

RMS-CES ROCKET NEWSLETTER

February 2025



February

February 13th
Winter Parent-Teacher
Conferences

February 14th
Valentine's Day

February 17th
No School

February 21st
6th Grade Baker
Field Experience

February 28th
Click below for info!
[RMS-CES Dance](#)

March 20th
End of Quartertr 3

March 21st-28th
No School-Spring Break

At RMS-CES, students are empowered to become innovators through engaging, authentic and developmentally appropriate opportunities, access to a strong academic foundation, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

We are a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) School with a focus on Environmental Studies.

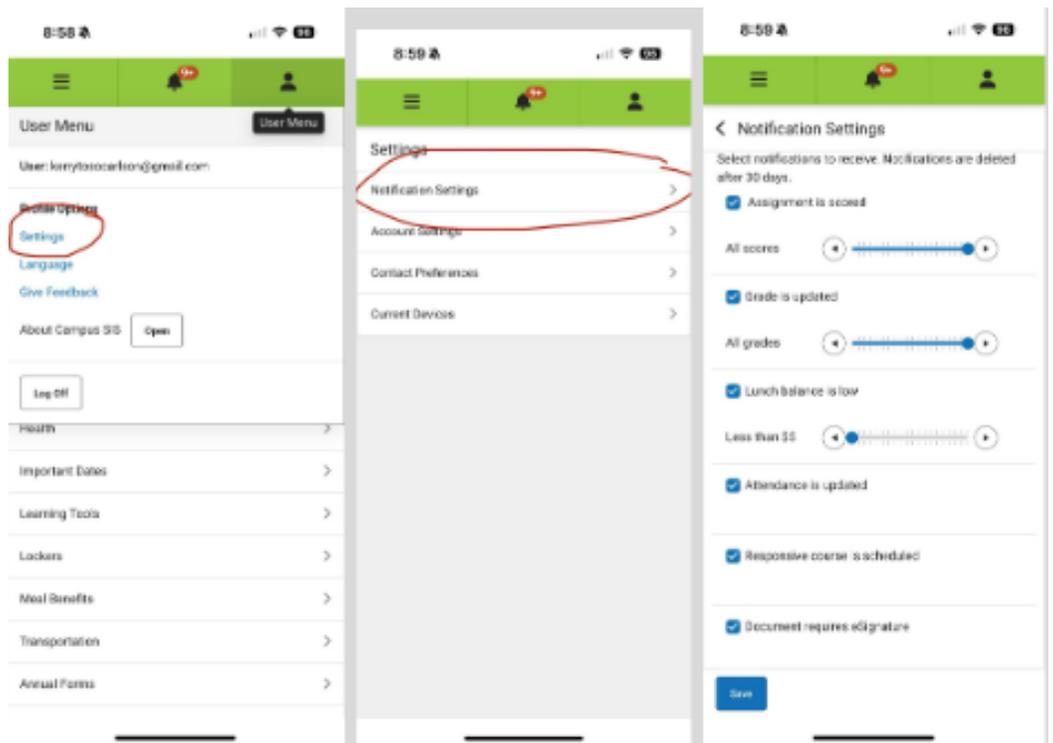


From the Principal

RMS-CES Families,

I hope this message finds you well as we move through the heart of the school year. February brings many opportunities to connect, engage, and support our students. Below are a few important updates and reminders.

Stay Connected: Parent Portal Alerts To help you stay informed, I encourage you to enable notifications on Parent Portal (Infinite Campus). This feature allows you to receive real-time updates on grades, attendance, and other key information. Please see the attached screenshots for guidance on setting up alerts on your mobile device.



RMS-CES ROCKET NEWSLETTER

From the Principal...continued

ATTENTION

To call your student in
absent:

763-477-7525

Welcoming New Staff

We are excited to introduce several new staff members who have joined our Rockford Middle School team:

Lindsey Menard – School Nurse
Erin Sindelir – Student Support Specialist
Jamalyn Soland-Weege – Paraprofessional
Jersey Marth– Paraprofessional
Nathan Stanek – Special Education Teacher
Stacey Peterson – Head Cook

Please join me in welcoming them to our school community!

Rapid Reminders

- Parent Pickup & Drop-off: Please use Door 4 for student pickup and drop-off. Ash Street is designated for bus and van routes only.
- Chromebook Care: These devices are critical learning tools. Please remind your student to handle them with care and charge them nightly.
- Cell Phone Expectations: We appreciate your continued support of our “Off and Away All Day” policy. Students should keep their phones off and stored away from 7:50 AM to 2:45 PM.

Please know that our teachers use a tool called the Academic Planner for grades 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th to communicate the learning in the classroom. You might find this to be a helpful tool to determine essential due dates, homework, upcoming tests, or simply the learning that is happening in the classroom.

Parent-Teacher Conferences – Thursday, February 13th, from 3:30–7:30 PM in an open format style. You are welcome to meet with teachers at your convenience in the following locations:

5th & 6th Grade: Gym

7th Grade: Media Center

8th Grade: Cafeteria

If you have been monitoring your child’s progress and do not have concerns, attendance is optional. However, our staff is always available via email and phone should you need assistance.

Thank you for your continued partnership in making Rockford Middle School a great place for learning. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Paul Marzecha

RMS-CES Principal



CHARACTER STRONG!

These CharacterDare challenges also provide students with more opportunities to practice habits discussed in class such as:

- Conversation Starters: Ways to practice positive communication for the whole family.
- Acts of Kindness: Simple ideas to support each other at home and in the community.
- Recreation and Rest: Fun and relaxing ways to unwind and enjoy each other's company.
- Expressions of Love: A variety of invitations family members can use to give & receive love.

This school year students and staff have been participating in weekly Character Strong lessons during their Boost classes. As we move into the new year we would like to introduce you to Family CharacterDares. Each Family CharacterDare offers families the opportunity to engage in challenges designed to increase connection and conversation at home.

Cell PHONE

Away for the Day Website <https://www.awayfortheday.org>

AASA Article: A Mind Shift Over Cellphones in Schools
<https://www.aasa.org/resources/resource/mindshift-over-cellphones-schools>

Book Study: The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness by Jonathan Haidt

United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy released a new Surgeon General's Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health - [PDF](#)



Guided Imagery

Guided imagery can have many health-related physical and emotional benefits. The steps that follow can help you teach teens to use their imaginations to actually change how they are feeling and what they are focused on.

www.changetochill.org

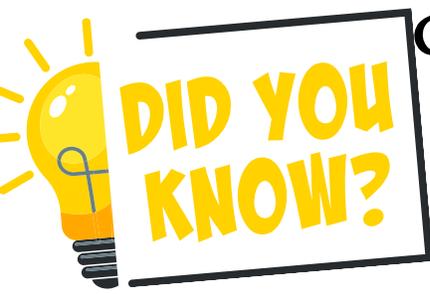


Please click [HERE](#) to read more about Chronic Absentism

Since COVID, chronic absenteeism has increased substantially. Up to 30% of Minnesota students are considered chronically absent. The criteria for being considered chronically absent is missing 10% or more of school days. When students are absent from school they miss critical instruction time and are at the greatest risk of falling behind. Please review the link below to learn more.



School-Based Therapy



Mrs. McKayla Kent

As the school-based therapist at RMS, I am available to work with students before, during, and after school hours on Tuesdays and Wednesdays with the understanding that I do not request sessions with students during their core classes. Sessions last from 45-60 minutes and, unless needs require otherwise, are held weekly. On occasion, sessions involving parents and students are required as part of the therapeutic process to ensure that the family dynamics that may contribute to student behaviors are addressed as well. I also am available as a resource for staff to provide any training or input for interventions or needs as they come throughout the year.

My HOURS

Monday-Thursday 7:30-5:30pm



RMS-CES | PARENT-COMMUNITY

News



YEARBOOK

ORDER YOUR STUDENTS
2024-2025 HERE-
DEADLINE TO ORDER IS
APRIL 4TH

Walsworth yearbooks

Tax Season 



The Minnesota Department of Revenue offers families valuable tax benefits on the 2024 income tax returns. Minnesota offers several credits that ease the financial burden for families, renters, homeowners, and working individuals

Please click [HERE](#) to view the Child Tax Credit Benefits

Please click [HERE](#) to view the K-12 Education Subtraction and Credit

<https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/>

RMS-CES | PARENT-COMMUNITY News

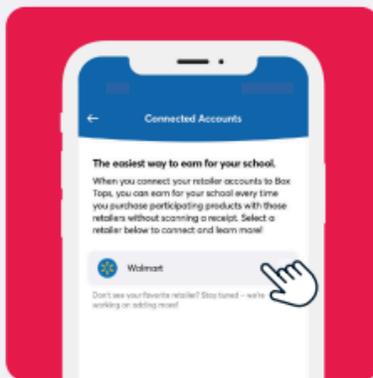


EARN FOR YOUR SCHOOL WITHOUT SCANNING!



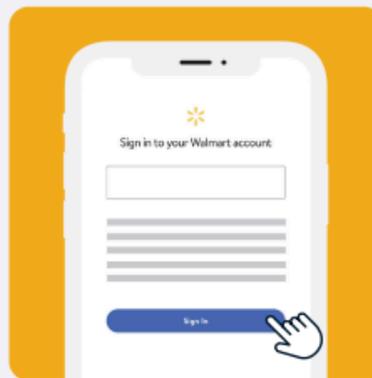
Now you can earn cash for your school every time you buy Box Tops products at Walmart — no scanning required! Just follow these simple steps to connect your Box Tops and Walmart accounts.

HOW IT WORKS:



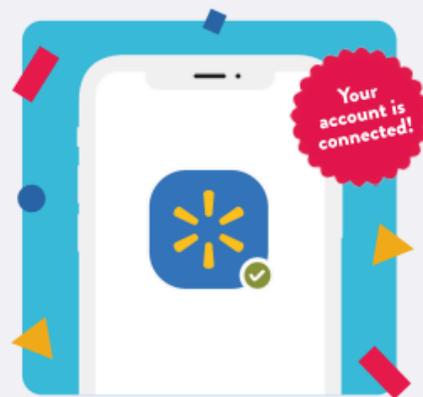
STEP 1

Download the Box Tops app or update to the latest version. In the app, go to your profile, then tap on "Connected Accounts" and select "Walmart."



STEP 2

When prompted, sign in to your Walmart account, (If you don't have a Walmart account, you'll be prompted to create one). Make sure to save a payment method to your Walmart account.



STEP 3

Your Walmart account is now connected to Box Tops, so your qualifying purchases made in-store and online with a saved payment method will earn for your school! Box Tops will be credited after you receive your Walmart items.

DON'T HAVE THE BOX TOPS APP YET? GET IT AT [BTFE.COM/APP](https://www.btf.com/app)

CONNECT YOUR ACCOUNTS NOW
FOR THE EASIEST WAY TO EARN





JOIN
OUR
TEAM

**WE ARE
HIRING**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION
PARAPROFESSIONAL**

- Enthusiastic about student learning.
- Compassionate
- Team player
- Demonstrated interest and respect for the unique needs of students and families.
- REAMS & RMS Openings

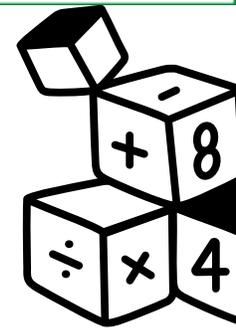
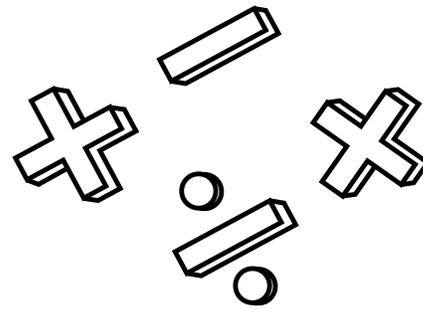
APPLY ONLINE TODAY!

Rockford883.org





News after school Math HELP



Our after-school math help program empowers students to strengthen their math skills, build confidence, and achieve academic success. With personalized guidance and a supportive environment, students tackle challenging concepts while connecting with peers who share their goals. Together, we're creating a thriving community that celebrates learning and growth—one equation at a time!

Meets every Thursday in Room 304 from 3:00-4:00pm

Check
this
out

SCHOOL STORE INFORMATION



Rocket Store Hours

Scan the QR
code to see
store hours or
Click HERE



FREE

Mental
HEALTH
Café



Rockford Community center

Tuesdays at 7:00-8:00pm

- ***January 14th:** The Mountain ahead: How to hike the mountain of mental health challenges.
- ***February 11th:** Why Creation Rests in Winter: Creating good sleep appetites.
- ***March 18th:** Movement is Momentum: Cure what ails you.
- ***April 8th:** New Spring Green: Watching for rebirth in your life.

All classes are FREE and snacks and beverages will be provided. Scan to register.





Spread Some Love This Valentine's Day!

Rockford Area teachers and staff often spend their own money to support our kids. This Valentine's Day let's show them how much we care by donating items from their classroom wish lists. It's a small gesture that makes a big difference!

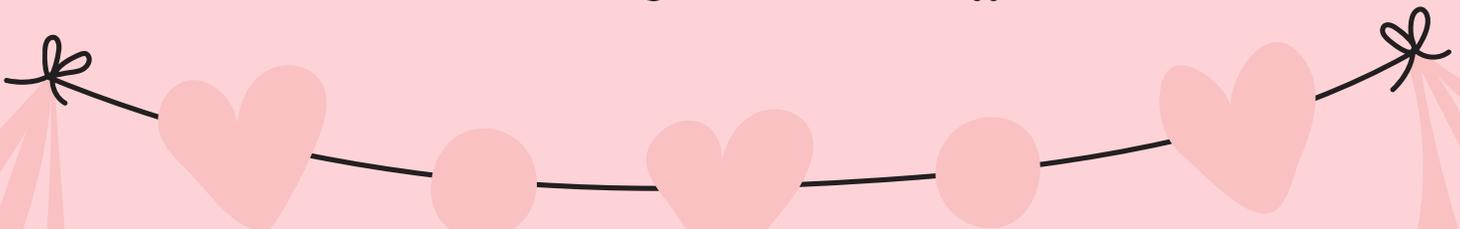


Steps to Donate:

1. View Classroom Wish Lists
2. Click [here](#) to view Classroom Wish Lists and choose items to donate.
3. Valentine Donation Card
4. Use one of our special Valentine donation cards to send along with your gift (or feel free to use your own card).
5. Delivery Options
 - Drop off your donation at the school's front office.
 - Have your student bring it directly to the recipient's classroom.
 - Note: If ordering from a staff member's Amazon wish list, please ship to your home first, then bring the item to the school with your donation card.

Donation Window: February 1 – 14

Let's spread the love and make this Valentine's Day unforgettable for our hardworking teachers and staff!



RMS-CES | PARENT-COMMUNITY

Rockford Education Foundation



About the Rockford Education Foundation

REF is a 501(c)3 nonprofit with a mission to enhance education, maximize students' potential, and inspire the community. We couldn't do it without the incredible support of our donors, volunteers, and this amazing community. Thank you for making a difference!

Learn more at www.rockfordfoundation.org and follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/rockfordeducationfoundation>

Get Involved

Interested in volunteering or learning more about how you can support REF? Reach out to Nikki at nikki@rockfordfoundation.org.

Together, we can do so much more!

Nikki Arvold

Executive Director, Rockford Education Foundation

612-226-3910 | nikki@rockfordfoundation.org

www.rockfordfoundation.org

RMS-CES | PARENT-COMMUNITY

Staff Spotlight



Amy Belanger
Special Education

I have taught special education for almost 30 years at RMS-CES. I joined the Middle School team right out of college and loved it so much I never left. I began my career teaching children with specific learning disabilities and have evolved over time and now teach children that have developmental disabilities and/or Autism spectrum disorder.

Favorite Things:

- Working with Kids
- Being at the Lake & on the pontoon
- My animals
- Gardening



This is my fourth year teaching at Rockford Area Schools RMS-CES, I teach Introduction to Spanish for both 7th and 8th grades. Also, as an EL teacher, I support students acquiring English and academic language. My students know that I have a love of llamas and alpacas because they remind me of my semester abroad in Chile. Outside of school I stay busy with my family and doing different crafts like weaving. During our Wellness Day last spring I had the chance to share my love of weaving with the students as we made yarn pom poms, and some students even made small weavings.



Favorite Things:



- Weaving
- Family
- Llamas

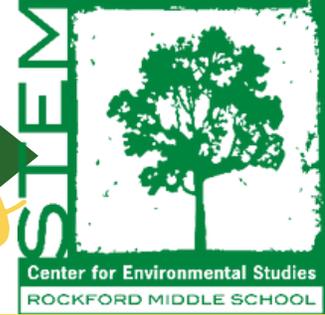


Kerry Toso Carlson
7th & 8th Grade Spanish
and EL

RMS

RMS-CES | PARENT-COMMUNITY

Our Paraprofessionals



During the week of January 20th, we celebrated our awesome, outstanding & devoted paraprofessionals!



Mr. Nyerkeh



Mrs. Bombard



Mrs. Binsfeld



Mrs. Coons



Mrs. Stefanich



Ms. Weiland



Mr. Kashemair



Mrs. Lockwood



Mrs. Borders



Ms. Marth



Mrs. Buckingham

RMS-CES | POINTS OF PRIDE

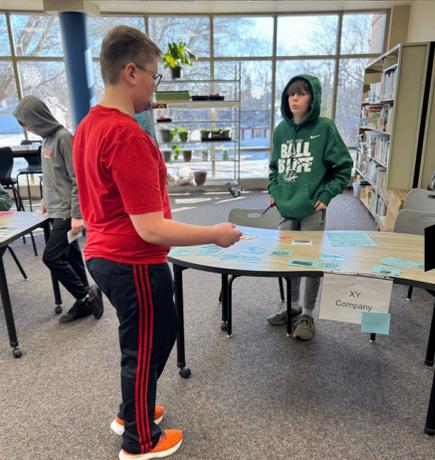
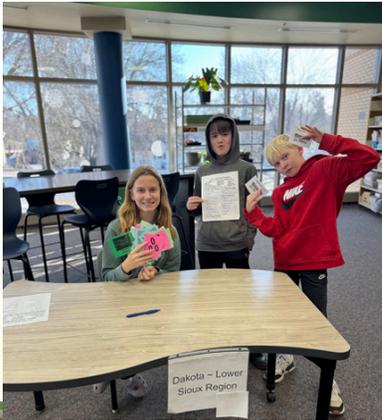
Social Studies w/ Mrs. Korzendorfer

6th



Social studies students spent a class period in December taking on different roles at a trade post, stepping back into the 1800s. Some were traders, European, Dakota, and Ojibwe, making the best trade they could get. While others were clerks keeping records and inventory at their trade post. The activity started in silence to simulate the language barrier between the fur traders, Dakota and Ojibwe. Students worked to make connections and build alliances to make their best trades.

1800



RMS-CES | POINTS OF PRIDE

Social Studies w/ Mrs. Korzendorfer



6th

Sixth graders played lacrosse on a couple of warm 50 degree days in November. Lacrosse is Minnesota's oldest team sport, originating with the Dakota and Ojibwe. They played it for fun to celebrate good times, honor the dead, as part of a healing, and to prepare for war.



LACROSSE

RMS-CES | POINTS OF PRIDE

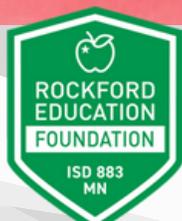
Digital Skills w/ Mrs. Russell



6th grade students ended their quarter of Digital Skills by working with a 3D modeling program. They spent time using the online tools to combine positive and negative shapes to create new objects. Students then saw their designs come to life with our school's 3D printer.

The printer was purchased by the Education Foundation in 2019 and has been used every year since!

Thank you to the Education Foundation for this engaging opportunity for our students!



RMS-CES | POINTS OF PRIDE

RMS Volunteer Club



THE RMS VOLUNTEER CLUB LEARNED THE VALUE OF GIVING BACK AS THEY CAME TOGETHER TO MAKE 200 SANDWICHES FOR THE HOMELESS. THIS WAS DONE IN PARTNERSHIP THROUGH THE SANDWICH PROJECT MINNESOTA.

The Sandwich Project MINNESOTA



W/ Ms. Biorn

SPARK Conference 2025

On the first Tuesday back from winter break a group of 5th through 7th grade student applicants had the opportunity to attend a student conference called SPARK, hosted by Resource Training and Solutions. 30 of our STEM enthusiasts visited the St. Cloud State University campus attending a variety of science and nature topic presentations and hands-on learning experiences. Sessions ranged from Carpentry Apprenticeships, to Coding, Building Your Own Lure, and Yo-Yo's and the Science of Spin. Students chose 3- 60 minute sessions, in addition to the Keynote speaker, Dazzling Dave, the Yo-Yo Master. Sessions were led by professionals in their fields such as paleontologists, entomologists (insects), or civil engineers. This was an opportunity brought to our 5th-7th graders through our EXCEL Gifted and Talented Program. The purpose of the conference was to introduce students to a variety of scientific and natural elements to inspire their natural interests and talents in the field. The group experience was provided to students who showed an intense and advanced interest in science topics.

Our student-scientists reported the following discoveries...



"I learned about how to control robots with coding." Grayson Hunter, experience Coding session
Jay Drummond & Lincoln Lewis pictured programming the codes



"We learned about different types of rocks and how they formed. There is a type of rock that comes from a volcano, called pumice, that floats." Lincoln & Porter Lewis, How to Tell an Agate VS. Amethyst

Keira Delany, Mackenzie Marudas, & Emma Hosmer (pictured left) examining rocks



"I loved the Pendulum Snake (pictured left), and I learned that energy can transfer to things in different ways." Samuel Oluwafemi, Pendulum Snake session



Alex Thomas, Cole Ashfeld & Ruby Briggs (pictured right) playing a variation of Rock, Paper, Scissors to show the metamorphosis cycle of an insect in the Insect Safari session.

Ada Bartels (pictured right) getting ready to have her

BBQ cricket snack. When Quinn Oakvik-Orr was asked what he thought of the cricket snack, he stated, "It was meh. Not great, but also not terrible."



"We learned how to identify different species of fish and how to attract them with lures. The purpose of a lure is to look like things in the water, like a frog, crayfish, minnow, or worm." Ducky Zweifel & Alex Thomas, Build Your Own Lure session
Group student lure creations and Samuel Oluwafemi & Sydney Hollingsworth making their lures pictured right.



"My favorite session was the Yo-Yo one because he was so cool to watch. My favorite part was when he knocked the poker chip off of the girl's ear." Connor Stewart, Yo-Yo's and the Science of Spin session



RMS-CES | POINTS OF PRIDE

RMS Spelling Bee 2025



Rockford Middle School's District



Thaddeus Parrish has earned a spot in Minnesota's Regional Spelling Bee. 7th Grader, Thad, reigns as Rockford Middle School's District Spelling Bee champion!

On Friday, January 10th, 18 students in 5th through 8th grade displayed their spelling abilities in the official district-level spelloff. This year's Bee lasted 21 rounds, using 158 words. Our top 3 students went head to head for 7 rounds. Thad secured the win in the 21st round, reigning as our 2025 RMS-CES Spelling Bee champion! Thad's winning word was "symbolizes." Our 2nd place contestant, Aaron Chaudhury(6th grade), ended with the word "gravelly," in round 20, and our 3rd place contestant, Samuel Oluwafemi(6th Grade), ended with the word "ruffian," in round 19.

Congratulations Thad! Mr. Parrish will go on to represent Rockford Area Schools at the Regional Spelling Bee on February 11 in Sartell, MN. Congratulations to all of Rockford's qualifying Spelling Bee participants!



RMS-CES | POINTS OF PRIDE

Language Arts w/ Mrs.

Hendrickson

8



In LA8, 8th Grade students have been tapping into their critical thinking skills throughout our study of Catherine Applegate's novel, *Home of the Brave*. After establishing background knowledge with a study of "The Lost Boys of Sudan", we got busy! We wrote Free Verse Poetry, created Poetic Phrase posters, kept Figurative Language Journals, and provided evidence for two Central Themes: Hope and Too Much, Too Little. Next, students will design and construct creative and colorful Symbolism Cubes and share their analyses during the upcoming "Hanging of the Cubes Ceremony". As always, each step students have made along the way prepares them for "what is next".

This week, we kicked off "I Love to Read Month", which allows us to celebrate the reader within each one of us. On Friday, 2/7/25, we will devote class to reading by getting comfy with our favorite books. At the end of Quarter 3, we will once again celebrate the winners of the "Reading Journal Awards", which showcases the number of books students have read throughout the quarter.



Finally, a shout out to 8th Graders Emma Bode and Emma Misuraco-Janish for creating the design layout in the hall for our 8th Graders: "Path to Success"! Thanks to both of them for taking time to organize and hang all of the "shoes" that represent our journey.

