



# Communication Guide 2025-2026



*Everything you need to communicate effectively in one simple guide.  
A publication of Rockwood Communications*



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# meet the team

Effective communication builds strong links among schools, parents, staff and community. Internal and external communication requires the ongoing management of systematic, two-way, honest channels between our educational organization and our publics.

Clear, consistent communication establishes a positive, cohesive image. This handbook offers valuable guidelines for developing communication and supporting materials that reach audiences at the right time and in the right way. Use these guidelines to effectively deliver messages and reinforce the positive image of the Rockwood School District.

The Rockwood Communications Department supports Rockwood's students, staff and community by providing a forum for strategic, two-way communication. The department works with the media, marketing, printing, graphic design, audio and video and web-based communication strategies for both internal and external audiences.

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# media relations

The Board of Education encourages Rockwood staff to work cooperatively with the news media regarding coverage of the district, its operations, its programs and accomplishments. News and special events should be submitted to the communications department so they can help spread your message.

## Things to keep in mind:



At all times, **a member of the communications department should be present when students are interviewed or photographed** in conjunction with a school or district function. This Board policy is for the safety of the students.



If the media calls your school and wants to interview or photograph a student or staff member, please instruct them to contact the communications department. In like manner, communications will inform the school if such contact originates with them.



If the issue is sensitive or controversial, the chief communications officer will consult with the superintendent. Sensitive or controversial issues include, but are not limited to, the following topics: bullying, drugs, alcohol, sex, gangs, weapons, violence and race.

Additionally, if the topic of interview or photography is sensitive or controversial in nature, parental consent is strongly recommended when students are involved.

Check out more on One Rockwood:  
[rsdmo.org/one](http://rsdmo.org/one)

# media relations

## • What IS news?



Think of news as...

**LOCAL:** What are you doing in class that could impact St. Louis (help others, provide insight into something new)? Is it tied to a national effort?

**TIMELY:** We want to share your story before it happens. Call the department of communications ahead of time.

**VISUAL:** Think about the types of images you see in newspapers, on social media and on television. What will students be doing? What can be seen?

**UNIQUE:** How is your story idea different?

## • How do we promote news?

We have more tools to promote stories than ever before. While securing positive, traditional media coverage remains important to the district, we can now reach thousands of people using JUST Rockwood-driven communication avenues, which includes social media.

News you submit to the communications department is strategically placed on Rockwood websites, social media outlets, the Rockwood ParentSquare app and enewsletters. We also send it to local news outlets:

- KTVI Channel 2
- KMOV Channel 4
- KSDK Channel 5
- KPLR Channel 11
- St. Louis Post-Dispatch
- West Newsmagazine
- The Leader (Eureka)

## • How can you help promote news?

It's easy. Send an email to [lapakmary@rsdmo.org](mailto:lapakmary@rsdmo.org) or call 636-733-1144 with your story idea. Every idea has potential. Nothing is too small!

Once you help get the communications department's foot in the door, we will take over from there. We know you are busy. We want to make the process fun and enjoyable for all.

[rsdmo.org/one](http://rsdmo.org/one)

# media relations

When the media wants to interview an administrator, principal or staff member, the communications department will always help with preparation. We want you to feel comfortable, relaxed and ready!



## How can you prepare for an interview?

- Do your research: What is the topic of the interview? What are the most important points you want to convey in the interview?
- Know your key messages: Consider the two or three most important points to make and stick to them.
- Relax: A vast majority of interviews aren't live. If you stumble, it's OK! You can always start over.



## Rockwood employees should never provide certain information to the media:

- Student discipline issues.
- Student records.
- Investigations or pending litigation.
- Personnel matters or incidents relating to specific employees.
- Real estate transactions.
- Competitive or proprietary information.
- Plans, programs or operations that have not been publicly announced.
- Labor negotiations or contract terms.

## What you need to know about student photos and information:

The Rockwood School District operates in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA.

This law allows students and parents to opt-out of the release of certain information about students, including photographs.

A school may disclose directory information to anyone, without consent, if it has given parents: 1) general notice of the information it has designated as “directory information,” 2) the right to opt-out of these disclosures and 3) the period of time they have to notify the school of their desire to opt-out.

The Rockwood School Board, in Regulation 2400, has identified FERPA directory information to include:

- Student name
- Student birth date
- Address of the student
- Phone number of the student
- Grade level
- Major field of study
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees
- Awards
- Most previous school attended
- Photographs
- Email addresses of parent/guardian

Information that is not released:

- Educational record (except information designated by the district as directory information)
- Student health information



## Sending photos to local media:

The communications department is happy to help you send photos to local media. Please contact the communications department with events needing a photographer.

If the communications department cannot make it to the event, please designate a photographer at your school. Send the photos to the communications department for distribution to local media - [lapakmary@rsdmo.org](mailto:lapakmary@rsdmo.org).

# crisis communication



A crisis can be broadly defined. No matter the situation, we want you to be prepared from a communications standpoint.

We will assist you every step of the way to ensure our community feels informed, our students feel safe and our staff feels confident in their leaders.

Please take time to review your crisis and safety plans on a regular basis.

## Media guidelines during a crisis:

Refer all news inquiries to the communications department. We want you to focus on your students and staff during the emergency.

With the help of the building administrator, we will designate an area for reporters:

- All media will be asked to wait in this area.
- They will be provided with frequent updates or interviews as soon as new information is available.

If you are contacted by the media via telephone during the crisis:

- Direct the media to the communications department
- Do not speculate.

If there is no spokesperson on the scene, and you must answer questions, keep the following in mind:

- Focus on the students and show compassion.
- Do not give information unless you are absolutely sure of its accuracy. It is better to say, "I don't know at this time" than to give out wrong information or mislead a reporter.
- Withhold the names of any victims until the families have been notified.
- Keep cool. Be polite and cooperative, and don't allow yourself to be provoked.
- Remember when talking to a reporter, there's no such thing as "off the record."
- State matter of factly when you can release information and why. Say, "This is what we know at this time."
- Short answers are better than long; however, use full sentences and never answer with "yes" or "no."
- Maintain good eye contact with the interviewer.
- If a student or staff member involved in a non-legal incident has been publicly identified, a reporter may ask for a yearbook photo. Such requests will be honored by the department of communications, as yearbooks and their contents are considered public documents.

# email etiquette

**Under Missouri Public Records Law, all email messages are public records. Never include anything in an email message that you would be embarrassed to have everyone see.**

Read the District's full Records Retention Policy and Regulation (1510) and download the Records Retention Manual on the Rockwood website.

According to the Rockwood School District's Regulation 6321, utilizing the network, including the email system for soliciting, advertising, fundraising, commercial purposes or for financial gain, is not allowed unless authorized by the district.

## DO:

- Take another look before you send a message
- Be concise and to the point
- Answer all questions from sender
- Respond in a timely fashion
- Pick up the phone if situation requires more explanation
- Maintain privacy and FERPA rules
- Always include a signature
- Show concern and respect

## DON'T:

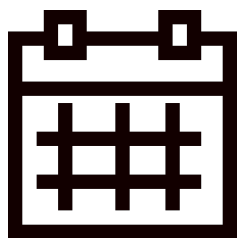
- Place blame in email
- Take it personally
- Send one-lined responses
- Hit "reply all" when not necessary
- Use jargon or slang
- Email when tension is high
- Leave subject line blank
- Type in capital letters

# planning special events



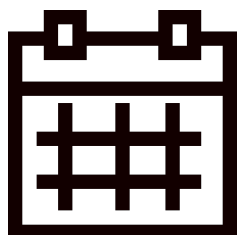
District and school events require careful and thoughtful planning. Whether it is a 50th anniversary celebration, an open house or a graduation, special events offer wonderful opportunities to highlight the achievements of our schools and the Rockwood School District.

The communications department wants to make sure your event goes smoothly! The best way to accomplish that goal is to follow a simple timeline.



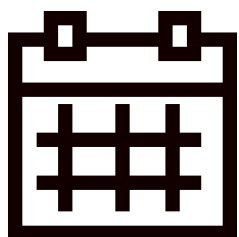
## **One month or more out:**

Establish a budget for the event, create a sample event rundown and establish tentative and confirmed dates on all calendars. You will also want to be sure all speakers, honorary guests and the communications department are informed of the date.



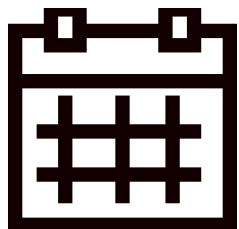
## **Four weeks or less out:**

Contact the print department if printed materials are needed, prepare scripts and speeches for the speakers and contact the communications department about promoting the event. Make sure it is on your school calendar.



## **Two weeks or less out:**

Finalize setup, print programs and signage, check audio and video needs, assign staff and student duties and create an announcement on your school website. Also, be sure to share the information with parents (if applicable) through ParentSquare.



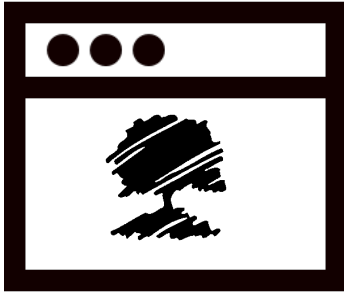
## **Day of event:**

Confirm set up is complete, test A/V equipment, make sure student greeters are in place, check FERPA status of students attending the event, take pictures and video of event, make sure guests are comfortable and have fun!

*After the event, be sure to share pictures and video with the communications department and on social media!*

# websites

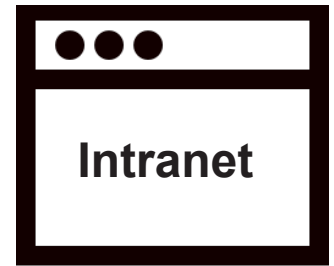
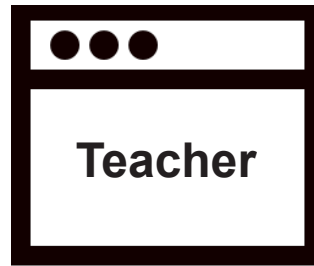
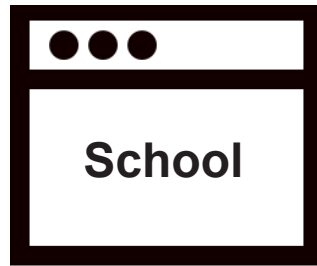
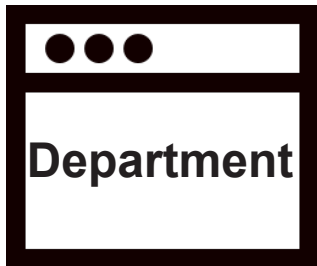
## Why they are important:



Each Rockwood School District website is a vital communications tool for parents, students, prospective Rockwood parents and the community. For this reason, it is important to create consistent, comprehensive, informative and user-friendly websites that will adequately represent the district.

Every school and department website contributes to the user's perception of the Rockwood School District.

## Types of websites in Rockwood:



Training is provided by the communications department for website management. We want to ensure you feel comfortable with content creation, photo editing and web management. To request training please contact [webmaster@rsdmo.org](mailto:webmaster@rsdmo.org).

## Tips for websites:

- Pictures should be less than 600 pixels wide or 600 pixels in height.
- All pictures must be saved in one of the following formats: jpg, gif or png.
- All image files, including clip art, must be obtained legally for use on any website. See page 12 for more information about copyright.
- PDFs are discouraged for accessibility reasons. Consider entering information directly on website.
- All Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations must be followed at all times.

# copyright



Every person who writes a document published on the internet, creates a graphic or icon, scans his or her own photograph, creates a document for a newsgroup or designs a web page owns the copyright to his or her creative work.



It's easier than ever to search for an image on the internet. Please know any district employee who knowingly or unknowingly allows copyright infringement to occur is likely to be named among the defendants in any legal action. Penalties can be stiff. The district employee need not actually participate in the infringement to be considered responsible, at least in part, for the violation.



**UNLESS THERE IS A CLEAR STATEMENT THAT ART, PHOTOS, AND TEXT ARE "PUBLIC DOMAIN" AND AVAILABLE FOR FREE USE, ONE SHOULD ASSUME THEY ARE COPYRIGHTED.**

## How can I find images that aren't copyrighted?

1. Go to [images.google.com](https://images.google.com)
2. Type in the image you want to find
3. Click on "Tools"
4. Click on "Usage Rights"
5. Choose "Creative Commons" licenses
6. Find the right image that suits your needs!

# branding and logos

## Why is branding important?

- **Recognition** - When branding is consistent and easy to recognize, the community feels more comfortable with the district. It also helps set Rockwood apart from other districts. The Rockwood brand represents YOU! You are the brand. Our staff is the brand. Our marketing materials are the brand.
- **Morale** - A clear brand strategy helps our staff be successful. It tells them what is expected and how to meet Rockwood's goals.
- **Word of Mouth** - People love to tell others about the brands they like.
- **User Experience** - Parents, staff, students and the community want to know what to expect from Rockwood.
- **Focus** - A clear brand strategy helps Rockwood stay focused on our mission.
- **Emotion** - When people see the Rockwood brand, we want them to feel good about the district.



An approved Rockwood School District logo should be included on all formal district documents and publications sent to the public. Logos should not be redrawn, modified or displayed in rough form.

The logo should be presented in color whenever possible. The color used for the logo is PMS 541, RGB 0,68,115, HTML #004473, or Wedgwood. When color presentation is not possible, black versions of the logo may be used.



School branding is important because it provides recognition, morale, focus and emotion. Your school logo represents YOU. It allows your community to uniquely identify both you and what you stand for.

What are the steps to change a school's brand or mascot?

Contact the communications department to get the process started. Schools that use copyrighted material for their mascot can be liable for legal action.

# social media

Social media may be used as an important communications tool. More than half the world now uses social media (62.6% in 2024 according to smartinsights.com). Most of these users are accessing Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) using their mobile device.

In Rockwood, we use social media as another way to communicate with parents, staff and the community. We use engaging content to drive parents to our Rockwood websites every day.

Having a Facebook page or an X account isn't mandatory in Rockwood. However, if you are interested in actively engaging with your parents via social media, the communications department is here to help you!

## Three big things for your post:



1. Take a Picture - a post accompanied by a photo is 10 times more likely to get engagement
2. Share a Link - direct people to your announcements
3. Be concise - posts below 250 characters get 60 percent more engagement



1. Take a Picture - get 150 percent more reposts
2. Share a Link - get 86 percent more reposts
3. Use hashtags carefully - more than two will decrease your repost rate

## Don't forget:

- Keep your professional and personal accounts separate. Know how your smartphone apps work!
- Comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Align all posts with Policy and Regulation 4812.
- Monitor your feed and delete any inappropriate activity.

# style guide

## A

**a, an** Use the article a before consonant sounds: a historic event, a one-year term (sounds as if it begins with a w), a united stand (sounds like you). Use the article an before vowel sounds: an energy crisis, an honorable man (the h is silent), an NBA record (sounds like it begins with the letter e), an 1890s celebration.

**abbreviation** Avoid using abbreviations the reader would not quickly recognize.

Some general principles:

**BEFORE A NAME:** Abbreviate the following titles when used before a full name outside direct quotations: Dr., Gov., Mr., Mrs. Spell out all except Dr., Mr., Mrs., and Ms. when they are used before a name in direct quotations.

**AFTER A NAME:** Abbreviate junior or senior after an individual's full name and do not precede with a comma: Martin Luther King Jr., George Bush Sr. Abbreviate company, corporation, incorporated and limited when used after the name of a corporate entity.

In some cases, an academic degree may be abbreviated after an individual's name. See **academic degrees**.

**WITH DATES OR NUMERALS:** Use the abbreviations a.m., p.m., No., and abbreviate certain months when used with the day of the month.

**See dates.**

Wrong: Early this a.m. he asked for the No. of your room. The abbreviations are correct only with figures.

Right: At 9:30 a.m.; in room No. 6; on Nov. 13.

**IN NUMBERED ADDRESSES:** Abbreviate avenue, boulevard and street in numbered addresses: He lives on Maryland Avenue. He lives at 1215 Maryland Ave.

**academic degrees** Do not precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow the name with the degree abbreviation in the same reference.

A degree can either precede a name, such as: Dr. Curtis Cain; or follow the name, such as: Curtis Cain, Ph.D.

Wrong: Dr. Curtis Cain, Ph.D.

Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, a master's degree, etc. Do not use an apostrophe in associate degree. Capitalize degree names if used in full: Master of Education, Bachelor of Science, Doctor of Education, etc. Lowercase, otherwise. See **associate degree, bachelor's degree, doctorate** and **master's degree**.

**academic departments** Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives: the department of history, the history department, the department of English, the English department or when department is part of the official and formal name: Rockwood School District Department of Communications.

**accept, except** Accept means to receive. Except means to exclude.

**acronym** Avoid using an acronym on first reference, unless its meaning is readily recognized. Write a name in full on first reference, directly followed by the acronym in parentheses. An acronym then can be used in all subsequent references.

# style guide

## A

**acting** Always lowercase, but capitalize any formal title that may follow before a name: *acting Principal John Smith*.

See **titles**.

**addresses** Follow the guidelines established by the U.S. Postal Service for mailing addresses. When listing an address in a publication, use the state abbreviations in this guide with the city names. See **states**. Use abbreviations *Ave.*, *Blvd.* and *St.* only with a numbered address. Spell out and capitalize *First* through *Ninth* when used as street names; use figures with two letters for *10th* and above.

Abbreviate compass points with a single, capital letter to indicate directional ends of a street in a numbered address, but spell out directions in a street name: *95 E. Beetdigger Blvd.*, *9361 S. 300 East*.

Abbreviate compass points with a single, capital letter to indicate directional ends of a street in a numbered address, but spell out directions in a street name: *95 E. Beetdigger Blvd.*, *9361 S. 300 East*.

**Advanced Placement** *AP* is acceptable on second reference.

**adviser** Not *advisor*.

**affect, effect** *Affect*, as a verb, means to influence: *The game will affect the standings*.

*Effect*, as a verb, means to cause: *He will effect many changes in the company*.

*Effect*, as a noun, means result: *The effect of the program was overwhelming*.

**African American** Do not hyphenate.

**afterward** Not *afterwards*.

**ages** Always use numerals. Examples: *The 68-year-old teacher has taught for seven years; The man is in his 40s; The student is 12 years old; Tom Smith, 68, was named Teacher of the Year*.

**aid, aide** *Aid* is assistance. An *aide* is a person who serves as an assistant.

**all right** (adv.) Never *alright*. Hyphenate only if used colloquially as a compound modifier: *He is an all-right guy*.

**almost never** Do not use. Instead use *seldom* or *hardly ever*.

**alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae** Use *alumnus* (*alumni* in the plural) when referring to a man who has attended a school.

Use *alumna* (*alumnae* in the plural) for similar reference to a woman.

Use *alumni* when referring to a group of men and women.

**a.m., p.m.** Lowercase with periods.

**ACT** abbreviation acceptable on first use

**ampersand (&)** Use as part of an organization's formal name: *Procter & Gamble Co*. The *ampersand* should not be used in place of *and*.

**annual** A first-time event cannot be the *first annual*. Instead, note that sponsors plan to hold the event annually.

**app** short for *application programming interface*.

**assistant** Do not abbreviate. Capitalize only when used in a formal title before a name. See **titles**.

**assistant principal** Capitalize only when part of a formal title before a name: *Assistant Principal John Smith*.

# style guide

## A B C

**associate degree** Not *associate's degree*.  
See **academic degrees**.

**association** Do not abbreviate. Capitalize as part of a proper name.

**athletic department** Not *athletics department*.

**bachelor's degree** Not *baccalaureate* or *bachelor degree*. See **academic degrees**.

**biannual, biennial** *Biannual* means twice a year and is a synonym for the word *semiannual*. *Biennial* means every two years.

**bimonthly** Means every other month. *Semimonthly* means twice a month.

**biweekly** Means every other week. *Semiweekly* means twice a week.

**board of directors** always lowercase

**Board of Education** See **Rockwood Board of Education**.

**book titles** See **titles**.

**buildings** Capitalize official building names (*Administrative Center, Administrative Center Annex, Maintenance/Warehouse Center*, etc.).

**busing, buses** Not *busses*.

**bylaw** not *by-law*.

**Cabinet** See **Superintendent's Cabinet**.

**capital, capitol** *Capital* describes money, equipment or property used in a business, or the city where a seat of government is located. *Capitol* refers to a building and is capitalized in reference to a specific capitol building.

**capitalization** In general, avoid unnecessary capitalization.

PROPER NAMES: Capitalize common nouns such as *river, street* and *west* when they are an integral part of the full name for a person, place or thing: *Mississippi River, West Virginia*.

Lowercase these common nouns when they stand alone in subsequent reference: *the river, the street*.

Lowercase the common noun elements of names in all plural uses: *First and Second streets, lakes Erie and Ontario*.

COMPOSITIONS: Capitalize the principal words in the names of books, movies, play, poems, operas, songs, radio and television programs, works of art, etc. See **titles**.

TITLES: Capitalize formal titles when used immediately before a name. Lowercase formal titles when used alone or in constructions that set them off from a name by commas. See **titles**.

**capitol** See **capital, capitol**.

**car pool** (n.), **carpool** (v. and adj.)

# style guide

## C D

**chairman, chairwoman** The term *chair* should not be used. Only use *chairperson* if it is the organization's formal title for an office. Capitalize as a formal title before a name: *company Chairman Henry Ford*.

Do not capitalize as a casual, temporary position: *meeting chairman Robert Jones*.

**chapters** Capitalize *chapter* when used with a numeral in reference to a section of a book: *Chapter 1, Chapter 20*. Lowercase when standing alone.

**Character.org** Formerly Character Education Partnership

**cities** When naming cities within Rockwood School District boundaries: *Ballwin, Chesterfield, Clarkson Valley, Ellisville, Eureka, Fenton, Manchester, Wildwood and Winchester* in publications being sent within Missouri, it is not necessary to follow the city name with Missouri (an exception to the Associated Press Stylebook).

**city** Capitalize *city* as part of a proper name: *Kansas City, New York City*. Lowercase elsewhere: *a Texas city; the city government; the city Board of Education*. Capitalize when part of a formal title before a name: *City Manager Francis McGrath*. Lowercase when not part of the formal title: *city Health Inspector Frank Reese*.

**Class of (year)** Capitalize when referring to a specific graduating class: *Class of 1973 reunion*.

**classwork** No hyphen. See **course work**.

**co-author (n.) co-authored (v.)** Hyphenate.

**coed, coeducation** No hyphen.

**colleges/universities** Spell out on first reference. Acronym is acceptable on second reference.

**commas** Do not use a comma at the start of an indirect or partial quotation: *She said the school strives for "academic excellence."* Use a comma to complete a quotation: *"The school strives for academic excellence," she said.* Also use a comma to introduce a complete one-sentence quote: *She said, "The school strives for academic excellence."*

**composition titles** See **titles**.

**Comprehensive School Improvement Plan CSIP** is acceptable on second reference.

**Cooperating School Districts** See **EducationPlus**

**council, counsel** *Council* refers to a deliberative body and those who are members of it. To *counsel* is to advise. A *counselor* is one who advises.

**course work** No hyphen. See **classwork**.

**courtesy titles** See **titles**.

**co-worker** Hyphenate.

**data** A plural noun. Singular is *datum*.

**database** One word.

# style guide

## D E

**dates** Capitalize the names of months in all uses. When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only *Jan.*, *Feb.*, *Aug.*, *Sept.*, *Oct.*, *Nov.* and *Dec.*: *Dec. 18, Oct. 2*. Spell out when using a month alone or with a year. Do not separate the month and the year with a comma: *January 2020*. When a date refers to a month, day and year, separate with a comma: *Jan. 1, 2020*. Avoid using *st*, *nd*, *rd* or *th*.

Wrong: *The trip is scheduled on August 2nd.*

Right: *The trip is scheduled on Aug. 2.*

**days of the week** Capitalize. Do not abbreviate except in a tabular format: *Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat*.

**degrees** See **academic degrees**.

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education** *DESE* is acceptable on second reference.

**departments** Lowercase *department* in plural uses, but capitalize the proper name element: *the departments of human resources and English*. Lowercase the department when it stands alone. See **academic departments**.

**disabled, handicapped, impaired** Acceptable terms to describe disabilities include: *disabled* (general term for a physical or cognitive condition that substantially limits one or more major daily life activity); *blind* (a person with complete loss of sight); *visually impaired* (partial loss of sight); *deaf* (a person with total hearing loss); *partially deaf*, *mute* (a person who physically cannot speak); *speech impaired*, *wheelchair user*. Avoid the terms *handicapped*, *deaf-mute* and *confined to a wheelchair*.

**district** If “district” stands alone, capitalize; If “the” proceeds it, lowercase.

**District Administration** See **Superintendent’s Cabinet**.

**districtwide** One word.

**doctorate** *Doctor’s degree* or *doctorate* are acceptable references. Capitalize if full academic name is used: *Doctor of Education*. See **academic degrees**.

**dollars** Always lowercase. Use figures and the \$ sign in all except casual reference or amounts without a figure: *The lunch cost \$5. Please bring a dollar for the trip.*

**drugs** Because the word *drugs* has come to be used as a synonym for narcotics in recent years, *medicine* is frequently the better word to specify that an individual is taking medication.

**EducationPlus** Formerly Cooperating School District

**effect** See **affect**, **effect**.

**email** Always lowercase; do not use a hyphen. When listing an email address, use all lowercase letters and do not use quotation marks: *smithjane@rsdmo.org*

**Employee Assistance Program** *EAP* is acceptable on second reference.

**English as a Second Language** English for speakers of other languages. *ESOL* is acceptable on second reference.

**ensure, insure** Use *ensure* to mean guarantee: *Steps were taken to ensure accuracy*. Use *insure* for references to insurance: *The policy insures his life*.

# style guide

## E F

**entitled** Books are *titled*, not *entitled*. *Entitled* means a right to do or have something.

Right: *She was entitled to the promotion.*

Right: *The book was titled "Gone With the Wind."*

**ethnic groups** *African American, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American.* See **African American**.

**every day, everyday** every day means each day. *He goes to class every day.* Everyday is an adjective that means commonplace, ordinary or normal. *These shoes are great for everyday wear.*

**exclamation point (!)** Avoid overuse.

**ext.** Do not capitalize. Abbreviated form preferred to *extension* in a phone number. Use a comma between the number and the extension: *458-7337, ext. 239.*

**extracurricular** No hyphen.

**Facebook** See **social networking**.

**Favorite** A button a Twitter user can click to express approval for a tweet. (noun) Also, the act of clicking on this button. (verb)

**fax** Not *facsimile* or *Fax*. The term *fax* should not be used as a verb: *I sent a fax to Robert Jones*; not *I faxed Robert Jones*.

**first quarter** Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier: *He scored in the first quarter. The team took the lead on his first-quarter goal.*

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** FERPA is acceptable on second reference.

**fiscal year** The district's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

**flu-like** Hyphenated.

**food** Most food names are lowercase: *apples, cheese, peanut butter.*

Capitalize brand names and trademarks: *Roquefort cheese, Tabasco sauce.*

Most proper nouns or adjectives are capitalized when they occur in a food name: *Boston brown bread, Russian dressing, Swiss cheese.*

Lowercase is used, however, when the food does not depend on the proper noun or adjective for its meaning: *french fries, graham crackers.*

**food services** Proper name is *Child Nutrition Services*.

**formal titles** See **titles**.

**full-time** Hyphenate when used as an adjective: *full-time student; He works full time.*

**fundraising, fundraiser** One word in all cases: *The district hosted a fundraising event; Fundraising is the Foundation's primary activity. The school held its annual fundraiser.*

# style guide

## G H I

**GED** See **High School Equivalency Test (HSE)**

**grade point average** *GPA* is acceptable in all references: *Students' GPAs should never be published without their written permission, even if the student has a 4.0 GPA.*

**grade, grader** Avoid using *grader* as a noun: *first-grader*. Hyphenate the adjective form of *grade*: *She is a 12th-grade student; He is in the fourth grade.*

**halftime** One word.

**handicapped** See **disabled, handicapped, impaired**.

**hashtag** See **Twitter**.

**High School Equivalency Test (HSE)** A test that demonstrates a person has attained the knowledge equivalent of a high school graduate. It consists of five subtests that measure knowledge in five core areas. This replaces the GED.

**his, her** Do not presume maleness in constructing a sentence, but use the pronoun *his* when an indefinite antecedent may be male or female: *A reporter attempts to protect his sources.* (Not *his* or *her sources*)

The best choice is a slight revision of the sentence: *Reporters attempt to protect their sources.*

**holidays** Official district school holidays include Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving recess, Winter recess, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents Day, Spring recess, Spring holiday and Memorial Day.

**home-base** (adj.) Hyphenate the reference to a *home-base* teacher.

**home page** Two words.

**homeroom** (adj., n) One word.

**human resources department** Not *human resource department* or *personnel department*. See **academic departments**.

**HTML, HTTP** Uppercase in text, lowercase in Web addresses.

**hyphens** Hyphens are used strictly for hyphenating words or line breaks. If a word may be used with or without a hyphen, preferred use is to omit the hyphen. Hyphenated words should not appear in headlines or titles.

*A few examples that arise districtwide are:*

*/ eighth-grade level*

*/ fifth-grade student*

*/ 12th-grade student*

**incorporated** Abbreviate and capitalize as *Inc.* when used as part of a corporate name. Do not set off with commas.

**initials** Use periods and omit spaces between initials: *E.B. White*.

**in-service** Hyphenate. Should only be used as an adjective and not as a stand-alone noun: *in-service training, in-service credit*.

# style guide

## I J K L M N

**insure, ensure** See **ensure, insure**.

**internet** No longer capitalized.

**interoffice** No hyphen. Refers to distribution within a single office or location.

**intradistrict** No hyphen. Refers to multiple locations within the district.

**intramural** No hyphen.

**intranet** The private computer network within an organization. Lowercase.

**italic; italicize** Not *italics*.

**jargon** In general, avoid jargon. When it is appropriate in a special context, include an explanation of any words likely to be unfamiliar to the reader.

**junior** Abbreviate as *Jr.* only with full names of persons and do not precede with a comma: *John F. Kennedy Jr.* See **abbreviation**.

**kids** Avoid in formal contexts. Use *children* or *students*.

**login, logon, logoff** All are one word.

**logo** Written school correspondence sent to the public should contain the district's logo.

**make up (v.), makeup (n., adj.)** No hyphen in the noun or adjective form: *The teacher scheduled a makeup exam; The couple decided to make up.*

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day** No comma. Not *Civil*

*Rights Day.*

**master's degree**

Wrong: *Master's degree of education.*

Right: *Master's degree in education.*

See **academic degrees**.

**Missouri Assessment Program MAP** is acceptable on second reference.

**Missouri School Improvement Process MSIP** is acceptable on second reference.

**months** See **dates**.

**names (first reference)** Preferred use is first and last name, followed by title or position. See **titles** and **Appendix D: District Administration Titles**. Use of middle initials is encouraged in formal context. Board and Cabinet members' names should appear in formal form.

**names (second reference)** In general, avoid the use of courtesy titles (*Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.*) in written correspondence. See **titles** for consistency. However, since these titles are commonly used in schools, exceptions may be made for publications specifically directed to parents and/or students.

# style guide

## N O P

**names of buildings** See **buildings**.

**names of schools** See **school**.

**national anthem** Lowercase. But capitalize “*The Star-Spangled Banner*.” See **titles**.

**nationwide** No hyphen.

**noon** Do not put *12* in front of *noon*.

**numbers** Spell out numbers below 10, use figures for 10 and above (except for ages). Spell out *first* through *ninth* when indicating a sequence. If you must begin a sentence with a number or year, spell it out: *Twelve students received the award*. See **ages**.

**off campus, on campus (subject);**

**off-campus, on-campus (adj.)** Hyphenate the adjective form: *The recruiter conducted on-campus interviews; The interview was conducted off campus*.

**online** One word, no hyphens.

**organizations, institutions, departments**

Capitalize the full names of organizations and institutions: *the Rockwood School District, the Math Club; the Society of Professional Journalists*.

**INTERNAL ELEMENTS:** Use lowercase for internal elements of an organization when they have names that are widely used generic terms: *the board of directors of the Rockwood Schools Foundation, the history department of the Rockwood School District*

**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS:** Some organizations and institutions are widely recognized by their abbreviations: *Alcoa, GOP, NAACP, NATO*.

**ParentSquare** - A mass notification system used to contact students, parents and staff via post, phone call, text, push notification and email. Notification preferences can be set by the user.

**Parent Teacher Association** *PTA* is acceptable on all references. Rockwood parent organizations are not affiliated with national PTA organizations.

**parent-teacher conferences** Hyphenate.

**Parent Teacher Organization** *PTO* is acceptable on all references.

**Partners in Education** *PIE* is acceptable on second reference.

# style guide

## P Q R S

**part time, part-time** Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier: *She works part time. She has a part-time job.*

**percent** Spell out unless used in a table or a financial publication. Numbers should be used when expressing a percent: *The Rockwood School District dropout rate is less than 4 percent.*

**p.m., a.m.** Lowercase with periods.

**president** Capitalize only as a formal title used directly before an individual's name. Lowercase all other uses: *Board President Jaime Bayes.*

**Presidents Day** No apostrophe.

**principal** Not *principle*. Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name: *Principal Dr. Emily McCown.* See **titles**.

**professor** Never abbreviate. Lowercase before a name. See **titles**.

**quarter** *fall quarter, winter quarter, etc.*

**quotations** Open-quote marks and close-quote marks are used to surround the exact words of a quote: *"I will not stay," he replied; "I do not object," he said, "to the tenor of the report."* Place quotation marks outside periods and commas. Use smart quotes for quotations: *'singular smart quote'* and *"double smart quote."*

**ranges** Use the form: *\$13 million to \$14 million.* Not: *\$12 to \$14 million.*

**résumé** Accents optional.

**RSS** An abbreviation for Really Simple Syndication. A protocol for subscribing to and distributing feeds that notify people of new entries on news sites, blogs or other online information sources. Rockwood sites offer the option to "subscribe to RSS."

**Rockwood Board of Education** Spell out on first reference. On second reference, refer to it simply as the *Board*. Capitalize *Board* in specific reference to the *Rockwood Board of Education* (an exception to the Associated Press Stylebook). Always use formal names and courtesy titles for Board members. When listing members of the Board, the proper order is president, vice president, then remaining directors in alphabetical order.

**Rockwood School District** *RSD* or *district* is acceptable on second reference.

**Rockwood School District Administrative Office** *Central Services* or *Administrative Center* is acceptable on all references. See **buildings**.

**room numbers** Use figures and capitalize *room* when used with a figure: *Room 2, Room 211.* It is unnecessary to use the word *room* if the building is named: *Auxiliary Services Building 201.*

**Scholastic Assessment Test** *SAT* is acceptable.

**St. Louis Community College** *SLCC* is acceptable on second reference.

**Saint Louis University** Not *St. Louis University*. *SLU* is acceptable on second reference.

# style guide

## S T

**school** Capitalize only when part of a proper name: *Eureka High School*. The word *school* should be included after the name on first reference: *Babler Elementary School*. The word *school* can be dropped on second reference: *Lafayette High*.

**school years** See **fiscal year** and **years**.

**seasons** Lowercase *fall*, *spring*, *summer* and *winter* unless part of a proper name.

**secretary** Capitalize only when part of an official corporate title. See **titles**.

**semiannual** Twice a year, a synonym for *biannual*. Do not confuse with *biennial*, which means every two years.

**SMART Board™** A trademark name for interactive white boards designed by SMART Technology.

**social networking** A practice by which people meet, interact, and share information online through the use of such sites as Facebook and Twitter.

**Special School District** *SSD* is acceptable on second reference.

**sports scores** Game scores should be written in numerals, even if fewer than 10: *The final score was 33-6*.

**states** spell out the state name in the body of a story. You will still use abbreviations in datelines, photo captions, lists, etc. *The student traveled to Madison, Wisconsin over the summer. Photo Caption: Jim Smith in Madison, WI*

**statewide** One word.

**student body (n.) student-body (adj.)** No hyphen unless used as an adjective: *The student body elected a new president; Student-body elections determined the new president*.

**student council** Capitalize when part of a proper name: the Rockwood Valley Student Council. Lowercase in other uses: the council, the Rockwood Valley and Crestview student councils, a city council.

**substitute teacher** Avoid using *substitute* as a noun. Never abbreviate as *subs*.

**superintendent** Do not abbreviate. The formal position title is *superintendent of schools*. Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name: *Superintendent Curtis Cain, Ph.D.* Always use the superintendent's full name in print. See **Appendix D: District Administration Titles**.

**Superintendent's Cabinet** *Cabinet* (capitalized) is acceptable in second reference. Members include the superintendent of schools, assistant superintendent human resources, assistant superintendent learning and support services, assistant superintendent supervision of secondary education, assistant superintendent supervision of elementary education, assistant superintendent student services, chief financial officer, chief information officer, chief communications officer and director of special education. See **Appendix D: District Administration Titles**.

**teammate** No hyphen.

**teen, teenager (n.), teenage (adj.)** Do not use *teen-aged*.

# style guide

## T U V

**TimeClock Plus** The software system used by Rockwood to collect timekeeping information for non-exempt staff.

**times** Use figures except for *noon* and *midnight*. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes, but avoid “:00” to represent the top of the hour: *10:45 a.m.*, *4 p.m.* Avoid such redundancies as *7 a.m. this morning*, *7 p.m. tonight* or *12 noon*. See **noon**, and **a.m.**, **p.m.** Never use *o'clock*.

### titles

**COMPOSITION TITLES:** Apply the guidelines listed here to book titles, computer game titles, movie titles, opera titles, play titles, poem titles, album and song titles, radio and television program titles, and the titles of lectures, speeches and works of art.

- Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters.

- Capitalize an article – the, a, an – or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title.

- Put quotation marks around the names of all such works except the Bible and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material. Do not use quotation marks around such software titles as WordPerfect or Windows.

- Translate a foreign title into English unless a work is known to the American public by its foreign name.

**COURTESY TITLES:** In general, avoid the use of courtesy titles: *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Miss*, *Ms.* in written correspondence. However, since these titles are commonly used in schools, exceptions may be made for publications specifically directed to parents and/or students.

**JOB TITLES:** In general, confine capitalization to formal titles used directly before an individual's name *Superintendent Curtis Cain, Ph.D.*; *teacher Patrick Smith*; *Chris Johnson, school secretary*. Lowercase titles when not used with an individual's name: *The superintendent issued a statement*; *the Board president approved the measure*. See **acting, assistant principal, superintendent** and **Appendix D: District Administration Titles**.

**Trending** Used to indicate that a particular topic is getting a lot of attention on a social network, search engine or website. Often used as a verb.

**underway** one word in all uses.

**United States** Spell out when used as a noun. Use *U.S.* (no space) only as an adjective.

**Valentine's Day** Use an apostrophe.

**Veterans Day** No apostrophe.

**vice president** No hyphen.

**vice principal** The correct title is *associate* or *assistant principal*. There are no *vice principals* in the Rockwood School District.

**vitamins** Lowercase *vitamin*, use a capital letter and/or a figure for the type: *vitamin A*, *vitamin B-12*.

# style guide

## V W X Y Z

**Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation VICC** is acceptable on second reference.

**website** One word. No capitalization. Not *web site*.

**Webmaster** One word, capitalized.

**web page** Two words, do not capitalize.

**-wide** No hyphen: *worldwide*, *nationwide*, *districtwide*.

**wiki** No capitalization.

**World Wide Web** Capitalize. Use *internet* instead.

**X (formerly known asTwitter)** A community-based, message-distribution system that allows users to post continual status updates of up to 280 characters detailing their activities for followers. The verb is to post. The use of a number sign (#) or hashtag is used to convey the subject the user is talking about.

**Xerox** A trademark, never a verb. Use a generic term, such as *photocopy*.

**yearlong** No hyphen.

**year-round** Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

**years** Apostrophe when omitting the first two numbers of the year: '22 School years should be written as 2021-22, omitting the century in the second year.  
See **fiscal year**.

**ZIP code** Use all caps for *ZIP* but lowercase *code*.

# style guide

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

|          |                                                  |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------|
| ALA      | Application Level Assessment                     |
| AP       | Advanced Placement                               |
| BD       | Behavioral Disorder                              |
| BOE      | Board of Education                               |
| CA       | Classroom Assistant                              |
| CAC      | Curriculum Advisory Committee                    |
| CCL      | Center for Creative Learning                     |
| CEI      | Counselor Evaluation Instrument                  |
| CFO      | Chief Financial Officer                          |
| CIO      | Chief Information Officer                        |
| CTBS-5   | Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills               |
| CWC      | Class within a Class                             |
| DESE     | Department of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| ECA      | Extracurricular Activities                       |
| ERC      | Education Resource Counselor                     |
| ESI      | Employee Suggestions for Improvement             |
| ESOL     | English for Speakers of other Languages          |
| FA       | Facilitating Activities                          |
| FERPA    | Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act        |
| GLE      | Grade-Level Expectation                          |
| HR       | Human Resources                                  |
| IC       | Infinite Campus                                  |
| ICEI     | Instructional Coach Evaluation Instrument        |
| IDEA/504 | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act/504  |
| IEP      | Individualized Education Plan                    |
| ILP      | Individualized Learning Plan                     |
| ISS      | In-School Suspension                             |
| LEI      | Library Media Specialist Evaluation Instrument   |
| LD       | Learning Disabled                                |

# style guide

## Acronyms and Abbreviations continued

|        |                                                   |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------|
| MAP    | Missouri Assessment Program                       |
| MOASBO | Missouri Association of School Business Officials |
| MSHSAA | Missouri State High School Activities Association |
| MSIP   | Missouri School Improvement Process               |
| NBCT   | National Board Certified Teacher                  |
| NCLB   | No Child Left Behind                              |
| NEA    | National Education Association                    |
| OSS    | Out-of-School Suspension                          |
| PCL    | Professional Certified Level One                  |
| PDC    | Professional Development Committee                |
| PDIP   | Performance Deficiency Improvement Plan           |
| PDP    | Professional Development Plan                     |
| PIE    | Partners in Education                             |
| PIP    | Personal Improvement Plan                         |
| PTO    | Parent Teacher Organization                       |
| RAP    | Recognition and Awards Program Committee          |
| RNEA   | Rockwood National Education Association           |
| RTI    | Response to Intervention                          |
| RWA    | Rockwood Writing Assessment                       |
| SAT    | Scholastic Assessment Test                        |
| SER    | Summative Evaluation Report                       |
| SIP    | School Improvement Plan                           |
| SRO    | School Resource Officer                           |
| SSD    | Special School District                           |
| STARR  | Select Teachers as Regional Resources             |
| TEI    | Teacher Evaluation Instrument                     |
| TOY    | Teacher of the Year                               |
| VICC   | Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation        |
| VTs    | Voluntary Transfer Student                        |

## Need something printed?

Brochures, reports, folders, signage and notebooks are all available from the Rockwood Print Department, in cooperation with Indox Services. Contact the print department at (636) 733-1145 for more information or email [heinebrandy@rsdmo.org](mailto:heinebrandy@rsdmo.org).



All publications and reports created by Rockwood schools and offices must follow guidelines to ensure they are appropriately reflecting district ownership and image – while serving their intended audience.

The combination of color, font families and the logo constitute a visual signature for Rockwood. If you need a design for a brochure or flyer, please check with the communications department to ensure your publication follows the district's brand parameters.

All publications must be carefully proofed, edited and free from grammatical and typographical errors.

All publications must be written and edited in accordance with the Rockwood Style Guide.

## Need a template?

Stationery, flyer templates and business cards can be obtained from the Print department!

If you need help creating a flyer, please contact the communications department.

# administrative titles

## Rockwood Administrative Titles

**superintendent of schools** Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name: *Superintendent Curtis Cain, Ph.D.* Preferred reference is: *Curtis Cain, Ph.D., superintendent of schools.* Always use the superintendent's full name in print.

**assistant superintendent human resources**

Do not abbreviate title. Preferred reference is: *Dr. Kimberly Cohen, assistant superintendent human resources.* Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name: *Assistant Superintendent Human Resources Dr. Kimberly Cohen.*

**assistant superintendent supervision of**

**secondary education** Do not abbreviate title. Preferred reference is: *Dr. Gary Jansen, assistant superintendent supervision of secondary education.* Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name: *Assistant Superintendent Supervision of Secondary Education Dr. Gary Jansen.*

**assistant superintendent supervision of elementary education**

Do not abbreviate title. Preferred reference is: *Dr. Paul Godwin, assistant superintendent supervision of elementary education.* Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name: *Assistant Superintendent Supervision of Elementary Education Dr. Paul Godwin.*

**assistant superintendent learning and support services**

Do not abbreviate title. Preferred reference is: *Dr. Shelley Willott, assistant superintendent learning and support services.* Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name: *Assistant Superintendent Learning and Support Services Shelley Willott*

**assistant superintendent student services** Do not abbreviate title. Preferred reference is: *Dr. Stephen Hankins, assistant superintendent student services.* Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name: *Assistant Superintendent Student Services Dr. Stephen Hankins.*

**chief financial officer (CFO)** Use acronym only on second reference. Preferred reference is: *Cyndee Byous, chief financial officer.* Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name: *Chief Financial Officer Cyndee Byous.*

**chief information officer (CIO)** Use acronym only on second reference. Preferred reference is: *Robert Deneau, chief information officer.* Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name: *Chief Information Officer Robert Deneau.*

**director of special education** Do not abbreviate title. Preferred reference is: *Dr. Carmen Harris, director of special education.* Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name: *Director of Special Education Dr. Carmen Harris.*

**chief communications officer** Do not abbreviate title. Preferred reference is: *Mary LaPak, chief communications officer.* Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name: *Chief Communications Officer Mary LaPak.*

# **mission statement**

We do whatever it takes to ensure all students realize their potential.