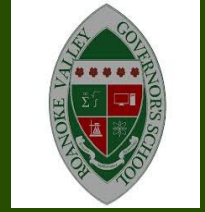


COMING UP SOON:

3/14: REGIONAL FAIR
3/17: STEM CAREER PANEL
AND HOFFMAN FORUM
3/18: INTERIM REPORT
3/30-4/6: RVGS SPRING
BREAK

RVGS Newsletter



Issue 2
Spring 2026

Counselor's Corner

Greetings and Happy Spring! We've been busy here at RVGS. Although Project Forum has passed and we are well into 2nd semester, many of our students are still competing in various science fairs. I am in the process of meeting with the 11 the graders individually to discuss their senior and college plans, and I am working on end of the year activities for seniors. It's hard to believe, but the 5th interim will be out soon! That means that the end of the year is quickly heading our way and there are many exciting (and sometimes stressful) things ahead. SOL testing and AP testing will begin the first week of May. Seniors are hearing about the last of the college decisions and many are waiting to see what happens with college waitlists. Those things can certainly be stressful, but we will be planning some fun things as well. The spring ultimate frisbee tournament has been scheduled for the week of April 6th. The money collected from that will go towards Feeding America. There will also be the celebration of World Rat Day, so look out for that as well! Speaking of seniors... We are holding our annual Senior Sunset on Friday, April 17 th at 7:00 pm. Our Senior Dinner takes place on Monday, May 4th at the Hotel Roanoke. Invitations will go out after spring break. Senior breakfast will take place here at RVGS on Friday, May 15th and this will be the last senior day! So this spring, get plenty of rest, review your study skills, and enjoy the fun things in between the stressful ones.

-Kathy Sebolt

Altec Challenge Winners

Each year, Altec's Innovation Challenge invites high school students to step into the role of real-world problem solvers. The program encourages teams to identify a challenge facing their local community and develop a STEM-driven solution, all while strengthening their collaboration and presentation skills. The winning team earns a \$10,000 grant to bring their idea from concept to reality. For Altec, the Innovation Challenge is both a celebration of innovation and a meaningful investment in the next generation, offering students firsthand exposure to careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—fields that continue to grow at a remarkable pace.

This year, Altec's Roanoke location hosted its third annual Innovation Challenge at the historic Hotel Roanoke, where students presented thoughtful, creative proposals aimed at improving safety, sustainability, and quality of life in their communities.

The top honor went to the Lucky Lab Rats from the Roanoke Valley Governor's School—Mason Killeen, Gryphon Flint, Strummer Giffin, and Sophia Rorrer. Their winning proposal focuses on enhancing safety along the Appalachian Trail by installing solar-powered charging stations and climate-controlled, AED-equipped trail huts. These stations would ensure hikers have access to emergency communication and life-saving resources during critical moments, blending environmental stewardship with practical engineering. With their \$10,000 implementation grant, the Lucky Lab Rats are ready to turn their vision into a tangible improvement for one of the region's most iconic outdoor spaces. Their work exemplifies the spirit of the Innovation Challenge: empowering young innovators to create meaningful change in their communities.



Message from the Director

I hope you are doing well and enjoying the transition to some warmer weather, which we can appreciate even more after the winter we had! I want to thank everyone again for being so flexible and positive amid the scheduling challenges and Project Forum complications related to weather.

A few things that always stand out about spring at RVGS are opportunities for guest speakers and continued science fair advancement. We recently had some guest speakers from VTC in support of their Brain Week educational outreach. Next week, we have our RVGS STEM Panel which gives our students a taste of a variety of career options and information about the pathways to get to those opportunities. Along with that, we have a few guest speakers coming to visit individual classes.

On the science fair side of things, we have the Western Virginia Regional Science Fair this weekend (3/14), with winners advancing to the state science fair in April and the top three projects heading to ISEF.

Spring break is around the corner, so please make sure that if you have a break that doesn't match RVGS's break that you have reviewed and acted on the information I sent out a few weeks ago.

Govie Gala: Vegas Vibes, Big Wins, and Unforgettable Moments

This year's Govie Gala delivered a full-on Vegas experience — no plane ticket required. From the glittering décor to the lively music, the night captured everything: excitement, glamour, and just the right amount of friendly risk-taking.

The dance floor stayed packed as students embraced the Vegas theme with energy and style.

Whether they were showing off their best moves or just enjoying the music with friends, the atmosphere felt electric from start to finish.



A highlight of the evening was the casino-style game area, expertly run by Mr. Browning. Students lined up to try their luck at blackjack, roulette and other games of chance, cheering each other on as they placed their bets. His enthusiasm and showmanship added an extra layer of fun, making

the games feel like the real deal.

Of course, no Vegas night would be complete without plenty of photo opportunities. Students loved capturing the moment — posing with friends, showing off their outfits, and taking snapshots that will no doubt become some of the year's favorite memories.

The Govie Gala once again proved why it's one of the most anticipated events of the year. With dancing, games, and endless moments worth photographing, the evening brought the students together in a way that felt both glamorous and joyful.



Project Forum 2026

The biggest event of the year at Roanoke Valley Governor's School is always Project Forum, and the 2026 celebration proved no exception — even after winter weather during Intersession forced the event to be delayed by a week. Despite the schedule shift, students, families, judges, and community partners arrived with enthusiasm, making the day a vibrant celebration of scientific inquiry and creativity.

Freshmen explored foundational topics in animal science, plant science, and microbiology, gaining hands-on experience with experimental design and scientific analysis. Their projects examined how different variables influence living systems, giving them a strong start in the research process. More advanced students pursued innovative projects across a wide range of categories — from Animal Science to Systems Software. Whether investigating chemical reactions, designing engineering solutions, exploring biotechnology, or developing computational tools, students demonstrated impressive depth, creativity, and perseverance.

While many students conducted their research in RVGS laboratories, others expanded their experience through mentorships at regional research centers, including VTCRI and Virginia Tech. These partnerships allowed students to work alongside professional scientists and gain exposure to advanced techniques and equipment.

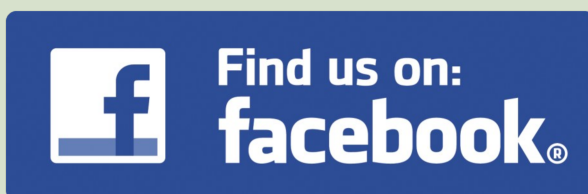
Winning projects earned the opportunity to advance to several area science fairs, including Roanoke County, Roanoke City, the Central Virginia Regional, and the Western Virginia Regional science fairs. These events give students a broader platform to share their work and continue refining their research.

The event also marked the close of the “official” Annual Appeal fundraiser. This year, the RVGS community raised over \$36,000 to support instruction, supplies, and student opportunities. The Annual Appeal helps fund research equipment, Project Forum awards, student activities, and travel expenses for ISEF competitors. The generosity of families, friends, and community supporters continues to make a meaningful impact on the RVGS experience.

Project Forum's success is the result of the dedication and hard work of judges, volunteers, and the entire RVGS faculty. Their time, expertise, and enthusiasm ensure that students have a platform to shine. A heartfelt thank-you goes out to everyone who contributed to making Project Forum 2026 an inspiring and memorable event.



Be sure to follow us on Facebook



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Senior Scholarship Spotlight



Archit Arora (SR/RVGS) has been selected as a recipient of the prestigious **Virginia Tech Beyond Boundaries Scholarship**, a highly competitive and renewable award granted to undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional academic achievement and financial need.

The Beyond Boundaries Scholarship covers full tuition for four years and provides up to \$7,000 for study-abroad experiences, supporting students who are ready to think globally and lead boldly.

Archit plans to pursue engineering at Virginia Tech, with particular interest in aerospace engineering or biomedical engineering—two fields that align with his passion for innovation, problem-solving, and improving the world through technology.

He is excited to join the Virginia Tech community, take advantage of its strong academic and professional networks, and immerse himself in the traditions that make the university special—including the unforgettable energy of football Saturdays in Blacksburg.

This scholarship recognizes Archit's hard work, curiosity, and commitment to excellence. It marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter as he prepares to become a Hokie and contribute to Virginia Tech's spirit of service and discovery.

Zachary Young (PH/RVGS) has been honored with the **Pamplin Leadership Award**, one of Virginia Tech's most respected scholarships recognizing students who demonstrate exceptional leadership, academic excellence, and a commitment to serving their communities. This award places Zachary among an elite group of future Hokies selected for their potential to lead with integrity and make meaningful contributions on campus and beyond.

Zachary plans to major in Mechanical Engineering, driven by his passion for innovation, problem-solving, and hands-on design. He is eager to take advantage of Virginia Tech's strong engineering programs and the university's emphasis on experiential learning.

One of the opportunities Zachary is most excited about is participating in undergraduate research. He looks forward to working alongside faculty mentors and contributing to projects that push the boundaries of engineering.

Outside the classroom, Zachary hopes to join the Virginia Tech club lacrosse team, continuing a sport he loves while becoming part of the vibrant Hokie community. Balancing athletics, academics, and leadership is something he's genuinely looking forward to as he begins this next chapter.

Zachary's achievement reflects his dedication, curiosity, and leadership both inside and outside the classroom. The RVGS community is proud to celebrate this milestone and excited to see the impact he will make as he joins the Hokie family.



Caiden Perry (LI/RVGS) has been selected for the **University Achievement Award** at the University of Virginia, a distinguished honor recognizing Virginia students who demonstrate outstanding leadership, strong character, and a commitment to excellence. The award covers all tuition and fees, making it one of UVA's most impactful opportunities for in-state students.

Caiden was immediately drawn to UVA's beautiful campus, welcoming atmosphere, and the friendliness of the student body. She will enter the university with 30 college credits already completed, giving her a significant head start as she begins her academic journey. She plans to double major in Biological Science and Religious Studies, an ambitious and thoughtful combination that reflects both her scientific interests and her desire to understand cultures, belief systems, and the human experience. Caiden also hopes to study abroad, where she can explore religious history firsthand and deepen her understanding of global traditions.

Caiden's achievement highlights her curiosity, determination, and broad intellectual interests. The RVGS community is excited to see the impact she will make as she joins the UVA family.

Highlights from RVGS

