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CRCSD Future Ready Today Newsletter

Listen to the Newsletter This Week!

We know life gets busy—between work, family, and everything else, it can be hard to keep up! That's why we're shaking things up and bringing you an easier way to stay in the loop. **Introducing our new podcast!** In just a few minutes, you'll get all the highlights from this week's newsletter.

Hit the button below to listen, and if something catches your ear, scroll down for all the details. You can also **find it on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music, and YouTube.**

Listen To The Podcast

A Bond Proposal Focused on Our Students' Future



Dear CRCSD Families,

On May 12, the CRCSD Board of Education voted to place a bond referendum to improve our schools on the November 4, 2025 election ballot. This bond, shaped by the voices of thousands, including many of you, focuses on what matters most: ensuring our students' safety and creating learning environments where they can reach their full potential. This is a BIG moment for our district, and it's one we couldn't have reached without the input and support of our community.

This plan is about more than just buildings. It's about creating spaces where every student, whether just starting school or preparing to graduate, can thrive. By investing in our schools, we're investing in their futures.

Here's what the bond includes:

- Renovating **McKinley Middle School**
- Transforming **Wilson Middle School** into a new elementary school for **Cedar River Academy** and **Grant Elementary**
- Renovating **Roosevelt Middle School** to welcome students from Wilson
- Upgrading **Kennedy High School**'s commons area and adding a 9th-grade wing
- **Critical safety upgrades** to each of the buildings listed above, including secure entrances and enhanced protection for students and staff

Why does this matter?

This bond is an investment in the safety and well-being of every child. It will ensure that students enter classrooms with reliable heating and cooling, modern learning spaces, and better emergency preparedness. Most importantly, it's about providing our students with the environment they deserve to grow, learn, and succeed.

If approved, the bond will cost the average homeowner about **$7.47 per month**—an investment in safer schools, improved facilities, and a brighter future for our community. Even with this increase, CRCSD will still have one of the lowest tax rates in Linn County.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who provided feedback. Your voices shaped this proposal, and we couldn't have done it without you. This is truly a community-driven effort, and together, we can build a stronger, safer, and more supportive future for every student in Cedar Rapids.

Thank you for your continued partnership and for helping us create the best possible future for our children.

With deep gratitude,
Dr. Tawana Grover
Superintendent
Cedar Rapids Community School District

District Updates

Keep Kids Reading This Summer—with Freebies!



Looking for a fun way to keep your child reading all summer long? There are plenty of national and local summer reading programs that reward kids for picking up a book. From free meals to game tickets and even books of their own, these incentives make summer reading extra exciting. Here are just a few options available to families this year:

- **Barnes & Noble –** Kids who read 8 books and complete a B&N Reading Journal can choose a free book from a designated list.
- **Pizza Hut Book It! –** Track reading through the digital dashboard and earn free personal-sized pizzas.
- **Panda Express –** Kids can earn a free meal coupon after reading 5 books.
- **Scholastic –** Use the Home Base App to log books and unlock digital experiences and rewards.
- **Cedar Rapids Kernels –** Minutes spent reading can lead to free food or tickets to a Kernels baseball game!
- **Cedar Rapids Public Library –** Participate in the library's summer reading program and win prizes based on time spent reading.
- **Half Price Books –** Submit a completed reading log to earn a $5 coupon toward any in-store purchase.

Encourage your child to set a summer reading goal and take advantage of these fun, educational incentives. Happy reading!

CRCSD Staff Spotlight: LaVern Burns

This week, we are proud to recognize LaVern Burns from our Transportation Department as our CRCSD Staff Spotlight.



LaVern has been a dedicated member of our district since 1990, marking an incredible 35 years of service. Over the decades, he has safely transported thousands of students to school, events, and activities, covering countless miles across our community.

Transportation supervisors describe LaVern as kind, easygoing, and exceptionally reliable. As a stand-by driver, he's always ready to step in and drive any route, often on short notice. With his deep knowledge of the district, LaVern has driven nearly every route multiple times and is known for his dependable nature in all weather conditions. As one supervisor shared, "He's dependable just like the postal service… rain, sleet, or snow—LaVern will get in a bus and go!"

Thank you, LaVern, for your unwavering commitment to CRCSD students, staff, and families. We are honored to celebrate your service and the impact you continue to make every day.

Spotlight on Excellence: Dr. Carl Rowles Leads Jefferson High School Bands with Passion and Prestige



Dr. Carl Rowles is a celebrated band director, conductor, and educator whose musical excellence has roots in Jefferson-Scranton. A 2005 graduate, Carl was a three-year All-State vocalist whose early talent forecast an impressive career in music education and performance.

Carl currently serves as Director of Bands at Cedar Rapids Jefferson High School, bringing with him a wealth of experience from both public schools and higher education. His career has taken him across the country, including five years teaching at the collegiate level in Texas and Kansas, before returning to public school instruction in Council Bluffs and now Cedar Rapids.

With a Doctor of Musical Arts in Band Conducting from the University of Iowa, Carl is a frequent guest conductor, clinician, and presenter for honor bands and professional music organizations. His work has earned national recognition: he was named Iowa's representative in SBO+ Magazine's "50 Directors Who Make a Difference" in 2022 and received the Kansas Bandmasters Association's Outstanding Young Bandmaster Award in 2021. He has also been a finalist for prestigious conducting positions with the United States Air Force Bands.

Beyond the classroom, Carl's talent extends to the stage—he won the 2014 Iowa Community Theatre Association's award for Outstanding Musical Direction for Jesus Christ Superstar in Coralville.

Graduating or Leaving CRCSD? Don't Forget to Take Your Google Data—and Update Your Accounts!

As the school year comes to a close, we want to remind all graduating students and staff leaving the district to t**ake your Google data with you** before your CRCSD account is deactivated.

You can use **Google Takeout** to download an archive of your emails, Drive files, calendars, photos, and more—or use **Google Transfer** to copy your Gmail and Google Drive content to a personal Google account.

Get started at takeout.google.com or takeout.google.com/transfer.

Important Reminder:
If you've used your CRCSD email address to sign up for platforms like Apple ID, Xbox, PlayStation, social media, or online shopping accounts, be sure to update those email addresses now to avoid losing access after your CRCSD account closes.

Need help? Contact the CRCSD Helpdesk at 319-558-2900.



Kennedy Senior Honored for Service Above Self



Congratulations to Kennedy High School senior Megan Doyle, recipient of the *Service Above Self* recognition from the Cedar Rapids Daybreak Rotary! This prestigious honor is awarded to students who exemplify compassion, leadership, and a deep commitment to making a difference in their communities.

Megan was celebrated for her exceptional heart for others and her standout leadership both inside and outside the classroom. She was joined at the recognition ceremony by her proud parents, Sarah and Tom Doyle.

As part of the award, Megan selected the Willis Dady Shelter to receive a donation in her name—further demonstrating her dedication to supporting individuals and families in need within our community.

We are proud to celebrate Megan and the impact she continues to make through her service and leadership.

Jefferson Students Shine at Iowa Industrial Technology Expo



Congratulations to the 27 Jefferson High School students who participated in the **Iowa Industrial Technology Expo** on Friday, May 9! It was a successful day of innovation, creativity, and hands-on learning as students showcased their skills across various project categories.

Jefferson students earned an impressive **10 blue ribbons** and **2 red ribbons** for their submitted projects. Several students also received top honors for outstanding work in their respective categories:

- **Gold Medal:** Diego Montero Lauda & Victorina Cervantes – *VEX Robotics*
- **Silver Medal:** Alex Kroll – *Electronics*
- **Silver Medal:** Elias Hale – *Woodworking – Intermediate*

We're proud of these students for their dedication and craftsmanship, and for representing Jefferson with excellence at a statewide level. Great job, J-Hawks!

Washington High School Theater Honored at Statewide Awards Showcase



We are thrilled to announce that Washington High School's theater department will participate in the prestigious **2025 Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards Showcase**, presented by EMC Insurance Companies. The invitation comes in recognition of the school's exceptional achievements for its **November production of *Hello, Dolly!*.

The Showcase, produced by Des Moines Performing Arts, will take place at the **Des Moines Civic Center** on **Thursday, May 29, at 7:00 p.m.**, and serves as the capstone celebration of a year-long statewide educational initiative involving 103 high schools.

Washington's *Hello, Dolly!* company has earned the **Outstanding Musical Production Award**—the program's highest honor. In addition, the production received accolades for **Outstanding Student Orchestra** and **Outstanding Ensemble**. To celebrate these accomplishments, the cast will perform a featured excerpt from their show during the live event.

The Awards Showcase will be **live-streamed** at IowaPBS.org, and a televised highlights special will air on **Iowa PBS later this summer**, with broadcast dates to be announced.

Congratulations to the students, directors, musicians, and entire production team on this outstanding achievement and for representing Washington and CRCSD on the statewide stage!

Celebrating the Class of 2025: Senior Walk Schedule



Cedar Rapids Community School District is excited to once again celebrate a beloved tradition—Senior Walks! This special event gives graduating seniors the chance to return to their elementary schools, walk the halls one last time, and inspire the next generation of students.

Families and community members are invited to join in the celebration and cheer on our seniors as they visit their former schools. These walks are a powerful way to reflect on students' journeys and recognize their achievements as they prepare for graduation.

Here is the 2025 Senior Walk schedule:

May 19

- Nixon | 9:00 AM | *Kennedy HS Seniors*
- Madison | 9:15 AM | *Kennedy HS Seniors*
- Coolidge & West Willow | 2:30 PM | *Jefferson HS Seniors*
- Kenwood | 9:20 AM | *Washington HS Seniors*
- Grant Wood | 9:30 AM | *Washington HS Seniors*
- Johnson | 9:30 AM | *Washington HS Seniors*
- Erskine | 10:00 AM | *Washington HS Seniors*
- Arthur, Garfield & Trailside | 12:45 PM | *Washington HS Seniors*
- Harrison | 3:15 PM | *Jefferson HS Seniors*

May 20

- Pierce | 8:45 AM | *Kennedy HS Seniors*
- Truman, Jackson & Maple Grove | 9:00 AM | *Kennedy & Jefferson HS Seniors*
- Grant | 9:10 AM | *Jefferson HS Seniors*

- Hiawatha | 3:00 PM | *Kennedy HS Seniors*
- Viola Gibson | 3:00 PM | *Kennedy HS Seniors*

May 21

- Wright | 3:00 PM | *Kennedy HS Seniors*

We encourage all to celebrate this milestone with our students and show your support as they close one chapter and prepare to begin another. Congratulations to the Class of 2025!

Glance Around CRCSD



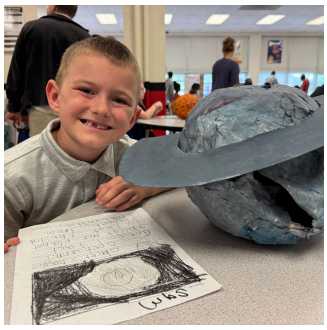
The Grant Wood G-Clefs brought their incredible talent to Cottage Grove and ELSC, filling the space with music and joy.



Taft students visited Camp Courageous! Perfect weather and a perfect day!



Cleveland had an amazing day full of programs with a record turn out of parents.



Harrison held their Leader in Me day. Students showed off their projects and the history of their building as they prepare for their renovations and new addition.



City view students Maddox and Isaac have been getting their hands dirty—starting produce from seed, planting, and learning how to properly irrigate crops for their internship with Black Earth Gardens.



Van Buren is having their PTA Walk a thon week! Students are working to collect donations to support our school. We are also having a dunk tank coin drive. Students can vote with their coins on who goes in the dunk tank.

In The News

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

- KCRG: Cedar Rapids Community School District approves new bond proposal for November election
- Gazette: Cedar Rapids schools' City View High to move to Linn County Regional Center
- Gazette: Cedar Rapids schools' proposed $117 million bond one step closer to voters
- Gazette: Novices give driving a school bus a try at Cedar Rapids recruiting event
- Gazette: Cedar Rapids schools administrators will take on more duties to keep teachers amid staffing cuts

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.

May 16, 2025

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

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