



# SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES

August 15, 2023

## Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year!

My name is Dr. Steve Matthews. I am the Superintendent of the Rockford Public Schools.

Today, August 15, we welcomed back our professional staff and held a welcome back event for all staff. Staff then continued meeting to finalize plans for the upcoming school year. We have been working hard since school ended in June to get ready for the first day of school next week.

All of us who work for the district are excited to begin school on Monday, August 21.

I will regularly - at least twice a month - email parents with district news. If there is breaking news, like a water main break or power outage or a snow day, you may receive several emails and mine will probably be one of them. My goal is to ensure that you have information about the district, our schools, and our programs.

If you have a question or concern, the first place to go would be the person closest to the situation. For example, if you have a concern about something that happens in a classroom, the best person to talk with would be the teacher. You could start with the principal, but my guess is they will ask if you have spoken to the teacher. If you have a question about an athletic team or a club or extra-curricular activity, the best person to talk with would be the coach or the club/activity sponsor. If you come directly to me, I will probably say that I need to speak with the principal or director to get more information.

However, questions may arise about district practices or policies. You may contact me with those questions. I may have one of the Assistant Superintendents, department directors, or principals respond back because they might have more information than I would about the issue. However, emailing me or contacting my office is certainly appropriate when you have a question or concern.

As we approach the start of the new school year, I would encourage you to talk with your children about the new school year. Talk about routines - when they will be getting up, when and where will they do homework, when will they go to bed, where will they catch the bus, what will happen at the end of the school day. Listen to them as they ask questions about the start of the school year. Children may have questions about riding the bus, getting their lunch, what to do if they can't open their locker, what to do if they lose something, and so on.

As a parent, I know from experience that I wanted my sons to be well-prepared. But occasionally, I could overwhelm them with information. That was not very helpful.

Listening to my sons and responding to their questions proved to be a more effective strategy.

Creating a sense of anticipation and calm is important for our students as the new school year begins. Reinforce that there are many people in each school building that will help and will answer questions. There is a fine line between being excited and being anxious. We need to try and be excited, but not anxious, for the start of the school year.

Rockford is a wonderful district. We have many things of which to be proud. I share many of the good things that I see through Instagram and the app formally known as Twitter and on the new app Threads. You can find me @docsmatthews.

I look forward to continuing the excellence of the Rockford Public Schools. I also look forward to seeing you at games and events throughout the district.

Steve

Dr. Steve Matthews  
Superintendent  
Rockford Public Schools