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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 Message from Superintendent Grover



Dear CRCSD Families,

Every child's educational journey be**gins with those first crucial steps. As we strive to make Every Learner, Future Ready,** I'm thrilled to announce a significant expansion of opportunities for our youngest students. **Registration opened this morning at 6:00 AM** for our enhanced preschool program that will welcome over 1,000 children next year. For families with children turning 4 by September 15, 2025, this is more than just enrollment—it's the foundation of your child's lifelong learning adventure.

The earliest years of learning shape a child's future—tiny hands turning pages, curious minds exploring, and hearts discovering the joy of possibility. In these moments, we are not just teaching; we are **shaping futures.** When we invest in our youngest learners, we invest in a future where **every child is equipped to dream, empowered to achieve, and engaged in a world full of possibilities to excel**.

Our district data confirms the power of early education: 62% of children who attended CRCSD preschool programs demonstrated stronger literacy skills and kindergarten readiness compared to those who didn't attend preschool. This isn't just a statistic—it represents real children in our community who started kindergarten confident, prepared, and excited to learn.

We've designed options to fit your family's unique needs:

- **Free half-day** preschool with certified teachers at multiple locations
- **Tuition Based Full-day** preschool option at Truman Early Learning Center for $325/month.
- **Wrap-around care options a**vailable for both half-day and full-day programs at multiple locations through partnerships with Champions and HeadStart
- All programs taught by highly qualified **certified teachers** ensuring quality education

As parents, you want to give your children every advantage. As a community, we want every child to have the opportunity to reach their potential. Whether you have a preschooler now, will in the future, or simply care about the future of Cedar Rapids, our commitment to early childhood education strengthens our entire city.

Don't miss this opportunity—registration is now open!

- **Online**: Available at crschools.us/preschool
- **In-Person:** Truman Early Learning Center, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
- Parents will select their 1st and 2nd choices for locations, filled on a first-come, first-served basis

Even if you don't have a preschool-aged child right now, please share this information with neighbors, friends, and family members who might benefit. As a community, we all play a role in supporting the next generation. **Every child deserves a strong beginning,** and together we can ensure that all children in Cedar Rapids have access to the quality early education that sets them on a path to success.

I look forward to welcoming our next generation of learners as they take their first steps on their educational journey with us. My heart fills with hope each time I visit our preschool classrooms and see the wonder in children's eyes as they learn and grow together.

"In the gentle awakening of a child's precious curiosity, we witness the most sacred and profound work of education—not simply teaching, but tenderly nurturing the brilliant light that will illuminate their entire journey. Each small, joyful discovery in preschool becomes the cherished foundation for a lifetime of wonder and boundless possibility." ~ Dr Grover

With excitement for the possibilities ahead,

Dr. Tawana Grover
Superintendent
Cedar Rapids Community School District

Time is Running Out – Share Your Bond Feedback by March 5!

Parents, this is your final opportunity to shape the future of Cedar Rapids schools! We are incredibly grateful for the nearly 6,000 surveys we have received so far! Your feedback has already helped shape key decisions, and your voices continue to guide this initiative. Thank you for your engagement, your questions, and your commitment to our students' success. If you haven't completed the bond survey, the **deadline** is **Tuesday, March 5**—don't miss your chance to have a say in the improvements that will directly impact your child's education.

STRONG SCHOOLS
STRONG COMMUNITY

Why This Matters for Your Child:

At the heart of this project is a simple fact: our students and teachers deserve the best facilities. This bond proposal will fund critical renovations and expansions impacting nine schools and benefiting over 5,000 students across the district. These improvements will:

- Ensure safe, modern learning environments that support student achievement.
- Create engaging, updated spaces designed for today's students.
- Help teachers and staff deliver the best education possible.

This plan has been guided by public input from the start, and we'll continue to listen and adjust. It's a collaborative vision that honors our past and builds for our future. Your input will help determine which facility improvements move forward and how they are implemented.

How to Complete the Survey

- **Online:** Complete the survey you received via email from School Perceptions by March 5.
- **By Mail:** If you are a registered voter, check your mailbox for a survey and return it by March 5.
- **Need a Survey?** If you didn't receive one, email FutureReadyFacilities@crschools.us to request a unique survey link and code.

For more details on the bond proposal, visit build.crschools.us.

The deadline is almost here—make your voice heard! Thank you for being a partner in creating **strong schools for a strong community.**

Jenny Wagner Honored with Prestigious Award for Violence Prevention Advocacy



Kennedy High School's Jenny Wagner has received the inaugural Dan Marburger Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Advocacy Award from the University of Northern Iowa's Patricia A. Tomson Center for Violence Prevention. Named in honor of Perry High School principal Dan Marburger—who lost his life protecting students from gun violence in January 2024—the award recognizes Wagner's leadership in fostering safer school environments through the MVP program.

Since starting the Kennedy program in 2017, Wagner has empowered student leaders to promote safety, respect, and proactive intervention. Her efforts have earned Kennedy several accolades, including recognition from Drake University in 2018 and the CR Rough Riders Impacting Community Excellence award in 2019.

Reflecting on the honor, Wagner noted, "This award affirms that our dedication to violence prevention truly matters." The Perry High School MVP advisory team also received the inaugural team award for outstanding contributions.
The Cedar Rapids Community School District is proud to celebrate Jenny Wagner's impactful work and the continued commitment of educators and student leaders to preventing violence.

Kennedy Senior Harper Hewitt Named Linn County Outstanding Student at Kirkwood



We are thrilled to announce that Harper Hewitt, a senior at Kennedy High School, has been selected as the Linn County Outstanding Student at Kirkwood Community College for the 2024-2025 academic year! This prestigious award recognizes students with exceptional academic achievement, dedication, and character.

To be eligible for nomination, students must:

- Maintain a 3.3 cumulative GPA at Kirkwood
- Earn at least 30 semester hours of Kirkwood credit—half the coursework needed for a degree
- Be enrolled during the current fall and/or spring terms

It is a rare accomplishment for a concurrent enrollment student to meet these rigorous qualifications and this year, Cedar Rapids had more than one student in the running. Harper stood out for her impressive academic record and the praise from the faculty, who commended her as a kind, hardworking, and deserving student.

"It's really important for me to get that head start in High School," said Hewitt, "Because, in college, I feel that I'm more prepared to take all my classes and that when it's something I'm paying for it, when it's going towards my degree, I am more almost advanced in them. And that can be really the best nurse in the future that I can be."

Harper has excelled in multiple Kirkwood programs, including:

- Kirkwood Patient Care Academy
- Nurse Aide Apprenticeship
- Pre-Med, Nursing & Pre-Professional Health Careers Academy

She will be honored with an award in April. Congratulations, Harper—your hard work and dedication inspire us all!

Kenwood Leadership Academy Hosts Leader in Me Day

On February 27, Kenwood Leadership Academy (KLA) welcomed parents and community members to Leader in Me Day, showcasing student leadership and school values.

Students took charge as emcees, navigators, and discussion leaders, engaging visitors with topics like “Why I Love KLA” and “My Favorite Mission Statement.” Performances by the Pom Squad and 4th-grade choir singing “Lean on Me” highlighted the school’s spirit and teamwork.

Guests explored classrooms to see leadership in action through mission statements and magnet activities. Teachers and staff were on hand to provide insights into how these activities foster personal growth and academic success. Parents and community members had the chance to see students actively applying leadership skills in real-world scenarios.

The event reinforced KLA’s commitment to developing confident, capable young leaders, leaving a lasting impression on all who attended.









Kennedy Girls Bowling Wins State Championship



The Kennedy Girls Bowling Team has made school history, claiming the **state championship title in 3A** with an outstanding performance. Their dedication, precision, and teamwork led them to the top, securing first place and bringing home a well-earned victory.

This achievement reflects the countless hours of practice, determination, and passion these athletes have poured into their sport. Their success is a testament to their hard work and the strong leadership that has guided them throughout the season.

Congratulations to the Kennedy Girls Bowling Team on this incredible accomplishment. The entire community celebrates your victory and looks forward to seeing what you achieve next.

Wishing Tori Paga the Best on Her Trip to Washington, D.C.!

We are thrilled to share that Tori Paga will be representing the state of Iowa in the prestigious United States Youth Senate Program in Washington, D.C.! This incredible opportunity allows her to engage with national leaders, gain firsthand experience in government, and make a lasting impact as a young leader.

Tori's dedication, passion, and leadership have brought her to this moment, and we couldn't be prouder. As she embarks on this journey, we know she will represent Iowa with excellence and bring back valuable insights to inspire others.

Check out the video below to hear from Tori herself!

Join us in wishing her a safe and successful trip!



Hear From Tori

Discover Summer Camp: Exciting Opportunities for Young Scholars!

Looking for a fun and enriching way to kick off the summer? Discover Summer Camps is the perfect opportunity for academically talented students in grades 3-5 to explore their interests, learn new skills, and challenge their minds!

Held June 16-17 at Harding Middle School, these engaging morning camps allow students to choose their classes based on their passions. With a variety of exciting themes—including coding, engineering, art, writing, chemistry, movie-making, CSI, show choir, comics, physics, and more—there's something for everyone!

Spots fill quickly, so sign up early! For more details and registration, visit www.CRDiscoverSummerCamp.weebly.com.

Scholarship Opportunities



In partnership with the Cedar Rapids Community Schools Foundation (https://crcsf.com) and local partners, the Cedar Rapids Community School District would like to highlight some of our local scholarship opportunities to ensure students and families are aware of the resources available. Be sure to visit the Cedar Rapids Community Schools Foundation Scholarship Page for CRCSD-specific scholarship details. Visit Scholarship Opportunities for links to applications and deadlines.

Don't miss out on these valuable opportunities—start exploring and applying today!

Paul Anthony Memorial Music Scholarship
Established in 1967, this $500 scholarship is in memory of Paul Anthony, a long-time music teacher at McKinley and Washington. Open to any senior in the CRCSD, the winner (either instrumental or vocal) is chosen by the audition process. More information can be secured from the student's music director.

Linn County Public Health Mobile Vaccine Clinic

The Cedar Rapids Community School District has partnered with Linn County Public Health to provide students with an opportunity to get their required vaccines before school starts next fall. A mobile vaccine clinic will be coming to all Middle School and High School locations. Please see below for the exact dates and times they will be at your child's school. If you are interested in your child receiving vaccines at this mobile clinic, please contact your child's school nurse.

Please note that additional paperwork must be completed and returned to the health office before your child can be seen at the mobile clinic. Now is a great time to beat the back-to-school rush and get the required vaccines done ahead of time at your child's school!

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Linn County, Iowa

School	Date	Time
Franklin Middle School	April 24th	9:00am - 11:00am
McKinley Middle School	April 24th	12:30 pm - 2:30pm
Harding Middle School	May 6th	9:00am - 11:00am
Roosevelt Middle School	May 6th	12:30 pm - 2:30pm
Taft Middle School	May 8th	9:00am - 11:00am
Wilson Middle School	May 8th	12:30 pm - 2:30pm
Kennedy High School	April 15th	9:00am - 11:00am
Washington High School	April 15th	12:30 pm - 2:30pm
Jefferson High School	April 22nd	9:00am - 11:00am
Metro High School	April 22nd	12:30 pm - 2:30pm
Hoover Pilot	May 22nd	8:30am - noon

Glance Around CRCSD



Trailside Elementary 3rd graders have been hard at work creating beautiful flowers for their upcoming spring concert!



The Washington Warrior Girls' Basketball team is moving forward in the State playoffs! A special congratulations to Sam



Johnson Steam Academy students had a fantastic time playing in the snow and making the most of the playground as the warmer weather returned!

Becker for reaching her 1,000th career point!



Taft Middle School students had a blast at Superstar Bowling!



Nixon Elementary 1st and 5th graders enjoyed connecting through their Buddy Classrooms experience!



Cleveland Elementary students in Ms. Linkvis's class collaborated to write an opinion paragraph on the future of space travel.

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: Casino shows where Cedar Rapids' values lie
- KCRG: Cedar Rapids teacher honored with award named for late Perry principal
- KGAN: Cedar Rapids district unveils new preschool model for 2025-2026 school year

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 28, 2025

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

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