



# THE JOHN DICKINSON SCHOOL

1801 Milltown Road / Wilmington, Delaware 19808 / P - (302) 992-5500 / F - (302) 992-5506  
**Dr. Lurleen M. Black, Principal**

August 10, 2025

## Welcome Back to School, Rams!

### Principal's Message

I am honored to introduce myself as the new principal of The John Dickinson School. I am Dr. Lurleen Black and this is my 18th year as a school level administrator, 24th overall in K-12 education. My major leadership accomplishments include:

- Leading initiatives that increased graduation rates and improved college and career readiness outcomes.
- Expanding programming that supported students in achieving record-breaking state test pass rates.
- Implementing literacy growth strategies that increased reading proficiency across grade levels.
- Implementing initiatives that promoted student self advocacy and efficacy

In addition to various leadership responsibilities, I specialize in: Adolescent relationship-building; Teacher professional development; Data-driven instructional leadership; Multilingual learner and special education inclusion practices; and Community and school partnerships that support whole-child development. It is with great excitement and deep gratitude that I step into this role, ready to work alongside you to make the 2025 - 2026 school year one of growth, excellence, and pride for our "Ramily".

Dickinson is an International Baccalaureate World School that takes pride in 6 core values: Academic Excellence, Diversity & Inclusion, Equity of Access and Opportunity, Global Citizenship, Holistic Development, and Collaborative Partnerships.

This year, our theme is - ***Level Up Learning: Quest for Success*** - and our vision is clear: to ensure that our diverse student community is supported and challenged to develop student capacity – academic, emotional, and social – for participation in a global society. Together, we will focus on three priorities:

1. **Improving Literacy** - ensuring every student is a confident reader, writer, and communicator.
2. **Strengthening Math Skills** - making certain that every student gains the knowledge and confidence to excel in advanced coursework, succeed in real-world problem-solving, and open doors to future academic and career pathways.
3. **Fostering Relationships** - creating opportunities for authentic relationship building through intentional programming and restorative practices.

### Academic & Program Updates

- Expanded CTE pathways and enhanced course offerings.
  - We have added more sections in our Business Pathway;
  - The Digital Design Media Pathway has expanded;
  - An additional advanced science course was added.
- Staff Development
  - Literacy-focused professional development for all staff;
  - IB-focused professional learning for all staff;
  - Restorative Practice professional learning for all staff;

- Vertical articulation teams to ensure standards-based instructional alignment in grades 6-12.
- Facilities Updates
  - ADA compliant upgrades at athletic fields.
- Infinite Campus added as a data management platform

## School Policies & Expectations

We are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for every student.

- **Attendance Matters:** The school day is from 7:25 a.m. to 2:10 p.m. Students are marked tardy if they arrive at their first block class after 7:25 a.m. Students are admitted into the building at 7:12 a.m. Please ensure students arrive on time daily. If your child is tardy or absent, please send in a note to our clerk either in-person or via e-mail at [shelli.lafazia@redclay.k12.de.us](mailto:shelli.lafazia@redclay.k12.de.us).
- **Dress Code:** Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities, including physical education, science labs, CTE classes, and other activities where unique hazards or specialized attire or safety gear is required.
  - Students must wear clothing including both a shirt with pants or skirt, or the equivalent.
  - The torso must be covered and undergarments must not be visible.
  - Students must wear shoes with a sole.
  - Hats and other head coverings are not to be worn in schools except in cases of medical, and religious reasons.  
Clothing may not:
    - depict, advertise or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances.
    - depict pornography, nudity or sexual acts.
    - share or depict hate speech.
    - Depict violence or threaten the health or safety of any other student or staff member.
    - [Dress Code](#)
- **Nutrition:** All Red Clay students receive a free breakfast and lunch. No application is necessary. Students may purchase additional items when available and permitted.
- **Technology:** All students will be assigned a chromebook for educational use. We encourage all students to use electronics responsibly and in ways that support learning and a safe school environment. Students who engage in unauthorized use of electronic devices may be subject to disciplinary consequences in accordance with district policy.

## School Supplies

[MYP School Supply List](#)

This supply list provides general recommendations to support student success in grades 9–12 and across the IB program. Individual teachers will communicate any additional or specific materials required for their courses at the start of the school year.

[General School Supply List for all students](#)

## Athletics

Rams sports are gearing up for another exciting season!

Visit [ramssports.com](http://ramssports.com) for tryout dates, game schedules, and sports news. Team practices begin:

Football - August 6 - 8:30 a.m.

B/G Cross Country- August 11 - 8:30 a.m.

Girls Volleyball- August 11 - 8:30 a.m.

Boys Soccer- August 11 - 8:30 a.m.

Field Hockey- August 13 - 8:30 a.m.

Get involved with a fall sport! Contact a coach today!

Sport	Coach Name	Email
Cheerleading	Sam Lindo	samanthajoe.lindo@redclay.k12.de.us
Cross Country - Boys	Terrence "Pops" Wilson	Terrencem.Wilson@redclay.k12.de.us
Cross Country - Girls	Kiersten Bailey	kiersten.bailey@redclay.k12.de.us
Field Hockey	Patricia Seeman	patricia.seeman@redclay.k12.de.us
Football	Charles Word	charles.word@redclay.k12.de.us
MYP Coed Soccer	Doug Bush	douglas.bush@redclay.k12.de.us
MYP Cross Country	Anthony Swierzbinski	anthony.swierzbinski@redclay.k12.de.us
MYP Volleyball Girls	Jim Brown	jimb@thelco.com
Soccer - Boys	Chris Distefano	chris.distefano@redclay.k12.de.us
Volleyball - Girls	Madison Adams	madison.adams@redclay.k12.de.us

[2025-2026 DIAA Pre-Participation Physical Forms.pdf](#)

[2025-2026 DIAA Pre-Participation Physical Forms - Spanish Version.pdf](#)

Andy Dick, Athletic Director

[andrew.dick@redclay.k12.de.us](mailto:andrew.dick@redclay.k12.de.us)

Office: 302-636-8757

## Band

The John Dickinson School Band welcomes new and returning members! Band camp is underway and it's not too late to join in. If you're interested in becoming a member of our marching or pep bands, please contact Ms. Huff.

Activity	Staff Name	Email
Band Director	Janae Huff	janae.huff@redclay.k12.de.us
Dance Team	Yarandrina Evans	yarandrina.evans@redclay.k12.de.us

## Communication & Support

- **Websites:**
  - [The John Dickinson School](#)
  - [RamsSports](#)
- **Main Office:** (302) 992-5500
- **Social Media:** Follow us on social media for updates.
  - [Facebook](#)
  - [Instagram](#)
  - [X](#)

## Safety & Wellness

- Our staff:
  - Participate in annual emergency response procedures training conducted by the RCCSD Safety Office.
  - Maintain up-to-date state of Delaware Wellness protocol training.
  - Designate CPR Trained staff members in each wing of the building.
  - Our school counselors, student services supports, and wellness teams are available to support students.
- Nurse's office is open daily for medical needs. Please contact our school nurses regarding specific medical concerns. They can be reached via email at [kimberly.francis@redclay.k12.de.us](mailto:kimberly.francis@redclay.k12.de.us) and [jennifer.obrien@redclay.k12.de.us](mailto:jennifer.obrien@redclay.k12.de.us) .
- [TJDS Christiana Care School-based Wellness Center](#) provides a variety of services at TJDS. Students must be registered to access these services. You can learn more about these services at the New Student Open House and by contacting the Wellness Center staff. Begin the registration process today!:  
[Wellness Center Application Link for 12 yr olds and up](#)  
[Wellness Center Application for 11 year olds and younger](#)

## Transportation

The RCCSD Transportation Department will notify families about bus transportation about 1 week prior to the first school day.

## Dickinson Support Association

The Dickinson Support Association (DSA) is a team of parents of Dickinson students committed to help support the Dickinson community by offering volunteer support at various Dickinson events and fundraising to support Dickinson student activities, field trips, clubs, family engagement events, and teacher appreciation and support needs. The DSA meets from September through May on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. The DSA board will meet at 6 p.m. Meetings are virtual, but occasionally hybrid meetings are held. The first general meeting of the school year will be held on **September 9, 2025 @ 6:30pm via Zoom**. For more information, you can contact DSA leadership via email at [dickinsondsa@gmail.com](mailto:dickinsondsa@gmail.com) .

## Important Dates

- August 11 – TJDS Office hours resume: 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- August 20 – New Student Open House
  - 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. for 6th grade and new MYP students
  - 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. for 9th grade and all new HS students
  - Guided and Self-Guided Building Tours
  - Chromebook distribution for 6th and 9th grades. (Other grade students will receive chromebooks at the beginning of the school year.)
  - A light meal will be provided.
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- August 25 – First day of school for 6th & 9th grade ONLY
- August 26 – First day for all other students
- September 6 - Red Clay Block Party @ TJDS 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- September 30 - Back-to-School Open House - all students

## Celebrating Our Community

This summer, our dedicated staff worked tirelessly preparing classrooms, updating resources, and creating a welcoming learning environment. Please give an extra special thanks to our custodial and maintenance team, as they have done a phenomenal job in beautifying our building and grounds in preparation for the school year. Our office and counseling teams worked to navigate a new data system this summer, teachers attended

professional learning, and our administrative team has been top notch in planning to lead the work toward our goals this year.

As we begin this new school year, I encourage every student and family to get involved by joining a sport or extracurricular activity, volunteer, cheer on our teams, and take pride in being a Ram. I can't wait to meet each of you in the hallways, at events, and in the classroom. Together, we will *Level Up Learning* and make 2025 - 2026 an incredible school year of learning, growth, and community.

With Ram Pride,

*Dr. Lurleen Black*

Principal

The John Dickinson School