



# Smithfield Public Schools

## Newsletter

🍁 October 2022 🍁

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*Our Promise*  
*Every student will be*  
*prepared for continued*  
*learning, career, and life*

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### A message from the Superintendent

Dear Smithfield Families,

It is hard to believe that fall is here and that we are into our second month of the school year. September saw many school activities, a strong start to instruction in our classrooms, and a focus on building connections with our students. October has arrived and so has the cooler weather and the changing colors of leaves. Our focus on building student connections continues. Each week I visit our schools and have the pleasure of sitting in on classes, meeting with students during lunch in the cafeteria, and observing programs in our school library/media centers as well as our teams on our athletic fields. Our students are truly our greatest asset and we must remain steadfast in prioritizing strengthening student connectedness to our schools, ensuring the health and safety of our young people, and expanding opportunities to learn and grow.



When I visit our schools, I am heartened to see teachers and administrators working closely with students and our young people posing questions, developing solutions to problems, and leading activities. I see the determination of our student athletes on the field and the beginnings of many school clubs and afterschool programs. I enjoy watching the investment our students have in their schools. I see our school safety patrols, student ambassadors showing new students around, and students wearing green to support our teams and the inclusion of ALL students in the Smithfield Public Schools.

### Educators continue to learn

Our schools are often second homes for many students and for our staff. Many of our teachers, administrators, and staff live in the community, many have children who attend our schools or who have graduated, and we are all invested in providing a quality education. Our teachers and administrators are also learners. This year our administrative team is reading the text, *Uplifting Leaders* by Andy Hargreaves, Alan Boyle, & Alma Harris. The text uses case studies, both education and business models, to illustrate and showcase successful examples of how to develop strong communities. In strong school communities students feel connected and because students feel that they are a part of their schools, student performance increases.

Coming out of several years of pandemic-related restrictions, it is more important than ever to ensure that every child in our schools feels valued and connected.

The connection to school should begin as soon as students enter our school grounds, it should be visible in the hallways, in each classroom, and in the cafeteria, playground, and fields. When students feel valued in school, they achieve at a higher rate than they would otherwise. My goal is that each child feels valued and connected and that each is able to name several adults in their schools who they feel they can go to for support. These adults may be their principals, teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals, school secretary, nurse, or custodian, for instance. In our work, we continue to focus on student well being and increasing the sense of belonging, on providing diverse opportunities (including academic, athletic, social, etc.), and on developing a connection between academics and the outside world. Our discussions include finding ways to expand learning beyond the classroom walls and ensuring high quality instruction that will provide our students with an exceptional education and diverse opportunities now and in the future.



Our school principals are key to developing school climates that set high expectations for student achievement and



they are pivotal in setting a tone in their buildings that nurtures student growth. October is **National Principals' Month** and I want to recognize the important roles that our principals, and assistant principals, play in our schools.

### **The impact of community**

Another important ingredient in building an exceptional school district is continual development of strong community partnerships. Over the past four months, I have seen first-hand how invested the Smithfield community is in the education of students. I have met several generations of family members who have graduated from our schools and



decided to live here in order for their children to also receive a quality education. I have met with our town leaders and officials, community and civic leaders, parents and family members, business owners, senior citizens, teachers and administrators, and more. While they may have diverse roles, what they have in common is the value they place on our schools and the importance of promoting opportunities that strengthen our students socially, emotionally, civically, and academically. The **Pink Out** for Breast Cancer Awareness held one Saturday in September at Smithfield High School brought together many members of our community around a common goal of raising awareness and fundraising. Generations of citizens in the community came out to cheer on our soccer teams; local businesses donated goods for raffles; and students, teachers, coaches, administrators, local officials, and parents filled the stands and sidelines. This is just one example of what makes the Smithfield community special and there are so many. **October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month** and other activities are planned.



Our PTAs, PTOs, and SELAC (Special Education Local Advisory Committee) are strong partners in facilitating activities for students that help to expand opportunities and increase connections. Fundraisers are helping to support the “extras” in our classrooms and activities such as the Fun Runs, Pink Out Day, and Unified Day have helped to promote awareness of important issues and causes, involve students as organizers and participants, and show our students that caring communities value **all** members. It is heartwarming to see our families and local officials, the Town Manager, Police Chief, and Fire Chief and their teams, and many others, attend school events and “high five” our students as they arrive at school. So many of our town leaders are also parents of our students or graduates of our high school and they join with us all year to plan activities for our students.

### **Moving Forward Together**

As we move into our second month of school, one of my goals as superintendent is to expand support for our schools by actively involving our community. I know that many community members willingly volunteer their time, talent, and financial support to our schools. In the next month, we will begin the planning process for developing the school district’s next five year strategic plan. To develop **Vision 2028**, a broad array of community voices and participants are necessary. A call for community volunteers will begin in November. In the Smithfield Public Schools, we are **MovingForwardTogether**.

Thank you.

Dawn Bartz

## Upcoming Important Dates

10/3 School Committee Meeting  
10/10 Columbus Day, No School  
10/17 School Committee Meeting

*Check school websites for additional events*



## Rights of Homeless Students

The Smithfield Public Schools enable the continuity of education and necessary services for homeless students as prescribed by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This Act requires districts, under most circumstances, to allow a homeless child to continue to attend his or her school of origin and entitles them to achieve the education standards set for all children. The definition of homeless students and rights of homeless students and their parents are delineated in policy JFABD, available on the district website and on this direct link:

<https://policies.smithfield-ps.org/home/jfabd>

## District Policies

A new policy regarding the administration of medical marijuana and the protocol for all medical marijuana administration to students was introduced at the September 19th School Committee meeting for a first reading. Under the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) regulations, all school districts must have a medical marijuana policy in place this year. The Smithfield Public Schools and school districts in our surrounding areas have put forth similar policies under the guidelines created by RIDE. In addition to School Committee member feedback, our school nurses have also provided feedback on the proposed policy. The School Committee will review the updated policy recommendation and consider its adoption at the October 3 School Committee meeting. All School Committee meetings are held in the SHS Library/Media Center and begin at 6:30 p.m. The School Committee policies are located on the district website at <https://policies.smithfield-ps.org/>.

## Special Education Advisory Committee



The Special Education Parent Advisory Committee will hold its first meeting of the school year on October 11, 2022 at 6:30pm in the media center at Smithfield High School.

Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) will be in attendance to speak about their programs and services. RIPIN provides peer support, at no charge, to families to help them navigate and advocate for individuals with disabilities.

- **Director of Special Education Eileen Crudele**

## Child Outreach Screening 2022-2023



Child Outreach Screening is a FREE service offered to ALL children 3 to 5 years old by your local school district in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Education. Much like your well child visit with the pediatrician, children should participate in screening annually at 3, 4 and 5 years old. Because children learn rapidly during these early years, each screening provides families with an up-to-date check on their child's development.

### Appointments are Available!!!

An appointment can be made by emailing us at [childoutreach@smithfield-ps.org](mailto:childoutreach@smithfield-ps.org) or you can also call 231-6608 or 349-4350.

Scan our QR code!





## Assistant Superintendent's Curriculum Corner



### English Language Arts

Over the past 2 years, elementary teachers and administrators have worked with [Instruction Partners](#) under the direction of Sara Monaco, Assistant Superintendent. A major goal of this work is to provide ongoing support to teachers as they implement the new English Language Arts program, [ReadyGen](#), adopted in 2019. This work has included cycles of improvement (PDSA - Plan, Do, Study, Act) that were used to identify professional learning needs.

As part of the PDSA cycles, administrators conducted walkthroughs of classrooms to provide teachers with feedback and guide professional learning sessions. Professional learning has focused on questioning, which is at the heart of every lesson. Within each lesson, teachers work to intentionally sequence questions so that all students build deeper understandings of the text and topic.

This year, the district is expanding walkthroughs to include elementary teachers visiting classrooms with the building administrators. Beginning this month, grade-level teaching partners will have the opportunity to observe each other and provide peer feedback. The focus will continue to be on questioning and student engagement. Smithfield's [Vision for Effective Literacy Instruction](#) guides this work.

English classes at Gallagher Middle School and Smithfield High School are in the first year of the [Into Literature](#) implementation. Professional learning for teachers and administrators will also be facilitated by Instruction Partners and will focus on using the new program to engage all students in meeting grade-level expectations. The first set of walkthroughs is scheduled during the first week in October. During this time, administrators will have the opportunity to see Into Literature in action and create a professional learning plan to support teachers in its first year of implementation.

## Lexia

The elementary and middle school students in Smithfield will have access to Lexia thanks to a grant from the RI Department of Education. Lexia is an adaptive computer-based program that supports students' reading skills in 6 areas: phonological awareness, phonics, structural analysis, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Lexia will be available to all students in grades K-2 and students in grades 3-8 with specific reading skill goals.

For more information visit the following links:

[Lexia Core5](#) (elementary)

[Lexia PowerUp](#) (middle school)

[Lexia English](#) (multilingual learners)

## School-Based Advocate

Smithfield welcomes Salena Gibbs who will serve as a School-Based Advocate at Gallagher Middle School and Smithfield High School. The position was made possible through a federal grant from the Office of Violence Against Women secured by the Sojourner House. Salena will be in Smithfield on Tuesdays and Thursdays to work on teen dating violence prevention and intervention through student, staff, and family programming.



The first family and staff workshop will be held on **October 20th at 6:00 pm** with a focus on Digital Citizenship and Safety.

Participants will learn about the internet's impact on youth, unsafe/safe internet usage, safety strategies to use while online, and how to discuss cyber safety with youth. [REGISTER HERE](#)

## Farm to School



Smithfield High School welcomed 50 guests from the USDA Farm-to-School Conference on September 22nd. Educators arrived from around the country to view Smithfield's innovative program. The district showcased its efforts in bringing local foods into the classroom, cafeteria, and community. Some of the highlights include the updates to the school cafeterias, smoothie bike, student tastings, family take-home meal kits, and the mobile cooking carts which are used by Chef Reece Lavacca to highlight school meals featuring local foods. Chartwells is the district's food supplier and partner in this project.

Pleasant View began the Local Food Ambassador program on September 30th with the support of the RI Healthy Schools Coalition and Farm Fresh RI who work with food services to train volunteer parents and community members on how to host cafeteria taste-tests featuring locally grown produce. On the 30th, Pleasant View students tasted oven-roasted beet fries made with beets grown at Confreda Farms. LaPerche was the first Smithfield school to participate in the program and Old County plans to introduce it this year.

## ALL ABILITIES Basketball Program

Smithfield Youth Basketball League is starting an ALL ABILITIES Basketball program on Saturdays!

The program will be an inclusive opportunity for our incredible K-12

students in the district who need more support. The all-abilities basketball program will incorporate peer partner support.

This program is 100% free and will be a great experience!

Information on signing up is available through the Smithfield Recreation Department.





## New Art Furniture

While schools were closed on Primary Day, our maintenance team was busy delivering and setting up new Art classroom furniture at both Smithfield High School and Gallagher Middle School. The new furniture included new student and teacher desks and chairs.

### High School Art Room Upgrades



### Middle School Art Room Upgrades





## New Kitchen Equipment

Smithfield High School's cafeteria also received new kitchen and serving equipment – it has been installed and was open to students on Wednesday, Sept. 14.

The kitchen equipment includes new hot and cold serving carts, a new steamer, a warming tray, and other serving equipment.



Students are directly benefiting from the new equipment and the focus on healthy, farm fresh food options in all of our schools' cafeterias. Many of the fruits and vegetables served are locally grown.

We plan to continue to expand healthy breakfast and lunch options for students through the Farm to School initiative.







## This Month's Spotlight, Old County Road School

As we enter October we're celebrating a strong start to the school year and we're looking forward to working together with teachers, staff, students, and families to support our school community.



Our school specific goal for this year is to “Strengthen students’ social skills and improve culture across all school settings by re-introducing and implementing Responsive Classroom practices utilizing the Interactive Modeling approach.” Teachers and staff have worked hard during the first few weeks of school teaching routines to support learning in the classroom, as well as expectations for common areas of the school to ensure that the learning of students in other classrooms is not interrupted. Using a graphical template shared by the leadership team of the high school, all of the OCRS staff worked collaboratively on creating simple and clear visual reminders of the common expectations. These visual reminders are posted



around the school to support the entire school community. Families and community members can view the OCRS Schoolwide Expectations at <https://bit.ly/OCRSExpectations>.

The first month of school also brought with it opportunities for students and parents to begin volunteering. Teams of our 5th grade students led tours for new families right before the beginning of school showing new families and students what makes OCRS special and helping them become familiar with the school community. Our 5th grade students are also forming the OCRS Safety Patrol to assist younger students during morning arrival and during special events when our youngest students might need some extra helping hands. We have already conducted two training sessions for parents interested in volunteering at the school and some parents have begun volunteering during morning arrival and in the cafeteria during lunch. As classroom teachers schedule field trips and classroom events, there will be additional opportunities for parents to volunteer and our PTA is always looking to welcome new parents that are interested in helping out.



We are proud of the strength of the entire school community and how each day staff, students, and families have worked collectively to make our school motto, “Be your best at OCRS!” come to life!

- **Principal Paul Barrette**



## Unified Day

Unified Day in the Smithfield Public Schools was celebrated on September 30. Thank you to our Special Education Local Advisory Committee, principals, teachers, staff, students, central office administrators and community members for an outstanding celebration of inclusion in our schools.

