



## FROM THE EDITOR

A celebration of community journalism, **B2**



## INCLUSIVE LEARNING

Supporting deaf, hard of hearing students, **B5**

# TURTLE TIMES

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## DDTwo adds PLC Wednesdays, 2 recesses

BY MADDIE JAMES,  
MIRANDA MONTERO,  
TRIBBLE PHILLIPS  
and JAINA THOMAS  
*Turtle Times*

Dorchester District Two (DD2) administrators and staff continually seek ways to improve student and teacher wellbeing. They intro-

duced two new 2024-2025 school year changes to help students and teachers stay focused, healthy, and ready to learn.

Starting this year, all DD2 elementary schools have implemented Professional Learning Committee (PLC) Wednesdays and added an extra daily recess to improve teaching and student learn-

ing.

Every Wednesday, students are dismissed early at 1:45 p.m., giving teachers an hour for meetings and planning before their contract hours end at 2:45 p.m. During this time, teachers meet in groups to share ideas, plan lessons and find better ways to support students.

"When teachers work as a team,

they can come up with new ways to help students succeed," said Carey Ball-Hodge, the assistant director of elementary education for DD2. "PLC Wednesdays give teachers the extra time they need to do this."

Another big change this year is the addition of two daily recesses. Instead of one longer break,

students have two shorter recess periods to give them more chances to move around during the day. Many students and teachers love this change and believe it helps students stay active, which can improve focus and learning in the classroom.

Please see **DD2, B9**

## Building future journalists

Each year, my fifth-grade class at Summerville Elementary School is fortunate enough to have the extraordinary opportunity to become journalists for The Turtle Times. This unique partnership with The Journal Scene allows students to enter the real world of reporting, photography and advertising while honing skills they'll carry with them for a lifetime.

Students take the reins from the first brainstorming session to the final publication. They work together to select stories that matter to their peers and community, conduct interviews, take photos and create advertisements for local businesses. Deadlines come fast, teamwork is essential, and creativity is at the heart.

The transformation is incredible to watch. What begins as rough ideas and notes blossoms into thoughtful news articles, engaging biographies and eye-catching ads. These young journalists experience how their school lessons — writing, editing and critical thinking — connect to real-world careers. They learn to take ownership of their work, solve problems and create something they can be proud of.

In my seventh year of leading this project, I am continually inspired by how each group of students rises to the challenge. This year, their passion and determination have stood out, making this edition of The Turtle Times a true labor of learning and creativity.

As you read through this year's publication, I hope you'll see more than just stories and pictures. You'll see the hard work, collaboration and growth of students who embraced this opportunity and made it their own.



**Sarah Cooke**

## SES Media Center is more than just books



TURTLE TIMES STAFF

The Summerville Elementary School (SES) media center is more than just a place to check out books. It's where students can learn to use technology, have fun and even take on leadership roles.

BY WYNNE BEAUCHENE,  
JACKSON KENNEDY,  
COLLINS RAILA  
and SAM SUMMERS  
*Turtle Times*

The Summerville Elementary School (SES) media center is more than just a place to check

out books. It's where students can learn to use technology, have fun and even take on leadership roles. Sandy Conroy, the media specialist, and her assistant, Darlene Reeser, work hard to make sure the library has books that students enjoy. But keeping up with all the latest

trends can be tricky.

"It seems like I can never get enough Dog Man books," Conroy said.

One fun program the media center offers is the school news show. Former principal Katie Barker worked with Conroy to create the news show, ensuring

it's only five minutes long but still packed with important information. Conroy also decided to involve fifth graders in the morning news. This allows younger students to look up to them while allowing the fifth

Please see **MEDIA, B9**



## Making a difference as a school counselor

BY AVERIE BLAZE,  
JEREMIAH GODFREY,  
GRIFFITH GREINER  
and CARLIE ROMEO  
*Turtle Times*

Shannon Loughran, the new school counselor at Summerville Elementary School (SES), loves helping students succeed.

Before becoming a counselor, Loughran taught for six years in third, fourth and fifth grades. After the pandemic, she decided to become a counselor because she wanted to make a bigger impact on

her students' emotional well-being. She realized her students needed more help with things like coping skills, and as a teacher, she couldn't provide all the support she felt they needed.

"I don't like being strict," Loughran said. "I like being nice and a safe person."

She teaches important lessons on how to manage your feelings and talk to someone when you're upset.

"I get to create fun lessons that help teach life lessons," she said.

Please see **COUNSELOR, B9**

Before becoming a counselor, Shannon Loughran taught for six years in third, fourth and fifth grades. After the pandemic, she decided to become a counselor because she wanted to make a bigger impact on her students' emotional well-being.

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