

December 18, 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

Holidays Hours

We want to extend the warmest holiday wishes to our staff, students, families, and community. We hope this season brings you joy, rest, and cherished moments with family and friends.

Please note that this will be our final newsletter communication until the New Year. We will resume on January 8th. We look forward to connecting with you again in 2026!

Please be aware of the following adjusted hours for the Educational Leadership and Support Center (ELSC) during Winter Break:

- The ELSC will not be open to the public from Monday, December 22, to Friday, January 2.
- All District offices will be closed on December 24, 25, 31, and January 1 in observance of the holidays. Regular business hours will resume on Monday, January 5, 2026.

Happy Holidays from CRCSD!



As we approach the winter break, I find myself reflecting on the incredible energy and spirit that fill our hallways every day. There is no better way to capture that joy than through the voices of our students.

I am delighted to share this short holiday video featuring some of our wonderful learners as we celebrate the season and the progress we've made together this year. It is a CRCSD spin on a holiday classic that is sure to bring a smile to your face.

On behalf of the district, I wish you a restful, warm, and happy holiday season. Please enjoy this special performance from our students!



Message from the Superintendent



Superintendent Name Update

We're pleased to share a personal update from our Superintendent. Dr. Tawana Grover was married this summer and will begin using her married name, Dr. Tawana Lannin, after winter break.

Families may notice this name change in district communications, including emails, newsletters, and media coverage. During the brief transition period, some materials may still reference Dr. Grover, but all future communications will reflect the name Dr. Tawana Lannin.

We're grateful for your partnership and understanding as we ensure consistent communication across the district. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Lannin on this exciting new chapter.

Student Spotlight

CRCSD echoed with the voices of diplomacy and global citizenship during the **11th Annual Cedar Rapids Elementary Model United Nations**.

PACT Students from across CRCSD elementary schools stepped out of their traditional classrooms and into the roles of international delegates and experts on global affairs.

The journey to the "General Assembly" wasn't a short one. To prepare for the event, students immersed themselves in:

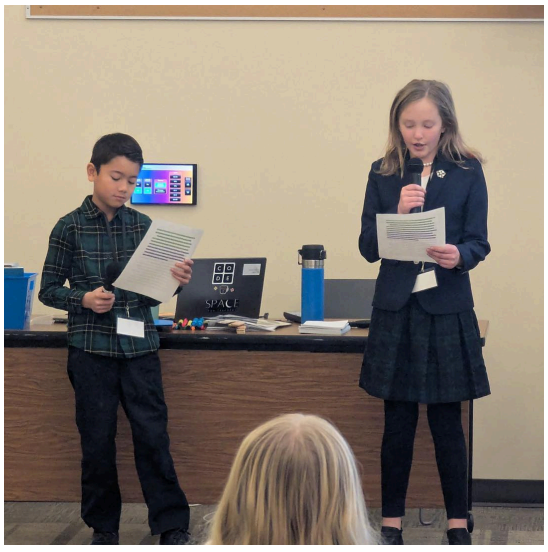
- **In-depth Research:** Learning the inner workings of the United Nations and the specific socio-political landscapes of their assigned countries.
- **Perspective-Taking:** Stepping into the shoes of different cultures to understand their unique concerns, from environmental sustainability to education access.
- **Formal Writing:** Drafting professional position papers that outlined their nation's stance on critical global issues.

Once the event began, the atmosphere was electric. Students didn't just present their findings; they engaged in the art of negotiation.

After delivering their speeches to the "General Assembly," delegates collaborated with peers from other schools. This "caucus" time required students to find common ground, bridge cultural differences, and draft **joint resolutions**. The day concluded with a formal voting process, during which students witnessed firsthand how collective action can lead to proposed solutions for the world's most pressing problems.

While the students were focused on their countries, the real-world impact was the development of "soft skills" that will last a lifetime. Participants walked away with enhanced **public speaking confidence**, **critical thinking skills, and a more profound** sense of **empathy** for the global community.

Congratulations to all our student delegates! You proved that you are never too young to have a voice in shaping the future.





Jefferson Holiday Meal Success

What an incredible night for the J-Hawks! Their 13th Annual Holiday Dinner was more than just a meal; it was a powerful celebration of their community, talent, and tradition. Thank you to everyone who came out to support Jefferson's students, staff, and families.

We are proud to announce that they served a **whopping 1,126 meals!** The energy in the building was electric, as evidenced by the sheer volume of people who joined us:

- **1,074 Seated Meals**
- **52 To-Go Orders**

One of the most touching moments of the night came from a long-time friend of Jefferson. Lisa from Pierson's Floral and Greenhouse, a business that has donated to this event for all 13 years. Lisa personally handcrafted every one of the 45 stunning centerpieces that graced the tables. She shared that out of all the organizations they support, this is the one she can say wholeheartedly: "*We will support this forever!" Seeing that level of dedication is what makes our community so special*.

The event also offered a glimpse into the future of Jefferson. Visitors connected with students and staff while exploring several of the school's signature programs, including:

• Auto Technology
• Woodworking and Construction
• Engineering

Guests also viewed renderings that showcased what Jefferson's new and renovated spaces will look like once construction is complete.

It was a proud moment for our "folks in the shop" to welcome the neighborhood and highlight the exciting next chapter of Jefferson.

Jefferson's **Band of Blue** helped create a festive atmosphere with a performance that left a lasting impression on attendees. A local couple who have lived in the neighborhood and attended all 13 holiday dinners—despite never having children in the district—initially assumed the group was a professional band hired for the event.

"Those kids sound better than some professionals we've seen!" they remarked.
It is neighbors like these, loyal, proud, and supportive, who remind us that Jefferson is a pillar of the entire community, not just for those with students in the building.

Thank you to everyone who cooked, served, performed, and attended. You made this a night to remember! If you would like to donate to help support next year's event, please contact Jefferson teacher, John O'Connor.





Big Win for Tech: Iowa BIG Secures "Credentials to Computer Science" Grant

We are thrilled to share that the Iowa Department of Education has announced its intent to award **Iowa BIG** a grant through the **Credentials to Computer Science Careers** program.

The award, totaling **$17,406.95**, is a massive step forward in our mission to bridge the gap between classroom learning and the digital economy. By providing students with high-level hardware and industry-standard certifications, we are ensuring our learners don't just "know" tech—they can lead the way.

This opportunity wouldn't be possible without the initiative and dedication of our staff. A huge **shoutout to Iowa BIG teacher, Becky Herman**, for her hard work in applying for this grant and championing new opportunities for our students!

The funds are earmarked for immediate hardware upgrades and long-term access to specialized software. Most importantly, it removes the financial barriers often associated with professional licensing.

The grant covers exam vouchers and training for:

- **CompTIA Tech+: Building a foundational understanding of IT infrastructure.**
- **IT Specialist: Validating technical knowledge in software development, networking, and security.**
- **Unity: Providing a pathway into the world of professional game design and real-time 3D development.**

Beyond the hardware, this grant also secures **five-year licenses** for **LearnKey IT Specialist** and **Unity** platforms. This means Iowa BIG students will have consistent access to professional-grade curricula, ensuring they are learning on the same tools used by industry experts today.

Iowa BIG is the Cedar Rapids Community School District's award-winning initiative where high school students earn credit by working on **authentic projects** that solve real problems for local businesses, non-profits, and the community.

'26-'27 District Calendar - Feedback Needed

The proposed district calendar for the 2026-2027 school year was presented to the board in November. Highlights of next year's calendar include:

- Students will be out of school, provided there are no snow makeup days needed, in May
- Professional Learning and Teacher Directed Days are consistently on Mondays
- The first and last day of school will be a full days

Before the calendar is finalized, we want to hear from you. Please provide your feedback on the proposed calendar by completing this survey.

Cedar Rapids Community School District

2026-27 School Calendar

First Day - August 25, 2026
Last Day - May 28, 2027

Calendar Legend

	New Teacher Pre-Service
	First Day of Classes Last Day of Classes
	Staff Professional Learning (No School for Students)
S	End of Semester
	Teacher Directed (No Students)
	Teacher Comp Day (No School for Students)
	Break (No School)
	District Holiday (All Offices Closed)
◆	Inclement Weather Make-Up

School Hours:

Elementary School: 8:50-3:50 pm
Middle School: 7:50-2:50 pm
High School: 7:50-2:50 pm

Weather Related Late Start Hours:

Elem School: 10:50 am – 3:50 pm
Middle School: 9:50 am – 2:50 pm
High School: 9:50 am – 2:50 pm

August 2026					Hours
3	4	5	6	7	
10	11	12	13	14	
17	18	19	20	21	
24	25	26	27	28	26
31					6.5
September 2026					
	1	2	3	4	26
7	8	9	10	11	26
14	15	16	17	18	32.5
21	22	23	24	25	26
28	29	30			19.5
October 2026					
			1	2	13
5	6	7	8	9	26
12	13	14	15	16	32.5
19	20	21	22	23	26
26	27	28	29	30	32.5
November 2026					
2	3	4	5	6	19.5
9	10	11	12	13	32.5
16	17	18	19	20	32.5
23	24	25	26	27	13
30					6.5
December 2026					
	1	2	3	4	26
7	8	9	10	11	32.5
14	15	16	17	18	32.5
21	22	23	24	25	13
28	29	30	31		500.5

State Hours = 1080 hours
Our Hours = 1105 hours
Built in hours = 25 hours

Board approved: PROPOSED 12/8/25

January 2027					
				1	
4	5	6	7	8	26
11	12	13	14	15 s	32.5
18	19	20	21	22	26
25	26	27	28	29	32.5
February 2027					
1	2	3	4	5	26
8	9	10	11	12	32.5
15	16	17	18	19	26
22	23	24	25	26	32.5
March 2027					
1	2	3	4	5	32.5
8	9	10	11	12	32.5
15	16	17	18	19	
22	23	24	25	26	32.5
29	30	31			13
April 2027					
			1	2	13
5	6	7	8	9	32.5
12	13	14	15	16	32.5
19	20	21	22	23	26
26	27	28	29	30	32.5
May 2027					
3	4	5	6	7	32.5
10	11	12	13	14	26
17	18	19	20	21	32.5
24	25	26	27	28	32.5
31					604.5
June 2027					
	1 ◆	2 ◆	3 ◆	4	1105
7	8	9	10	11	
14	15	16	17	18	
21	22	23	24	25	
28	29	30			

High School Graduation Information

January 20 at 7:00 pm: Metro (Winter)
May 26 at 7:00 pm: Metro
May 27 at 7:00 pm: Kennedy
May 28 at 7:00 pm: Washington
May 29 at 7:00 pm: Jefferson

DRAFT

Glance Around The District



Washington held its Annual Mime Showcase for its Adaptive Theatre class. Their Little Theatre was filled with fans being entertained by these notable thespians with the assistance of their dedicated paras.



Erskine kindergarteners wrapped up their CKLA unit on farms with a fun-filled celebration called “Holiday on the Farm!” Students rotated through exciting farm-themed activities, including Ms Dena’s hens, barn dancing, and wheelbarrow races.



Maple Grove students celebrated with a building-wide hallway coloring event! The students worked extremely hard to earn their PAWS tickets and were celebrated by coloring in the hall with their friends



Cleveland Elementary had a “Grinch” dress-up day this week. From fuzzy green outfits to big smiles, it was a fun-filled day that spread laughter, school spirit, and a little holiday cheer.



RCCBA's Art in Business class had a fantastic field trip to the Eastern Iowa Arts Academy where they participated in a variety of different art projects.



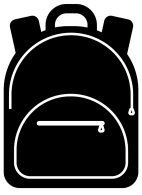
Wilson's eighth-grade science class explored squid anatomy through a hands-on dissection. Students carefully examined external features and dug into the internal anatomy, as they learned about these fascinating sea creatures.

CRCSD IN THE NEWS

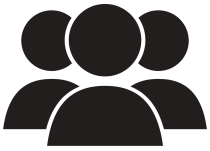
In case you missed it, here are recent news items about, or of interest to, Cedar Rapids Community School District students, teachers, and parents.

Gazette: Cedar Rapids district explores cost-saving measures with community coalition — Read Here

KCRG: Jefferson High School hosts holiday dinner, showcases future changes — 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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