



# SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES

December 2, 2022

Welcome to December! At the end of the day two weeks from today - December 16 - we start our Holiday break.

Bond work continues. Work on the new elementary school on the west side of the district is proceeding. Crestwood Elementary work continues as we work to add classroom space and a gym. The new secure athletic entrance at the high school with additional team rooms for swimming is moving along. Plans will be presented to the Board of Education in the new year to add space at North Rockford Middle School.

We have multiple concerts this month. There is a high school orchestra concert on December 6 at 7:00 PM. There is a high school choir concert on December 7 at 7:00 PM. There is a high school band concert on December 12 at 7:00 PM. In addition, the Collage Concert with high school band, orchestra, and choir students will take place December 14 and 15. Collage tickets are available at [www.rocktix.org](http://www.rocktix.org). I was able this week to see concerts from several of our elementary schools.

In addition, our winter sports season is underway. Be sure to check out our high school teams. Schedules can be found on our district website.

This week was one year since the tragic shootings at Oxford High School in Oxford, MI. Here in Rockford we continue to prioritize safety in our school district. As you are aware, we have added a second school resource officer in our district. Pam Vredevoogd has started, is assigned to North Rockford Middle School and works closely with the schools within the city limits of Rockford – Parkside, Valley View and the River Valley Academy. Her influence will be felt throughout the district as well as all elementary schools as the DARE officer. In addition, we will add on January 1, 2023, a new school resource officer from Kent County. This officer will be located at East Middle School but will work closely with Lakes, Meadow Ridge, and Cannonsburg Elementary schools.

In addition, we completed a safety audit with Secure Education Consultants - SEC. This audit reviewed our practice and our secure environments.

An important consideration when talking about school safety is ensuring that our students are meaningfully engaged in our schools. When students are meaningfully engaged school safety improves. Our staff - teachers, principals, lunch staff, bus drivers, child care workers, secretaries, school administrators - take the time to see your children. Rockford Public School staff notice the uniqueness of your children. Rockford Public School staff see the goodness in your students. The grace that your students have in times of difficulty. The sadness that your students have when they navigate the trials and tribulations of being 5 or 13 or 17. The joy your students experience in being and finding themselves.

In schools it is easy to get caught up in budgets, construction projects, enrollment, and test scores. But, while those are important, those things are not the most crucial part of our educational system. What is really important is the confidence that you should have that when you send your son or daughter to one of the Rockford Public School District schools that your children will be valued, challenged, supported, seen, and honored. And in doing so we prepare you child for success now and in the future.

We care deeply about the children who come to our schools every day and in doing so our schools are safer because of it.

As always, say hello when you see me in our schools or around town. I hope you have a great weekend of holiday fun!

Steve

Dr. Steve Matthews  
Superintendent  
Rockford Public Schools