



# Community Update

## Rochester Community Schools

Summer 2023 Edition



### Congratulations Class of 2023!

RCS teachers, staff and administrators partner with families to inspire excellence. Our 1,224 graduating seniors give us much to celebrate.

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- Social-emotional wellness investment
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- Celebrating excellence
- Community support

### Career-readiness begins early

#### Rochester Community Schools proudly educates our professionals and tradespeople of the future!

Career readiness is a kindergarten through grade-12 journey at Rochester Community Schools. Beginning early in their education, students are introduced to a variety of vocations, industries, specialties and pathways to prepare for lifelong personal success.

In collaboration with educators and community partners, career-readiness counseling teams help RCS students learn about linking their personal values and skills to career aspirations.

From the very start, students get familiar with a K-12 college- and career-readiness software program that adapts as students develop, helping them explore options, build self-knowledge, inspire passions, create plans and reassess their interests.

"Career development takes time and intention," said Debi Fragomeni, deputy superintendent for teaching and learning. "RCS students have a strong foundation that builds on rigorous literacy and math standards, which are essential components of success. Additionally, our educators use multi-tiered support strategies to ensure students are well-prepared beyond their K-12 years."

The district helps guide and inform students so they can make wise choices for their future, whether that includes college, apprenticeship, military service, entrepreneurship, trades, or other pathways toward adulthood and independence.

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**60%**

of the class earned a 3.5 GPA or higher

**449**

earned  $\geq 3.9$  GPA with 4 or more AP classes

**93**

earned  $\geq 3.8$  GPA with 3 or more AP classes

**188**

earned  $\geq 3.5$  GPA with 2 or more AP classes

**91**

earned a College Board AP Capstone Diploma

# STEM exploration provides hands-on learning and career readiness

Innovative learning at Rochester Community Schools is demonstrated through many STEM experiences focusing on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) across the entire curriculum, from transitional kindergarten through grade 12. STEM competencies emphasize problem-solving and critical thinking skills, which are in high demand in nearly all careers and industries. RCS students engage in hands-on, inquiry-based, collaborative STEM learning, building their ability to approach real-world challenges in innovative ways.

## Students impact their community



RCS middle school students have a long history of participating in environmental research in collaboration with the Clinton River Watershed Council.

With waders, nets and testing kits, students make physical, biological, chemical and macro assessments of the water to study the health of the river and its surrounding ecosystem.

“We all play a part in caring for our natural resources,” one student said. “The more we know, the more we can help protect our environment.”

Through their experiments and analysis, students learn about native plants, reducing riverbed erosion, restoring fish habitats, decreasing water temperature, minimizing deforestation and more.

## Early introductions open STEM learning

Elementary students have early exposures to computer coding and the power of STEM through Science Day experiments, classroom activities, Oakland Schools partnerships, and enrichments.

For example, all RCS first-graders wrote code to drive small robot cars along a particular route. Fourth-graders powered handheld robots, motorized fans, police sirens, snap circuits and Google Chrome Music Lab spectrograms. Fifth-graders helped Dash robots complete student-constructed mazes. Additionally, thanks to many community volunteers, afterschool robotics, and Math Pentathlon team experiences were offered at elementary schools districtwide.

“We continue to expand the many amazing STEM opportunities offered to students,” said Jennifer Diemert, RCS STEM teacher. “We are proud of our students’ active, personal, intentional engagement in their learning.”



## High schools go green

High school students in Advanced Placement environmental science grew lettuce using a hydroponic tower. They learned about locally farmed food, photosynthesis, sustainability, plant nutrients and pest control. Additionally, many students volunteer through our PTSA Green Schools committees to lead earth-friendly projects that include raising chickens, integrating plants into the classroom, maintaining pollinator gardens and recycling.



## Innovation Lab inspires passion

Summer learning opportunities offered through the RCS Innovation Lab encourage students to explore their passion projects and propose solutions to community challenges. Combining STEM research, deep thinking and collaboration, students are working to develop an all-terrain trash collector, automatic lawn weeder, mental health app, car seat for children with special breathing needs, recycled art, compost collection kits, water filtration system, and deer-sighting app, to name a few.



# Strategic Planning Points of Pride

Rochester Community Schools has a rich history of excellence that has been strengthened over the past decade through the strategic planning process

Strategic planning helps ensure organizations identify priorities, create a unified sense of purpose, and drive action.

The current RCS strategic plan was launched in 2014 in collaboration with a team of community stakeholders. The framework includes three key goal areas: curriculum, instruction, assessment; technology and infrastructure; and global awareness. Each goal area has six strategies that represent opportunities to achieve the specific goal.

As the district prepares to enter a new strategic planning process in 2024, RCS celebrates its decade-long achievements.



## Curriculum, instruction, assessment.

Student offerings include 25 Advanced Placement® and 26 Career and Technical Education courses; 180 high school electives; AP Capstone Diploma™ program and Seal of Biliteracy; hundreds of clubs, including award-winning DECA, Business Professionals of America and FIRST robotics; and choir, band and orchestra instruction that supports the district's designation as a Best Community for Music Education. RCS has 50

curriculum consultants, literacy coaches, and interventionists districtwide. At the elementary level, the district provides a comprehensive literacy plan and reading and writing curriculum, as well as a new math curriculum. In support of physical education, RCS has 75 Michigan High School Athletic Association varsity teams and approximately 90 sub-varsity teams.

For the 2021-22 school year, RCS SAT scores averaged 9% higher than the county and 13% higher than state averages. Additionally, 60% of the 2023 RCS graduates earned a 3.5 grade point average or higher throughout their entire high school education.

**Technology & infrastructure.** RCS has the fifth largest school population in the tri-county area with 26 facilities on 561 acres. Fiscal stewardship ensures a balanced, equitable, and sustainable spending plan that promotes quality student programs. Thanks to the community's investment in our schools through the bond and sinking fund, additional funding sources addressed critical needs and enhancements across the district.

With a highly qualified workforce, 887 RCS staff members have a master's degree or higher; 42.3% of staff have been with the district 10 or more years.

RCS maintains more than 15,000

student Chromebooks and 1,500 laptops for personnel to ensure a one-to-one ratio; 1,500 security cameras and 663 radios; 800 SMART interactive flat panels; and 21 renovated media centers for flexible and collaborative learning.



**Global awareness.** Since our global initiatives began, 1,309 students completed an AP Capstone course; 13 students and 19 teachers participated in exchange programs; 259 students were awarded Seals of Biliteracy; 242 students traveled to five different countries; 99 full-year exchange students were welcomed in our community; and 23 world language courses continued to be offered.

"We look forward to initiating a new strategic planning process that will take into consideration a variety of viewpoints through stakeholder feedback," said Board of Education President Michelle Buettel. "The strategic plan will be based on a shared vision; leads to measurable goals and objectives; and effectively guides our district's ongoing and future work. This is an exciting time as we re-evaluate and set our sights on a new horizon."





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Purdue Univ.



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Michigan State Univ.



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Michigan State Univ.



**Dylan Amin**  
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Michigan State Univ.



**Kaci Andrews**  
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Michigan State Univ.



**Andrew Antaya**  
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Michigan State Univ.



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**Joshua Ascano**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Louis Asmus**  
Stoney Creek  
Kalamazoo College



**Pablo Avila**  
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Oakland Univ.



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Univ. of Michigan



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Oakland Univ.



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Michigan State Univ.



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**Emily Baszczuk**  
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Michigan State Univ.



**Chad Beckeman**  
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Michigan State Univ.



**Alan Bennett**  
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Univ. of British Columbia



**Caitlin Berry**  
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Univ. of Michigan



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**Sofia Biermann**  
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Univ. of Dayton



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Univ. of Michigan



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Michigan Technological Univ.



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Univ. of Michigan



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Oakland Univ.



**Christine Bombard**  
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Univ. of Massachusetts



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Arizona State Univ.



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Hope College



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Gap Year



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Michigan State Univ.



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Michigan State Univ.



**Jake Crist**  
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Michigan State Univ.



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Michigan State Univ.



**Madeleine Croissant**  
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Michigan State Univ.



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Central Michigan Univ.



**Nolan Curran**  
Adams  
Indiana Univ.



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**Luke de Chazal**  
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Bryn Athyn College



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**Sofia De Oliveira  
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**Kennedy Demars**  
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**Nathaniel Derkacz**  
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**Damanpreet Dhami**  
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Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Brendan Donahue**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Mia Donaj**  
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Univ. of Michigan



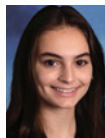
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**Leila Eddy**  
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**Vaelone Elankumaran\***  
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**Parker Eleccko**  
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**Ava Gjokaj**  
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# 2023 RCS Scholars of Highest Distinction

GPA of 3.9 - 4.0 or higher • Complete and pass 4 or more AP courses

\* National Merit Scholar Finalist



**Lindsey Gleason**  
Rochester  
Univ. of Michigan



**Samantha Glover**  
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Univ. of Iowa



**Anabella Godfrey**  
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**Cara Godlewski**  
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Oakland Univ.



**Jane Gould**  
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Univ. of Michigan



**Lucy Gowans**  
Adams  
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**Zoe Guthrie**  
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**Rachel Hall**  
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**Andrew Hampson**  
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**Andrew Hamway**  
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Michigan State Univ.



**Brett Hamway**  
Rochester  
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**Aaliyan Hassan**  
Adams  
Oakland Univ.



**Jason Haubert**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Majd Hazim**  
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**Rose Helms**  
Stoney Creek  
Hope College



**Lucia Hernandez**  
Rochester  
Univ. of Michigan



**Kirsten Hewines**  
Adams  
Moody Bible Institute



**Darby Hinkson**  
Adams  
Baylor Univ.



**Davis Hobley**  
Stoney Creek  
Princeton Univ.



**Brennan Holt**  
Stoney Creek  
U.S. Coast Guard  
Academy



**Jamie Huang**  
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**Greta Hugen**  
Adams  
Columbia College  
Chicago



**Natalia Humbert**  
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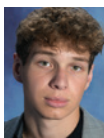
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Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Ramsha Ibadat**  
Adams  
Univ. of Detroit Mercy



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**Kendall Jackson**  
Rochester  
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**Nathan Jaracz**  
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**Jin Ah Jasper**  
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**Grace Jiang\***  
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Loyola Univ.



**Colton Jones**  
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**Angelrose Joseph**  
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**Justin Joseph**  
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**Madison Kalvelage**  
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Michigan State Univ.



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**Emilia Karpinski**  
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Michigan State Univ.



**Brian Kim**  
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Univ. of Michigan



**David Kim**  
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**Dohee Kim**  
Adams  
Virginia Tech



**Doyeon Kim**  
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**Emily Kim**  
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**Landen Makowski**  
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**Jack McCutcheon**  
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**Kaleigh Mellet**  
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**Tongyuan Miao**  
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Univ. of Detroit Mercy



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Liberty Univ.



**Aldo Mujaj**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Abhinay Mundrigi**  
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**Yash Munj**  
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Univ. of Michigan



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Univ. of Michigan



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**Makenna Musser**  
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Indiana Univ.



**Jack Myers**  
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**Cooper Nugent**  
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**Ava Oates**  
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**Nathaniel Oberdier**  
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**Matteo Oddo**  
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**Nihar Ogale**  
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**Zachary Olson**  
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**Logan Olszewski**  
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**Giorgio Orecchia**  
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**Crystal Orser**  
Rochester  
Oakland Univ.



**Aidan Osentoski**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Samantha Ostrander**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Arizona



**Kendall Pape**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Ronak Parikh**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Abbey Parks**  
Stoney Creek  
Miami Univ.



**Emilio Pastora Monterosso**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Disha Patel**  
Stoney Creek  
Northeastern Univ.



**Nicholas Paterra**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Makenzie Paul**  
Rochester  
Savannah College of Art and Design



**Michelle Peng\***  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Nicolas Pereira Della Volpe**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Emma Peterlin**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Margaret Peterman**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Anne Peters**  
Adams  
Univ. of Detroit Mercy



**Brooke Phillips**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Shreya Pillai\***  
Rochester  
Univ. of Michigan





**Abigail Pleasant**  
Rochester  
Pepperdine Univ.



**Jayden Pone**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Dylan Popovski**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Ananya Prashar**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Sylvia Preston**  
Stoney Creek  
Oakland Univ.



**Andrew Priskorn**  
Adams  
Michigan Technological  
Univ.



**Chloe Pryber**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Lourdes Qonja**  
Rochester  
Oakland Univ.



**Angela Qu**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Q Quail**  
Adams  
Oakland Univ.



**Alexis Quitter**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Ana Ramirez-Pinto**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Cleo Randall**  
Rochester  
Univ. of Michigan



**Nikhil Rangarajan**  
Rochester  
Univ. of Michigan



**Smayan Ranjan**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Kartik Rao\***  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Sophia Rasmussen**  
Adams  
Emerson College



**Gauri Rastogi**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Prabhaav Pillai**  
**Ravikumar Pillai**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Natalie Rayce**  
Rochester  
Carnegie Mellon Univ.



**Kiera Raymond\***  
Adams  
Oakland Univ.



**Peyton Regalado**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Anna Reif**  
Rochester  
Central Michigan Univ.



**Eduardo Rengifo**  
Adams  
Michigan Technological  
Univ.



**Angelina Reyes**  
Stoney Creek  
Central Michigan Univ.



**Lorena Reyes**  
Stoney Creek  
Central Michigan Univ.



**Cameron Reynolds**  
Adams  
Grand Valley State  
Univ.



**Clayton Richmond**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Grace Richmond**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Carson Ricker**  
Stoney Creek  
Oakland Univ.



**Sydney Ripperger**  
Adams  
Indiana Univ.



**Alexandra Ris**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Kathryn Roehrig**  
Stoney Creek  
Arizona State Univ.



**Veronica Rogalski**  
Rochester  
Oakland Univ.



**Andrew Romanski**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Carlos Rosales\***  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Tharun Royan**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Peyton Rummier**  
Stoney Creek  
Messiah Univ.



**Cambry Rutherford**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Jacob Ryan**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Alexander Sajdak**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Chaitan Saka**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Sara Salem**  
Adams  
Wayne State Univ.



**Emily Santangelo**  
Adams  
Univ. of Tampa



**Ashley Sapardanis**  
Adams  
Calvin Univ.



**Saswat Saravanan\***  
Adams  
Johns Hopkins Univ.



**Spencer Sassak**  
Rochester  
Univ. of Michigan



**Thiago Sawada Guiguer**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Arnav Sawant**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Wisconsin



**Sarah Scharfenberg**  
Rochester  
Loyola Univ.



**Isabelle Schneider**  
Adams  
Loyola Univ.



**Anja Schoenstein**  
Rochester  
Univ. of Vermont



**Nathan Schreck**  
Rochester  
Univ. of Michigan



**Aurora Schultz**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Dominick Schwutke**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Trenton Seres**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Tanner Shankin**  
Rochester  
Wayne State Univ.



**Rosalia Simion**  
Adams  
Indiana Univ.



**David Singer**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Frank Singer**  
Rochester  
Michigan Technological  
Univ.



**Amishu Singh**  
Adams  
Boston Univ.



**Abigail Skiff**  
Adams  
Univ. of Iowa



**Skyler Slezak**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Lily Smith**  
Rochester  
Northwestern  
Michigan College



**Owen Smith**  
Adams  
Western Michigan Univ.



**Nicholas Snellgrove**  
Rochester  
Savannah College of  
Art and Design



**Amanda Soldan**  
Adams  
Tulane Univ.



**Lily Solek**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Grace Soliven**  
Stoney Creek  
Grand Valley State  
Univ.



**Hyejin Song**  
Rochester  
Wayne State Univ.



**Haley Sornig**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Jacob Spinks**  
Adams  
Oakland Univ.



**Nikitha Srikrishna\***  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Luisa Stacioni Saito**  
Adams  
Wayne State Univ.



**Angelina Stathakios**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Alana Steimel**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Taylor Stepnes**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Evan Sun\***  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Joseph Sun**  
Rochester  
Univ. of Michigan



**Andrew Sundquist**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Muskaan Suvas**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Christopher Swaim**  
Adams  
Purdue Univ.



**Samantha Tandy**  
Rochester  
Gap Year



**Nicholas Teknos**  
Rochester  
Univ. of Michigan



**Andrew Terenzi**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Nihar Thonta**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Melaina Troy**  
Rochester  
Oakland Univ.



**Andrew Trybus**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Emma Uhler**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Georgio Valentino**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Ana Camila Vazquez**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Aedan Vermeulen  
Van De Velde**  
Stoney Creek  
Calvin Univ.



**Alyssa Vettraino**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Archit Vig**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Carlos Villarreal-Davila**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Joslyn Vince**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Vinessa Vincent Rajah**  
Rochester  
Oakland Univ.



**Abigail Vindler**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Benjamin Virkus**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Collin Vora**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Elaine Wang**  
Rochester  
Univ. of Michigan



**Grace Wang**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Janice Wang**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Abigail Weisenstein**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Kyle Wen**  
Rochester  
Univ. of Michigan



**Kayla Wiese**  
Adams  
Western Michigan  
Univ.



**Paige Wilusz**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Elexa Wolfe**  
Stoney Creek  
Loyola Univ.



**Abbey Wonboy**  
Adams  
Oakland Univ.



**Kara Wong**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Cameron Wood**  
Adams  
Miami Univ.



**Kate Wornson**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Ella Wozniak**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Colin Wrobel**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.



**Lauren Wroza**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Brett Wyckhuys**  
Adams  
Michigan State Univ.



**Jiaxin Yang**  
Rochester  
Undecided



**Jiahn Yoo**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Michigan



**Haeseon Yoon**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Nathan Young**  
Adams  
Indiana Univ.



**Jean Yu**  
Rochester  
Univ. of Michigan



**Michael Yucha**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Channah Yun**  
Adams  
Univ. of Detroit Mercy



**Alvin Zaka**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Jason Zanchetta**  
Stoney Creek  
Univ. of Detroit Mercy



**Gabriela Zen**  
Rochester  
Gap Year



**Haoxiang Zhang**  
Rochester  
Imperial College  
London



**Lucia Zhang**  
Adams  
Univ. of Michigan



**Parker Zielonka**  
Rochester  
Michigan State Univ.



**Francesca Zobrist**  
Adams  
Univ. of South Carolina



**Jean-Paul Zoorob**  
Stoney Creek  
Michigan State Univ.

"There is a true power in each stepping stone of your journey that has enabled you to reach your goal. Consider treating each of these encounters as a special gift. In doing so, you will be able to elevate their significance in a manner that inspires you and gives you the strength to turn your dreams into reality." Deputy Superintendent Debi Fragomeni

## Rochester Community Schools budget and business operations continue to be recognized for excellence

With a steadfast focus on high-quality student education, RCS continues to earn international recognition for its transparency and excellence in financial reporting.

The Association of School Business Officials International has consistently recognized RCS with its highest honors, awarded only to school districts who undergo rigorous review by professional auditors and industry experts.

For the sixth consecutive year, RCS has earned the Meritorious Budget Award, indicating excellence in

school budget presentation and transparent budget development.

For the fourth time, RCS has earned a Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting for meeting the highest standards for financial reporting and transparency.

"The RCS business team is proud to contribute to student achievement by presenting a budget that is sustainable, supports growth and maintains high-quality student programs," said Matthew McDaniel, assistant superintendent for business operations. "We remain committed

to providing every available resource to maximize the learning potential of all our students."

The 2023 debt fund millage rate required to support principal, interest, abated taxes and servicing costs of previously voter-approved bond debt is 1.76 mills. The 2023 sinking fund millage rate is 1.4630 mills.

Association of School Business Officials International Awards, 2022-23



**The general fund budget in its broadest terms is outlined below. (Amounts are in millions.)**

	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Amended	2023-24 Proposed
Revenue	\$195.9	\$235.5	\$213.4
Expenditures	195.6	234.9	213.7
Surplus (Deficit)	.2	.6	-2
Ending Fund Balance	38.8	39.5	39.2
Ending Fund Balance as a % of Expenditures	19.85%	16.80%	18.36%

# Celebrating 2022-23 MHSAA state champion athletes

A state championship is the highest honor a high school athlete can achieve. Congratulations to the elite Rochester Community Schools athletes who earned a Michigan High School Athletic Association state championship during the 2022-23 school year.



**Katie Fodale**, skier, Rochester Adams High, earned the 2023 MHSAA Division 1 state title in the individual slalom for the second consecutive year.



**Peter Roehl**, golfer, Rochester Adams High School, earned the individual title in the 2023 Lower Peninsula Division 1 boys golf final.



**Rhian Russell**, swimmer, Rochester Adams High School, earned the 2022 MHSAA Division 2 state championship in the 100-yard butterfly.



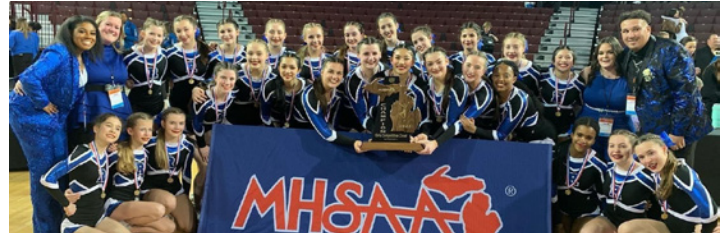
**Rochester Adams High School girls golf team** earned the 2022 Division 1 state championship.

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| ◇ Brooke Behaylo | ◇ Janhavi Ramekar |
| ◇ Grace Wang     | ◇ Alexa Camargo   |
| ◇ Elle Bailey    | ◇ Peyton Sage     |
| ◇ Olivia Dance   | ◇ Brianna Park    |
| ◇ Laura Liu      | ◇ Hannah Wang     |
| ◇ Katie Fodale   |                   |



**Stoney Creek High School girls soccer team** earned the 2023 Division 1 state champion title.

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| ◇ Kendall Allen   | ◇ Tigi Maio          |
| ◇ Emily Altman    | ◇ Madeline McGinlay  |
| ◇ Ava Avripas     | ◇ Makenna Musser     |
| ◇ Gigi Biondo     | ◇ Lauren Palmer      |
| ◇ Lilley Bosley   | ◇ Merrick Schwalbach |
| ◇ Faith Breuhan   | ◇ Sarina Shah        |
| ◇ Kaeli Butcher   | ◇ Lily Solek         |
| ◇ Mia Carson      | ◇ Lily Stickney      |
| ◇ Jessica Kennedy | ◇ Angie Toma         |
| ◇ Megan Kennedy   | ◇ Alyssa Vettraino   |
| ◇ Kaitlyn Krier   | ◇ Alyssa Welker      |
| ◇ Olivia Lombardo | ◇ Elexa Wolfe        |



**Rochester High School competitive cheer team** earned the 2023 Division 1 state championship title.

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| ◇ Kelly Burdick     | ◇ Isabella Gungab |
| ◇ Morgan Calcagno   | ◇ Aubrey Hillard  |
| ◇ Madison Carpenter | ◇ Emily Isabell   |
| ◇ Lena Cleveland    | ◇ Juliet Jones    |
| ◇ Natalie Cote      | ◇ Wanja Kamau     |
| ◇ Amelia Craft      | ◇ Maeve Losh      |
| ◇ Martina Dedvukaj  | ◇ Ava Manson      |
| ◇ Elizabeth Dyki    | ◇ Sarah Newport   |
| ◇ Elizabeth Faglie  | ◇ Claire O'Neill  |
| ◇ Raegan Farley     | ◇ Momoko Paris    |
| ◇ Ava Grabke        | ◇ Shreya Pillai   |
| ◇ Natalia Grabovac  |                   |



**Rochester Adams High School boys soccer team** won the 2022 Division 1 state championship, their first since 1999.

- |                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| ◇ Ethan Borschke         | ◇ Colton Janes      |
| ◇ John Coon              | ◇ Bryan Moradshahi  |
| ◇ Jackson Craft          | ◇ Noah Murray       |
| ◇ Reid Dennis            | ◇ Matteo Oddo       |
| ◇ Spencer DeKraker       | ◇ Anthony Page      |
| ◇ Brendan Donahue        | ◇ Connor Patriito   |
| ◇ Brendan Duff           | ◇ Luke Rosin        |
| ◇ Niko Efthymoulidis     | ◇ Koen Schultz      |
| ◇ Michael Elzerman       | ◇ Rayaan Trabaddor  |
| ◇ Saul Castano Fernandez | ◇ Matthew Vostrikov |
| ◇ Henry Hall             | ◇ Young Xu          |
| ◇ Jason Haubert          | ◇ Oliver Youngman   |
| ◇ Nick Hopkins           |                     |

These outstanding student-athletes have demonstrated their strength, discipline, skill and commitment to excellence!

# Rochester Community Schools invests \$1.7 million to enhance social-emotional support services

RCS is hiring more behavioral interventionists and counselors to enhance social-emotional supports at the elementary and secondary levels. These professionals will join the district's highly skilled educational teams who work with community stakeholders to meet the needs of all RCS students.

"Adding caring and credentialed support staff to schools allows counselors and interventionists more one-on-one and small-group time with students for personalized guidance, academic planning, and timely, need-based behavior support," said Debi Fragomeni, deputy superintendent for teaching and learning. "This important investment in our students helps maximize success in and out of the classroom."

New staff positions will initially be supported by a state grant that focuses on improving student mental health. As part of the Public Act 144 of 2022, Section 31aa, funding is dispersed on a per-pupil basis. For RCS, this totals over \$1.7 million.

"As good stewards of taxpayer dollars, Rochester Community Schools is in a unique position to provide additional health and wellness supports, knowing that they are systemic and sustainable over time. Student programs will not be adversely impacted by this

investment," said Assistant Superintendent of Business Operations Matthew McDaniel. "By coordinating this opportunity with other funding sources, students will continue to have the supports they need."

Rochester Community Schools made a formal commitment in 2019 to prioritize the mental health of its students and staff.

With the development of its social-emotional wellness task force, efforts to enhance supports include providing professional growth opportunities to build trauma-informed and trauma-resilient leaders; creating more inclusive environments; increasing awareness of social-emotional needs; decreasing the stigma associated with mental health; building community partnerships; and securing more resources.

"Through extensive education, training and community partnerships, we have been building our capacity to support a trauma-resilient community. We have also been working to shift the culture to remove the stigma associated with mental health. Our students and staff need to know that it's okay to ask for help," Fragomeni said.

The district continues to observe national and local trends that address student health and wellness, monitor student achievement,

listen to what students are saying they need, and incorporate multi-tiered systems of support.

Recent RCS student surveys focused on: exploring more about a learner's



supportive relationships; growth mindset, such as learning new points of view and practicing self-care; social awareness and ability to consider other perspectives; feelings on diversity and inclusion; emotional regulation; cultural awareness; and sense of belonging.

"This journey is an evolution, not a culminating event," said Cory Heitsch, assistant superintendent of early childhood and elementary education. "We remain committed to addressing the needs of the whole child through proactive partnerships with our community stakeholders."

"Hope definitely comes from a community of caring," Fragomeni said. "We remain truly grateful for our government and community partners who ensure supports are available to help our students, staff and families in times of need."





# Outstanding staff honored for Excellence in Education



The Rochester Community Schools Foundation presented Excellence in Education Awards to six outstanding staff members for their extraordinary service and dedication to our students and families. Selected from 92 nominations, these honorees represent pride in excellence across the district. Congratulations to the 2023 Excellence in Education Award recipients.

**Matthew Catalano**, teacher and coach at West Middle School, for being a humble, positive, dependable presence and for treating every person with kindness and respect.

**Carol Hill**, technology facilitator, for her patience and professionalism in helping students, teachers and staff advance their technology proficiency.

**Jamie Dulka**, first-grade teacher at Long Meadow Elementary School, for being a compassionate and patient educator who works to understand the abilities and challenges of each child.

**Cheryl Conn**, special education teacher at Hampton, for positively impacting the educational experience for children who need extra support.

**Jeff Hughes** and **George Myrick**, Rochester High School paraeducators, for modeling kindness and love while supporting students through the RHS Academic Center.

RCS is grateful to Michele Beitelshes of the Pino Insurance Agency for continuing this decades-long tradition to recognize exemplary service. Each winner is provided with a generous donation to be used for a school-related project or program.



Community members of all ages are invited to support the RCS Foundation through this beloved community tradition to benefit students districtwide.

Participants can choose a 5K loop or a 1-mile superhero color run/walk. Both routes begin at the site of our generous sponsor, Chief Financial Credit Union, in downtown Rochester.

To make a difference, community members can sponsor the event, volunteer, or register to participate.

**For more information, visit:**  
[www.rcs-foundation.org](http://www.rcs-foundation.org)

## RCS Foundation invests in students

The Rochester Community Schools Foundation enriches education for RCS students through contributions and community partnerships.

During the 22-23 school year, RCSF awarded \$112,000 for 46 classroom grants to enhance educational experiences districtwide. Highlights include special education equine-assisted activities, decodable texts for school libraries, robot starter kits, STEM equipment, and support for Link Crew peer mentoring programs.

In addition, generous community members shared over \$49,000 through the online Support-A-Project platform to help fund literacy enrichments, student leadership training, band programs, media center materials, and more.

The RCS Foundation proudly awarded more than \$75,000 in scholarships to 46 graduating seniors to recognize their outstanding accomplishments as they continue their education.

It is with sincere gratitude that the RCSF thanks the generous community members who support efforts to enhance programs and services for district students.

## Connecting through coffee

Students with special needs are building business skills, interpersonal relationships and independence by serving coffee in Rochester Community Schools.

A brand-new Rochester Coffee House located inside Rochester High School is staffed by students with cognitive impairments and supported by peer mentors and special education staff.

"Like all students, they have to work hard and understand their responsibilities being on a jobsite," said special education teacher Gina Campbell. "Seeing the interactions with their peers, their teachers, and other staff is inspiring. They feel the value of giving back to the school community."

The Rochester Coffee House operates during two school days each week in the RHS mall area.

Elsewhere in the district, the Jitterz coffee shop and boutique is operated by post-high school students up to age 26 in the Adult Transition Program and Services. While serving customers, students practice work skills in



a supportive learning environment. In addition to providing coffee, beverages and snacks, students also sell handmade crafts and gifts created through their microenterprise classes. Jitterz operates three mornings each week during the school year at the district's administration building.

These innovative experiences support the RCS commitment to special education, social-emotional wellness and inclusive learning.

Coffee and friends are the perfect blend!

## Board of Education of Rochester Community Schools

**Michelle Bueltel**, president, serves through Dec. 31, 2024

**Barbara Anness**, vice president, serves through Dec. 31, 2024

**Kristin Bull**, treasurer, serves through Dec. 31, 2026

**Jessica Gupta**, secretary, serves through Dec. 31, 2028

**Dr. Julie Alspach**, trustee, serves through Dec. 31, 2024

**Carol Beth Litkouhi**, trustee, serves through Dec. 31, 2028

**Andrew Weaver**, trustee, serves through Dec. 31, 2024

Regular board meetings and board work sessions are held in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and the public is welcome to attend. Unless otherwise noted, meetings and work sessions will take place on Monday evenings at 6 p.m. Locations are provided in the board agenda.

## Career readiness (continued from page one)

Further building on career competencies in middle school, students have opportunities to explore many areas of interest. For example, students in grades 6-8 experience the STEMi mobile lab, financial literacy with the Junior Achievement Finance Park, community learning in partnership with the Rochester Downtown Development Authority, virtual field trips and meetings with guest speakers, nonprofit connections through charitable activities, Challenge Island engineering and design competitions, and more.

"At the high school level, career connections are embedded in curriculum areas," said Karen Malsbury, director of career readiness, career and technical education and career-focused education. "For those who want more specialized training, CTE and CFE offerings prepare students for high-wage, high-skill and high-demand careers that don't always require a college degree."



In addition to its core curriculum classes, the district offers 11 state-approved CTE programs, five CTE credentials and nine CTE student organizations. Through classroom instruction, laboratory learning, work-based learning and student leadership, students acquire skills and knowledge that prepare them for successful careers and continuing education.

**POSTAL PATRON**  
**ROCHESTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

**Rochester Community Schools 2023-2024 District Calendar**

**August 2023**

- 28 First day of school, half-day grades TK-12 and ATPS
- 29 Full day of school for grades 1-12 and ATPS  
TK/kindergarten student last names A-M only
- 30 Full day of school for grades 1-12 and ATPS  
TK/kindergarten student last names N-Z only
- 31 Full day of school, grades TK-12 and ATPS  
Labor Day recess begins at end of day

**September**

- 5 Classes resume

**October**

- 4 Fall Student Count Day  
Afterschool parent-teacher conferences, grades 9-12
- 5 Afterschool parent-teacher conferences, grades 6-8
- 6 No school for students districtwide, professional development
- 9 No school, Indigenous Peoples Day
- 11 Afterschool parent-teacher conferences, grades 6-8
- 12 Afterschool parent-teacher conferences, grades 9-12

**November**

- 3 Half-day of school, end of quarter 1 for grades 6-12 and ATPS
- 7 No school for students districtwide, Election Day, Professional development
- 17 Half-day of school, end of trimester 1, ECSE-grade 5
- 20-Dec 15 Elementary parent-teacher conference window
- 21 Thanksgiving recess begins at end of day, ECSE-grade 12 and ATPS  
Thanksgiving recess November 22-26, 2023
- 27 Classes resume

**December**

- 4 No school for students districtwide, professional development
- 22 Winter holiday recess begins at end of day, ECSE-grade 12 and ATPS

**January 2024**

- 8 Classes resume
- 15 No school - Martin Luther King Jr. holiday
- 17 Half-day or full day for grades 6-12 and ATPS  
(To be determined based upon exam structure)

**January (cont.)**

- 18 Half-day of school, grades 6-12 and ATPS
- 19 Half-day of school, grades 6-12 and ATPS  
End of quarter 2/semester 1, grades 6-12 and ATPS

**February**

- 5 No school for students districtwide, professional development
- 7 Spring Student Count Day
- 16 Midwinter recess begins at end of day, ECSE-grade 12 and ATPS
- 21 Classes resume

**March**

- 1 Half-day of school, end of trimester 2, ECSE-grade 5
- 4-22 Elementary parent-teacher conference window
- 22 Half-day of school, ECSE-grade 12 and ATPS  
End of quarter 3, grades 6-12 and ATPS  
Spring recess begins at end of day, ECSE-grade 12 and ATPS

**April**

- 1 Classes resume
- 9-10 PSAT/SAT testing, specific details and schedule to be determined
- 19 No school for students districtwide  
Professional development

**May**

- 17 No school for students districtwide  
Professional development
- 27 No school - Memorial Day holiday
- 28 Classes resume

**June**

- 5 Half-day or full day for grades 6-12 and ATPS  
(To be determined based upon exam structure)
- 6 Half-day for students, grades 6-12 and ATPS
- 7 Half-day for students, ECSE-grade 12 and ATPS  
End of quarter 4/semester 2, grades 6-12 and ATPS  
End of trimester 3, ECSE-grade 5  
End of school year

**Key:**

- ATPS - Adult Transition Program and Services
- ECSE - Early Childhood Special Education
- TK - Transitional Kindergarten