



THE CAESAR RODNEY SCHOOL DISTRICT QUARTERLY "Where Excellence is Our Tradition" CR REPORT

Your District-Wide Information Source

October 2011 Issue



**Welcome back
to
another exciting
"Rider" year!**



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What's Happening?

Board Meetings (7:00 p.m.)

October 25: Fifer Middle School

November 15: Caesar Rodney High School

December 20: Nellie Stokes Elementary School

Special Events:

October 8: Rider Pride Day

October 11: CR Teacher of the Year

Recognition of the Year Dinner

October 21: Simpson Ribbon Cutting

**Congratulations, Nellie Hughes Stokes
Elementary School Being Named a
National Blue Ribbon School!**

Have you seen our new website?
<http://www.cr.k12.de.us>

Rider Pride Day October 8th 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.



This image is a Quick Response Code (QR) for the Caesar Rodney School District website. If you have a Smartphone with a camera, just search for a QR "app" then use your phone to take a picture of this image. You will then be taken to the district website. Once you have installed the "app" on your phone, go to Google.com and type in "QR Generator." You will then be able to create your own QR codes to share websites, videos or other information.



Message From the Superintendent

A new school year has begun and these are certainly exciting times for the Caesar Rodney School District and the Caesar Rodney community. First, we welcome nearly 80 new teachers, administrators,



paraprofessionals and custodians to the Caesar Rodney School District. I hope that each person finds their experience here at CR to be exciting and rewarding. I also want to personally welcome Dr. Dave Santore as the new principal at Dover Air Force Base Middle School. Dr. Santore replaces Dr.

Jessilene Corbett who was appointed principal at Fred Fifer Middle School.

As promised, W.B. Simpson Elementary School has opened its doors after a year-long renovation. The school was designed in the classical style of the old Caesar Rodney High School/Junior High School. A ribbon-cutting event is scheduled for October 21st where the Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of Education and others will help to “officially” open the doors at Simpson. But you will be able to tour the building on October 8th as part of Rider Pride Day.

The work at Allen Frear Elementary School continues as our fourth and final renovation project. As you drive by, you can see the empty shells that were once classrooms, but as with McIlvaine, Brown and Simpson, they will soon be replaced by state-of-the-art engineering and technology, a cost-savings energy system and a wonderful learning environment for our CR Riders.

I am extremely proud that Nellie Hughes Stokes Elementary School has been recently chosen as a National Blue Ribbon School. This is the finest educational honor that can be bestowed on a school. The award honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools whose students achieve at very high levels or have made significant progress and helped close gaps in achievement especially among disadvantaged and minority students. This is a national validation of the hard work by our students and staff at Stokes.

Also, as you may be aware, the state’s school accountability ratings were recently released. Nine of our twelve schools have been rated “Superior;” two were rated “Commendable” and one was rated “Under Academic Watch.” We will continue to work hard to ensure all of our students are receiving the education they deserve.

A special commendation goes out to the staff at Postlethwait Middle School which is the only middle school in Delaware to show improvement under the old DSTP testing program and the new DCAS program—well done!

And finally, our fourth annual Rider Pride Day is scheduled for October 8th with more exhibits, performances, demonstrations, vendors and activities than ever before. I hope you can join us as we thank our community for all of it’s support through the years.

Nellie Stokes Receives National Blue Ribbon School Status

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has named Nellie Hughes Stokes Elementary School a National Blue Ribbon School. This award honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools whose students achieve at very high levels or have made significant progress and helped close gaps in achievement especially among disadvantaged and minority students.

Schools are chosen based upon one of two criteria: 1) Schools whose students, regardless of backgrounds, are high performing. These are schools ranked among the state's highest performing schools as measured by their performance on state assessments or in the case of private schools, that score at the highest performance level on tests referenced by national norms in at least the most recent year tested; and 2) Schools with at



Staff from Nellie Stokes Elementary School celebrate after learning of their Blue Ribbon School status.

least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that improve student performance to high levels as measured by the school's performance on state assessments or nationally-normed tests.

Go Riders!

Welcome to the Caesar Rodney School District



Seen above are some of the sixty-three teachers recently hired for the 2011-2012 school year who will provide a quality education to our more than 7600 students in the Caesar Rodney School District. Working throughout the district, these teachers have been assigned to teach subjects including: English, Arabic, Math, Special Education, Drama, Biology, Science, Social Studies and Library Media. One administrator, one principal and one assistant principal were also hired as were nine paraprofessionals and one custodian.

Photographs of school and student activities now online

A new feature of the Caesar Rodney School District website is up-to-the-minute photographs of student and school activities taken during the current school year. Photographs will only be used if parental or guardian consent has been provided for students under 18 years of age.

To access the photo gallery, go to this link:

<http://www.cr.k12.de.us/photos/photos/htm>

then simply click on a school's picture album or event album to see the latest pictures. Pictures are taken in high resolution and can easily be downloaded and printed. Enjoy!

Immediate Openings in District's Pre-School Classroom

Caesar Rodney School District's Early Intervention Program is looking for typically developing three year old children to provide inclusionary experiences in the district's half-day preschool program. The class meets Monday-Friday at W.B. Simpson Elementary School throughout the school from 8:30-11:05 in the morning or 12:25-3:00 in the afternoon.

There is a monthly fee of \$55. Parents must provide transportation and proof of residency in the Caesar Rodney School District. This program is a great introduction to a structured school setting and exposes children to a preschool curriculum taught by a certified teacher.

If you would like your child to be considered for this program, please contact Sherri Gray @ 697-4145.



W.B. Simpson Elementary Opens After Year-Long Renovations

After a year of renovations and students being relocated to Dover Air Force Base, W.B. Simpson once again opened its doors to a population of nearly 550 students. In addition to the new eye-pleasing brick exterior, the interior of the school was completely upgraded with new plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems as well as state-of-the-art technology.

Simpson Elementary also has an underground geothermal system, which burns no fossil fuels and allows teachers to control their individual classroom's temperature and humidity. Welcome back all!



The exterior of W.B. Simpson just two days before the doors opened to returning students. Work will continue on landscaping and other projects until completed.



Race To The Top Program Focuses on Student Achievement

Race To The Top (RTTT) is a federal grant program focused on improving the quality of education for all students. Currently, the district is in our second year of the four year program focused on improving the number of college and career ready students, improving the use of data to make decisions, supporting effective teaching practices and improving those schools who need it the most. Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, all districts began implementing RTTT requirements while also conducting a "needs assessment." As a result of looking at our various student achievement measures, RTTT has been focused on supporting secondary schools by developing a Freshman Academy and a summer Success Academy.

Caesar Rodney High School (CRHS) is the largest high school in Delaware. As students transition to this new environment, they face many challenges in both their personal and academic lives. To support the transition to rigorous coursework, a separate part of the building has been dedicated to these 9th graders. Now called the Freshman Academy, it provides a smaller and "focused" environment with a core group of teachers better able to meet needs of the 550 students who enter CRHS every year. Teachers have been supported through intensive training and received many new "tools" to teach and engage students as well as chart student progress, including SMART boards and student response systems which will be on display during Rider Pride Day.

The school year was extended for many freshmen students as they participated in the Success Academy which focused on the orientation of these students to each other, their teachers and the building itself while navigating a variety of team building and leadership activities. Overall, we achieved well over our target goal of 250 students and the surveys report a tremendous student experience.

The second focus of RTTT is the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for all K-12 teachers, where groups of teachers set common goals and collaboratively work together to discuss teaching and assessing and supporting all students based on individual need. The goal of PLC's is to put time in the hands of groups of teachers as a form of job-embedded training to share "best practices."

Currently, the state requirement for PLCs is 90 minutes per week, working out to 60 hours a year of time and training that is coordinated and supported by the district while determined by groups of teachers to support student learning.

The initial goal of RTTT was to identify areas of improvement to target and this has been accomplished. The goal now is to transform and shape how we serve students and our community while continuing to improve for the future. For additional information related to the RTTT program, please contact: ryan.fuller@cr.k12.de.us.



STUDENTS ENCOURAGED TO JOIN A BAND

The 5th graders of Nellie Hughes Stokes, Star Hill, W.B.Simpson, W. Reily Brown and Allen Frear Elementary schools were recently treated to an instrument demonstration courtesy of Mr. Harry Voshell of B&B Music in Camden.

The instrument demonstration is the first step in band recruitment. Mrs. Maureen Cannon (Elementary Band Director) subsequently meets with each child to screen them for the "right and perfect" instrument.; great care must be made when making that decision.

Students will perform concerts in their separate schools in January and February of 2012. In May, all elementary schools will combine to play a Gala Spring Concert

at Caesar Rodney High School, forming the largest elementary band in the State of Delaware. For more information, please contact Maureen McDermott Cannon at maureen.cannon@cr.k12.de.us.





First-ever Success Academy a HUGE success!

Nearly 360 freshman students, or 60% of the incoming freshman class at Caesar Rodney High School recently sacrificed two weeks of their summer vacation to participate in Caesar Rodney High School's "Success Academy," a Race-To-



The-Top initiative designed to build leadership skills, develop team building and bond with fellow classmates. More

importantly, the academy was created to assist middle school students as they transition into high school.

"Our high school Success Academy was off to a great start," said Jeff Visalli, assistant principal at Caesar Rodney High School, in charge of both the Success Academy and Freshman Academy. "We had anticipated 250 students to arrive, but nearly 360 attended. This truly shows the commitment to education from our students, our parents and the entire Caesar Rodney community."



On the first day, students were introduced to the academy staff then provided with information about goals and objectives. They were also oriented to the high school environment including learning where their classrooms were located, given their locker assignments as well as their coursework for their freshman year. They were also broken up into group activities including academic preparation, team building and leadership exercises. "This was not a mandatory program;

attendance was optional and no grades were given during the program," said Visalli. "The Success Academy is about a positive learning environment free from stress and rich in academics."

Said one student, "This program is a benefit for freshmen. We're lucky to be the first class to have this." Said another, "I love being with my friends and I didn't think we were going to have a good time. I like high school so much better than middle school!"



Visalli also thanked the business community for their generosity and support. "It goes without saying that we could not have been successful without the help and contributions made by our community businesses. Our students and staff thank them for all they do to support our schools in the Caesar Rodney School District."



Varsity Sports Underway as New School Year Begins



Remaining Football Schedule

October 7	SUSSEX TECH (Homecoming)
October 14	@Sussex Central
October 21	@Smryna
October 28	MILFORD
November 4	@Cape Henlopen
November 11	DOVER

Remaining Soccer Schedule

October 4	@Dover
October 6	SMYRNA
October 11	INDIAN RIVER
October 13	@Woodbridge
October 18	MIDDLETOWN
October 20	@Sussex Tech
October 25	LAUREL
October 27	@Cape Henlopen
November 1	@Appoquinimink (6 pm)



Remaining Field Hockey Schedule

October 4	@Laurel
October 6	MILFORD
October 11	@Seaford
October 13	@Cape Henlopen
October 18	DELMAR
October 20	@Caravel
October 21	SUSSEX TECH
October 25	SMYRNA
October 27	@Polytech

Remaining Girls Volleyball Schedule

October 4	ARCHMERE
October 6	MILFORD
October 13	@Cape Henlopen
October 17	@Sanford
October 18	DELMAR
October 20	SUSSEX TECH
October 25	SMYRNA
October 27	@Polytech



Caesar Rodney Supports 9-11 Ceremonies



In ceremonies commemorating the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the crash of Flight 93 in Shanksville, PA., members of the Caesar Rodney High School AFJROTC led first responders across Bicenntennial Park Bridge in Milford for a wreath-laying ceremony. Meanwhile, at McIlvaine Early Childhood Center, children, staff and parents gathered at the school's flagpole to recite the Pledge of Allegiance at the exact moment the first World Trade Center Tower was attacked.

Fifth Annual Grandparents Day at Star Hill

Students at Star Hill Elementary were recently treated to some quality time with their grandparents as the school held a pre-celebration of Grandparents' Day which typically falls on the Sunday after Labor Day. Teachers from each grade level planned activities which grandparents participated in with their grandchildren. Some classrooms served breakfast to their guests while others played classroom games such as Bingo. Many grandparents also had the opportunity to interact with classroom technology such as SmartBoards and were amazed how things have changed since they went to school.



Have you seen our new website? <http://www.cr.k12.de.us>

The CR Report is a publication created exclusively for the community of the Caesar Rodney School District. For questions or comments, please contact Ron Gough, Community Relations Specialist for the Caesar Rodney School District at (302) 698-4828 or via email at: ronald.gough@cr.k12.de.us.