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photo link: Delaware DNREC



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photo link: Delaware Children's Museum

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Greek Festival Ends Sunday



Smyrna Has Successful Referendum



Christina Carroll's LPGA Bids

photo link: Delaware DNREC



# Headlines

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# HOW IS STATE GRAD. RATE 88% WITH 31% MATH PROFICIENCY, 41% ELA?

BY JAREK RUTZ

Although just 31% of students in Delaware are proficient in math and 41% are proficient in English language arts, the graduation rate in First State high schools is 88%.

“While Delaware’s graduation rate is encouraging, understanding achievement requires a deeper look at student growth throughout their K-12 experience,” said Julia Keleher, chief strategy and operating officer for **First State Educate**, a state education advocacy group.

Other factors to consider outside of just state test scores, she says, include:

- Different types of assessment data
- Alternative graduation paths
- Potential variations in standards
- Limited high school data
- Graduation rates reflects completion

The state’s proficiency rates are based on the **Smarter Balanced Assessments** given to students annually in grades three through eight, and then the SAT which is

given to all 11th graders.

“As there are different metrics and standards for graduation and proficiency rates, this is like comparing apples and oranges,” said Kendall Massett, executive director of the **Delaware Charter Schools Network**.

Per **Delaware Code**, there’s no graduation requirement related to proficiency on standardized tests.

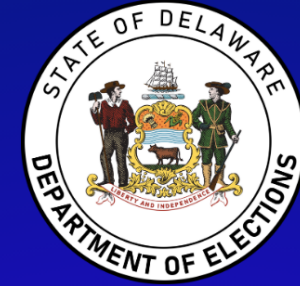
“Like the vast majority of states in the country, Delaware’s state assessment is not tied to high school graduation,” the Department of Education stated. Only a handful of states in the nation have graduation exit exams. Rather, the requirements are tied to the amount of credits completed, with requirements in different subjects.

Students must pass a class to receive the credit, so graduation rate is indirectly tied to grade point average, because if a student has a very low GPA, it’s likely they aren’t passing their classes and receiving credit.



87.70%

[READ MORE HERE](#)



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& Deadlines**



# TORCH RUN UNIFIES SPECIAL OLYMPICS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, COMMUNITY

BY JAREK RUTZ

The spirit of the Summer Olympics is here in Delaware, so get the torches lit, the legs stretched and hit the streets and sidewalks to unite with neighbors in a statewide effort to support law enforcement and people with special needs.

The 38th Annual Statewide **Law Enforcement Torch Run** for Special Olympics kicked off Wednesday and ran through Friday. Organized by the **Special Olympics Delaware**, the annual run was capped off Friday afternoon when a cauldron was lit by the organization's Torch Runner of the Year and Athlete of the Year to officially signify the opening of the games.

“Through that partnership, awareness and funds are generated to further the mission of Special Olympics,” said Lisa Smith, senior director of marketing and development and Torch Run liaison for Special Olympics Delaware. “Law enforcement as our partners are as committed to providing opportunities for those with intellectual disabilities, using sports as a platform as we are as an organization.”

Here's this year's schedule:

**Wednesday, June 5—Upstate**

- Start: 9 a.m. New Castle County Police Department
- Ceremony: 9:30 a.m. Wilmington Police Department

- Route: Kirkwood Highway to Albertson Boulevard
- Downstate**
- Start: 3:30 p.m. at Fenwick Island
- Ceremony: 7 p.m. at Rehoboth Beach Bandstand
- Route: Post-ceremony one-mile run to Grove Park

**Thursday, June 6—Downstate**

- Start (Leg 1): 6:15 a.m. at Delmar Police Department;
- Start (Leg 2): 6:55 a.m. at Georgetown Circle
- Unification: Harrington, continuing to Dover
- Ceremony: 1:45 p.m. on Legislative Mall, Dover

**Upstate**

- Start: 10:30 a.m. at Middletown Police Department;
- Convergence: Dover ceremony at 1:45 p.m. on Legislative Mall, Dover

**Friday, June 7**

- Start: 4:15 p.m. at Newark Shopping Center
- Culmination: 4 p.m. at the Opening Ceremony of the Summer Games, held at the Bob Carpenter Center at the University of Delaware. The Flame of Hope will arrive at the ceremony at approximately 5 p.m.

Smith said nearly 1,000 people run/walk in the event, in addition to another 1,000 volunteers. Since its inception, the Torch Run has raised over \$11 million, directly benefiting the year-round programs of Special Olympics Delaware. These funds ensure that children and adults with intellectual disabilities receive quality sports training and opportunities for athletic competition.

The Special Summer Games themselves took place on Friday and Saturday at the University of Delaware Sports Complex, with six different sports in an open-to-the-public event. Smith said the athletes have been training for about 10 weeks.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



# GET TO KNOW MILFORD'S SHANNON GRONAU, BEHAVIORAL PRO OF THE YEAR

BY JAREK RUTZ

Shannon Gronau from the [Milford School District](#) believes the movement behind mental health after the pandemic has shifted the paradigm of society and of public education. The counselor at [Mispillion Elementary School](#) was recently named 2024 Delaware Behavioral Health Professional of the Year, an award honoring outstanding service by school employees who are health care practitioners or human service providers who work to improve an individual's mental health.

“Our society has shifted and changed in a lot of ways and students fell out of their regular routines and so many things have changed not only for children, but also for parents and families,” she Gronau said, “so getting that support, not only academically but focusing on the

basic needs of our children and their development, behaviorally and social emotionally, is just so important because we're working with humans.”

Mispillion serves almost 600 students, and Gronau herself has about 300 of them on her caseload. She does one-on-one counseling and group counseling, and in those sessions, she works with her children to build skills on topics like conflict resolution, social skills, self-regulation, friendships, leadership and more.

Gronau also goes directly into classrooms where she teaches lessons on different mindfulness techniques and even teaches students about the different parts of the brain and what each does and is responsible for.

“We then connect it too, so it's like okay, I was upset,

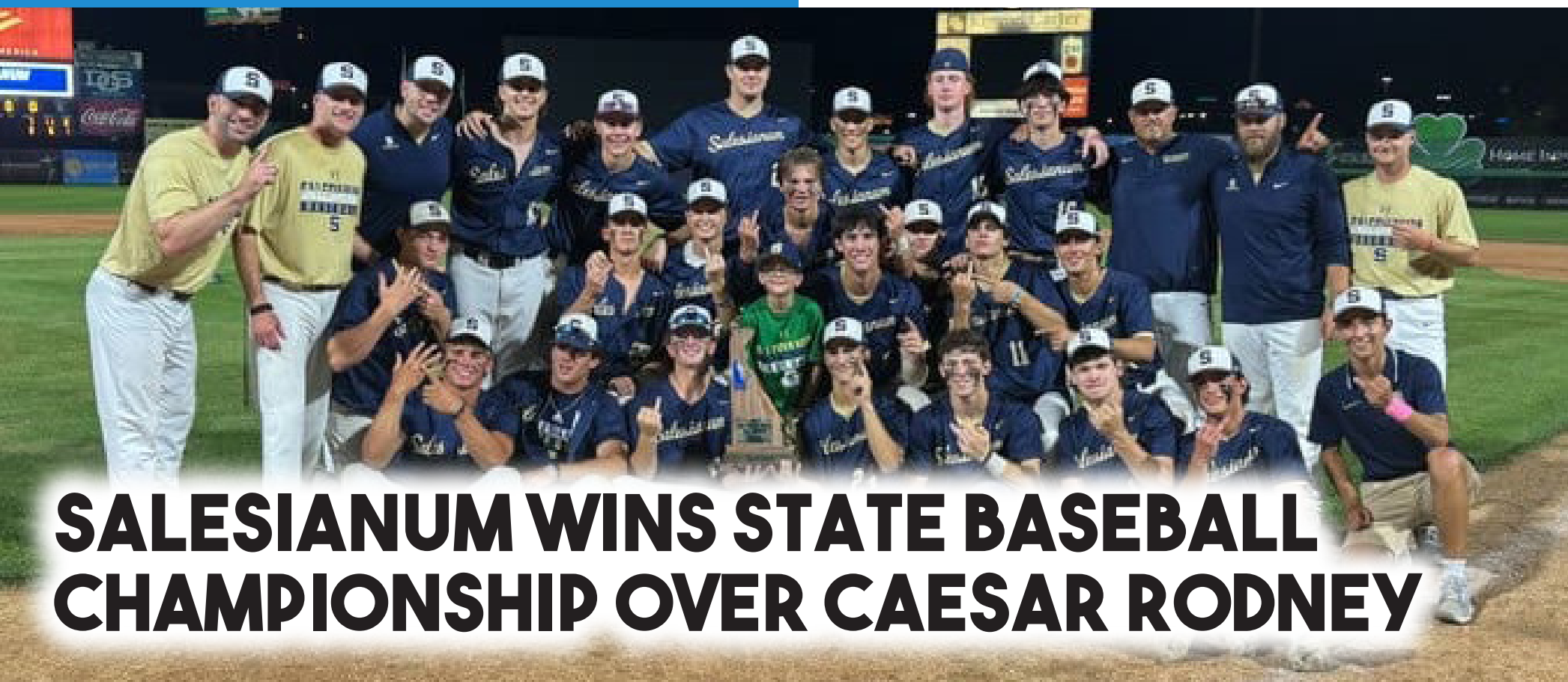


my amygdala went off and I remembered, you know, some techniques through my hippocampus on how to calm myself down,” she said. “It's been really cool to see because our kids are like sponges and I feel like the more they understand what's happening in the moment, the better prepared they are to be able to overcome obstacles.”

Gronau graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a bachelor's degree in psychology.

“We had an internship at the end of our program where we got to go out and experience different pathways for psychology-related careers,” she said.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



## SALESIANUM WINS STATE BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP OVER CAESAR RODNEY

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The No. 13 seeded Salesianum Sals continued their run all the way through the championship. The Sals came into the championship the underdog just like they were as they faced the No. 6 seed Caesar Rodney Riders June 1.

The Sals beat No. 20 Brandywine, No. 4 DMA, No. 5 Sanford and No. 2 Sussex Tech to reach the state championship game. In the title game, they continued their hot play as they set their sights on Riders.

With the Sal trailing 2-1 in the fifth inning broke the game wide open scoring five runs on six hits. The biggest blow in the inning was an inside the park home run by Jude Swift that drove in three runs. Matt McSorely had an RBI double in the inning, while Landon Johnston added an RBI single as Salesianum took a 6-2 lead.

The big fifth inning proved to be too much for the Riders to overcome as the Sal defeated them 7-3. Sals starting pitcher Jack Rossi got the win on the mound while Chris Moxley threw the last two innings to close out the game.

Salesianum totaled 12 hits in the game and had five players each with two hits. Swift led the way going 2-of-2 with a run scored and three RBI on his inside the park home run. Caesar Rodney had six hits in the game as Colby Rall led the way going 2-of-4 with two runs scored.

This is the first baseball state championship for the Sals since 2008.



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photo link: The Delaware Contemporary

# Culture

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# WILMINGTON GREEK FESTIVAL RUNS THROUGH SUNDAY

Vendors are scattered throughout the grounds along with live music and outdoor booths on both sides of the church. The band Atlantis will perform nightly surrounded by plenty of seating/tables, souvlaki, kalamari, loukoumades, gyros and two bars. The church's Terpsichorean Dancers will perform traditional Greek dances nightly beginning at 6 p.m.

The take-out booth is located in the south parking lot adjoining Broom Street, providing walk-up food service with all the favorites from the dining room from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and a curbside pickup option from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. only along Broom Street. Online ordering is also available [HERE](#).

Next to the take-out booth on the south side is DJ entertainment nightly with additional tables/chairs and children's games. Outdoor food booths open up between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. There is stroller/handicap access to the dining room, indoor pastries and vendors at the new entrance, with an elevator, next to the children's games on the south side of the church.

All major credits cards and cash are accepted throughout the festival. To view the full menu, click [HERE](#).

BY JAREK RUTZ

Have a taste of Greek life, food and culture without taking a step out of Delaware. The [Holy Trinity Greek Festival](#) in downtown Wilmington is back, meaning First Staters can immerse themselves with all things Greece for a week.

Organized by the [Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church](#), the event involves Greek Food, music, dancing and more. The cuisine features all the staples from Greece: pastichio, moussaka, dolmades, spanakopita, gyros, souvlaki and calamari.

The festival began Monday at the church at 808 N. Broom Street in Wilmington. It runs through Saturday, June 8 from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. each day. The community center/gym hosts the indoor dining room and Greek pastries and cookies are available on the balcony.





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# Government

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# DE MEDICAID TO GIVE NEW MOMS DIAPERS, HOME-DELIVERED MEALS

BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware will become the first state to give new moms enrolled in a Medicaid program a safety net of 12 weeks of free diapers, wipes and home-delivered meals. The pilot program, set to run five years, is designed to offer those moms and babies a healthier start by reducing maternal stress and food and diaper insecurity during postpartum, the period of time it takes for a woman's body to return to normal after pregnancy.

The program will also allow Delaware to enroll women in evidence-based outpatient treatment programs for pregnant or postpartum mothers diagnosed with stimulant or opioid use disorders. Those 18 or older who are diagnosed with a stimulant use disorder will be eligible for a 24-week program; those diagnosed with an opioid use disorder who are 18 or older, pregnant or up to 12 months postpartum diagnosed and who have a com-

pleted American Society of Addiction Medicine criteria assessment indicating that outpatient treatment is medically appropriate, will be eligible for a 64-week program.

The moves are supported by a 1115 Waiver approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. It was not immediately clear how big the grant is or whether Delaware has to match the money in some way.

The five-year pilot program will extend a pilot program to give low-income postpartum mothers two home-delivered meals per day, or one medically appropriate shelf-stable food box. It will cover up to 80 diapers and one pack of baby wipes per week during the first 12 weeks following birth of the baby.

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\*Students must meet eligibility requirements. Course fees and books are not covered by the SEED Scholarship.

photo link: Delaware Department of Education



# Education

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# 22 VOTES: SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT SQUEEZES OUT SUCCESSFUL REFERENDUM

BY JAREK RUTZ

*This is a developing story. Check back for updates.*

It came down to 22 votes, but the Smyrna School District had a successful referendum Thursday. The district's first try at raising taxes through referendum was unsuccessful in early March.

Smyrna School District sought \$4,162,286 from local revenue to build a new 600-student intermediate school on Rabbit Chase Lane to address crucial needs. The bonds represent 23% of the total increase in cost of \$18,096,640 and will address enrollment growth and capacity issues.

Here is the accurate funding breakdown for the June 6 referendum:

- \$13,934,354 – state's share
- \$4,162,286 – district's local share
- \$18,096,640 – total

For the average homeowner in the district, taxes would go up \$17.29 in year one, \$16.90 in year two, \$16.52 in year three, \$16.14 in year four and \$15.75 in year five. That's less than \$2 more monthly.

Thursday's unofficial referendum results came in at about 9 p.m. The vote count was 1,090 (50.5%) "yes" and 1,068 (49.5%) "no".

"We are thrilled to announce that, thanks to the incredible support of our community members, the Smyrna School District's Capital Referendum on June 6, 2024, has passed, according to the unofficial results!" the district stated in a Facebook post Thursday at 9:30 p.m.

Here's how the residents voted:

	AUTHORITY TO ISSUE BONDS					
	VOTE FOR 1					
	For the Bond Issue	Against the Bond Issue	Total Votes Cast	*Overvotes	**Undervotes	Contest Total
Kenton Ruritan Club	125	218	343	0	1	344
Smyrna Elementary School	504	529	1,033	0	0	1,033
Smyrna Middle School	451	305	756	0	2	758
Absentee Votes	10	16	26	0	0	26
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,090</b>	<b>1,068</b>	<b>2,158</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2,161</b>

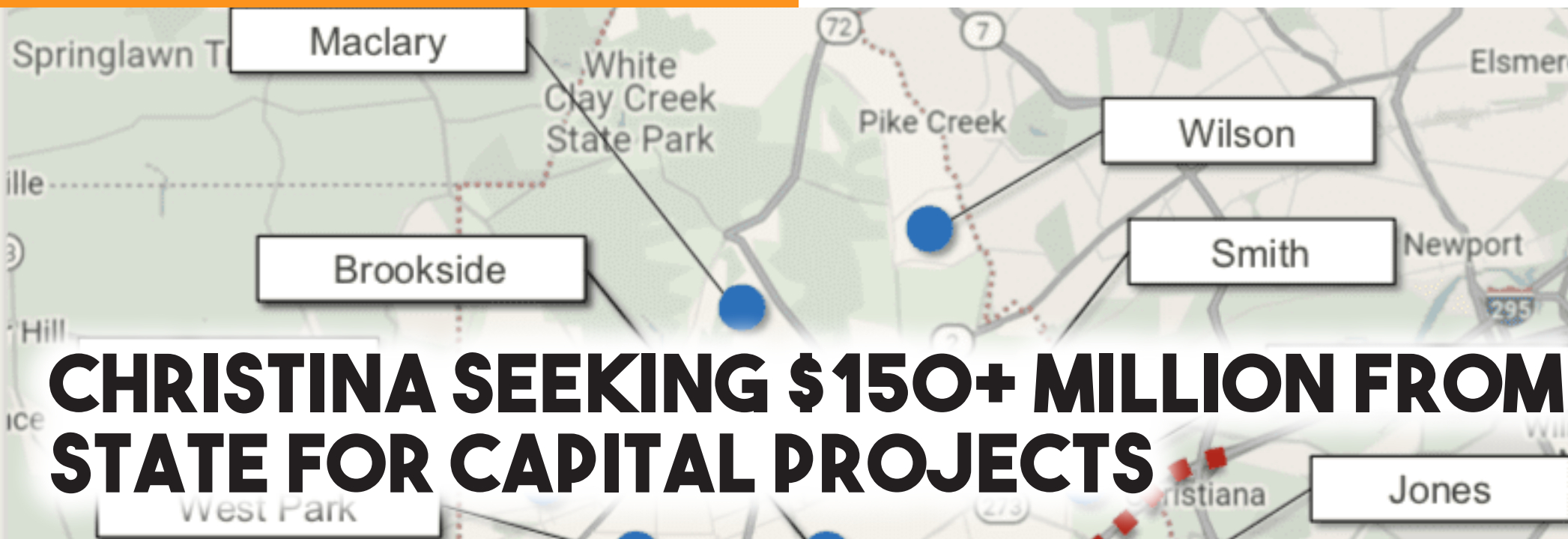
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# CHRISTINA SEEKING \$150+ MILLION FROM STATE FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

The **Christina School District** is set to ask the state for well over \$150 million dollars this summer to help complete capital projects at all three levels: elementary, middle and high school.

By Aug. 31, the district—the second largest in the state serving more than 13,000 students—will submit a certificate of necessity to the state **Department of Education**, its board announced in its monthly meeting Tuesday night. That formal document is voted on by district school boards first and contains vigorous details on how much money the district is asking for, where specifically that money will go and how it is needed for the success of the district community. The state can then approve all of the projects, some or none.

That money begins funneling into the district the following fiscal year and is usually spread across a few years. So, if Christina’s is approved, money would start being allocated by the state in fiscal year 2026, or the

2025-2026 school year.

In total, Christina estimates a \$285-to-\$350 million price tag to complete all of its projects.

When a certificate of necessity is approved, the state picks up the majority of the cost, usually 60% to 70% depending on the district and year, and the rest comes from local revenue. This past year, six districts had their certificates of necessity approved. Often, a district doesn’t have enough local revenue to cover its share, resulting in a referendum where residents must vote to approve a tax increase.

Board member Alethea Smith-Tucker expects a referendum will be needed if the the state approves Christina’s ask. This year, six districts went to referendum to raise local funds to match state-funding and fulfill the certificate of necessity. That’s the most referendums in Delaware in 14 years.

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5K (6.52%)

33K (47.53%)

**Disciplinary Action Taken**

- Suspension - Out of School without Serv...
- Suspension - In School
- Suspension - Out of School with Services
- Suspension -In School- School Interventi...
- Alternative to Suspension
- Suspension - Out of School with CDAP P...
- Expulsion with CDAP Placement

# SCHOOL BEHAVIORAL INFRACTIONS REMAIN ABOVE 30,000 ANNUALLY

BY JAREK RUTZ

A state committee created to evaluate and make recommendations to improve the environment of schools had its third meeting Monday night in which it learned that there were more than 30,000 behavioral infractions to middle and high school students in 2022. Although that number dropped in 2023, it was still north of 11,000 for high schoolers and nearly 14,000 for middle schoolers.

The 24-member Student Behavior and School Climate Task Force is made of government and educational officials, as well as school behavioral specialists and resource officers. **Delaware Department of Education** Education Associate Rosie Morales presented the data, which included 37,000 offenses in 2022 that resulted in suspension or expulsion, with out-of-school suspensions without services being the highest discipline tool

utilized statewide. That’s a tool that some committee members deemed ineffective.

Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, said he’d only like to see out-of-school suspensions if there’s a legal reason why a student needs to be removed, or if they are a direct threat to other people in the building. He’d like to see more intervention with the student to reverse their negative behavior, especially if it’s reoccurring.

“Whether it’s a simple counseling, whether it’s behavior specialist, whether it’s school, psychologists or all together, the parents are thrown in and you’re brought in on that third and fourth offense where everybody’s meeting,” he said.

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# EIGHT STUDENTS HONORED IN DIGITAL INTERACTIVE MAPPING NATIONAL CONTEST



BY JAREK RUTZ

Eight First State students have been recognized for their excellence in a national interactive mapping contest. The [Esri's 2024 ArcGIS webapp competition](#) challenges students to create and share interactive mapping projects using ESRI ArcGIS software. First Staters created digital storymaps that explore some aspect of life in Delaware. Click on the project names below to view the maps.

Here's who placed this year:

## High School

- 1st Place: Chanel Beck of Brandywine High School: [The Delaware Indians: The First People of the First State](#)
- 2nd place: Natalie Lewis of Caesar Rodney High School: [Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad](#)
- 3rd place: Levi Levine of Brandywine High School: [Horseshoe Crabs: Delaware's Most Helpful Living Fossil](#)
- 4th place: Hudson Dooley of Charter School of Wilmington: [Understanding State Immigration and Refugees](#)
- 5th place: Caleb Comley and Alexander Bovell of Charter School of Wilmington: [Educational Attainment in Wilmington](#)

## Middle School

- 1st place: Eric Lewis, a home school student: [The duPont Family in Delaware](#)
- 2nd place: Katia Smith of Christiana Honors Academy: [Seaside Wonders](#)
- 3rd place: Natalia Smith of Christiana Honors Academy: [The Inside Scoop: The Ice Cream Shops of Delaware](#)

Honorable mentions were given to Parker Cuff of Odyssey Charter School for [Where There is a Need, There is a Lion](#) and Elliot Warburton and Rita Nyamikah of AI duPont HS for Evolution of AI duPont Feeder Pattern (link not available).





# Sports

photo credit: Delaware 302 Sports

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BY JAREK RUTZ

Although she doesn't watch golf at all and can't name a favorite player, the passion of playing the sport and the skills she's developed over the past decade has opened the doors to a professional career for one recent University of Delaware graduate.

Christina Carroll, a graduate of the William Penn High School in Colonial School District and who just earned her degree from UD in electrical engineering, will compete this for a bid into two **Ladies Professional Golf Association** (LPGA) events. The LPGA is the primary professional golf league for women golfers in America.

## UD GRAD CHRISTINA CARROLL TAKES HER SHOT FOR LPGA BIDS

"I just graduated this spring and my goal is to play golf full time now," Carroll said. "Engineering is kind of like a backup plan, but it's something that I love doing, especially doing undergraduate research since I was a sophomore."

She said her passion for the green and for engineering made it hard to pick which to pursue. "But my love of golf of course took over, and this is why I've wanted since I was like 13, to play pro," she said.

Tuesday and Wednesday, Carroll will face off against 11 other golfers from across the country in the **John Shippen Women's Invitational**, an event in its fourth year that welcomes top professional and amateur Black female golfers to compete. The 36-hole event will take place at **Blythefield Country Club** in Grand Rapids, MI.

Whoever wins the two-day competition earns exemptions into the **Meijer LPGA Classic by Simply Give** June 13–16 at the Blythefield Country Club in Belmont, MI, as well as the **Dow Championship**, scheduled for June 27–30 at the **Midland Country Club** in Midland, MI.

"The only way that I'll be able to get into these events is if I do a qualifier like the one this week," Carroll said.

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# RILEY'S EARLY GOAL LIFTS CAVALIERS TO SOCCER STATE TITLE

BY JOE SINGLES

The Division I girls' soccer championship was played June 1 at Cape Henlopen High School between cross town rivals Middletown Cavaliers and the Appoquinimink Jaguars.

The Cavalier squad came into the contest touting a 17-0 record while the Jaguars had an impressive season as well with a 13-2-1 record.

On an afternoon that would make the weather in Southern California jealous, Gabby Riley, the U of D recruit and probable player of the year, made her presence felt early. Three minutes into the contest Riley found herself at the edge of the 18-yard box with just the Jaguar keeper to beat. Keeping her composure, she

chipped the ball over top of a charging Emerson Brooks for the first and only goal of the first half. The Jaguar squad secured a number of corner kicks but no legitimate scoring chances.

Different half, same story in the second as the Jaguars' inability to maintain possession haunted them throughout the half. The Cavaliers continued to dominate the middle of the field forcing the opposing team's midfield to play the ball backwards only to see it booted forward right back to the Cavalier defense keeping the Jaguars on their heels for most of the 40 minutes.

Cavalier forwards Lily Holcroft and Flannery Grimm did an excellent job of keeping the Jaguar defenders on

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their guard when the ball was played up to them, giving their team time to make runs and then distribute the ball to teammates down the sidelines.

Riley's goal proved to be the game winner despite being scored in the first three minutes of the game, capping off an undefeated season for the Middletown Cavaliers and giving them the 2024 Division 1 girls' soccer state championship.





# SALESIANUM WINS FOURTH STRAIGHT BOYS' LACROSSE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The No. 1 Salesianum Sals hosted the No. 2 Cape Henlopen Vikings June 1 in the boys' lacrosse state championship at Delaware Military Academy's Fusco Stadium. These two teams are very familiar with each other and have faced off in many state championships over the last few years.

The Sals jumped out to an early 7-2 first quarter lead and never looked back. They went on to outscore the Vikings 16-6 to win their fourth consecutive state championship. Salesianum went undefeated in state, but

had a few losses to nationally ranked out-of-state teams.

Sallies was led by Elliot Dotson and Carson Robins who scored four goals apiece. Cape Henlopen was led by Jacob Schell and Burke Healy who scored two goals apiece.

These two teams have met the last four years straight with Sallies coming away victorious in all four. Cape hasn't won a state championship since 2019.



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