

December 4, 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



Dear CRCSD Families,

The Cedar Rapids Community School District is preparing to address today's budget and enrollment challenges through the development of a stronger, community-driven strategic plan.

Like many districts across Iowa, we are experiencing declining enrollment and financial pressures. We view this moment as an opportunity to realign our resources, elevate programming, and ensure long-term success for our students and staff. Our commitment remains the same: to provide high-quality, future-ready learning experiences that make CRCSD a district of

choice.

In the weeks ahead, we will invite staff, families, and community members into the process of shaping a new seven-year strategic plan that defines sustainable, high-quality education for Cedar Rapids.

Key Engagement Opportunities:

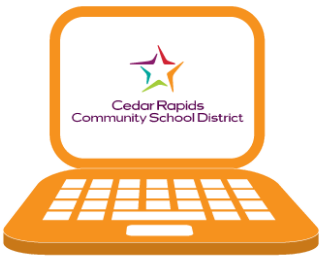
- Board Work Session: *December 5, 2025* – Review of enrollment and financial data.
- Staff Engagement: *December 9, 2025* – Districtwide virtual meeting
- Community Coalition: *December 11, 2025* – Conversation with staff, families, and partners. **CLICK HERE** to join the coalition.
- Strategic Plan Executive Committee (SPEC): *Date TBD* – A smaller group guiding alignment between current needs and long-term goals.

No decisions have been made. We are focused on listening, learning, and collaborating to shape thoughtful solutions. Surveys and additional engagement opportunities will be shared soon to gather input on priorities and future planning.

Thank you for your partnership. We will provide regular updates as this work continues. Together with our Board of Education, staff, families, and community, we will chart a sustainable path forward, grounded in trust and committed to every learner.

Moving Forward Together,
Dr. Tawana Grover, Superintendent

CRCSD WEBSITE SURVEY



CRCSD is working to update and redesign our websites to make them more user-friendly, informative, and helpful for everyone in our community. Our websites are an important resource for accessing school information, calendars, services, and more. We want to ensure the new design truly supports the needs of our students, families, staff, and community partners.

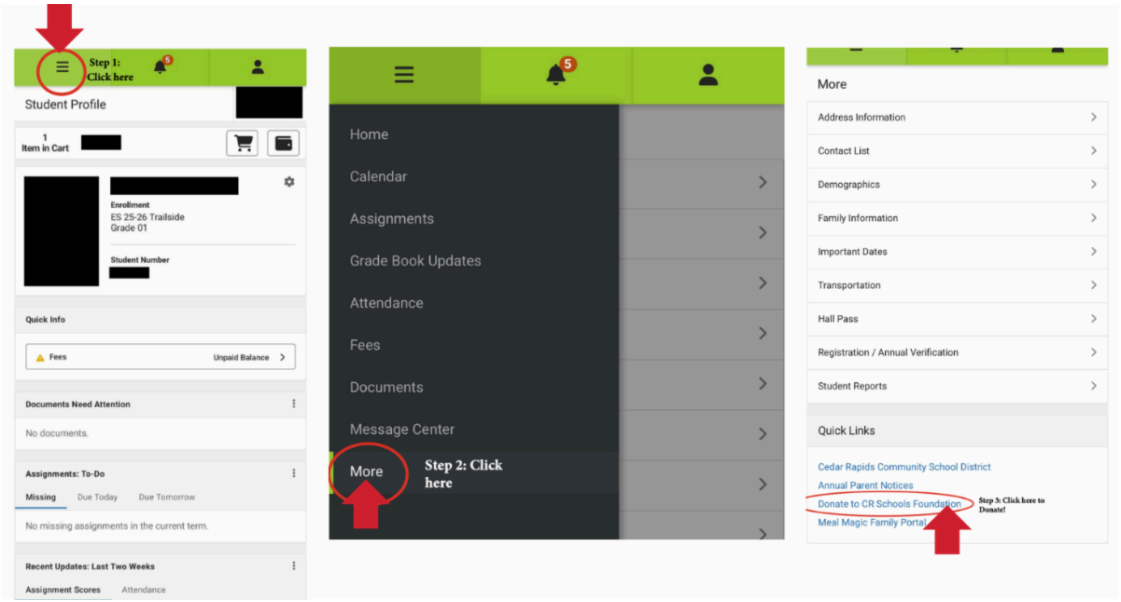
To help guide this work, we invite you to share your feedback in a short survey. Let us know what you use most, what you like, and what could be improved on the current CRCSD websites. Your input will directly shape the design and functionality of the new sites. Thank you for helping us make our new websites a success!

Take the Website Survey Now

PARTNER WITH CRCSF FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Did you know you can easily support enriching educational programming through the Cedar Rapids Community Schools Foundation (CRCSF) directly through Infinite Campus? The Foundation has long provided scholarships, grants, and enrichment programs that help our students thrive, all of which are funded through private donations from individuals who believe in the importance of public education.

While you're already logged into Infinite Campus, checking your student's grades and attendance, you can now make a quick, secure contribution to the CRCSF. Every donation stays in the community, helping to enhance the curriculum and provide invaluable learning opportunities. Look for the giving option the next time you log in. Your generosity makes a meaningful difference for CRCSD students!!



INTRODUCING THE CORE DIPLOMA: EXPANDING PATHWAYS TO GRADUATION



At CRCSD, our goal is for every student to graduate prepared for college, careers, and life. To support this vision, CRCSD will now offer two high school diploma options: the Standard Diploma and the Core Diploma. We want to ensure that all staff understand what a Core Diploma is, how it differs from our Standard Diploma, and why CRCSD is offering this new option.

Standard Diploma: The Standard Diploma is the same diploma CRCSD has offered for years, with no changes. It exceeds the state graduation requirements, requiring at least 40 credit hours across English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, and electives. This is the option the majority of students will receive as it best prepares them for a wide range of postsecondary opportunities (2-year & 4-year colleges/universities, military, and workforce).

Core Diploma: The Core Diploma is a new state-approved option designed for students facing significant life challenges that make completing the Standard Diploma difficult. It meets all Iowa graduation requirements but only requires 32 credits. It includes the same number of core subject credits as the Standard Diploma, with fewer required elective credits.

The Core Diploma is reserved for select students with exceptional circumstances. To be considered, students must have fewer than 15 credits by their junior year and be referred through an application process by a teacher, counselor, or administrator. The Core Diploma does not impact FAFSA eligibility, but it does NOT meet NCAA Eligibility and may not meet admissions requirements at some colleges and universities.

HELP SHAPE PRESCHOOL OPTIONS FOR 2026-2027



The Cedar Rapids Community School District is gathering input from parents and the community to help shape our preschool programming for the 2026–2027 school year. Your feedback will help us understand what families value in a high-quality preschool experience and guide improvements that benefit students across our community.

If you have a preschool-age child at home—even if they do *not* attend a CRCSD preschool—we want to hear from you. Your voice plays an important role in helping us create strong, accessible early-learning opportunities for all families. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and share your perspectives. Your input truly matters!

Share Your Perspective

GIVE YOUR STUDENT A HEAD START WITH AP COURSES

High school is a time for exploration, growth, and preparing for the future, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses at Cedar Rapids Community School District help students do all three. AP classes are college-level courses offered in high school that challenge students with rigorous, in-depth study, fast-paced learning, and advanced critical thinking. In many ways, taking an AP class is like experiencing college while still in high school. CRCSD is proud to offer 30 different AP courses across our high schools, with two more being added next year, providing students a wide range of opportunities to engage in rigorous, college-level learning.

AP courses come with many advantages. High scores on AP Exams can earn college credit, giving students a head start on their degree and saving hundreds or even thousands of dollars in tuition. They also strengthen college applications, showing admissions teams that students are ready for college-level work. Many high schools, including CRCSD, weigh AP courses more heavily in GPA calculations, giving students the potential to raise their GPA above 4.0. Beyond grades and college credit, AP courses help students develop critical skills, such as analytical thinking, time management, and effective study habits, that are valuable in college and beyond.

While there's no limit to the number of AP courses a student can take in high school, CRCSD encourages students to choose courses that both challenge them and align with their future academic or career plans. Check out the video below to see what our students are saying about AP courses, and contact your student's school counsellor to learn more about the AP courses offered at their school.



WINTER WEATHER PREPAREDNESS



Our first snowfall arrived earlier than expected, and we would like to extend a big thank you to our Buildings & Grounds team for spending their holiday weekend clearing sidewalks, preparing entrances, and ensuring our schools were ready on Monday. We also appreciate our transportation team for getting students to and from school safely on challenging roads.

As winter sets in, safety remains our top priority. Here's what families need to know:

Weather Closures & Delays

- Decisions are made by 5:30 AM based on road conditions, temperatures, and building accessibility.
- If school is delayed or closed, families will receive a call, email, and text.
- Please have a plan for late starts, early dismissals, or closures.

Stay Connected

Make sure your contact information is up-to-date in Infinite Campus so you receive weather alerts quickly.

Cold-Weather Preparedness

Students should come with coats, hats, gloves, and boots for recess, bus stops, and outdoor activities. Students go outside for recess if the air temperature or wind chill is above 10 degrees. If your family needs help accessing winter gear, please reach out to your school—we are here to support you.

JEFFERSON'S PLAY IS A DOUBLE FEATURE

Jefferson High School's Drama Department is thrilled to announce its upcoming production: a double feature of timely and hilarious one-act plays: "*The A.I. Play*" and "*10 Ways to Survive the End of the World.*" The plays open tonight and run through the weekend (Dec. 4-6), so get your tickets now! Don't miss your chance to see our talented students as they tackle technology and impending global doom!

When: December 4, 5, & 6, 2025
Where: The Jefferson High School Auditorium
Tickets: Available at the door or online HERE.

Student Plays





About the Plays:

- The A.I. Play: Dive into the chaotic world of Eleanor, a student who thought using a chatbot to write her *Great Gatsby* paper was a harmless shortcut. The plan backfires spectacularly when the AI crafts the *best essay ever*, earning her a spot at a prestigious "genius school." However, this seemingly elite academy is far from what it seems. Eleanor quickly discovers that every other student also cheated with their own personal AI—and the "school" feels suspiciously like a prison. Now, with the help of her fellow *artificial* geniuses, Eleanor must lead a daring jailbreak. This sharp, witty play explores the ethical dilemmas, unexpected consequences, and hilarious irony of relying on artificial intelligence to achieve success. Can Eleanor and her friends escape without the very technology that got them into trouble? Find out!
- 10 Ways to Survive the End of the World: From the author of the hit *10 Ways to Survive the Zombie Apocalypse* comes a brand-new, uproarious "how-to" guide for surviving the truly unpredictable. The play offers a comedic, fast-paced examination of every conceivable apocalypse scenario. Will it be the machines, the apes, a killer virus, or a rogue asteroid that finally does us in? Our quick-witted cast will walk you through the essential survival tactics for each one. Get ready for a night of laughs and learn a few tips that could one day save your life.

KENNEDY'S GRINCH MUSICAL



Kennedy High School, in collaboration with Playtime Poppy Children's Theatre, is thrilled to present the spectacular musical production of Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical*.

Enjoy the classic story of the mean, green Grinch and the cheerful town of Whoville brought to life on stage with beloved songs, laughter, and an abundance of holiday magic. Based on the beloved children's book by Dr. Seuss, this spirited and whimsical retelling is directed by Kennedy High School's Theatre Department, led by Steven Tolly and Alisabeth Von Presley. Don't miss this opportunity to see our talented students bring this classic tale of redemption and holiday joy to the stage! The show runs December 4-6 at Kennedy High School's auditorium. You can get your tickets online here.

JEFFERSON HOLIDAY DINNER

The holidays are a time for coming together, and that is what Jefferson High School students and staff hope to do with their 13th Annual Holiday Dinner on Wednesday, December 17, from 5:00 to 8:00 PM. The free meal, entirely funded by generous donations from local businesses and community members, is open to everyone! Guests will enjoy a traditional holiday feast featuring turkey, gravy, potatoes, and an array of side dishes, all prepared and served by Jefferson students and staff.

Last year, the event served a record 1,343 meals, not only filling stomachs but also warming hearts, celebrating the season, and strengthening the bonds between our school and the Cedar Rapids community. The hope is that this cherished tradition will continue to grow this year.

"*At Jefferson, our school is a family, and this event reflects that spirit. It's a wonderful opportunity for students, staff, and community members to come together and support one another*," shared Principal Sam Hostetler.

After the meal, guests are invited to visit the West Gym to explore the exciting programs and activities happening at Jefferson High School, including information on clubs, courses, athletics, and renderings of the current renovations that are underway.

Join us for an evening of food, festive cheer, and community connection at Jefferson High School's Holiday Dinner. You won't want to miss it! Due to ongoing construction, guests should park in the gym parking lot off 8th St. SE and enter through the gym doors.

Glance Around The District



Cedar River Academy had a visit from the Earth Dome! Students had the chance to visit every continent and ocean on the globe, learning about the diverse features and animals found across the world.



Grant Wood was buzzing with fun at their family "Around the World" night. Families explored hieroglyphics, tried origami, did STEM activities, and enjoyed a candy walk.



The 2nd graders at Viola Gibson wrapped up their CKLA unit on Ancient Greek Civilizations with a fun Greek celebration complete with togas and olive crowns.



Students at Grant Elementary are having fun building and playing in the snow at recess.



Maple Grove students held their own Macy's style parade with their own parade balloons.



Kindergartners at Wright Elementary had the opportunity to learn about Llamas and alpacas with their special visitors from Prairie Patch Farm.

CRCSD 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.

KGAN: CRCSD is seeing a new but familiar face as school board president

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.

Sign Up To Receive This Newsletter Weekly

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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