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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 Dr. Grover

Our Commitment to Students & the Future of CRCSD



Dear CRCSD Families,

At this week's board meeting, we heard from passionate staff, board members, parents, and community members who care deeply about our schools. We understand the concerns about staffing reductions and the uncertainty they bring. Please know that our commitment to our students remains steadfast, and we have taken great care to minimize the impact on our classrooms. We know that teachers have an immeasurable impact on students, and we are working to ensure we have the right people in the right positions to best serve our children.

Our district is facing a $12 million budget deficit, primarily due to inadequate state funding for public schools. To date, the state legislature has yet to set supplemental student aid for the 2025-26 school year—a decision that directly affects our ability to plan for the future. Despite these challenges, we are taking proactive steps to support our students.

As we shared last month, we are realigning staff in collaboration with the Cedar Rapids Education Association (CREA), and so far, 32 of 58 surplused teachers have been placed in other positions within the district. We are doing everything we can to retain as many of our dedicated staff members as possible while being fiscally responsible with the

resources available. To date, no teachers have been released due to the realignment process. We will continue to keep you up to date.

While these are difficult times, we must come together to advocate for the future of public education. I encourage you to contact your legislators and urge them to provide adequate funding for Iowa's public schools. Your voice matters. You can find your legislator and make your voice heard here: https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find.

As Director Byers so powerfully stated, "The fight is not with each other—we are all here because we care about public education." We will continue to navigate these challenges with transparency, responsibility, and an unwavering focus on what matters most—our students.

Thank you for your support and commitment to CRCSD.

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

Last Day of School Update

The last day of school for students will be **Thursday, June 5**, and it will be a full day of school. Unlike previous years, there will not be an early dismissal. This assumes there are no more cancellations or delays for the remainder of the school year.

Please plan accordingly, and thank you for a great school year.



District Updates

ISASP Testing is Underway: How You Can Help Your Student Succeed



Spring brings warmer weather, longer days—and ISASP testing for students across our district. The Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) is now underway, with some schools starting this week and others beginning next week.

These assessments are a valuable tool that help us measure student growth and academic progress across key subjects. While testing can sometimes feel stressful, a little preparation goes a long way toward helping students feel confident and ready.
Here are a few simple ways you can support your student during ISASP testing:

1. Prioritize Sleep
A well-rested brain performs better. Encourage your student to get a full night's sleep before test days. For most school-aged kids, that means 8–10 hours of rest.

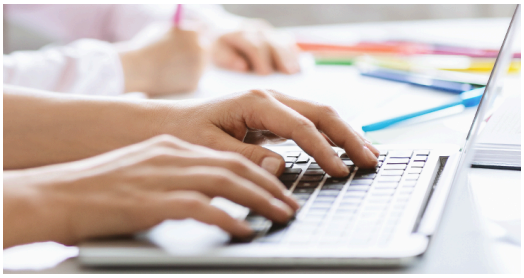
2. Eat a Balanced Breakfast
Make sure your student starts the day with a nutritious breakfast—something with protein, whole grains, and fruit helps maintain focus and energy throughout the day.

3. Arrive on Time
A calm start to the morning makes a big difference. Try to avoid rushing, and ensure your student arrives at school on time and ready to go.

4. Stay Positive
Encouragement from parents and caregivers matters! Remind your student that the ISASP is just one way to show what they've learned—and that their best effort is something to be proud of.

We appreciate the partnership of our families and community as we work together to support every student's success. If you have questions about your school's testing schedule, please reach out to your building.

CRCSD to Administer Conditions for Learning Survey



Cedar Rapids Community School District is committed to creating a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment for all students. Between April 14 and 30, we will administer the annual **Conditions for Learning Survey** to students in **grades 3-12** between **April 14-30**.

What This Survey Matters

This survey provides valuable insight into students' perspectives on safety, relationships, school rules, and overall engagement in learning. The information collected helps school leaders and teachers enhance the educational experience for all students.

- The **Conditions for Learning Survey** asks students about key aspects of their school experience, including:
- **Physical Safety** – How safe students feel on school grounds.
- **Emotion**al Safety – The extent to which students feel free from bullying, teasing, and exclusion.
- **Adult-Student Relationships –** How supported and connected students feel with school staff.
- **Student-Student Relationships –** How students interact and collaborate with one another.
- **Boundaries & Expectations –** The clarity and fairness of school rules.

By gathering this feedback, our district can identify strengths, growth areas, and staff professional development opportunities. Research has shown that fostering a positive school environment improves academic performance, better classroom behavior, and stronger student engagement.

Student Participation

The survey will take **20-30 minutes** to complete and will be administered online at school. Student responses are **confidential** and will only be reported in aggregate form—individual answers will not be shared. A copy of the survey questions for each grade level is available on our district website. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child's school office or principal.

Thank you for your support in making our schools a better place for all students to learn and thrive!

Serving Up Excellence: Bridget Ferry's Impact at Taft Middle School

For 14 years, **Bridget Ferry** has been a food and nutrition employee with CRCSD. For the last 8 years, she has been the Cafeteria Manager at Taft Middle School. She has gone

above and beyond in her management role by demonstrating exceptional dedication and hard work every day.



Her commitment to providing nutritious meals, ensuring smooth operations, and fostering a welcoming environment has made a significant impact on both staff and students.

From navigating last year's Taft dome cafeteria closure to excelling in a recent administrative state review, handling last-minute challenges, and always supporting her team, her efforts do not go unnoticed. She is a valued employee of the Food and Nutrition team whose hard work and passion truly make a difference. Thank you, Bridget!

Celebrating CRCSD's Progress in Graduation and Dropout Rates



We are excited to share great news about the progress we've made as a district in improving student outcomes! The Iowa Department of Education has released the graduation and dropout rates for the Class of 2024, and the results highlight the incredible dedication of our students, staff, and families.

The four-year cohort graduation rate for the Class of 2024 increased to **79.1%**, continuing an upward trend. This marks a **1.6% increase from the Class of 2023** (77.5%). Additionally, the district's five-year cohort graduation rate for the Class of 2023 has risen to 81.26%, demonstrating CRCSD's commitment to ensuring that more students complete their education successfully, even if it takes an additional year.

At the same time, CRCSD's dropout rates continue to decline across grades 7-12. The overall grade 7-12 dropout rate for the 2023-24 school year is 2.67%, down from 3.3% in 2022-23. For students in grades 9-12, the dropout rate now stands at 3.65%.

District Dropout and Graduation Data:

- **Class of 2024 Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate:** 79.1%
- **Class of 2023 Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rate:** 81.26%
- **Grade 7-12 Dropout Rate in 2023-24:** 2.67%
- **Grade 9-12 Dropout Rate in 2023-24:** 3.65%

CRCSD remains committed to continuing this positive trend, ensuring that every student is supported to reach graduation and prepared for life after high school. The district's vision, "Every Learner. Future Ready.", underscores its dedication to equipping all students for success. CRCSD also upholds its core values of Everyone Empowered, Engaged, and Equipped to Excel.

These improvements are a direct reflection of the hard work of our staff, our strong support systems, and innovative programs to ensure students graduate prepared for life after high school.

Use the Safe+Sound App to Keep Our Schools Safe

Safety in our schools starts with awareness and timely reporting. The Iowa Safe+Sound App is a powerful tool that allows students, staff, parents, and community members to anonymously report concerns about students in crisis, school violence, bullying, safety threats, and any other concerning or suspicious behavior.

Reports made through the app are monitored 24/7 and shared with school administrators and local law enforcement to ensure swift action and support for those in need—before harm occurs. By working together, we can create a safer learning environment for all. The Safe+Sound app is available for download on the App Store and Google Play. Let's stay vigilant and look out for one another! Stand Up - Speak out - Save a Life

Calling All Future J-Hawks, Cougars, and Warriors!!



CRCSD preschool and kindergarten registration is NOW OPEN for the 2025–2026 school year! We're excited to welcome your little learners into our school families and provide them with a fun, engaging, and supportive learning environment.

4-Year-Old Preschool Registration Now Open

Is your child ready to start their educational journey? Our preschool program offers an exciting introduction to school, with engaging activities that will spark their love for learning. We're also offering wrap-around care for working parents so your little one can stay at school all day!

Preschool Options to Fit Your Family:

- **FREE Half-Day Preschool:** A perfect introduction to school routines with AM and PM options available!
- **Full-Day Preschool (Tuition-Based):** Just $325/month for a full day of learning.
- **Multiple Convenient Locations:** Classes are available at several schools across the district to make it easier for families. Locations include: CRA, Maple Grove, West Willow, Grant Wood, Kenwood Leadership Academy, Johnson STEAM Academy, Viola Gibson, Wright, Hiawatha, and Truman Early Learning Center.
- **Wrap-Around Care Services:** Your child can stay at school all day thanks to wrap-around care from our trusted partners - Head Start and Champions.

Kindergarten Registration is Open, Too!

If your child will be 5 years old by September 15, 2025, they're ready to start kindergarten in the fall! Our kindergarten classrooms provide a warm, welcoming environment where kids build strong academic and social-emotional skills to set them up for a lifetime of success.

Enroll Today - Space is Limited!

We can't wait to meet your little learner and start their educational journey together. Space is limited, so register now to secure your spot! Enroll today at http://crschools.us/enroll

Glance Around CRCSD



As a fun April Fools celebration, Harrison Elementary food & nutrition staff had brownies on their menu and served brown E's!



Viola Gibson is ready to ROCK the ISASP tests! They had an assembly reminding the students of our testing goals and how to prepare for our testing!



JSA students put on their "thinking caps" in honor of ISASP testing for 3rd-5th grade students this week!



CRA 3rd graders started their Animals Across Time unit with a trip to the Devonian Fossil Gorge! They discovered fossils from 375 million years ago when Iowa was a tropical ocean.



City View student intern, Jack, confidently leads a tour—an experience that builds public speaking skills, historical knowledge, and leadership.



Trailside kindergartners made 2d and 3d shapes out of toothpicks and marshmallows for math, making learning fun… and edible!

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: Dealership donates new car for Cedar Rapids high school automotive class

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.

April 4, 2025

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

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