

Winter  
20  
26

A PUBLICATION OF THE CAESAR RODNEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

WWW.CRK12.ORG

# CR REPORT



## TOMORROW STARTS HERE

*STORIES OF GROWTH, ACHIEVEMENT, AND OPPORTUNITY*

# LOOKING AHEAD TO SUCCESS

## A YEAR IN FOCUS

WRITTEN BY: Dr. Corey Miklus, Superintendent



Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed the holiday break and was able to spend quality time together with friends and family. As we reflect on 2025, the district has much to celebrate. Our school district has been recognized for the continued growth on state assessments. Caesar Rodney received a top-three statewide ranking for student performance in grades 3-8. In addition, U.S. News & World Report ranked Caesar Rodney High School as the #2 traditional high school in Delaware. This fall, every high school sports team made the post-season and our band program received top honors and placed 2nd overall at the Atlantic Coast Championships. These accomplishments are possible because of the hard work and dedication of our families, students, and staff.

As we begin the New Year, the district will continue its mission of providing high-quality education and opportunities for all students. February 9, 2026 is an important day for our district. On this date, we are asking our community to support the Caesar Rodney School District by approving our Operating Referendum. This referendum is essential to maintaining the high-quality education and care our families expect. The funding will directly support the recruitment and retention of staff, strengthen school safety through continued and enhanced security measures--including interior cameras and electronic door badge readers that allow for quick lockdowns and controlled access to classrooms--and address our growing transportation needs. Your support helps ensure safe, supportive, and successful schools for all students.

Your support of this referendum is an investment not only in our schools, but our entire community. Strong schools build strong communities. I have had the privilege of serving Caesar Rodney as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, supervisor of instruction, and superintendent. I am also a proud parent of a current 11th grader, as well as a recent graduate of Caesar Rodney. Their education and experiences in the district have prepared them to thrive in a highly competitive society. This referendum will allow Caesar Rodney to continue the standard of excellence our students, families, and community expect and deserve.

**IT'S A GREAT DAY TO BE A** *Rider*

# A VOTE FOR COMMUNITY

## SHAPING TOMORROW WITH TODAY'S SUPPORT

WRITTEN BY: Jessica Marelli, School Board President



On February 9th, I'm voting FOR the operating referendum because strong schools are the foundation of a strong community, even for those of us who no longer have children enrolled. As a parent of three Caesar Rodney alumni, I have seen firsthand how these schools shape not only students, but families, neighborhoods, and the future workforce of our area. The quality of our schools directly affects property values, local businesses, and our ability to attract new families and employers. Investing through this referendum is not just about classrooms today—it is about maintaining the long-term stability and vitality of the entire Caesar Rodney community.

Beyond education, the operating referendum represents a shared responsibility to care for the community that once supported our own children and will support future generations. School safety, programming to support our students, and recruiting and retaining a quality staff will make our schools community hubs and gathering places that benefit everyone, regardless of age or family status. Passing the referendum demonstrates that we value fiscal responsibility, community pride, and forward planning. Even without current students in our schools, supporting this measure is a way to give back, honor the legacy of Caesar Rodney, and ensure our community remains strong, connected, and prepared for the future.



# RIDER PRIDE LASTS A LIFETIME

## THE LASTING IMPACT OF LESSONS LEARNED

WRITTEN BY: Duron Harmon, CRHS Alumni

Graduating from Caesar Rodney High School was one of the most important chapters of my life. As a student-athlete, CR became more than just a place where I went to class—it was where I grew, struggled, learned discipline, and discovered who I was becoming. Balancing academics with football and basketball was never easy, but the challenges I faced there helped shape my character and prepared me for the demands of college and life beyond high school.

Athletics played a huge role in my journey at Caesar Rodney. Playing football and basketball taught me accountability, teamwork, and perseverance. Winning the football state championship my senior year was an unforgettable moment, one that showed me the power of commitment and belief in one another. Then, a few months later, finishing as the state runner-up in basketball was bittersweet, but it reinforced lessons about resilience and pride in giving your best effort, regardless of the outcome.

Beyond the wins and losses, the relationships I built at CR mean the most to me. I met lifelong friends who pushed me, supported me, and created shared memories that I'll carry forever. The environment was challenging at times, but that challenge was exactly what prepared me for college—teaching me how to manage my time, stay focused, and never shy away from hard work.

I am forever thankful to all of my teachers and coaches who invested in me during my time at Caesar Rodney High School. I have to give a special shoutout to my favorite teacher, Mrs. Wallace, whose support and belief never wavered. And to Coach Schoenwolf—the coach who saw something in me before I saw it in myself—thank you for changing my life. Rest in peace, sir. You are truly missed down here. I am grateful for the opportunity to graduate from Caesar Rodney High School and proud to always call it home.

Yours truly,

*Duron Harmon*

*Proud Alumni of Caesar Rodney High School, Class of 2009*



# SERVICE FROM THE HEART

## STUDENTS PITCH SERVICE PROJECTS AT MONTHLY LIONS' DEN

WRITTEN BY: Patrick Analore, Vice President, Camden-Wyoming Lions Club

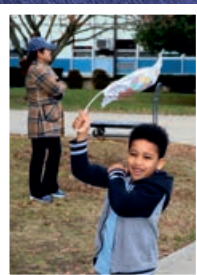
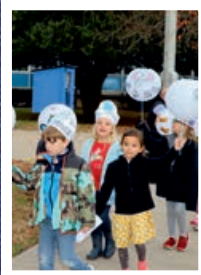
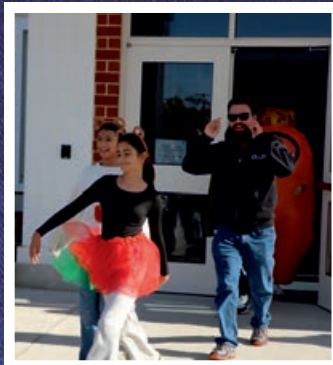
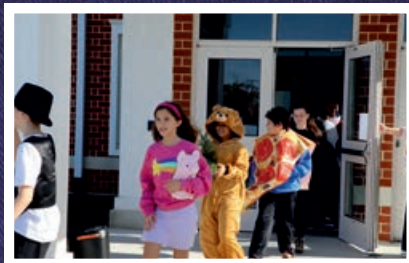
For the second year in a row, the Camden-Wyoming Lions Club is proud to partner with the Caesar Rodney School District to present The Lions' Den, a student service competition inspired by the television show Shark Tank. Each month, three student organizations from across the district present their community service projects, competing for a \$250 award provided by our Lions Club. These projects reflect the very heart of our Lions motto—*We Serve*—by showing how students are stepping up to make a difference in their schools and neighborhoods.

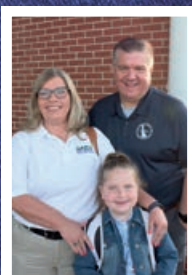
Student teams present their work to a rotating panel of community judges, including business leaders, educators, school board members, Caesar Rodney alumni, and local elected officials. Just like on the TV show, the judges don't go easy on them. Students are asked thoughtful questions about their planning, teamwork, impact, and future goals for their projects. Judges leave impressed not only by what the students have accomplished, but by the confidence, professionalism, and poise they show while thinking on their feet and defending their work.

The competition alternates each month between high school groups and elementary and middle school organizations, ensuring that students of all ages have the opportunity to participate. The Lions' Den was created to encourage student volunteerism and to highlight the positive character, leadership, and generosity that define Caesar Rodney students.

Funding for The Lions' Den comes from the Camden-Wyoming Lions Club's annual used book sale held each spring. Proceeds from the sale also support scholarships for Caesar Rodney students. Donations of used books, CDs, and DVDs may be dropped off at the Town of Wyoming Town Hall. Community members interested in serving as a judge for The Lions' Den are encouraged to contact Dan Rigby at the Caesar Rodney School District office. Together, through service and high expectations, we are helping prepare the next generation of leaders—because as Lions, We Serve.







# CULTIVATING LEADERS

## AGRISCIENCE BRINGS EDUCATION FULL CIRCLE

WRITTEN BY: Lauren Ruskey, CRHS Agriscience Teacher

Agriscience is a longstanding tradition in the Caesar Rodney School District. The Agriscience Department at Caesar Rodney High School offers two pathways - Plant Systems and Animal Systems. Students who successfully complete three sequential courses in either area graduate as a pathway completer. At the completion of their pathways, students can participate in Work-Based Learning opportunities at school, where they help to manage the barn and the greenhouses.

Spring brings excitement for Agriscience Department students. In late April, the hard work of students in the Plant Science pathway is on full display at the annual Spring Plant Sale. Students spend time preparing for this sale from January through the day of the sale, sterilizing the greenhouses and tools, transplanting plugs, starting seeds, fertilizing, and developing promotional items. For Animal Science students, spring means baby goats and chicks. Students incubate eggs to learn more about chick development during their poultry unit. Goats that were bred in the fall return to school in the spring to give birth, allowing upper-level Animal Science students to practice drawing blood, reading ultrasounds, and administering medications and vaccines, all of which they learned how to do during classroom instruction.

Hands-on learning is not just for the classroom. Some of life's best lessons happen in the barn, in the greenhouse, at work, or in the van on the way to a Future Farmers of America (FFA) event. Being a student in the Agriscience Department opens up a whole world of opportunities that many people are unaware of. Some of the students in the Agriscience Department may not end up working directly in agriculture, but the lessons they have learned and the opportunities they have been given to develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success are ones that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. Being a member of the Agriscience and FFA family will forever connect them not only to their peers, but to the Rider community as a whole, for they are a part of the long-standing tradition of excellence and pride that is the Caesar Rodney School District.



# THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

## CRHS TO PRESENT SPRING MUSICAL “MAN OF LA MANCHA”

WRITTEN BY: Keith McCarthy, Show Director

The Caesar Rodney High School Performing Arts Department will bring the timeless musical *Man of La Mancha* to life with performances on the following dates and times:

- Thursday, February 26 at 7:00 p.m.
- Friday, February 27 at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, February 28 at 6:00 p.m.

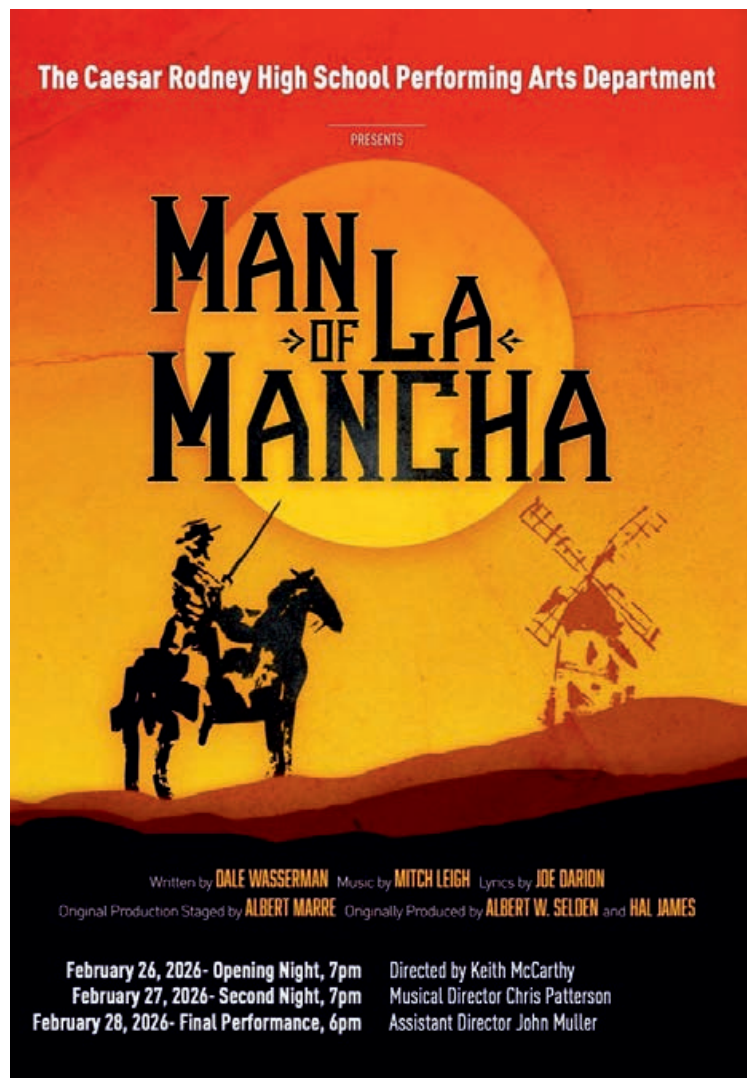
Tickets are \$10 for students and seniors and \$15 for general admission.

The beloved show follows Miguel de Cervantes as he tells the story of Don Quixote, a dreamer who dares to see the world not as it is, but as it should be.

Audiences can look forward to iconic characters like Sancho Panza, Aldonza, and the chivalrous Don Quixote himself. The production features unforgettable songs such as “The Impossible Dream,” “Dulcinea,” and “I, Don Quixote,” which highlight the musical’s powerful themes of hope, honor, and perseverance.

Students have worked tirelessly to capture the humor, heart, and emotional depth of this classic tale.

Don’t miss this inspiring theatrical experience that celebrates courage, imagination, and the pursuit of one’s dreams.



# LIGHTING THE WAY FORWARD

## GEEP STUDENTS SERVE THROUGH STEM

WRITTEN BY: Barbara Miklus, Supervisor of Instruction

CR Shines Bright brought Gifted Enrichment Education Program (GEEP) students and their families together on January 8th at W.B. Simpson Elementary for a districtwide celebration of learning, service, and community. In partnership with Code Purple, students proudly shared information about the GEEP program, their units of study, and their work in alternative energy—specifically solar power.

As part of this meaningful, hands-on experience, each family worked alongside their child to build two solar-powered lanterns using simple materials that model real-world solar technology. One lantern was taken home, while the second was donated to Code Purple to support displaced families, reinforcing the importance of service-learning and civic responsibility. Representatives from Code Purple shared their mission and explained how the donated lanterns will provide light, safety, and hope to individuals experiencing housing insecurity.

CR Shines Bright was designed as a true family and community engagement event, strengthening connections between students, families, schools, and community partners. District leadership was also present to share information about the upcoming February 9 referendum, ensuring families remained informed and connected to district initiatives. Together, these elements created a welcoming, impactful event that highlighted student learning, renewable energy, and the power of community working together.

A special thanks to W.B. Simpson for hosting the event and to our elementary Achievement Liaison Teachers and Brittany Cole, our S.T.E.M. resource teacher for making this event possible.



# CELEBRATING GROWTH AT MAGNOLIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

WRITTEN BY: Matt Keen, Magnolia Middle School Principal

In just two short school years, Magnolia Middle School (MMS) has experienced a remarkable transformation - one that speaks to the power of intentional leadership, collective ownership, and an unwavering belief in people. Once identified as a TSI (Targeted Support and Improvement) school under state academic watch, MMS has emerged as the highest-growing school in grades 3–8 on the Smarter Balanced Assessment in Delaware for School Year 24/25. This growth did not happen by chance. It was the result of a clear vision, a commitment to culture, and a belief that when people are supported and empowered, students thrive.

**Step One:** Making Magnolia a Great Place to Learn and Work

**Step Two:** Empowering Staff Through Shared Leadership

**Step Three:** Bringing in and Developing Talent

## The Results: Growth That Matters

The impact of this work is evident in our academic outcomes.

From the 2023–2024 school year to the 2024–2025 school year, Magnolia Middle School saw:

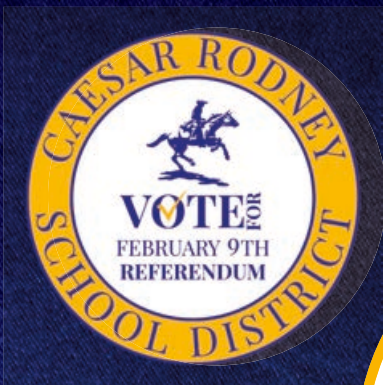
- ELA proficiency increased by 15%
- Math proficiency increased by 17%

These gains represent more than test scores—they reflect improved instruction, stronger relationships, and a schoolwide commitment to growth.

## Looking Ahead: Winning or Learning

While we are proud of how far we have come, Magnolia Middle School is not defined solely by past success. We have set high expectations for the current school year, but our true measure of success goes beyond numbers. We will judge our year by one essential question: ***Did we give our students the chance to get better every day?*** At Magnolia Middle School, we believe that growth is a continuous process. We embrace challenges, reflect honestly, and move forward together. Because at Magnolia, we don't fail — we WIN OR LEARN.





## DID YOU KNOW?

You can vote at any of the **8** polling places - open from **7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. on Monday, February 9.**

Just bring one of the following:

- ✓ Driver's License
- ✓ Delaware ID Card
- ✓ Work ID Card with photo & home address
- ✓ U.S. Postal Material with street address

**Caesar Rodney High School**  
239 Old North Rd  
Camden, DE 19934

**Allen Frear Elementary**  
238 Sorghum Mill Rd  
Camden-Wyoming, DE 19934

**Fred Fifer Middle School**  
109 E. Camden-Wyoming Ave  
Camden, DE 19934

**Star Hill Elementary**  
594 Voshells Mill Star Hill Rd  
Dover, DE 19901

**W. Reily Brown Elementary**  
360 Webbs Ln  
Dover, DE 19904

**David E. Robinson Elementary**  
1038 Briarbush Rd  
Magnolia, DE 19962

**Nellie H. Stokes Elementary**  
3874 Upper King Rd  
Camden, DE 19934

**Magnolia Fire Hall**  
2 North Main Street  
Magnolia, DE 19962

**Our Schools, Our Community, Our Future –  
*The Best Investment We Can Make.***