

Rocket Newsletter

March 2026



Important Dates:

- March 9: Spring Sports practice begins
- March 10: Choir Concert
- March 12: Spring Conferences
- March 14: FFA Banquet
- March 27: No School
- March 30 - April 3: No School - SPRING 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 March! When I worked in the Education Department at Marian, one of our professors joked that this month contains the only date of the year that commands us to do something: March Forth! As we march forth into the spring season, please consider attending conferences, checking in with your children to ensure they are positioning themselves for a good midterm grade, and continuing to demonstrate good habits, drive, and focus in order to approach the end of the year with success.

SENIOR PARENTS: Your children should be actively applying for local scholarships through Dollars for Scholars. The deadline for submission is March 27th, which is also the beginning of Spring Break. Do not delay, as this can directly benefit your family by accessing scholarships and reducing tuition costs for 2 and 4 year colleges.

JUNIOR PARENTS: While registration for the ACT hosted by RHS is closed, we encourage you to consider registering for the ACT later this spring or summer. There are several advantages to taking the test in 11th grade, including the ability to see the test, retake to earn a higher score, and take advantage of test prep programs. Let's keep Rockford among the top districts in the state on ACT performance!

SOPHOMORE PARENTS: Ask your children about their IB Personal Projects, a capstone experience for our 10th graders to demonstrate a passion, engage in research and reporting, and show off their creativity. These will be on display during spring conferences for all to see. We continue to be proud of the work our students are able to complete, largely on their own, and this year was no exception. They are extremely well done!

FRESHMEN PARENTS: Some of our 9th graders have a new-found confidence in the second semester; they've gotten used to routines, academic habits, taking personal responsibility, and answering the rigorous demands of a high school student. For others this can still be a process; please be patient with your child and keep the lines of communication wide open. If they aren't saying much, they might not have much of a plan. If you discover your child needs help with anything--organization, priorities, setting deadlines for late work or makeup tests, or more--please do not hesitate to reach out. This is the year where foundational practices are built that will last them through the next three years of high school. Additionally, there is research that suggests involvement in extra-curriculars makes a student feel more connected to their school which often translates to increased academic performance. Consider registering for a spring activity [here!](#)

Go Rockets!

Sincerely,

Paul Menard
RHS Principal

Order Your Yearbook Today!

**Yearbook
preorders are now
available!**

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

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





REF News & Updates

March 2026

Mini-Grant Impacts

Growing Opportunities. Inspiring Potential. Strengthening Our Schools

Because of your generosity, powerful learning experiences are happening across our schools. Prize patrol was out in February providing mini-grant funding to support literacy growth, hands-on science, creative writing, and meaningful interventions for students who need it most.

Here's a look at the impact you are making:

Literacy for Neurodivergent Learners

Engaging resources from Reading.com and The Fidget Game are helping students strengthen reading skills through interactive, targeted support.

Sensory Support at RMS

New sensory bags provide Tier One interventions to help students regulate emotions and stay focused in the classroom.

AVID Magazine Subscriptions

Upfront and Action Scholastic News are building critical thinking and reading skills — with built-in support for struggling learners and digital resources included.

Author Visit with William Durbin

This Spring, sixth graders will explore history and writing through engaging presentations and hands-on writing workshops designed to inspire young authors.

Hands-On Science

Students will investigate DNA damage and the effects of UV light using interactive lab kits from Carolina Biological Supply.

Literary Orangizers

Printed curriculum materials and vocabulary resources are supporting structured, effective instruction.



Upcoming Events



SAVE THE DATE

FREE Family Fun Bingo Night+ Swap!

Friday, April 17th

Doors open at 5:30pm

Bingo starts at 6:00pm

★ Multiple rounds of bingo

★ Concessions available for purchase

★ Fun prizes

★ Board game, book, & puzzle swap

Registration Required

<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/familybingofunnightregistration/event/freefamilybingoswap/>

Stay Connected

Follow the Rockford Education Foundation on Facebook, Instagram, or sign up for our newsletter to stay up to date on funding stories, upcoming events, and the incredible impact happening in our schools every day.



Thank you for being part of the REF community. Together, we are investing in students, supporting educators, and building strong futures for Rockford.

Get Involved - We Need Volunteers!



As REF expands its community events and fundraisers, we need volunteers to help bring these opportunities to life!

Sign up to volunteer: www.rockfordfoundation.org/get-involved/

IN THE CLASSROOM: Music



Mr. Ferdig

The band program is having a very active winter season! Here are some of the highlights.....

- Saturday, January 10: Wright County Honor Band
 - Several members of the band program participated in this 1-day event held at Southwest Christian High School
- Saturday, January 17: Central MN Band Directors Association Honor Band.
 - This 1-day honor band was held at Elk River High School. Students from grades 9-10 participated.
- Monday, February 9: Section Solo/Ensemble Contests
 - This event was held at Rockford High School. A total of 48 students from Rockford performed in various solos/ensembles. Rockford had 29 entries total.
- February 21-22: Jazz band trip to Bemidji State University
 - Rockford's top jazz band participated in rehearsals and master classes at Bemidji State University.



IN THE CLASSROOM: Music



Ms. Swanson

There's a lot of beautiful music happening in our choir room! Students have been hard at work preparing for their upcoming choir concert.

Our choirs are exploring folk songs from across the United States and from many different countries. Through this diverse repertoire, students are not only learning about different cultures and musical traditions, but also strengthening their overall musicianship. In addition to concert music, students are continuing to grow in vocal technique, tone production, and music literacy through our sightreading curriculum.

We are also proud to celebrate a recent achievement by our Concert Choir. The group participated in the Region 5A Large Group Contest and earned a Superior Rating—the highest possible distinction.

Nine students represented Rockford High School at a special choir festival at Bemidji State University on Wednesday, March 4. This exciting opportunity allowed them to sing alongside other talented students, work with guest clinicians, and continue developing their musical skills. We are incredibly proud of our choir students and look forward to sharing their music with the community at the upcoming concert.



IN THE CLASSROOM:

Music



Meet The Teachers!



Meet Mr. Ferdig!

Mr. Ferdig is the director of bands for grades 7-12 at Rockford Schools. Mr. Ferdig received his undergraduate degree from Bemidji State University in 1999 and his master's degree in music education from the University of Minnesota in the twin cities. After student teaching in the Becker School District, Mr. Ferdig received his first job at Butterfield-Odin Public Schools where he taught 5-12 band for six years. Mr. Ferdig also conducts the high school pep band, summer marching band, the pit orchestra for the high school musical, and 2 high school jazz bands. Mr. Ferdig is also active in the MN Band Directors Association, serving as an All-State judge and is on the board for Central MN Band Directors Association and the Bemidji Summer Music Camp.

Meet Ms. Swanson!

Ms. Swanson is the 9-12 choir director at RHS and teaches 1st and 2nd grade music at REAMS. She joined the Rockford Area Schools after teaching in International Falls, MN, where she also directed the one act play and coached volleyball. Ms. Swanson received her Master of Music in vocal performance from the University of Memphis and her Bachelors of Music Education in vocal and instrumental music from Northern State University. She is an active performer and currently sings as a soprano in The Singers - Minnesota Choral Artists and will perform with the Minnesota Opera this spring, and has previously sung and conducted with Vox Nova Chorale and the River City Singers. In addition to singing, Ms. Swanson plays piano, horn, and trumpet. When not making music, she enjoys reading, crocheting, cooking, hiking, and spending time with her two cats, Scarlett and Diesel.



IN THE CLASSROOM: Foreign Language



Ms. Zastoupil

Spanish 1 is currently learning regular -er and -ir verbs, learning more food vocabulary and reviewing how to use "Gusta" to say what they like to eat.

DP Spanish Year 1 is currently learning the imperfect past tense, how to distinguish it from the preterite past tense and writing their own legend.

DP Spanish Year 2 is currently learning the subjunctive mood and distinguishing it from the indicative. They are working hard to prepare for their IA, which is an oral exam.



Ms. Nelson

In our ELL classes the students are currently ACCESS testing. WIDA ACCESS is a mandatory test that measures English language proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The results of the test help educators support student learning and language development.

In Español 2, students are learning vocabulary related to technology. They are discussing and writing a paragraph about their technology habits and opinions on technology. Students are also learning how to form the past tense. Throughout the class period, students engage in a variety of activities that require them to communicate with their peers to use the language structures and vocabulary we are learning.



IN THE CLASSROOM: Foreign Language



Meet the Teachers!

Meet Ms. Zastoupil!



Calli Zastoupil grew up in Minot, ND, and graduated from North Dakota State University in Fargo (Go Bison!) with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish Education. After undergrad, she taught English as a Second Language in Cheonan, South Korea, for a year. She earned a Master of Education degree from the College of St. Scholastica in 2022. She has been teaching at RHS since 2018.

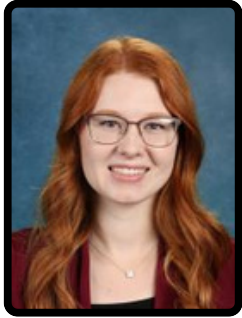
Meet Ms. Nelson!

Profe Nelson has been teaching Spanish at RHS since 2015 and ESL since 2022. Profe Nelson graduated from the University of Northwestern Saint Paul in 2014. She has a BA in Spanish Education and ESL and an MA in ESL from Concordia University, St. Paul. She enjoys playing tennis, traveling, and going for walks by the lake with her husband, son, and 2 dogs.



RHS | Counselor's Corner

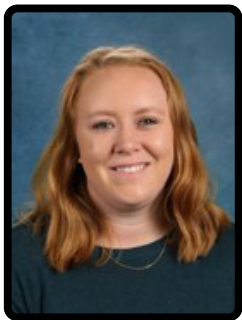
Meet The Counselors



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

Helpful 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)
- [Wright County Resource Link](#)
- **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)

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!

Important Dates to Know!

- **Tuesday, March 24th - RB1**
 - FINAL Dollars for Scholars Meeting - Deadline March 27th
- **Thursday, April 16th - Time TBD**
 - Senior Meeting with Mr. Menard - Information about Graduation and Senior Checkout
 - All Seniors should plan on attending (Including PSEO and OJT Students)
- **Tuesday May 12th - Lunch Periods**
 - Senior Checkout Day - Wrap Up, Pay Fees, Graduation requirements, collect your Cap & Gown!
- **Thursday May 28th - Senior Last Day**
 - Finals and Chromebook Check-In
- **Friday, May 29th - Graduation Rehearsal and Graduation Ceremony**
 - Rehearsal is at 10:00 am in the RCC Fieldhouse. ALL SENIORS are required to attend rehearsal (With Cap & Gown).
 - Ceremony begins at 5:00 pm. Seniors in Commons at 4:30 pm.

Attention Seniors!

It's Scholarship season and scholarship dealines are fast approaching!

- Allina Clinic/ Buffalo Hospital Scholarship- March 18th
- Amy Nicolle Johnson Scholarship- March 26th
- All Dollars for Scholars Scholarships- March 26th (the final DFS meeting will be Tuesday, March 24th)
- Wright Hennepin Electric - March 27th
- Rockford Star Lodge #62 Scholarship- April 1st
- Hanover Athletics Scholarship- April 5th
- Corcoran Lions Club Scholarship- April 15th
- RHS Alumni Scholarship- April 15th
- Hanover Lions Scholarship- May 1st



All national and local scholarship applications and eligibility criteria are posted on the RHS website and the senior guidance classroom page.

RHS | Athletics & Activities

Athena Award Winner

The votes are in and the 2026 RHS Athena Award goes to Lilly Bury!

The Athena Award is given to one senior female athlete from each participating school who has distinguished herself in special individual athletic achievement or superior achievements in one or more sports.

Lilly will be joined by family member and Rockford administrators at the 54th annual Minneapolis Athena Award luncheon on May 1st.

Other RHS candidates nominated for this award include Anna Feyen, Olivia Thomas and Sofie Westgaard. GO ROCKETS!



SCHOOL STORE March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5 Store Hours 6-8pm	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Store Hours 9am-12pm
15	16	17	18	19 Store Hours 6-9pm	20	21
22	23	24	25 Store Hours 5-8pm	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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

FFA Day at the State Capitol

On March 4th Rockford FFA attended FFA day at the Capitol, an event that helps bring awareness to FFA and provide government officials with real students that their work has helped support.

The Rockford Chapter had the opportunity to speak to several Senators and Representatives including Sen. Michael Holmstrom, Sen. Warren Limmer, Sen. Eric Lucero, and Rep. Joe McDonald.



This was a great opportunity for the students to learn about agricultural advocacy, how committees work, and how bills get passed.

Rockford FFA also had two students attend APEX (Ag Policy Experience), a 2 day conference for High School students that does a deep dive into the workings of government policy and how to debate for the policies you are most passionate about. Allison Vergin and Ava Cox spoke highly of their time and had the opportunity to network with other officials and chapters as well.



Speech Conference Results

The Rockford speech team competed in the Wright County Conference on Thursday, February 26th.

Although it was early in the season this year, our team worked incredibly hard and brought the competition.

In their respective categories:

- Alex Bombard, Veronica Ferdig, and Lucy Zednik placed seventh
- Payton Nordhus placed sixth
- Ava Stendahl and Thomas Rust placed fifth
- Joey Peterson placed fourth
- Olivia Larson placed third
- Breanna Clarkson and Natalie and Mackenzie Lockwood placed second.



Additionally, this year Rockford had more entries into the tournament than they have had since 2020! Way to go Rockets!



RHS Choirs Present:

Music of the People

folk songs from near and far

FEATURING:
ROCKET CHOIR
CONCERT CHOIR
CHAMBER CHOIR

Tuesday, March 10

7:30 pm

Rockford High School Auditorium