

INDIAN RIVER DISTRICT NEWS

INDIAN RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT, 31 HOSIER ST., SELBYVILLE, DELAWARE 19975
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COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS Implementation Moves Forward

Rigorous goals established for K-12 students

The implementation of Common Core State Standards is continuing in classrooms throughout the Indian River School District during the 2013-2014 school year.

Delaware is one of 46 states adopting the new standards, which set grade level learning expectations for students in math, English lan-

Common Core Standards: Myth vs. Fact.....Page 4

guage arts and literacy. Common Core State Standards set clear, consistent and rigorous learning goals and are focused on preparing students for success in college and career. District curriculum is being aligned with the standards, and teachers continue to be trained on instructional strategies and lesson development.

"We're preparing students to face life in the 21st Century,"



Delaware Gov. Jack Markell observes students in Kelsea Dell's eighth-grade math classroom at Millsboro Middle School. Markell visited the school on Oct. 10 to witness Common Core State Standards in action.

said LouAnn Hudson, IRSD Director of Curriculum and Instruction. "We now live in a global society."

Common Core standards are currently being utilized in K-12 math and English language arts lessons at all district schools. In addition, the high-level reading and writing skills

acquired through Common Core can benefit students in all content areas, including science, social studies, visual/performing arts, and career and technical education classes.

"We are building lessons in all subjects with a strong literacy component in mind," said Hudson, who also noted

the importance of the crossover between mathematics and science and the district's focus on STEM.

One misconception about Common Core is that the standards are a national curriculum for schools. The standards are not a curriculum but rather a benchmark that establishes what students should learn and when they should learn it. District curriculum is written by teachers and aligned with the Common Core standards. The district has the freedom to choose the instructional strategies and curricular materials it deems appropriate to prepare students to meet the standards.

While student performance standards have been in place in Delaware since the late-1990s, the adoption of Common Core represents a significant shift in rigor and expectations. In October, the district hosted a pair of public forums to explain the new standards to parents and community members.

"The changes are considerable," Hudson said. "This is
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UD-IRSD PARTNERSHIP

Dual Enrollment Prepares Students for College

Indian River High School is partnering with the University of Delaware this year to provide 12th-grade students with the opportunity to earn college credit prior to graduation.

Through a special dual enrollment program, 19 IRHS students are completing the university's E110 course, which is a requirement for all fresh-

man college students. The three-credit-hour course teaches the writing and research skills that students will utilize throughout their college careers.

"So far, it's going well," said Will Revels, district Supervisor of Secondary Education. "They're well on their way to becoming good writers and re-

searchers for college."

Students in the program are dually enrolled in both Indian River High School and the University of Delaware. They were chosen based on SAT scores, past academic performance, and teacher recommendations. E110 is taught by Michelle Peeling, who completed extensive training at UD

and had the course syllabus approved by the university.

Revels noted the program will introduce students to college-level course work, provide them with the writing and research skills needed to be successful in college, and give them college credit at the time of their high school graduation. The
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"A Model of Excellence"

From the Desk of the Superintendent



Dear Parents,

What makes the Indian River School District a "Model of Excellence"? Flipping through the pages of this newsletter will give you plenty of answers to that question. Having seven schools recognized by the State of Delaware as either Recognition Schools or Schools of Continued Excellence (Page 3), Jennifer Lougheed being selected for the Rodel Teacher Council (right), and Indian River High School offering a dual enrollment program that gives students the opportunity to earn college credit (Page 1) are all tremendous accomplishments for our district. Factor in Sussex Central High School's International Baccalaureate program, Indian River High School's STEM curriculum pathway, our two elementary Spanish immersion programs, and the middle school AVID program that helps young learners reach their full potential, and you have plenty of reasons to feel good about sending your children to one of the finest public school districts in Delaware.

A large portion of this newsletter is devoted to the district's adoption of Common Core State Standards. Since this is an extremely important initiative, we want parents to be accurately informed about how the new standards will impact their children's education. We hope the provided information will help parents understand how the standards are preparing students for success in the global economy of the 21st Century. It was a privilege to have Delaware Gov. Jack Markell visit Millsboro Middle School in October to observe the implementation of the new standards in IRSD's classrooms. The district has also hosted two public forums to explain the CCSS implementation in our schools. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's school or the district office if they have questions about this important initiative.

In conclusion, I want to convey my immense pride at our district's being considered the gold standard for what is effective in Delaware public education. IRSD's sterling reputation would not be possible without the support of our caring parents. Please accept my heartfelt thanks for helping to make us a true "Model of Excellence."

Sincerely,

Susan S. Bunting
Superintendent

Lougheed Selected for Teacher Council

Jennifer Lougheed of Georgetown Middle School was one of 16 exemplary teachers selected by the Rodel Foundation of Delaware to serve as members of the Rodel Teacher Council. The announcement was made on Sept. 10.

The goal of the Rodel Teacher Council is to provide a venue for teachers to weigh-in on important issues that affect the work of educators and help set the course for future education reforms throughout the State of Delaware that focus on personalized learning. Council members will advise the Rodel Foundation on critical education re-



Lougheed

form initiatives, meet with key education stakeholders, visit exemplary schools where innovation is transforming instruction, and help scale these best practices on instruction and innovation throughout the state.

"To have a talented educator like Jennifer Lougheed selected for the Rodel Teacher Council makes me extremely

proud," Indian River School District Superintendent Susan Bunting said. "Jennifer's commitment and dedication to her profession make her an ideal candidate for the council and an important voice in education reform in the State of Delaware. Gifted teachers like Jennifer have helped make the Indian River School District a Model of Excellence."

A seventh-grade math teacher at Georgetown Middle School, Lougheed is in her eighth year of teaching in the Indian River School District. She has been a part of her school's Vision Network of Delaware team, Common Core curricu-

lum writing team, and instructional leadership team. She is also the math department chair and was the school's 2011-2012 Teacher of the Year.

Each of the educators selected for the council applied through a competitive process and was interviewed by a panel of Rodel staff, district administrators, and state education leaders. The council includes a variety of teacher voices, with members coming from all three counties, representing different grade levels, and bringing leadership perspectives that include union representatives, state policy committee advisors, and teachers of the year.

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Seven Schools Honored

Lt. Gov. Denn hosts ceremony for 2013 awards

Seven district schools were honored on Oct. 15 when Lt. Gov. Matt Denn hosted a special ceremony at Georgetown Middle School to announce Delaware's Reward and Recognition Schools for 2013.

Georgetown Middle School, Georgetown Elementary School, East Millsboro Elementary School, and Long Neck Elementary School were all named 2013 Recognition Schools. Each received a \$50,000 prize. In addition, Phillip C. Showell, John M. Clayton, and Lord Baltimore elementary schools were named Schools of Continued Excellence.

Lt. Gov. Denn and Delaware Secretary of Education Mark Murphy presented each school with a special banner at the ceremony.

"To have four schools receive Recognition Awards from the Lt. Governor is a tremendous honor for our district," Superin-



East Millsboro Principal Kelly Dorman addresses the audience during the Delaware Recognition Schools ceremony.

tendent Susan Bunting said. "This accomplishment is further reinforced by the three additional schools that were named Schools of Continued Excellence. Thus, we are thrilled to have nearly half the schools in our district recognized for their academic excellence."

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. They are also awarded to schools that have

succeeded in closing achievement gaps for groups such as low-income and minority students, and students with disabilities. Funding for the awards comes from the state's Race to the Top grant.

Of the 17 Reward and Recognition Schools in the State of Delaware, four hailed from the Indian River School District. In addition, Georgetown Middle was the only traditional middle school to receive the honor.

IRSD also had three of the state's 12 Schools of Continued Excellence. These schools won

★ *Recognition School* ★
Georgetown Middle School
2013

★ *Recognition School* ★
Georgetown Elementary School
2013

★ *Recognition School* ★
East Millsboro Elementary School
2013

★ *Recognition School* ★
Long Neck Elementary School
2013

★ *School of Continued Excellence* ★
Phillip C. Showell Elementary School
2013

★ *School of Continued Excellence* ★
John M. Clayton Elementary School
2013

School of Continued Excellence
Lord Baltimore Elementary School
2013

Recognition Awards last year and had another outstanding performance in 2012-2013, but are not eligible for financial awards again until 2014.

"I would like to congratulate the students and staffs of each school for exhibiting the outstanding dedication and achievement that has enabled Indian River to be one of the finest public school systems in the State of Delaware – a definite model of excellence," Bunting stated.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Chamber Supports PCS Elem.



On Oct. 11, the Bethany-Fenwick Chamber of Commerce donated \$650 to the art department at Phillip C. Showell Elementary School in Selbyville. From left, Chamber Event and Member Relations Manager Lauren Weaver, student Josiah Dennis, Phillip C. Showell Principal Laura Schneider, and student Olivia Olley.

Donation to Howard T. Ennis



In observance of "Make a Difference Day," American Legion Oak Orchard Riverdale Post 28 made a donation of clothing to children in need at the Howard T. Ennis School. Pictured (from left) are Julie Barton, Carol Feeley, Sandy Elliott, Tina Washington, and school nurse Diane Milam.

Common Core Standards

From Page 1

the biggest change in standards we've seen since the 1990s. This is definitely a leap, and our staff will rise to the challenge."

District implementation of the standards will continue during the next few years with the refining of standards-based lessons, the revising of summative unit tests, and the possible adoption of new textbooks.

As part of the shift to Common Core State Standards, the State of Delaware is implementing a new student assessment program. The existing Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) will be discontinued after the 2013-



Gov. Jack Markell speaks with students during his visit to Millsboro Middle School in October.

2014 school year and replaced with the new Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Smarter Balanced will be piloted in the Indian River School District this spring and fully implemented in 2014-2015.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Miss Delaware Visits Two District Schools



Rebecca Jackson, Miss Delaware 2013, visited classrooms at John M. Clayton Elementary School and the G.W. Carver Academy on Nov. 5 to deliver a special presentation on character building. Jackson read the book "Penny the One of a Kind Piano," which was written by her mother, Suzanne Jackson. She also performed songs from "Penny the Musical" and signed autographs for students.



IRSD: A Model of Excellence

Common Core State Standards Myth vs. Fact

Myth: The standards tell teachers what to teach.

Fact: The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who are in them. That's why these standards will establish what students need to learn, but they will not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will decide how best to help students reach the standards.

Myth: These standards amount to a national curriculum for our schools.

Fact: The standards are not a curriculum. They are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and others will decide how the standards are to be met. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.

Myth: The standards do not prepare or require students to learn Algebra in the eighth grade as many states' current standards do.

Fact: The standards accommodate and prepare students for Algebra I in the eighth grade by including the prerequisites for the course in Grades K-7. Students who master the K-7 material will be able to take Algebra I in eighth grade.

Myth: Common Core math standards do not require students to answer a problem correctly. As long as they can get close or justify their answer students get credit.

Fact: While Common Core standards include a renewed emphasis on building foundational math skills in early grades, students must still answer problems correctly. Students are encouraged to develop the math fluency to solve problems using multiple strategies.

IRHS Offers Dual Enrollment

From Page 1

three credits may also be transferable to another college or university if that school accepts UD course credit.

The E110 course will run the length of the school year rather than just a typical three-month college semester. Students will also receive more individualized instruction from their high school teacher.

The district plans to offer E110 at Indian River again next year and will investigate ex-

panding the partnership with UD to include additional courses in the future. Students were able to take E110 free of charge this year, as tuition and textbook costs were covered by the school district.

"It's really a great opportunity," Revels noted. "Any time we can partner with a university like UD for college and career readiness, it's a plus for us."

Dual enrollment is separate from the school's Advanced Placement courses.