fields.

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## AWARDS

### Schools Honored by State

Four district elementary schools were honored in October when the State of Delaware announced its list of award-winning schools for 2012.

John M. Clayton Elementary, Lord Baltimore Elementary and Phillip C. Showell Elementary were named state Recognition Schools for 2012. John M. Clayton Elementary was also a state Distinguished Title I School nominee. Each school will receive a monetary award of \$50,000.

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### JMC Named National Title I School

John M. Clayton Elementary School in Frankford has been named a National Distinguished Title I School for 2012.

This marks the third time in eight years that JMC (formerly Frankford Elementary School) has received the honor. It also won the award in 2004 and 2008. Since 2000, district schools have earned this recognition nine times.

JMC Principal Char Hopkins praised the school's teachers and staff for going

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**"A Model of Excellence"**

## From the Desk of the Superintendent



Dear Parents,

The State of Delaware's new accountability system has changed the way schools are recognized for improving student performance. Gone are the days when schools received ratings such as "Superior," "Commendable" and "Academic Watch." Under the new system, schools are rated on the basis of whether or not they achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). I'm pleased to report that every district school achieved AYP for the 2011-2012 school year. I'm extremely proud of this accomplishment and took great pleasure in presenting each school with a special banner touting this honor at the September 18 Board of Education meeting. I reiterate my congratulations to all students, teachers and staff from across the district for this outstanding achievement.

On the front page of this newsletter, you will find an article highlighting our efforts to enhance students' preparation for postsecondary education. Each year our district does a commendable job readying students to attend two- and four-year colleges. The figures showing the high percentage of district graduates who choose to continue their education speak for themselves. With the addition of the STEM pre-engineering pathway at Indian River High and the International Baccalaureate program at Sussex Central High, more graduates than ever before will have the skills needed to be successful in college and the real world.

A few other notes as the school year moves forward:

- I would like to welcome Belinda Waples and LouAnn Hudson to the district's central office staff. Mrs. Waples is our new Director of Special Services while Mrs. Hudson is the new Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Both previously served as school principals in our district.

- The Board of Education has welcomed a new member in Mr. Shaun C. Fink, who was appointed in October to fill the District 2 seat vacated by Patricia Oliphant. I look forward to working with Mr. Fink and would like to thank Mrs. Oliphant for her many years of dedicated service to the Board.

Thanks again for supporting our high-performing schools!

Sincerely,

Susan S. Bunting  
Superintendent

## Creative Mentors Needed In Schools

Parents and community members are invited to become Creative Mentors in the Indian River School District this fall.

Creative Mentors are safe, trained and committed adults who spend time with a child who has been identified as needing additional individual attention. It only takes an hour a week and the desire to help a child become all he or she can be. It involves listening, sharing and the greatest gift - your time.

The Creative Mentoring program will train participants on the appropriate roles of a

mentor, how to listen and connect with a child and how to handle difficult situations. The training and mentor handbook will prepare adults to build effective relationships with mentees. All mentors must complete an application and background check.

To learn more about becoming a Creative Mentor, visit [www.CreativeMentoring.org](http://www.CreativeMentoring.org) or call toll-free at 1-877-202-9050. Interested adults can also contact Michele Murphy, District Mentor Coordinator, at 302-732-1522 or [michele.murphy@irsd.k12.de.us](mailto:michele.murphy@irsd.k12.de.us)

## Board Welcomes New Member

At a special meeting on Oct. 9, the Indian River Board of Education appointed Shaun C. Fink of Millsboro to fill a vacant seat in Election District 2.

Mr. Fink will occupy the seat vacated by former board

member Patricia Oliphant, who resigned from the board in September. He was officially sworn in at the regular monthly board meeting on Oct. 16. His term will expire on June 30, 2013.

## JMC Wins National Title I Award

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the extra mile to help students be successful. Despite having more than 80 percent of students on the federal free and

reduced lunch program, JMC annually achieves Adequate Yearly Progress under the State of Delaware's school accountability system.

"The staff is just phenomenal," Hopkins said. "They work so hard for the children."

The award, which is sponsored by the National Association of State Title I Directors, honors schools that have demonstrated significant sustained academic improvement despite having poverty rates of 35 percent or more.

Other National Title I School winners from the district were Phillip C. Showell Elementary (2000, 2002 and 2003), Long Neck Elementary (2007), East Millsboro Elementary (2007) and North Georgetown Elementary (2009).

### INDIAN RIVER BOARD of EDUCATION

Charles M. Bireley, President  
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— • —  
Susan S. Bunting, Ed.D.,  
Board Secretary and District  
Superintendent

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.



## District Nurses Attend Institute

Four nurses from the Indian River School District were among 48 fellows representing 13 school districts who participated in a five-day residential institute sponsored by the Johnson & Johnson School Health Leadership Program.

Lara Booth of the G.W. Carver Center, Marie Karitis-Smith of Phillip C. Showell Elementary School, Barbara McMillen of Southern Delaware School of the Arts and Anna Miller of Sussex Central High School attended the institute, which was held in New Brunswick, N.J. from July 23-27.

The Johnson & Johnson



*From left, nurses Lara Booth, Marie Karitis-Smith, Barbara McMillen and Anna Miller.*

School Health Leadership Program is designed to improve student health practices by facilitating the empowerment and development of school nurses as leaders within their community's educational and health

service teams.

The institute provided an opportunity for Indian River's team of school nurses to develop their leadership and advocacy skills. Topics covered included school leadership, program planning and evaluation, coalition building and networking, strategic planning, project management, effective communication, facilitation and fundraising. Additionally, nurses were exposed to advanced topic content, received intensive technology training, and were trained in selecting and utilizing evidence-based intervention programs.

## Williams Monument Relocated

A special monument honoring former student David G. Williams was recently relocated to the campus of Sussex Central High School north of Millsboro. The monument was placed at the entrance to the school's tennis courts.

Donated by the Sussex Central Class of 1979, the brick monument was previously located near the tennis courts at the Georgetown Middle School building, which housed Sussex Central High until 2004. With those courts no longer in use, the Williams family requested that the monument be moved to the new Sussex Central High School campus.

David Williams was an exceptional student and athlete who died in 1978 at the age of 17 after battling a rare form of bone cancer.

The Williams family contacted the school last spring about relocating the monument. Several district custodians were able to move the memorial to its new home shortly before the opening of the 2012-2013 school year in early-September.

### Soccer Skills on Display

On Oct. 16, the Howard T. Ennis School in Georgetown hosted the Sussex County Soccer Skills Competition for Delaware Special Olympics.

Ennis students, along with those from other schools across Sussex County, spent the morning showing off their dribbling, passing and shooting skills.

The event was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. Delaware Special Olympics annually hosts soccer skills competitions in each of the state's three counties.

## "Sticks and Stones" Presented to IRSD Elementary School Students

### Joshua M. Freeman Foundation funds theatrical program

The Indian River School District and the Joshua M. Freeman Foundation recently took a theatrical approach to teaching elementary school students about bullying.

During the week of Oct. 15-19, all district students in Grades 3-5 attended performances of "Sticks and Stones," an interactive, dramatic musical program designed to educate children about the choices they make and the behaviors that are expected of them. The performances were staged by musical performer and teaching artist Lyle Cogen.

Cogen used songs and storytelling to teach children about the behaviors that are considered bullying and what to do if they or their classmates are being bullied.



*Teaching artist Lyle Cogen (left and above) performs her "Sticks and Stones" program for district elementary school students.*

"Sticks and Stones" was staged at Sussex Central High School, Southern Delaware School of the Arts and John M. Clayton Elementary School. Students were bused to the performance sites throughout the week.

The Joshua M. Freeman Foundation generously funded the entire cost of the program, including student transportation.

## Indian River School District "A Model of Excellence"

# College Prep Initiatives

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The pathway is modeled after a similar STEM program at North Penn High School in Lansdale, Pa. Principal Mark Steele visited the North Penn program on several occasions while formulating the IRHS pathway. About 18 freshman and sophomores are currently enrolled in the pre-engineering program. The total enrollment should peak at about 120 students within four years.

Steele noted the "project-based" pathway not only enhances students' math, science and technology skills but also hones their critical-thinking abilities. As a result, students will be better prepared for college and real world employment.

"This is a good program," Steele said. "The vast, vast majority will go straight to college, and many into engineering."

Meanwhile, Sussex Central High School is finalizing its candidacy for the prestigious International Baccalaureate program. Since IB classes are scheduled to begin in 2013-14, the school is currently reviewing admission applications.

This internationally-recognized curriculum requires 11th and 12th grade students to take and test in six subjects over a two-year period while also completing core classes in reasoning, extended essay and "Creativity, Action and Service." Sussex Central will be only the third Delaware high school to offer an IB diploma, which provides students with

college credit, recruitment by top colleges and greater opportunities for grants and loans.

Both district high schools also offer Advanced Placement courses, which expose students to college-level course work and give them the opportunity to earn college credit. AP course offerings at Indian River and Sussex Central include calculus, English literature, U.S. history, biology, chemistry, Spanish and statistics.

The district's efforts to prepare students for post-secondary education also extend to the middle school level.

The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program is an elective class for eighth- and ninth-grade students at Millsboro Middle School, Georgetown Middle School and Sussex Central High School. The overall goal of the program is to make college a reality for more students. Designed for students performing in the academic middle, AVID builds motivation, foundational learning and academic self-confidence while providing insight into college expectations.

Selbyville Middle School, meanwhile, is offering a series of nine-week exploratory courses designed to stimulate interest in STEM principles and prepare students for Indian River High School's pre-engineering pathway.

Federal Race to the Top funding was used to implement many of these college preparatory initiatives.

## NONDISCRIMINATION

All practices, procedures and policies of the Indian River School District shall clearly exemplify that there is no discrimination in the hiring, training, assignment, promotion, transfer or discipline of employees or in the educational programs and activities of students on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age within statutory limits, gender, domicile, marital status or disability in accordance with state and federal laws. The district offers additional service to students with limited English language skills or with disabilities so that they may benefit from these programs. For additional information and assistance, please contact:

### ADA Coordinator

John Eckrich, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, Indian River School District, 31 Hosier St., Selbyville, De. 19975, (302) 436-1000

### Section 504 Coordinator

Belinda Waples, Director of Special Services, Indian River School District, 31 Hosier St., Selbyville, De. 19975, (302) 436-1000

### Title IX Coordinator

Lesia Jones, Supervisor of Special Projects, Indian River School District, 31 Hosier St., Selbyville, De. 19975, (302) 436-1000



## NINGUNA DISCRIMINACION

Todas las prácticas, procedimientos y políticas del distrito escolar de Indian River ejemplificarán claramente que no hay ninguna discriminación en el empleo, el entrenamiento, la promoción, la transferencia, o la disciplina de los empleados o en el programa educativo y las actividades de los estudiantes en la base de la raza, el credo, el color, la religión, el origen nacional, la edad dentro de los límites estatutarios, el sexo, el domicilio, el estado civil o la incapacidad de acuerdo con las leyes estatales y federales. El distrito les ofrece servicio adicional a los estudiantes con las destrezas limitadas en el idioma inglés o con unas incapacidades para que puedan beneficiar de estos programas. Para más información y ayuda adicional, por favor llame:

### al Coordinador de ADA

John Eckrich, Supervisor de Edificios y Propiedades, Distrito Escolar Indian River, 31 Hosier St., Selbyville, DE 19975, (302) 436-1000

### al Coordinador de Sección 504

Belinda Waples, Director de Servicios Especiales, Distrito Escolar Indian River, 31 Hosier St., Selbyville, DE 19975, (302) 436-1000

### al Coordinador de Título IX

Lesia Jones, Supervisor de Proyectos Especiales, Distrito Escolar Indian River, 31 Hosier St., Selbyville, DE 19975, (302) 436-1000.

# Four District Elementary Schools Earn State Awards

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In addition, Long Neck Elementary School was named a School of Continued Excellence. The award recognizes its sustained accomplishments in promoting high academic achievement for students. Long Neck was one of only two schools in Delaware to receive this honor.

"It gives me immense pleasure to have these four schools recognized on a statewide level," Superintendent Susan Bunting said. "IRSD students face a variety of socioeconomic challenges, but our teachers have never allowed these challenges to become obstacles to learning. I congratulate each of our

award-winning schools for working tirelessly to ensure success for all students."

As Recognition Schools, John M. Clayton, Lord Baltimore and Phillip C. Showell were honored for exceptional student performance and for closing the achievement gaps between multiple student groups. Each school will ap-

point a committee to determine how the \$50,000 award will be spent.

Delaware Lt. Gov. Matt Denn and Secretary of Education Mark Murphy announced the award winners at a special press conference on Oct. 10. Winners were selected based on DCAS data from the 2011-2012 school year.