



Bond projects benefit every student at every school

By approving a \$185 million bond proposal, the community overwhelmingly voted to invest in the educational future of our students. Significant progress has been made as we work to enhance student safety and school security, improve technology, and address critical infrastructure needs across the district.

The bond projects are scheduled to span over a five-year period of time. We are currently entering year two.

A total of seven schools will be under construction this summer. The year one projects will be wrapping up at Hugger, Musson, and Rochester High, but those projects will overlap with the initiation of construction at Baldwin, Hamlin, West, and Rochester Adams High School.

Work behind the walls is as crucial as the work that is visible, which is evident at Hamlin and Baldwin Elementary Schools, where the HVAC systems account for nearly half of the budgets. Hamlin will also be receiving a new addition in the administrative office area to secure the main entrance.

Finishes not affected by the bond projects will continue to be replaced or repaired through the normal facility maintenance process.

Construction for the Alternative Center for Education will begin in September 2017. The current ACE building will be expanding by 30,000 square feet to accommodate ACE students and provide a dedicated space for students in the adult Special Education program and the Rochester Adult Center for Education.



Artistic rendering of Hamlin's new addition.



A message from Superintendent Robert Shaner, Ph.D.

We are fortunate to belong to a district where community members place such a high value on education. With the second year bond projects currently underway, we are pleased to announce that all construction efforts are under budget and on time. Moving forward, we will continue to focus on safety, security, and technology improvements throughout the entire organization, while remaining good stewards of all bond resources.

The financial health of our district remains strong. Our ability to accomplish the goals set by our strategic plan requires fiscal stewardship which includes maintaining a balanced budget that is sustainable, promotes growth, and maintains high quality student programs. District policy requires that we preserve a fund balance of at least 10 percent of the general fund expenditure budget. We are currently approaching a fund balance of 15 percent which better positions us for financial success.

During many of my speaking engagements, I frequently talk about how Rochester Community Schools serves as an example of what is right with public education. This year, we produced 88 Scholars of Highest Distinction, 153 Scholars of Distinction, and 156 Scholars of Achievement across all three high schools. These are impressive statistics which reflect the hard work, dedication, and partnerships of our students, staff, families, and community members.

Thank you for your continued support of the Rochester Community School District. Together, we can do great things for our students.

Work-based learning opportunities for adults with special needs

A job can provide more than a paycheck; a paycheck can provide more than money. With the help of the Rochester Community Schools Adult Transition Program, students 18-26 years of age with mild to moderate disabilities can experience the sense of belonging and pride that comes from being part of a work community.

In addition to classroom activities, RCS provides social exposures and real-world schedules and routines so students can practice their life skills. “The post-high work-based learning program helps adults with special needs achieve a higher level of personal self-sufficiency and success than would otherwise be available if they were only given access to a typical classroom education,” said Executive Director of Special Education Anne Evans. “The skills acquired here will help them achieve supported independence throughout adulthood.”



Student Jean Louis Ortiz learns new tasks in the PAES lab.

Classroom curriculum focuses on teaching students practical skills, such as how to use a calendar, manage money, or maintain a household. To further develop those skills, RCS invested in a Practical Assessment Exploration System lab offering training for more than 120 tasks in areas such as customer service,

assembly and production, and clerical assistance.

Job coaches assess each student's task, provide guidance, and

document a student's strengths. “We find that some students are great at counting money, which would make them reliable cashiers. Others enjoy data entry. Some have a particular attention to detail. This gives us a realistic look at each person's employment potential and allows us to make informed recommendations for job sites,” said Job Coach Margo Jones.

For additional hands-on experience, the Adult Transition Program also provides micro-enterprise opportunities, such as with the JitterZ Eats-n-Treats coffee shop. The marketing students make their rounds through the offices announcing the coffee shop offerings, and the cashiers and baristas serve the customers. The team keeps inventory, orders supplies, counts change, and serves customers.

Another opportunity being piloted by the district is Winning Futures, a school-based mentoring program where business professionals work with the students to build goals and develop life skills.

On-the-job training also helps students practice their skills. A partnership with Mid States Bolt & Screw Company, for example, has students performing small manipulations, like putting parts together before they are packaged and shipped to customers.

Other companies and organizations provide sites for students to volunteer. Approximately 25 local businesses train more than 30 post-high special education students onsite. “Sometimes, the most important lesson to teach at these volunteer sites is commitment. A student may feel tired, but if the staff has high expectations, we remind them to honor their commitments and

A new place to call home, opening September 2018!

Students in the Adult Transition Program and the Rochester Adult Center for Education will be provided with a dedicated space within the district. Thanks to the ongoing bond efforts, the current Alternative Center for Education building, located on John R. Road, will receive a 30,000 square foot addition. Students will occupy the new space in September 2018.



Artistic rendering. Actual building structure may appear different than the picture.

Work-based learning (cont.)

work hard to meet expectations,” said Special Education Teacher Consultant Jennifer Lamar.

Partnering with businesses has proven to be successful. “Our partner businesses genuinely want to nurture our students and, in many instances, make them long-term employees. But most importantly, these caring employers want adults with special needs to know that this is their community, and they can play a meaningful part in it,” said Lamar.

An example of this business partnership includes the employment of student Aaron Kowalski. Kowalski



Aaron Kowalski takes pride in folding laundry at his job site.

impressed the staff at Neil King Physical Therapy during his work-based learning experience so much that they offered him paid employment.

“Having Aaron here benefits the whole

clinic. He has contagious enthusiasm. He contributes to our overall job satisfaction,” said Therapist Tina Schaffner.

“This is a dream come true, to have Aaron employed,” said Aaron’s mother, Lisa, who is an advocate for the district’s adult special education program. “It was a 22-year journey, and we are grateful.”

Another student, 23-year old Ellie Gassen, began working at Partners in Architecture just three years after entering the Adult Transition Program. “I just got a raise and that motivates me to work even harder,” she said. “Sometimes I ask if I can work longer days. Once I get into my routine, I like to dive in head first. I’m always all in. That’s the way I work.”

Because each student has different limitations, realistic expectations for independence vary. Although not every graduate of the RCS Adult Transition Program will pursue college or attain full-time employment, the students still benefit from increased opportunities while achieving personal growth and fulfillment.

“All parents hope for their children to move onto greater things when they leave school. In the same way, we are providing training for our adult transition students so, as they age out of the school system, they are prepared to take next steps and achieve maximum personal potential—whatever that may be,” said Lamar.

Bond project status update

Status of projects to date:

- Secure entrances for North Hill, Long Meadow, Meadow Brook, McGregor, Reuther, Hart, Van Hoosen, Stoney Creek High School, and the Administration building: Complete.
- Old Brooklands building demolition: Complete.
- Stoney Creek and Hart track: Complete.
- Hamlin playground: Complete.
- Hugger, Musson, and Rochester High: On schedule with an August 2017 completion date.



Upcoming projects:

- West: August 2017 completion date.
- Baldwin: August 2017 completion date.
- Hamlin: August 2017 completion date.
- Adams High: June 2017 – August 2018.
- ACE: September 2017 – August 2018.

Technology updates. New devices include:

- 1,300 computers for teachers and administrators districtwide.
- 250 Interactive Flat Panel SMART boards for Rochester High, West, Baldwin, Hamlin, Hugger, and Musson, and 60 IFPs for all other buildings.
- 36 mobile labs districtwide.
- 2,000 phones districtwide.
- 600 surveillance cameras districtwide.
- PA systems and clocks, districtwide by December 2017.

Want to learn more?

If you would like to learn more about the school bond projects, please visit our website at www.rochester.k12.mi.us and click on the “School Bond Information” tab.

Technology enhancements span districtwide



As identified in the RCS Strategic Plan 2020, bond resources also focus on providing state-of-the-art technology throughout the district. We have already designed and implemented a robust wired and wireless network and completed many infrastructure updates. Efforts are now focused on updating devices and classroom and media center technology (Interactive Flat Panels and mobile labs), along with phones, public address (PA) systems, clocks, copiers, and video surveillance cameras.

In addition, we are implementing a new districtwide student information system, called Synergy, for the 2017-18 school year. Synergy is web-based and accessible from home. The teacher, parent, student, administrator, and counselor apps will replace myRCS.

RCS Scholars of Highest Distinction

GPA of 3.9 or higher - Four Advanced Placement® Courses - SAT composite score of 1450 or higher

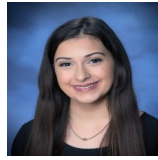
* National Merit Scholar Finalists



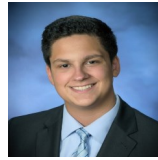
Rana Azhan Ahmad*
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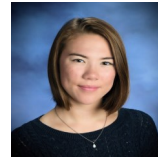
Maggie Bailey
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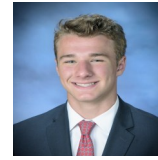
Nadya Barghouty
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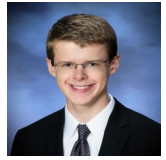
Max Behl
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Anna Carl
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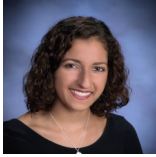
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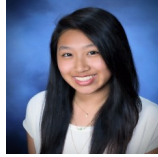
Evan Casey*
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Harrison Catlin
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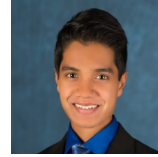
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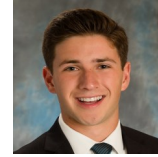
Kelly Chang
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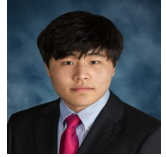
Theresa Costantini
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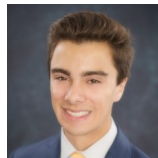
Hyeonsu Do
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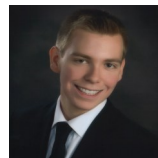
Joshua Durham*
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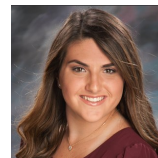
Jacob Engelhardt
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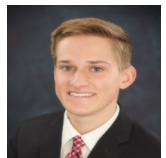
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Ryan Garman
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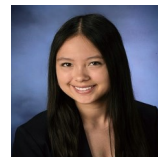
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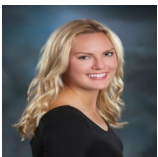
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Hamza Kaakarli
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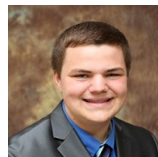
Casey Ketelhut
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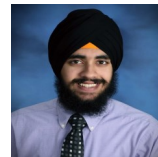
Limmy Kim
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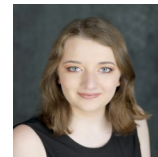
John Kim
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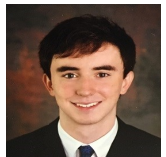
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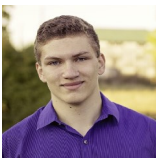
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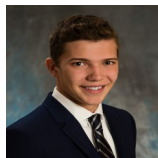
Mark Landry*
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Oliver Li
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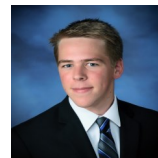
Luke Lowery*
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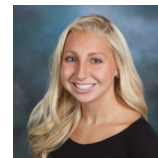
William Mattox
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Morgan McDonald
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Luke McGill
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Elizabeth McKalko
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Claire Mechler
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RCS Scholars of Highest Distinction

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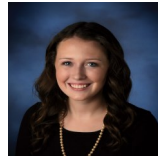
* National Merit Scholar Finalists



Ioana Mirica*
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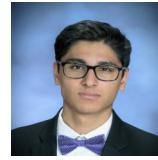
Alaina Molnar
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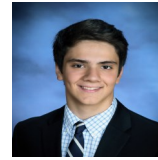
Julia Moran
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Rachael Morin
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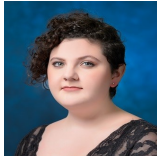
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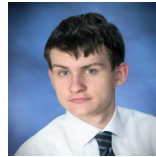
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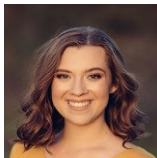
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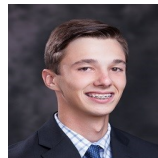
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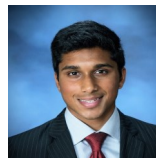
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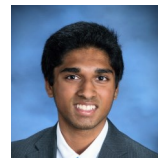
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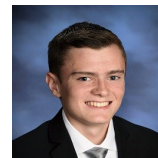
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Samarth Setru
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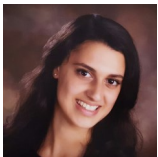
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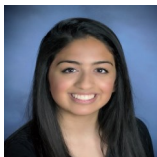
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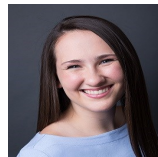
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Gabrielle Sinacola
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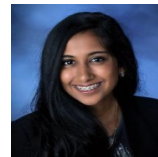
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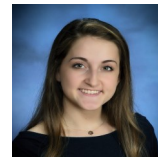
Charlene Smale
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Andrew Smith*
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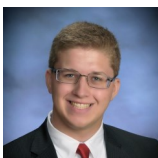
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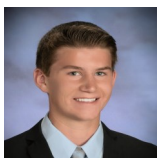
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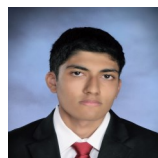
Fay Steiger
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Christopher Streng
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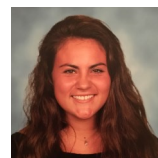
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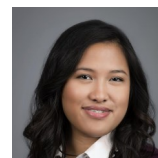
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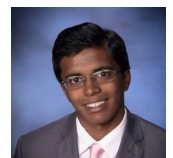
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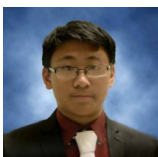
Hannah Tobiczky
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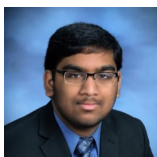
Eugene Ninotchka Valdez
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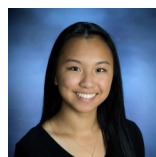
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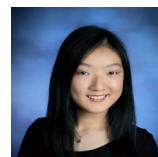
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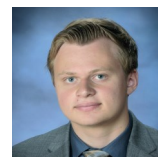
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Lillian Yang*
Adams
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Julie Ye
Adams
Univ. of Michigan



Gregory Young
Stoney Creek
Univ. of Michigan

Not Pictured:
Mary Keller
RHS / Undecided
Aiden Kendra*
SCHS / Univ. of Michigan
Pauleana Stevanovski
AHS / Undecided
Olivia Waelchli*
SCHS / Univ. of Michigan
Kaixin Kathy Zhan
AHS / Northwestern



Rochester Community Schools Foundation

Connecting donors to opportunities

The RCS Foundation is a charitable nonprofit organization committed to supporting the advanced learning of all RCS students by obtaining contributions for academics, arts, and athletics.

Since its inception in 1995, the RCS Foundation has raised more than \$10 million through fundraising activities and donor and memorial contributions.

During the 2016-17 school year, the RCS Foundation disbursed more than \$25,000 to district teachers and staff to support grant requests. Award dollars were used to purchase materials or services to enhance school district classrooms or facilities.

In a partnership with the Community Foundation of Greater Rochester, the Kiwanis Club of Rochester and the Rochester Rotary Club, more than 75 scholarships worth nearly \$100,000 were awarded to RCS students this past year.

Pino Insurance Agent Michele Beitelshes also continued her family's tradition of partnering with the RCS Foundation by providing a generous donation to support the Excellence in Education Award, which is now in its 20th year. The 2017 winners of the Excellence in Education Award are: Craig Rizzi, Stoney Creek High; Lori Dupuis, McGregor Elementary; Jaclyn Facca, Brooklands Elementary; and Heather Romzek, Adult Transition.

The annual fundraising event is the Hometown Hustle, a 5K fun run/walk.

This year, thanks to the generosity of our platinum sponsor, Chief Financial Credit Union, along with more than 50 premier sponsors and approximately 1,500 guests, the 12th annual event raised more than \$54,000.



Dr. Shaner joined more than 1,500 community members for the Hometown Hustle.

To date, the RCS Foundation has provided more than \$105,000 to support the district's global awareness initiatives, which include student trips to China and Costa Rica.

The 6th annual Sip, Savor and Shop, an additional fundraising event, is scheduled to take place on November 9. Please call the office for more information.

The RCS Foundation is always accepting donations online but will be glad to meet with interested donors to create opportunities to help RCS students.

"It is truly heartwarming to see one generation help the next generation succeed," said RCS Foundation Director Lori Grein. "We thank all donors who choose to make a difference for our students."

Please call **248-726-3190**
to learn how you can help
support student achievement in
Rochester Community Schools.

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2017 Hometown Hustle

Districtwide data-based accreditation

The RCS Board of Education is committed to ensuring districtwide accreditation of our schools. Working with AdvancED, a non-profit organization with more than 100 years of work in school accreditation, the district will be looking at systems and processes to ensure best practices across the organization.

“The accreditation process is a journey which provides us with an opportunity to not only examine our practices but to also look at areas for growth,” said Superintendent Robert Shaner, Ph.D. “We are not doing this for mere accolades. We look at best practices so we can continue to give our students the best possible education.”

AdvancED combines “the knowledge and expertise of a research institute, the skills of a management consulting firm and the passion of a grassroots movement for educational change.” The goal is to help schools improve so students can reach their full

potential. Currently, only the RCS high schools have received this type of accreditation; however, as the district strives for coherency across the organization, all schools at all grade levels will be expected to go through the process.

“The accreditation process is a journey which will take place every five years. We have a diverse leadership team who will provide the schools with the necessary support,” said Director of School Improvement and Supplemental Programs Karen Gelardi.

The accreditation process is based on research and metrics. Team members from across the country look at objective data, experimental analysis, and subjective evaluations. They also consider the climate, culture and beliefs of the organization.

“As a district, we are proud of the excellence achieved by our students and staff. The accreditation process will ensure that excellence continues,” said Shaner.

RCS POINTS OF PRIDE

- Nationally recognized award-winning schools.
- Ranked as a top three district in Oakland County based on science, social studies, math, and writing test scores.
- 96% graduation rate.
- 95% of graduates attend post-secondary schools.
- Mean SAT score is 12% higher than the state average and 14% higher than the national average.
- Recognized by the Michigan Department of Education as a “Notably Successful” school district.
- Employs highly skilled, caring teachers and staff.
- Supports a strong parent network.
- Maintains a balanced budget that is sustainable, promotes growth, and supports high quality student programs.

Budget Overview

The 2017 debt fund millage rate required to support principal, interest, abated taxes and servicing costs of previously voter-approved bond debt is 6.0 mills. The general fund budget in its broadest terms is outlined below (amounts are in millions).

	2015-16 Actual	2016-17 Amended	2017-18 Proposed
Revenue	\$166.4	\$169.5	\$170.1
Expenditures	160.1	168.3	168.6
Surplus (Deficit)	6.3	1.2	1.5
Ending Fund Balance	22.5	23.7	25.1
Ending Fund Balance as a % of Expenditures	14.0%	14.1%	14.9%

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.

The Update is published by the RCS Community Relations Department. For feedback, please call (248) 726-3185 or use the *Talk to Us* button on our website. Community Relations Director Lori Grein. Secretary Sharon Ahearn. Contributing Writer Amy DiCresce.



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POSTAL PATRON ROCHESTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

2017-18 District Calendar

August

- 23-24 New Teacher Orientation
- 28 Teachers Report
- 29-30 Professional Development

September

- 5 First Day of School for Students
Half Day of School AM (K-5)
Professional Development PM (K-5)
Full Day of School (6-12 and Post High)
- 6 Full Day of School (1-12 and Post High)
Kindergarten Students with Last Name A-M only
- 7 Full Day of School (1-12 and Post High)
Kindergarten Students with Last Name N-Z only
- 29 Half Day for Students AM (K-12 and Post High)
Professional Development PM

October

- 11 Parent/Teacher Conferences (9-12)
- 12 Parent/Teacher Conferences (6-8)
- 18 Parent/Teacher Conferences (6-8)
- 19 Parent/Teacher Conferences (9-12)

November

- 3 End of 1st Trimester (K-5) and 1st Quarter (6-12)
- 7 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High)
Professional Development/Records
- 14 Parent/Teacher Conferences (K-5)
- 16 Parent/Teacher Conferences (K-5)
- 20 Parent/Teacher Conferences (K-5)
- 21 Thanksgiving Recess begins at end of day
- 22 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High)
- 27 Classes Resume (K-12 and Post High)

December

- 20 Winter Recess Begins at End of Day (K-12 & Post High)
- 21 No School for Students, Winter Recess Dec. 21 – Jan. 2

January

- 3 Classes Resume (K-12 and Post High)
- 15 No School (K-12 and Post High)
- 24 Half Day for Students, AM Exams (6-12 and Post High)
- 25 Half Day for Students, AM Exams (6-12 and Post High)

- 26 Half Day for Students (6-12 and Post High), AM Exams
Half Day for Students AM (K-5)
End of 2nd Quarter/1st Semester (6-12)
Professional Development/Records PM

February

- 16 Midwinter Recess begins at end of day
- 19 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High)
- 20 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High)
- 21 Classes Resume

March

- 6 Parent/Teacher Conferences (6-8)
- 8 Parent/Teacher Conferences (9-12)
- 9 Half Day for Students (K-12 and Post High),
End of 2nd Trimester (K-5)
Professional Development/Records PM
- 20 Parent/Teacher Conferences (K-5)
- 22 Parent/Teacher Conferences (K-5)
- 29 Spring Recess begins at end of day
End of 3rd Quarter (6-12)
- 30 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High)

April

- 2-6 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High)
- 9 Classes Resume
- 10 9th grade PSAT, 11th grade SAT
No School for 10th and 12th grade
Full day for students (K-8)
- 11 10th grade PSAT, 11th grade ACT Work Keys,
Late Start for 9th and 12th grade
Full day for students (K-8)
- 30 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High)

May

- 28 No School for Students (K-12 and Post High)

June

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

* Please note that any potential future changes to the Oakland Schools calendar may affect the above dates.