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October 2, 2025

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Listen To The Newsletter

We know you all have busy schedules, so we are sharing this important information through a short podcast-style recording. Click the button below to listen to an overview of the newsletter, and then you can dive deeper by reading below!

Listen Now

DR. GROVER'S MESSAGE



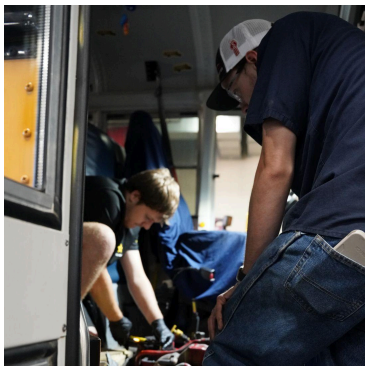
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

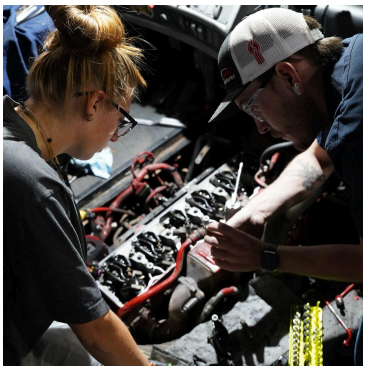
Construction on the new Jefferson High School Freshman Academy and CTE spaces is well underway, promising state-of-the-art facilities for future students. However, this temporary disruption hasn't slowed down the learning for Jefferson's current automotive students! Thanks to a fantastic collaboration, students in Jim Schwiebert's automotive classes continue to gain invaluable hands-on experiences.

The district's transportation team has stepped up to provide a work space and hands-on opportunities for these budding mechanics. This partnership ensures that the core of CTE (practical, real-world application) remains central to the curriculum, even without a dedicated classroom garage.

Two students, Mikey Dieter-Shedeck and Passion Barkdoll, have already taken advantage of this unique opportunity by teaming up with a district bus technician. Last week, they got their hands dirty with a critical repair job: learning how to replace diesel engine injectors on one of the CRCSD buses.

Working side by side with a professional, Mikey and Passion didn't just observe; they actively participated in a complex and essential maintenance task. These kinds of experiences are priceless, offering a direct view into the high-demand skills required for a career in automotive and diesel technology. It's an exemplary illustration of how district-wide collaboration is turning temporary obstacles into powerful learning opportunities.





NOVEMBER BOND REFERENDUM: PRESERVING HISTORY & BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE



On Tuesday, November 4, 2025, voters in the Cedar Rapids Community School District will consider a bond proposal to update aging school facilities, improve safety, increase accessibility, and create modern learning spaces for students and staff. This plan, created by parents, staff, and community members, balances preserving historic school buildings with preparing learning environments for today's students.

Key Projects

- McKinley STEAM Academy – Full modernization, security upgrades, and ADA-compliant, while preserving the historic exterior.
- Wilson Middle → Elementary – Renovated into a new elementary school serving Grant & Cedar River Academy students.
- Roosevelt Creative Coordinator Business Academy – Modernized interior, security upgrades, ADA-compliant, and designed for one grade level per floor. Wilson students combine with Roosevelt.
- Kennedy High – New Freshman Academy and expanded cafeteria & kitchen area for equity with Washington & Jefferson.

Learn More: build.crschools.us

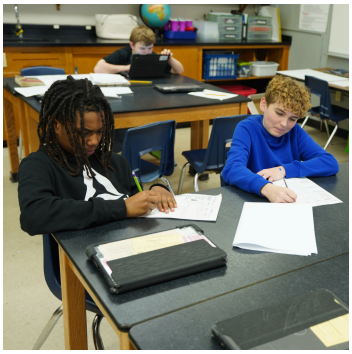
Why It Matters: The average CRCSD school building is 63 years old, with several over 100 years old. While the district has invested in building upkeep, the condition of the buildings is showing a natural decline, which is expected with age. They need significant upgrades to remain safe, accessible, and accommodating 21st-century teaching/learning.

- Students: Safer, ADA-compliant schools with modern classrooms to learn and grow.
- Staff: Improved facilities and resources to support teaching and learning.
- District: Stronger ability to attract and retain students and staff.
- Community: Protects property values, supports economic growth while honoring the district's history.

Voting Information: Vote on or before November 4th

- Election Day: Tuesday, Nov. 4
- Register to Vote by: Oct. 20
    - Same-day registration in Iowa is available: bring a government-issued ID with the correct address or ID and proof of residence.
- Absentee Ballot Requests Due by: Oct. 21
- Find Your Voting Location

ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH RECAP



As we wrap up Attendance Awareness Month, it's time to give a big shoutout to the schools that showed up in a big way! Congratulations to our top five schools with the highest average daily attendance for the month of September:

- Hoover - 97.09%
- Cedar River Academy - 96.55%
- Maple Grove - 96.03%
- Kenwood Leadership Academy - 95.79%
- Viola Gibson - 95.73%

When it comes to attendance, every day matters. Students who attend school regularly build essential reading and math skills, develop consistent habits, and are better prepared for future success. A huge thank you to our students, families, and staff for making attendance a priority and making every day count! If something is getting in the way of your student attending every day, don't hesitate to reach out to your school principal for support. Click Here to read the district's attendance policy.

AMERICA READS DAY



Cedar Rapids Community School District is excited to once again take part in America Reads Day on Thursday, October 9, and Friday, October 10! This annual tradition brings community members, families, and local leaders into our schools to share the joy of reading with our students.

Volunteers are invited to spend time in classrooms across the district, reading their favorite book and sparking excitement for literacy. It's a simple act that makes a big impact, helping to inspire a lifelong love of reading in our students.

Whether you're a parent, grandparent, neighbor, or community partner, we welcome you to join us in celebrating the power of books and storytelling.

Sign Up For A Time Slot

PARENT-TEACHER CONFENCE REMINDER



A friendly reminder that Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled to begin on Thursday, October 20th. We look forward to connecting with all families to discuss your student's progress and set goals for a successful year.

To ensure all families can fully participate in these important discussions, we want to remind our families who speak a language other than English that interpreter services are available.

If you require an interpreter for your scheduled conference, please ensure you have requested this service in advance with your student's teacher or the school office. Your participation is a vital part of your child's

education, and we are committed to providing the necessary support to make communication clear and effective.

Please confirm your conference time and arrive a few minutes early. We can't wait to see you!

NATIONAL CIVICS BEE



The Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance is hosting the local entry into the National Civics Bee®, a nonpartisan competition for students in grades 6–8 from public, private, charter, and home schools across Eastern Iowa. This year's event celebrates America's 250th anniversary and will be held in all 50 states for the first time. Students begin by submitting a written essay, with finalists advancing to a live local quiz event in Spring 2026.

Winners progress to the Iowa State Finals, and the state champion earns a trip to Washington, D.C. for the National Championship in Fall 2026, where they'll compete for cash prizes, national recognition, and up to a $100,000 contribution to a 529 education savings plan. First-place state winners may also secure a $5,000 donation for their school. The application deadline is February 3, 2026.

Learn more and apply

IJAG PARTNERSHIP CONTINUES FOR 2025-2026

CRCSD continues its 20-year partnership with iJAG (Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates) to support students and empower them with the skills they need to succeed. The organization helps students remove obstacles while developing leadership, communication, and employability skills. Students in the program also gain experience in civic engagement and community service, along with personalized guidance to help them achieve their educational and career goals.

iJAG is a public/private nonprofit organization supported by the State of Iowa Legislature, school partners, and private support from corporations, foundations, and community members. The organization creates business, industry, and education partnerships committed to achieving the mission of JAG: ensuring that youth graduate, attain basic employability skills through classroom instruction and work-based learning, transition more successfully from middle to high school, and into the next step in their futures, whether that be education, employment, or enlistment.

Program Highlights
iJAG Specialists provide career counseling, skills development, and work-based learning experiences that improve academic performance, attendance, and confidence. Data from 2024 showed that students who participated in iJAG had a 98.4% graduation rate, and 70% had secured employment within one year of graduation. Additionally 38% improved their attendance and nearly 80% demonstrated academic growth. Currently, there are five specialists who serve approximately 250 students across Jefferson High School, Washington High School, and Wilson Middle School.

New This Year
All five remaining middle schools will now participate in iJAG Lite at no cost to the district. This expansion aligns with CRCSD's Student Excel Plan and Portrait of a Graduate, ensuring equity and opportunity for every student.

For more information about iJAG programs in CRCSD, contact Rebecca Vasquez at rebecca.vasquez@ijag.org or Tara Troester at ttroester@crschools.us.

I-SMILE DENTAL SCREENING AT SCHOOL

I-Smile may be visiting your child's school this school year. Students/families will receive a consent form from their school Health Office, and we ask that everyone fill out the form and send it back, whether you marked yes or no. We really want to encourage and improve on getting these consent forms returned so we can serve as many students as possible. Ismile will screen all students with a completed consent form in grade levels 2-5 at schools that are 40% or more free and reduced.

A licensed Dental Hygienist will come to the school and can provide a dental screening, sealants, and fluoride to those who need treatment. This is at no cost to families. Sealants are placed on the chewing surfaces of teeth to help prevent cavities from forming. It is a quick, easy, and painless way to help seal in deep grooves that catch food debris.

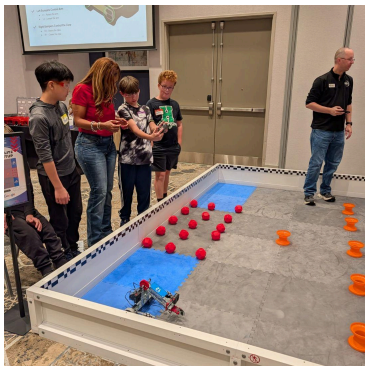
Dental Health is extremely important and can affect your child's ability to learn/focus, eat, and speak. Dental concerns can have serious health implications as well. I-Smile will also be providing help to families that need to find a dental home or have other barriers that may keep them from seeking dental treatment. This service is essential to our community.to ensure your child has a dental home and gets scheduled for treatment if concerns are noted during the dental screening.

VISION SCREENING WITH LION'S CLUB

CRCSD partners with the Lion's Club to complete vision screenings at school. These are free vision screenings for students in AK, PreK, and Kindergarten. A vision screening can identify vision issues when a child may not be able to recognize or describe a problem.

School Health Office staff will distribute consent forms, and a completed consent form is required for students to participate in the screening. We encourage all students/families to complete this consent form to participate in the screening for early detection and intervention of vision problems.

Iowa law requires that the parents or guardians of a child who is to be enrolled in a public elementary schools, have a vision screening at least once before enrollment in kindergarten and again before enrollment in 3rd grade.





Harding, Taft, and McKinley middle school students attended the Google/Rec Conference at Kirkwood, providing them with an invaluable opportunity to engage with industry experts and expand their knowledge. Students had to build a robot and then use it to complete a series of tasks.



JSA Jaguars made their mascot debut at JSA's first assembly of the year! We said goodbye to the old Jaguar, and JJ helped unveil our new Goal Getters STEAM whistle, which students will pull at monthly goal celebrations.



Mrs. Sleege's class at Erskine had some fun team-building time! Students worked together to build towers using spaghetti and marshmallows. It was a great way to practice teamwork and problem-solving while having fun



City View students attended the Students' Oceans Conference at the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque. They learned about their local watershed and how it connects to the ocean through the Mississippi River.

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: C.R. school board making 'concrete, immediate improvements' in communication — Read Here
- Gazette: Parent teacher groups fund school spirit, but lack volunteers — Read Here
- KGAN: Wilson Middle School project aims to provide students with clean clothes — Read Here

Your School's Virtual Backpack

CRCSD Is Hiring! Apply Here

Breakfast & Lunch Menus

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, Educational Leadership and Support Center, 2500 Edgewood Rd NW, Cedar Rapids, IA, (319) 558-2000.

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Jefferson Activities Calendar

Kennedy Activities Calendar

Washington Activities Calendar

Cedar Rapids Community School District
Every Learner: Future Ready

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

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