

COMMUNITY UPDATE

ROCHESTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Summer 2022 Edition —

RCS shares kindness, promotes inclusion, and supports wellness

Rochester Community Schools students and staff embrace opportunities to build authentic relationships that positively impact academic and social-emotional outcomes.

RCS initiated a social-emotional task force in 2019 as a formal commitment to care for the whole child – academically, socially and emotionally. Since then, our school community has been actively collaborating to expand awareness, initiatives and resources to support our learning environments and overall well-being.

Social-emotional learning opportunities are available in classrooms, clubs and extracurriculars across our curriculum and beyond.

At the elementary school level, for example, students can practice mindfulness, visit with trained therapy dogs, take a break in sensory rooms, celebrate character strengths with the yearlong Positivity Project, and more.

Delta Kelly Elementary School teachers Robin Cottone and Kristina Nichols shared the importance of the Kaleidoscope Kids program that pairs fifth graders with students who have special needs and receive support from cognitively impaired programs and resources.

"These students are building amazing friendships as they work together during the school day," Cottone said. (continued page 3)



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Leveraging the digital: transforming learning



Technology on its own can serve as a tool, but when paired with strong instructional practices, it can transform learning.

From podcasts, to coding, to 3D design and printing, to Genius Hour passion projects, Rochester Community Schools students are maximizing the power of digital technology. Rachel Mainero, instructional technology specialist, has taken the lead in supporting educators across the district as they integrate instructional technology into their daily practices to create student-centered learning opportunities.

"Our students are becoming empowered learners, computational thinkers, innovative designers, knowledge constructors, creative communicators, global collaborators and digital citizens," Mainero said. (continued page 2)

Leveraging the digital: transforming learning (continued)

As early as kindergarten and throughout their RCS education, students are experimenting and making connections with technology.

Fifth graders at McGregor Elementary recently used computers and conductive materials to create innovative musical instruments including a banana piano, aluminum foil drums and musical spoons.

"Learning is not a cookie-cutter experience, but can take place in numerous ways."

"Seeing the students use ideas from art class and lessons learned in science to create a musical experience via technology was beyond what I could have imagined at the beginning of my career," said music teacher Jolene Plotzke. "But here we are, designing games and interactive instruments from circuits and imagination."

Van Hoosen Middle School explorers used a programmable circuit board and lessons from code.org to learn about physical computing. "What I really enjoy about this project is that it gives students a chance to relate to a lot of the physical devices they use daily," said Jennifer Diemert, STEM teacher. "The students

begin to see the connection of their coding having a practical use outside the classroom." This hands-on, technology-based lesson resulted in inventions that included a posture checker, automatic nightlight, thermometer and more.

Educators also take learning beyond the classroom to help students explore technology-related career connections. During a sixth-grade Ignite Learning Day, students participated in stations centered on smart manufacturing, extended reality, collaborative robots and autonomous vehicles. At each station, technology was used to solve real-world problems. For example, coding robotic vehicles allowed the safe removal of hazardous waste and piloted drones took aerial photos of patches of deforestation.

"This experience was so fun," said a participating student. "We got to explore so many different types of technology.



It made us all really excited about today's world and future."



In a collaborative partnership between the Alternative Center for Education (ACE) and the RCS Virtual Campus, scientists of all ages helped teachers Jeff Fosnaugh and Brian Peterson plant a tree for an Earth Day science lesson. Some attended in person and others were part of the live experience using tools like Zoom, video streaming, and a cell phone.

"Learning is not a cookie-cutter experience, but can take place in numerous ways," Peterson said.

At all levels across the district, RCS educators are leveraging digital tools to provide real-world, student-centered learning.

Message from Superintendent Dr. Robert Shaner



The love for our students is deep, genuine and steadfast.

As we reflect on student success and growth throughout the 2021-22 school year, we share heartfelt gratitude for our highly skilled, dedicated staff and the families and community members

who work together to enhance positive experiences. These partnerships remain essential in helping our students achieve extraordinary results in and out of the classroom.

RCS students embrace every opportunity to succeed. This year, we are honored to celebrate 24 National Merit Scholar Finalists—students who represent the top one percent of their peers nationwide. It is also impressive to note that approximately 46 percent of RCS graduating seniors maintained a cumulative 3.7 grade point average or higher (straight A's)

throughout their entire high school education.

When we stop to think about the human potential that exists within the Class of 2022, it is truly inspiring. Our district feels an immense sense of pride as we not only consider these academic accomplishments, but also our students' ability to change the world. We have no doubt they have that ability.

At Rochester Community Schools, our students remain at the heart of everything we do. As we look to the 2022-23 school year, we are committed to meeting their needs, academically, socially and emotionally. By embracing our core beliefs to spread hope, inspiration and love, our teachers, administrators and staff will continue to lay the foundation that supports deep learning and sets the example for our students to be the best versions of themselves.

Thank you for your partnership and support. Together, we can continue to do great things for our students.

RCS shares kindness, promotes inclusion, and supports wellness (continued)

Committed to inclusion, Delta Kelly added two new adaptive swings, an inclusive spinner, and other accessible playground equipment for children to enjoy. "This has

been a game changer when we go out for recess," Nichols said. "We have children who are now able to go on the swings,



and they absolutely love it. It has been really wonderful to see their communication grow because they are able to do something that they love so much."

Programs like Kindergarten Jumpstart recognize that some students benefit from a slower transition to school in a small group or one-on-one setting. "Kindergarten Jumpstart was beneficial not only for my daughter, but also for myself. The kids were able to come in, get a feel for the classroom, get to know their teachers, and walk through what they're going to be expected to do when they start the school year," said a Baldwin Elementary School parent.

RCS middle schools work hard to provide supportive learning environments for all students through kindness challenges, positive behavior recognition, service activities, peer mentoring and more. Hart Middle School's WEB program stands for Where Everybody Belongs. Volunteers help incoming sixth graders transition from elementary school with support from seventh and eighth graders. One student said, "I like being a WEB leader. Kids aren't always comfortable talking with an adult; they often want to talk to someone who's closer to them in age. When someone new needs a friend, I'm always here for them."

Counselors conduct minute meetings with

all students throughout the year for a quick check-in. Counselor Kristin Daugherty said, "I always ask the same questions. What is one thing that you feel good about? What is one thing you don't feel so good about and how can I support you? What is one fun thing you like to do outside of school as your stress reliever?"

"Minute meetings help me get to know my counselor and let my counselor get to know me. This helps relieve a lot of stress and helps me set goals if something isn't going super well," one student said.

High school collaborative spaces, learning lounges, charitable activities, clubs and educational opportunities provide options and resources for students to build relationships and achieve success.

High school students participate in a group called Here4U to break the stigma



around mental health. In addition to leading awareness campaigns and stress-relief activities, Rochester Adams students, for example, distribute bracelets that have crisis hotline information on the inside, and the words "Highlanders are here for you" on the outside.

"I'm really proud of this group of kids," said counselor Christy Clement. "They really make sure that people feel safe and comfortable and know that they're loved and belong here."

Rochester Community Schools remains proud of the students, staff, families and community members who continue to bring hope, inspiration and joy into the teaching and learning environments throughout the district.

All means all

The Rochester Community School District's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion aligns with the respect code, so all members are safe, valued and respected.

Student volunteers at all grade levels respond by promoting inclusivity, educating their peers about cultural groups, and working to ensure all individuals feel welcome.



Extracurricular social justice clubs at RCS high schools provide student leaders with a framework to help guide their advocacy and efforts in challenging practices, mindsets and behaviors.

Club advisor Carnella Johnson said, "I have been impacted by the light, enthusiasm and motivation of our students. This is a student-led club for those individuals wanting a voice, wanting to educate, and to really help their school and community to feel involved and included."



"People of every race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, language, religion, gender identity or cultural identity group have the right to belong. RCS will continue to challenge students to be empowered global stewards and inspire them to have a positive impact on their community, country, and world," said Dr. Robert Shaner, superintendent.





Jonathan Abraham Univ. of Michigan



David Atkinson Adams Western Michigan



Lukas Barr Stoney Creek Hope College



Samuel Blanchet Stoney Creek Univ. of Michigan



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Michael Bunda Stoney Creek Oakland Univ.



Delaney Allan Adams Grand Valley State Univ.



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Emma Leigh Busch Central Michigan Univ.



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Rochester



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Mackenzie Brown

Stoney Creek

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Alyssa Catsburg Stoney Creek Hope College



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Michigan State Univ.

Jenna Arnold

Rochester



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Michigan State Univ.



Adams Univ. of Michigan

Madeline Bist

Stoney Creek

Michigan State Univ.



Andrew Brusseau Stoney Creek Univ. of Michigan



Adams



Gabrielle Chamberlin Rochester Michigan State Univ.





Thomas Conley Rochester Michigan State Univ.



Alexander DeGrieck Adams Harvard Univ.



Trisha Divecha Adams Univ. of Michigan



Josephine Eckman Adams Undecided



David Chen* Adams Univ. of Michigan



Jordyn Cook Stoney Creek Univ. of Michigan



Madelyn Deir Stoney Creek Northern Michigan



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Roman Cherneta Stoney Creek Michigan Technological



William Cooper Rochester Univ. of Michigan



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Wadih Elaridi Rochester Univ. of Michigan



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John Cracium Rochester Alma College



Bruno Deni New York Univ.



Elaine Donahue Stoney Creek Univ. of Michigan



Ethan Eliassen* Univ. of Michigan



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Jack Crandall Rochester Univ. of Michigan



Pranav Deshmukh Rochester Michigan State Univ.



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Sidesh Devardadjy* Rochester



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Joshua Ellis Stoney Creek Central Michigan Univ.



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Anna Daugherty Adams Michigan State Univ.



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Aidan Duggan Stoney Creek Univ. of Wisconsin



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Chaz Dunselman

Univ. of Michigan

Stoney Creek



Ian Faurote Stoney Creek Univ. of Michigan



Carson Collins Adams Univ. of Michigan



Ella DeGraw Stoney Creek Univ. of Michigan

Ian DeGrendel

Stoney Creek

Undecided



Adams Univ. of South Carolina

Melissa Dilley



Vincent Duronio Stoney Creek



Hallie Faycurry Stoney Creek Michigan State Univ.





Imani Dinkins Adams Undecided



Grand Valley State



Munizah Fazal Rochester Wayne State Univ.



* National Merit Scholar Finalist



Paulina Fidler Adams Univ. of Detroit Mercy



Megan Garnai Adams Indiana Univ.



Blake Griffith Stoney Creek Michigan State Univ.



Nathan Hamrick Stoney Creek Michigan Technological Univ.



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Dylan Fitzgerald Rochester Wayne State Univ.



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Paul-Franklin Heyninger Rochester Michigan State Univ.



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Micah Gendich Rochester Univ. of Michigan



Pranavi Gudi* Rochester Michigan State Univ.



Marcella Hanna Rochester Michigan State Univ.



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Nicholas Gerbi Rochester Michigan State Univ.



Nikolas Guerrieri Rochester Michigan State Univ.



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Mela Hogerheide Clemson Univ.



Elizabeth Forsell Stoney Creek Univ. of Michigan



Trevor Gergics Stoney Creek Michigan State Univ.



Tyler Guolla Rochester Michigan State Univ.



Kailee Hanson Stoney Creek Center for Creative Studies



Jack Honomichl Case Western Reserve Univ.



Kennedy Fraser Rochester Univ. of Rochester



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Hector Fuentes Martinez Rochester Univ. of Michigan



Shelby Gibson Rochester Michigan State Univ.



Savannah Gurley Rochester Undecided



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Stoney Creek Michigan State Univ.

Univ. of Michigan

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Rochester

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Jayson Igwe Stoney Creek Michigan State Univ.



Marissa Gallagher Rochester Florida Atlantic Univ.

Jimena Garcia

Oakland Univ.

Adams



Kate Green Rochester Florida State Univ.



Kiera Hall

Zachary Hager

Stoney Creek



Rochester Univ. of Tampa



Ellie Irish Stoney Creek Miami Univ.

Koshy Jacob

Univ. of Michigan

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Rochester



* National Merit Scholar Finalist



Austin Jasky Adams Michigan State Univ.



Sloane Kerska Stoney Creek Purdue Univ.



Rohan Kochhar Rochester Michigan State Univ.



Jillian Lauridsen Adams Loyola Univ.



Ethan Liedtke Stoney Creek Michigan State Univ.



Jenna Jenkins Adams Michigan State Univ.



Zahra Khan Adams Wayne State Univ.



Joanna Kosowska Rochester Undecided



Jeanette Lawrence Stoney Creek Univ. of Michigan



Jerry Lin Rochester Univ. of Michigan



Elizabeth Jewell Rochester Michigan State Univ.



Caleb Kienbaum Rochester Michigan State Univ.



Molly Kovtun Stoney Creek Univ. of Georgia



Evelyne Lee Rochester Univ. of Michigan



Paul Lin* Adams Michigan State Univ.



Macy Johnson Rochester Michigan State Univ.



Austin Kim Michigan State Univ.



Kate Kramm Aquinas College



Sabrina Lee Michigan State Univ.



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Carly Jones Rochester Univ. of Michigan



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Jillian Jones Rochester Michigan State Univ.



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Stephen Lee Adams



Tingqi Liu Stoney Creek Univ. of Michigan



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Katharina Lohner Univ. of Toledo



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Adams



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Stoney Creek Hope College

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Ayden Mell Stoney Creek Univ. of Michigan



Gwendolyn Mullins Stoney Creek College for Creative Studies



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Daniela Meson De La Fuente Stoney Creek Oakland Univ.



Manar Murray Adams Univ. of Michigan



Victor Nejman Adams Undecided



David Palazzolo Stoney Creek Columbia College



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Shrimann Myneni Rochester Univ. of Michigan



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Mallory Moilanen Adams Univ. of Glasgow



Adams Michigan State Univ.



* National Merit Scholar Finalist



Faith Park Rochester Wayne State Univ.



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Crystal Shi* Adams Univ. of Michigan



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Univ. of South Wales

Rochester



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Sambanthamoorthy Rochester Univ. of Michigan

Achintya



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Rochester Univ. of Michigan



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Adam Rivera Rochester Oakland Univ.



Camille Sanchez Adams Brigham Young Univ.



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* National Merit Scholar Finalist



Jillian Sinovic Stoney Creek Michigan State Univ.



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Erynne Stanton Adams Central Michigan Univ.



Bailey Symington Stoney Creek Michigan Technological Univ.



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Aiden Starr Stoney Creek Michigan State Univ.



Lugracianna Taliercio Rochester Saginaw Valley State Univ.



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Univ. of Michigan

Rochester



Grace Wasiluk Stoney Creek Undecided



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RCS budget excellence earns international recognition

Rochester Community Schools is consistently recognized for its commitment to transparency and excellence in financial reporting which supports a balanced budget that is sustainable, supports and maintains high-quality growth student programs.

For the fifth consecutive year, RCS has earned the Meritorious Budget Award, indicating excellence in school budget presentation and transparent budget development.

For the third consecutive year, RCS has earned a Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting, related to the RCS Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Both awards from the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International are awarded only to school districts who have undergone a rigorous review by professional auditors and continue to meet or exceed the program's stringent criteria.

"The RCS business team is comprised distinguished professionals who student support achievement through effective resource management in various



areas ranging from finance and operations to food services and transportation, with a commitment to high-quality education," said Executive Director of Business Operations Matthew McDaniel.

The 2022 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 2022 sinking fund millage rate is 1.4630 mills.

Budget overview

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

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
	Actual	Amended	Proposed
Revenue	\$184.3	\$198.9	\$196.4
Expenditures	184.2	199.7	197.5
Surplus (Deficit)	.1	8	-1.1
Ending Fund Balance	38.6	37.8	36.7
Ending Fund Balance as a Percent of Expenditures	20.96%	18.93%	18.60%

District Equity Statement affirms commitment to inclusion

The District Equity Statement reads: "Rochester Community Schools is committed to providing an equitable education that prepares all students for an interdependent, evolving world. We believe in a unified culture of belonging for all. We recognize that systemic inequities exist that create educational equity gaps among various identity groups, specifically those who have been marginalized. Through a multifaceted approach of inclusion, we commit to creating opportunities and access, protecting the well-being of all, eliminating barriers, and educating within a safe environment where all individuals are valued, respected, included, welcomed, and acknowledged."

The Rochester Community School District Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution to adopt the District Equity Statement, a collaborative effort to ensure inclusive learning environments.

"The RCS District Equity Statement serves as our commitment to honor and affirm the complete humanity of all students, staff, caregivers, and members within our organization," said Tiffany Goliday, executive director for diversity, equity and inclusion.

"I wholeheartedly support the RCS Equity Statement and am proud to work along-side the smart, dedicated individuals who made sure every word of it meaningfully contributes to the mission of our organization," said Board of Education Vice President Kristin Bull. "We have a long way to go to address equity gaps in education — as a district and as a greater community. My hope is that this statement serves as a guide for that work going forward."

The District Equity Statement is the result of a collaborative process that was initiated by the District Equity Committee, a representative group of students, parents, caregivers, staff and community members who serve to advance Rochester Community Schools on its journey toward cultural proficiency, inclusion and belonging.

"Having worked on the statement as part of the District Equity Committee, I know first-hand the thought and care that was put into crafting it," said Amber Gress, RCS information literacy specialist. "It truly shows the commitment of the district to continue to lift up all voices, support an inclusive learning and work environment, and foster positive change. What is even more exciting to me, is that

this equity statement is just the beginning. It is a stepping-off point for taking action and creating sustainable change that will benefit both our district and community. I look forward to continuing the work of the District Equity Committee."



Rochester High School Parent and RCS Equity Committee Member Albert Rush said, "As a parent, I have volunteered at RCS since my 10th grader was in first grade and am currently serving as the vice president of membership for the Rochester High School PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association). I am excited that after five years of intense discussion and challenging work, RCS has adopted this District Equity Statement. It is my hope and prayer that this statement will help RCS advance as a more equitable district."

As the largest district in Oakland County, Rochester Community Schools has been acknowledged for actively embracing and signing into practice a statement that strengthens its commitment to the work of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Dr. Jay Marks, diversity and equity consultant for Oakland Schools, attended the May 9 board meeting and read a memorandum of support on behalf of the Oakland County Equity Leaders Referent Group, a body of equity leaders

representing 10 school districts within Oakland County.

Dr. Marks said in part, "We applaud the work done by Mrs. Tiffany Goliday and her committee to clearly articulate the purpose, intentions and rationale for advancing equity. In our current climate of division and controversy, many organizations have suspended this important work. Others have chosen to continue, but are doing so in ways that avoid public scrutiny. This statement represents a transparent and collaborative effort toward honoring the shared humanity of all Rochester Community School stakeholders."

Goliday reinforced that the District Equity Statement is an important first step in the process toward cultural proficiency. "The District Equity Statement is the beginning of a journey. It is an intentional effort to amplify the voices and experiences of groups and individuals who have been marginalized; analyze the equity gaps that exist in our data; and dedicate ourselves to creating an environment free from barriers so all members of our community can thrive and succeed," said Goliday.

"We are proud of our community's commitment to supporting the health and well-being of our students, teachers, administrators, staff and families. An important part of that work includes ensuring all members of our district have a sense of belonging and are safe, valued, and respected," said Dr. Robert Shaner, superintendent. "The District Equity Statement is an excellent example of how great advancements can be made when we all work together for the common good."

Rochester Community Schools Board of Education

Rochester Community Schools extends our sincere gratitude to the volunteers who serve on our Board of Education. Through their tireless commitment to ensure students remain at the forefront of all decisions, their support for our teachers, administrators and staff, and their ability to lead with kindness and respect, they are making a difference.

Special thanks to RCS Board of Education members:

Kevin Beers, president
Kristin Bull, vice president
Michelle Bueltel, treasurer
Joseph Pittel, secretary
Barbara Anness, trustee
Jessica Gupta, trustee
Scott Muska, trustee



Outstanding staff honored for Excellence in Education



The Rochester Community Schools Foundation presented Excellence in Education Awards to eight 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 Excellence in Education Award recipients!

Laura Duff, teacher and coach, Reuther Middle School
Jeff Frankowiak, administrator, RCS Virtual Campus and ACE
Barb Gasko, paraeducator, McGregor Elementary School
Dawn Klemp, teacher, Baldwin Elementary School
Kelly Kubik, teacher, Meadow Brook Elementary School
Tracye Schwartz, teacher and learning consultant, Rochester
Adams High School

Hanan Spencer, teacher, West Middle School **Chad Zwolinski**, teacher, Rochester High School.

RCS is grateful to Michele Beitelshees 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.



RCS athletes **Division 1 state champions**

Rochester Community Schools is proud to recognize the elite athletes who earned MHSAA (Michigan High School Athletic Association) state championships during the 2021-22 school year. Earning a state championship is the highest honor that a high-school athlete can achieve. We are proud of these student-athletes for their discipline, strength, skill and commitment to excellence!



Katie Fodale, skier, Rochester Adams High School, earned the individual state slalom title with a time of 1:03:60.



Nathan DeHart, skier, Rochester Adams High School, earned the individual state title in the giant slalom with a time of 1:02:18.



Jack Van Howe, swimmer, Rochester High School, placed first in the boys 100-yard backstroke for the second consecutive year, with a time of 48.13 seconds.



Armon Howard, hurdler, Rochester Adams High School track and field team, placed first in the 300-meter hurdles with a time of 37.30-seconds.



Rochester Adams High School Competitive Cheer Team

Celeste Barnard Trisha Bartolome Ava Bolin Sophia Bondra Katie Burgin Elizabeth Doran Destini Dorkins Reese Falconer Francesca Ford

Carley Hedlund
Lily Hittle
Emilia Honingford
Laurel Kania
Anna Kelly
Sabrina Lee
Ella Malinowski
Emma Maynard
Skylar Menzies

Peyton Regalado Alex Ris Megan Robinson Ashley Rosati Gigi Schultz Cece Shea Christina Truszkowski



Run, walk or fly during the Hometown Hustle 5K or 1-mile superhero color walk/run



Hometown Hustle 5K and 1-mile superhero color walk/run SEPTEMBER 17 8 a.m.

200 Diversion Street, Rochester, Michigan

Save the date for Saturday, Sept. 17, 2022, when community members of all ages are invited to support the Rochester Community Schools Foundation's premier fundraiser, the Hometown Hustle, a beloved community tradition.

In addition to the 5K loop, this year the RCS Foundation has added an all-ages 1-mile superhero color run, where participants will receive a superhero cape and color powder packet. The 5K course and 1-mile family-friendly color walk/run will begin at the site of our generous sponsor, Chief Financial Credit Union, 200 Diversion Street, Rochester, Michigan.

There are three great ways to support and make a difference: Sponsor! Register to run or walk the course! Volunteer!

For more information, call 248-726-3000 or visit our website at: https://rcs-foundation.org/hometown-hustle/. A group of four or more friends, co-workers, or family members can register together for a discount.

"We are fortunate to be part of a community that consistently supports education and social-emotional wellness for RCS students," said Joann Beydoun, RCS Foundation director. "We are proud to offer this opportunity for donors and participants to make a difference through scholarships, school grants and other learning opportunities."

We look forward to seeing you on Saturday, Sept. 17, at Chief Financial Credit Union, 200 Diversion Street!





RCS and school service partners are now hiring!

Open positions for:

- ♦ Bus drivers
- ♦ Custodial services
- ♦ Food services
- ♦ Paraeducators
- ♦ Pre-K teachers and assistants
- ◆ School-age care associates
- RCS Caring Steps childcare staff
- ♦ Safe-Ed. school security
- Technology specialists
- Teachers and guest teachers



For employment opportunities, visit: www.rochester.k12.mi.us



































Rochester Community Schools 52585 Dequindre Road Rochester, MI 48307 248-726-3000 www.rochester.k12.mi.us Non-Profit Org. U.S. Postage **PAID** Rochester, MI

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POSTAL PATRON ROCHESTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

ROCHESTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS 2022-23 DISTRICT CALENDAR

A 1		JST
ΔI	1671	

29 First day of school, half day grades TK-12 and ATPS

Full day of school for grades 1-12 and ATPS, TK/kindergarten last names A-M only

Full day of school for grades 1-12 and ATPS TK/kindergarten last names N-Z only

SEPTEMBER

Full day of school for grades TK-12 and ATPS Labor Day recess begins at end of day

6 Classes resume

OCTOBER

7 No school for students districtwide, professional development

No school, Indigenous Peoples Day

NOVEMBER

4 Half day of school, end of quarter 1 for grades 6-12 and ATPS

8 No school for students districtwide, Election Day

18 Half day of school, end of trimester 1, ECSE-grade 5

Thanksgiving recess begins at end of day, ECSE-grade 12 and ATPS Thanksgiving recess November 23-27, 2022

Classes resume

DECEMBER

28

No school for students districtwide, professional development

Winter holiday recess begins at end of day, ECSE-grade 12 and ATPS

JANUARY

9 Classes resume

No school, Martin Luther King Jr. holiday

Half day or full day for grades 6-12 and ATPS (To be determined based upon exam structure)

19 Half day of school, grades 6-12 and ATPS

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

FEBRUARY

No school for students districtwide, professional development

17 Midwinter recess begins at end of day, ECSE-grade 12 and ATPS

22 Classes resume

MARCH

3 Half day of school, end of trimester 2, ECSE-grade 5

24 Half day of school districtwide
End of quarter 3, grades 6-12 and ATPS
Spring recess begins at end of day, ECSE-grade 12
and ATPS

APRIL

3 Classes resume

7 No school districtwide

11-12 PSAT/SAT testing, details and schedule to be determined

17 No school for students districtwide, professional development

MAY

No school for students districtwide, professional development

29 No school, Memorial Day holiday

30 Classes resume

JUNE

7 Half day or full day for grades 6-12 and ATPS (To be determined based upon exam structure)

8 Half day for students grades 6-12 and ATPS

9 Half day for students districtwide End of school year

KEY

ATPS – Adult Transition Program and Services

ECSE – Early Childhood Special Education

TK – Transitional Kindergarten