

Ford Wins BHPOY Award

Jessica Ford of Phillip C. Showell Elementary School has been named the Indian River School District's Behavioral Health Professional of the Year for 2023!

The announcement was made at a special ceremony on March 9 at the Seed & Sapling venue in Frankford.

Jessica is in her fifth year as a school counselor at Phillip C. Showell and has 13 years of experience in the behavioral health profession. At PCS, she supports the emotional well-being of students to help them succeed in the classroom, works with outside agencies and community members to secure resources for families, helps coordinate the school's monthly club programs and secures food and gifts for families through the "Holiday Help" initiative.

"Jessi Ford is an outstanding advocate for the mental health and well-being of the students at Phillip C. Showell," said PCS Principal Christy Kerr. "We are extremely proud to have Mrs. Ford as our PCS school counselor and are thankful for the work that she does day-in and day-out to support the mental health of the students at Phillip C. Showell."

Jessica was chosen as the overall winner from a pool of 15 candidates, one from each district school. Seven school nurses, four mental health counselors, three school counselors and one school psychologist from IRSD were honored in the awards program.



Jessica Ford



IRSD Behavioral Health Professionals of the Year. Seated (from left): Sandra Chandler, Blair Catlin-Brown, Jessica Ford (overall winner), Jayme Mahoney, Jennifer Goodman. Standing (from left): Colleen Jones, Deena King, Anastasia Robinson, Kenna Murray, Amber Larimore, Tanja Doty-Levenson, Maria Cruz-Darby, Christine Griffin. Not pictured: Mallori Roy, Stephanie Wilkinson.

Photos of school winners, Page 3

IRSD Hosts Superbot Saturday

On Saturday, March 4, the Indian River School District hosted the 5th Superbot Saturday VEX IQ Delmarva Robotics Championship. Forty-two teams and more than 200 students from across Delmarva competed in the event, held at Indian River High School in Dagsboro.

Four IRSD teams earned bids to the VEX IQ World Championships in Dallas, Texas in April and May. World qualifiers are as follows:

Middle Schools, VEX IQ Worlds, April 30-May 2

- Millsboro Middle School, Team 21353A
- Southern Delaware School of the Arts, Team 47646G

Elementary Schools, VEX IQ Worlds, May 2-4

- Georgetown Elementary School, GES Robotics Team 11600A
- John M. Clayton Elementary School, The Boys Team 19945D

In addition, several teams earned special awards for their performance at

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Indian River School District

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the web at
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From the Superintendent



Dear Parents,

Indian River High School was the center of the robotics universe on March 4 when Indian River High School hosted the "Superbot Saturday" VEX IQ Delmarva Championships. More than 200 students from across Delmarva competed in front of a large crowd of spectators. At the end of the day, four teams from IRSD qualified for the World Championships in Dallas, Texas. I had the pleasure of attending this event and watching my own children compete alongside some of the most talented students in the region. I am thankful for the principles of teamwork that this program instills and that will certainly benefit students throughout their lives. The talent I witnessed at this competition has convinced me that many of our students have careers ahead of them in robotics or other STEM fields. I wish the best of luck to our qualifying teams in Dallas.

On March 9, the district hosted a special ceremony honoring our Behavioral Health Professionals of the Year for 2023. Jessica Ford, a school counselor at Phillip C. Showell Elementary School, was chosen as our overall winner from a talented pool of candidates that included nurses, counselors and school psychologists. (See Page 3.) I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Jessica and the other dedicated professionals that support our students' physical and emotional well-being every day!

On Page 4, you'll find photos of our Teacher of the Year winners for 2023-2024. I want to congratulate all of these dedicated individuals for representing the best of the teaching profession. Our district is truly fortunate to employ so many gifted educators that always have the best interest of our students at heart. The overall district winner will be announced at a special ceremony on May 4 and I'm certain the selection committee will have a very difficult task in choosing our district representative from this talented group.

Just a reminder that schools will be closed for Easter Break from April 6-14. I hope you enjoy this well-deserved time off!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jay F. Owens
Superintendent

Did You Know?

North Georgetown Elementary School hosted its first National Elementary Honor Society induction ceremony on March 6. A total of 44 fourth- and fifth-graders were inducted into the organization.



IRSD Behavioral Health Professionals of the Year



Blair Catlin-Brown
Southern Delaware
School of the Arts



Sandra Chandler
Lord Baltimore
Elementary School



Maria Cruz-Darby
North Georgetown
Elementary School



Jessica Ford
Overall Winner
Phillip C. Showell Elementary
School



Tanja Doty-Levenson
Georgetown Middle
School



Jennifer Goodman
Howard T. Ennis
School



Christine Griffin
East Millsboro
Elementary School



Colleen Jones
John M. Clayton
Elementary School



Deena King
Millsboro Middle
School



Amber Larimore
Long Neck
Elementary School



Jayme Mahoney
Selbyville Middle
School



Kenna Murray
IRSD Early Learning
Center



Anastasia Robinson
Sussex Central High
School



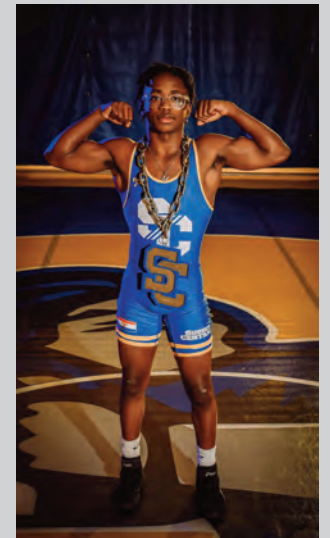
Mallori Roy
Georgetown
Elementary School



Stephanie Wilkinson
Indian River High
School

**Thank you
to these
dedicated
professionals
for all they
do for our
students!**

State Champs!



Malachi Stratton of Sussex Central High School won his second consecutive individual state wrestling title on March 4 at Cape Henlopen High School. Malachi defeated Red Lion's Tye Bellarin 9-3 in the 113-pound final to capture the championship. He was also state champion at 106 pounds in 2022.



Sussex Central High School's Breyden Wright won the state championship in the 100-yard butterfly at the Delaware DIAA Swimming Championships on February 25. Breyden captured the title with a time of 49.19 seconds.

VEX Robotics

From Page 1
the event. They are as follows:

Elementary School Division Teamwork Champion Award

- Georgetown Elementary School, GES Robotics Team 11600A

Robot Skills Champion Award - John M. Clayton Elementary School, The Boys Team 19945D

Judges Award - Georgetown Elementary School, GES Robotics Team 11600B

Middle School Division Excellence Award

- Millsboro Middle School, Team 21353A

Teamwork Champion Award - Millsboro Middle School, Team 21353A

Design Award - Millsboro Middle School, Team 21353B

Robot Skills Champion - Millsboro Middle School, Team 21353A

Judges Award - Southern Delaware School of the Arts, Team 47646G

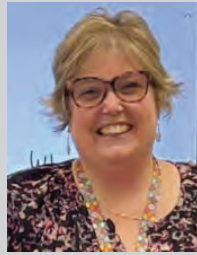
The Indian River School District would like to congratulate all teams that qualified for the VEX IQ World Championships!

Visit IRSD on:





Melanie Absher



Beth Baker



Jessica Behrens



Ashley Carter



Triwania DeShields-Morris



Hilary Diefenderfer

IRSD Teachers of the Year, 2023-2024

The Indian River School District is pleased to announce its Teacher of the Year winners for 2023-2024! The honorees are as follows:



Sheila Ebke



Leanne Hearn



Kasey Revel



Clayton Riepen



Abbe Tribbitt



Elizabeth Walter



Brooke Zwiebel



Kelsey Gullede



Wendy McCabe

Melanie Absher, East Millsboro Elementary School
Beth Baker, Howard T. Ennis School
Jessica Behrens, Lord Baltimore Elementary School
Ashley Carter, Millsboro Middle School
Triwania DeShields-Morris, North Georgetown Elementary School
Hilary Diefenderfer, Indian River High School
Sheila Ebke, Phillip C. Showell Elementary School
Kelsey Gullede, Long Neck Elementary School
Leanne Hearn, Georgetown Elementary School
Wendy McCabe, Southern Delaware School of the Arts
Kasey Revel, Sussex Central High School
Clayton Riepen, Selbyville Middle School
Abbe Tribbitt, John M. Clayton Elementary School
Elizabeth Walter, Georgetown Middle School
Brooke Zwiebel, IRSD Early Learning Center

The district's overall winner will be announced at a special ceremony on May 4.

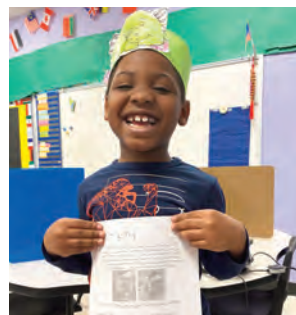
Congratulations to all of these gifted teachers!

JMC Completes Second Family Literacy Program

On Monday, February 27, John M. Clayton Elementary School celebrated the completion of its second Family Literacy Program this school year.

Ten families attended class for six weeks to learn the important reading skills taught in the classroom in order to enhance their support at home.

Each week, families read two stories that focused on different literary skills including story elements, compare and contrast, cause and effect, sequence, point of



view, and more. After working with teachers in class, families took the books home for the week to read together as a family and complete the accompanying activities. The following week, families returned their books, shared their experiences and read two new stories that focused on new literacy skills.

This program has been beneficial in building a reading routine at home, making connections between home and school, building relationships with teachers and families, and reinforcing education in all environments.

DOE Secretary Visits IRSD...Twice!

Delaware Secretary of Education Mark Holodick visited the Indian River School District twice in February and March.

His first visit was to North Georgetown Elementary School on February 17. Mr. Holodick presented certificates to bus drivers in honor of Bus Driver Appreciation Month. He then took a tour of the school, visiting classrooms and speaking with staff.

His second visit was on March 14 to East Millsboro Elementary School, where he observed students participating in a planting lesson for their new school garden. The garden is part of the Education Cultivation Program sponsored by Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids. Mr. Holodick also spent time speaking with HFHK staff members about the program.

The mission of HFHK is to inspire healthier lives by providing youth with joyful school gardening experiences and opportunities to eat the garden-fresh vegetables they've grown. Its vision is to have a vegetable garden in every Delaware school, leading to generations of healthy families throughout the state.

HFHK currently has gardens at 48 schools in Delaware. The garden at East Millsboro is the fifth in the Indian River School District.



IRSD Students and Staff Take Inclusion Pledge

On Wednesday, March 1, students and staff throughout the Indian River School District took the pledge to promote ACCEPTANCE, RESPECT and INCLUSION for all. The Spread the Word - Inclusion campaign, spearheaded by Special Olympics, teaches us to recognize that our choice of action frames how we treat others. Many students and staff proudly wore t-shirts created and distributed by Special Olympics Delaware to bring awareness to the campaign.

Howard T. Ennis School proudly leads the way in promoting and modeling Inclusion for all students. It was proud to partner with North Georgetown Elementary School, Georgetown Elementary School, Georgetown Middle School and Sussex Central High School in their banner signing events. Howard T. Ennis students were able to teach others about their disabilities and establish the foundation for lasting friendships through these partnerships.

To kick off the banner signing celebrations, Dr. Heather Statler from the IRSD Board of Education joined together with Inclusion friends from Sussex Central High School and Howard T. Ennis students and staff to lead the way in this initiative.



Students at Georgetown Elementary School sign the Inclusion banner.