



**Principal Robin Davenport, former Creeds student**



**School staff and former students, top to bottom: Jo Ann Stutzman, Sally Davis, Sharon Arnold**



# It's all in the family at Creeds Elementary



**Teresa Gregory, school staff and former student**

## the school

Creeds serves 285 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The attendance zone encompasses parts or all of Blackwater, Creeds, Knotts Island and Pungo.

## the 'family' tree

Take a look at the numerous connections within the Creeds school family. *Chart, Page 8*

*After 68 years, rural Beach community still revolves around school*

By Lauren Roth  
*The Virginian-Pilot*

**VIRGINIA BEACH**  
**N**EARLY 50 YEARS AGO, Robin Davenport was an eager first-grader at Creeds Elementary School.

Then, many of the students and staff lived in the same rural neighborhoods and attended the same churches. The principal's husband ran one of the area's few gas stations, and probably

repaired the Davenport cars.

Not a lot has changed. The closest full-service restaurant is still a 20-minute drive from the school. Active farms and fruit stands still dot the roads.

And Robin Davenport continues to hang around the school. He's the principal.

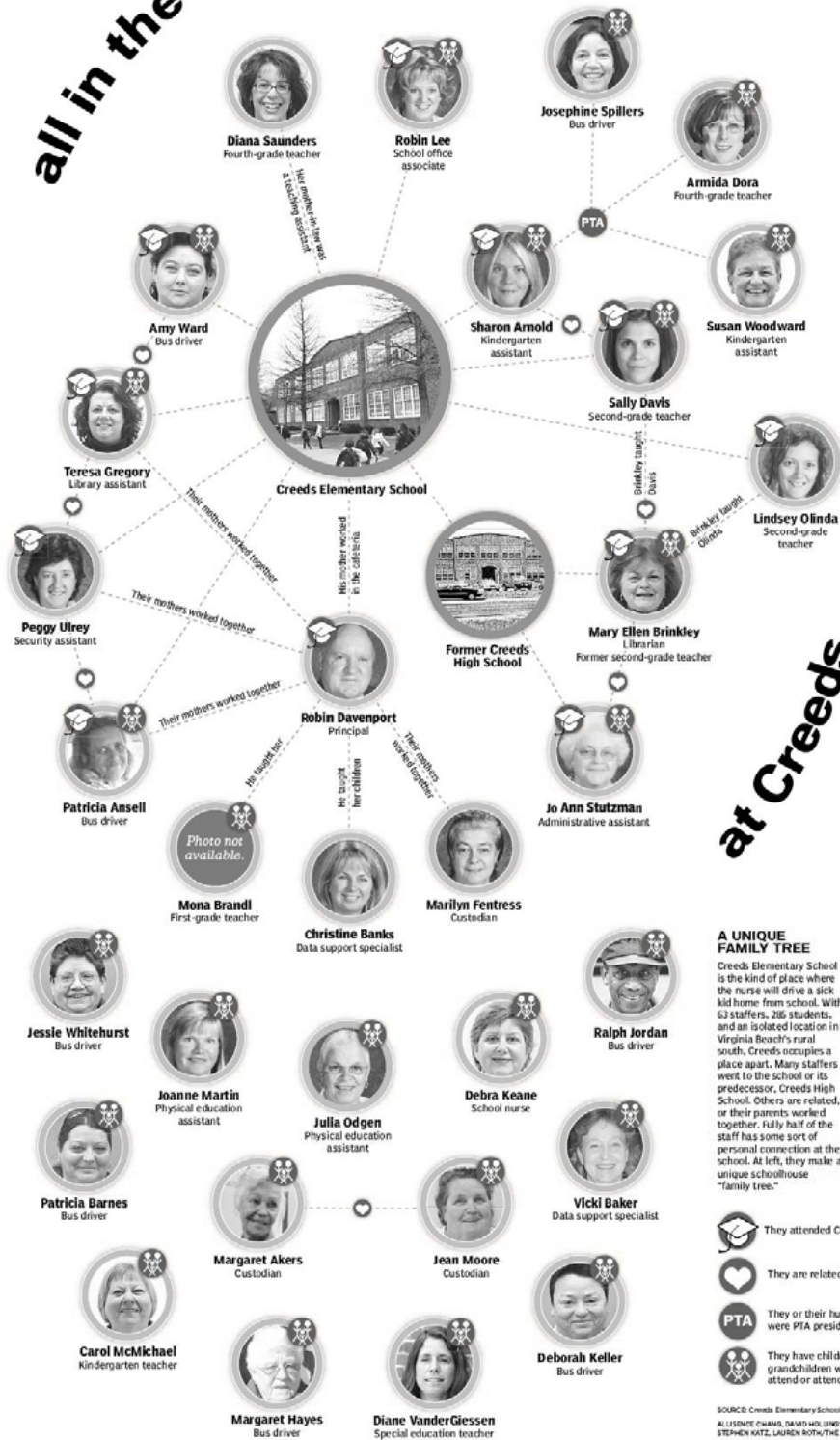
In a city where thousands of residents come and go each year, the 68-year-old school is a constant, isolated from traffic and commerce farther north.

The city's smallest elementary school is so far south, it's closer to the North Carolina border than to Pungo. With a little traffic, it can easily take an hour to drive to the school from the Beach's Town Center.

Every child rides the bus or is driven by a parent. And it's not uncommon for the school nurse to take a sick child home.

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# all in the family



# at Creeds

## A UNIQUE FAMILY TREE

Creeds Elementary School is the kind of place where the nurse will drive a sick kid home from school. With 63 staffers, 256 students, and an isolated location in Virginia Beach's rural south, Creeds occupies a place apart. Many staffers went to the school or its predecessor, Creeds High School. Others are related, or their parents worked together. Fully half of the staff has some sort of personal connection at the school. At left, they make a unique schoolhouse "family tree."

- They attended Creeds.
- They are related.
- They or their husbands were PTA president.
- They have children or grandchildren who attend or attended Creeds.

SOURCE: Creeds Elementary School  
ALLISANCE CHANG, DAVID HOLLINGSWORTH,  
STEPHEN KATZ, LAUREN ROTH/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT



## CREEDS ELEMENTARY

# SCHOOL HAS DEEP ROOTS IN COMMUNITY

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Creeds is one of the most stable elementary schools in the city. Only a few dozen students come and go each year. This year, the closure of Norfolk's Ford plant hit home, Davenport said. Several of the students, whose families had moved to the Creeds community to live in the country, moved away. Among the school's 63 staffers, Davenport says, at least one-third live within the vast Creeds attendance zone, which encompasses parts or all of Blackwater, Creeds, Knotts

Island and Pungo. Half of the school's employees have other ties to the school. Many of them, their children or their grandchildren have gone there. "It just goes from the next generation to the next," said Davenport, who grew up on farmland 10 minutes from the school. "Sometimes, that'll stop. But it won't happen in my lifetime or probably the next." When her son enrolled in the late 1950s, Bessie Davenport began volunteering at the school. The next year, she got a job in the cafeteria.

"It just goes from the next generation to the next."

Robin Davenport, Creeds Elementary School principal

Robin Davenport, who recently learned that his mother's volunteer efforts landed her that job, said that over the past decade, he has hired many volunteer parents. "You get to know these people," he said. "You know what they're capable of. You know

their work ethic." His mother eventually rose to the position of cafeteria manager. Though she is 88 and has long since retired, she still has colleagues at the school. When Davenport attended the school, it served grades 1 to 7. He went straight from Creeds to Kellam High School. Now Creeds serves kindergarten through fifth grade. The school remains small, with only 285 students enrolled during the school year. Birdneck Elementary, the city's largest, had about 1,000 this year.

The school has deep roots. Creeds opened as one of Princess Anne County's high schools in 1939. In 1954, it became an elementary school. Six years ago, contractors renovated the building, and now the school's library shares a wall and a door with a branch of the public library. Through mid-August, the school library will host reading nights every Wednesday. "It's such a family," Davenport said. A "friendly school."

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