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photo link: Longwood Gardens  
photo by Joe Hare

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**Dems Never Told Reps About Appropriations Bill Releases**



**Bus Contractors Need Insurance Funds**



**Wright Leads St. Elizabeth's**

photo link: Hagley Museum and Library



# Headlines

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# GOP REPS: DEMS NEVER TOLD US ABOUT APPROPRIATIONS BILL RELEASES

BY BETSY PRICE

Republican members of the House Appropriations Committee say they were not notified that Democrats planned to release bills from the House Appropriations Committee they sit on. The bills were signed by the Democrat members Wednesday, maybe during a caucus meeting, and then press releases were sent out saying they had been released by the committee, which never met.

Among them were a new version of the permit-to-purchase bill, which would require anyone buying a handgun to have both a permit and a training course before they could buy the gun, as well as a bill that would fine gun sellers for not keeping ammunition locked up.

Rep. Kevin Hensley, R-Odessa, and Rep. Charles Postles, R-Milford, both Republican members of the House Appropriations Committee, said Thursday they were not able to comment on the release of the permit bill, **SS 1 for SB 2**, “because they were never notified that the legislation was being considered by the House Appropriations Committee.” A vote to release the mea-

sure was taken without their knowledge, they said in the joint statement.

Delaware law allows legislators to sign the backs of bills rather than taking a vote in public.

Efforts to reach Hensley and Postles Friday or House Minority leaders Mike Ramone, R-Newark/Pike Creek, were unsuccessful.

The ammunition bill, **House Bill 270**, is sponsored in the House by Rep. Kim Williams, D-Marshallton, who is also chair of the Appropriations Committee. It was prefiled Thursday. The permit bill is sponsored by House Majority Leader Melissa Minor-Brown and Senate Majority Whip Elizabeth “Tizzy” Lockman. Efforts also were unsuccessful to reach Williams or Minor-Brown for comment Friday.

## APPROPRIATIONS

The move comes as legislators continue to pay lip service to the idea of civil and cordial relations between the parties and working together for the good of the

state. With a Democratic Supermajority in the Senate, they can pass whatever they want, but need a few Republican votes in the House even though Dems are the majority there.

In a press release about the permit bill, House Speaker Valerie Longhurst said again that she is committed to passing SB 2 (S) when the General Assembly reconvenes in January.

“For the past decade, we have passed some of the most comprehensive gun safety laws in the country, making Delaware a leader by strengthening our background checks, closing loopholes, banning assault-style firearms and large-capacity magazines, and instituting red flag laws,” she said. “I’ve been proud to sponsor many of these bills and stand up to the gun lobby.”

One member of that gun lobby said the proper procedure would be to have held a meeting and a hearing and the release was a set up to meet that January promise.

“The process was not done in a normal way,” said Jeff Hague of the Delaware State Sportsmen Association. “To me that is underhanded. It is not democratic. What they did was just do it, regardless.”

In the last few years, any bills involving guns have invariably sparked long, well-attended and hotly contested hearings along every step. Hague’s group doesn’t like the bill and thinks it is discriminatory, among other things. Hague said Hensley and Postles both told him they had no idea the bills were under consideration and the first they knew was when they started getting calls about the bills.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



# ADDING \$500M+ MORE INTO EDUCATION LIKELY MATTER FOR LEGISLATURE

BY JAREK RUTZ

A long-awaited report released from the American Institutes for Research on school funding has shown that Delaware needs to allocate anywhere from \$590 million to \$1 billion more into education. That's between a 27% and 46% increase from the multi-billion dollar investment the state already has in public education, which is typically about a third of the state budget.

## THE REPORT


Drew Atchison, a senior researcher at the [American Institutes for Research](#), presented to a crowd of educators, advocates, parents and legislators the findings from the report, which cost Delaware \$700,000. One of the main recommendations of the report is to transition to a weighted funding system, rather than the current resource-based system that converts student enrollment into “units” and bases part of the funding on the experience level of teachers.

Some problems arise from this, including the fact that students with disabilities, English language learners or low-income students do not receive the additional funding to support their specialized needs.

The report focused on three areas: adequacy, equity and wealth neutrality with emphasis on transparency, flexibility and stability. In its recommended weighted system, each student receives a base amount of funding and then gets a multiplier if they are low-income, an English language learner or have a disability. Then, there is an effective weight—an adjusted weight accounting for the proportion of students for which a given weight applies.

For example, a low-income weight of 1.81 for a school where 31% of students are low-income results in an effective weight of 1.20, whereas a school where 70% of students are low-income would have an effective weight of 1.51.

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# WILMINGTON'S OFFICE-TO-HOUSING CONVERSIONS ADD ENERGY TO CITY

BY PETER OSBORNE

Chris Buccini bristles when he hears people talk about sky-high **vacancy rates** and slow demand in downtown Wilmington.

“When I look at the Northern Delaware market, we have probably had our best year ever,” says one of the three founders of **Buccini/Pollin Group** (BPG). “We’ve always been a big corporate town with companies like DuPont and MBNA, so we have some big blocks of corporate space that have been vacant in the past few years but are either being repurposed, or [buyers/big tenants] are taking a second look.”

Some of that repurposing includes converting the space from office to residential and those changes are helping turn the city into more of the liveable, walkable space that proponents have long advocated and sought.

“Creating a density of residents downtown helps increase the foot traffic to support local businesses and we find that as more people are on the streets, the more comfortable people feel,” says Sean Park, director of the Mayor’s Office of Economic Development. The influx of new residents adds to city wage tax revenue and encourages additional development, he said.

“Downtown Wilmington is a 25-year-old overnight success,” Chris Buccini says he tells people. “I think it’s healthier today than it’s been in half a century. It’s a disconnect to say otherwise.”

## BOLD GUESS ABOUT DOWNTOWN HOUSING

Adding more apartments in downtown Wilmington has been underway for two decades. Between 1999 and 2017, BPG purchased DuPont’s five-property headquar-

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ters buildings, including the Nemours, DuPont and Brandywine buildings, and two parking garages. It has rebranded the complex as **Market West** and added the I.M. Pei building at 1105 North Market to the mix.

Heading into 2000, Chris and his brother Rob predicted demand for 5,000 apartments in downtown Wilmington based on an unscientific assumption that 10 percent of 50,000 downtown workers would be interested in living in a vibrant, affordable downtown. Rob Buccini said Tuesday that BPG-owned residential units will be at the 5,000 number within the next 18 months and then at 6,000 units shortly thereafter.

“The first apartments we ever did in Delaware were at the Nemours Building,” Chris Buccini says.

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photo credit: Rockwood Park & Museum

Culture

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## CHILDREN ECSTATIC FOR SANTA'S CASE DISMISSAL IN DEL. TRADITION

BY JAREK RUTZ

Dozens of New Castle County elementary school students filled the rows of a courtroom in Wilmington's Leonard L. Williams Justice Center Friday as jolly Christmas music welcomed them. It's not everyday that a courthouse is exclusively filled with positivity, laughter and joy, but the annual "Miracle on 34th Street" rendition put jingle bells in the hands and smiles on the faces of everyone in attendance.

First State courts offered several, 45-minute performances of a scene from the heartwarming classic movie in all three of Delaware counties this week, wrapping up in New Castle County Friday.

"Miracle on 34th Street" is about an old man named Kris Kringle who becomes a very popular Santa at

Macy's in Manhattan. When Kringle claims he's really Santa, the ensuing hubbub ends up in court to determine his mental health as well as whether his claim is really true. The 1947 film starred Edmund Gwenn as Kringle, with single mom Maureen O'Hara and her daughter, played by Natalie Wood, getting swept up in the fray.

The two-decade tradition returned to live-action last year after the pandemic forced the event to go virtual. Along with the playful environment, the demonstration was partly to inform young children about how the court system operates.

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BY BETSY PRICE

He's big. He's bad. He's Black Stache, a pirate captain with a huge black mustache he's had since he was 10.

And [Michael Doherty](#), the actor who plays in him [Delaware Theatre Co.](#)'s "Peter and The Starcatcher," has the merriest time cracking up the audience as the play's vainglorious villain they can't get enough of.

"I love how unapologetic he is," said Doherty. "There's something about playing a villain and playing someone who says and does despicable things that is incredibly liberating, because it's so far from my existence."

# PERMISSION TO PLAY: MEET 'PETER & STARCATCHER'S' GIDDY VILLAIN

He prances and preens, wiggles and waggles, looms and leers in a role he says harks back to older theater traditions.

"There's a lot of vaudeville, British Music Hall and British Panto references to it," says Doherty. "There's something about those older styles that kind of lends themselves to a more, you know, presentational style."

Vaudeville, British music hall and British pantomime all involved presenting a mix of songs, speciality acts and comedy, often bawdy and often breaking the fourth wall to speak and react to the audience.

"Starcatcher," he said, "feels at times more akin to stand-up comedy than your typical live theatrical performance, where the fourth wall is very much intact."

He's able to throw in ad libs here and there and said he delights in trying to throw the actor playing Peter off track with a few of them.

"When you see in a script that a character is licensed to break the fourth wall, or improvise, it gives the actor a lot of power and it's this rare and very generous thing that I think a playwright can do for an actor. It's such a gift," Doherty said. "You're not getting in the way by sort of going for it and putting your all into it. It's what the piece wants."

## BECOMING PETER, THE PLAY

The play by Rick Elice is based on the novel of the same name by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson. It's a

prequel to "Peter Pan," the beloved musical that told the story of the boy who didn't want to grow up.

Delaware Theater executive director Matt Silva said he chose "Peter and the Starcatcher," which runs through Dec. 24, as the holiday show because he thought it would delight audiences, create a sense of community and appeal to a wide range of people.

"It's a show that I think has heart and at the roots of the show, it's really about this childlike wonderment and a sense of play," Silva said. "We all have that, whether we lose some of it, but we're reminded of that and so I think it's something special for the holidays." In just the first week, he said, they've seen patrons as young as four and as old as 94.

While the show stars Gabriel W. Elmore as the boy with no name, Amanda Jill Robinson as Molly Aster and Doherty, it's largely an ensemble piece with actors assuming several roles, including the doors and walls of two ocean-going ships. They provide soundscapes, repeat jokes and quick costume changes.

Doherty often plays in the background of the ensemble, just another sailor rolling a cigarette and stomping it out, before his star turn.

## A VILLAIN WITH DEEP FEELINGS

Playing Black Stache was a natural stretch for a guy who describes himself as "indeed an extrovert."

[READ MORE HERE](#)

# NATIONAL PARK GRANT WILL HELP WINTERTHUR RESTORE GATE HOUSE

BY BETSY PRICE

**Winterthur Museum, Gardens and Library** will match a \$125,000 historic preservation grant from the National Park Service to restore its Old Gate House. It's the only Delaware institution to receive any money from the grant.

Located on the western edge of Winterthur along Kennett Pike (Route 52), the Old Gate House is a prominent and recognizable part of the estate. Designed in 1902 by Robeson Lea Perot, a Philadelphia architect, the two-story colonial/neoclassical revival building served as the main gate entrance to Winterthur. It was also the residence for the gatekeeper and his family until 1961. Today, the gatehouse serves as offices for some of Winterthur's development staff.

Winterthur applied for the grant and was required to match it with non-federal funds. The grant money comes from \$25.7 million allotted to Save America's Treasures, in partnership with the National Endowment for the

Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute for Museum and Library Services.

## WINTERTHUR HERITAGE

Winterthur is the former home of Henry Francis du Pont (1880-1969), a renowned horticulturist and antique collector. Famed as one of the people to first embrace American antiques and decorative arts, du Pont spent his life managing Winterthur's estate and its farm and perfecting its gardens.

At its peak, the estate had 12 temperature-controlled greenhouses, a 23-acre orchard, a 5.5-acre vegetable garden and a four-acre cutting garden. It also had a butcher shop, sawmill, tannery, post office, train station and a dairy barn where du Pont bred and raised award-winning Holstein cattle. Ninety-nine cottages housed 250 members of Winterthur's staff and their families.

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# Business

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BY JAREK RUTZ

Lots of packages are arriving on the doorsteps of Delawareans. None are permitted to contain a certain adult beverage and a group of state legislators say it's time Delaware caught up with changes that happened elsewhere in the nation in the 20th century and allowed it.

Nearly 98% of Americans can have wine shipped to their homes, but in the First State, that's illegal. Utah and Mississippi are the only other states where it's outlawed—and this may be the rare occasion politicians are NOT saying “Thank God for Mississippi”. A bipartisan group of state legislators plan to offer two bills to change the laws.

Right now, Delawareans must buy wine at liquor stores. No alcoholic beverage can be ordered by a Delaware consumer for shipment directly to their residence, according to Joseph Fulgham, director of policy and communications for Delaware House Republicans.

# BILLS AIM TO OK ALCOHOL HOME DELIVERIES TO MODERNIZE SHOPPING

Those who want wine not found in local stores can only legally obtain it through a process that forces all sales of beer, wine and other alcohol through a system of distributors, wholesalers and retailers established following the repeal of Prohibition 90 years ago.

“It’s an antiquated protocol that makes distributors and retailers the gate-keepers of all beer, wine and spirits sales,” Fulgham said.

The state will allow a winery to ship a bottle of wine if the customer purchases the product at a winery. However, the same customer is barred from ordering the same wine by phone or online. [House Bill 262](#), sponsored by Rep. Mike Smith, R-Pike Creek, seeks to modernize Delaware law by allowing direct-to-consumer wine sales under the following conditions:

- Carriers like FedEx and UPS would need to obtain special licenses to handle wine shipments
- Wine shipments would need to be specially labeled
- Wineries shipping their products to Delaware would need a state license
- Pay the same state alcohol taxes levied on retail sales
- Restrict deliveries to adults over the age of 21, who must sign for the package
- Limit households to no more than three cases of wine per year
- Not allow the re-sale of shipped wine

Smith and other supporters of the bill state that the

legislation would not result in any lost sales for Delaware package stores. In the states that have enacted similar laws, retail sales have gone up after the laws took effect.

Another proposed bill aims for an even broader modernization of alcoholic beverage sales. [House Bill 259](#), sponsored by Rep. Jeff Spiegelman, R-Townsend-Clayton, would allow farm breweries, microbreweries and craft distilleries to conduct direct-to-consumer sales of wine, beer, spirits, mead and hard cider.

Spiegelman’s bill also would allow state liquor stores to conduct home deliveries, while requiring the licensing and training of delivery workers and mandating that those receiving the order are identified and at least 21 years old. The sponsors expect their opposition to claim that will encourage underage drinking.

Not so, said Chuck Nunan, owner of the Harvest Ridge Winery in Marydel. Carrier services have so many checks and balances that wouldn’t happen, he said. The state needs to reform its obsolete alcohol sales laws to reflect 21st-century consumerism, he said.

“Consumer buying habits have changed,” he said, citing Amazon, Chewy and Walmart. “You order it online and it shows up at your doorstep.”

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**BY PAM GEORGE**

Tourism is big business in Sussex County, DE, and the proof is in the numbers, according to Matt Parker, chair of **Southern Delaware Tourism** and a financial planner. In fiscal year 2023, Sussex County generated \$2.7 billion in visitor spending, he noted at the Annual Tourism Awards Luncheon, held Dec. 15 at **Lighthouse Cove Event Center** in Dewey Beach.

“This is real money and a real impact,” Parker told the room of tourism industry members and government officials.

“For every dollar spent, another \$1.20 goes right back into our local economy—dining out, going to the beach, camping, enjoying the great outdoors,” he continued. Moreover, tourism saves each Delaware \$1,608 in taxes a year, he added.

**AWARDS SALUTE**

The luncheon did more than toot tourism’s horn. It saluted movers and shakers who contribute to the county’s success. For instance, take Chef Dru Tevis, the keynote speaker, who is part of the number one visitor activity: dining. Tevis is the pastry chef for **SoDel Concepts**, a Rehoboth Beach-based hospitality group with restaurants from Milford to Fenwick Island. The colorful chef garnered national attention last year when he won the “Holiday Baking Championship” on the **Food Network**.

Tevis said he was proud of the area’s dining scene. “I know from personal experience that there’s nothing anyone else is doing in food across this whole country that we aren’t doing right here,” he said.

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photo link: Wilmington Friends School



# Education

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# REDDING CONSORTIUM, WLC SET ALIGNED GOALS

BY BETSY PRICE

Two Wilmington organizations focused on helping city students excel—the **Redding Consortium** and the **Wilmington Learning Collaborative**—have started to determine how they will work together.

“We are at a point now where we really can give a high level introduction to what we think that’s going to look like,” said Sen. Elizabeth “Tizzy” Lockman, D-Wilmington, co-chair of the consortium.

The Redding Consortium was founded in 2019 to recommend policies and practices to the governor and legislators to improve education equity and outcomes in the city of Wilmington and northern New Castle County. Some of their work includes implementing school-based health and wellness centers as well as preschool programs.

The Wilmington Learning Collaborative was created in November 2022 and is made up of nine city elemen-

tary schools across Brandywine, Red Clay and Christina school districts. It aims to improve the educational and societal outcomes for those children while also giving Wilmington families more of a voice in policy decisions. Both receive millions of dollars of state funding.

Lockman and the WLC’s Laura Burgos, listed these areas of alignment:

- Empowering school communities
- Improving outcomes for students in the city of Wilmington
- Codesign of expanded learning activities with school communities
- Evidence-based support services
- State-funded programs focused on educational equity and access to high-quality teaching and learning for Pre-K to grade 12 students

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RENEW

# ALL SIX CHARTERS UP FOR RENEWAL TO CONTINUE OPERATION

BY JAREK RUTZ

All six charter schools up for renewal this academic year have been renewed by the state secretary of education. In the state Board of Education’s monthly meeting Thursday night, Education Secretary Mark Holodick gave the final OK on Kuumba Academy, Positive Outcomes Charter School, First State Military Academy, Sussex Montessori School, Freire Charter School and Great Oaks Charter School to continue operating.

Every five years, the state requires charter schools to apply for renewal. Applications include basic information about the school like leadership personnel, contacts, enrollment, district of residence, mission statements and more complex details like trends in enrollment, academic performance, graduation rates and proficiency rates.

There wasn’t too much action as Holodick made his announcements, as he takes strong consideration into the recommendations of the Charter School Account-

ability Committee. The state secretary renders a decision after the the accountability committee’s recommendation, but the final authority, per statute, rests with the state Board of Education, who voted for the renewal of all six.

That committee spent the last two months having renewal hearings for each of the charters, where they asked questions about areas of concern, allowed the school to present some highlights of student achievement and progress, and sometimes set conditions that schools have to meet in order to stay open.

For example, Great Oaks had a pretty hefty hail of 16 conditions it needs to meet heading into and through next school year, mainly in regard to steady student enrollment and educator certifications.

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# SURVEY: BUS CONTRACTORS SOUTH OF CANAL NEED INSURANCE FUNDS

BY JAREK RUTZ

School bus contractors are hoping to get about an additional \$500,000 from the state to cover vehicle insurance costs. The request reflects a survey presented in Thursday’s Public School Transportation Committee meeting.

The contractors say costs are higher than the state allots; some companies are requiring higher levels of premiums to cover special needs students, potential child abuse and acts of terrorism; and that the difference in insuring smaller buses and larger ones isn’t as much as the state pays for.

“There are 93 contractors south of the canal for this new year, and there are 615 buses that operate south of the canal,” said Tyler Bryan, education associate for school transportation at the [Department of Education](#).

“It has been a barrier for new contractors to get, and especially one-bus operators who want to pick up a bus, to get any insurance company to take them if they don’t have like five years of insurance are given worse premiums at much higher rates,” Bryan said.

The current state allowance for bus insurance, which is calculated by passenger sizes of buses, is \$2,104 for buses that hold 60 or more passengers, \$1,822 for buses carrying 36 to 59 passengers, \$1,735 for buses holding 17 to 35 passengers and \$1,563 for buses with a capacity of 16 passengers or less.

“We had 42 respondents to the survey and the average insurance cost of all the respondents was \$2,993.75,” Bryan said.

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## APPO REFERENDUM FAILS, PRELIMINARY VOTING RESULTS SHOW

BY JAREK RUTZ

In a narrow outcome, the residents of **Appoquinimink School District** voted against all three questions on the ballot of the Dec. 12 referendum, which would have raised taxes \$435 per year for the average homeowner if successful.

“Obviously there is a lot of disappointment in the room tonight,” said Appo Superintendent Matt Burrows in a statement after the preliminary results were made public Tuesday night. The district was also holding its monthly school board meeting Tuesday night and in the last five minutes, Burrows made the announcement that the referendum had failed. His comments were brief and he expressed his disappointment before the district released his statement following the meeting.

Burrows stated the district is growing and will continue to grow. Appo’s enrollment has grown by 17% in the last five years, making it the fastest-growing district in the state.

“Without support for new buildings, we know we will have overcrowded classrooms and an increased need for modular learning spaces,” he said. “This isn’t what we want for our students.”

In his statement, he pointed out the majority of this effort to raise local revenue was “focused on our amazing educators and staff.” He said without the additional funds, Appo can’t stay competitive with other districts.

“Teachers are our greatest resource and we can’t afford to keep losing them to other districts,” he said. “The voters have spoken and now we must continue to operate with even less. There’s no question that our students, teachers and families all suffer as a result of this decision.”

The election results are unofficial and will need to be certified by the state in the coming days.

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# BRANDYWINE TO HOLD ELECTION IN FEB. TO RAISE TAXES

BY JAREK RUTZ

The residents of Brandywine School District will have the opportunity to vote for or against a raise in taxes at a special election on Feb. 13, 2024. The district is seeking to raise \$15,625,549 of local revenue “to support ongoing district operations.”

If passed, those that live in the district will have their local school taxes increased a total of 45 cents per \$100 of assessed property value. The average assessed value in Brandywine is \$72,701, so the average homeowner would see a \$181.75 increase in taxes for fiscal year 2025 and a \$145.40 per year increase in fiscal year 2026 and beyond. Here are some of the ways the district will use the potential revenue boost:

- Continued operations and operating cost increases
- Continued safety and security initiatives including additional constables
- Continued staff retention and recruitment including salary and employment costs and maintaining building-based substitutes

- Maintaining curricular and other instructional programming for students, including gifted, international baccalaureate, AVID and alternative education
- Maintaining extra-curricular programming including visual and performing arts, athletics and clubs
- Technology maintenance and repair including chromebooks and interactive classroom boards

The polls for the special election will be open on Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2024, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eligible voters do not have to be a registered voter for general elections, but must be a U.S. citizen and a Brandywine resident of at least 18 years of age. **Absentee ballots** are also available.

The Brandywine board of education is expected to discuss the election at its monthly meeting Monday night, which starts at 7 p.m. and can be watched **HERE**.

Polling places are Brandywine High School, Carrcroft Elementary School, Claymont Elementary School, Concord High School, Forwood Elementary School,



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Hanby Elementary School, Lancashire Elementary School, Lombardy Elementary School, Maple Lane Elementary School, Mount Pleasant Elementary School, Mount Pleasant High School, P.S. DuPont Middle School, Springer Middle School and Talley Middle School.

Brandywine is just one of several districts holding special elections in the coming months to raise local revenue. Others include Appoquinimink, Red Clay Consolidated and Colonial school districts. Appo’s referendum is Tuesday.



# \$26.5 MILLION EASTSIDE STEM HUB TO OPEN IN ONE YEAR

## STAFF WRITER

Those passing the crossroads of North Claymont Street and Todds Lane in the Riverside neighborhood of Wilmington this past year have probably noticed a fleet of excavators, metal beams, and lots and lots of dirt.

That's because **EastSide Charter School** is making significant progress on its construction of a new \$26.5 million hub for Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The STEM hub broke ground in February and is a year away from opening in January 2025.

"Initially, we had to phase this project because we weren't sure we were going to get enough funding for our entire vision," said Nick Medaglio, director of finance at EastSide Charter. "Once we did get enough funding, we were able to greenlight everything and things started to move."

The needed funding finally became completely available in July, he said. And although he estimates the project is about 25-30% complete, most of the hub's

foundation is complete and the construction team will soon be building vertically.

"We're gonna start going vertical with steel over the next month or so, which is going to make it feel like and look like a lot more work has been done, even though there's already been a lot of groundwork that's been done," Medaglio said.

Just like any construction project, Medaglio said some of the challenges and delays have been caused by the rising costs of materials as well as poor weather conditions. The 24,000-square-foot space is completely externally funded by a number of community organizations.

"This is all being funded, not by the school, but by **First Community Foundation**, which is the nonprofit that owns our land and the building," Medaglio said. "They are doing all the fundraising for it, and we've cobbled this together with the help of other major grants."

JOHN MOLLURA

- PHOTOGRAPHY -

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Grants include \$4 million from **Chemours**, \$1 million from **Barclays** US Consumer Bank, \$3 million in federal funding and \$5 million in state funds.

"The Chemours STEM Hub at EastSide will be an amazing opportunity for anyone in Delaware to have an opportunity to learn about STEM and engage in internships with companies that will be offering job opportunities," said Aaron Bass, chief executive officer of EastSide. "We know that STEM is the number one driver of our state and we wanted to make sure that all Delawareans are able to have access to great careers."

Along with classes, the hub will feature a maker's space with professional machinery, a 3D printing lab, computer coding labs, experimental science labs, and a music and TV studio.

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## UD CLIMBS 31 SPOTS TO NO. 47 IN U.S. COLLEGE R&D

BY JAREK RUTZ

The University of Delaware is climbing the national rankings for best universities for research and development. The [National Science Foundation](#) recently released its [Higher Education Research and Development Survey](#) findings, which ranks the Blue Hens 47 out of 626 academic institutions across the country for non-medical school research and development expenditures. That caveat is because UD does not have a medical school.

Last year, the school was ranked at 78. With the 31-spot leap in the standings, UD is now in the top 8% nationally for research and development activities. UD is sandwiched between the University of Utah at 46 and Rockefeller University at 48. It also lands just five spots below Stanford University. Johns Hopkins University is at the top of the rankings.

UD ranked 78 in total research spending (52 among public universities), up from 109 (73 for public). The university reported research and development expenditures of \$368 million, up 59% from the previous year's \$231 million expenditure. Research and development expenditures are essentially investments, sometimes funds provided by external sponsors like federal and state grants, or funds from the college itself, to support investigators with a variety of research needs.

“The University of Delaware is deeply committed to advancing innovation and problem-solving,” university president Dennis Assanis said. “This latest ranking reflects the drive and ingenuity of our faculty, staff and students, as well as the significant investment UD is making to support their critical work—from our world-



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class core facilities to our successful research development programs.”

In this fiscal year alone, UD has been awarded 520 research proposals. Some of the research toppings include high-interval training to recover walking after a stroke, and recycled textile and apparel manufacturing.

Since 2018, UD has hired 460 faculty, providing start-up funds to help new researchers establish their labs and procure the equipment needed for their work.

It also provides tuition remission to support graduate students who contribute to research projects with their advisers through a university fellowship or graduate assistantship.

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# Sports

photo credit: Ben Fulton

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# WRIGHT LEADS ST. ELIZABETH OVER PENN

BY JASON WINCHELL

Julius Wright scored 22 points to lead six St. Elizabeth players in double figures as the Vikings made a statement in an 86-67 win over William Penn at a sold-out St. E Center on Thursday (Dec. 14) night.

The Colonials, who entered the game ranked fifth in the state by *Delaware Live*, took a 13-11 lead in the first quarter on two free throws, but St. E's responded with a 10-0 run to end the quarter. That stretch included two three-pointers in the final 33 seconds, including a buzzer-beater by freshman Kiyen Alexander.

Speaking of threes, Penn got several in the second from Elin McCoy and Jaylin Horsey, but the Vikings continued to blister the nets. They hit five more triples in the quarter and, for good measure, Wright and Steven Nixon Jr. had old-fashioned three-point plays. The Colonials did get the Vikings' lead down to single digits in the final minute of the half, but the Vikings led by 13 at the break.

Aiden Tobiason, the St. Elizabeth senior who has signed with Temple University, scored 12 points in the first half, but he spent most of the third quarter on the bench in foul trouble. William Penn had its highest-scoring quarter as Emmanuel Vonhm took advantage of Tobiason's absence to score 10 points and Horsey, who had been mostly outside in the first half, got closer to the hoop for nine points in the third.

Still, the Vikings' lead was 15 with 30 seconds remaining in the third, but William Penn put together a mini-run before it ended. That included a follow shot by Vonhm with six seconds left, then a steal and layup by Horsey as time expired.

The lead for St. Elizabeth was 10, but it erased any doubt with a hot start to the fourth. A 12-2 start, which started with a Wright layup and three balls for Hunter and Tobias Reese, quickly increased the lead to 20 and the margin remained in that neighborhood for the remainder of the night.

St. Elizabeth players joining Wright in double figures included Tobiason and Reese with 15 each, Alexander and Nixon with 11 each, and Hunter with 10. The Vikings (2-0) are at St. Georges Thursday at 5:15 p.m.

Horsey led the Colonials with 23 and Vonhm added 11. Penn (1-1) is off until Dec. 26, when it participates in the Governor's Challenge at Wicomico High School in Salisbury, MD.





## COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 1 GIRLS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The fall sports season ended on Dec. 2, and now is the time to focus on the winter sports that kicked off their season. Here are my girls' high school basketball court-side notes for this week and the first rankings for *Delaware Live*.

Former Ursuline and Villanova basketball player Adrianna Hahn is the new coach at Tower Hill and she added a tough schedule for her squad. She is playing her former Catholic conference rivals Saint Mark's, Padua and St. Elizabeth. They are also playing Ursuline in the Diamond State Classic.

Talk about teams getting off to good starts, as these four teams—Delmarva Christian, ECHS, Lake Forest and Middletown—are a combined 17-0 while the top teams in the top eight teams in the rankings all have at

least one loss against some tough competition.

Many teams are playing in holiday tournaments over the Christmas break including the Diamond State Classic played at Tatnall and the Viking Invitational played at the St. E's Center.

Here is the first top 10 of the basketball season for our *Delaware Live* crew.

**No. 1 Ursuline** The Raiders are 3-1 after a 1-1 weekend at the She Got Game tournament. They hosted Archmere on Dec. 14 before heading to New York this weekend.

**No. 2 Caravel** The Bucs are off to a good start with the only setback to Pennsylvania powerhouse Cardinal O'Hara 50-48. They are in the Shore Games in northern New Jersey this weekend.

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## COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 1 BOYS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY GLENN FRAZER

The fall sports season ended on Dec. 2, and now is the time to focus on the winter sports that kicked off their season. Here are my boys' high school basketball courtside notes for this week and the first rankings for *Delaware Live*.

I have enjoyed the fact that these schools are playing some great out-of-state competition and proving that Delaware can play with these teams. Sanford beat Plymouth Whitemarsh at the Kobe Bryant Classic while Sallies lost in overtime on a buzzer beater to Neumann Goretti.

McKean, who finished 2-18 last year, is off to a fast start this year as it improved to 5-0 after winning three games in four days over the extended weekend. MOT Charter also is off to a hot start, winning its first four games by averaging 74.3 points per game on offense.

The Blue Hen Flight A conference is going to be exciting this year as two newcomers, Odessa and Christiana, join a stack conference that includes Appoquinimink, Middletown, Mount, Newark, Delcastle, St. Georges Tech and William Penn. These will be some of the better matchups in the state as the season moves on.

Here is the first top 10 of the basketball season for our *Delaware Live* crew.

**No. 1 Salesianum** The defending champions started the year 1-1 against two (PA) teams when they beat LaSalle in their annual Silent Night game. They played at Archbishop Wood (PA) on Dec. 16.

**No. 2 William Penn** The Colonials kicked off their season with a 53-43 win over St. Andrews. They traveled to St. Elizabeth Dec. 14 in a top five matchup covered on *Delaware Live*.

**No. 3 Middletown** The Cavs started the season Dec. 14, as they traveled to Sanford for an early season clash. Then they traveled to St. John's College High in Washington, DC, on Saturday.

**No. 4 Dover** The Senators kicked off their season with a home contest against rival Caesar Rodney on Saturday afternoon.

**No. 5 St. Elizabeth's** The Vikings were impressive in their season opener by connecting on 17 three-point baskets in their win over St. Andrews. They hosted William Penn Dec. 14 in an early season top five matchup.

**No. 6 Sanford** The Warriors started the season 2-0 including the win over Plymouth Whitemarsh (PA) on Sunday. They host No. 3 Middletown tomorrow night in another top early season contest.

**No. 7 Howard** The Wildcats will open this season playing in the Hammer and Nail tournament being played at their gym this weekend.

**No. 8 Laurel** The Bulldogs picked up a pair of conference wins to start the season over Delmar and Sussex Academy. They traveled to face The Salisbury School (MD) on Dec. 14.

**No. 9 Appoquinimink** The Jags started the year with wins over Caesar Rodney and Tri State Christian Academy (MD) They are off till next Wednesday when they host No. 1 Sallies.

**No. 10 Odessa** The Ducks have won their first three games by outscoring their opponents 221-96 in those games. They traveled to Concord Dec. 14 and Newark Charter on Dec. 16.



# FORMER SUSSEX CENTRAL WRESTLER TAKES HIS TALENTS TO JAPAN

BY BENNY MITCHELL

Okinawa, Japan is far far away from Long Neck, DE. A 13-hour time difference to be exact. But that is where former two-sport high school athlete Jevon Saffold has already made a name for himself fighting in the cage.

Saffold, a 2019 graduate of Sussex Central High School joined the United States Air Force after graduation. He is currently stationed in Okinawa with the U.S.A.F. Security Services. So with his spare time and his wrestling background he began training in mixed martial arts.

“I have been doing MMA for about a year and a half, it started as just something to do to just stay in shape,” Saffold said.

Saffold said seeing some former wrestlers he knew competing back in the United States changed that and he began training to compete. “I was inspired by some

Delaware guys taking it more seriously like Chase Archangelo and Austin Clayton,” Saffold said.

Both Archangelo (Smyrna High School) and Clayton (St. Georges Tech High School) were high school wrestlers around the time Saffold wrestled for Sussex Central. Saffold was a state finalist his senior year.

Saffold trains and competes with the Ryuku Fight Club with both Japanese and American fighters. He trains five days a week while still doing his job with the military. He is currently competing as an amateur with a record of 4-1. All of his wins so far have come via TKO and his lone loss was by submission in his second fight. Saffold is currently the 145 lb. champion for the Grasp the Future Amateur Fight League.

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