

## **Open Topics Forum Questions and Answers November 18, 2025**

### **All-District**

#### **Q. What is the Open Topics Forum, and how does it work?**

- A. The RCSD holds two Open Topics Forums per year -- one in the fall, and one in the spring. During a regular Board of Education meeting, the meeting is paused for 30 minutes, and members of the Board leave the dais and sit down at tables with members of the community to have a dialogue about their concerns, answer questions, and listen to feedback about the school district.

Once the 30-minute session is concluded, the public meeting restarts, and the Board members summarize what was discussed in individual groups for the benefit of all. Afterwards, the administration will provide written feedback on the topics brought forward by the community after the meeting. These will be sent to attendees of the meeting and posted to the District website for interested members of the community.

The forums are designed to give everyone in our community a chance to speak about topics that matter most to them and to hear responses in an open, collaborative setting.

#### **Q. What are some of the changes that have been made to the Counseling program over time?**

- A. One of the biggest changes took place in the fall of 2025: the RCSD hired Seth Busching as Director of Counseling and Student Wellness. Mr. Busching oversees the 12 school counselors District-wide and heads up the RCSD's social-emotional learning program. Mr. Busching is conducting entry interviews, and members of the community are encouraged to schedule one with him to ask questions and give feedback about school counseling.

Another important change was the addition of counselors at each of the elementary schools in 2023. Previously, there was one elementary-level counselor who traveled between the schools. Dedicated elementary school counselors mean that students have more access to the counselor and the counselor pushes into classrooms with lessons on a much more regular basis.

#### **Q. What were some of the most recent presentations at the Board of Education meetings about?**

- A. The Board recently heard presentations about the new International Baccalaureate program and classes at the High School (November 4) and one on the state of RCSD facilities on December 2. Looking back a bit, there was one on Artificial Intelligence on October 7.

**Q. What does the District think about its ranking in the *USNews&World Report* Top High Schools list?**

- A. As a District, we generally don't put much emphasis on these rankings because the data lags by two years and only takes into account student performance on state tests. The District prefers to use its own localized (by school building) and current data to track student growth and achievement using multiple measures, in real time.

Some examples were provided in our annual Board of Education assessment data presentation, which took place this year on October 28. The presentation illustrated the multiple methodologies the District uses to track students by grade level in various subjects. This enables the District to focus efforts where it is not seeing progress and helps to drive and inform instruction.

**Q. What is the High School Counseling Department doing to help students get into Ivy League schools/most challenging schools?**

- A. The District, School Counseling Department, and Board of Education have all sought to emphasize that students should focus on finding colleges/universities/postgraduate plans that are the right fit for them in terms of academics and extracurriculars, rather than focusing on admission to any one group of colleges/universities.

This is a central notion promoted by Challenge Success, of which RHS has been a partner school since 2018. School counselors support students in self-reflection about what kind of school is the best fit, and how course selections at RHS can help them reach their goals.

**Q. Will the District be fielding an exit survey for RHS grads?**

- A. Yes, the District intends to field a high school exit survey this year. Now that there is a Director of Counseling and Student Wellness (Seth Busching) in place, the District is better positioned to both field such a survey and to analyze the data.

**Q. How is the District furthering advanced science and math classes so that all students are challenged?**

- A. The courses the District has put in place through the IB program, particularly the "Analysis and Approaches" course, offer all students (not just those in the IB programme) a high level of math challenge. The District is currently looking at adding additional IB science courses that would provide a high level of rigor in that discipline.

**Q. Does the addition of the IB program mean the District is doing away with AP classes?**

- A. No, the District will maintain a full complement of AP classes in addition to the IB classes. AP and IB classes offer differing content, require different skill sets, and are suited to different kinds of learners. One will not supplant the other.