

STATE OF THE DISTRICT

EXPLORE RPS 205 THROUGH
STORIES AND DATA

- SEPTEMBER 2019 -

Our Vision:

BE THE FIRST CHOICE FOR ALL FAMILIES



ENROLLMENT
29,036

42 SCHOOLS

Early Childhood Centers: **4**

Elementary Schools: **21**

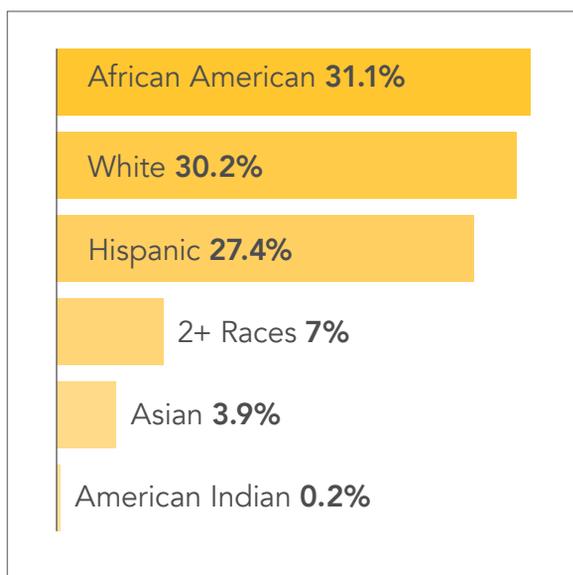
Middle Schools: **6**

High Schools: **5**

Special Program Schools: **5**

Special Education: **1**

Students: Race/Ethnicity



75 LANGUAGES SPOKEN

5 English: **20,574**

Spanish: **6,170**

Arabic: **532**

Swahili: **293**

Lao: **196**

TOP 5



Early Childhood

- Beyer Early Childhood Center
- Fairview Early Childhood Center
- Nashold Early Childhood Center
- Summerdale Early Childhood Center

Elementary Schools

- Bloom Elementary School
- Brookview Elementary School
- Carlson Elementary School
- Cherry Valley Elementary School
- Conklin Elementary School
- Constance Lane Elementary School
- Ellis Elementary School
- Froberg Elementary School
- Gregory Elementary School
- Hillman Elementary School
- Johnson Elementary School

- Lathrop Elementary School
- Lewis Lemon Elementary School
- McIntosh Elementary School
- Riverdahl Elementary School
- Rolling Green Elementary School
- Spring Creek Elementary School
- Washington Elementary School
- Welsh Elementary School
- West View Elementary School
- Whitehead Elementary School

Middle Schools

- Eisenhower Middle School
- Flinn Middle School
- Kennedy Middle School
- Lincoln Middle School
- RESA Middle School
- West Middle School

High Schools

- Auburn High School
- East High School
- Guilford High School
- Jefferson High School
- Roosevelt Community Education Center

Special Program Schools

- Gifted Academy at Thurgood Marshall Elementary
- Gifted Academy at Thurgood Marshall School
- Maria Montessori at Marsh
- STEAM Academy at Haskell
- Two-Way Language Immersion at Barbour

Special Education

- Wilson ASPIRE

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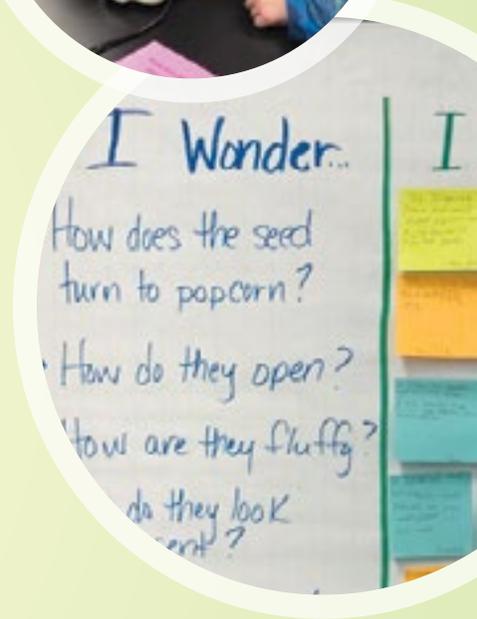
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Work for RPS 20528



“ Two years ago, I made a professional move and accepted a position as an instructional coach at a southwest Rockford neighborhood school. **I always wanted to make a difference in the lives of children in the city I love,** and this was my opportunity. ”

Making a Difference in the City I Love

For 20 years, I taught in a rural school district north of Rockford. The kids behaved, parents were involved, attendance was exceptional and class sizes were small. My students excelled on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers or PARCC. Every day my kids came to school ready to learn with more than enough resources and support from home to be successful.

Two years ago, I made a professional move and accepted a position as an instructional coach at a southwest Rockford neighborhood school. I always wanted to make a difference in the lives of children in the city I love, and this was my opportunity.

I first noticed that Rockford teachers have grit. They have the courage to deal with issues that I only experienced a handful of times. They greet every child with a hug, a smile or a fist bump. They believe children can and will learn. Rockford teachers are the hardest working teachers I have ever met. They have risen to the many challenges and have taken on several new curriculum changes. Those changes include the district's new elementary math curriculum, Integrated Literacy and the new foundational literacy program.

Through these new initiatives, we are seeing incremental success. Kindergarten foundational literacy scores took a huge jump last year. This year, our students are being exposed to more science and social studies than ever before. In math, our kids are no longer memorizing facts, but instead are learning that there is more than one way to solve a problem. We are no longer doing what we have always done and expecting a different result.

Story continued on next page

All of these changes take time. Teachers need to become familiar with the new resources, digest and perfect their craft. The needle won't move overnight. However, if people dive into the data, they will find dozens of bright spots that demonstrate the direction we are heading is the right one. We are all in the same boat, rowing in the same direction.

I am often asked, "Do you ever miss your old district and your old job?" I miss my friends, the kids and families. But I was craving a chance to make a difference in the lives of Rockford children. I feel I have.

Recently I was teaching a difficult concept to fourth graders. One boy said, "Mrs. Hand, this is too hard. I can't do this!" I looked at him and took a line from one of my favorite movies, "A League of their Own." I said, "The hard is what makes it great!" "If something is easy," I explained to him, "there is no thrill in getting there." Two days later, he stood up in class when we discussed the concept again. He yelled, "Mrs. Hand! I get it!" Then he asked, "What else can we learn that's hard?"

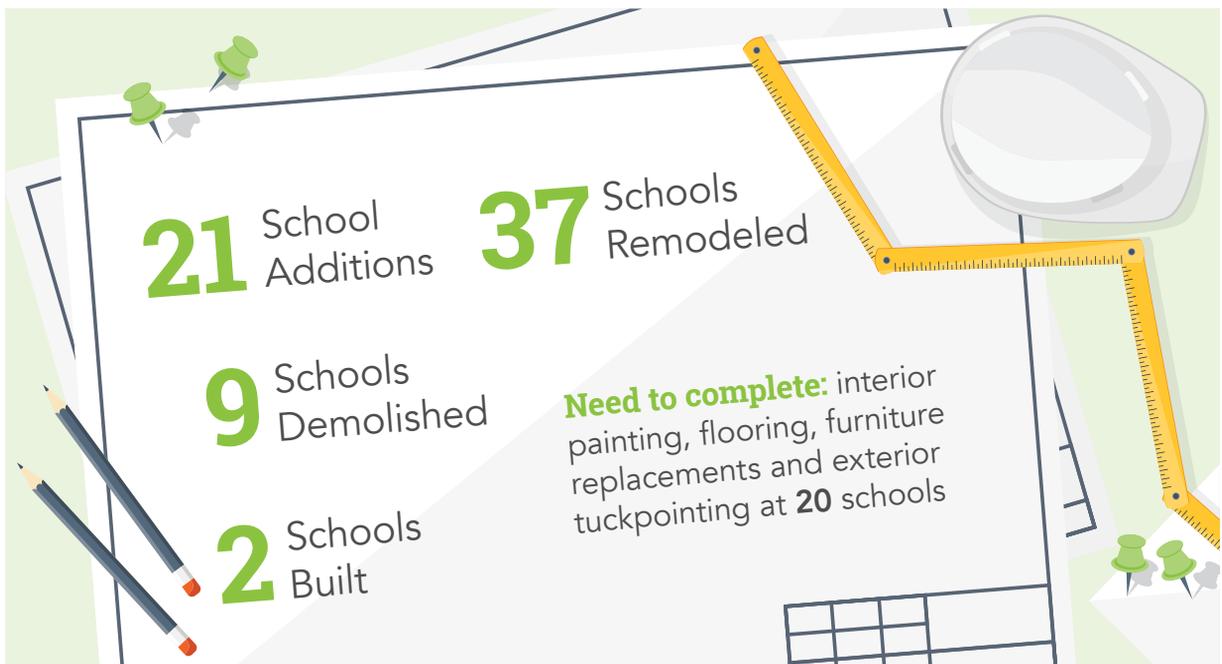
It's moments like these and many others that affirm my career change and my faith in the future of Rockford Public Schools. I invite everyone to join us in this adventure as volunteers. We cannot do it alone.

- Elizabeth Hand, Instructional Coach at Washington Elementary School

See what else people are saying on the 205 VIBE. RPS205.COM/205VIBE

Rockford Public Schools recently completed construction on two new elementary schools. These schools are part of a board-approved facilities plan to upgrade RPS 205 buildings and shrink the district's footprint. The School Board approved an updated 10-year facilities plan in August 2014.

Facilities: 10-Year Plan

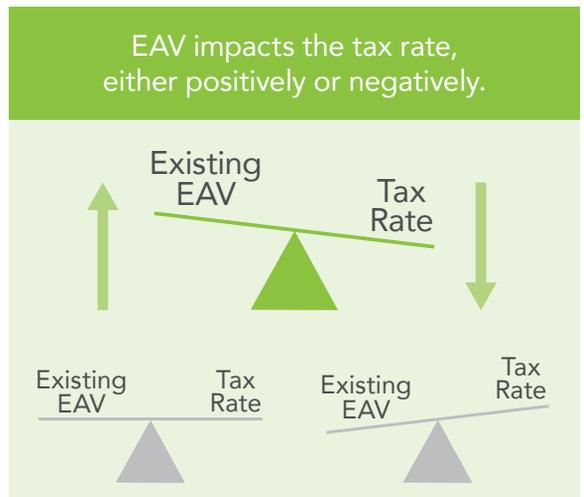
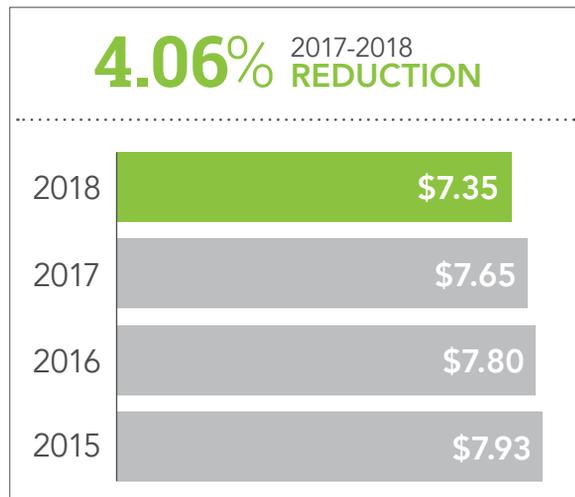


The District has held the line on taxes since 2011 by passing on the amount it could collect if it taxed to the fullest allowable amount. The total amount not collected is **\$117M** since 2011. For the 2019 tax levy, RPS 205 is foregoing an estimated **\$3.1M** in property tax to keep the tax levy flat. This includes the allowed estimated new property value of **\$6.9M** and Consumer Price Index (CPI) of **1.90%**.

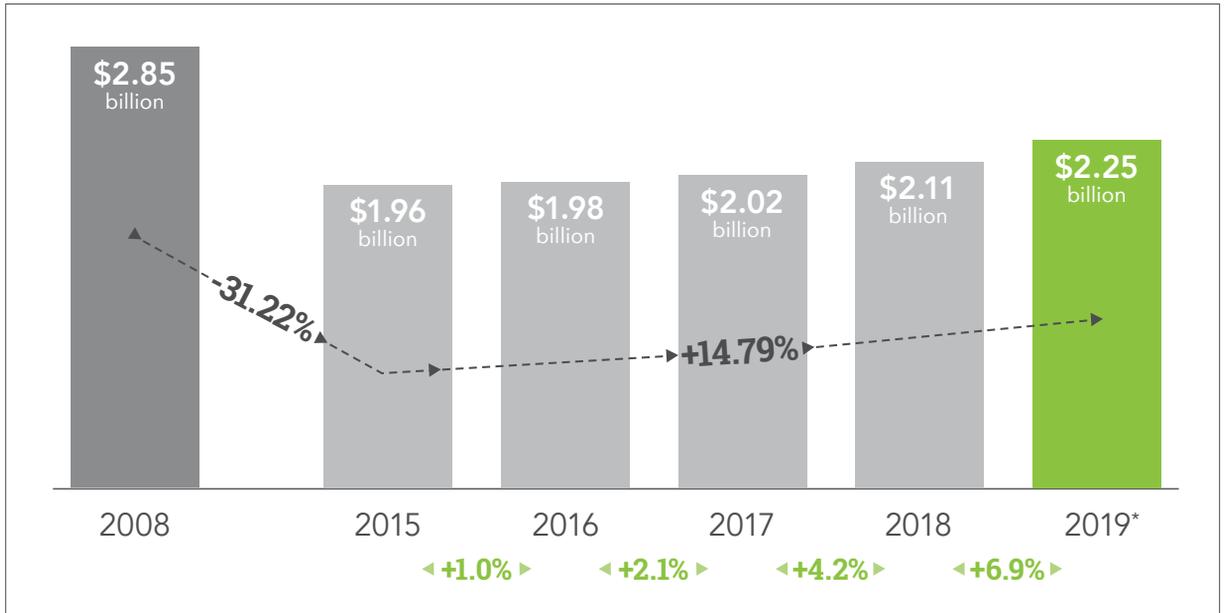
Holding the Line on Taxes



Tax Levy: RPS 205



Equalized Assessed Value (EAV)



*2019 levy information is estimated

Tax Levy: The Road to Below \$7

EAV increased more than 6% for 2019, bringing down the tax rate faster than expected. **The 2019 tax rate is anticipated to be just below \$7.**



“

My daughter's experience at Fairview has been **nothing short of perfect**. She has made great friends, learned stuff, had a blast and attended multiple dance parties.

Her teachers, Ms. Kalli and Ms. Lori, have been amazing. They are kind.

They are patient. They are everything a parent dreams their child's teacher can be. ”



Thank You, Fairview. Love, Evelyn's Dad.

Two years ago my daughter started school at Fairview Early Childhood Center. My baby girl had somehow transformed into an articulate, independent and curious human. My wife and I knew it was the perfect time to start half days at Fairview, but our brains could not convince our hearts.

She cried (we cried) the first day at drop off, but no tears have been shed since (except my wife's upon reading this). I know this will change soon, but this time on her last day leaving Fairview.

My daughter's experience at Fairview has been nothing short of perfect. She has made great friends, learned stuff, had a blast and attended multiple dance parties. Her teachers, Ms. Kalli and Ms. Lori, have been amazing. They are kind. They are patient. They are everything a parent dreams their child's teacher can be.

We will miss them, but we will always remember how important they were in my daughter's young life.

Walt Whitman talked of a "barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world," and I suppose this is mine about Fairview. A quiet thank you note slipped into a cubby hole would have been acceptable, but this is the public articulation of my full-throated love for a building, for a staff, for an administration that has taken care of my baby for two years.

I now ask, politely, when you see me sobbing in the parking lot at Carlson Elementary School in September, please give me a hug.

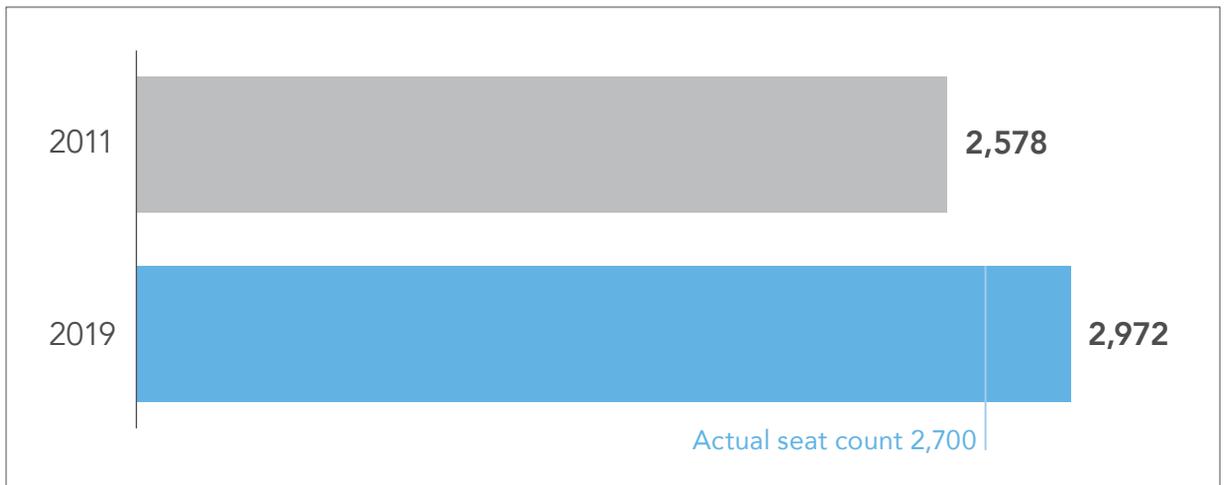
– Grant Schubert, RPS 205 parent

See what else people are saying on the 205 VIBE. RPS205.COM/205VIBE

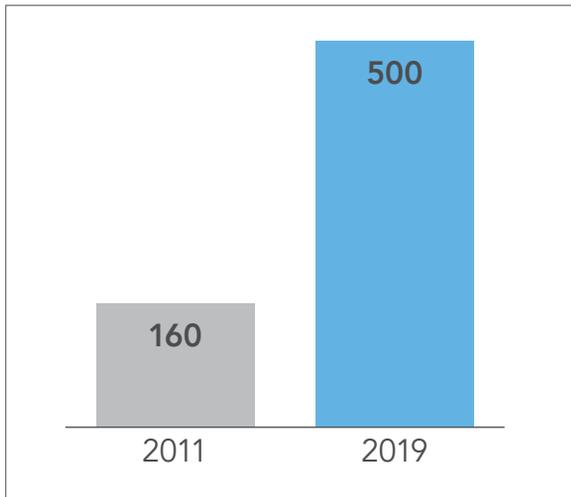
Our award-winning Early Childhood programs support the growth and development of young children and families.

The programs empower young children to become effective, enthusiastic and socially competent learners by creating a bond among children, families, school and community.

Preschool: Number of Students Served



Preschool: All-Day Seats



1,240

home visits completed
by Family Support staff
for preschool program

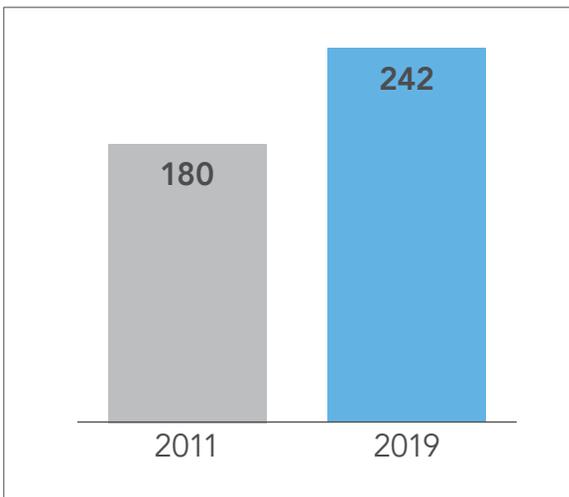


The following locations have achieved the **Gold Circle of Quality for Preschool Programming**: Beyer, Nashold, Fairview and Summerdale



The home visiting program received the **Parents as Teachers Blue Ribbon Affiliate recognition of quality** this year.

Prenatal to 3: Available Seats

A light blue house-shaped graphic with a white outline. The number "2,872" is written in a large, bold, blue font inside the house. Below the number, the text "home visits completed for prenatal to 3 program" is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

2,872
home visits completed
for prenatal to 3 program

“ The academies at RPS 205 high schools give students an advantage over those who do not have the opportunity to experience their future career in high school. Preparing early for a lifelong occupation **ensures**



a better future with greater leaders who benefit everybody in their community, nation, and even the world. ”

Academy Anatomy at RPS 205

The administration at Rockford Public Schools knows that its students have the potential to become billionaires, surgeons, entrepreneurs, or anything else they desire. Rockford Public Schools decided seven years ago to establish a system of academies in their high schools to help students focus more on the career they wish to pursue. The academies include: business, health, production and service. Each academy has multiple pathways to direct learning toward specific professions while also having mandatory pathway classes to ensure students are involved in career learning. Entering the workforce with little or no experience is a difficult move, so it helps to have guidance in your high school years so you know what you're getting yourself into.

Being a student at Jefferson High School, I personally love my business academy because the classes benefit me greatly in my pursuit for a business career. They even influenced my decision join the YMCA Intern Challenge to gain more experience. The academies help students figure out what exactly their desired employment is. For example, in the health academy, students learn about the hundreds of medical careers they can pursue through research projects, field trips to medical facilities, and by meeting professionals in the medical field. Each academy has its own way of introducing and educating students about what is available for them outside of school.

Alumni Nasay Beh, an early graduate, praised her academy: "My academy gave me classes that consisted of information about my career pathway, which gave me opportunities to learn new things and has helped prepare me for college."

The academies at RPS 205 high schools give students an advantage over those who do not have the opportunity to experience their future career in high school. Preparing early for a lifelong occupation ensures a better future with greater leaders who benefit everybody in their community, nation, and even the world.

- Callissa Franco, senior at Jefferson High School

See what else people are saying on the 205 VIBE. RPS205.COM/205VIBE

High school students benefit from small learning communities called **College and Career Academies**. Our Academies provide real-world experiences with local businesses and professionals, linking schoolwork and the workplace based on a student’s unique pathway. Within the Academies, students can choose from more than two dozen career pathways that allow students to further explore career areas of interest.



Pathways:

- Business
- Information Technology
- Graphic Arts
- Studio Arts



Pathways:

- Production
- Engineering
- Manufacturing
- Fabrication
- Skilled Trades
- Transportation Technology

STUDENTS ARE GUARANTEED FOUR WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Grade 9: Academy Expo

Grade 10: Site Visit

Grade 11: Job Shadow

Grade 12: Capstone/
Apprenticeship/Internship



Pathways:

Medical Sciences
Exercise Science
BioMed



Pathways:

Education
Public Safety

Alignment Rockford is offering an opportunity for businesses to partner with RPS 205 high schools and influence Rockford's future workforce. A couple benefits include helping academies meet industry needs and developing valuable relationships with students.

COMMITTED PATHWAY SPONSORS

- Associated Bank
- City of Rockford Fire Department
- City of Rockford Police Department
- Collins Aerospace
- Midland States Bank
- OSF HealthCare
- PCI Pharma Services
- Rockford Bell Credit Union
- Rockford University
- SwedishAmerican
- Woodward, Inc.

For more information or to become a sponsor please contact Anisha Grimmertt, Executive Director of Alignment Rockford.
anisha@alignmentrockford.com or 779.774.4389

2,290

Advanced Placement Exams
taken in 2018-19 school year

Jay Mathews Challenge Index

Three RPS 205 high schools are in the top 10% of the country for access to AP exams

Auburn ranked **489** - Top **2%**

Guilford ranked **1,648** - Top **5%**

Jefferson ranked **2,289** - Top **10%**



The Superintendent's Student Advisory Council gives high school students the opportunity to work on their leadership skills. They work collaboratively with their peers to raise awareness about the positive aspects of RPS 205, increase community service and improve collaboration between the schools, administration and the public.

15 SSAC STUDENTS

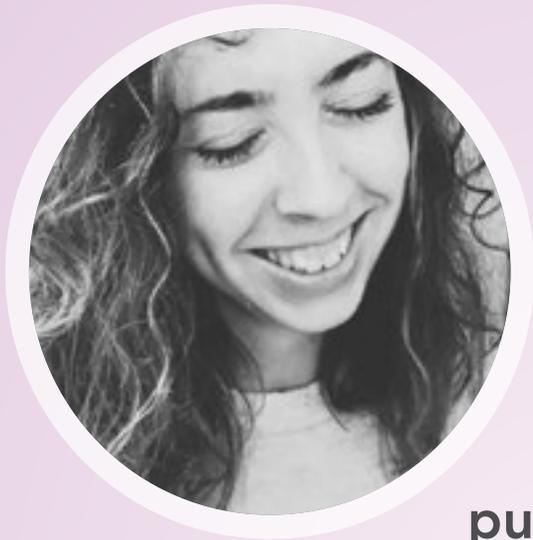
Student Ambassadors are trained in leadership skills, public relations and soft skills. This learning sets them on a path for success in their education as well as the world beyond.

138
ELEMENTARY

54
MIDDLE SCHOOL

80
HIGH SCHOOL





“

Both years of
my AP art classes
at **Guilford High School**
pushed me to experiment

with materials I wouldn't have touched
on my own...Due to the influence of these
experiences, I've begun to explore the more
conceptual view of visuals in my work. **Where**
I am at now with my craft wouldn't have
been achieved had it
not been for my time
in the art classes
in RPS 205. ”



In the Artist's Words: Guilford Alum Destiny Pelley

Both years of my AP art classes at Guilford High School pushed me to experiment with materials I wouldn't have touched on my own. I had the opportunity to use and incorporate charcoal, oil and dry pastels, colored pencils and watercolor in ways that illustrated my ideas to the viewer. With this opportunity I was presented, I found a love for pastels and charcoal. To this day I'll jump at the chance to use these forms of media whenever a moment presents itself.

When it came to the subjects I wished to recreate in my pieces, I turned to ideas which enamor my artistic interest. I've always enjoyed the natural world and its components; connecting abstract thoughts to concrete objects that we see.

My junior year portfolio focused on overt and subtle human emotions with their psychological relation to color. Sequentially, my senior portfolio highlighted the visual comparison between synthetic and organic objects. This effect was accomplished by producing artwork of said organic objects while titling the work with its correlating synthetic object. This maintained the subjective nature of the content while clarifying the piece's purpose.

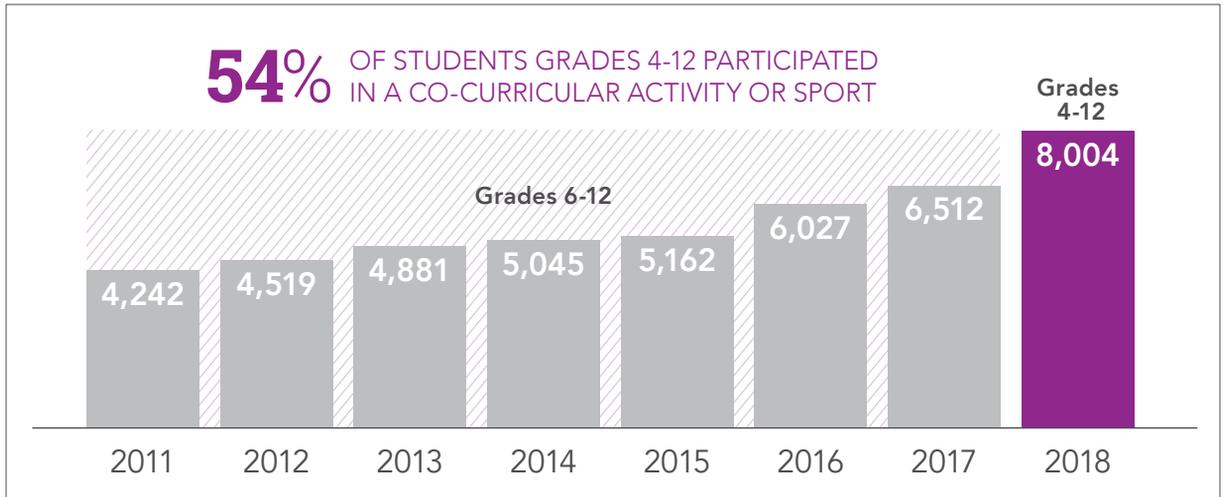
Due to the influence of these experiences, I've begun to explore the more conceptual view of visuals in my work. Where I am at now with my craft wouldn't have been achieved had it not been for my time in the art classes in RPS 205. I am grateful to have had such wonderful teachers — Mrs. Doll, Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Hammarberg — who opened the door to creativity not only for me, but many others before and after.

Destiny Pelley's artwork is on display outside the third floor board room in the RPS 205 Administration Building at 501 7th Street.

- Destiny Pelley, Guilford High School graduate

See what else people are saying on the 205 VIBE. RPS205.COM/205VIBE

Athletics: Participation Rate



Athletics: 2018-2019 IHSA & IESA State Finals



108
INDIVIDUAL
ATHLETES



10
TEAMS

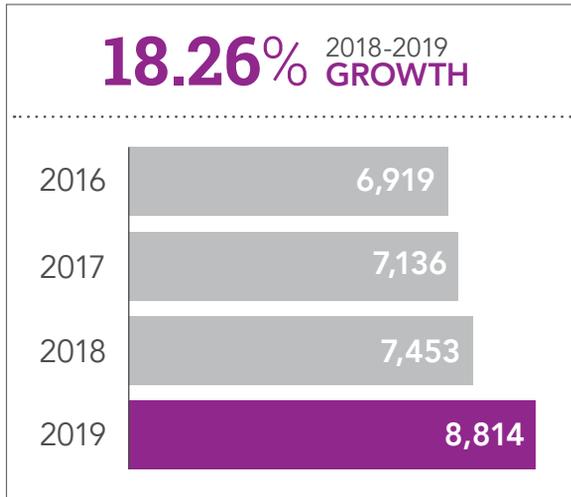


Many finished in the **top 4**.

Also, **7 state Champions**.

RPS hosted the Chicagoland Summer Showcase, a NCAA live boys basketball tournament featuring top talent across several states, brought in nearly **\$650,000** in economic activity to the region. That figure, measured by hotel stays, food and gas purchases by visitors from Illinois and eight other states, was compiled by the Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. The event also brought in **\$12,588** to support Rockford Public Schools athletics in the 2019-20 school year. Nearly 140 teams participated in the event.

Fine Arts: Participation Rate



The Rockford Fine Arts Coalition was created in 2018 by a group of Rockford Public Schools parents, employees and community members who want to **generate supplemental funding for fine arts** programs in RPS 205.

Fine Arts: Band Grandpa Program



Featured on NBC Nightly News

568,000 VIEWS

4,200+ SHARES



Fine Arts will be honored by the American Choral Directors Association **for growth and excellence in our choral music programs.**



The CAPA Concert Choir has been **invited to perform at Carnegie Hall by composer and conductor Sydney Guillaume.**



Imagine telling your friend or colleague in who graduate from Rockford Public

Rockford: At the Beginning of its Promise

Imagine telling your friend or colleague in another town that all students who graduate from Rockford Public Schools get free college. Picture the impact of that statement. Communities that have place-based scholarships have been transformed by investing in their own children. These scholarships are typically called Promise Scholarships because communities make a promise to the children who live there. Lots of things start to happen in Promise communities. Graduation rates go up. Property values go up. Crime goes down. Students who never thought about going to college are able to envision it. Students who always knew they would go to college don't have to worry about crushing debt for years afterward. Companies choose that city for relocation because they know that such a place will attract employees. Citizens looking for new homes choose the Promise community instead of the town next door. It's a snowball of transformation.

Rockford is at the beginning of its Promise. We partnered with Rock Valley College and Rockford University to fund five full scholarships in 2016, 10 scholarships in 2017 and 22 scholarships in 2018. Our ultimate vision is to make higher education free or debt-free for any student living in Rockford city limits. The funding guidelines will develop as the Promise grows.

There are several dozen Promise communities around the country, and they all operate a little bit differently based on the needs and funding in their city. For example, Kalamazoo guarantees a full ride to every graduate who is accepted to a partnering college or university. Baldwin, Mich., a much smaller town, gives students \$5,000 per year to use as they wish for further education. There are versions of Promise Scholarships in Pittsburgh and Akron, Ohio,

another town that **all students** **Schools get free college. ”**



and even the Chicago suburbs. Promise scholarships are funded in various ways including large, private donors, business partnerships and grassroots community funding.

The Promise Scholarship program does three things. No. 1: It helps young people get more education, which experts agree is important in today's rapidly advancing society. Making higher education or skills training possible for everyone shifts the culture of expectation for young people. They progress through school knowing that many options are available to them. This is reinforced by the recent creation of Career Academies in RPS 205 schools. No. 2: A Promise program raises the educational attainment level of a community, which in turn attracts businesses looking for a prepared workforce. A Harvard study found that a community's skill composition is one of the highest predictors of urban growth. No. 3: Promise programs lure residents into the Promise zone to take advantage of the scholarship – which increases tax revenue and puts emphasis on education. Promise programs are not just about the students who receive the scholarships; – they are about the community as well.

We believe this program can contribute to transforming Rockford into a first-choice community of the midwest. You can learn more at rockfordpromise.org.

- Susan Fumo, RPS 205 Executive Director of School Improvement and Fund Development Chair for Rockford Promise.

See what else people are saying on the 205 VIBE. RPS205.COM/205VIBE

Rockford Promise takes it a step further...

We believe that financial barriers are just part of the equation. In addition to full-tuition college scholarships, Rockford Promise supports scholars with robust community mentorships, strong academic advising and meaningful social connections.

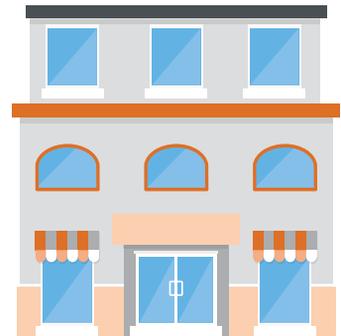
With Rockford Promise,



Every student will have a path to post-secondary education.



Potential residents will choose our community.



Businesses will move here because of the talented workforce.

\$800,000
raised to date

65 Rockford Promise Scholars

800 active volunteers & supporters

\$131.81
local economic impact for every \$1 invested

Follow our progress at rockfordpromise.org

RU Education Pathway

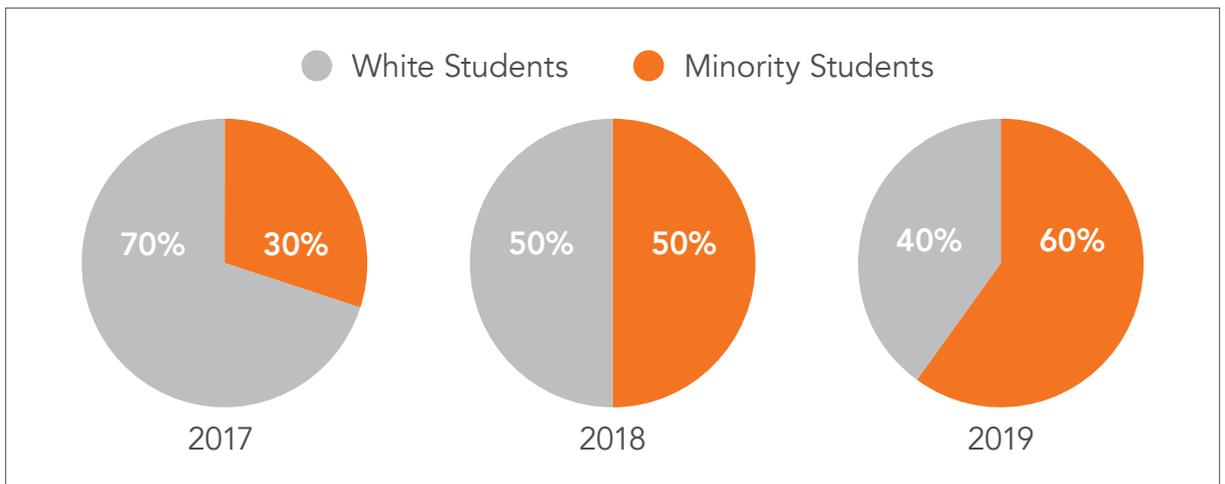
Rockford Public Schools has partnered with Rockford University to recruit teachers and build a workforce from its student body. The Education Pathway begins in middle school and continues in high school. Students then enroll in a college degree program through Rockford University. The hope is to continue the program through teacher certification and employment with RPS 205. Graduates can continue as RPS 205 teachers in a graduate program through Rockford University.

42 students in the RU Education pathway program

8 of the 42 are currently earning clinical hours in the district

1 early graduate is employed as a team resource teacher at Auburn High School

RU Education Pathway: Increase in Program Diversity



“ Every year I feel nervous, excited and terrified all at once – **but mostly excited to see my students...They’re my why for getting up every day.** This job doesn’t really feel like work. It’s hard, but I can find the good in every day. ”



Back-to-School: Haskell Principal Ready to Welcome Students Home

I'm about to start my 22nd school year in RPS 205, and my first-day insomnia kicked in more than a week ago. Every year I feel nervous, excited and terrified all at once – but mostly excited to see my students. My babes. I'm looking forward to seeing them smile and run to us on the first day of school next week to get a welcome back hug. They're my why for getting up every day. This job doesn't really feel like work. It's hard, but I can find the good in every day. In fact, all the staff can at the STEAM Academy at Haskell. We have amazing kids. We know their names, their nicknames, their middle names, their birthdays. They are my why.

There's one student this summer who made sure I took a smile home with me when I left school each day after preparing for the upcoming year. Danyll – an incoming first grader who lives across the street from Haskell with his grandma – would play outside on his trampoline, and he'd shout to me, "Bye Ms. Leathers! I love you!" I'd roll down my window to say, "I love you, too, Danyll!" I'm looking forward to seeing Danyll every day at school – not only on my way home.

For me, Haskell has always provided the right mix of community service and job. My extra time, energy and love – it all goes to Haskell kids and families. I started at Haskell as a kindergarten teacher when it was hard to find local teaching jobs. I have worked as a teacher, reading coach and now principal. I'm on my second-generation and third-generation students, and that idea gives me goosebumps. I hug parents like they're still my students, because we're one big family at Haskell.

Our district's vision resonates, because I want RPS 205 to be the first choice for all families. I want the STEAM Academy at Haskell to be a first-choice school. I want Haskell to be a place where our kids are using outside-of-the-box thinking to make the world better. I know Haskell is a place where we believe in and love our kids. Haskell is home.

- Loree Leathers, Principal at STEAM Academy at Haskell

See what else people are saying on the 205 VIBE. RPS205.COM/205VIBE

Rockford Public Schools is one of the largest school districts in Illinois and employs approximately 4,890 people. The school district is the second-largest employer in the region.

79

CILs in
the district

Curriculum Implementation Leader (CIL) actively coordinates between district curriculum leadership and teachers within their discipline and school, while fully implementing best instructional practices to execute the curriculum and improve student educational outcomes.

3

participating
Schools

Multi-Classroom Leader (MCL*) leads and provides support to grade level and or content area teams. The MCL serves as a coach to build capacity for teachers and Aspiring Teachers. This enables staff to perform for continued student achievement, engagement in the classroom, and improved classroom management.

*Adapted from opportunityculture.org; copyright Public Impact

55

New Teacher
Mentors each year

The New Teacher Mentor supports new teachers during their initial years in the profession to establish proficient practices and continually discuss adjustments for professional growth. This role will support new teachers through collaboration sessions and participation in events while collaborating with other mentors districtwide.

1

Instructional Coach
in each elementary
building

The Instructional Coach provides support to teachers and school leadership, including principals and assistant principals, as they implement the RPS 205 Curricula and Instructional Framework by guiding necessary changes to increase student engagement, improve student achievement and build teacher capacity within our schools.

Neighborhood Schools

RPS 205 believes strong neighborhood schools allow our students and families to develop a strong sense of family and community within the school and neighborhood.

Special Programs

RPS 205 offers a variety of special programs designed for unique learning opportunities to fulfill a child's educational passion and foster success in the classroom.

Creative and Performing Arts at West Middle School and Auburn High school.

CAPA is an art and arts-integrated program that gives artistically gifted and talented students intensive guidance and opportunities to pursue a lifelong engagement with the arts.

Gifted Academy at Thurgood Marshall Elementary, Thurgood Marshall School and Auburn High School.

The Gifted Academy provides a stimulating environment of enriched and accelerated content to meet the unique needs of students identified for the gifted program. The goal is to fulfill students' individual potential and positively impact society.

STEAM Academy at Haskell. This program provides integrated learning through science and technology,

interpreted through engineering and the arts, all based in mathematical elements. The program includes the FOSS™ Full Option Science System of UC Berkeley, curriculum with hands-on, deeper learning.

Maria Montessori at Marsh. Students are grouped in multi-age classrooms and encouraged to take responsibility for their own education. Students remain with the same teacher for two-to-three years and the result is a strong sense of community with self-directed learning.

Two-Way Language Immersion at Barbour. Barbour is the only kindergarten through eighth grade school where students read, write and speak in both English and Spanish. In K-first grades, students receive 90% of their daily instruction in Spanish, and instructional time in English is increased by 10% each subsequent grade.

Charter Schools

RPS 205 oversees three charter schools, which are public schools that are privately operated. They include:

Jackson Charter School (K-8)

Galapagos Rockford Charter Lower & Upper Academy (K-8)

Legacy Academy of Excellence (K-12)

Learn more about the district at
RPS205.COM

Stay tuned for the new school scorecards
coming November 2019



501 7th Street, Rockford, IL 61104
815.966.3000 | rps205.com