



Smithfield Public Schools

Newsletter

December 2022

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

A message from the Superintendent

Dear Families,

As we are moving into December our schools are busy planning for holiday activities, parent conferences, events on the weekends all while having a very targeted approach to improving learning outcomes for all of our students. Our teachers and administrators are involved in ongoing learning through professional development, faculty and staff meetings, teacher collaborations and visitations, and coaching sessions by our math coordinator, math interventionists and reading teachers.



We are focused on addressing learning gaps at all levels that may have been exacerbated by the pandemic and looking at ways that we can expand opportunities for students. One event you may be interested in is the **Career and Technology Education (CTE) Showcase** on Dec. 14 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Smithfield High School. The showcase is open to all and is intended to provide information and a preview of our CTE programs. The showcase includes tours, discussions with CTE teachers and students who are currently enrolled in one of our programs, and a preview of the courses of study. The CTE programs are open to our high school students as well as high school students from other districts.

The programs that are available at Smithfield High School include a Teacher Preparation Pathway, in which students take part in a classroom practicum under the guidance and supervision of an experienced teacher at the elementary, middle or high school level; the Law and Public Safety Pathway, which is connected to the Smithfield Police Department; the Information Technology/Cybersecurity Pathway; the Computer Science Pathway; and the Business and Finance Pathway. All are designed to provide hands-on practical experiences for students as well as college credit. Inquiry-based programs like these develop strong connections between academic subjects, careers and college, allowing students to explore interests and to develop mentorships with professionals in the field.



This **“inquiry approach,”** in which learning is connected to career exploration and students are directly involved in solving compelling problems or answering driving questions, is extremely meaningful for young people. Students can readily see the connections between what they are learning in school and what is happening outside of the classroom. Research has demonstrated that when academics are connected to “real-world learning,” student engagement increases. When students are highly engaged in their learning they tend to excel academically. Through hands-on learning that is inquiry-based, and connects academics to the “real world,” students see the connection between school subjects as well as between school and careers. Hands-on learning places students



at the center of the learning process, it compels them to solve problems and to answer questions that we grapple with in our everyday lives. It is my vision that at every grade level we are integrating inquiry approaches to learning that will increase our students' engagement and ignite higher order thinking skills in age-appropriate ways.



Combined with learning is the feeling of **community**. For students to invest in learning, they must feel that the adults in the schools really care about them. These connections that are being made further drive achievement. As I visit the schools each week, I often see these connections being made. It may be the classroom teacher waiting at the door for his or her students to arrive and giving a “high five,”



the custodian who takes a few minutes out of his day to check in with students, the principal who learns every student’s name, or the paraprofessional who tells a student that he or she is doing a great job. Through our connections surveys, we are working to ensure that each student feels valued in our schools and a “connection” to at least one or more adults is occurring in their schools.



The Strategic Plan - Vision 2028

As part of our school district improvement, we are beginning to embark on developing our five-year strategic plan. We are inviting the community to be part of this process, which will involve many different groups and individuals, both those in the school community as well as in the greater community. Our goal is to set a pathway for improvement through the next five years. I have received much input and feedback from community members and families over the past few months about what is valued in the Smithfield Public Schools and what needs to be improved. We will be inviting families, community members, teachers, staff and students to participate in surveys over the next weeks to continue to gather your views as we shape the task forces that will help us to improve the schools. There will also be an open meeting for all interested, in late January where information on the conclusion of the last strategic plan (2017-2023) will be shared as well as information on where you are today.

Our goal is to have a large and diverse group of citizens involved in the process. Smithfield is a community and the community clearly has a vested interest in its schools. I invite you to be a part of the process. While we will identify some of the needs together, we know that some of the task forces will focus on: facilities, curricular program and extra-curricular programs, career pathways K-12, developing the characteristics of the “graduated student,” technology planning, community building and more.

I welcome your involvement and feedback. If you do not have your email address listed to receive updates, please contact your school offices to be included. The surveys will be electronically distributed, however, you may also contact our district office at 231-6606 if you would like to be involved in the strategic planning process. We anticipate beginning with a kickoff in late January 2023.

Thank you.
Dawn

Upcoming Important Dates

- 12/6 – School Committee Meeting
- 12/15 - No School: Parent-teacher conferences for Elementary and Professional Development Day for SHS & GMS
- 12/19 - School Committee Meeting
- 12/23-1/2 - School Vacation



Please check school websites for additional events



Kindergarten registration 2023-2024 School Year

*Registrations for Kindergarten will take place in
January 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year.*

A child must be 5 years of age on or before September 1, 2023 in order to be eligible to register for the 2023-2024 school year.

~ More details to follow in the January newsletter ~



Smithfield School Committee

Smithfield voters chose incumbent Richard Iannitelli as well as new members Amanda Fafard and Jessica Sala to join Anthony Torregrossa and Benjamin Caisse to serve on the Smithfield School Committee.

Student liaisons for the 22/23 school year are SHS senior Emma Ferraro and junior Henry Siravo.

The swearing in ceremony for the School Committee will be held before the regularly scheduled school committee meeting of December 6th at 6:30 pm in the high school media center. Officers will be chosen at the meeting.

Richard Iannitelli
Anthony Torregrossa
Benjamin Caisse
Amanda Fafard
Jessica Sala



Best wishes for a peaceful and joyful holiday season!

Assistant Superintendent's Curriculum Corner

State Assessment Results



The RI Department of Education has released the spring 2022 state assessment results which include RICAS (Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System) for students in grades 3-8, PSAT for sophomores, and SAT for juniors.

Statewide, participation rates on state assessments increased compared to 2021. Changes in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics performance were mixed throughout the state with RICAS scores indicating a decrease in ELA scores but an increase in mathematics scores. This trend was similar in Massachusetts.

Smithfield's RICAS results were consistent with the state showing a decrease in ELA and an increase in mathematics scores which now exceed pre-pandemic levels. The table below shows the **percentage of students meeting and exceeding expectations** pre and post-pandemic. For a more detailed view of Smithfield's results and to see the results of other districts, visit the [RI Department of Education Assessment Data Portal](#).

Individual student score reports have been sent home to families. The RICAS Individual Score Reports now include QR codes that link to a video that provides greater insight for families on their child's performance. The videos are offered in 11 different languages. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's school with any questions about your child's results.

Teachers and administrators are in the process of analyzing the results of current and former students in order to continuously improve instruction. Teaching teams will work together to review performance on individual items in order to identify areas of the curriculum to focus on for improvement. In addition, the middle and high schools are implementing Into Literature, a new high-quality ELA program, and the elementary schools are implementing Lexia Core 5, a computer adaptive program aimed at accelerating literacy skills.

	2018	2019	2021	2022
RICAS ELA	52	58	54	49
RICAS Math	39	41	37	44
PSAT ELA	70	77	79	75
PSAT Math	54	37	49	40
SAT ELA	70	66	66	62
SAT Math	35	49	40	36

Supporting your child's math learning

Mathematics instruction has shifted in order to build an understanding of concepts before students use traditional algorithms or formulas. Oftentimes families ask how to support their child as they build that understanding. Below are some ideas on how you can build a positive mindset and perseverance: two of the most important areas that lead to success in mathematics.

Build your child's positive mindset: Social media often portrays math as a hard, irrelevant subject which can cause children to adopt these attitudes and use it as an excuse to not try. Jo Boaler, professor of math education at Stanford University and author of several books, has done extensive research on the power of mindset in building confident and capable mathematicians. Here are six steps she recommends to families to support a positive math mindset:

1. Encourage children to play math puzzles and games
2. Instead of telling kids they're wrong when they're working on math, find and acknowledge the logic in their thinking
3. Never associate math with speed

4. Never share with your children the idea that you were bad at math or you dislike it
5. Encourage number sense
6. Encourage a “growth mindset” and let students know that they have unlimited math potential and that being good at math is all about working hard

See [Advice for Parents, from Professor Jo Boaler](#) for the full article and other resources

Build perseverance: The Rhode Island Core Standards for Mathematics include 8 practice standards that all K-12 students should engage in on a regular basis. One of the most important practices is to “make sense of problems and persevere in solving them”. A person who can persevere has the physical and mental tools to tackle challenging problems. Here are some strategies you can use to support your child if they are struggling with their math homework:

1. Let them know it’s OK to struggle and in fact, we learn more when we have to work hard
2. Ask your child what they know and what’s confusing them.
3. Do not allow your child to do nothing - set a minimum expectation such as setting the problem up or writing a question to the teacher telling the teacher what they know and where they’re stuck
4. Ask what tools they can use. Some suggestions might be:
 - a. Notes or past work
 - b. For students in grades 6-8, Algebra 1, Geometry, or Algebra 2, use the resources in their math book. ([Student Guide to 6-8 enVision Resources](#), [Student Guide to A1|G|A2 enVision Resources](#))
5. Phone a friend
6. If you’ve tried all of the above and your child is reaching a point of frustration where they cannot move forward, stop them and instruct them to check in with their teacher. Follow up the next day to ask what the teacher said.

Family Workshop

Smithfield Public Schools is hosting a mental health workshop for families and staff members on **December 13th at 6 PM: Identify, Navigate, and Conquer Anxiety & Depression**. This virtual presentation will be facilitated by the Inner You Counseling Center. Don’t miss this opportunity to learn more about these topics. Click [HERE](#) to register in advance for this webinar. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.



“Snow Day” Plans

Smithfield Public Schools has gained approval from the RI Department of Education for virtual instructional days in the case of school building closures necessitated by inclement weather. The hope is that all of our students will be able to participate in live virtual instruction with their teachers from 8:00-12:00 when a virtual instructional day is announced. When a traditional snow day is announced, no instruction will occur and a school day will be added to the end of the year. The full virtual snow-day plan inclusive of schedules [can be found here](#).

Notification of Rights Regarding Students Records

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Rhode Island Educational Bill of Rights Act afford parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. They are.



1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within ten (10) days of the day the student district receives a written request for access.
Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal, the Director of Special Education, or the Superintendent a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The responsible administrator will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. Parents and eligible students are also entitled to copies of education records, at a cost not to exceed fifteen cents (\$.15) per page.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading.
Parents or eligible students may ask the Smithfield Public Schools to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school principal, Director of Special Education or Superintendent of Schools, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the responsible custodian of the record decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the responsible administrator will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the Smithfield Public Schools as an administrator, supervisor, teacher, tutor, provider of related services, or support staff member, including health or medical staff, a person elected to the School Committee, or a person employed or under contract to the school district to perform a special task, such as an attorney, auditor, consultant, or therapist.
A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the Smithfield Public Schools District discloses educational records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. The right to file a complaint with the US Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:
Family Policy Compliance Office
US Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-4605
5. The right to notice that the Smithfield Public Schools have been served with a lawful subpoena prior to the release of confidential information, subject to certain exclusions as set forth in FERPA.
Parents and eligible students are further informed that the Smithfield Public Schools considers the following information to be Directory Information: student name, parents’ names, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, grade level classification, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, date of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended, and photograph. The Smithfield Public Schools may disclose any item considered as Directory Information without prior written consent, unless previously notified in writing to the contrary by the parent or eligible student.

What's Going on Over at Smithfield Public Schools Child Outreach Program?



Currently, we are screening in the preschool and day care settings in the town of Smithfield. If you have a child that is enrolled in a community day care or preschool, ask your child's teacher the dates of the screening event being held there.

If we are due to come in, a parent packet will be asked to be completed. All preschool students with a completed screening packet will be screened, including out of district preschool students. If we have already been there, give our office a call to schedule a private screening appointment. Our number is 401-349-4350.

The next district wide screening event is scheduled for January 17, 18, 19, 20, 2023. Give us a call to schedule an appointment! We even have one evening event! To find more about Child Outreach, use the QR code below.



SUBSTITUTES NEEDED

To be a substitute teacher in Smithfield, a person just needs an associate's degree.

RI Department of Education certified substitute teachers are needed as well.



Substitutes may choose days they are available and preferences for specific schools.

Please apply on [SchoolSpring.com](https://www.schoolspring.com) or email lpetrone@smithfield-ps.org.

See additional substitute positions available below.

Teacher substitutes

<https://www.schoolspring.com/job.cfm?jid=4037919>

Teacher assistant substitutes

<https://www.schoolspring.com/job.cfm?jid=4037921>

Secretary substitutes

<https://www.schoolspring.com/job.cfm?jid=4037925>

Custodian substitutes

<https://www.schoolspring.com/job.cfm?jid=3739771>



This Month's Spotlight, Smithfield High School



Smithfield High School's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathways offer students the opportunity to begin defining their future from the very beginning of high school. For more than 25 years, our Pathway programs have offered students a three to four course sequence, college credits, and work based learning experiences,

giving students a head start in their career field. We currently have five Pathways that our students are engaged in.

The Business and Finance Pathway is a rigorous business, finance, and academic program that prepares students for careers through the mastery of both hard and soft skills within the context of a comprehensive business curriculum. Students participate in engaging courses, an 80-hour internship and have the opportunity to earn up to 9 college credits.



The Teacher Preparation Pathway is designed for students who wish to explore a career in education. Students have the opportunity to work alongside master educators at Smithfield High School, Gallagher Middle School and Pleasant View Elementary School. Students learn about education theory, develop and teach lesson plans, and have the opportunity to earn 2 college credits.

The Computer Science Pathway is designed to prepare students to pursue a Computer Science degree at a four-year

college. Students are introduced to foundational concepts of Computer Science and challenged to explore how computing and technology can impact the world. Students work collaboratively to design, create, and present solutions to real world problems. The Pathway engages students in technician work, real software experience, and an opportunity to earn 16 college credits.



The Information Technology/Cybersecurity Pathway is designed to introduce students to the foundational concepts of Information Technology and Cybersecurity. This rigorous Pathway engages students in understanding cybersecurity and digital forensics. Students gain industry and practical computational thinking skills through hands-on projects. The Pathway engages students in computer simulations, diagnose and repair computers, and an opportunity to earn 16 college credits.



The Law and Public Safety Pathway serves as an introduction to the American legal system and criminal justice process as well as physical and mental preparation to enter the field of first responders. Students will analyze ethics, criminal and civil law, the trial process, participate in mock trials and other aspects of public safety. The Pathway engages students in analyzing real and hypothetical criminal scenarios, prepares students for the physical demands of law enforcement, students complete internship hours with the Smithfield Police Department, and have an opportunity to earn 12 college credits.

For more information or to schedule a tour, please email ctepathways@smithfield-ps.org.



Smithfield High School Sentinel Showcase

We're looking forward to introducing you to all that Smithfield High School has to offer and welcoming you to create your #SHSLegacy. Join us as we showcase our academic programs, clubs, activities, and athletics. Get your questions answered about what it means to be a Smithfield Sentinel!



Wednesday, December 14, 2022

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Check out our Career & Technical Education (CTE) Pathways

- ✦ Teacher Preparation Pathway
- ✦ Law & Public Safety Pathway
- ✦ Information Technology/Cybersecurity Pathway
- ✦ Computer Science Pathway
- ✦ Business & Finance Pathway

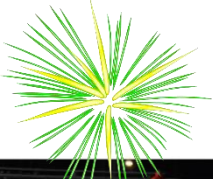
Why choose Smithfield High School?

- ✦ Over 75 percent of our graduates earn college credit. Many graduate with 12-18 college credits.
- ✦ Sports (7 Division One Teams) and Extra-Curricular Opportunities for Students
- ✦ 14 Advanced Placement (AP) Courses
- ✦ 20 Early Enrollment Program (EEP) courses offered for students to earn college credit.

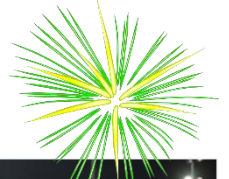
- Tour the building!
- Attend an AP/EEP information session!
- Learn more about our diverse course offerings!
- Attend a CTE information session!
- Meet our faculty and students!

What is your #SHSLegacy?

For more information call 401-949-2050, email dkelley@smithfield-ps.org, or visit us at www.shsri.org



Congratulations to the SHS Sentinels on a perfect season, 11-0.
Winners of the Super Bowl Championship.



Dan Kelley
Principal



Allison Amodie
Assistant Principal



Jose Libano
Assistant Principal