FALL/WINTER 2024

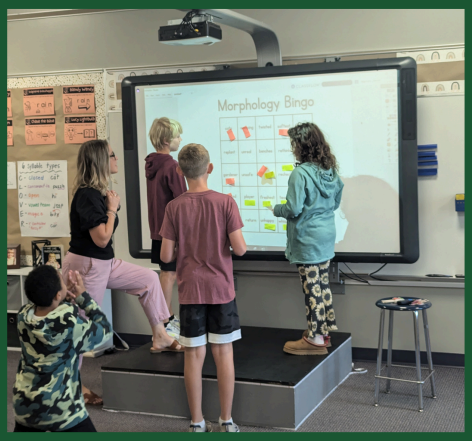
Rocket Report

ROCKFORD AREA SCHOOLS
DISTRICT NEWSLETTER









Winter Break

Dec. 23 - Jan. 1

Check the school website for current announcements and activities

www.rockford883.org







OUR MISSION

In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.

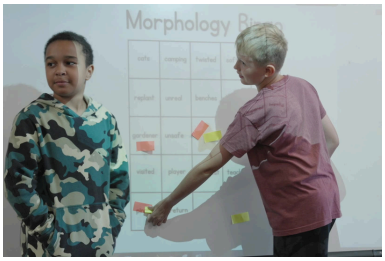


State of the District

Superintendent, Dr. Jeff Ridlehoover

Hello Rockford Area Schools Residents and Families,

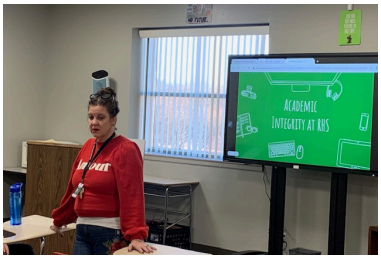
As the weather cools and the days grow shorter, we take a moment to reflect on another vibrant fall here in Rockford Area Schools. Our students are excelling in the classroom, on stage, in the gym, and on the athletic fields. Our dedicated teachers and support staff work tirelessly in their professional learning communities, and through continuous improvement, they continue to inspire knowledge, creativity, and innovation in our students. This collective effort doesn't happen by chance, and I'm deeply grateful for each person's contribution to making Rockford Area Schools the best it can be.

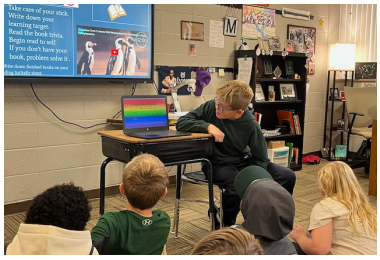


In that same spirit, we also extend our gratitude to every resident who became informed and voted in the general election on November 5th. While the outcome was not what we had hoped, our commitment to delivering the highest quality education to our students remains unwavering. We know that some challenging decisions lie ahead, and we will make these decisions together—with transparency and integrity.

We want to remind you that our challenges related to enhancing our safety and security, instructional technology, and outdated infrastructure remain significant. We will soon start the process of investigating the ways in which we can provide the most essential of these resources, as they are critical to our daily operations. Doing so will require some difficult decisions and with limited finances, other areas of our budget will be impacted.







In closing, thank you once again for entrusting us with the education of your children. As we look to the new year, we do so with a sense of hope, inspiration, and optimism, ready to embrace the endless possibilities that await.

Warmest wishes for a joyful holiday season.

Jeffery P. Ridlehoover

Dr. Jeff Ridlehoover
Superintendent

Building a Community for Life-Long Learning
Rockford Area Schools
COMMUNITY EDUCATION

learn.explore.create.imagine
REAMS
ROCKFORD ELEMENTARY ARTS MAGNET SCHOOL

STEM

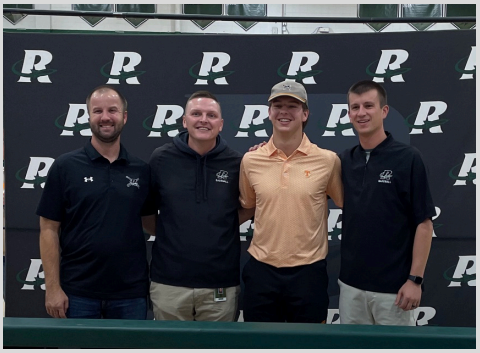
INSPIRE ACHIEVE EXCEL
ROCKFORD HIGH SCHOOL

Early Signing Day!

Will Haas has signed to continue his baseball career at the University of Tennessee after he graduates in the Spring of 2025. This is a major accomplishment to take his career to the D1 level and to a prestigious program like the Volunteers, who are consistently one of the best in the nation and just won the 2024 NCAA College World Series. Will Haas is a constant competitor and does whatever it takes to succeed on the field. From offseason and in-season workouts, to helping fellow teammates up their game, he is always doing whatever it takes to be the best he can be on the field and pumping up his teammates along the way. He is a guy that whenever he is starting on the mound we are almost guaranteed a quality start each and every time and know we have a very good chance to win. He has been one of the key pieces to our success the past three seasons at Rockford and helped us capture our first state championship in Rockford baseball history. We look forward to him helping lead us to another successful season for his senior year and helping us defend our back to back conference championships, our 2024 section championship, and our 2024 state championship.

~ Cody Hallahan









Girls Soccer: The Girls Soccer program in Rockford (co-op with HLWW) provided training for all levels of experience to the Girls Soccer athletes, for ALL girls interested in playing in the program. The coaches provide the training in a fun training environment, applying the skills, drills, fun, and learning into the games, as well as lessons learned in the games. From a team building trip to Duluth this past season, to highly competitive games at home and away, the excitement continues to build for the future. We are looking forward to the continued growth and participation of 7th-12th grade girls joining and playing in our program year after year. Anyone interested in trying Soccer for the first time is invited to play with us!

Season Highlights

Football: Rockford Football played a lot of close games this year. Received some great individual recognitions and awards including,

2024 TEAM AWARDS
Most Valuable Defensive Lineman - Dalton Larson
Most Valuable Linebacker - Patrick Binnebose
Most Valuable Defensive Back – Will Luckett
Defensive Player of the Year – Bradley Graunke
Most Valuable Offensive Lineman – Jaden Kolhei
Most Valuable Offensive Back – Grant Kloss
Most Valuable Receiver – Braden Blanchard
Offensive Player of the Year – Tim Houghton
Most Improved Player Offense – Riley Moran
Most Improved Player Defense – Owen Dornsbach
Special Teams Player of the Year - Will Luckett
Scout Team Player of the Year – Ian Faber

DISTRICT AWARDS
All District - 1st Team Tim Houghton, Sean Asangwe
2nd Team Braden Blanchard, Bradley Graunke
All District player- Mid-Northwest District White
Quarterback of the Year - #9 Tim Houghton

SECTION AWARDS
All Section- Patrick Binnebose & Dalton Larson
Academic All District awards: Braden Blanchard, Parker Bode, Max Edwards, Grant Kloss, Jaden Kolhei, Riley Moran, Aiden Rund, Ryan Schuman, Charlie Brun, Benton Blanchard, Max Ladman, Ethan Robran

Continued on activities page.

REAMS
ROCKFORD ELEMENTARY ARTS MAGNET SCHOOL

4th Grade Arts Troupes



Fourth grade students have an exciting opportunity to participate in one or more Arts Troupes during their final year at REAMS. These specialized classes of presentation or performance groups are in the arts areas of visual art, dance, music, or theater. By offering these in-depth fine arts experiences, students go beyond the traditional elementary arts curriculum in a smaller setting with more hands-on training.

This fall, fourth grade students have at least two options, one working with Mrs. Ehleringer being imaginative and explorative in Theater Games. Another option this fall has been Bucket Drumming. Students in the Bucket Drumming arts troupe learn to read rhythms, work together as a team, and create their patterns to perform for audiences.



In past years, there have a been a wide variety of arts troupes offered including visual art studio where students create a year-long project that is added to the REAMS permanent gallery. Other classes that have performances include Intro to Dance, Intro to Theater, Reader's Theater (putting on a short play), Gullah Stick Pounding, Recorder, and World Drumming, to name just a few.

REAMS Yearbook Cover

Every year, fourth grade students have the opportunity to design the yearbook cover for Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School. The contest is under the direction and guidance of Mrs. Weber, the Visual Arts teacher at REAMS.

The yearbook cover contest is a way for students to showcase their artistic talents through illustration. When designing the cover, students are asked to think about what Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School is about and all the school has to offer.

This opportunity allows students to use learned knowledge and skills while responding to, creating, and presenting original artistic work. Students make artistic choices in order to convey meaning in their work, while integrating their knowledge and personal experiences.

There were five top entries chosen this year for the cover. The runner-up entries are published in the back of the yearbook.

Front cover winner:
Josie Landa

Four Runner up winners:
Demetrius Kinn
Jocie Tombers
Sylvia Shun
Violet Korzendorfer





discover
REAMS

Veteran's Day

Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School staff and students honored U.S Veterans in a special assembly on Veteran's Day. Many of our students and their families know people who have served our country in the armed forces. This was a day for our students to honor those people who have fought for peace and learn about the importance of Veteran's Day. We had many students participate in this assembly. Students show their pride for the Veterans that have served our country each year and have an immense amount of respect during this program.







Artist in Residence

The Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School staff is excited to once again partner with many local artists who are providing experiences for students at REAMS in the areas of dance, drama, music, visual arts, and diversity during the 2024-2025 school year. Children have the opportunity to work with many of the artists for several sessions to enhance their learning. The teachers have also related the work with the artists to the core curriculum back in their classrooms to enhance the students learning.





Third grade students have been working with an artist in residence this fall connecting their learning through literacy and science to the dance elements of body, action, space, time, and energy. Teaching Artist Karla Nweje has led students through several movements that tell the traditional Cheyenne story of "Quillwork Girl and Her New Seven Brothers." The science units that are covered during the week are stars and constellations, moon phases, and the rotation and revolution of the earth (seasons, length of day, etc.). While students were working with the guest artist, students used their imagination, collaboration, and focus.

Students will have an opportunity to work with a specific artist in residence at every grade level during their K-4 experience at REAMS. Arts coordinator, Darren Eliason, has helped to plan these special events for each of our grade levels and connects with local artists annually.



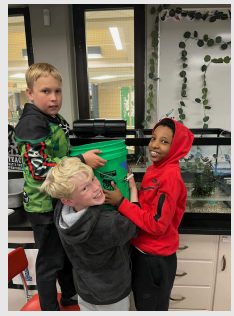


RMS-CES

ROCKFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL - CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

5th Grade Embarks on Trout in the Classroom Journey









RMS-CES 5th Grade students recently kicked off their Minnesota Trout in the Classroom experience. Environmental educator, Jim Emery, detailed the components of ecosystems that create healthy trout habitat. After exploring the RMS-CES campus, students got to work designing their own habitat. Trout in the Classroom is a program that allows students to raise trout from eggs to juvenile stages and then release them in a local waterway. Beginning in December, the students will be raising trout from eggs to fingerlings to hatchlings. Through hands-on real-world science, the Minnesota Trout in the Classroom program fosters a deep understanding of aquatic ecosystems, the role of trout in Minnesota ecosystems, and the importance of protecting Minnesota's natural resources, while also introducing critical environmental science concepts, like life cycles, ecosystem balance, and environmental stewardship.

Just last week the 5th Grade scientists began setting up and pre-cycling the tank in preparation for the Trout in the Classroom egg delivery day. Students adjust and record the pH, ammonia, and nitrate levels to promote the growth of beneficial bacteria colonies. Before egg delivery, the water will be chilled to 52 degrees, optimal temperature for tempering the eggs.

We are excited to bring this opportunity to RMS-CES. The equipment and supplies have been fully funded through a combination of individual donations and the Rockford Education Foundation, The Minnesota Trout in the Classroom program is funded by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, with recommendations from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR).

If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities with the program, reach out to Minnesota Trout Unlimited, mntu.education@gmail.com

RMS-CES Student Council



The RMS-CES Student Council is the voice of the student body; a job they take very seriously. Each member was voted into office by their grade level peers after viewing compelling campaign videos. This year RMS had over 60 students run for student council, which is a testament to the drive of our students to make a positive impact on their school and show their leadership skills! The Student Council meets twice a month and tackles the pressing issues of middle school life. Each meeting begins with an open forum, where members voice the concerns of their constituents and discuss ways to create an inclusive school culture. This fall they had the responsibility of deciding the ever important spirit dress up days for homecoming week and planning a successful Veterans Day program. One of the initiatives they led was asking RMS families to send recordings of veterans reciting the pledge of allegiance. Each day during the week of Veterans Day the school day began by being led in the pledge of allegiance by family members of RMS students. **Continued on next page.**

discover
RMS-CES

Letter from Principal Warzecha

We are off to an amazing start to the school year. We have enjoyed outdoor experiences in many different contexts and have spent time building meaningful relationships with one another and with the content areas we are learning. As we leave the excitement of Fall and head into Winter we are reminded that each season creates a new and exciting learning opportunity and encourages our community members to share their passion for winter months and all that it brings both outdoor and indoor alike with our students.





At Rockford Middle School, we are committed to delivering a high-quality education that's connected to Minnesota state standards. This year our Building Instructional Leadership Team of teachers has selected five goals to focus on for the coming year. The first three goals focus on instruction where teachers are spending time operationalizing the Minnesota's State standards for their specific course, and then selecting the most essential standards that create the core of each specific course. Once the essential standards have been selected, we work hard to create learning targets in student-friendly language that allow students to know what they are working on at any given moment and then ultimately making sure that our assessments align to standards and learning targets. Another goal focuses on student connectedness making efforts to ensure that each student has an adult they have a connection with and can go to if they need help, support, or assistance. Last but not least, our goal focuses on student achievement and improving academic growth for each of our students, especially learners who might find academic tasks challenging or who have shown less growth previously. One way that we are improving the skill and confidence of learners is through a new program called IXL, which allows for students to answer questions and build specific grade level skills in a variety of our curricular areas. Math has started leading these efforts, so if you hear of Middle Schoolers working on their IXL, that means that they are able to answer questions and then the program gives them specific explanation and video tutorials if they answer questions incorrectly, which helps them learn more quickly from mistakes to build mastery which will help them in their classroom learning as well as on the MCA's this Spring.

We are incredibly grateful for the partnership of this community and the direct positive impact that such a community has on our young people. Thank you all for making Rockford a place where people can accept one another, showing genuine care and compassion, and ultimately for showing support for one another in good times and bad. We consider ourselves grateful to do this work alongside this community!

RMS-CES Student Council Continued

There was something truly special and powerful about hearing the booming voices of service members sharing their experiences and leading students in the pledge each morning. The Student Council also collaborated with Taher, the district food service management company, to decorate festive cookies as a special treat for students at lunch. The impressive work of this group is far from over, as they continue to meet to plan out events like the third annual RMS activity night! These student leaders make a difference at RMS-CES, and will be the leaders of tomorrow!



RHS
ROCKFORD HIGH SCHOOL

Letter from Principal Menard

It's been a great start to the 2024-2025 school year at Rockford High School. Chief among the goals of our School Improvement Plan is to provide note taking strategies, engaging opportunities to build positive culture, and quality instruction for all our students. Here is a sample of some of the efforts we have made thus far:

- RHS began the school year following protocol from the state to reduce personal technology use in K-12 schools (only allowing phones during passing time and lunch). The feedback is overwhelmingly positive, teachers feel students are more present, and our students are interacting more with one another. Mr. Menard's favorite exchange took place during lunch when a group of young women were walking and said, "See, Mr. Menard, we are choosing to talk instead of being on our phones...even when we can be on our phones!"
- Implementing AVID strategies and research-based findings regarding note taking, RHS teachers have begun an intentional analysis of their approach to instructing, guiding, monitoring, and interacting with note taking in all of their classrooms. This work will continue throughout the year in an effort to more closely monitor formative learning in real time.
- In response to this protocol, RHS teachers developed a list of dozens of engagement strategies to keep students' attention instead of reverting to phone use; these strategies include writing work, inquiry, collaborative activities, organizational tools and structures, reading strategies, and relational capacity building exercises.
- We have created a new collaborative space for classroom breakout opportunities in our West Commons. Underutilized lockers were removed, and teachers are already using the space to bring their curriculum to life in a larger, more spacious environment.







- Student activities are well underway as our students make positive memories on and off the field.
- Students are commenting on the dramatic increase in engagement and decrease of homework; this is directly tied to restrictions on personal technology
- 9th grade and NHS members completed a community project, cleaning our curbside along County Road 50 and underneath our stadium bleachers. This is a capstone experience of the IB MYP.
- We have already begun a series of college and career visits through our partnership with NWSISD and other organizations.
- The Student Leadership Team began their first Renaissance challenge (a program aimed at building positive culture sponsored by Josten's); during the month of October teachers are submitting reasons "Why You're Awesome" for individual students, SLT folds origami shapes, and Mr. Menard delivers them to the students in class.

Rockets

discover RHS

- RHS students partnered with Tuffy's "The Spot" to host an art show on Tuesday, October 29th. Proceeds from art sales will go to the Soldier's Six fund, which sponsors the training of support dogs for veterans and first responders right here in Rockford.
- We now have a total of three IB Career Pathways in business, veterinarian technician, and clinical nursing assistant. Our goal is to add two additional pathways by 2025; we are currently exploring Education and Craftsmanship (welding and woods) pathways. All of these pathways train students to be industry ready and include a professional certification and/or outside organizational recognition.
- Our students have earned over $1.4 million in scholarships since 2020 due to our CIS and IB programs–the only school in the area to offer both.



We are proud of our accomplishments, and we thank you for your support in our future success.

Sincerely,
Paul Menard
Principal
Rockford High School



BLT and SLT: Focus on the good

At Rockford High School, we've created a Building Leadership Team, composed of teaching staff, and a Student Leadership Team, composed of students. Both of these groups will work parallel and jointly to issue monthly challenges, awareness campaigns, and celebrations to continue to enrich our unique and highly praised school culture. This group will also boldly analyze operational aspects of the school and suggest improvements. BLT and SLT are an enhancement to previous efforts to provide more voice in positive student leadership. We are thrilled to announce that 29 students stepped up to participate and seven staff members, respectively. I'm excited to intentionally focus on the good; the more we praise positive efforts and achievements, the more we underscore the importance of integrity, academic stamina, and perseverance. We often hear families experienced and new to our community how Rockford High School feels like a family, and we want to put the time and energy into making sure everyone in the 'family' is doing their best and being their best self. These groups will play a key role in those efforts.

ib Diploma Programme ib Career-related Programme ib Middle Years Programme

#Rockets883

discover ACTIVITIES

Season Highlights Continued

Cross Country: The Rocket Cross Country Teams had a banner year in 2024. Both Boys and Girls teams achieved Gold Status for team unweighted GPA's (Boys 3.848, Girls 3.822) with 9 athletes earning All-Conference Acadmic. For the Girls, Maiya Roelofs (9th grade) and Ruby Gifford (12th grade) earned All-Conference Honors, with Ruby Gifford achieving a school-record 6th All-Conf honors. Maiya Roelofs qualified for the 2024 State Meet with a 10th place finish at the Section Meet. The Boys won the WCC West Conference Championship for the first time since 1995 and their first Conference title (CMC Conf) since 2009. The boys had 5 individual All-Conference Awards tying a school record from 1997 and the combined 7 All-Conference awards across both teams ties a school record (1999 & 2000). The Boys Team qualified for the 2024 Class AA State Cross Country Meet for the first time since 1999 and finished with a 10th place finish. The boys' appearance in 2024 notched the school's 9th appearance at the state meet. Will Czech earned All-State Academic awards at the Section Meet with his 4th place finish and unweighted cumulative GPA > 3.75

Cheer: Rockford Cheer had a great season. We had 3 new cheerleaders join the team for Fall. 5 Cheerleaders participated in the MCCA All State Cheer Tryouts, with 2 cheerleaders receiving individual honors. Evelyn Engebretson (2 x achiever) and Kayln Hatcher (first time achiever). These athletes will go on to perform at the MCCA State Cheer Competition in February. The MCCA All State team is comprised of the top 25 cheerleaders trying out from the State of Minnesota.





Girls Tennis: The girls tennis team had an excellent season! Our 13 student athletes competed at the junior varsity level this year, and we were highly competitive in our matches and meets. We only lost one senior, so next year we will have a lot of returning athletes who have a lot to build off of. Every where we went, we represented Rockford Area schools immaculately.





Boys Soccer: Due to the younger turnout of players, the program ran a JV/C-squad schedule. A lot of hard work led to success on the field, so the team will move back to a varsity schedule for the 2025 season.



Marching Band: The fall season of Rockford's band program got off to a great start with our 100 piece marching band participating in Homecoming. The high school fall concert took place on Thursday, Nov. 7 and featured all band students in grades 9-12. The performance highlighted Rockford's flag team and was led by drum majors Ryan Schuman and Evelyn Engebretson.

Musical: The musical brought together about 90 students across grades 5-12. Challenging music and twice as many scenes as last year meant surrmounting challenges for onstage and backstage students alike.



Robotics: We started a few new teams this year. FTC for 9th grade, FLL for 5th & 6th graders. Our FTC (7th & 8th grades) had their first practice meet on 10/25 and were able to successfully pick up a game piece. Coming into week zero with a working robot is a great start. Nov 9th both FTC 9th grade and both FLL teams have scrimmages in Osseo.

Volleyball: The volleyball team had a year of growth. After graduating 10 seniors last year, this was almost an entirely new varsity team. So while we did not win many games, we got faster, more consistent and more confident as the season went on. Our goal this year was to get better and we accomplished that. We will only lose one senior this year so the team will start next season with a lot of varsity experience. The team also received the Silver Academic Award this year.

discover

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community Education is here for YOU!

What is Community Education? In a nutshell, it's lifelong learning! From infants to senior citizens and every age in between, community education seeks to increase opportunities for learning, development, and connection across all age groups, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for everyone in our community.

Did you know?

- **Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)** offers play-based learning for children from birth to age 5 and provides classes, support, resources and education for parents.
- **Launching Pad Preschool**, a 4-Star Parent Aware Rated Preschool, serves students ages 3-5 years old, is taught by licensed MN teachers, and is located right in the Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School (REAMS).
- **Galaxy Kids School Age Care** offers extended preschool-age care (3-5 years), along with before and after school care for preschool to grade 6 students, and is also located across the hall from Preschool at REAMS.
- **Youth programming** includes arts & crafts, dance, STEM-related classes, sports leagues, gymnastics, driver's education, and sport-skills camps.
- **Adult/Senior programming** includes recreation like pickleball, volleyball or dancing, arts & crafts, personal interest topics, and specific Senior 55+ options.
- **Rockford Community Center** offers family, senior, individual and student memberships, walking passes and a full buffet of fitness classes from Boot Camp to Yoga.













No matter what your age or interests, Rockford's Community Education Programs are here to engage with you! We welcome you to come and check us out. We can't wait to see you! We are here to make our community stronger, supportive, and to build relationships!

For more information contact us at: Call 763-477-4563 or email melissa.joseph@rockford883.org

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