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Cedar Rapids Community School District

No School Reminder

Just a friendly reminder that there is no school for students on Monday, February 26th. This is a scheduled day off per the 2023-2024 District Calendar. Office staff will be present in the buildings, and the district office will remain open on Monday. While there won't be any classes, we encourage students to use the time to catch up on assignments or engage in some self-directed learning adventures.



Black History Month

Unsung Heroes Award



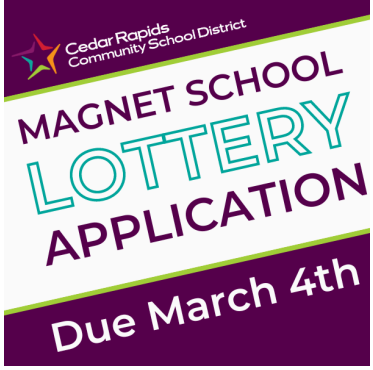
CRCSD Superintendent Dr. Tawana Grover and school board member Nancy Humbles were honored this week at the “Unsung Heroes: A Celebration of Black History” event at Mount Mercy University. The event, organized by Empowering Youths of Iowa and the Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity at Mount Mercy University, recognizes African Americans who are doing great things in our community. Superintendent Grover was selected as an honoree because she is the first Black woman to lead the CRCSD district, and Humbles was the first Black person elected to the Cedar Rapids school board. Other honorees include Simon Estes, Ruth White, and Brandon Jackson. The event featured musical performances, guest speakers, and award presentations and was a part of Black History Month celebrations.

News and Updates

Magnet School Lottery Closes March 4th

We wanted to remind families that the deadline to apply to the Magnet School Lottery for the next school year (2024-2025) is fast approaching. We encourage all families to explore the six different magnet schools CRCSD has to offer. Each of our six magnet schools provides another choice for students that nurtures their interests, talents, and career goals. Each school offers a unique, innovative, and robust learning experience

focused around a specific theme - sustainability, S.T.E.A.M. (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics), leadership, business, and community impact.



Application for the lottery can be submitted through March 4th. Students who live within a magnet school's attendance boundary are automatically enrolled in that school. However, if a student lives outside the magnet school's attendance zone and wishes to attend, they must enter the magnet school lottery. For more information about CRCSD magnet schools and to submit a lottery application, visit crschools.us/magnet.

High School ESports Teams Compete at State Tournament



Esports teams from Kennedy and Washington High Schools battled teams from across the state in the Iowa High School Esports Association (IAHSEA) State Tournament, held on February 21st and 22nd in Marshalltown. The tournament featured two different leagues of gameplay: Overwatch 2 and Rocket League. Overwatch 2 is a strategic team combat game. There are five players on each team working together to try and win the best of 5 matches. On the other hand, Rocket League is described as soccer with cars where teams of three battle in 5 minutes games to score goals. The first team to win three games wins.

In a thrilling display of digital dexterity, Washington's Overwatch 2 and Kennedy's Rocket League teams placed within the final eight teams. Kennedy's Overwatch 2 team emerged victorious, clinching the championship title for the game. This is Kennedy's first-ever state championship in esports.

"*With Kennedy being in their 3rd year of esports and Wash being in our 1st, I would say this is just the tip of the iceberg for success for esports at CRCSD schools*," shared Jason Wood, Washington esports coach.

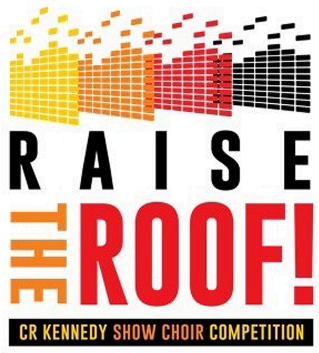
Esports, short for electronic sports, is a form of competitive video gaming where teams compete against each other in organized tournaments and leagues. It has rapidly grown in popularity over the past few years, with over 13,000 high schools offering esports teams nationwide. Like traditional sports, esports demands a blend of physical and mental skills, from game knowledge and hand-eye coordination to communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. But the allure of competitive gaming can extend beyond the screen, with more than 200 colleges offering esports scholarships and 50% of esports athletes going into STEM-based careers.



Kennedy's Overwatch 2 team are state esports champions!

Raise the Roof

Come see some of Iowa's top show choirs as they take the stage at the Alliant Energy Powerhouse on Saturday, February 24th, for the Kennedy High School's Raise the Roof Show Choir Competition. Watch performances from middle school to high school groups compete, vying for the title of Grand Champion. Tickets are available at the Alliant Energy Powerhouse Box Office on the day of the event. You can purchase tickets for the full day of performances or just for the middle school portion of the competition.



Middle School Women in STEAM Event

Girls from Taft, McKinley, Harding, and Franklin Middle Schools had the opportunity to spend the day at Collins Aerospace this week. The girls learned about several different STEM careers available from some of Collin's female engineers. STEM careers are careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The students also had the opportunity to try several hands-on experiences throughout the day, including programming drones, interacting with aviation equipment, and making prosthetic hands. Click here to see photos from the day.



PPEL - Did You Know?

The district's current voter-approved Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL) is set to expire in June 2025. PPEL funds allow the district to improve safety and security in our buildings, upgrade and maintain athletic and performing arts facilities, purchase buses and other transportation, and maintain district buildings and grounds. This fall (September 2024), we will be asking voters to continue our PPEL for another 10 years.



Awards and Honors

AATSEEL Award Recipient at Washington



Willis Harte, a Russian and Math teacher at Washington High School, has been awarded the prestigious Award for Excellence in Secondary Teaching by The American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL). Mr. Harte received the award in recognition of his dedication to teaching students the Russian language and culture.

Mr. Harte has led student trips abroad to Russia and most recently served as the Resident Director for the 2003 Summer Russian Language Teachers Program in Almaty, Kazakhstan. He also established a Russian film library at the school in 2011, which has over 100 Russian movies on DVD. In addition to his teaching efforts, Mr. Harte is also involved in a new program designed to help students get better information about colleges, study abroad opportunities, scholarships, and possible careers where they can use the Russian language they have learned in Harte's class. Congratulations, Mr. Harte, and thank you for the amazing contributions you bring to Washington High School!

Winter Sports MVC Conference Honors



More winter sports honors were announced this week. The Mississippi Valley Conference (MVC) released their All-Division Honors for several sports, including girls' basketball, girls' and boys' wrestling, and girls' and boys' bowling. CRCSD would like to congratulate all of our district athletes who have been chosen for the MVC all-conference teams. Click the button below to see all of the honorees.

Some coaches also received some top awards this season. Kennedy girls' wrestling coach Craig Mallicoat, Washington girls' basketball coach Chris James, and Kennedy girls' bowling coach Scott Bader all received "Coach of the Year" honors. Congratulations!

Winter Sports Honors

Oratorical Contest



Students from Taft, McKinley, Harding, and Franklin Middle Schools showcased their speech skills this month by participating in the annual Optimist International Oratorical Contest. This annual contest is organized by the two Cedar Rapids Optimist Clubs and helps students develop public speaking skills along with stage presence and speechwriting.

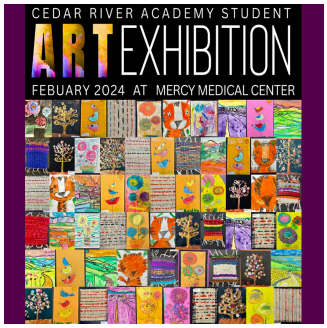
For the contest, students write a speech centered around a yearly theme and then give the speech in front of judges. They are then scored on both the substance of their speech and their delivery. This year's theme was "How to change the world with optimism." While all students who participate receive a medal and certificate, only one silver and one gold medal are awarded to the top two speeches. Congratulations to Jordyn Velitchkov, Sage Mersch, and Sophia Douglas, all from Harding, for receiving gold medals. One of these gold medal

winners will move on to the next round of the competition, competing against other schools in the area on March 30th in Lisbon.

Glance Around The District



Elementary students across the district have been enjoying the warmer weather this week during their outside recesses.



Cedar River Academy students have a special art exhibit at Mercy Medical Center! Their artwork will be on exhibit all month long in the hall by the 10th Street entrance.



Maple Grove and Van Buren recently got a GaGa Ball pit on their playground. GaGa ball is becoming a popular game students are playing during recess



Viola Gibson 5th graders entered a writing contest to talk about what the Flag means to them. Isaac Long's essay not only won at Viola Gibson but also placed 4th in the state!



First graders at Cleveland Elementary School had the opportunity to visit the Iowa Children's Museum in Coralville this week. They had the opportunity to explore several of the interactive exhibits.



Metro students in the Forensic Class are collecting DNA samples from a mock crime scene and running them through a gel electrophoresis, which separates the DNA, allowing for suspect identification.

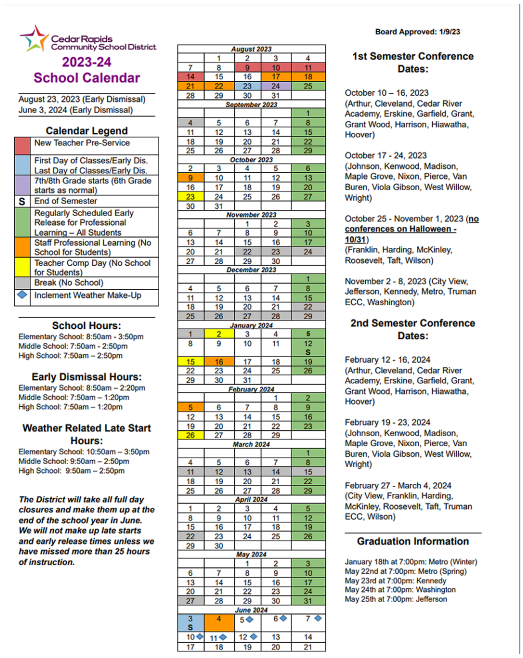
CRCSD In the News

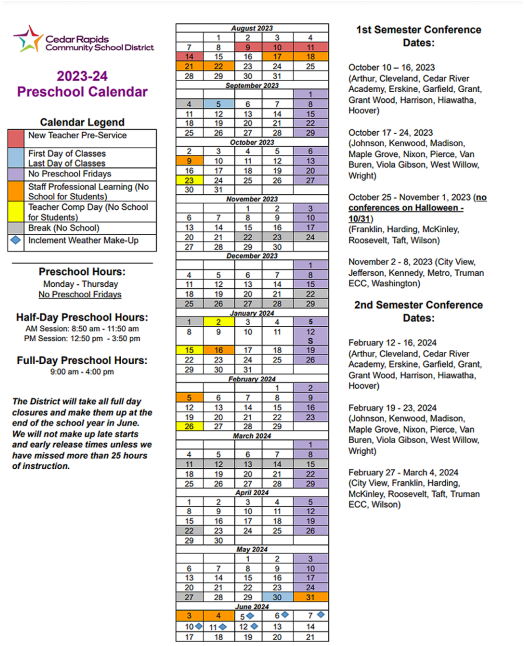
High School Decathlon Teams Advance to State

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

- **Gazette:** Domes at Harding, Taft middle schools all reopen
- **Gazette:** CRCSD board advocates at the Statehouse

District Calendars





[2023-24 School Calendar]

[2023-24 Preschool Calendar]

Visit our Calendar page

[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.

February 23, 2024

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