

RAMPAGE

WINTER 2024 | VOLUME 41 NUMBER 3



Rockford Public Schools

Quality Community – Quality Schools
Together Building a Tradition of Excellence



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RPS NEWS ALERTS

For up-to-date information regarding Rockford Public Schools delays and/or closings, events and safety alerts, send a text message of “Y” or “Yes” to our district’s short code number, **67587**.

Opt out any time by simply replying to one of our messages with “Stop”.

A MESSAGE FROM DR. MATTHEWS

In 1992, there were one million devices connected to the internet. In 2022, the number of devices connected to the internet was 14.4 billion.

In 1990, the Human Genome Project, the ultimately first successful attempt to sequence the human genome, took 13 years from 1990 – 2003. In 2022, Stanford Medicine, using an ultra-rapid DNA sequencing technology, completed the process in 7 hours and 18 minutes.

It took the airlines 68 years to hit 50 million users. It took the telephone 50 years to hit 50 million users. It took television 22 years to hit 50 million users. It took computers 14 years to hit 50 million users. It took the internet 7 years to hit 50 million users. It took Pokémon Go 19 days to hit 50 million users.

In 1900, human knowledge doubled approximately every 100 years. By 1945, human knowledge was estimated to double every 25 years. Today, it is estimated that human knowledge is doubling every 13 months.

When Google was founded in 1998 it was serving 10,000 search queries a day. Now, Google estimates that it processes over 3.5 billion searches a day. The second largest search engine after Google is YouTube.

In years past, information and knowledge were often the province of a limited group of people. To access knowledge a person frequently had to have wealth or connections. Now, information, and sometimes knowledge, is available for free if you have a phone or an internet connection. M.I.T., for example, offers all of its undergraduate and graduate course materials for free online.



Dr. Steve Matthews

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VISIT THE ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEBSITE AT WWW.ROCKFORDSCHOOLS.ORG

The Rampage is published 5 times annually by Rockford Public Schools

Why do I share all of this information with you?

How people learn is changing. How people access information is changing. How people find information is changing. How people find and use information to acquire and develop knowledge and skills is changing.

And, the Rockford Public Schools needs to keep pace.

That is why we, the Rockford Public Schools community, is engaging in a strategic planning process that will help us define the future of our school district. Our process, called RAMS – the Rockford Action Model for Success, has had 11 iterations in the last 30 years. We are currently on RAMS XI.

In November we began developing our next RAMS strategic plan – RAMS XII. We began with an online survey. In December and January, we will follow up the survey with focus groups. We will then convene a committee of students, parents, community members, and staff to analyze the information that we have gathered to identify what our community believes is our vision for the students in our district. Our vision will help craft our mission.

From there a staff committee will begin to identify goals and objectives for the next three years. If we know what our vision and mission are, where we believe and hope our students can go, then we need to identify the steps we are going to take to ensure that they get there.

In June 2024, we will present to our Board of Education the RAMS XII – our new three-year strategic plan. Over the summer we will examine the draft and in August, we will ask the Board to approve RAMS XII.

We will keep our community informed as we move along. Together, as the Rockford Public Schools community, we will continue to build a school district that prepares our students for the challenges of a changing world.

Dr. Steve Matthews,
Superintendent



Preschool Information Night

Information Night for parents interested in
learning more about the
Child Development Lab Preschool
will be held

Monday, February 5, 5:30-7:00pm
(CDL is located behind Rockford High School).

Information Night for parents interested in
learning more about
**Community Education Preschool,
Montessori, Spanish Preschool, or
Full Day Preschool**
will be held

Tuesday, February 6, 6:00-7:30pm
Administration Building, 350 N. Main Street.

For more information, please call the Child Care office.

616.863.6560

ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ROCKFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION

President..... Jarrod Folsom
Vice President..... Kelley Freridge
Secretary..... Christie Ramsey
Treasurer..... Jake Himmelspach

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Steve Matthews..... 616.863.6557
 Superintendent of Schools
Mike Ramm..... 616.863.6556
 Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Korie Wilson-Crawford..... 616.863.6554
 Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
Lisa Jacobs..... 616.863.6322
 Executive Director of Community Services
Mindy Duba..... 616.863.6326
 Executive Director of Special Services
Allison Clements..... 616.863.6555
 Executive Director of Operations and Finance

SUPPORT SERVICES

Athletics..... 616.863.6040
 Cole Andrews, Director
 Nick Davis, Assistant Athletic Director
District Literacy..... 616.863.6556
 Sharon Wells, Director
Facilities Operations (Maintenance)..... 616.863.6330
 Shawn Hayward, Director
Finance..... 616.863.6555
 Jessica Walburg, Director
Food Service..... 616.863.6037
 John Henry, Director
Information Services (Technology)..... 616.863.6332
 Robert Stull, Director
Innovation and Accountability..... 616.863.6326
 Maggie Thelen, Director
Library Services..... 616.863.6377
 Matthew Zokoe, Director
Security..... 616.863.6034
 Scott Beckman, Director
Spanish Immersion..... 616.863.6374
 Amie Santillan, Dean K-12
Special Services..... 616.863.6326
 Larinda Fase, Director of Special Programs
Transportation..... 616.863.6328
 Matt Puett, Director

Trustee..... Tricia Anderson
Trustee..... Barbara Helms
Trustee..... Nick Reichenbach

SCHOOLS

Belmont Elementary..... 616.863.6362
 Shannon Ouellette, Principal
Cannonsburg Elementary..... 616.863.6344
 Matthew Zokoe, Principal
Crestwood Elementary..... 616.863.6346
 Kyle Avink, Principal
Lakes Elementary..... 616.863.6340
 Mindy McGinn, Principal
Meadow Ridge Elementary..... 616.863.6342
 Blake Bowman, Principal
Parkside Elementary..... 616.863.6360
 Larry Watters, Principal
Roguewood Elementary..... 616.863.6374
 Teya Cotter, Principal
Valley View Elementary..... 616.863.6366
 Jeremy Karel, Principal
East Rockford Middle..... 616.863.6140
 Adam Burkholder, Principal
 Jesus Santillan, Assistant Principal
 Jennifer Domagalski, Student Activities Coordinator
North Rockford Middle..... 616.863.6300
 Lissa Weidenfeller, Principal
 Al Reickard, Assistant Principal
 Jennifer Domagalski, Student Activities Coordinator
RHS Freshman Center..... 616.863.6348
 Dr. Kelly Amshey, Principal
 Derek Dillon, Assistant Principal
Rockford High School..... 616.863.6030
 Tom Hosford, Principal
 Eric Cavalli, Associate Principal
 Ricky Clark, Assistant Principal
 Rachel DeKuiper, Assistant Principal
River Valley Academy..... 616.863.6324
 Lisa Jacobs, Principal
Rockford Virtual..... 616.863.6320
 Dr. Kelly Amshey, Principal

The Rockford School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, height, weight and marital status in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Korie Wilson-Crawford, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources, Rockford Public Schools, 350 N. Main, Rockford, Michigan 49341, Telephone 616.863.6554.

WINTER CALENDAR

JANUARY

8: School Resumes

10: Early Release, 12:30 (Gr 6-12), 1:30 (Gr DK-5)

24: Early Release, 12:30 (Gr 6-12), 1:30 (Gr DK-5)

FEBRUARY

14: Early Release, 12:30 (Gr 6-12), 1:30 (Gr DK-5)

16: 19: Mid-Winter Break (no school)

28: Early Release, 12:30 (Gr 6-12), 1:30 (Gr DK-5)

MARCH

1: Early Release, 12:30 (Gr 6-12), 1:30 (Gr DK-5)

13: Early Release, 12:30 (Gr 6-12), 1:30 (Gr DK-5)

27: Early Release, 12:30 (Gr 6-12), 1:30 (Gr DK-5)

28, 29: Spring Break (no school)

APRIL

SPRING BREAK: March 28 – April 5 (no school)

8: School Resumes

10: Early Release, 12:30 (Gr 6-12), 1:30 (Gr DK-5)

24: Early Release, 12:30 (Gr 6-12), 1:30 (Gr DK-5)

BOARD MEETINGS

Check individual Board agenda for access to Board meetings; Board agenda posted on website no later than the Friday preceding the meeting.

GARDEN CLUB SCHOLARSHIP

The Rockford Garden Club 2024 Scholarship is available to high school seniors majoring in Horticulture Studies, Landscape Architecture, Environmental Science, Conservatory Management, Organic Farming, or associated, related fields. A \$2,500 scholarship will be awarded to one student attending any college in the fall of 2024 and can be used for tuition and/or books.

Applications are available on Facebook at the Rockford Garden Club, Inc. of Michigan page or at the RHS Counseling office. Deadline is March 30, 2024.

SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION

SCHOOL CLOSINGS/DELAYS

The decision to close or delay school can be a tricky one. As a Michigan resident, you know how fickle our weather is. Just as weather systems can appear without warning, there are times when weather systems predicted to appear do not. Please keep in mind that a forecast is a prediction. Even skilled meteorologists will agree that not all watches, warnings, and advisories materialize as predicted.

School personnel carefully monitor weather forecasts and road conditions. The Rockford Public Schools district spans approximately 97 square miles. Therefore, weather and road conditions can be significantly different within our school district. Ultimately, the decision to close or delay school is made by the Superintendent of Schools, with every effort to make a decision by 5:30 am.

In summary, weather is unpredictable and district staff does their best to make reasonable and practical decisions with the safety of students as their top priority. In addition, please keep in mind that weather conditions can rapidly improve or decline from the time a decision is made in the early hours of the morning to the time school is scheduled to start. If at any time you feel it is unsafe to send your child(ren) to school due to the weather or road conditions, you are encouraged to exercise your right to keep them home with an excused absence.

EARLY DISMISSALS

Once students are in school, it is only in extreme cases the district would dismiss early due to weather, mainly due to the fact that many of our younger students could potentially go home to an empty house. However, in the rare case of an early dismissal, this will be posted on TV and the district website, and parents will be notified via the district's automated School Messenger system and/or the school phone tree.

Occasionally when road conditions deteriorate during the day, a decision is made to dismiss students up to one-half hour early to allow buses additional travel time so students arrive home at their regularly scheduled time. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your school principal or the Superintendent's Office at 616.863.6557. To receive free text information about School Closings or Delays, just send a text message of "Y" or "Yes" to 67587.

Morning closings and delays are posted on the district website and local TV/radio stations, with several stations offering notification options such as text or email alerts



Complete Your School Meal Form Today

Michigan School Meals provide quality food that fuels good education. The new state investment allows all students to eat one breakfast and one lunch for free each day of the entire school year if they choose.

Even though all meals are free for the 2023-24 school year, there are other education benefits provided to the district, individual school building, or household that require an individual student benefit (free, reduced, paid) to be determined each year.

We're asking every family to complete and submit either the School Meal Application or Education Benefits Form (formerly the Household Information Report). The information collected is used to provide additional services and benefits beyond school meals, like resources for classrooms, teachers, and children, guidance and college counselors, and health and wellness services. Summer EBT benefits are also available for eligible households. Talk to your school about which form you need.

ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2023 - 2024

Community **EDUCATION** and **PREVENTION** Series

JANUARY 11, 2024 | 6:30-8:00PM
at the Rockford High School Auditorium

Chris Herren is a former professional basketball player, a voice on the topic of substance use prevention and a wellness advocate. Since 2009, Chris has spoken to over one million students, athletes and community members, sparking honest discussions on the topics of substance use disorder and wellness. A person in long-term recovery, Chris continues to share his story nationally with a renewed focus on prevention education and challenging audiences to rethink how we look at the disease of addiction – changing the focus from the last day to the first.

ROGUEWOOD ELEMENTARY NEWS

Family Partnerships Matter at Roguewood!

Partnering with families to support our students is 100% necessary. We are proud of the many ways families are involved in helping students and staff be successful in our school, classrooms, on our fields, in the woods, in our community, and behind the scenes!



Words cannot describe all that happens in the first year of learning for our Spanish Immersion Kindergarten students. Each week families are invited in to experience **An-Hour-In-The-Life of Their Child** and it's **REMARKABLE!**



Twice monthly, families, like the Schrot family, show their love and appreciation to staff with Warm Fuzzies in the lounge.



At conferences families provide meals for our teachers! Here's the Glover girls helping out their Mom with set-up!



We especially work hard to involve positive male role models in the lives of students. In the Fall we host Donuts with Dads, a fun event celebrating positive men in the lives of kids! Everyday Roguewood has 2 dads acting as Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students). They spend the day serving in the classroom, on the playground, in our lunchroom and outside at arrival and dismissal.

ROGUEWOOD ELEMENTARY NEWS



This fall, lead parent Mike Edwardson and many other families have been busy helping turn our 7.2 acres of woods into outdoor learning areas for teachers and students. We are excited to move our learning into the great outdoors for an even more authentic and engaging environment...RogueWOODS!



Throughout the year our families support the efforts of our PTO by popping popcorn for students to enjoy after school!



Our families help students all week-long during Book Fair with selecting books and shopping!

ROCKFORD'S 19TH ANNUAL EXPO



- 120 local business showcases
- Giveaways throughout the event
- Entertainment from RPS Students

**SAVE THE
DATE
SATURDAY
MARCH 9, 2024
9am - 2pm
at Rockford High
School**



Welcome Future Rockford Rams!

Enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year opens February 15, 2024!

Children who turn five on or before December 1, 2024 are eligible to enroll for the 2024-2025 school year.



Rockford Public Schools

Quality Community – Quality Schools
Together Building a Tradition of Excellence

Developmental Kindergarten and Kindergarten
Students starting school Fall 2024:

SAVE THE DATE!

MARCH 21, 2024 | 6:30-7:30 pm

Parent / Guardian Information night at each elementary school
Edgerton Trails TBD

BOOSTER BUCKS

**Boost Our Schools... Boost Our Community
with**



ROCKFORD CASH



**Gives
Back! ^{Now} 5%**



Rockford Public Schools
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www.rockfordschools.org/booster-bucks/

CANNONSBURG ELEMENTARY NEWS



Zoo School

Did you ever wish you had a chance to go to elementary school at the zoo for a day? How about one week? Fourth-grade Cannonsburg Elementary students, led by Mrs. Arnett and Mrs. TenBrink, have taken their learning to John Ball Park Zoo to do just that. Cannonsburg students are learning about animal habitats, physical characteristics, and animal adaptations. Students also had an opportunity to learn about animal enrichment and how it mimics an animal's natural habitat. Our fourth-graders are learning about field research and applying many great learning opportunities with this partnership.



Fourth graders observing the physical characteristics of zoo animals and making observations in their field journals.



Fourth graders observing an enrichment opportunity for the penguins.



Fourth graders learning about river otters and their aquatic habitat.

CANNONSBURG ELEMENTARY NEWS

Character Presentation, Parade, & Thanksgiving Feast

Cannonsburg second graders, led by Ms. Devereaux and Mrs. Gumbs, worked hard researching a book character from their recent book study in language arts to share with our school. Students created a Thanksgiving Day float, based on their character, which they paraded through the school. The parade route ended with a reader's theater performance the students performed for family and friends. Students celebrated with their families and classmates after their performance with a Thanksgiving feast.



Second-grade students enjoying their Thanksgiving Day feast!



Second-grade students sharing their book character float in the media center.



Mrs. Pitsch's third-grade students are preparing to complete a water sample.



Students checking to see if the 100 Chinook eggs have hatched.

Salmon in the Classroom

Cannonsburg Elementary students are learning about animal life cycles in a whole new way this school year. Our third-grade classes, led by Mrs. Pitsch and Mrs. Fink, are raising Chinook salmon here at Cannonsburg through the DNR program, Salmon in the Classroom. Our third graders have precycled a large fish tank, taken daily water samples, and prepared a fish nursery for 100 Chinook salmon eggs. Students will continue to apply their science strategies to help support the salmon to the parr stage here at school. This spring, the third-graders will release the salmon into the Great Lakes waterways to continue their growth cycle. Our students are actively engaging their third-grade science standards through this amazing program here at school.



ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Honors School Board Members

FOR ANNUAL RECOGNITION MONTH

January is National Oatmeal Month.

Of course, January is also National Soup Month, National Hot Tea Month, National Slow Cooking Month, National Hobby Month, and National Mentoring Month. Almost as important, January is also National Healthy Weight Awareness Month.

Evidently, there is a lot to recognize in January.

Not to be forgotten, January is also School Board Recognition Month — a time to salute the work of our school board members and to celebrate public education.

Recognizing our Rockford Public Schools Board of Education members reflects our community's combined commitment to ensure that all children succeed.

It's an exciting and challenging time in public education. The needs in our community and our nation remain great. The opportunities are boundless, but success requires education. The members of our Board of Education recognize and are committed to ensuring that the students in our district receive an education that will prepare them to be successful today and in the future.

Our district provides services to children and young adults from birth through age 26. Our school board develops policies and makes tough decisions that help shape the future of the 7,900 students in our district.

The Board of Education bears responsibility for an annual budget of \$100 million, our capital projects bond approved in 2019, more than 1500 employees, thirteen school buildings, and three support buildings.

Our board, and the hundreds like it across the state, work to ensure that students in communities large and small receive a high-quality, robust, and challenging education. In doing so, the Board of Education guarantees that our community and our country will have knowledgeable and prepared citizens who help build thriving communities. Public education works because school boards across our state help to make decisions on school programming that reflect our community's values, culture, and circumstances.

Showing appreciation for the important work of school boards should be a year-round process, but too often we fail to recognize the dedication and hard work of these men and women who represent our community. This January, I would like to take a moment and thank our school board members.

Our community has been well served by Nick Reichenbach, Kelley Freridge, Jarrod Folsom, Jake Himmelspace, Christie Ramsey, Tricia Anderson, and Barbara Helms. Together, they serve without pay and without benefit. They serve because they have a deep commitment to the students in our district.

Members of Rockford's Board of Education would state that serving is an honor and a privilege. It is also a lot of hard work. During January, I would encourage you to thank the members of the board for their service.



Check out the progress on
our new elementary school,
EDGERTON TRAILS!

www.rockfordschools.org/elementary-schools/edgerton-trails/



Well Minded Matters

Well Minded Matters is an informational newsletter put out by

Rockford Public Schools. One thing we can count on living in Michigan

is winter! Some of us can't get enough of the cold and snow, while

others count the days until spring. Our next issue will offer advice on

how to balance the busyness and joyfulness of the season with some of

the stressors it brings. It will also include an up-close look at some of

RPS' favorite employees-our dog pack. Well Minded Matters connects

the community with resources that educate and empower in the areas of

mental health and wellness. You can check out our winter issue at

<https://www.smores.com/9k12w> or by scanning the QR code.



Rockford Public Schools

Quality Community – Quality Schools
Together Building a Tradition of Excellence



**Celebrate excellence in Rockford. Embrace a tradition of achievement and dedication.
Nominate outstanding alumni and community contributors.**

NOMINATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- Complete the top portion of the form with the nominee's full name, their address, contact information, and year of RHS graduation, if applicable.
- Select the appropriate category for your nomination.
- Include a detailed description of the achievements for the nomination. Please make sure your information is legible and complete. Add any past honors and include copies of supporting evidence like resumes, certificates, news clippings, etc.
- Include your name, address, and contact information.
- Please be thorough, as the Hall of Fame Advisory Council may not be familiar with your candidate.

Inductees will be honored in Fall 2024 and have the chance to share their experiences in Rockford classrooms.

The Hall of Fame Advisory Council will review nominations and select inductees. Nominees not selected for induction will be kept in nomination status for four years. Completed forms and supporting documentation must be received by April 15, 2024.

REF | **ROCKFORD EDUCATION
FOUNDATION**

CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS:

- Cultural/Performing Arts

A Rockford Public Schools alumna/alumnus recognized for excelling in cultural, visual, or performing arts, or for promoting cultural activities locally, statewide, nationally, or globally.

- Academic/Career Accomplishments

A Rockford Public Schools alumna/alumnus acknowledged for outstanding achievement in their profession, making a direct and significant impact. The nominee showcases unique talents and accomplishments.

- Service to Rockford Public Schools/Community

A Rockford Public Schools alumna/alumnus recognized for impactful service to Rockford Public Schools or the community, influencing lives through their leadership.

- Honorary Achievement

Recognized for outstanding contribution to education in the Rockford community. This individual has supported education through example or contributions, being a significant influence in the lives of students of all ages in Rockford. Graduating from Rockford High School is not required for this category.

Forms may be completed online at rockfordEDfoundation.org
or may be mailed/delivered to: Rockford Community Services - "Hall of Fame" RPS Administration Building,
350 N Main St, Rockford MI 49341 or emailed to ref@rockfordschools.org

ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS HALL OF FAME

2024 Nomination Form

NOMINEE INFORMATION:

First: _____ Middle: _____ Last: _____ Maiden: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (H) _____ (W) _____ (other) _____

Email: _____ Year graduated from RHS _____

Nominees for categories 1, 2, & 3 must be Rockford High School graduates who graduated before 2014.

There is no RHS graduation requirement for category 4.

RPS HALL OF FAME AWARD CATEGORY (please check only one):

_____ 1. Cultural/Performing Arts

_____ 3. Service to Rockford Public Schools/Community

_____ 2. Academic/Career Accomplishments

_____ 4. Honorary Achievement



rockfordEDfoundation.org

NOMINEE ACHIEVEMENTS/HONORS: Please attach a detailed description of the achievement(s) for which the nomination is being made. Include any past honors that the nominee has received. Include as much documentation as possible (i.e., copies of bio, news clippings, resume, etc.).

Your Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (H) _____ (W) _____ (other) _____ Email: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____

Completed form and supporting documentation must be received by April 15, 2024.



Please mail or deliver to:
Rockford Community Services @
RPS Administration Building,
350 N Main Street, Rockford MI 49341

or email to ref@rockfordschools.org.

PRESENTED BY:

REF | ROCKFORD EDUCATION
FOUNDATION



BE A REAL LIFE HERO

We invite you to be a hero for Rockford's children. Your gift has the power to change lives and create a world of possibilities for our community's youngest members.

Join us in creating hope and happiness for Rockford kids. To donate to the Rockford Education Foundation, scan the QR code below or visit rockfordEDfoundation.org/ways-to-support/.

REF | ROCKFORD EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

PO Box 777, Rockford, MI 49341
616-863-6317 | ref@rockfordschools.org
rockfordEDfoundation.org

