

Rocket Newsletter

November 2025



Important Dates:

- November 12:
Lockdown Drill
- November 20:
Dollars for Scholars Meeting
- November 21:
Matilda the Musical - 7:00 pm
- November 22:
Rockford Education Foundation Gala
- November 22:
Matilda the Musical - 7:00 pm
- November 23:
Matilda the Musical - 2:00 pm
- November 26-28: No School - Fall Break



The mission of Rockford High School is to foster the development of a caring environment by prioritizing personal relationships and creating a collaborative culture that prepares all students to become inquisitive lifelong learners who act as compassionate global citizens.

From the Principal



Greetings RHS Families,

Happy November! It's hard to believe we are already one quarter through the school year. It's been wonderful seeing our students start to hit a groove in their academics, deepen their friendships with classmates, and continue to build a positive school culture as we enter the chillier months. In a month where we give thanks, I'm extremely grateful for all of your support and partnership in helping to prepare our students for life after high school!

SENIOR PARENTS: We are already reaching some of those milestone moments for seniors. Please pay close attention to messages regarding senior photo and baby photo deadlines, college application deadlines, OJT deadlines for students currently in the workforce, and other announcements regarding end of year and graduation updates. I'm so thankful to our seniors for demonstrating positive leadership. As I told them the first week of school, their leadership (positive or negative) sets the tone for the school year, and they have been doing an exceptional job building positive culture.

JUNIOR PARENTS: Please note that we recently shared information for exams many juniors consider prior to applying for college such as the PSAT (offered in October, determines National Merit Scholars) and ACT (offered a few dates each year, one hosted here at RHS in the early Spring). Our current juniors have been doing a good job balancing their academic workload and, for many, an increased role in sports, jobs, and families. Many of our students have now fully grasped the level-set expectations of higher level academics through their first quarter of IB Diploma coursework and IB Career pathway exploration. I appreciate the level of hard work we are seeing from the juniors.

SOPHOMORE PARENTS: Our sophomores are off to a solid start this year. They are in the beginning stages of creating their personal project—an individual passion project that assesses their research skills, reporting skills, writing, and inquiry. A highlight for me each year is seeing the brilliance and passion of our students shine through when they submit their finished work (some of which is displayed at Spring Conferences). I admire the creativity and cohesion that I see from this class.

FRESHMEN PARENTS: I appreciate the energy our freshmen bring to our school community. They are quickly aligning to the academic and behavioral expectations of American high schools. Learning how to navigate multiple classes, prioritize work, and manage time and responsibilities are difficult real-world skills to learn, but they are adapting well. Students sign up for their Thursday Rocket Blocks on Tuesdays. Please remind them to sign up on Tuesdays or they are placed in a random Rocket Block with open seats. I have enjoyed getting to know our freshmen students as they open up more in the lunchroom and hallways.

Go Rockets!

Sincerely,

Paul Menard
RHS Principal

RHS | Parent-Community News



Free Nutritious Meals
For Kids 18 And Under

Attention:

During the 2023 Minnesota Legislative Session, lawmakers signed into law the Free School Meals program for students, and this continues into the 25-26 school year.

All students will be eligible for one reimbursable breakfast and one reimbursable lunch per day free of charge. This is only for their first meal for breakfast and for lunch. A la Carte and anything extra still will add to your balance due.

Meal Prices

Breakfast

- Adult/Second full Student Meal: \$2.50

Lunch

- Adult/Second full Student Meal: \$5.05

Food Service Reminder

Please note, per our School Board approved [School Meals Policy](#), Low Account Balance and Negative Account Balance email reminders will continue to be sent.

Since Rockford Area Schools are not receiving additional meal funding at this time, it remains the parent(s) or guardian's responsibility to ensure adequate funds are available in the meal account.

Attendance Line: 763-477-7525

Please call our attendance line to report your student's absence.

Option 1: REAMS

Options 2: RMS-CES

Option 3: RHS

Option 4: Galaxy

Option 5: Launching Pad
Preschool



Order Your Yearbook Today!

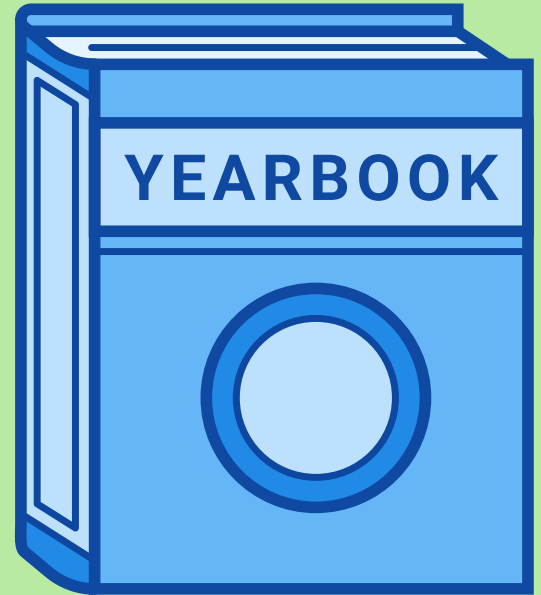
Yearbook preorders are now available!

To order your yearbook, click [HERE!](#)

You can also customize your students yearbook!

Pricing available in the link.

- Custom Text/Name on yearbook cover
- Personalized Icons (Up to 4)
- Color Autograph Section
- Clear Protective Cover
- Photo Pockets



The Rocket Cart is HERE!

Mr. Stariha's class has partnered with Chef Harlan to bring staff and students the Rocket Cart!

The Rocket Cart is an extension of the the Ala Carte products in the lunch room. Every Wednesday during our 1st block tech break, students and staff can purchase various hot and cold drinks and breakfast snacks!

This partnership helps build confidence and skills in Mr.Stariha's students!



REF News & Updates

NOVEMBER 2025

Impact in Action: Author William Durbin Inspires Young Writers

Last spring, thanks to the generosity of our donors, **6 graders at RMS-CES** had an unforgettable opportunity to learn from Minnesota author **William Durbin**, whose visit was funded through the **REF Mini-Grant Program**.



This hands-on workshop turned reading into real-life inspiration. After studying Durbin's *The Broken Blade* in class, students were able to meet the author behind the story, ask questions, and dive into what it truly means to be a writer. For many, it was a spark that lit a new passion.

"I always thought I didn't like to write, but I realized I just don't like being told what to write. I love to free write. This workshop helped me realize that." - Ethan

Others found themselves brimming with new story ideas and confidence:

"I liked the writing workshop and got a bunch of ideas for a story that I want to write" - Thor

"The writing workshop was really fun and made me want to get back into writing again" - Reegan

"I honestly enjoyed when he came and taught us how to write. He taught us that if you write a page every day, you can write a whole book. I really liked his encouragement" - Chioma



Their teacher, Mrs. K, saw the impact firsthand:

"It was really cool seeing RMS-CES students work with William Durbin after reading *The Broken Blade* in class. It made the story come alive and inspired them to keep exploring writing. Experiences like this truly make learning come to life."

This unique experience – where literature, creativity, and real-world connect meet – was possible **only because of donor support**. REF's Mini-Grant Program empowers teachers to dream big and bring opportunities like this directly into classrooms, where they have a lasting impact on students' growth and confidence.

When you give to the Rockford Education Foundation, you're not just funding a program – you're **inspiring the next generation of readers, writers, and dreamers**.

Events

♥ REAMSKindness Fundraiser: Students Paying it Forward



RockfordElementaryArts Magnet School studentsrecentlycompleted their **Kindness Fundraiser**, and the results were incredible!

Together, students raised over \$11,000 to support REAMS Arts Experiences – including field trips, artist in residency, theater programs, the all school song, and so much more.

Even more inspiring? Each act of kindness performed by students reminded us what community truly means. From helping neighbors and teachers to writing kind notes and sharing smiles, our students made kindness the most meaningful currency of all. They completed over 400 acts of kindness AND donated over 1,300 food items to Riverworks Food Shelf.

Thank you to every family and donor who contributed – you’ve made it possible for our youngest learners to express themselves through the arts and experience the joy of giving back.

****Not an ISD 883 Sponsored Event****

Get Ready to Play! 80's TV Game Show Night

 Saturday, November 22, 2025 |  RushCreek GolfCourse



The Rockford Education Foundation is turning up the volume and throwing it back to the ultimate era of **neon, big hair, and buzzer-beating fun!**

Join us for an unforgettable evening of **games, dinner, and fundraising**, all supporting educational excellence in Rockford schools.

 Tickets on sale now through November 15!

Don't miss your chance to be part of this high-energy night that's sure to have you laughing, reminiscing, and giving back.

Buy Tickets Here » <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/rockford25/>

****Not an ISD 883 Sponsored Event****

♥ Thank You for Fueling the Future

From author visits and art experiences to STEM integration and career pathways—your support continues to make learning come alive across Rockford schools.

Together, we're inspiring the next generation to dream big, work hard, and shine bright.

Stay connected:

 Follow us on Facebook & Instagram for stories, updates, and ways to make a difference.

 www.RockfordEducationFoundation.org

ROCKFORD AREA SCHOOLS PRESENTS

Roald Dahl's

Matilda

The Musical

Friday 11/21 at 7pm

Saturday 11/22 at 7pm

Sunday 11/23 at 2pm



RHS
Auditorium

all seats \$8
tickets at the
door

PRESENTED WITH PERMISSION OF MTI

Support Your 2026 Prom Committee!

Mini Photo Sessions

This year the 2026 Prom Committee will be offering Mini Photo sessions to help raise money for Prom! There will be a Fall photo session offered in October and a Holiday photo session offered in November with Images of Hope Photography.

These are 15 minutes sessions with fully edited photos. To reserve your spot, use the Sign-Up Genius links below!

Fall Mini Photo Session

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0949AAA_F28A1FA7-57908489-fall

Holiday Mini Photo Session

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0949AAA_F28A1FA7-57929738-holiday

To support our student-led fundraiser, we kindly ask for a minimum donation of \$50. Your generosity beyond that is always welcome. You can Venmo @RHS2027 or set-up payment arrangement with Candice Lark to save your registrations.

If you have any questions, you can contact Candice Lark at 763-202-9143.

*****Not an ISD 883 Sponsored Event*****



BINGO

BIG CASH EVENT

Join us for an afternoon of daubing battles, laughs, and the thrill of yelling “BINGO”! Bring your friends, your lucky dauber, your competitive spirit and help make Prom 2026 unforgettable!



Saturday, November 8th
Starting at 1:00 p.m.
Arrive early, no presales



Clay's Restaurant
8900 Walnut Street, Ste 500
Rockford, MN



\$28 packets, 8 games
Cash Only



\$1,500 Final Coverall
\$500 First Coverall
6 - \$200 Regular Games

HOSTED BY: ROCKFORD PROM 2026 COMMITTEE
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DELANO YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION
AND CLAY'S RESTAURANT

Rockford Prom 2026 Fundraiser

Not a ISD 883 Sponsored Event

HELPING A COMMUNITY PARTNER IN NEED

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO
RIVERWORKS THIS THANKSGIVING

To make your donation today, click the link
below or scan the QR Code.

<https://riverworksonline.org/donate/>

On the donation page, you will
see a drop-down box. Please
select Rockford School Food
Drive and complete your
donation!



Thank you for supporting Riverworks
Food Shelf!

**** Not an ISD 883 Sponsored Event ****

IN THE CLASSROOM



AVID - Advancemet Via Individual Determination

The AVID (or Advancement Via Individual Determination) Program is a whole school initiative intended to ensure four-year college eligibility for all students, especially those least served in academia. It is designed to support students in succeeding in rigorous academic courses and prepare for college. Students typically join AVID in grade 9 and continue all four years of their high school career.

Students are introduced to various skills in AVID 9 and continue to build on those skills as they continue through the program such as:

- **WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, and Reading Processes)**
- **Critical Thinking Skills**
- **Study Skills**
- **Organizational Tools**
- **Time Management**
- **Note-Taking**

Along with a focus on preparing for college readiness, our AVID classes attend various Career Fairs and College Tours (around 5 through out the year), and 2 - 3 guest speakers a month, with the goal of exposing students to many options career and college options that are available to them!



Meet the Teachers!

Hello! My name is Mrs. Polly Trandahl. I earned my Bachelor of Science in Education at the University of Wisconsin LaCrosse and my Master's of Science in Elementary and Middle School Counseling at the University of Wisconsin River Falls. In 2018 I earned my Reading Licensure from St. Cloud State. I love what I do for my job here at RHS.

My name is Jenn DesMarais-Holland and I have been teaching for the past 30 years and am an AVID teacher and Media Specialist! I have 2 young sons and a husband who is my rock. I love traveling and exploring new places to cross of my bucket list! I graduated from Mayville State University in 1994 with a BS in Arts and Science. Since then I have had the opportunity to be in many positions and several states as an educator. My belief is that every child can learn, just not maybe on the same days as others.



IN THE CLASSROOM



Certified Nursing Assistant Program

The Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Home Health Aide (HHA) course provides classroom and clinical training for individuals interested in pursuing direct patient care in hospitals, nursing homes, or home healthcare settings. As CNA, students will be qualified to care for sick, injured, convalescent, and disabled under the supervision of physicians, licensed practical nurses, and registered nurse.

Students will experience:

- Orientation
- Basic skills assessment tests
- Classroom/lab training, and hands-on clinical training (students will be expected to provide hands-on care during clinicals).

Once students have completed all course hours and clinicals, students will be eligible to take the state exam, and upon passing, will be recognized by the State of Minnesota in its registry of Certified Nursing Assistants. This course also serves as a prerequisite for most LPN or RN programs in Minnesota and is valuable to anyone interested in direct patient care.

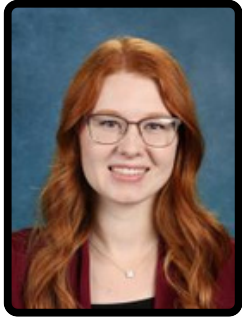


Meet the Teacher

Hello! I'm Becca Morgan, the district nurse, and CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) teacher. I became a CNA when I was 15 and worked at my hometown nursing home throughout high school. Working in that environment, I developed a passion for assuring that our vulnerable populations receive quality care. When the opportunity arose to teach the next generation of CNA's right here at Rockford High School, I was beyond excited. This unique opportunity has been a blessing to our students, our community, and to myself.

RHS | Counselor's Corner

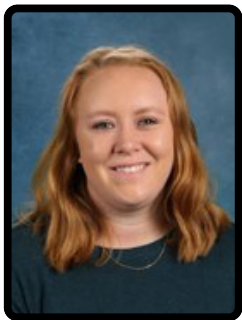
Meet The Counselors



Ellie Engstrom: 9th & 10th Grade

Hello! My name is Ellie Engstrom and I've been at Rockford High School since 2023. I have also been at Rockford Middle School - Center for Environmental Studies since 2022.

I graduated from St. Cloud State University with both my Bachelor's and Master's degree. In my spare time, I love to be up north spending time on the lake.



Samantha Bloom: 11th & 12th Grade

My name is Samantha Bloom and I have been at Rockford High School as a Counselor since 2020. I received my Undergrad in Psychology from St. Scholastica, and my Master of Education Degree in School Counseling Pre-K through 12 from the University of Wisconsin Superior. In my free time I enjoy reading and spending time on the lake.

Contact Us!

Ms. Ellie Engstrom,
Rockford High School
Counselor at
ellie.engstrom@rockford883.org or call
[763-477-5846](tel:763-477-5846), ext. 3020

Ms. Samantha Bloom,
Rockford High School
Counselor at
samantha.bloom@rockford883.org or call
[763-477-5846](tel:763-477-5846), ext. 3033

Mental Health Resources

- **Crisis Text Line- Suicide Prevention Resource for Teens:** Text "MN" to [741741](tel:741741)
- **Hennepin County Mental Health Crisis Response Line:** [1-612-348-2233](tel:1-612-348-2233) (adult)
- **Wright County Mental Health Crisis Response Line:** [1-800-635-8008](tel:1-800-635-8008)
- **Trevor Project for LGBTQ Youth in Need:** Text "start" to [678-678](tel:678-678) or call [1-866-488-7386](tel:1-866-488-7386)
- **National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline:** [800-656-4673](tel:800-656-4673)
- **PrairieCare- Assessment and Intake Team:** [952-826-8475](tel:952-826-8475)

Rockford High School Career Fair

2 weeks ago, Rockford High School held its 4th annual Career Fair and it was a HUGE success! Over 50 fantastic vendors joined us to share their insights, career paths, and educational opportunities with our Middle School and High School students!



It was an incredible day of exploration, connecting with colleges, and planning for the future. Thank you to every vendor who participated and provided such valuable information. Our students left inspired!



Senior Portraits & Recognition Ads

Senior Portrait submissions are now open!

Senior Portraits are due at 11:59 pm on January 15th, 2026. **NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED!**

Please submit your Senior Portrait using this link:

<https://photos.jostens.com/6YK8U8>

If you are using a professional photographer, you can share this link with them to submit your photo.

**Please make sure the file is saved as LAST NAME FIRST NAME.*



You can also order specialized ads for your graduating senior!

To purchase an ad, use this link: [Yearbook Recognition Ads](#)

Ads are \$24 per 1/8 page

Purchases are due January 15th, 2026. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Cap & Gown Order Reminder

Cap & Gown Orders are still open!

Cap & Gowns are free of charge for all seniors. **Orders are due December 19th.**

Please be as accurate as possible when entering your students height and weight, to ensure the gown fits properly. Caps are traditionally one size fits all (XL Cap available upon request).

If you believe your student may need it, please see Olivia Koskela in the front office for guidance.

[Rockford Cap & Gown Order Form](#)



CARING FOR YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH!

Transformational Therapy Services now offers in-school mental health at all Rockford Schools!

At Transformational Therapy Services (TTS), we know how much you want your children to feel happy, confident, and supported—both in school and at home. That's why we've partnered with Rockford Schools to bring mental health and wellness services directly to your family's fingertips.

How We Can Help Your Child:

- School-based therapy for anxiety, depression, ADHD, trauma, and behavioral challenges
- Medication management with a skilled psychiatric team when needed
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) sessions to build resilience, emotional awareness, and healthy coping skills
- Family therapy and supports to strengthen relationships and communication at home

Signs Your Child May Need Extra Support:

- Sudden changes in mood, sleep, or appetite
- Trouble focusing or declining grades
- Withdrawal from friends or activities
- Big emotional reactions or frequent meltdowns
- Persistent worry, sadness, or irritability

If you've noticed any of these, early support can make a lasting difference!

Services are available in-school or in-clinic. Your child can access support during their school day or after school in office in Rockford. We make the process simple and confidential.

Let's Take the Next Step Together

Email us: info@transformationaltherapymn.com

Visit us: www.transformationaltherapymn.com

or

Ask your child's teacher about a referral for school-based therapy.

Early support changes lives—and we're here to make that happen for your family!

RHS | Athletics & Activities

Cross Country Season Highlights

Section and Conference Championships

Both Boys and Girls teams achieved Gold Status for team unweighted GPA's (Boys 3.826, Girls 3.936) with 10 athletes earning All-Conference Academic.

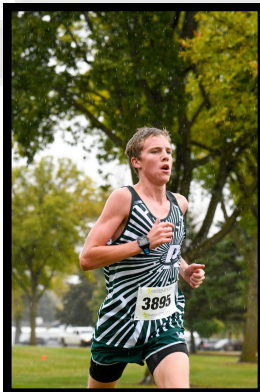
Four girls received All-Conference Honorable Mention Honors with the team finishing 4th at the conference meet.

The girls also placed 6th at the Section 6AA Championship (The 11th consecutive year finishing in the top-10)!



The Boys won 4 meets during the regular season (Maple Lake, Norwood-YA, New London-Spicer and WCC West Conf. Championship).

The Back-to-Back WCC West Conference Championship was the first time since 1993-1995 winning consecutive championship titles and the 11th conference title in program history!



The boys had 4 individual All-Conference Awards (William Czech, Connor Ellos, Legend Mendenhall, Cayden Ellos) and 3 All-Conf. Honorable Mentions.

RHS | Athletics & Activities

The Boys Team finished 4th at the Section 6AA Championship with Will Czech advancing to the 2025 State Meet as an Individual Qualifier.



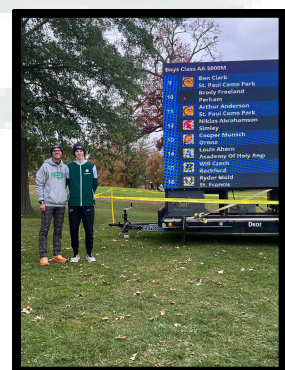
Will Czech and Connor Ellos earned All-State Academic awards at the Section Meet with their Top-15 finishes and unweighted cumulative GPA > 3.75



State Meet

Will Czech earned All-State Honors (Top-25 Individuals) at the 2025 State Cross Country Meet held at Les Bolstad Golf Course on the Univ. of MN Golf Course today.

Will's time of 16:04.3 is a new Rockford High School State Meet record breaking his 2024 time of 16:34, and his 15th place finish (Out of 160 competitors) ties the school record for best place finish for an RHS athlete (Mike Pepin 97', Jeff Dickman 00').



Congratulations Will for an amazing State run and congratulations to all of our student athletes! What an amazing season! GO ROCKETS!

RHS | Athletics & Activities

FFA Nationals

Rockford Area Schools was represented well at the 9th National FFA Convention October 29 - 31. Ava Cox and Grant Slininger competed in the National FFA Agriscience Competition after winning their category, Social Sciences Division 4, at the Minnesota FFA Convention in April.



They presented their project on Evacative Food Labels to a panel of judges in September and presented to attendees at National Convention. Ava was also selected to speak on a panel about the project.

This project was selected out of 50 state winning projects to be in the top 10 finalists. During the Awards Session, it was announced that they paced 4th overall!

School Store Hours

November 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Store Hours 5:30-7:30pm	4	5	6 Store Hours 7-9pm	7	8
9	10	11	12 Store Hours 5-7pm	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 Store Hours 6:30-9pm	22 Store Hours 6:30-9pm
23	24	25	26	28 Happy Thanksgiving!	29	30

Dates and times subject to change based on event changes. Any changes will be updated and posted on our social media platforms.

ROCKET



WRESTLING STORE