FALL 2020

Rocket Report

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



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DECEMBER 21ST -- BOARD REGULAR MEETING
DEC 24 - JAN 1 -- WINTER BREAK

CHECK OUT THE SCHOOL WEBSITE FOR UP-TO-DATE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES AT:

WWW.ROCKFORD.K12.MN.US





Superintendent Message
Rhonda Dean

ROCKFORD AREA SCHOOLS
by Rhonda Dean

2020
For decades, we have envisioned the year 2020. Through movies, songs, and fiction novels we have conjured up images of how the year 2020 will look. What we will be wearing; how will our homes operate; how we commute from one place to another. The possibilities were only limited by our imagination. Yet, in all the ways we imagined 2020, I bet you didn't see this coming. Through all the uncertainty, Rockford Areas Schools reopened as scheduled on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. From that day forward, the wellbeing of our staff and students has been the top priority. As we navigate these unchartered waters, I feel fortunate to serve a community that places great value on education.

CARES ACT
Rockford Area Schools along with every school district in the state received federal funds to assist with Covid-19 related expenses. Similar to other districts in the state, we spent the summer retrofitting our buildings and classrooms to meet the requirements for reopening. The majority of CARES funds has been allocated into 3 buckets. First and foremost is personal protective equipment. This includes multiple hand sanitizer dispensers located throughout all our buildings, face masks and shields, gloves, plexiglass dividers, disinfectant spray, etc.

A second bucket of expenses is related to preparing the physical space. Moving excess furniture and equipment out of classrooms to allow for more spacing; creating more outdoor learning spaces; monitoring and adjusting all HVAC units to allow for more fresh air to enter our buildings; replacing classroom tables with individual desks; and acquiring equipment to sanitize large areas, etc.

By far the greatest expense is technology. Starting in March 2020 following the Executive Order to close schools, we were challenged with providing distance learning option for students. Unlike many districts, Rockford Area Schools was not a 1:1 device district; our infrastructure was not equipped to deliver on-line instruction. While many school districts throughout the state were already flush with technology, Rockford Area Schools was not. Nonetheless, the most significant positive outcome of this whole ordeal has been our ability to purchase electronic devices for students, and investing in our technology infrastructure.

Our investment in technology has benefited our school district greatly. Access to technology has significantly expanded our ability to provide a quality educational experience for all students. However, getting devices has proven to be one of the biggest challenges. With every school district and organization in the country purchasing Chromebooks/tablets, the supply chain for receiving devices has been our biggest obstacle.

Although the use of CARES funds has jump-started our use of technology to deliver and enhance instruction, our challenge moving forward will be to maintain and upgrade devices as time progresses. It's a great place to start as we continue to focus our efforts on providing an equitable educational experience for every student attending Rockford Area Schools.

These are unprecedented times and we are all trying to get through this with hope, courage, and with humanity. It takes everyday people with common sense solutions to make our communities safe and prosperous. There WILL be a time when we will look back and say, "I can't believe we did that".

REAMS









ROCKFORD ELEMENTARY
ARTS MAGNET SCHOOL

LEARN . EXPLORE . CREATE . IMAGINE

ROCKFORD ELEMENTARY ARTS & MAGNET SCHOOL

WRITTEN BY, BRENDA NYHUS, PRINCIPAL

We often wonder after going through something pretty difficult how we ever made it through such a time. Students at Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School will more than likely look back on 2020 and think that very thought when they are grown adults. How did I go to school in the middle of a pandemic, wearing a mask, social distancing, constantly washing my hands, and having everything I touch sanitized? Truthfully, the students at REAMS are doing just that every single day, and doing it beautifully!

Returning to school in the middle of a pandemic definitely has its challenges. A group of REAMS staff came together this summer to look at every aspect of an elementary student's day from the time they arrive, until they walk out the door at the end of the day. Safety measures were put into place that addressed each part of their day through the efforts of this group. The REAMS staff began the work of putting new procedures and practices into their classrooms for the return of students, and a video was created to help students see what their new normal would look like upon their return.

The students have adjusted to the many activities and traditions that have been put into place over the years that may not be able to happen this year. As an Arts Magnet School, there are an abundance of activities that require large group gatherings of parents and students. Many of these activities are performance-based and may not be part of the regular traditions this school year. However, the staff continues to work hard each day to be creative and give students opportunities to learn in new ways.

It truly takes a village to make coming back to school in the middle of a pandemic happen in a safe and positive manner. Parents, staff, and students have collaborated in ways never seen before to help make the school year possible for them in person. A first grade student said it best when I stopped into the classroom and asked what the best part of first grade has been so far. Expecting the typical answer of recess, lunch, or friends, a little boy raised his hand and said, “We get to be here, in school, together”.







DISTANCE LEARNING-REAMS

Distance learning expresses hope at REAMS
This past August, families of Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School (REAMS) students had to decide whether to send their child(ren) to learn in a classroom, at the elementary school, five days a week or to learn from a distance (at home or elsewhere), with the assistance of a computer, five days a week. A difficult decision to make in the midst of constantly-changing educational mandates, public health chaos and a pandemic.

Nonetheless, on September 8, 2020, 77 students took advantage of the distance learning opportunity at REAMS and REAMS responded to the call with inspired attitudes and educational lesson plans to ensure students seamlessly transitioned to a new way of going to school.

For families, students, teachers and staff, Distance Learning includes a learning curve that requires flexibility, patience and a good attitude.

Distance Learners begin the school day with a morning meeting with their teacher and classmates - much like the students who are sitting in a classroom. The meetings are an opportunity for students to ask questions and to share responses. It is a time for students to connect to each other and with the teacher even though they are apart.

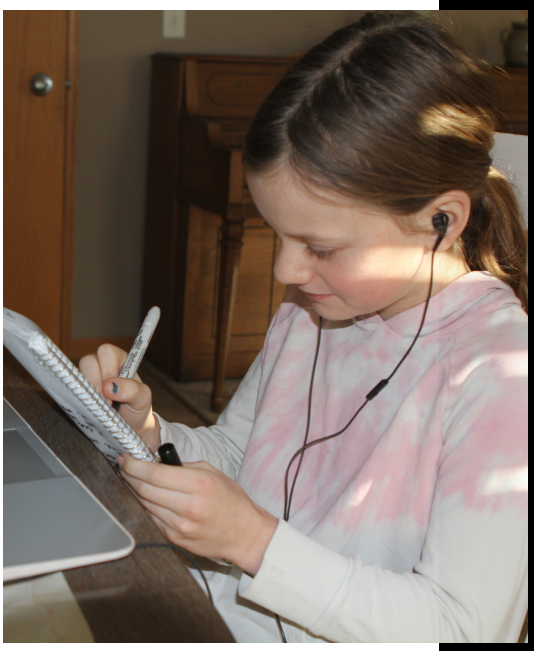
Students are taught the core subjects: reading, math, science, social studies and specials. The lessons are taught through a combination of online activities and discussions, and through pencil and notebook. Most of the lessons are taught through a digital platform called Seesaw. The portfolio empowers students to create, share and collaborate. Students can show what they have learned and share their thoughts through photos, videos/recording, drawings, text, PDFs and links.

In addition to the instruction applied through Seesaw, Distance Learners often meet in small virtual groups where the instruction is differentiated to meet their specific needs. In addition to robust academic classes, Distance Learners also receive lessons in art, music and physical education - specials. The specialists use a variety of teaching methods and tools to facilitate connections and dialogue, and to create a learning experience. The lesson plans follow the Minnesota State standards and mirror what is being taught in the classroom. In music, kindergarteners and 1st graders learn how to keep the beat while students in 2nd through 4th grade create rhythms and practice pitches. Every week students are given two different physical education activities that align with the activities the in-person students are learning. Creativity and artistic development continues in art classes where students are asked to create original works of art or to provide interpretations of art.

Until the day comes when all students are in the classroom learning together, the teachers and staff at REAMS will continue exploring and delivering a high quality Distance Learning program that prevents learning gaps and develops students and families.

“REAMS is committed to teaching and developing the whole person,” said Brenda Nyhus, REAMS Principal. “Teaching and learning from a distance does not prevent the students at REAMS from growing and excelling. Teaching from a distance ensures all of our students have a successful learning experience. Regardless of the format, in-person or online, the quality of education at REAMS will be the highest possible.”



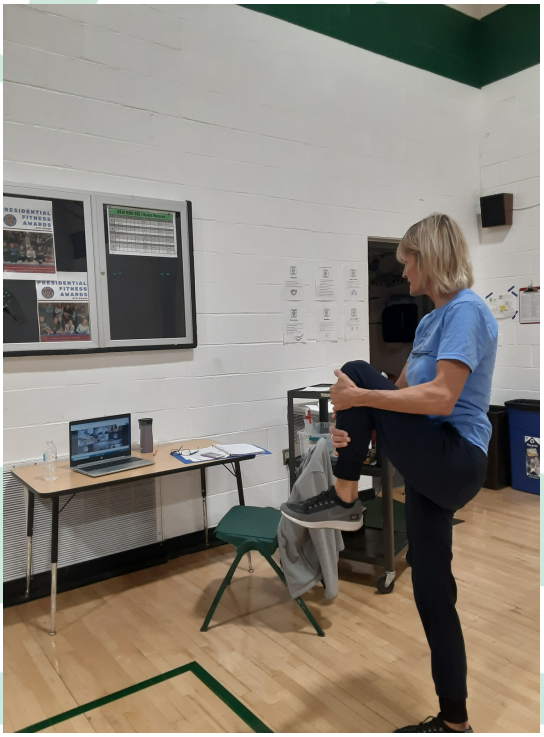




RMS-CES







Rockford Middle School - CES

WRITTEN BY BOBBI ANDERSON-HUME PH.D, PRINCIPAL

Teachers and students at Rockford Middle School - Center for Environmental Studies love to be outside and we are out learning all year long. When one of the suggestions to keep students and staff safer from COVID-19 was to hold classes outside, RMS-CES fully embraced it!

Because our school is located in a beautiful bowl, we have a natural auditorium for student lessons. Paired with some well placed boulders and The University of Minnesota Raptor Center, seventh grade students had a wonderful learning experience.

There have also been several other classes out to take advantage of the space who had a bit better luck with the weather during their class time. This group is out during their Art class to extend their fine arts skills and create great works of beauty.

RMS-CES is also fortunate to have a great relationship with the City of Rockford, who gives us access to the Lion's Park for learning opportunities all year. The on-site shelters and meeting areas are the perfect setting for students to attend class. Additionally, the Crow River is a never-ending source of knowledge for our middle school students.

Another great resource at Rockford Middle School - Center for Environmental Studies is across Ash Street from the school. This is the site of our raised bed gardens and the soon-to-be home for our greenhouse! Baker Near-Wilderness Center came out to teach our Science students about the animals who share our environment on a beautiful fall day.

Of course RMS-CES is fortunate to have our very own school forest on-site. This outdoor classroom has been groomed each year to become the perfect spot for all classes to get outside, spread out, and both learn from nature and learn in nature.

Finally, the middle school was able to create a few more outdoor classrooms this fall for our students. It's amazing how some buckets can go from carrying needed materials to becoming sturdy seats for 8th graders and beautiful pine trees can serve as the perfect backdrop for math class.



WHAT WE'RE LEARNING OUTDOORS

by Beth Russell on behalf of RMS-CES



The mission at RMS-CES is to provide authentic, hands-on, environmental experiences for students, and this involves learning outdoors with the support of our school partners. Although the fall of 2020 was different than usual in many ways, outdoor learning was still a focus at the middle school.

Before the year started, teachers and staff were trained by the naturalists from Baker Outdoor Learning Center on outdoor learning techniques. The middle school has had a partnership with Baker for many years, and it was exciting to learn from the experts about how to run an outdoor classroom. Teachers identified outdoor learning spaces, from fields and the school forest to gardens and the Crow River, and gathered outdoor learning materials such as clipboards, sit-upons, buckets, easel whiteboards and other items to make teaching outside possible.



On any given day this fall, classrooms could be seen outside, enjoying the beautiful fall weather. Mr. Reeck's math class learned with the new number lines the basketball courts while Mrs. Gregory's class cleaned the rain gardens with the help of staff members from Wright County Soil and Water Conservation. Ms. Udalla's class read a play outside and were able to yell the scary lines, and Mr. Madson's class created sound maps. Mrs. Werth's class compiled data in the school forest, and Ms. Hendrickson's class used the same space for a poetry walk. Mr. Ferdig and Ms. Bauer's band classes practiced outside (even as snow started to fall), and Mrs. Lingo's class played flag football.



Students were still able to experience outdoor visits from Baker and the Raptor Center this fall, and teachers and staff modified our typical fall field trips into shorter outdoor lessons. 7th graders saw raptors up close and had a lesson on mapping and GPS, and 6th and 8th graders will participate in archery and voyageur activities. Students in Mrs. Oliverius's 5th grade class identified animal skulls and pelts with naturalist Chad Hollinbeck during their Baker visit. Mrs. O, who has prior experience teaching as a naturalist, is currently planning an outdoor winter day for her 5th grade class. Like many staff members at RMS-CES, she is passionate about the outdoors and enjoys teaching and learning with students outside of the classroom.

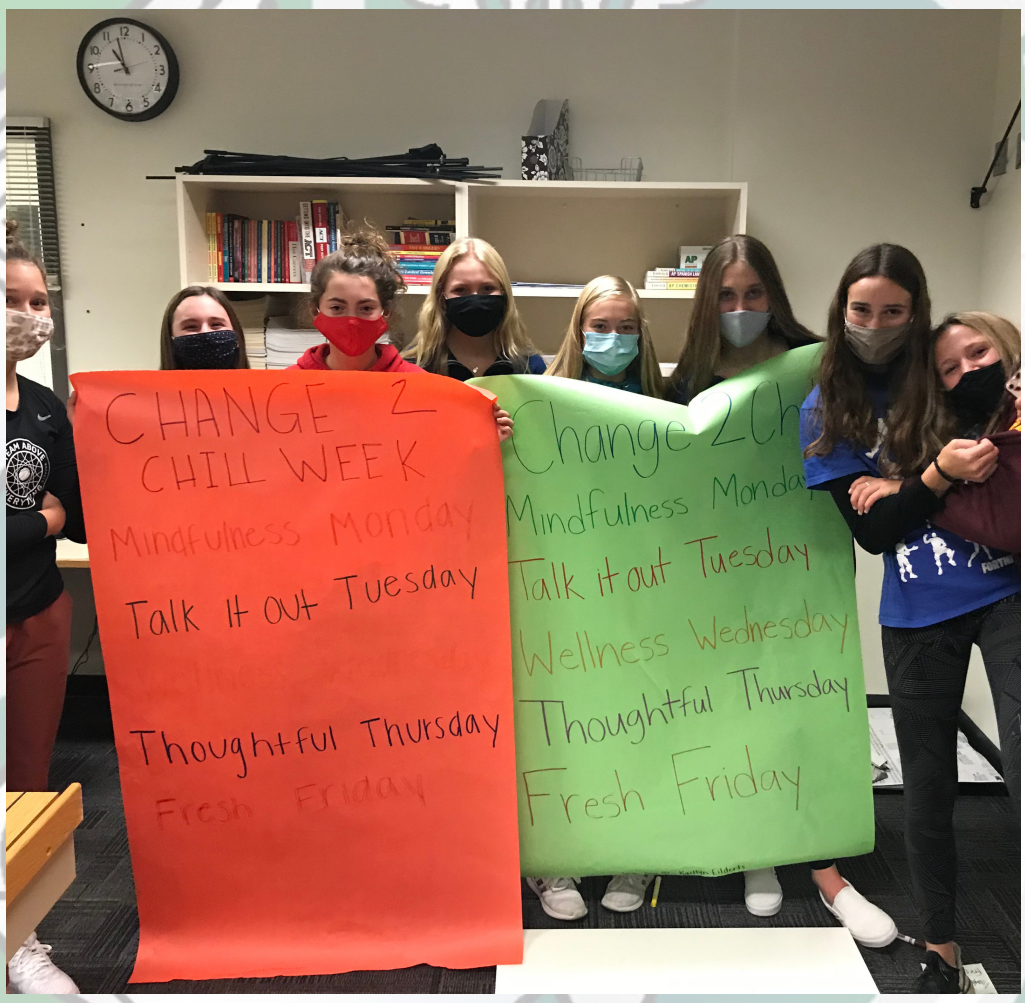
RMS-CES teachers work incredibly hard to provide engaging lessons in the outdoor classrooms near our building. Students and staff both report feeling connected to nature and excited about being outside during the school day. Despite all the challenges that 2020 has brought to education, being outside with students is a continued highlight of the start of the school year.

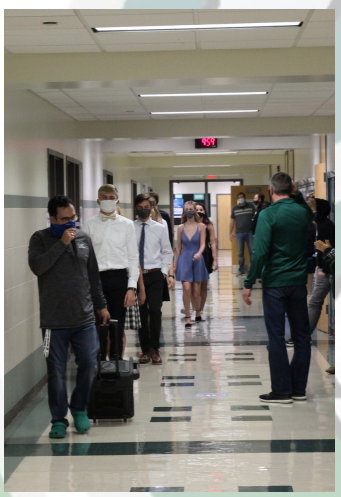




RHS











Scout Lund

Rockford High School

WRITTEN BY PAUL MENARD, PRINCIPAL

Rockford High School began the school year in the hybrid learning model. Students in Cohort A and B were given a presentation outlining the protocols and expectations for the school year during our first week of classes. Our student desks are spread apart, teacher areas are taped off, and our halls are peppered with stickers indicating one-way traffic and social distancing reminders. It was an auspicious start!

Since that first week, we have begun to find our way. With our ten minutes of flex time at the start of each day and staggered release at the end of the day, students are safely entering and exiting the building. Individuals are logging in to Google Meets from home while their peers are being instructed in person. They may participate in discussions, small group learning, or just get a friendly greeting from their teachers and an outline of the work for each period of the day. Our lunchroom looks different as we are using individual computer desks for our dining experience instead of our usual lunch tables, but students are still conversing, bonding, and joking; meetings for organizations and athletic teams are occurring safely; we have scheduled a pandemic-appropriate coronation--all of these efforts are pursued in the name of responsibly delivering authentic high school experiences to students in this uncertain time.

The most important focus for the staff at Rockford High School is to make sure that students feel safe and supported. While that is more challenging to accomplish with students mixed at home and in the building, we continue with that as our primary focus. Trivia and music are featured at lunch time to help bring levity to our students' day. There is an opportunity each day for students to sign up and 'chill' in our Media Center. We have a minute during announcements where we ask our students to just sit and take a breath! All of these are the first fruits of our "Change to Chill" grant which aims to help students de-escalate stress, practice mindfulness and learn to manage their feelings.

Another primary focus area is the continued implementation of the International Baccalaureate program. We have met with 9th and 10th grade students to further explain how the program maps out, integrates with curriculum, and Mr. Menard taught a sample lesson from his IB English course. Our teachers are working hard to prepare for the 11th and 12th grade Diploma Program and Career-Related Program verification visit scheduled later this year and submit the authorization application for our 9th and 10th grade Middle Years Program currently being run in the candidate phase.

Heading into the winter months, we are prepared to accept the many uncertainties the rest of the school year will bring. Practicing empathy, kindness and understanding will go a long way and allow us to weather the challenges and opportunities on the horizon. Many staff have remarked how proud we are of our students and how thankful we are to have connected with them to begin the year. As always, and this fall is no exception, they have been the highlight of the work that we do and continue to motivate all of us to find new and creative ways to make things work.









Rockford Area Schools and the Board of Education would like to thank the Rockford Education Foundation for the generous donations that funded the renovation of the RHS Media Center. The space turned out beautifully!

Here are some images of the newly recreated space and a picture of the amazing group of supporters.

Thank you!

ROCKFORD EDUCATION FOUNDATION ISD 883

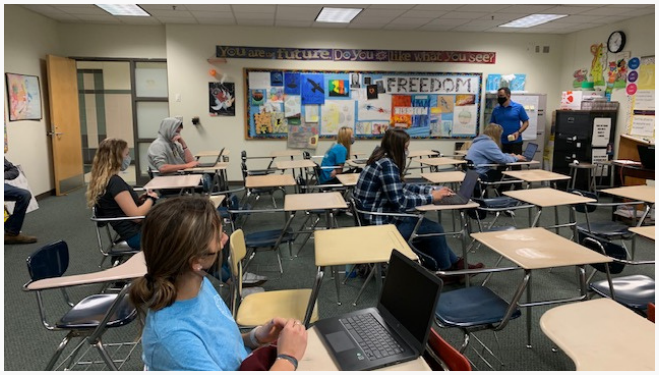
INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

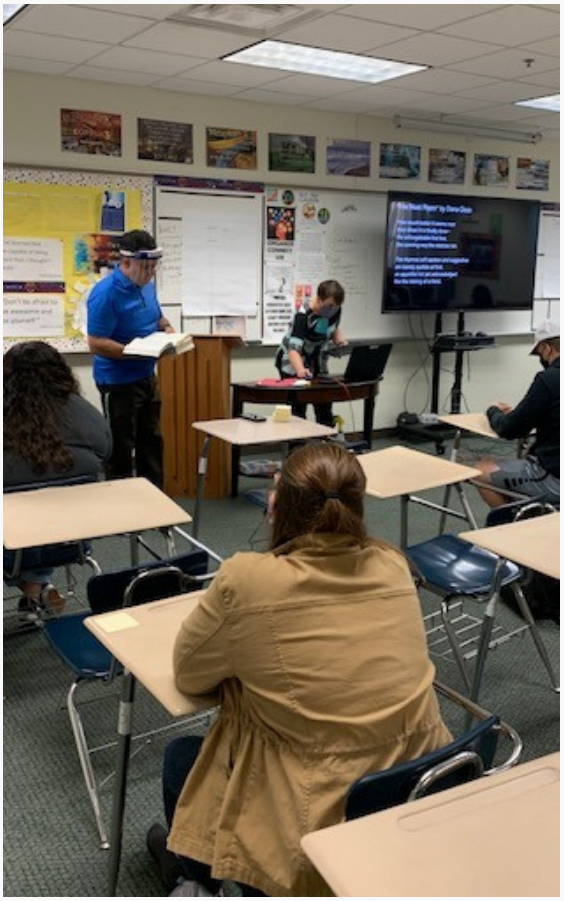
by Jill Gordee, IB Coordinator

Hello Rockford Families and Community Members:

My name is Jill Gordee and at the end of July, I had the privilege of becoming the International Baccalaureate (IB) Coordinator for the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme (DP), and the Career-related Programme (CP). During this time we established a team to assist with rolling out each of these programs and one of the initial goals of the program was to reintroduce IB to our staff, students, and community members. We wanted to demonstrate that it was purposeful and show connections for our students to the curriculum.

One of the ways we have done this is by visiting all of our 10th grade MYP English 10 classes and presenting a lesson to introduce them to IB . During our class visit Mr. Menard (our school principal) read the students a poem and asked them to complete the last four stanzas. We had everything from brilliant lines of poetry, to I don't know how to do this, and question mark responses. However, one of the other things we were able to do is have them participate in a carousel activity, where they were able to place questions on four different posters. The posters included the following topics: how are you feeling about the current school year, next school year, COVID-19 and IB. We were blown away by the feedback our students shared and how they were so articulate about their answers. As a result we have taken this information and shared it with our teachers. In addition, we are now visiting our ninth grade classrooms to gain their perspective on the topics. Plans have been made to visit with our eleventh and twelfth graders as well.





"It is a higher level of thinking, and it begins to create connections for you in each subject area."--Jill Gordee

Another area that we are preparing for is our verification visit for the DP/CP program which will be on January 13, 2021 and January 14, 2021. This visit will be an opportunity for the International Baccalaureate Programme Administrators to meet with teachers, students, staff, parents and administrators to determine if we will become authorized to offer the DP/CP program.

Finally, we are beginning to plan for registration for the 2021-2022 school year. This will include visits to the 10th grade classrooms to give out information concerning planning for DP/CP courses, individual meetings for those 10th grade students interested in becoming diploma candidates and presentations.



Photo courtesy of Gail Waldorf

FROM THE

ACTIVITIES & ATHLETICS

Department

Photo courtesy of Melissa Joseph



Photo courtesy of Eric Elstadl



Photo courtesy of Rod Strumbel





Photo courtesy of Robyn Schuman

FALL SPORT SPOTLIGHT

by Daniel Pratt, Director of Activities and Athletics

20/20 is perfect eyesight to see things in our lives with clarity and impeccable definition. Most see this year as anything but perfect and most would say it has been so horrible that we would rather skip daylight savings (to fall back an hour) just to get to the New Year an hour earlier. Societies most vulnerable have been isolated from family and friends. Youth have missed educational opportunities at an extremely impressionable time and families struggle with financial strains not normally felt. 2020 is like no other year! We get to choose to accept the notion that 2020 is forgettable and can't end soon enough or we can choose to embrace the challenge before us and trek through purposefully. Navigating 2020 is not easy, it might be the hardest year ever, but giving in and allowing despair to consume us is not an option. I choose optimism, positive thinking, finding the good in every situation, being willing to be uncomfortable and learning from our failures. This is the growth mindset our student athletes have embraced.

The 2020-21 school year started off with boys and girls Soccer, boys and girls Cross Country and the new kid on the block girls Tennis on the schedule. The MSHSL moved Volleyball and Football into the late fall schedule requiring for a slight pivot and retooling to allow kids to fulfill their commitment to the earlier offered sports. Kids are amazing and their willingness to adjust on the fly was never more evident than this fall.

Soccer programs finished the season healthy without any medical stoppage or mandatory quarantine. Game set up saw a new look with teams on opposite sides of the playing field and fans on opposite sides as well. Players on the benches wearing masks and coaches masked up as well.

Cross Country saw more dual and triangular meets as big invites were not allowed. Kids and coaches masked up unless competing and spectators maintained social distancing. Our girls had a very strong showing at the conference and section meets. All healthy with zero spread from team to team or participant to participant.

Girls Tennis starting this fall with the absence of Volleyball (or so we thought). 14 girls signed up, some were learning the game, others had played. It was a great sight to see all 8 of our tennis courts filled with laughter, friendly banter and coaching advice from coach Hogle. When Volleyball was reinstated to the later fall, a couple of girls headed back to their first love.

2020 Late fall opened up to Football and Volleyball. The MSHSL decided these two sports needed to be played in 2020 and not in the early spring of 2021.

Like all the sports, the volleyball season was shortened by 30% for games and 20% for length of season. This change in start time has altered most sports start times for the rest of the year. Our team is in the middle of their season and playing well, but not getting the results they are looking for. Second half of the season we will see more consistent results from a very talented group of young ladies.

Football this group of young men have not allowed the changes to their season, the changes in location of games or the changes of their opponents to alter their love for the game. These guys have played well, played hard and continue to look forward to their next challenge.

2020 is an opportunity to redefine ourselves as hard working, non-complaining, tough-nosed doers! Rockford Student Athletes are just that, DOERS!

#Rockets883

Photo courtesy of Tiffany Gifford

Rocket Coaches' Corner

CROSS - COUNTRY

BY JASON HESTER

The Rockford Girls' cross country team recently completed a very successful season. The girls earned second place in the Wright County Conference West championships. Two runners, Hailey Jackson and Ruby Gifford earned All-conference honors while Ellie Sather, Elizabeth Smith, and Alix Gifford earned Honorable Mention All-Conference. Hailey and Ruby also earned a trip to the State Meet with strong finishes at the Section 5A Meet. This is the first time in over twenty years that two individuals from the Rockford team have earned a trip to state.

Both the boys and girls teams earned the Academic Gold Award for maintaining a team GPA of over 3.75.

FOOTBALL

BY DAN HOUGHTON

It's been a crazy year starting our Football season seven weeks later than normal. We've been having to manage colder practices, games and October snow with the later start. And, in order to comply with COVID-19 guidelines, we have had to change the way we practice and many parts of our normal routine. Our Homecoming Game vs Montevideo was canceled the week of the game because of a spike in their COVD-19 cases. That cancellation led to a scramble to find a team to play, leading us to trek down south of Mankato to play Maple River. It has been a challenging season, but I am proud of all of the players as they have shown flexibility and rallied in this unprecedented situation.

SOCCER BOYS & GIRLS

BY MELISSA JOSEPH

The Rockford Soccer teams enjoyed a season of fun and competitiveness. The players were such a fun group that supported one another immensely! The leadership by our seniors and our captains was so genuine and welcoming, that it just really made for a great year with so much team connection that was inclusive, joyful, and yet still loaded with hard work! Coach MJ said that this was by far one of her favorite seasons of coaching because every single player was so respectful, had a great attitude, and was fun loving. This team had the ability to turn a bad day into a good one with their sense of humor, support, and constant smiles. Way to represent Rockford Schools!

VOLLEYBALL

BY JENNIFER MILTON

The Rockets Volleyball team has played a lot of close matches so far this year. Our record (1-6) is not a true reflection of the strength of our team. The team has been working hard to improve and is willing to put in the work it will take to win our upcoming matches. The Rockets are led by captains Sophie Bremel (Jr), Lauren Loegering (Jr) and Lexi Wacker (Sr). Loegering leads the team in kills (78), digs (96), and ace serves (12). Also making an impact on the court are returning starters, Kylee Sauers and Meghan Roggenkamp as well as freshmen newcomers Ellie Keuseman and Kennedy Torborg.

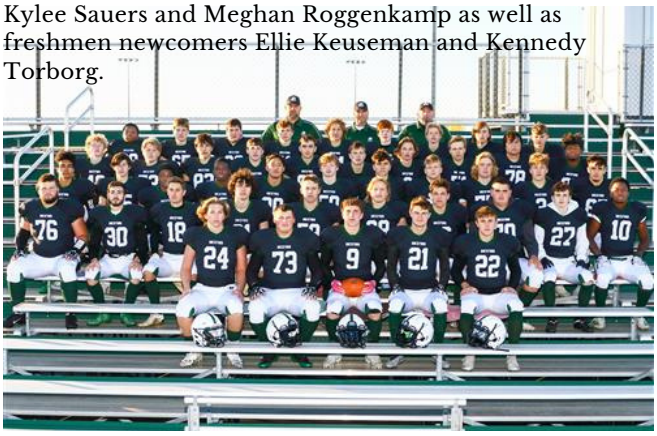




Photo courtesy of Tiffany Gifford





Photo courtesy of Gail Waldorf





Photo courtesy of Eric Elstadl

DANCE





FALL FLAG FOOTBALL

CLASSES AVAILABLE

Men's Basketball over 35

Youth Band Lessons

Youth Voice Lessons

KidzArt Snow Days

Youth Rocket Power

Rockford Area Community Education has programs and/or classes for everyone in the community to enjoy: Early childhood, kindergarten-12th grade students, lifelong adult learners, and our senior citizens. These programs enhance the PreK-12 curriculum, and offer learning and fitness opportunities for non-school age community members that are engaging and varied in context. We present opportunities to expand the core subjects, foster creativity, teach life lessons, spark interest in the arts and music, and learn about new technologies or disciplines.

We recently finished up with our flag football program, which was a huge success for all involved! Between our awesome parent volunteer coaches and our enthusiastic PreK-4th grade boys and girls, the energy coming from the field on Monday and Wednesday nights was phenomenal. The program provided a fun learning environment in an outdoor space that followed our current COVID guidelines.

We are also currently offering dance classes for 1st-6th graders. Our dance program can be compared to offerings that you find at a private dance studio, including the culminating event of a Dance Recital in our Rockford Auditorium! We even have an adult dance class with space available called "Tappy Hour!" Please contact the office at 763-477-4563 if you are interested in joining.

You can view all of our open and upcoming classes on our Community Education page https://rockford.ce.eleyo.com/.

We are always looking for ideas on new and exciting classes, so if you have an idea, or even a class that you would like to see, please reach out to Melissa Joseph, Interim Community Education Director at 763-477-4563 or josephm@rockford.k12.mn.us.

Building a Community for Life-Long Learning
Rockford Area Schools
COMMUNITY EDUCATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

by Tiffany Reinhard, Early Childhood Coordinator



Have you recently moved or had a baby?
If you have recently had a new baby, or have moved to our school district and have children ages birth through five, it is important that they are included in the school census. This ensures that you receive notification about early childhood classes, early childhood screening, kindergarten round-up and other school-related information. If you are not sure whether your children are listed on the school census, please contact the Early Childhood Office at 763-477-7500, or fill out a census form located on our web site at www.rockford.k12.mn.us/domain/125.



Early Childhood Screening
Identifying possible concerns early is the best way to prevent serious problems later in young children. State law requires all children to participate in Early Childhood Health & Development Screening before they may enter public kindergarten. The ideal time to screen children is at age 3 to 4. Early Childhood Screening also provides an opportunity for parents to discuss and find out about resources in the school and community.



The Screening Process
Screening includes a health history, immunization assessment, height and weight assessment, interview with parents and screening in the following areas:

Hearing & Vision
Speech & Development
Fine & Gross Motor Skills
Social-Emotional

Make your appointment and learn more by calling 763-477-7500
Appointments are needed and letters are sent to families with age-eligible children. If you have a child in this age group and do not receive a letter, please call the Early Childhood Programs office, 763-477-7500.



GALAXY KIDS

by Jessica Peters, Galaxy Kids Coordinator

Galaxy Kids Program is accredited through the Minnesota Afterschool Accreditation Program (MAAP). Accreditation is a third party endorsement of a program's ability to meet research and evidence based best practices. The program strives to promote positive behavior, social skills, and friendships while encouraging self-expression, creativity, and leadership. Galaxy Kids offers choice-based programming, offering opportunities in the areas of art and drama, music, sports, science, math, engineering and technology, language arts/literacy, mentoring and community services, homework assistance, and self-guided activities. Children are encouraged to pursue and share their interests through youth led activities, develop confidence and independence, make new friends, and of course, have fun! Galaxy Kids Program works in cooperation with families, school staff, and our community to provide additional learning and social opportunities that enhances each child's educational experience.



Galaxy Kids Program staff members are dedicated to providing a professional, high-quality program for students in our community during their out of school time, with knowledgeable, professional staff members in an engaging environment. The program is also a certified child care center through the Department of Human Services.

EDUCATOR OF EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNER

KEVIN NEFF















Recognition

PLEASE HELP US CONGRATULATE

BestPrep Educator of Excellence Award Winner Kevin Neff
BestPrep showcased its educational programs and celebrated its most fantastic students, volunteers, and teachers. The event featured keynote speaker Jeannine Rivet, Retired Executive President of UnitedHealth Group; a special message from New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman; and emcee Paul Douglas from WCCO Radio.

Health Education Professional of the Year Winne Jessica Matheson
The purpose of this award is to recognize outstanding contributions by practitioners in the health education field. The American Association of Health Education (AAHE) Teacher of the Year Awards (TOY) are given to teachers who are members of both MNSHAPE and SHAPE America and who demonstrate exemplary teaching abilities in respective grade levels and health education.

Leadership in Educational Excellence Award Winners
Abbey Kaufman, Kevin Neff and Holly Biorn
Leadership in Education Excellence Banquet and Award Ceremony (LEEA). This ceremony recognizes outstanding educational leaders from our member school districts. Over 150
educators and administrators are honored each year.

Minnesota Association for Environmental Educations Formal Environment Educator of the Year Award Winner Jean Schneeweis
The Minnesota Association for Environmental Education Awards Program exists to recognize and encourage excellence in the field of environmental education.

Educational Support Staff Award Winners
Janel Koosman, Shea Roskowiak, Diana Wondra and Shari Coons
Resource Training & Solutions hosts an annual Educational Support Staff Recognition Event (ESS) each fall from our member school districts. This ceremony recognizes and celebrates the contributions of the Educational Support Staff including: bus drivers, food service, paraprofessionals, hall monitors, custodians, office administrative assistants, coaches (who are not certified teachers), or other positions within our Region's school districts. Over 100 Educational Support Staff are honored each year

UPDATES AROUND THE DISTRICT

RiverWorks Food Shelf

FROM THE COUNSELORS

Every year we partner with RiverWorks Food Shelf to help support our community before the holiday season. This year RiverWorks needs our support more than ever...and in a different way. Due to COVID, we will not be collecting food or money in our buildings. We are asking all families and staff to donate money on-line directly to RiverWorks. With the financial support, they will be able to purchase the food to fill their shelves. Please use the link below to donate. Any dollar amount helps! Thank you for supporting our community and partnering with Rockford Area Schools. Happy Holidays!

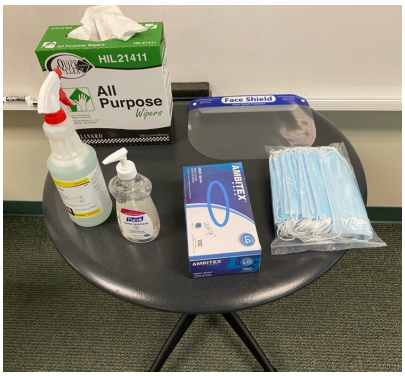
riverworksonline.org, click on Donate, Donate Online, Fund and select Rockford School Thanksgiving Fund Drive

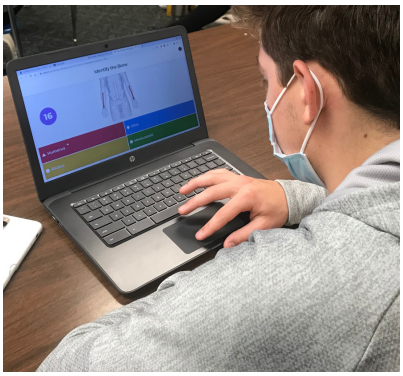
Rockford Area Schools COVID-19 Response

CARES Act Funds

In response to COVID-19 and planning a safe return to learning, Rockford Area Schools used CARES funds to provide enhancements to our Buildings in three major areas. First, included sneeze guards for added protection, investments in fogging guns to disinfectant larger areas quicker, and upgrading the ventilation systems for added air flow. Second, the district purchased additional PPE for all staff which included; masks, gloves, sanitizers, disinfectants and cleaning supplies. Third, was our purchase of technology devices to support a 1:1 plan for grades K - 12.







Environment

Retro-fitted plexi-glass guards give an extra level of protection. There was creation of extra space by removing furniture and excess items to allow for more spacing and physical distancing. Then bringing the education to more outdoor learning spaces.

Protection

PPE is essential for all our staff. Each member of our staff is issued face masks, a face shield, gloves, hand sanitizer, a bottle of disinfectant that kills the coronavirus after a 3 min sit time and a box of wipes for further cleaning and disinfecting.

Technology

The Technology department deployed 1:1 devices to all students in grades K-12 over the course of the first quarter starting with secondary students in grades 5-12 and then grades K-4. The ability for Rockford Area Schools to go 1:1 with devices was in large part due to the funds issued to our school through the CARES Act.

On our website you can find all of our COVID-19 resources, including our updated COVID-19 dashboard under District Annoucements

WE ARE HIRING

Human Resources Department

Rockford Area Schools currently uses Frontline for all openings in the district. Frontline allows you to view current job openings around the district, and then gives you the ability to upload and manage your application and materials without having to send in hard copies. Any future revisions or job applications that you would like to make are easy to do by simply logging back into your account and making the necessary changes!

Please visit our site and join our workforce: https://www.applitrack.com/rockfordmn/onlineapp/default.aspx





SUBSTITUTES NEEDED

Human Resources Department

Rockford Area Schools has partnered with Teachers On Call to fill our Substitute Teacher and Paraprofessionals. Please visit www.teachersoncall.com > Apply Now to complete an online application for employment, or don't hesitate to contact TOC directly at 800.713.4439 with questions and for more information. Competitive hourly and daily pay rates for the surrounding area!



School Bus Drivers Needed!

Looking to earn a little extra money and to work close to home?

Rockford Bus Service is hiring bus drivers. No experience necessary. We will train!

Also, we are in need of a monring van driver and morning bus aide.

SIGNING BONUS!!

It's a fun, flexible work environment with a schedule that allows for you to have free time during the day, with opportunities to work more if desired.

Email: myersb@rockford.k12.mn.us or call 763-477-6100 for more information.

Rockford Area Schools would like to thank the following businesses, groups, parents, staff, and community members on their generous donations of face coverings and water bottles.

Trent Shipley with Trent Shipley, Keller Williams Realty Integrity NW

Shane Modrow with Modrow Insurance Agency

Banken Enterprises

Rocket Pride FB Group

Abbey Kauffan, Sarah Gunderson, Dawn Rund, Christa Larson, Krista Bird, Beth Russell, Shawn Weddel, Monica Palmer, Reschke Family, Megain and Kyle Seiler, Lyric Rogich, Heather Michalik, Sara PauleyMC Wyrowski, Judy King, Anna Thelen, Sue Heariet, Debbie and Marissa Triemert, Jennifer Fox, Jill Pearcy, Cusciotta Family, Rick and Dara Appoloni, and the many Anonymous donors who dropped off the masks and water bottles in our collection boxes outside our buildings.

A special thank you for the many donations to our activity funds, Galaxy Kids program, and general school supplies. We are humbled every time a donation comes our way.

Independent School District 883
ROCKFORD AREA SCHOOLS
6051 Ash Street
Rockford, MN 55373

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