

ROSS *Reflections*

Ross Local School District
www.rossrams.com

Fall
2023
Edition

A MESSAGE *from the* *Superintendent* CHAD KONKLE



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Financial Update Page 2
- Student Spotlight.... Page 2 & 5
- HR Update Page 2
- Building Updates 3-5



COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

We will have our first **"Coffee and Conversation"** event with the community on September 27, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at Shepherd's Ground Coffee located at 4190 Hamilton Cleves Road.

This will be an informal conversation regarding the state of the schools with myself and Mr. Castator, School Treasurer.

Please RSVP to Ms. Gina Burnett at 513-863-1253. We look forward to seeing you there.



Greetings! We are excited to start another school year! On behalf of the students and staff of the Ross Local School District, we sincerely hope you had a wonderful summer. Welcome back to school!

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of our District's highlights since the end of last school year.

First and foremost, I am proud of our students and staff for their high levels of academic achievement. This speaks volumes about our staff, students, and families who work diligently every day. Our goal is to continue on this trajectory of quality education for all. Our state report card will be released later this fall and we will share more at that time.

There have been several impactful changes that have occurred over the past several months. Our goal is to clearly communicate such changes to our school community.

- 1. State of Ohio Biennium Budget.** Our District has been relatively flat-funded since 2013. The Governor signed a new budget into law on July 5, 2023. Based on current simulations, we will receive an overall increase in funding for the 2-year biennium.
- 2. Health Care.** The cost of our current staff healthcare system has increased drastically over the past three years. District costs over this period have increased by approximately 30%, including a 17.9% increase last year. To that end, we have explored market bids and secured a new provider with a three-year contract that includes increases of just 2%, 0%, and 0% respectively. This change will save our District approximately two million dollars over a three-year period.
- 3. Business Operations Study.** We have carefully examined many aspects of our District's operations. By renegotiating third-party contracts and utility rates, we anticipate a savings of approximately \$200,000 a year.

We will continue to work to improve our District's academic performance and financial stability.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

As we start another school year, it's nice to be able to share some positive financial news! The District did benefit from the recently passed HB 33 (aka the new state biennium budget) receiving an approximate \$1,000,000 (combined) increase in state funding for Fiscal Year's '24 & '25. This is good news following a decade of relatively flat funding. In response to the state performance audit that was completed last year, we've also negotiated a new contract with a different health insurance provider effective January, 2024 which will save the District approximately \$2,000,000 over a 3-year period. In addition, renegotiating contracts with vendors and energy suppliers will also result in significant operational savings this year and beyond.

There has been much discussion around Butler County regarding the triennial update to property values. As you may have seen in the news, Butler County is experiencing an average 37% increase in property valuation increases to more closely reflect current sales prices. This will increase the amount of property tax dollars that the district receives beginning in Spring, 2024. The result of all of these items has a positive cumulative effect on the district's financial health now and moving forward.

All of these changes will be reflected in the 5-year forecast submission this fall which will be shared in late October/early November.

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

In step with our mission of doing what's best for our District while being fiscally responsible, we have a couple of personnel shifts to share with the community.

Devin Huff, 2004 Ross graduate who started with RLSD in 2017, will continue as the Business Operations Supervisor. He will no longer oversee the Transportation Department but will add HVAC Technician to his job responsibilities. As you may be aware, we spend about \$160,000 a year on broken/fixing HVAC items. It is our goal to cut these costs drastically with an in-house person. Devin has a background in the HVAC field. Devin will continue to oversee the maintenance/custodial staff.



Tina Sefton, current routing specialist, will be promoted to Transportation Supervisor. Tina has a wealth of knowledge and experience. We are looking forward to great things from the Transportation Department.

STUDENT *Spotlight*

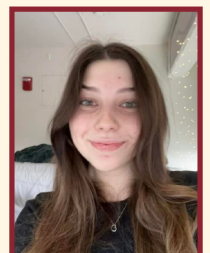
FIVE ROSS STUDENTS HAVE EARNED THE AMERICAN FFA DEGREE

The National FFA Organization annually recognizes dedicated members for leadership, growth, and career success in agricultural education. The American FFA Degree is awarded to exemplary students, with over 4,400 conferred this year.

Ross High School celebrates 5 students receiving the award: Justin Baum, Aubrie Jordan, Luke Kiefer, Joey Payne, and Katie Zapf—the most applications the Ross chapter has submitted in 51 years, according to former program leader Mr. Korb. Sponsored by Cargill, Case IH, Elanco Animal Health, and Syngenta, the award acknowledges achievements in agriculture.



Eligibility for this degree requires earning \$10,000 or \$2,000 and 2,250 supervised agricultural experience hours, alongside leadership, community service, and civic involvement. Less than 1% of FFA members earn this accolade.



Recipients are honored with a gold key and certificate at the national convention. The National FFA Organization includes 945,000 students across 50 states and territories. Ross Local Schools' FFA program, led by Dr. Jeremy Falk, fosters proud accomplishments in these students as they embody Ross Rams values.



#RossBetterTogether

ROSS HIGH SCHOOL

Regardless of when school starts, August is always a busy month at RHS. Marching band, fall sports, show choir, student government and other activities spring into action. One of our back-to-school traditions is to hold class meetings in the Performing Arts Center during the first few days of school. During these meetings we review expectations for the school year and talk at length about what it means to be a student at Ross High School. We discuss being a positive representation of yourself, your family, your school and your community. "We do what we do" is an oft-repeated mantra here at RHS that means we focus on being the best students and staff that we can rather than concerning ourselves with what surrounding school districts are doing. We feel that this focus on our culture contributes mightily to our consistent success as one of the highest performing high schools in the area. We love our students and we're looking forward to another great school year! **#GoRams #AllHail #RossBetterTogether**

New staff members we are excited to welcome to the awesome RHS team include:

- Matthew Archibald - Math
- Amy Beal - School Counselor
- Robyn Bryant - Math



- Rebekah Butz - Assistant Principal
- Elijah Carson - Paraprofessional
- Jeremy Falk - Agriculture
- Katie Gill - Intervention Specialist
- Landon Herrmann - Paraprofessional
- Jamie Rady - Intervention Specialist
- Kendall Resseguie - English Language Arts and Yearbook
- Hallie Thompson - Choir and Show Choir

It's going to be a great year!
RHS Principal - Brian Martin



ROSS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Welcome back! It has been a fantastic start to the 2023-24 school year! It has been wonderful to see all of our students' smiling faces as they return from summer break – the halls are alive again!

As always, a lot has already taken place, above and beyond starting the year and helping students settle into classes and beginning academic work. This summer alone, in addition to making preparations for the start of the school year, many activities took place. For example, our FCCLA group sent representatives to the national conference in Colorado where all 8 teams placed in the top 10 in the nation. We also hosted our first ever Jump Start Band Camp for incoming 6th graders, held our annual First Lego league Rambotics sundae party, and much more!

The first few weeks of school have been packed with schedule pick-up days, Open House, welcome activities - helping students find their way and in general working to get the year off to a great start.

We are excited to welcome the following new staff members to the awesome team at RMS:

- Michelle Beckman - Social Studies
- Jenny Brown - Math
- Hallie Thompson - Choir and Show Choir

We are so happy to play a part in the lives of such outstanding young people and we are looking forward to a great school year!

RMS Principal - Chris Saylor

Around the District

ROSS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

RIS is off to a great start to the 2023-24 school year!!! We appreciate the time and effort the Maintenance Staff spent preparing our building. They took on various projects and our building looks fantastic! Thanks to them, our building is painted, carpets are cleaned, furniture has been replaced, floors are waxed, landscaping completed, and so much more! Also, thanks to our teachers that came in early to set their rooms up to create a warm and inviting environment for our RIS students.



We would also like to welcome our new staff:

- Stacey Calihan - Intervention Specialist
- Emily Estridge - 5th Grade ELA/SS
- Lyndsey Stidham- Aide
- Olivia Burnett - Aide
- Susan Rahm - Aide
- Josh Lawson - Tech

We also have staff that have worked in the District but are new to RIS:

- Brandi Emenaker - 5th Grade Math/SS
- Shelly Martin - Aide
- Lisa Lapp-Draginoff - 4th Grade Art

Be RAMS!!!!

RIS Principal - Jason Rettinger



ELDA ELEMENTARY

We are excited to welcome back our staff, students, and families! The first few weeks of school have been AWESOME! Our staff has worked extremely hard to build relationships with their new students and will continue to do so throughout the year. The first few weeks of school have been filled with get-to-know-you activities and team building! Our PTO Back to School Movie Night was a hit and we enjoyed hosting so many of our families on our playground for a nice evening of fun! We look forward to hosting many more events each month, so please stay informed about all of the exciting happenings at Elda!



We are also very excited to welcome our half-day Kindergarten teacher to the Elda team:

- Mrs. Briana Mathews

Thank you for sending your kids to our school and please reach out with any questions or concerns. As always, Go RAMS!

Elda Principal - Adam Hull

MORGAN ELEMENTARY

It is hard to believe that school is already starting again but we couldn't have asked for a better start to our year. On our staff work day we came together for "Taco Bout a Great Year" fiesta where we welcomed a few new faces and spent time planning for a successful school year. We had a great turnout at our open house events including practice riding the bus for Kindergarten and Preschool students, a PTO-sponsored photo booth for families, and yummy snacks from our cafeteria staff.

We have several new talented staff members joining the Morgan family including:

- David Adams-School Psychologist
- Kasey Allen-Music
- Sara Allen-P.E.
- Jennifer Beckman-Aide
- Shelley Elliott-Aide
- Brooke Fey-Catalyst Therapist
- Kelly Johnson-2nd Grade
- Lisa Lapp-Draginoff-Art
- Renee Summe-Nurse

Stay tuned for information from our Morgan PTO regarding the Fall Carnival at Stricker's Grove on October 20th, 2023, Family Movie night, and Mum Buddies - which started Monday, August, 21st - reach out to your favorite Morgan Elementary student and order yours today!

We're excited to have a great year!

Morgan Principal - Tom Perry



RHS STUDENT *Earns the* NRSTA FROM COLLEGEBOARD



Ross High School student, Kenneth Rakes, earned academic honors from the College Board National Recognition Programs. These programs celebrate students' hard work in high school and showcase their strong academic performance. The academic honors for rural area, Black, Indigenous, and/or Latino students are an opportunity for students to share their strong academic achievements with colleges and scholarship programs that are seeking to recruit diverse talent.

The criteria for eligible students include:

- GPA of 3.5 or higher.
- PSAT/NMSQT or PSAT 10 assessment scores that are within the top 10% of assessment takers in each state for each award program or earned a score of 3 or higher on 2 or more AP Exams in 9th and 10th grade.
- Attend school in a rural area or small town, or identify as African American/Black, Hispanic American/Latino, or Indigenous/Native.

“

We're thrilled to celebrate Kenneth and recognize him for the great work he's been doing. We're proud of his strong academic performance in the classroom and on College Board assessments like the PSAT/NMSQT®, PSAT™ 10, and AP® exams,” said Brian Martin. “We have so much to celebrate about our staff and students, and this is one great example. Way to go, Kenneth.

”

Fine Arts

BAND

The Ross High School Marching Band has gotten off to a great start this summer with this year's Red Skies contest show. This show tells a nautical story of a sailing adventure. Band students met for pre camp for two weeks followed by the intensive band camp off campus. The band this year is 88 members strong and has a very good senior class to help lead younger students.

The Ross Middle School band had its first ever Jump Start band camp for incoming 6th grade band students. Students learned to assemble their instruments and how to play the first five notes. Thanks to the Ross Community Foundation for making this possible. We couldn't have done it without you.

Band Director - Dick Roemer

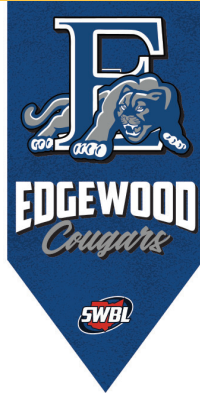


CHOIR/SHOW CHOIR

The Ross Show Choirs, Next Generation and Legacy, began working on their 2023-2024 competition shows this July during their vocal and choreography camp. Both groups worked extremely hard to learn the first few numbers both vocally and choreographically. Students welcomed choreographers, Brooke Smolder and Chantz Gould, to learn two numbers in two days! Brooke came to us from Winfield, WV and Chantz came to us from Lexington, KY. We are so grateful for their expertise and positivity. In addition, each group took time to grow as a team and get to know each other. Next Generation and Legacy are shaping up to have another great season of shows!

Choir Teacher & Show Choir Director - Hallie Thompson

Athletics



The 2023-2024 season is shaping up to be an exciting campaign for the Ross Athletic Department. We are entering our inaugural season in the Southwestern Buckeye League where we will be facing new divisional opponents: Bellbrook, Edgewood, Franklin and Monroe. The other division in the league is: Brookville, Carlisle, Eaton, Madison, Oakwood, Valley View, and Waynesville.

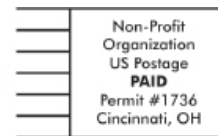
Over the summer, there were a few facility upgrades and facelifts. The high school gymnasium floor was sanded down and has a new paint job. Additionally, the athletic department installed new windscreens on the back of the home bleachers.

We're looking forward to a great fall season and start to the school year.

Athletic Director - Justin Beck



HOME OF THE ROSS RAMS



ROSS LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

3371 Hamilton Cleves Road
Hamilton, Ohio 45013

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Financial Update Page 2
- Student Spotlight.... Page 2 & 5
- HR Update Page 2
- Building Updates 3-5

Connect with us!
ROSS RAMS SOCIAL MEDIA



SOCIAL MEDIA



Facebook: Ross Local School District



Instagram: RossLocalSchoolDistrict



X/Twitter: @Ross_Local

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

It is a top priority of the Ross Local School District to stay in touch with our community, communicating important information and highlights of our awesome students and staff. Social media is an efficient way of doing this, but we understand that not everyone is present there. We hope that this newsletter serves as an accessible path of communication from us to you. With that in mind, we are looking for any businesses or community members that are willing to partner with us in the efforts this newsletter accomplishes. If you might be interested in advertising your business in this newsletter, which will be released on a quarterly basis to approximately 6,000 households, please reach out via email to mandy.rice@rossrams.com.
We appreciate your support!