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Cedar Rapids Community School District

Career and Technical Education Programs



“What do you want to be when you grow up?” This is a common question many kids are asked throughout their childhood. But, by the time they graduate high school, they are expected to have a definitive answer. But what if they don’t? That’s where a CTE program can help.

What was once called “vo-tech” or “vocational-technical education” has expanded over the years and is now called Career and Technical Education (CTE). CTE programs offer students an opportunity to explore different career interests and develop employability skills to help better prepare them for college and career success. The classes provide diverse learning opportunities, including classroom work, hands-on experiences, job shadows, internships, and certification work.

In a typical CTE program, students would start exploring their interests, passions, and strengths during elementary and middle school. They would also have opportunities to learn about different careers through research, guest speakers, and company tours. Then, they would take classes in high school geared toward a specific career path, such as business, computer science, engineering, automotive, healthcare, education, or construction. By getting a more in-depth look and hands-on experience with a specific career field, students are able to decide if this is something they would like to do in the future. Also, through their CTE coursework, they could gain college credits or industrial certifications that could benefit them after graduation.

While all high schools in the Cedar Rapids Community School District already offer a few CTE type classes, the district is looking to expand and improve its program. While this will likely be a 2-5 year process, the work has already begun. This week, the district worked with school administrators, counselors, teachers, and students to learn more about our student’s needs and what a future CTE program could look like in our schools. The district is also working with consultants from Steele Dynamics, who have helped schools around the world, to develop college and career readiness programs.

Finally, part of the proposed bond on the November ballot would be used to add more CTE spaces and equipment to three of the district’s high schools.

District Spotlight

The Teacher Who Rocked the NFL!

Washington High School industrial technology teacher Sam Schmidt might be a familiar face to his students. But, the man who has inspired countless young minds with the art of

woodworking and stagecraft recently found himself at the center of NFL fanfare.



At the age of five, Sam's dad taught him how to play guitar, igniting a lifelong passion for music. Sam's musical skills continued to grow as he played tuba in his high school band and guitar in the Jazz Band. It wasn't long before Sam considered following a musical path professionally. After graduating high school, Sam's original plan was to pursue a career as a high school band director. However, his path took a turn midway through college when he changed to industrial technology because it better aligned with his interests and skill sets. But despite this change in his career path, his love for music remained undiminished.



Fast forward a few years, and Sam has flourished into an educator and accomplished musician. He is currently teaching woodworking, construction, manufacturing, and stagecraft as an industrial technology teacher at Washington High School. When not in school, Sam performs in the band he co-founded with his two talented siblings called "The Schmidt Brothers." The trio has become a beloved fixture in the Iowa music scene, known for belting out crowd-pleasing cover songs at events, festivals, weddings, and bars across the state.



As an avid Minnesota Vikings fan, Sam was ecstatic when the band was asked to headline the official tailgate party before the Chargers vs. Vikings game in September. The band's infectious energy and undeniable talent won over the hearts of the fans and the organization. They were asked to return to perform in the pre-game kickoff concert with country star Chris Janson for the Chief vs. Vikings game. But it didn't stop there. The team also asked if Sam would kick off the team's entrance into the arena with a self-written guitar solo!



On Sunday, October 8th, in front of sixty thousand screaming Viking fans and TV audiences from around the country, Sam took to the field wearing a custom-made Vikings jersey. From the first note, his fingers danced across the fretboard, sending shockwaves of excitement through the crowd. His dream had come full circle, from learning guitar with his dad to playing a solo at his beloved Vikings' NFL game.

Sam's journey from shop class to the NFL stage serves as an inspiration for all of his students, showing how passion, dedication, and hard work can lead to incredible opportunities in life.

Minnesota Vikings Guitar Solo - Sam Schmidt (The Schmid...

News, Updates, & Reminders

Bond Basics

The CRCSD bond referendum is now officially on the ballot for the November 7th election. We wanted to provide you with some educational information about the bond so you can make an informed decision on election day. Over the next few weeks, we will be sharing videos with information about the bond, projects that will be funded by the bond, and how it will impact families.





Taking the Lead



Gracia Kabula, an 8th grader at Roosevelt Creative Corridor Business Academy (RCCBA), has led the pack of middle school cross country runners this year.

"*Gracia runs with so much passion, he runs hard, and he knows who he is running for, and that is what makes him a runner and an awesome person all around*," stated Makayla Buck, RCCBA's cross country coach.

Middle school cross country runners compete on a two-mile course. Gracia placed first for every meet this year except his last one, where a cramp hindered his undefeated season. He is currently ranked 1st for 8th grade boys cross country runners in the state of Iowa with a time of 10:31.

"*I love running because I know who I run for*," says Gracia. "*I do it for my family, I do it for God, and it just makes me want to run.*"

Garcia thanks his coaches for the regular training runs up and down the big hill outside of RCCBA and for creating his mental toughness.

"*Running is more of a mindset than it is in the body. Your mind is stronger than your body*," adds Gracia.

Next year, Gracia hopes to keep competing in cross country with the Jefferson J-Hawks team.

Glance Around The District



Matthew 25 visited Harrison Elementary School this week to teach students about hydroponics. They also donated a hydroponic tower to the school so students could watch the greens grow.



Kindergarteners at Hiawatha Elementary took a field trip to the Hiawatha Fire Station on Tuesday to learn about fire safety and what it takes to be a fireman.



At Cedar River Academy, students in Ms. Meeker's class had a lesson on what makes classmates the same and different. Every student brings something unique to our classrooms!



Wright Elementary students got the opportunity to paint a blade for the city's snowplows as part of the "Paint a Plow" program.



Students at Garfield Elementary love practicing their literacy skills by reading a book to Hopkins, the school's therapy dog.



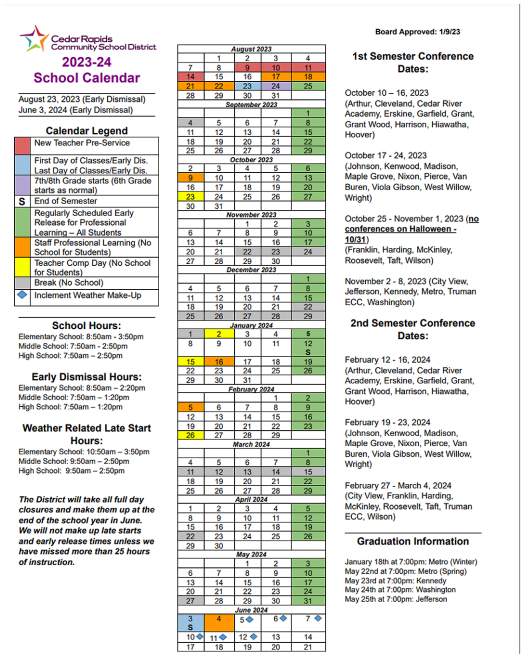
Police Pal Office Shawn had fun playing four square and basketball with his friends at Erskine Elementary earlier this week.

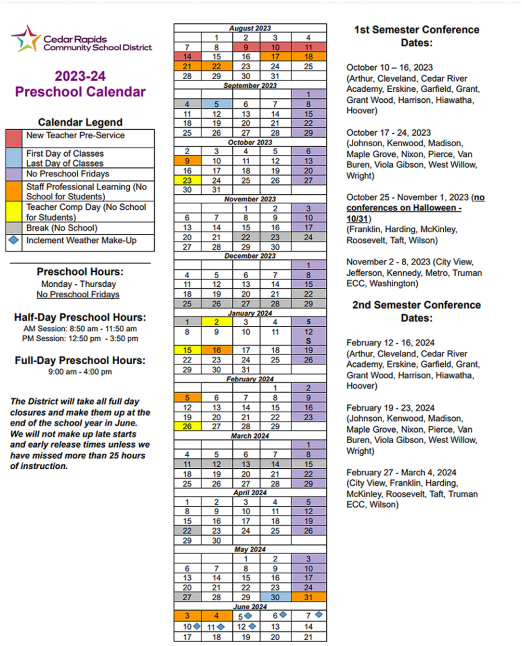
CRCSD In The News

In case you missed it, here are some of the recent stories in the news media about or of interest to students, teachers, and parents of Cedar Rapids Community School District.

- Gazette: Kennedy High performs 'The Anxiety Project' written by school alumna
- Gazette: A portion of Taft Middle School evacuated for not being structurally sound
- KCRG: Longtime Cedar Rapids Washington football coach Wally Sheets dies

District Calendars





2023-24 School Calendar

2023-24 Preschool Calendar

Jefferson High School Activities Calendar

Kennedy High School Activities Calendar

Washington High School Activities Calendar

CRCSD is hiring! View open positions and apply here.

Learn more about breakfast and lunch meals here.

View your school's virtual backpack

Follow us on social media for the latest updates:

Sign up for Future Ready Today

Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the Cedar Rapids Community School District not to discriminate in educational programs and/or activities on the basis of race, creed, color, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, gender identity, socioeconomic status, national origin, religion, disability, age (except for permitting/prohibiting students to engage in certain activities) or genetic information and in employment opportunities on the basis of age, race, creed, color, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, disability or genetic information. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact Darius Ballard, Chief of Human Resources, Educational Leadership and Support Center, 2500 Edgewood Rd NW, Cedar Rapids, IA, (319) 558-2000.

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Cedar Rapids Community School District | 2500 Edgewood Dr NW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52405

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