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Community

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



ODYSSEY TO OFFER STATE'S FIRST AP AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY COURSE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Odyssey Charter will be the first school in Delaware to offer an Advanced Placement African American Studies class. The class examines the diversity of African American experiences through authentic and varied sources. The interdisciplinary course will draw from a variety of fields like literature, the arts and humanities, political science, geography and science.

The class will be taught by **Melissa Tracy**, who has taught AP classes for 14 years and won national Charter School awards for her teaching.

“All students benefit from examining history through multiple lenses and through multiple kinds of experiences,” Tracy said. “The whole point of a humanities curriculum is to help students be more human.”

Advanced Placement classes offer an opportunity for students to take college-level classes in high school, and even earn college credit before graduating high school if they reach a certain score on their end-of-the-year AP exam.

The classes are more intense and faster paced than routine high school classes. More than 1 million high

school seniors took an AP exam, which is 35% of seniors, according to a College Board **report**.

In the new African American AP class, which is being taught for the first time in 63 schools around the country, students will learn about everything from early African kingdoms to the ongoing challenges and achievements of the community today.

They’ll also study the diversity of Black communities in the United States within the broader context of Africa and the **African Diaspora**, which is the mass dispersion of people native to Africa across the world, often in the context of the **Transatlantic Slave Trade**.

Tracy was chosen to teach the course in Delaware after expressing interest and participating in three weeks of training over the spring and summer.

She pointed out that in primary schooling, students are often taught the bare minimum of topics related to African American history like slavery and abolition, while the focus on prominent figures are limited to Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks, but not many others.

“There’s so much more to history than iconic leaders and having discussions about slavery,” Tracy said, “and you can think about for students, particularly students of color, how traumatic that could be to only be exposed to that type of content throughout their entire educational journey.”

HERE’S WHAT’S IN THE CLASS

The new AP course will consist of four main topics: Origins of the African Diaspora; Freedom, Enslavement and Resistance; The Practice of Freedom; and Movements and Debates. In each major unit of study, students will practice at least one of the following skills in every lesson:

- **Disciplinary Knowledge:** Evaluating course concepts, developments, patterns and processes (cultural, historical, political, social)
- **Source analysis:** Evaluating written sources, including historical documents, literary texts and music lyrics
- **Data Analysis:** Interpreting data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, surveys and infographics
- **Visual Analysis:** Analyzing visual artifacts, including works of art and material culture
- **Developing an argument:** Using a line of reasoning to connect claims and evidence

To date, the College Board doesn’t have any course, topic, or exam descriptions published on its website. The class won’t be added to the site until it’s fully launched throughout the country in 2024.

Although the exam structure could change before the full rollout in 2024, the pilot year’s final grade will feature a test and a project.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



ROTARY FLAGS LINE WILMINGTON RIVERWALK UNTIL SEPT. 19

BY BETSY PRICE

Hundreds of U.S. flags once again are dancing gracefully along the Wilmington Riverwalk. Courtesy of the Rotary Club of Wilmington, the Flags for Heroes display is an annual event originally designed to honor veterans and current members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

In 2020, the club expanded those being honored to include first responders, law enforcement officers, teachers, healthcare providers and all other who serve, protect, defend and enrich our lives.

“The motto of Rotary is service above self,” said club President Jonathan Hickey. “Rotary was founded on that basic principle. And in this case, we wanted to do something that would honor those that we consider to

be heroes in the community, and there are heroes in many walks of life.”

The display will stretch over Labor Day and end Sept. 19. The club invited members and others to buy a flag to honor someone they consider a hero, even a personal one, and now owns 500 flags.

The displays began at Centennial Park near the Hercules Building and moved to the riverfront in 2020, a fortunate occurrence that gave people coping with the start of the pandemic something to see during a fresh air outing.

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LIBRARIES TEST TECH ALLOWING PATRONS TO SELF-CHECKOUT

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Delaware’s libraries are investing in tech that allows patrons to check out their own items—and also lets staff members do some nifty things behind the scenes.

Testing started this spring at 14 libraries and two bookmobiles. A second stage, launching in September, will include the first school libraries, in the Colonial School District, and bring the technology to every public library in New Castle County.

“We’re excited,” said Michelle Hughes, administrative librarian with the [Delaware Division of Libraries](#).

More than 70 libraries across the state belong to a consortium that shares a catalog and shares in technology like this project, which uses radio frequency identification.

The **RFID** system has two parts: readers and tags. Readers send out radio waves to the tags, which feature

what Hughes nicknamed “a racetrack of wires” that send a signal back.

The division figured it needed 814,437 tags for the first phase (it ordered more, to allow for incoming acquisitions) and 940,871 for the second (ditto). The tags identify each title, plus their type (book or something else) and whether they can be circulated or not.

About half the members in the consortium are **public libraries**. Others include schools, historical societies, museums, colleges and specialized libraries. Not all the libraries have yet decided to participate, Hughes said.

The ability for patrons to check out items is an secondary feature of the project, she said.

LIBRARIES TAGGING BENEFITS

A big plus will be to allow circulation desk staffers to check out books and other items more quickly in groups,

rather than individually shuffling them to align each bar code with the existing scanner.

Another plus involves collections management. One feature that the state wants to have involves what Hughes called “inventory wands.” They would allow librarians to walk down the stacks, point their wands and find items that are supposedly checked out or missing from the catalog.

The system could be scaled up to automate checking in items left in book drops, she said. Such automation is not expected to affect staffing. “We don’t anticipate any reduction in staffing or hours,” Hughes said.

And here’s another thing not happening: “Libraries do not have security gates at the entrance/exit doors, so if an un-checked item is taken out of the building, there is no notification beep,” Hughes said.

“However, if a patron is using the self-check machine, it does alert them if an item could not be read for some reason. Likewise, if a patron is trying to renew items on their account, the self-check machine alerts them to items that can’t be renewed and prints on the receipt items that did not check out/renew.”

RFID technology dates back to the 1990s, and the American Library Association has concluded it could “automate library circulation, inventory management and security control,” thus “increasing the efficiency of library transactions, reducing workplace injuries and improving services to library users.”

The benefits are “enormous,” the association says, but privacy risks are also a concern, so in 2005 it passed a resolution calling for libraries using the technology to maintain privacy.

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Photo credit: Food Bank of Delaware



Food & Dining

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

FALAFELS SEEM TO BE HAVING A MOMENT IN DELAWARE

BY PAM GEORGE

For me, it started with the 1995 film “Party Girl.” Parker Posey’s funky character, Mary, regularly visited the same food cart to request a falafel with hot sauce, a side order of baba ghanoush and a seltzer. I was fascinated, having never had a falafel.

So, what was this dish that seemed so cosmopolitan? Why did street food sound sophisticated? More than 30 years later—ouch—I realize why Mary was so enamored.

A falafel is a crisp, flavorful delight that resembles a hush puppy. Indeed, it has similar qualities, including a crunchy exterior and soft interior. The taste, however, is far more exotic.

The falafel seems to be finally gaining fame in Delaware. Credit the number of restaurants specializing in Middle Eastern cuisine.

WHAT IS A FALAFEL?

The main ingredient is chickpeas or fava beans—one reason falafels are having their moment. Vegans, vegetarians and people on a plant-based diet are growing in number and looking for options.

The recipe might include herbs, aromatics and spices. Picture parsley, cilantro, dill, cumin, coriander, cayenne, onions, garlic and shallots. After mixing it all together, the cook divides the dough into balls or patties and deep fries them to a golden brown.

You can pop a falafel into your mouth, dip it in a sauce, wrap it in a pita or place it on a mezze platter.

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BELLEVUE DINER OPENING ON PHILADELPHIA PIKE

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

The family that owns the Sungate Diner is replicating the popular menu of the Marcus Hook, PA, landmark in Delaware.

The Bellevue Diner opened Wednesday, Aug. 31 at 703 Philadelphia Pike, north of Wilmington and less than a mile south of the historic Bellevue Hall that gives it its name. The space once housed Jimmy's Restaurant, and George Argiroudis later ran George's Restaurant there.

"The Sungate is amazing," Cookie Ohlson of the Ardens wrote on nextdoor.com. "I have never been disappointed."

"It's a nice little mom-and-pop place," said Stacey Pereira, a Sungate waitress for five years, adding that it's been owned for 19 years by Alicon Dugmeoglu and his wife Ayse. They once worked at the spot they're now running, she said.

She said they also own the Stargate Diner and Restaurant in Ridley Park, PA, and Italiano's Authentic Eatery in Marcus Hook.

BELLEVUE'S MENU

"Sungate Diner specializes in homestyle foods, big portions and great prices," its website says.

Pereira recommended the creamed chipped beef for breakfast (\$10.99), the burgers (\$8.99-\$12.99) and cheesesteaks (\$10.99-\$12.99) for lunch and the stuffed salmon (\$25.99) for dinner. (Prices are based on the Sungate's menu).

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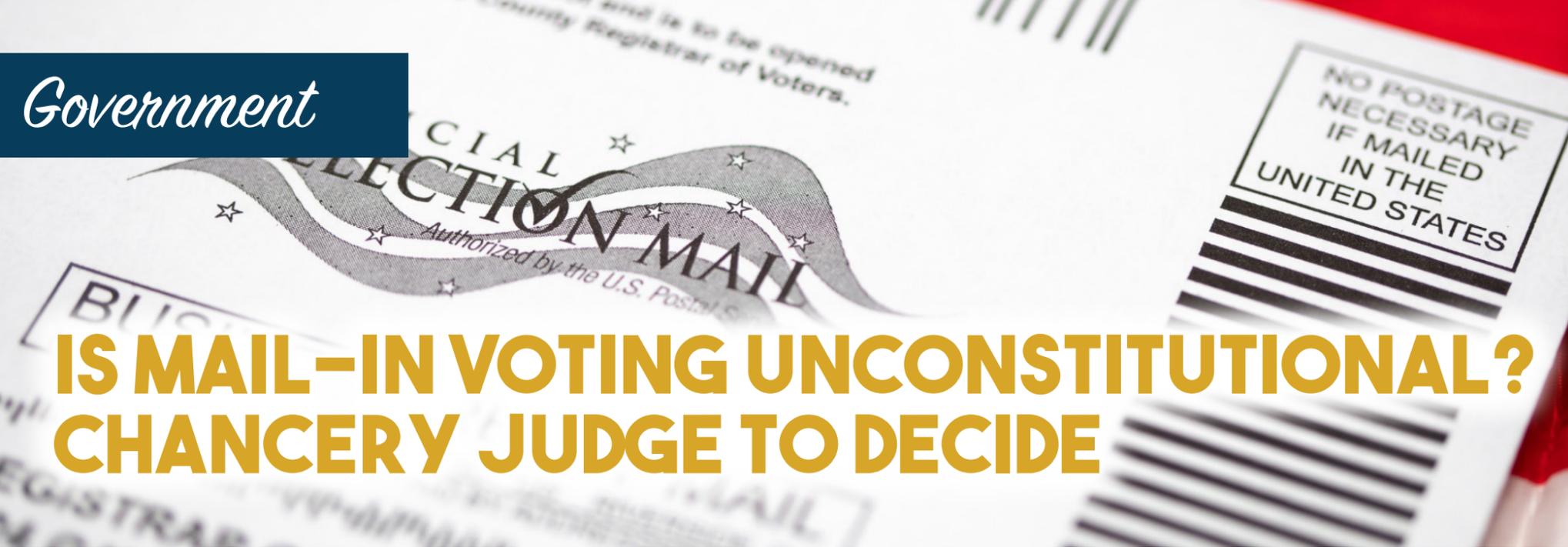
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Government

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



IS MAIL-IN VOTING UNCONSTITUTIONAL? CHANCERY JUDGE TO DECIDE

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Delaware’s mail-in voting law was the subject of a four-hour-long **hearing** before the state’s Court of Chancery Wednesday.

Vice Chancellor Nathan Cook will now decide whether the new law violates the **state Constitution** by allowing voters to cast their ballots from a place other than their designated polling location without having an allowed excuse under the Constitution’s absentee voting provision.

During the hearing, Cook heard arguments on two similar lawsuits, both brought on behalf of several plaintiffs. Delaware Republican Party chairwoman **Jane Brady** and Republican candidate for attorney general **Julianne Murray** are behind the suits.

Brady and Murray are representing the plaintiffs in their capacities as private attorneys—not on behalf of the Republican Party of Delaware.

Election Commissioner Anthony Albence and the Department of Elections are named as defendants in

the lawsuits. Both are being represented by Zi-Xiang Shen, a deputy attorney general with the Delaware Department of Justice.

Both sides have asked Cook to grant a motion for summary judgment, meaning his decision will be the ultimate ruling on the law’s constitutionality—at least until it’s appealed to the Delaware Supreme Court.

Murray is representing three Delaware voters: Ayonne “Nick” Miles, Paul Falkowski and Nancy Smith.

According to Murray, one of them is a Democrat, one is a Republican and the other is unaffiliated. One is from New Castle County, one is from Kent and the other is from Sussex.

Brady is representing two plaintiffs: Michael Higgin and Michael Mennella. Higgin is a **candidate** for state representative and Mennella has worked as a poll worker during at least eight election cycles.

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- URSULINE ACADEMY



BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The judge who oversaw the [trial](#) of Delaware State Auditor Kathy McGuinness has thrown out one of the jury's three guilty verdicts. He upheld their guilty verdicts on the other two charges and denied McGuinness' request for a new trial.

On July 1, McGuinness was found guilty on three misdemeanor charges of official misconduct, structuring and conflict of interest. The jury found her not guilty on felony charges of theft and intimidation.

Superior Court Judge William Carpenter, Jr. on Tuesday upheld the jury's guilty verdict on the official misconduct and conflict of interest charges. He found "insufficient evidence" to convict McGuinness on the structuring charge and granted her motion for a judgment of acquittal.

A DOJ spokesperson said they would reserve comment until McGuinness is sentenced. McGuinness' attorney said the auditor will appeal her remaining

JUDGE TOSSES ONE CONVICTION, UPHOLDS TWO OTHERS

convictions to the Delaware Supreme Court after she is sentenced. Read the ruling [HERE](#).

STRUCTURING CONVICTION THROWN OUT

McGuinness asked that the structuring conviction be thrown out because, in order to break the law, a contract would have to be fragmented into multiple separate contracts with the intent to circumvent the state's procurement code. At the time of the alleged offense, the procurement code required contracts over \$50,000 to go through a public bidding process.

Fragmenting payments within one contract does not satisfy the elements of the crime, McGuinness' legal team argued. In order to be found guilty, she would also need to have intended to break the law or known that she was breaking the law.

The judge said the prosecution changed its theory on the charge after it became clear McGuinness did not fragment a contract to keep it beneath \$50,000, negating the need for a public bidding process.

The contract in question was properly executed, the judge ruled, because at the time it was signed, it was for an amount less than \$50,000.

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WILMINGTON PD HOPES TO UNITE POLICE, COMMUNITY WITH FAIRS

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The **Wilmington Police Department** hopes to build stronger relationships with community members by hosting three community resource fairs throughout the month of September. The fairs will build off the success of the National Night Out, an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships.

The events will feature police officers representing a range of assignments and positions as well as partner agencies and organizations that serve the city and its residents.

Mayor Mike Purzycki and police chief Robert Tracy said in a press release Monday that the fairs will bring police officers and the public together in a relaxed and

fun-filled setting. Attendees will be able to meet and interact with police officers from various divisions and units of the department.

Members of the K-9 Unit will conduct demonstrations with their dogs and there will be presentations by the Explosive Ordinance Disposal Unit, Crisis Management Tactical Team, Special Operations Division, Mobile Command Post, Traffic Unit and Uniformed Services Division. Members of the department's recruitment team will be present with information about career opportunities with the Wilmington Police Department.

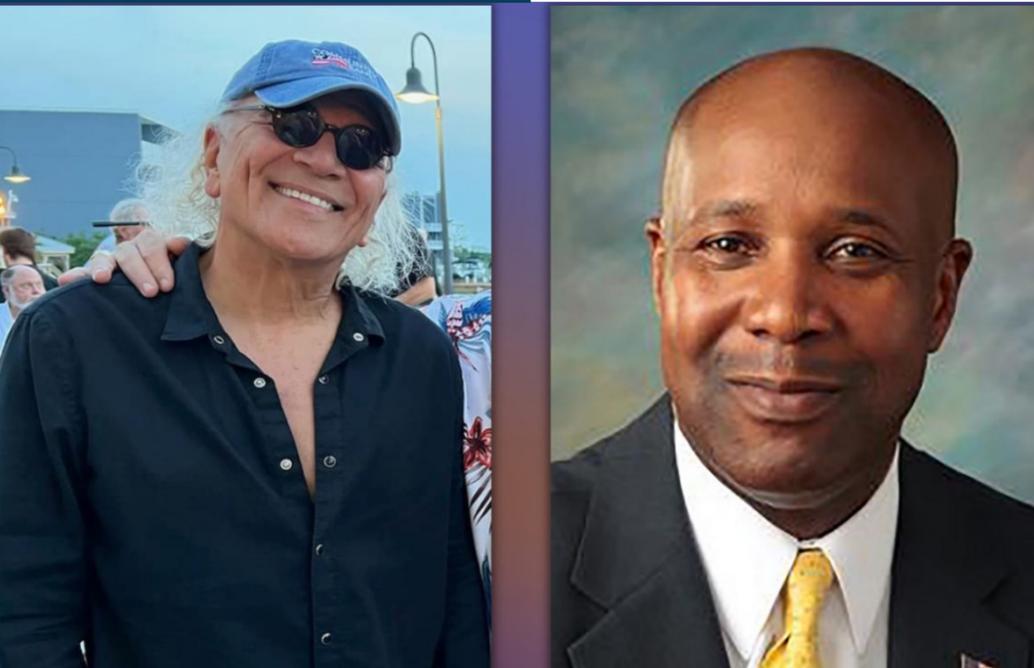
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ACADEMY



BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

A Sussex County campaign mailer deemed **racist** by Republican Party officials was financed with money from four prominent county figures.

Some political observers say the mailer is an example of a schism in the Sussex County GOP.

The mailer, which criticized Greg Fuller, a Republican candidate for register of wills, was organized by the 35th Representative District Conservative Committee.

According to recent **campaign finance filings**, between July 15 and July 29, the committee collected \$17,500 in contributions from four people: Alex Pires, founder of Highway One Group; Chris Hudson of Hudson Management; developer Elmer Fannin and homebuilder Scott Dailey—who is running for re-election as Sussex County recorder of deeds—through Caleb Ventures LLC, a company he owns.

PIRES, THREE OTHERS PAID \$17K FOR ANTI-GREG FULLER MAILER

Pires donated \$5,000; Hudson donated \$5,000; Fannin donated \$6,000 and Dailey donated \$1,500. The group used that money to fund two mailers: one that criticized Fuller and another in support of Fuller’s opponent, Candice Green Wilkinson, daughter of former register of wills and current county councilwoman Cindy Green. Dailey’s Caleb Ventures LLC also contributed \$600—the maximum amount allowed by law—to Green’s campaign.

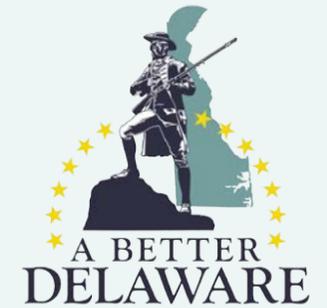
Fannin donated \$600 to Green’s campaign, and at least six of his family members also donated the maximum for a grand total of \$3,600.

The 35th Representative District Conservative Committee’s financial report says the committee spent \$17,150 in two separate transactions on July 19 and July 22. The money went to a Florida-based campaign consultant named Jon Coley, who produced the mailers.

Other than one payment to M&T Bank, the payments to Coley are the group’s only transactions during this election cycle.

Coley has done work for the Green family before.

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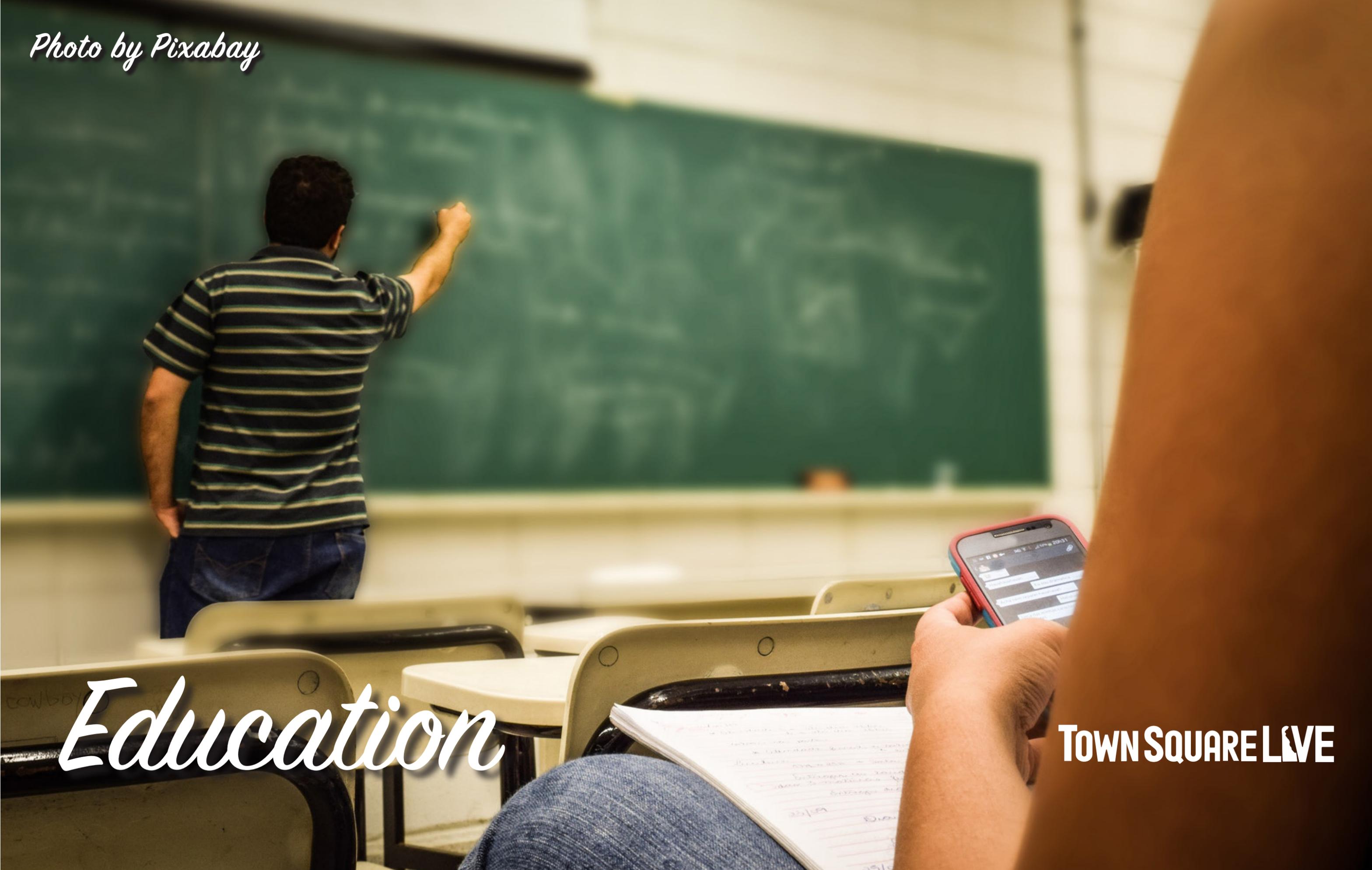
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Education

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



EVERETT MEREDITH REOPENS AFTER TWO YEARS WITHOUT A HOME

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Crusaders of **Everett Meredith Middle School** finally have a home to call their own. For the past two years, they've moved around as the **Appoquinimink School District** destroyed the original 1929 building and rebuilt it in the same location on Broad Street in Middletown.

Wednesday at 6 p.m. officials will cut the ribbon to celebrate the school opening this fall, a long anticipated day as students, former students, teachers, parents and town residents have followed the construction.

"It feels like this great exhale, like we're home and can finally unpack," said Evangeline Thornton, an English teacher at Everett Meredith.

The school was built after a 2016 referendum authorized slightly higher taxes to build more schools.

The state contributed \$43.1 million to tear down the old building and replace it with a modern, open-designed school. The local contribution was \$14.4 million.

"We needed the new building because the MOT (Middletown, Odessa, Townsend) area in general has been massively expanding, which is a great challenge to have," said Beth Everett, principal of the middle school.

The community seems amped up to see the doors open the 504 South Broad school named for a former teacher.

"We're excited to welcome all of our students and families back to really build that family feel here in our own building," Everett said.

For 2020 and 2021, Odessa High School served as a "swing-school." Jennifer Atkinson started teaching at

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Everett Meredith while it was in its temporary home. Now entering her second year, the science teacher is ecstatic for her classroom to be permanent.

"It was a challenge in the temporary school," she said. "You couldn't create, you couldn't decorate the classroom, because it was all short-term. You couldn't make it your own space."

She said she already has a vision for her new space. "I can't wait to make this my home," she said.

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WINNIE THE DOG, SENIORS WELCOME BACK URSULINE STUDENTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Cheering **Ursuline Academy** seniors waving signs welcomed students of the lower school back to the classroom Wednesday, along with a new furry friend. Winnie, who's celebrating her first birthday Wednesday as students return, is a poodle mix that was adopted by the academy to provide emotional support for students.

Donna Kinzel, Ursuline's chief financial officer, said that librarians will use Winnie for reading sessions. The pupper (tiny dog) also will be utilized by the guidance counselors and during therapeutic sessions when midterms and finals are taking place.

"For kids, especially the younger ones, who are scared to go back to school, I'm thinking that Winnie will definitely help them feel calm and comfortable," said fifth-grader Elizabeth Coen.

Winnie has gone through extensive training to serve as a therapeutic dog, said Trisha Medeiros, president of Ursuline.

"After COVID, we wanted to have systems and structures and pets that can help with wellness and care," Medeiros said. "You can't help but be happy when this adorable little dog comes running up to you and you can snuggle her."

At the front of the school Wednesday morning, dozens of Ursuline seniors were blowing party horns, waving signs and cheering as drivers dropping off children honked horns in response.

"This really just adds to our energy and is a good way to kick off the first day," said Ann Philips, Ursuline's middle school principal. "I think if someone has some

jitters, when they see all our seniors cheering for them, they'll be excited." She said the welcome team reinforces community and connections shared among the Ursuline family.

URSULINE ENERGY

"This is like the energy that we have within our walls every day," she said. "The older students are always great mentors and role models for our younger students."

Chayce Patton, a fifth-grader at Ursuline, said she loved being greeted by her Ursuline sisters.

"It makes me feel very energetic and it makes me feel like I want to learn and I want to come back to school the next day," she said. "It makes me feel really encouraged that I've made it to another year."

Winnie isn't the first pet she has seen at school. Her fourth-grade teacher had a class fish, but she "brought it home for the summer and it hasn't been back since."

Chayce said she's excited to pet Winnie every morning and play with the dog whenever she needs a pick-me-up. Both Chayce and Elizabeth said their goals for this school year are to get good grades and have fun with their classmates and teachers.

"This is one of my favorite days of the year," Medeiros said. "It helps set the tone for the entire year."

She noted that this is the first school start since 2019 in which the staff and students can feel normal again, without the burden of COVID-19 restrictions.

"I think that's what makes today extra special," she said. "There's that spirit and lift of hope and energy. The students have experienced such loss these past couple years and that's what makes today even more special."

SCHOOL BOARDS LAY OUT WORRIES, SUPPORT FOR LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

BY JAREK RUTZ

A joint meeting Tuesday of the Brandywine, Christina and Red Clay school districts about the **Wilmington Learning Collaborative** featured a lively discussion, but still no vote. The 21 board members were joined by Gov. John Carney, Education Secretary Mark Holodick and other key education officials.

While no one outright opposed the learning collaborative, some expressed concern about the timeline of implementation. Having more specific information in the agreement and the language that said teachers would report to the collaborative when the district is responsible for them.

“I happen to believe once the collaborative is put together and people are working together, some of those bureaucratic differences will melt away,” said Gov. Carney.

Adriana Bohm of **Red Clay**, and several others, passionately pushed for approval, saying that there isn’t time to waste on perfecting every detail of the agreement.

“We need to get to our feet and make some movement, because we cannot deny the next generation the oppor-

tunities our generation were deprived of,” she said.

LEARNING COLLABORATIVE GOALS

The collaborative would put the city schools in all three districts, which are largely suburban, under an organization that would focus on just those city schools.

Its goal is to help city students, which are largely minority, to learn better and close achievement gaps by supporting them with ground-up programs that would help them in school while also supporting their families with wraparound services.

The collaborative has held more than 300 meetings, and has tried to engage the community by holding town halls, family fairs and knocking on area doors to both understand the needs of families in city of Wilmington schools and describe what the collaborative would do.

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URSULINE ACADEMY



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TEACHERS NO LONGER GRANTED 10-DAY COVID LEAVE

BY JAREK RUTZ

For the first time since fall 2020, Delaware teachers will not be granted paid COVID-19 leave. That means they have to use their normal sick leave if they or a family member gets sick.

“The argument can be made that we’re further away from the craziness of COVID, so I get it,” said Jennifer Saunders, who’s taught in **Red Clay** for three decades. “The cases are less severe with herd immunity and people building up immunity...I just feel like it’s not fair enough to certain teachers.”

During the past year-and-a-half, educators were given 10 days of paid time off if they tested positive for COVID. The days could also be used if there was close contact or exposure to someone with the disease. With more people having been infected and vaccinated, the

severity of the sickness has lessened and hospitals haven’t been as overwhelmed, educators agree.

“We’re going from a pandemic to it being more of an endemic now,” said John Marinucci, executive director of **Delaware School Boards Association**. COVID seems to be following the routes of flu and pneumonia, becoming cyclical and dependent on the season.

“For the past 10 months or so, since the Omicron came out, COVID has been nothing more than a common cold,” said Chris Casscells, director of the Center for Health Policy at the **Caesar Rodney Institute**.

WHY COVID LEAVE WAS DISCONTINUED

Delaware school districts had no say in the decision to end COVID leave. It was made by the state.

“We are not fully out of danger and this removal does

put everybody at risk,” said Naveed Baqir, a **Christina School District** school board member, “but school districts are not to be blamed for this because they never had to or were allowed to make this decision.”

A federal act that required employers to grant up to two weeks of paid time off ended June 30.

“If I have two kids at home who are sick with COVID, as a parent, that’s my problem and responsibility,” said Saunders. “You have the potential of 15 days out, so how much of that do we have to pay for, while other teachers without kids don’t have to pay that?”

She added that if someone is taking care of an older parent, their aides or nurses likely won’t be available if that parent has COVID.

Because the Department of Education has recommended that someone who’s sick should stay home from school for five days, a teacher could quickly eat up all their sick days if their child contracts the disease, too.

Bradley Layfield, principal of Sussex Central High School, said that teachers would often use their COVID leave even if they weren’t sick.

“The majority of people that took COVID leave as educators over the past couple of years were not actually sick with COVID, they were just in close contact with it,” Layfield said. He said that COVID leave was discontinued largely because the Division of Public Health doesn’t require isolation for contact or sickness.

“As we transition back to a post-pandemic world, although COVID is still with us, it’s kind of just the same way we’ve dealt with the flu for years and years and years prior to the pandemic,” he said.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



BY JAREK RUTZ

Jennifer Reeve's son starts kindergarten on Monday, and she said it's important for her to feel comfortable with the environment she's dropping him off at. So they attended the Aug. 24 open house barbecue at [Castle Hills Elementary](#).

"He's entering public school for the very first time," she said. "He was able to meet his teachers and being able to recognize their faces just makes him feel more comfortable on the first day." Her son said he was there for the snacks.

"Anywhere there's snacks, he'll be there," Reeve said. "It's really nice that they incorporated that and made it feel like a family right off the bat with the school,

CASTLE HILLS WELCOMES FAMILIES BACK WITH BBQ, HAIRCUTS

parents, students and teachers. It just makes me feel excited, and while he knows summer's ending, he knows there's something else to look forward to."

A fresh haircut, barbecue and snow cones were all part of the back-to-school celebration for Castle Hills Elementary students heading into the 2023-24 school year. The Colonial School District elementary is in New Castle.

Brandon Repella, who has two daughters entering the second and fourth grade, said attending the open house helps calm his nerves about sending his children back to the classroom. More importantly, it eases his daughters' anxiety, too.

"It's really important to see the teachers before the first day and also for teachers to get to see the kids," he said. "My girls get to shake off the nerves by putting a face to the name."

The fun atmosphere is unique, he said. It builds a connection more than a traditional open house where students and parents just meet the teacher in the classroom and then go home.

He said it allows his daughters to say "Okay, this is my teacher. She just encouraged me and she made me laugh during this fun night out. It seems like it's gonna be a good school year."

Families toured the school and the classrooms of their children while mingling with their teacher. Outside, about 100 people were gathered in the parking lot.

FREE CUTS AT CASTLE HILLS

Through a partnership with [Paul Mitchell The School](#), a beauty school in Newark, the Reading Dragons of Castle Hills were able to get free back-to-school haircuts. The school's cosmetology students benefited, too, by fulfilling required community service hours.

Monique Lusby, a student at Paul Mitchell, said her and her team of hairdressers were delighted to attend because they want to give back to the community and kids.

"With COVID, our school wasn't able to come out and do these community events," Lusby said, "so it's great to be out here and see all the young faces and get them ready for a fresh start to the new year, looking good and feeling good."

After a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic, Castle Hills is back to holding open house festivals. It's not just the families that enjoy the night. Drew Webster, fifth-grade teacher at the school, said teachers really value the annual festival and are happy it's back.

Forging a relationship with a student and their family, even prior to the first day of school, helps build trust and enforce that all parties have the common goal of helping the child succeed.

"It's always fun because everybody's together and the more interaction with the parents, the better," he said. "I really enjoy this but more importantly, I know the kids love it."

STATE TRAINS DISTRICTS ON REUNITING FAMILIES AFTER SCHOOL CRISIS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Teachers, firemen, custodians, bus drivers and parents decked out in neon-colored vests filled the first floor hallway at Dover High School Aug. 24. They were there to listen to and participate in a program focused on how to help families find each other after a school emergency.

The training describes how to create a team in which each member has a specific task to put families back together and document where children are. That will usually happen at a dedicated site away from the school.

The [Delaware Emergency Management Agency](#) has partnered with the [I Love U Guys Foundation](#) to offer training for all three counties.

The Dover one ran Aug. 23 and 24. A Sussex County training at Sussex Academy of Arts and Sciences began Aug. 25 and ended Aug. 26. A New Castle training at Brandywine High School took place Aug. 1 and 2.

The I Love U Guys Foundation was created in 2006 by Ellen and John-Michael Keyes following a [school shooting](#) at Platte Canyon High School in Colorado that took the life of their daughter, Emily. On that day, Emily sent two text messages, one to her mother saying, “I love u guys. K,” and one to her father saying “I love u guys.”

Since then, Keyes has made it his mission to do everything in his power to prepare schools for a way to unite families after a shooting, tornado or any other crisis.

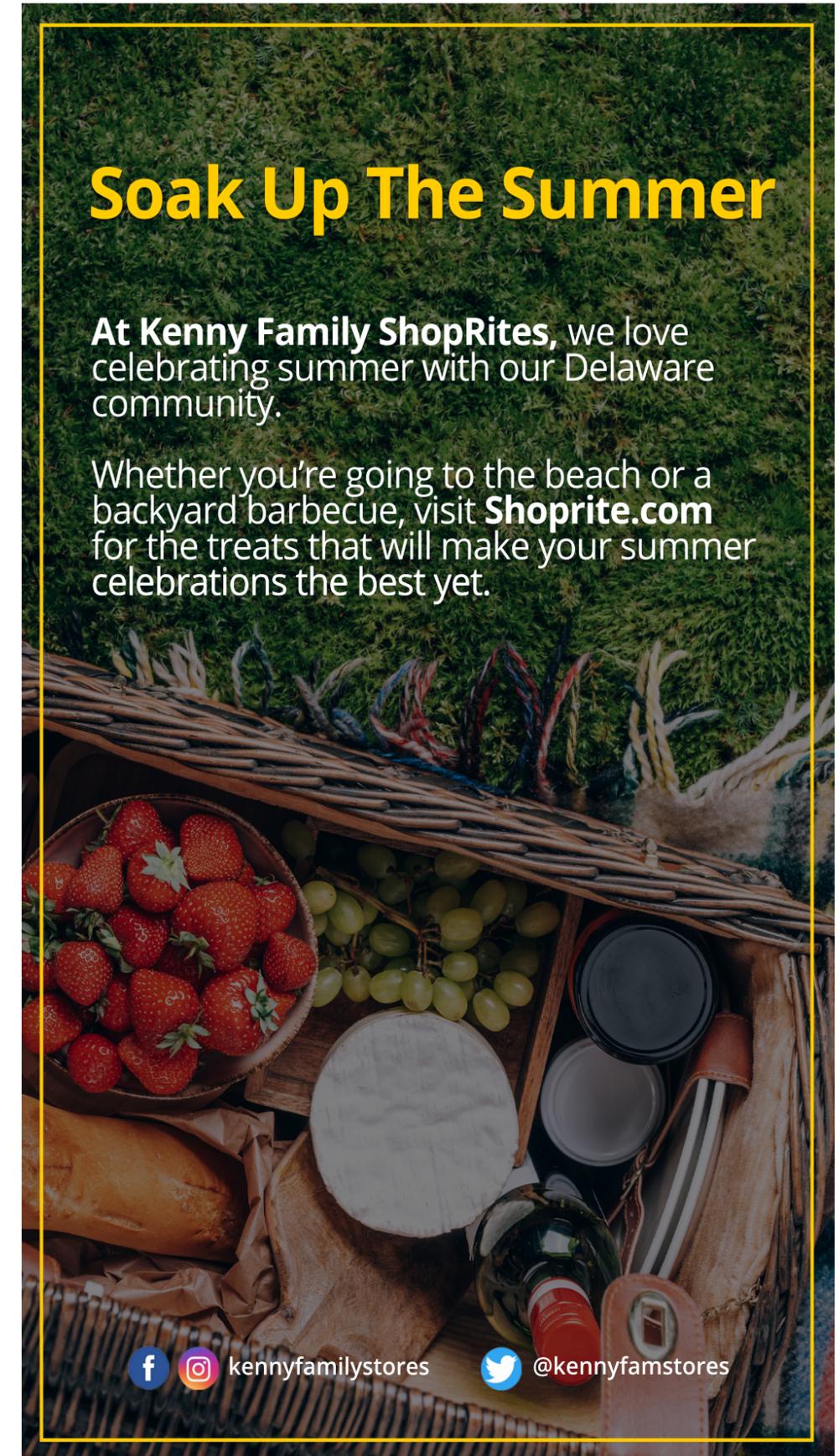
The foundation offers free downloadable crisis recovery and prevention plans on its website. It uses what the foundation calls the “Standard Reunification Method.” Districts in Texas, Wisconsin, Indiana, the Carolinas, Virginia, Colorado and Oregon have adopted it.

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Photo by Guy Kawasaki for Pexels

Health

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

STATE NARCAN KITS ADD STRIPS SO ADDICTS CAN TEST FOR FENTANYL

BY BETSY PRICE

The state is starting to include fentanyl test strips in the Narcan kits it gives away, enabling a person who plans to use an illegal drug to test it to know whether it contains the deadly synthetic opioid. The move is part of a harm-reduction strategy to prevent accidental overdoses, said Timothy Turane, a public information officer for the Delaware Division of Public Health.

“The test is instant, and a person can be informed about the increased danger they put themselves in by using the product,” Turane said.

Narcan, also known as naloxone, is an overdose drug that works to reverse opioid’s ability to slow and stop breathing, leading to death.

Fentanyl, a powerful, fast-acting drug, is now the leading cause of **drug overdose deaths** in Delaware. It’s been found in more than 80% of fatal overdoses, a Public Health release said.

“After a test strip detects fentanyl, an individual can choose not to use the drug based on the risk,” said Dr. Rick Hong, interim director of the division. “However, if they choose to use, they can implement alternative harm-reduction strategies, like going slow, not using as much, or/and not using alone.”

The strips require the tester to put a small amount of the drug into water, swirl it around and then put the end of a test strip into the water. Much like a COVID-19 test, stripes on the strip will tell the user whether fentanyl is present. Having the strips in the same kit empowers family, friend and neighbors to act in the event of an overdose, Hong said.

USE OF NARCAN KITS

“Those living with substance use disorder should designate someone trained in using Narcan to check on them,” he said. “We will continue to discourage drug

use and encourage people to seek treatment, but for persons with substance use disorder, we are using a compassionate approach to help raise awareness and empower friends and family to act in an emergency situation.”

According to Division of Forensic Science data, there were 515 overdose deaths in Delaware in 2021, an increase of 15% from 2020. Fentanyl was found in 83% of those deaths. So far this year, there have been nearly 300 deaths from suspected drug overdoses.

Fentanyl cannot be detected by sight, taste, smell or touch. The test strips—which Delaware residents can also get a free pack of—can test marijuana, cocaine, meth, ecstasy and other substances for the presence of fentanyl. The highly sensitive test strips will detect fentanyl down to 0.1 mcg/ml.

Most overdoses are unintentional, and individuals using them may not realize the strength of the drug they are using or that it contains fentanyl, the Public Health release said.

The testing strips used to be considered contraband until a 2021 state law changed that after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced they would permit state purchases of fentanyl test strips.

The Delaware Division of Public Health is one of 66 jurisdictions that joined a cooperative agreement to distribute the strips as part of surveillance and prevention strategies.

To get a free 10-pack of fentanyl test strip kits through the mail, go [HERE](#).

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

Photo by Donnell Henriquez



Sports

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



LAUREL SITS ATOP 1A FOOTBALL PRESEASON RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The high school football season kicks off Thursday and this year the Delaware Live Sports crew has a different football ranking that we are calling the Super 7s.

We have seven members of our crew voting for the top seven teams in the three classes. Each vote is worth a point total and our Delaware Live Super 7s will be announced every Wednesday on our Delaware LIVE Sports Weekly show.

Here are the preseason Class A Super 7s:

No. 1: Laurel Bulldogs, the defending state champions, received six first place votes to grab the top spot. They open the season Thursday against Sussex Tech on Delaware LIVE. The Bulldogs have four Class AA teams on the schedule and will have some tough district games against Indian River and Seaford.

No. 2: St Elizabeth Vikings got the other first place vote and six second-place votes. The Vikings open the season Sept. 10 at Conrad. The Vikings host Tatnall and Wilmington Charter. They also travel to Indian River and Caravel this year.

No. 3: Indian River Indians will open their season Sept. 9 against Stephen Decatur. They have some tough road games against Odessa, Seaford, Delmar and Laurel.

No. 4: Tatnall Hornets are following a great season where they made it to the Class A semifinals. The Hornets' schedule is tough as they face three Class AA teams that made the state tournament and seven teams that made the playoffs last year. They open the season at Archmere Sept. 8.

No. 5: Odessa Ducks made the state tournament with only freshmen and sophomores on the team. The Ducks play a tough schedule with a couple of key home games against Indian River and Seaford. They open the season on Sept. 9 at McKean.

No. 6: Seaford Blue Jays open the season Friday at Col. Richardson, also on Delaware LIVE Sports. The Blue Jays have a tough schedule including Laurel and Odessa on the road.

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ARCHMERE FOOTBALL UNANIMOUS NO. 1 IN 2A

BY JASON WINCHELL

The high school football season kicks off Thursday and this year the Delaware Live Sports crew has a different football rankings that we are calling the Super 7s.

We have seven members of our crew voting for the top 7 teams in the three high school classes. Each vote is worth a point total and our Delaware Live super 7s will be announced every Wednesday on our Delaware Live Sports Weekly show.

Here are the preseason Class A Super 7s. There are 21 teams in this middle category. The 3A class includes 11 of the biggest, winningest schools and 1A includes 14 smaller schools.

No. 1: Archmere Auks took all seven top votes in Class AA to take the top spot. The Auks open the season at home on Thursday, Sept. 8. The Auks face a tough schedule including Wilmington Friends, Saint Mark's, Tower Hill and DMA.

No. 2: Delaware Military Academy Seahawks open the season on Delaware LIVE Sport Friday night at Howard. The Seahawks' schedule is tough, including a

home game against Saint Mark's that could be for the District 1 title.

No. 3: Delmar Wildcats are the third-ranked team and they host Friends Sept. 9. The Quakers beat the Wildcats 21-20 in the quarterfinals last year in Wilmington.

No. 4: Saint Mark's Spartans host Appoquinimink Friday night. The Spartans have tough games against Woodbridge, DMA and Archmere.

No. 5: Wilmington Friends Quakers who made the semifinals of the class AA state tournament last year. They travel to Delmar to open their season. They have a strong schedule facing six playoff teams from last year.

No. 6: Woodbridge Blue Raiders open the season at Cape Henlopen Sept. 8. The Blue Raiders face Delmar, Laurel, Saint Mark's and Caravel to name a few.

No. 7: Caravel Buccaneers open their season Sept. 8 against Glasgow. The Bucs face Delmar, Woodbridge and St Elizabeth's this year.




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MIDDLETOWN TAKES NO. 1 IN 3A FOOTBALL

BY GLENN FRAZER

Last year, the DIAA re-classified football into three groups of schools with Class 3A containing the 11 largest programs from the previous Division I. All 11 qualified for the state tournament as Middletown captured its first title since 2012 with a 28-22 win over Smyrna.

Many feel those two will meet again in this season's championship game, but there are a few teams that could challenge the Cavaliers and Eagles for the top spots.

The Delaware LIVE Weekly panel of seven voters cast their ballots for the preseason Super 7 in Class 3A, as the football season gets underway this week. Here are our Super 7 Class 3A picks:

No. 1: Middletown gained all seven of the first place votes from our panel as the defending champs return most of the offensive line for running backs Michael Pearson and Josh Roberson. Pearson gained over 800 yards rushing last year while Roberson added 700. Ty Hynson and Noah Kracyla return at wideout, but

Middletown has to fill the vacancy at quarterback as Braden Davis graduated and has **joined** fellow Delawareans Debo Williams (Smyrna) and MarShawn Lloyd (Wilmington—Dematha HS) on the roster at South Carolina. On defense, the Cavs graduated the starting down linemen, but returned stellar linebacker Jaden Wheeler along with D-backs Pearson, Hynson and Dru Beckford. Middletown has a daunting schedule, playing three powerhouse programs all on the road, St. John's of D.C. on Sept. 3, Washington High (Ohio) Sept. 30 and IMG-Florida Oct. 28.

The Cavaliers will face off against Smyrna in the annual Harvest Bowl on Sept. 16. That will be Delaware LIVE Sports' Game-of-the-Week, powered by 302 Sports.

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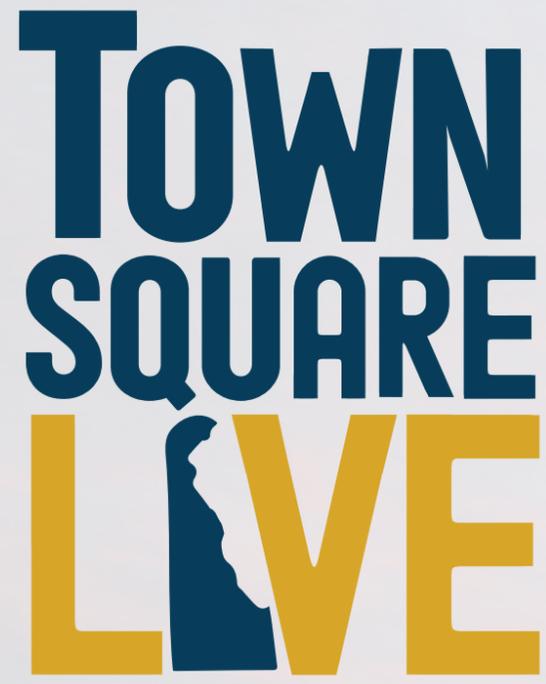


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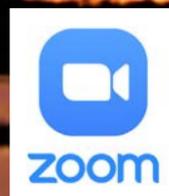


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