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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-style update! 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 Spotify, Amazon Music, Podchaser, and YouTube.

Listen To The Podcast

A Message from Superintendant Dr. Tawana Grover



Dear CRCSD Families,

At this week's school board meeting, we took a monumental step toward success. Our board approved the purchase of 51 acres of land for a new middle school to replace Harding. This achievement underscores our commitment to creating exceptional learning environments for our students and aligns with our vision of Everyone Equipped, Empowered, and Engaged to Excel.

First, Thank you to the Tauke family, who generously agreed to sell their land. The Tauke's share the District's vision of a vibrant, effective educational system. Without them, this opportunity would not have been possible and we are deeply grateful for their partnership. This land purchase lays the foundation for us to build our future-ready facilities plan.

This land purchase is critical as we prepare for a new bond referendum in November 2025. Purchasing this land now allows us to clearly communicate to families, the community, and taxpayers the location of a new middle school and allows us to only ask for the essential upgrades and new additions that are needed to help us right-size our district and preserve our historical buildings in the upcoming bond.

We must replace 60-year-old Harding Middle School and it cannot be rebuilt in its current location because the land around Harding is not zoned to the Cedar Rapids Community School District. The site will address the needs of our growing population on the city's North Side and will provide a direct feeder to Kennedy High School. We currently utilize 34 buses and vans to transport Harding students to and from Palo, Hiawatha, Robins, and northern Cedar Rapids, this new site will provide a more centralized location for those students. The collaboration with the City of Cedar Rapids to annex this land has been instrumental and we look forward to continuing this partnership.

I also want to thank our Board of Education for their unwavering leadership and foresight, as well as the incredible work of our Operations team, led by Chad Schumacher. Their efforts made this milestone possible. To our families, thank you for your ongoing support and trust as we navigate this exciting journey.
In addition, our Bond Taskforce met again this week to provide valuable input on proposed bond options. Their thoughtful contributions have been vital in shaping our vision, and we're eager to hear from you as

well. A community survey will launch in February to gather your feedback, ensuring that our plans reflect the voices and aspirations of our families.

Your partnership is key as we shape the future of CRCSD. Together, we can equip and empower our district and ensure that every decision we make benefits our students and their learning journey.

Warm regards,
Dr. Tawana Grover
Superintendent, CRCSD

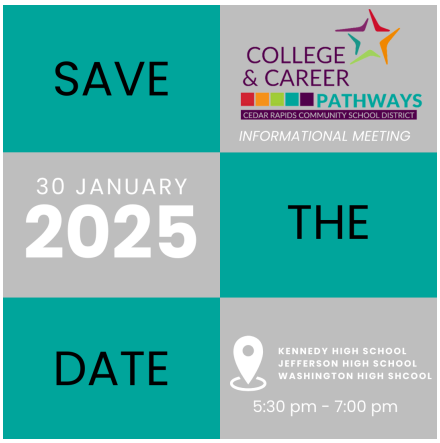


No School Reminders

Just a reminder, there will be no school for students on January 17 for a Teacher Directed Day.

There will also be no school on January 20 for a Staff Professional Learning Day. Champions will also be closed on January 20.

The district office will remain open.



College & Career Pathways Update

Join us for important updates on the Freshman Academies and the Pathways program, following feedback from our Pathways Parent Advisory group.

The meeting will be the same at all three schools.

Barriers Down, Achievement Up - Crisis Prevention Update



On Sept. 12, 2022, the Cedar Rapids Community School District (CRCSD) entered into an agreement with the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) around the areas of seclusion and physical restraint of students with behavior concerns.

The district has worked diligently with our buildings to ensure that we are implementing student behavior management approaches that are evidence-based, positive, and the least restrictive means of responding to each student. As a result, our efforts heavily emphasize prevention and de-escalation strategies such as truly knowing and understanding the reason for individual student behaviors, giving student choices, listening to a student, and encouraging/collaborating with the student to find a solution.

On Wednesday, February 5, 2025, the district will host a public meeting to invite the community to ask questions and comment on these student behavior strategies and the District's DOJ agreement. The meeting will be streamed live on the district's YouTube Page. The public can submit questions beforehand through this Google form.

Students Help Shape New School Designs

Students from Hoover and Van Buren Elementary Schools are helping shape the future of their schools as CRCSD plans two new school buildings, set to open in the fall of 2027. Describing their ideal learning spaces as "awesome," "fun," "colorful," and "exciting," these students are dreaming big for the future.

Both Hoover and Van Buren will be replaced by brand-new elementary schools funded by S.A.V.E. dollars. When asked about what they love most about their current school and what could be better,

students didn't focus on their own needs—they thought about ways to improve the experience for their teachers. Many students created drawings of spaces that would help their teachers thrive, reflecting the deep appreciation and respect they have for them.

The ideas and enthusiasm from these young voices are sure to make the future of education at Hoover and Van Buren even brighter. Read the full article here!



Magnet Spotlight



The Cedar Rapids Community School District Magnet Lottery is now open for grades K-8. Families interested in exploring unique, theme-based learning opportunities are encouraged to apply. Information about High School Magnet programming will be shared at a later date as we continue to collaborate with staff and families on Pathways programming details. Learn about the lottery here.

Choosing the right school for your student is a significant decision. CRCSD's magnet schools provide tailored options designed to align with students' interests, talents, and career aspirations. Each school delivers a rigorous, innovative, and high-quality education centered around a specific theme. The six magnet schools focus on themes such as sustainability, S.T.E.A.M. (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics), leadership, business, and community impact.

Magnet Spotlight
Cedar River Academy at Taylor Elementary focuses on a sustainability theme, offering an innovative curriculum that emphasizes environmental stewardship, green-focused technologies, and conservation practices. In hand, students engage in learning experiences that empower them to become future leaders in creating a more sustainable world.

Meet the Magnets
There will also be a Meet the Magnets event on January 27, 4:30-6:00 PM, at the public library. This is a district-wide open house to inform families about the magnet schools and recruit students for them.

You can learn more about all our magnet schools on our website.

Making A Difference: Mr. Tyler's Dedication to Music and Community



At Maple Grove Elementary, music teacher Mr. Tyler inspires students to achieve more than they ever imagined. His passion for music and education shines through every note sung and every lesson taught. Watch Mr. Tyler's full story.

Reflecting on his work, Mr. Tyler shared a heartfelt moment, *"It is great to see how well our students respond and sing at our concerts. We have two concerts usually in a night, and after the first one, I come upstairs and take some me time. I turn off my lights, and sometimes I'll just bust out and cry because of how wonderful the students did.'"*

Mr. Tyler's dedication doesn't stop in the classroom or on the concert stage. He has also volunteered his time to help manage morning and afternoon pickup and dropoff traffic, ensuring the safety and smooth flow for students and families. His willingness to go above and beyond shows how much he truly cares for his school community.



Kindergarten & New Student Registration Now Open



New Student Registration for the 25-26 school year, is now open. This includes any NEW student to CRCSD entering Kindergarten through 12th grade. Children who are five years old on or before September 15, 2025, are eligible for Kindergarten this fall. Please note that preschool registration will open at a later date.

Our **Annual Verification will open on April 1, 2025**. Parents must complete the Annual Verification for all current CRCSD students each year to verify that they are attending a CRCSD school for the next school year, update important contact information, and complete yearly permission forms.

Register Now

Attendance Changes for 2nd Semester



Effective January 21st, with the start of the second semester, CRCSD is revising its Student Attendance Policy to address feedback and improve equity.

Key Change:

- **Medical/Illness-Related Absences**: Students can now have up to **8 exempt illness-related absences per semester without a doctor's note.**
- Starting with the **9th absence**, a doctor's note must be submitted within 48 hours for the absence to be exempt. Otherwise, it will count toward the student's total absenteeism.

These updates maintain compliance with Iowa Code (SF 2435) and continue our focus on fostering consistent attendance to support academic success.

For questions or assistance, contact your school's principal or guidance counselor. Together, we can ensure every student stays on track.

Join the Cedar Rapids Community School District Career Fair!

Are you interested in becoming part of the Cedar Rapids Community School District for the 2025-26 school year? We're hosting a career fair for teacher candidates, and we'd love to meet you!

Date: March 13
Time: 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Location: Educational Leadership and Support Center, 2500 Edgewood Rd. NW, Cedar Rapids

At the event, you'll have the opportunity to:

- Participate in on-site interviews with district administrators.
- Learn about the district's competitive pay scale and employee benefits.
- Explore additional opportunities such as coaching sports, leading clubs, and substitute teaching.

- Connect with the Cedar Rapids Education Association Teacher's Union to discover more about the support and resources available to educators.

Don't miss this chance to kickstart your teaching career with us! We look forward to meeting you and discussing how you can make an impact in our schools.



Glance Around CRCSD



Johnson STEAM Academy 2nd graders extend a big "thank you" to Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation for the free swimming lessons at Bender Pool, where they had fun building life-saving skills!



Hiawatha fifth graders designed a healthy pond ecosystem with a perfect balance of fish food, producers, and decomposers.



Cleveland students are embracing Cleveland Expectations by practicing respect through kind words and actions!



Metro STEAM Academy students took on the Cardboard Boat Challenge, designing and building boats to carry the maximum cargo while floating in their STEAM "pond."



Maple Grove Elementary celebrated 22 students as the first recipients of the Student Leadership PAWS Awards.



Harding Middle School is incredibly grateful to Oakland Church of the Nazarene for donating clothing and school supplies to benefit students!

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.

- Gazette: Cedar Rapids schools purchases 51 acres to build future northeast middle school
- Gazette: Cedar Rapids district seeking feedback from City View families on future of the school
- Gazette: Cedar Rapids schools' magnet lottery now open
- Gazette: Kids on Course expanding to Trailside Elementary in Cedar Rapids
- KGAN: Cedar Rapids Magnet School Lottery Now Open for 2025-26 School Year
- KCRG: Cedar Rapids school district votes to buy land for future middle school
- KWWL: Cedar Rapids School Board approves buying land for new Middle School

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.

January 17, 2025

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

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