

Ennis Therapy Pool Opens

On January 11, the therapy pool at the new Howard T. Ennis School officially opened. Aquatics facilitator Keri Justice and lifeguard Kyle Weed commemorated its opening with the very first pool plunge. Many HTE students have also since enjoyed their "first swim."

The new school officially opened on January 3, 2023 but the opening of the therapy pool was delayed for more than a year due to construction and design issues.

"The pool opening has been one of the most anticipated moments since we have moved into the new building," Keri Justice said. "The emotions we all felt as we have watched the progress and setbacks has been a rollercoaster, but now we are excited to move forward. Kyle and I have worked hard to prepare the space, learn the new equipment and make the new pool a comfortable and welcoming environment that the students will continue to enjoy for many years."

With the opening of the pool, students were finally able to practice the

water safety and basic swimming skills which they have been simulating in class.

Students with cerebral palsy and limited mobility are able to feel the weightlessness the water provided by wearing a neck collar. The neck collar enables them to move their arms and legs freely and takes away all of the pressure points they feel when they are out of the water. It didn't take long for students who hesitated and feared the water to express excitement and joy as they explored the new environment.

As students and staff continue to adjust to the new space, the aquatics facilitator and assisting lifeguard will work diligently to nurture students' individual abilities and comfort levels to ensure that they can enjoy this aquatic environment to the fullest. Safety in and around the water continues to be integrated into every class and, when coupled with learning to move freely and independently, students become confident, safe, and successful while meeting their aquatic goals.

IRSD Receives State Teacher Residency Grant

The Indian River School District is excited to announce that it has been awarded a competitive Yearlong Teacher Residency Grant from the Delaware Department of Education for the 2024-2025 school year!

The \$440,000 grant will allow IRSD to host up to 20 yearlong teacher residents in 2024-2025. The district will partner with Delaware Technical and Community College, the Relay Graduate School of Education and the University of Delaware.

Yearlong residents will be paid \$25,000 for the year and be placed at North Georgetown, East Millsboro, Lord Baltimore and John M. Clayton elementary schools. This is the fifth consecutive year IRSD has been awarded the Yearlong Residency Grant.

Candidates Sought for District 1 Seats

The Indian River Board of Education is seeking interested candidates to fill two vacant seats in District 1 through June 30, 2024. Interested candidates should contact:

Superintendent Jay Owens
(302) 436-1000
jack.owens@irsd.k12.de.us

Jennifer Troublefield
(302) 436-1000
jennifer.troublefield@irsd.k12.de.us

Interested candidates should submit a candidate filing form and letter of interest prior to 4:00 p.m. on **February 16, 2024**. Forms and additional information are available at irsd.net.



Indian River School District

"A Model of Excellence"

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From the Superintendent



Dear Parents,

As we move past the halfway point of the school year, there is plenty to be excited about in the Indian River School District. First and foremost, as you can see on the first page of this newsletter, the therapy pool at the new Howard T. Ennis School is up and running. Various design and construction issues delayed the pool's opening for more than a year, but now Ennis staff can use the facility to provide valuable therapy services to students with disabilities. I would like to thank the Howard T. Ennis staff for their patience as we worked to provide the school with a first-class aquatic facility. We are also pleased to report that the construction of the school's greenhouse is moving forward and should be completed within the next two weeks.

There is more good news coming from across the street, as construction of the new Sussex Central High School is progressing on schedule. Structural steel and decking are complete and drywall installation and interior painting are underway in some areas of the building. I recently had the opportunity to tour the new facility and was extremely impressed with what I saw. The facility remains on track for a September 2025 opening. I encourage you to take a drive down Patriots Way to see this wonderful facility taking shape.

Just a reminder that one of the best ways to stay on top of the great things happening in IRSD is through our district's social media pages. We have had Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) accounts for several years and are pleased to announce the addition of an Instagram account in 2024. These pages are a great source of information about the positive accomplishments of our students and staff. Most of our schools have individual Facebook pages as well. Anyone perusing these pages can't help but be impressed with the number of talented students and educators in our district. For me, it serves as a personal reminder of why we're here and why I'm proud to serve as IRSD superintendent.

As always, thank you for supporting our schools!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jay F. Owens
Superintendent



Did You Know?

Indian River School District is now on Instagram!

Follow us at:

**Indian River School District - Delaware
(@indianriverde)**

Mobile Museum Visits IRSD Early Learning Center

Preschool students at the IRSD Early Learning Center were treated to a special "Mobile Museum" from the Delaware Museum of Nature and Science on Dec. 12 and Dec. 19.

The Amazing Animal Adaptations program allowed students to touch animal specimens such as a puffer fish, beaver and elephant's tooth. Students also read "The Mixed-Up Chameleon" and participated in a camouflage quilt activity that reinforced the lesson.

The Mobile Museum is designed to bring the fun of a field trip into the school. The Delaware Museum of Nature and Science offers exciting, hands-on programs that complement what schools are teaching in the classroom.



Crandell Wins Gatorade Award

Brynn Crandell of Indian River High School has been named Gatorade Delaware Cross Country Player of the Year for the third consecutive year.

Brynn has won the Delaware cross country state title in each of the past three seasons. The senior is the district's first-ever three-time winner of the Gatorade award.

The Gatorade Player of the Year Award was established in 1985 to recognize the nation's most elite high school student-athletes for their athletic excellence, academic achievement and exemplary character. In each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, one Gatorade winner is chosen in 12 different sports.

Overall, IRSD has had nine athletes earn 11 Gatorade awards in the program's history.

Indian River Hosts College Showcase

On December 20, Indian River High School hosted its first-ever College Showcase for juniors and seniors.

A panel of IRHS graduates spoke to students about their college experiences and what to expect from post-secondary education.

Members of the panel were Aniyah Blake (Class of 2023, Roanoke College), Jordan Gonzalez (Class of 2023, University of Delaware), Mya MacDonald (Class of 2023, University of South Carolina), LaNajah Trader (Class of 2023, Delaware Tech), Brooke Workley (Class of 2023, Beebe School of Nursing), Christie Nicholson (Class of 2023, Fashion Institute of Technology NYC), Max Forrey (Class of 2023, Eastern University), Finn Hanley (Class of 2022, Wake Forest University), Bryan Cabrera-Icté (Class of 2022, University of Delaware), Lanaya Haynes (Class of 2022, College of Charleston), Kevin Reid (Class of 2022, Delaware State University) and Lia Diakos (Class of 2022, University of Delaware).

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GES Receives TangerKids Grant



Samantha West, a fourth-grade teacher at Georgetown Elementary School, was selected from more than 20 applicants to receive a Tanger Kids Grant in the amount of \$1,750. The grant was written to buy durable headphones with microphones for students to use with the district's new ELA program, as well as ACCESS testing. Mrs. West is pictured with her fourth-grade students.

Paras Participate in Professional Learning

On January 22, the Indian River School District hosted day-long professional learning activities for paraprofessionals.

Participants learned about the district's new paraprofessional mentoring program scheduled to launch in the fall of 2024. In addition, representatives from the Delaware State Education Association conducted presentations on topics such as making connections with students, the impact of poverty on children and how to deal with various personalities in the workplace.

The day culminated with a college fair for district staff members. Participants were able to speak with representatives from local colleges and universities about undergraduate programs, graduate programs and ARTC opportunities.

Colleges participating in the event were Delaware State University, Delaware Technical and Community College, Relay Graduate School of Education, University of Delaware and Wilmington University.

Activities were held at Sussex Central High School.

