

COMMUNITY UPDATE

ROCHESTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

———— SUMMER 2019 EDITION ————



Focus on student well-being

RCS commits to social-emotional wellness with creation of innovative task force

Rochester Community Schools has made social-emotional wellness a critical priority for its students and staff by building on the importance of healthy personal connections as a fundamental part of education and human growth.

With the formation of a social-emotional wellness task force in February, RCS has made a commitment to take a strategic and systemic approach to better foster conditions and environments that promote mental health and well-being. The district is researching best practices to ensure our students have the tools to not only succeed academically, but socially and emotionally as well.

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Transitional kindergarten gives young students the gift of time

Kindergarten readiness encompasses more than a child's age; it also considers a child's interactions with peers, physical development, self-confidence, and other factors that may influence success inside and outside the classroom.

The launching of a new transitional kindergarten program, commonly known as "young fives," considers the educational needs and social-emotional variation among our youngest learners.

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“Literacy for every child is a moral imperative”

RCS initiatives promote joyful reading for lifelong learning

Literacy education for all RCS students remains a strategic priority for educators. A districtwide commitment to enhance reading and writing instruction ensures that all children will build their skills for a lifetime of communication, deep thinking,



self-confidence and self-expression.

“Literacy for every child is a moral imperative, but it is not enough to just teach students to read. With great care, love, and a deep commitment

to teaching and learning, we are instilling a passion in our students for acquiring knowledge,” said Debi Fragomeni, deputy superintendent for teaching and learning.

Nurturing a love of reading

Comprehensive literacy initiatives include layered, multi-tiered approaches.

◆ Reading Recovery interventionists offer

daily one-on-one lessons for first graders who are having extreme difficulty with reading and writing. These strong personal connections have resulted in successful growth and achievement.

◆ The district’s third annual Literacy Summit gathered community stakeholders to showcase how literacy can be fostered beyond the classroom walls.

◆ Pathways to lasting literacy are being nurtured through family and community partnerships, with reading scavenger hunts, take-home library books, and encouragement for good reading habits.

◆ Elementary educators are completing training through Columbia University’s Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, which provides research-based teaching tools and methods to nurture student reading, writing and inquiry.

◆ Literacy *Learning Walks* enable teachers to observe and share successful practices that impact student growth.

◆ Phonics Units of Study are introduced to

elementary students with lessons that focus on fun themes like vowel power shields, the mystery of the silent E, rascal vowel sounds, and marvelous bloopers that encourage learning through wise mistakes.

◆ A summer academy program invited young learners to enjoy a week of instructional boosts to increase literacy confidence and avoid a summer reading slide.

◆ RCS has assessed more than 6,000 elementary students to measure and chart their literacy growth, allowing teachers to tailor lessons to best meet the needs of our students.



“Literacy is an inalienable right for all people in a democratic

society,” said Early Literacy Specialist Lynn Newmyer. “RCS will preserve that right and build positive relations that are the foundation of a rich learning community.”

Bond projects remain on time and on budget

Year four of five-year RCS commitment brings school improvements

Time flies when investing in the educational future of our students! RCS is now in phase four of its five-year, \$185 million bond initiative, which ensured critical needs were addressed in every building across the district.

Many improvements were made behind the walls to enhance heating, cooling and ventilation systems, mechanical and electrical systems, and technology capabilities. Although outward enhancements may be more photo-worthy, all are critical measures to increase student and staff safety and school security, improve technology, and enrich the learning environment for RCS students.

Phases three and four affected many buildings during 2018-19. Schools that celebrated completion this year were Rochester Adams, Brooklands, Hampton, Long Meadow and McGregor. Construction continues through the summer for Delta Kelly, Hart, Meadow Brook, North Hill and phase one for Stoney Creek. The district Transportation Center will be completed in November 2019.

Extensive work at Brewster and University Hills continues through the summer of 2020. Each will have a 20,000 square-foot addition with interior renovations, enhanced security entrances, a media center with flexible furniture, playground improvements, repaved parking lots and replaced sidewalks.

The final phase of bond work will improve Reuther, Stoney Creek, Van Hoosen and the RCS administration building, with a planned completion date in 2021.

“We are proud to be good stewards of our taxpayer dollars. An investment in our schools is an investment in our greater community,” said RCS Superintendent Robert Shaner, Ph.D.



Global initiatives and cultural awareness efforts nurture students

As travelers and ambassadors, RCS explores the world



Rochester Community Schools embraces cultural diversity.

From Asia to Europe to Central America, the strategic plan ensures RCS students, family members, staff and administrators are exposed to international opportunities so they can positively impact our country, our community, and the world.

"A global education personalizes learning and encourages students to develop a meaningful awareness of the various cultures and beliefs from around the world," said Karen Gelardi, executive director of instructional practices K-12.

Each year the district presents a variety of educational travel options for middle and high-school students. Over the past several

years, RCS students visited five countries, where they actively enjoyed up-close global perspectives. Future travel plans include a trip to South Africa.

RCS teachers also continue to participate in international teaching academies and travel programs to learn about diverse educational systems and practices.

"When educators have a firsthand understanding of the subject matter they teach, they are able to deeply enhance the learning environment. Everyone is more engaged," said Gelardi.

Learning opportunities are also available at home in the greater Rochester area. Sister-school partnerships with China provide ongoing initiatives as our district

continues to host international guests annually. This summer, our families served as local ambassadors, opening their homes and sharing their communities with Chinese students.

During the school year, many of our classrooms engage in video-chat sessions and pen-pal programs, allowing students to practice language skills and connect with their cross-continental peers.

More than 55 countries are represented in schools throughout the district. In order to develop and expand cultural awareness, celebrations include international fairs and social discussions, as well as opportunities for families to share their customs and traditions with others.

Social-emotional wellness

(continued from page one)

Dr. Robert Shaner, RCS superintendent, reached out to Detroit Red Wings Announcer Ken Daniels, whose son Jamie died of an overdose, to bring awareness to the opioid crisis. During a press conference that drew more than 200 community members and print and broadcast media, Dr. Shaner was the first superintendent in Michigan to announce the initiation of a social-emotional wellness task force.

"We are disheartened by the number of opioid and suicide-related deaths our community has experienced. It's time that we talk about the importance of social-emotional wellness and cultivate a community of acceptance to remove the stigma of asking for and getting help."

Prioritizing the social-emotional wellness of our students is not a knee-jerk reaction to recent trends. Current curriculum provides wellness programs to assist students in making independent,

informed decisions concerning their physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Partnerships also provide additional awareness, training, and resources on depression, anxiety, suicide, substance abuse, healthy relationships, and coping skills.



Detroit Red Wings Announcer Ken Daniels joins Dr. Shaner to bring awareness to the opioid crisis.

Continuing the conversation, the district hosted an opioid roundtable discussion, moderated by broadcast journalist, Paula Tutman, to identify action steps that will guide the district's task force moving forward. The dialogue included congressional, judicial, and law enforcement appointees, regional celebrities, medical professionals, academic experts, victims and families. Following the event, Tutman wrote, "Not just talk ... but action." The conversation revealed the need to create better mental health

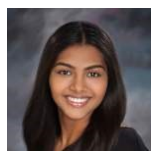
support systems in schools, enhance education, and change terminology to remove the stigma of asking for and getting help.

"We remain committed to ensuring all students have the tools to succeed in life," said Dr. Shaner. "More can be done, and we are prepared to do the work."

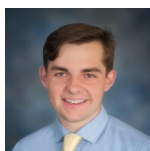
RCS Scholars of Highest Distinction

GPA of 3.9 or higher - Four or more Advanced Placement® courses - SAT composite score of 1450 or higher - or ACT composite score of 32 or higher

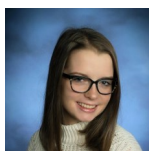
* National Merit Scholar Finalist



Zeeba Ali
Rochester
Michigan State



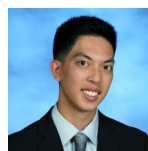
Nicholas Anason*
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



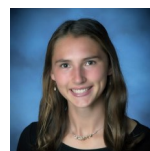
Katherine Andreshak*
Adams
Oakland Univ.



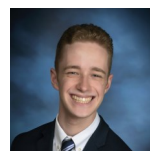
Kaitlyn Arnold
Rochester
Michigan State



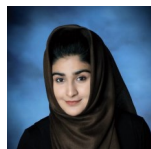
Antonio Barretto
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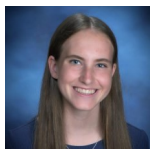
Lauren Benitez
Stoney Creek
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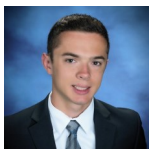
Michael Berry*
Adams
Vanderbilt Univ.



Fatima Bhatti
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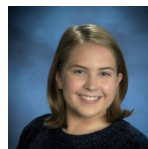
Kristen Blaty
Stoney Creek
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Andrew Blitz
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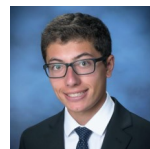
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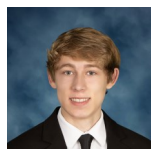
Mallory Boyd
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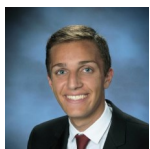
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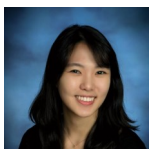
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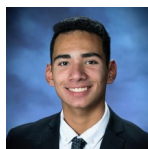
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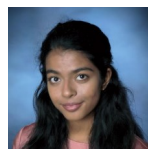
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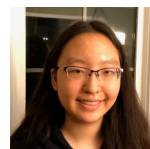
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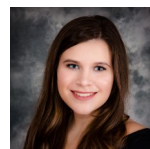
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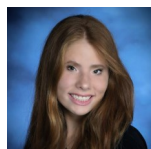
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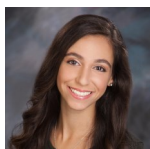
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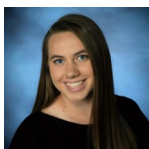
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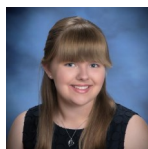
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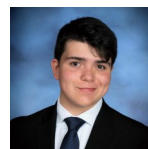
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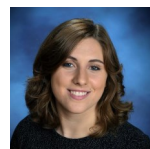
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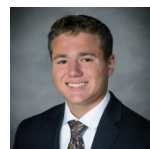
Allison Czora
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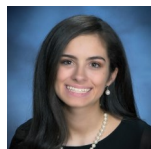
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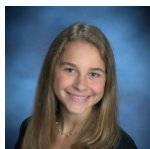
Kristin Daniel
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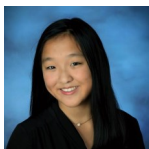
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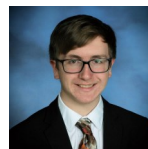
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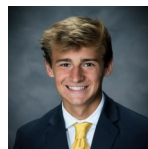
Iulia Dobrin*
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Univ. of Michigan



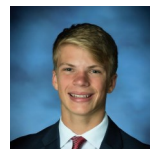
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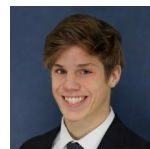
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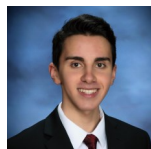
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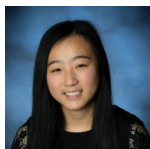
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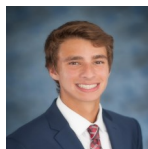
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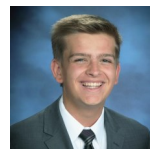
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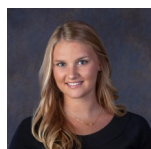
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Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



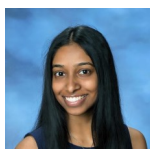
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Wyatt Gilbert
Adams
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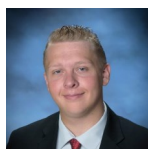
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Reema Gowda
Stoney Creek
Saint Louis Univ.



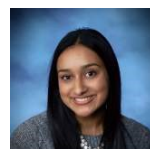
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Oakland Univ.



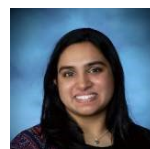
Salvatore Grupido
Stoney Creek
Oakland Univ.



Tejas Gulur
Rochester
Ohio State



Rhea Gupta*
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan

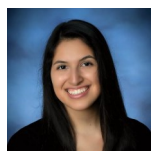


Saloni Gupta
Rochester
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RCS Scholars of Highest Distinction

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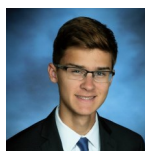
* National Merit Scholar Finalist



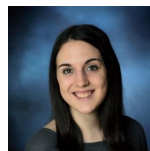
Carolina Gutierrez*
Adams
MA Inst. of Tech.



Ryan Hart
Rochester
Univ. of Detroit



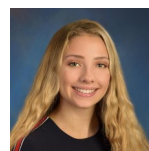
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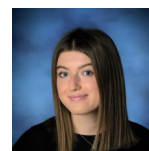
Grace Haubert
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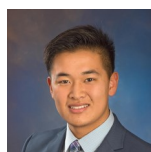
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Michigan State



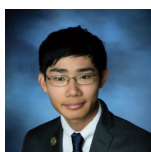
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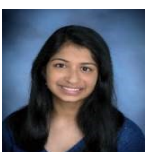
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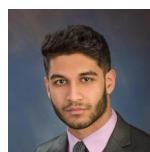
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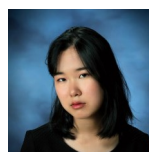
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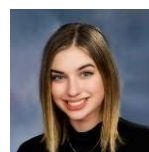
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Rochester
Univ. of Illinois



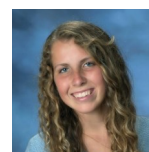
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Univ. of Michigan



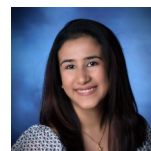
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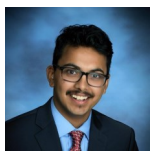
Emily Jinerson
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



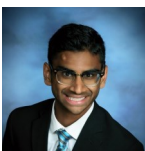
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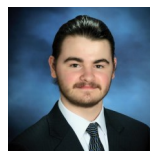
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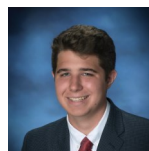
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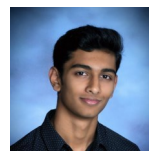
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Michigan Tech



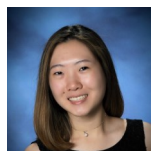
Benjamin Kesman
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



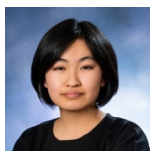
Omar Khan
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



Aditi Khare
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



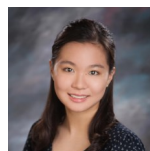
Esther Kim
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



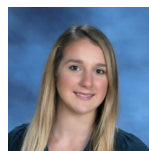
Jacqueline Kim*
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



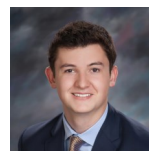
Jade Kim
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



Lois Kim
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



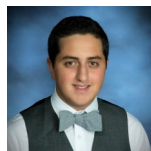
Julianna King
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



Cole Kniffen
Adams
Purdue Univ.



Nandini Kommineni
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



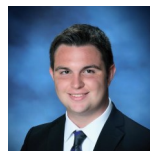
Christopher Kordyan
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



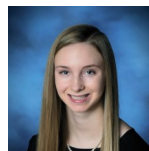
Martha Kuitula
Rochester
Rensselaer
Polytechnic Inst.



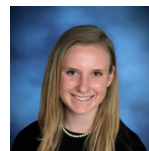
Udit Kumar*
Rochester
New York Univ.



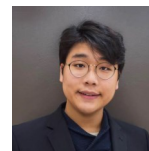
Alexander Lajoie*
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



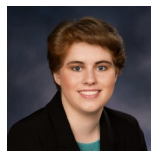
Abigail Larson
Stoney Creek
Miami Univ.



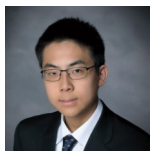
Madelyn Larson
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



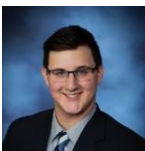
Juno Lee
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



Gemma Levine
Adams
Miami Univ.



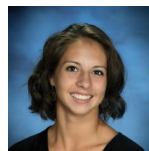
John Lin
Adams
Michigan State



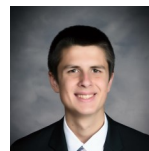
Aiden Losh
Rochester
Michigan Tech



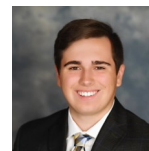
Viraj Lunani
Rochester
Undecided



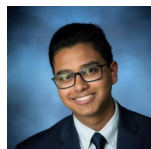
Grace MacFarland
Adams
Clemson Univ.



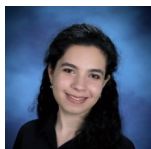
Andrew Martin
Adams
Michigan Tech



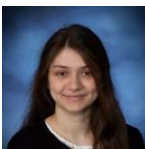
Dylan Marx
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



Ryan Mathews
Adams
St. Bonaventure Univ.



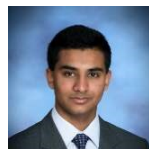
Mariana Matos
Stoney Creek
College for Creative
Studies



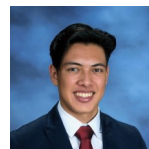
Alexandra Maxim
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



Austin McDonald
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



Vismay Mehta
Rochester
Univ. of Minnesota



Everardo Mejia
Stoney Creek
Purdue Univ.

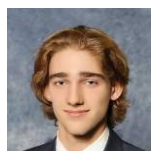


Lucien Meloche
Adams
Univ. of Michigan

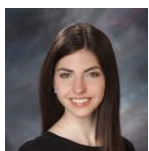
RCS Scholars of Highest Distinction

GPA of 3.9 or higher - Four or more Advanced Placement® courses - SAT composite score of 1450 or higher - or ACT composite score of 32 or higher

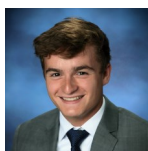
* National Merit Scholar Finalist



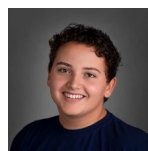
Jackson Miller
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



Julia Mleczek
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



Marcello Munaco
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



James Myers III
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



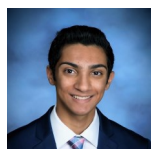
Emily Nagy
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



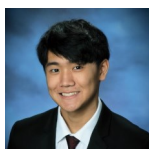
Noora Neiroukh
Rochester
Oakland Univ.



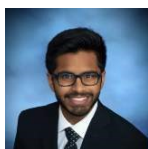
Elise Osterbrink
Rochester
Rensselaer
Polytechnic Inst.



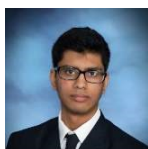
Saahil Parikh
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



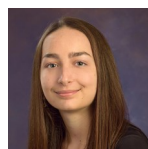
Taejung Park
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



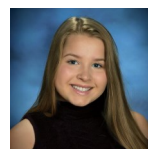
Neel A. Patel
Rochester
Wayne State



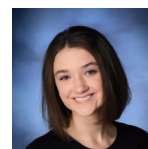
Neel M. Patel
Rochester
Michigan State



Maria Pencu
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



Danielle Phillips
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



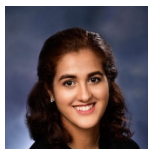
Bianca Pokrzywa
Adams
Boston Univ.



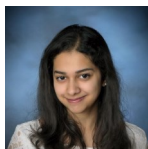
Pranav Rajaram*
Rochester
Wayne State



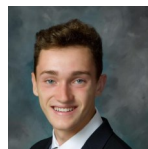
Shreeya Ramesh
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



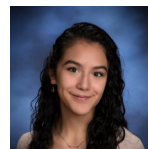
Nithya Rao
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



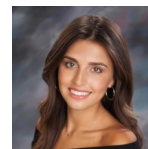
Geetanjali Rastogi*
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



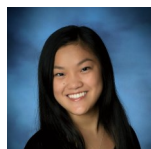
Parker Raymond
Adams
Undecided



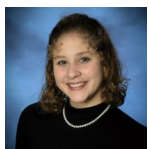
Mariana Recio-
Moreno
Adams
Oakland Univ.



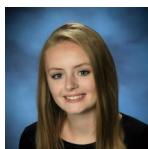
Sydney Reed
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



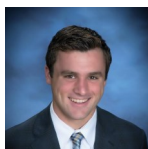
Faith Reger
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



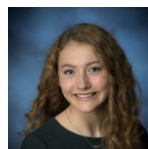
Valentina Rengifo
Adams
Univ. of Maine



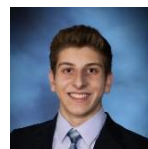
Ashley Rill
Adams
Kalamazoo College



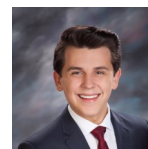
Kyle Rourke
Stoney Creek
Undecided



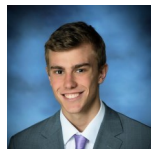
Claire Sanford
Adams
Miami Univ.



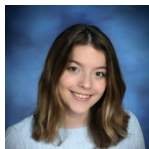
Rami Sbahi*
Rochester
Duke Univ.



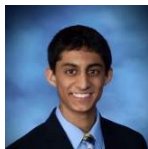
Maxwell Schein
Adams
Oakland Univ.



Jacob Schuler
Adams
Trine Univ.



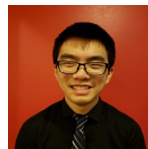
Ryan Schwartz
Stoney Creek
Oakland Univ.



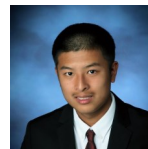
Tej Seth
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



Richard Shen
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



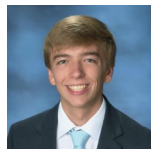
Kevin Shi*
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



Raymen Shu
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



Ishita Shukla
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



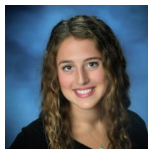
Evan Sochanski
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Univ. of Michigan



Meghan Solek
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



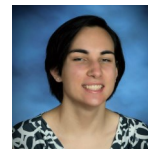
Isaac Steenson
Rochester
Michigan State



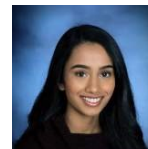
Caroline Stice
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



Erica Straus
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



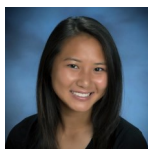
Catherine Sullivan
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



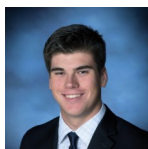
Shweta Suri*
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



Nidhi Tigadi
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



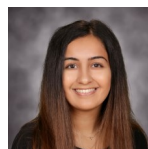
Jordan Tjhung
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



Jordan Tungate
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



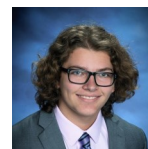
Viktor Tyberkevych
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



Juhi Valera
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



Natalie VeCasey
Rochester
Grand Valley State



Simon Vedder
Stoney Creek
Michigan State

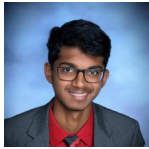
RCS Scholars of Highest Distinction

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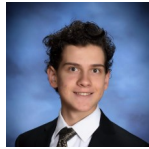
* National Merit Scholar Finalist



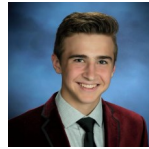
Desiree Velez
Rochester
Columbia Univ.



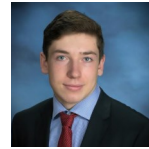
Ramana Venkatesh*
Stoney Creek
Arizona State



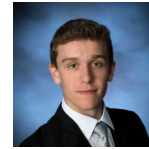
Paul Versin
Adams
Univ. of Detroit



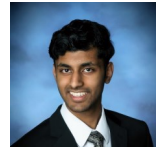
Brady Vibert
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



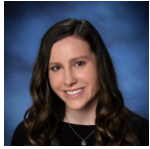
Erik Vogel
Adams
Michigan Tech



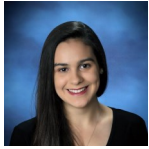
Franklin Volcic
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



Preetam Vupputuri*
Stoney Creek
Michigan State



Alexandria Waack
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



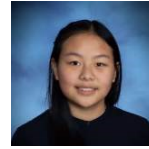
Mia Waelchli
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



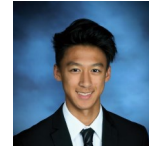
Melanie Walsh
Adams
Univ. of Pennsylvania



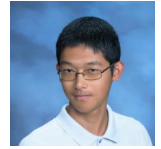
Anna Wang
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



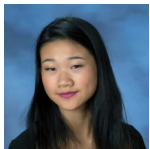
Erin Wang
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



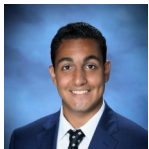
Kevin Wang
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



Kevin Wang*
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



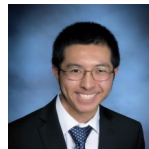
Serena Wang*
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



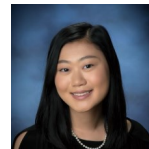
Daniel Wanis
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



Meghan Welker
Stoney Creek
Central Michigan



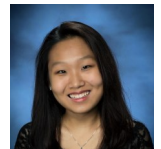
Michael Xi*
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



Elizabeth Yang*
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan



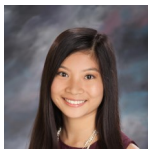
Sai Pavan Yerra
Rochester
Univ. of Michigan



Soyoung Yoon
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



Amanda Yuran*
Stoney Creek
Michigan State



Catherine Zhu
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan

Not Pictured:

Abeer Abukamil, Adams, Michigan State
Anna Gianakopoulos, Adams, Oakland Univ.
Justin Reyes, Adams, Univ. of Michigan
Aaron Zhang, Adams, Univ. of Michigan



RCS awarded districtwide accreditation

Rochester Community Schools is proud to be awarded districtwide accreditation through AdvancED, a leader in school improvement services. The accreditation is granted for a period of five years.

"Previously, only our high schools went through the accreditation process, but we wanted to ensure coherency across the district," said Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education Carrie Lawler. "It's about our children and how we can ensure they are receiving the best possible education to learn and grow."

In collaboration with the Michigan Department of Education, AdvancED uses a set of rigorous research-based standards and criteria to examine the policies, programs, practices, learning conditions, and cultural context of the organization, and to determine the organization's level of success in meeting the needs of all students.

"The improvement process is a journey. We want to learn about our strengths, but in order to ensure all children at all levels are receiving the best possible education, we also need to learn about

areas where we can improve. That's a critical part of the process," said Executive Director of Instructional Practices K-12 Karen Gelardi.

The six-member AdvancED accreditation team spent two hours at eight randomly selected schools, where they conducted 20-min. classroom assessments using the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool. "There are so many people to thank, from our support staff and teachers, to our administrators and board of education, to our community stakeholders," said Superintendent Robert Shaner, Ph.D.

"During the exit interview, the overwhelming observation from the accreditation team focused on our systemness. The observers also commented on how our staff deeply cares for all our students and how our teachers are devoted to tailoring instruction in order to connect with each and every child. Rochester Community Schools represents what's great about public education when the community is behind it and the stakeholders are involved."

Zero-tax increase building and site sinking fund proposal on Nov. ballot



Rochester Community Schools is proposing a zero-tax increase building and site sinking fund on the Nov. 5 ballot. The sinking fund will not exceed 1.5000 mills for a period of 10 years, from 2020-2029. With four existing bonds expiring in 2019 and 2020, homeowners will *not* experience an increase in their property taxes from previous years.

"In 2015 the community overwhelmingly voted to invest in our schools. Four years later, those items once identified as deferred needs are now critical needs. A sinking fund is a sustainable mechanism to ensure the district continues to have the means to repair, replace, or buy new facility and infrastructure items, enhance security, and upgrade technology," said Superintendent Robert Shaner, Ph.D.

Keeping dollars in the classroom

A building and site sinking fund enables residents to invest directly in their school system by keeping tax dollars local. The district can then make improvements on a pay-as-you-go basis, rather than paying interest on a long-term bond.

"A sinking fund provides an opportunity for schools to increase funds beyond what is allocated by state and federal sources. This enables districts to preserve money from the general fund (which has historically been the funding mechanism for school capital improvement projects not included in a bond) to support instruction, programs, and salaries," said Dana Taylor, deputy superintendent for business affairs.

More than half of Oakland County school districts have the advantage of a sinking fund.*

Protecting the community's investment

If approved by voters and levied in 2020, it is estimated that the revenue the district will collect from the building and site sinking fund will be approximately \$7,881,817 per year.

The sinking fund may be used for the construction or repair of school buildings and facilities, school security improvements, and acquiring or upgrading technology. Examples of how a district can use a sinking fund include replacing a parking lot, repairing a roof, buying a new heating, cooling or ventilation system, updating plumbing and electrical systems, and enhancing flooring.

"The 2015 bond enabled the district to fund critical infrastructure and technology enhancements and improve student safety and school security across the district. A sinking fund is an opportunity to protect that investment by offering a sustainable mechanism to support future needs," said Dr. Shaner.

Keeping the Pride in Excellence

The district's Advanced Planning Committee, comprised of local business leaders, government and community stakeholders, parents, and school representatives, met in the spring to learn about district funding mechanisms for capital outlay and other projects. The committee determined that although Rochester Community Schools maintains a balanced budget that promotes growth and supports high-quality student programs, there is currently no sustainable mechanism to repair, replace or buy new items that support critical facility and infrastructure needs.

The committee learned that a sinking fund is a way for the greater Rochester community to protect its investment in school facilities

and keep tax dollars local. This pay-as-you-go mechanism does not require the school district to borrow money or pay interest, and provides an opportunity to generate funds beyond what is allocated by state and federal sources.

After a thorough review of all available funding mechanisms and district budget assessments, the Advanced Planning Committee recommended that the Board of Education pursue a sinking fund proposal on the Nov. 5, 2019 ballot.

In June, the Board of Education of the Rochester Community School District authorized the preparation of a zero-tax increase building and site sinking fund proposal.

You are invited

The greater Rochester community is invited to learn more about the building and site sinking fund proposal and make an informed decision when voting on Nov. 5. Detailed information will be provided on the district's website at www.rochester.k12.mi.us after Sept. 3 once school begins.

*Source: Summaries and Surveys 2018-2019 (Oakland Schools)

Get news. Stay informed.

To receive district email updates about news and events, go to:

[www.rochester.k12.mi.us/pages/45803/
community-messenger-self-signup](http://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/pages/45803/community-messenger-self-signup)

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Transitional kindergarten

(continued from page one)

While some children progress with ease from preschool to kindergarten, others can benefit from an additional year of support. For the first time, Rochester Community Schools will offer transitional kindergarten during the 2019-20 school year.



The TK program follows a modified kindergarten curriculum that is play-based, has an adjusted teacher-to-student ratio, and is developmentally appropriate for less experienced learners.

Upon completion of TK, students will advance to kindergarten in 2020-21. "Early intervention for our youngest learners will set them up for success and pave a pathway for continued growth throughout their years in RCS," said Marisa Jakubiak, second-grade teacher.

"Research commonly shows that there can be differences in a child's chronological age and his or her developmental age," said Amanda McKay, Delta Kelly principal. "We are providing a bridge from preschool to kindergarten for those students who need it. We want every child to have all the necessary tools for success." This additional option to our pre-K curriculum allows parents and educators to make thoughtful decisions and shape the best academic plans for their RCS children.

Passionate about diversity in literature

Sisters and RCS students, Mena and Zena, created a non-profit organization to promote diversity in literature. Through their community fundraising efforts, they have donated books with Muslim characters to libraries and schools across the country.



The sisters have inspired community members and raised awareness about the accessibility of stories with diverse characters and content. Their success has been featured on National Public Radio, the Today show, Elle Magazine, and local television and news stations, among other media outlets.

#RCSpride



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\$5/pay

Supports the employee
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The RCS Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that works in partnership with the school district to support educational programs that are above and beyond what the district could otherwise provide.

Excellence in Education



The Rochester Community Schools Foundation, in partnership with Michele Beitelshes of the Pino Insurance Agency, presented six district educators with the esteemed Excellence in Education Award. Winners received a generous contribution to enhance educational initiatives in their classroom or program.

Congratulations to the following winners: Lisa Dimefski, Hart learning consultant; Anne Edwards, Stoney Creek learning consultant; Jeffrey Gehm, Delta Kelly teacher; Mark MacFarland, Adams social studies teacher; Rachel Mainero, Reuther instructional literacy specialist; and Whitney Marshall, Long Meadow media specialist.

Hometown Hustle



The 5K Hometown Hustle is celebrating its 15th year! This beloved community tradition and signature fundraiser for the RCS Foundation averaged 1,500 participants, sponsors and volunteers who raised \$76,000 in 2019 for the district's orchestra program. Stay tuned for some exciting changes to the 2020 race! Proceeds from the 2020 race will benefit social-emotional wellness initiatives across the district. For more information about becoming a sponsor, call (248) 726-3190.

RCS Foundation Board of Directors

Robert M. Justin, Chair; Glenn Gouldley, Vice-Chair;
Debra Hartman, Secretary; Robert Shaner, Ph.D., Treasurer;
Lori Grein, Director; Joann Beydoun, Coordinator;
Karen Schaefer, Office Secretary; Mike Bennion;
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Marlene Hemmerling; Michelle Nagy; Barb Rill; Andrea
Walker-Leidy; Michael Webber; Christine Weemhoff

Strong schools; strong community

The strong fiscal stability of Rochester Community Schools has been reaffirmed. Over the past few years, the district has aligned expenditures with available resources, delivered a balanced budget, ensured a healthy fund balance, eliminated the line of credit, and upgraded the credit rating twice, all while delivering high-quality programs for children.

The district’s credit rating increased from AA- with a positive outlook in 2016 to AA with a stable outlook in 2019. “A good credit rating is important because it demonstrates that we are less of a risk for investors. This allows us to borrow money at a lower interest rate, which is great news for our taxpayers,” said Dana Taylor, deputy superintendent of business affairs.

The upgrade reflects the district’s consistently positive operating results over the past three years, posting significant general fund surpluses and nearly doubling its available general fund balance.

“The Board of Education’s commitment to address the district’s financial needs was a major contributing factor to the improved rating,” said Taylor.

“Ensuring a healthy fund balance is critical to our success as an organization. With a new political environment, we are uncertain as to the resources that will be made

available to Michigan schools. This fund balance allows us to have some flexibility in the event of funding cuts. We are committed to a balanced and equitable spending plan,” said Matthew McDaniel, director of financial services.

In April, RCS Series II bonds, totaling \$57 million, sold at a premium in the second largest competitive sale nationwide. “Positive investor participation in the bond sale resulted in an advantageous outcome for district taxpayers,” said Taylor.

To further confirm the district’s financial success, RCS received an unmodified audit opinion, which is the highest level of assurance possible for the district’s financial statements, and was presented with the prestigious Association of School Business Officials International Meritorious Budget Award for a second consecutive year.

“The state of our schools is strong,” said Superintendent Robert Shaner, Ph.D. “Our business operations throughout the organization are focused, deliberate and strategic. We will continue to meet the needs of our students while carefully honoring our commitments to community stakeholders.

“We are fortunate that our community values education as an investment rather than an expense.”



RCS Board of Education

Did you know that the Board of Education of Rochester Community Schools is comprised entirely of volunteers? Members are elected by the community and receive no payment for their service.

With diverse educational and professional backgrounds, the board provides a solid foundation to ensure our school district remains fiscally responsible, operationally effective, and publicly accountable so our students are afforded a world-class education. Members are:

- President Kristin Bull (2020)
- Vice President Kevin Beers (2022)
- Treasurer Mike Zabat (2020)
- Secretary Barb Anness (2024)
- Trustee Michelle Bueltel (2024)
- Trustee Scott Muska (2020)
- Trustee Andrea Walker-Leidy (2024)

Budget Overview

The 2019 debt fund millage rate required to support principal, interest, abated taxes and servicing costs of previously voter-approved bond debt is 5.30 mills. The general fund budget in its broadest terms is outlined below. (Amounts are in millions.)

	2017-18 Actual	2018-19 Amended	2019-20 Proposed
Revenue	\$173.3	\$179.9	\$180.9
Expenditures	171.0	178.9	179.6
Surplus (Deficit)	2.3	1.0	1.2
Ending Fund Balance	31.3	32.2	33.5
Ending Fund Balance as a % of Expenditures	18.28%	18.02%	18.63%

Rochester Community Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, creed or ancestry, age, sex, marital status, height, weight, familial status, arrest record or physical and mental disabilities in accordance with the Elliot-Larson Civil Rights Act (ELCRA) MCL 37.2206, Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act (PWCRA), MCL 37.1206, Title II, Title VI, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendment Act of 1972, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act and the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (8U.S.C., Section 1324A Et.Seq.) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In addition, individuals will not be excluded from, or be denied, the benefits of participation in any program or activity for which the Board is responsible. Rochester Community Schools has designated the following authorities as Compliance Coordinators: Title IX, Title II and Section 504 – Students: Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, 501 W. University, Rochester, MI 48307 (248)726-3106; Equal Employment Opportunity/Section 504 for non-students: Chief Human Resource Officer, 501 W. University, Rochester, MI 48307, (248)726-3110.

**POSTAL PATRON
ROCHESTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

2019-2020 District Calendar

September

- 3 First Day of School; Full Day (6-12 and Post High);
Half Day (K-5); Professional Development PM
- 4 Full Day of School (1-12 and Post High)
Kindergarten Student Last Names A-M Only
- 5 Full Day of School (1-12 and Post High)
Kindergarten Student Last Names N-Z Only

October

- 9 & 17 Parent/Teacher Conferences (9-12)
- 10 & 16 Parent/Teacher Conferences (6-8)
- 11 Half Day for Students AM (K-12 and Post High)
Professional Development PM
- 16 PSAT/NMSQT Testing Grades 9, 10 & 11
Late Start Grade 12

November

- 1 End of 1st Quarter (6-12) and 1st Trimester (K-5)
- 4 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High)
Professional Development
- 5 No School (K-12 and Post High), Election Day
Professional Development/Records
- 12, 14, 20 Parent/Teacher Conferences (K-5)
- 26 Thanksgiving Recess Begins at End of Day
(K-12 and Post High)
- 27 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High)

December

- 2 Classes Resume
- 13 Half Day for Students AM (K-12 and Post High)
Professional Development PM
- 20 Holiday Recess begins at End of Day (K-12 and Post High)
Holiday Recess December 21, 2019 – January 5, 2020

January

- 6 Classes Resume
- 20 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High),
Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
- 22 Half Day for Students (6-12 and Post High), Exams AM
Records PM (6-12)
- 23 Half Day for Students (6-12 and Post High), Exams AM
Records PM (6-12)
- 24 Half Day for Students (6-12 and Post High), Exams AM
Records PM; End of 2nd Quarter/1st Semester (6-12)

February

- 7 Half Day for Students AM (K-5)
Professional Development PM
- 14 Midwinter Recess Begins at End of Day (K-12 & Post High)
- 17 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High)
- 18 Classes Resume

March

- 4 Parent/Teacher Conferences (6-8)
- 5 Parent/Teacher Conferences (9-12)
- 6 Half Day for Students AM (K-12 and Post High)
End of 2nd Trimester (K-5) Records and
Professional Development PM
- 17 & 19 Parent/Teacher Conferences (K-5)

April

- 2 End of 3rd Quarter (6-12 and Post High)
Spring Break Begins at End of Day (K-12 and Post High)
Spring Break April 3 – April 12, 2020
- 13 Classes Resume
- 14 Grade 10 PSAT, Grade 11 SAT,
Late Start Grades 6 & 7, PSAT Grade 8
- 15 Grade 9 PSAT, Grade 11 ACT WorkKeys,
Late Start Grades 10 & 12

May

- 8 Half Day for Students AM (K-12 and Post High)
Professional Development PM
- 22 Memorial Day Recess Begins at End of Day
(K-12 and Post High)
- 25 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High),
Memorial Day
- 26 Classes Resume

June

- 10 Half Day for Students (6-12 and Post High), Exams AM
Records PM (6-12)
- 11 Half Day for Students (6-12 and Post High), Exams AM
Records PM (6-12)
- 12 Half Day for Students (6-12 and Post High), Exams AM
Half Day for Students AM (K-5)
End of 4th Quarter/2nd Semester (6-12)/
3rd Trimester (K-5)/School Year