

Rocket Newsletter

April 2026



Important Dates:

- April 16: Reading & Math MCA Testing
- April 16: Senior Meeting
- April 22-24: Science MCA Testing
- April 30: Spring Band Concert - 8:00 pm
- May 2: Prom
- May 5: Jazz Concert - 8:00 pm



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,

4th quarter is no 'fooling' as we begin the month of April. While this is an exciting time of year, it can be stressful for adults and students as workload and pressure increase. Please exercise patience, active listening, and work hard to understand the perspective of one another as we begin the final stretch of this fantastic 2025-2026 school year. This is one of the most exciting times of the year in high school: watching our seniors enjoy their 'lasts', seeing our sports and ensembles excel, and supporting one another to a successful finish of the school year.

SENIOR PARENTS: Allow yourself to breathe, be fully present for your children who are entering adulthood, and ensure your children are confident for their conclusion of high school and future plans. Pay close attention to additional messengers and announcements coming your way. Beginning as early as next week's senior class meeting there is a lot of information to digest and it works best if the adults are also well informed to assist with reminders and ensure a smooth end to this 13 year journey!

JUNIOR PARENTS: As your children approach summer, consider lining them up for job shadows, college visits, and/or appointments with military recruiters. Getting an early start on these transitional conversations will help you manage stress, allow time and space to make informed decisions, and allows your child to stay in school more during their senior year. Fall of senior year is the last semester that appears on student transcripts when they apply for jobs or college, so it is arguably the most pivotal start to any school year. Help them finish this year strong and start planning for their future beyond high school.

SOPHOMORE PARENTS: Continue discussing your child's future high school path. Beginning immediately in 11th grade, students start a transition from acquiring knowledge to choosing a career path in which to apply that knowledge. Become a parent expert on our IB DP and CP programs, Launch Your Future program, and the career prep courses and courses through which you can access over 50 college credits. Double check your child's registration in Infinite Campus; if there need to be adjustments, contact the Guidance Office later this summer to ensure your child's courses align with their future intent.

FRESHMEN PARENTS: As they wrap up their first year of high school, please remind your children that these grades count, assistance is available if they self-advocate, and choosing to quit is the least desirable option (I can give many examples through the years where students chose to have an unproductive freshman year, which made the remainder of high school challenging and, at times, seemingly impossible. Establishing a strong GPA early helps in multiple ways. As I've mentioned before, now that they understand the routines and rigor of high school, if they need support now is an ideal time to ask for help!

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



Can't Look Away

Last night we hosted the community screening of the Jolt Films documentary, "Can't Look Away".

After the screening, we held space for important and timely conversations about the many dangers of social media and discussed practical strategies for raising children in this constantly changing digital age.

If you were not able to attend but wish to watch the panel discussion, led by industry expert Jessica Smith for ClickSafe, you can find the link to watch [HERE](#), and viewer discretion is advised. Additionally, you can find a one-page overview of the event [HERE](#).

We appreciate the collaboration between school, parents, students, and the community at large as we try to navigate the complex and ever-changing landscape of social media.



SCHOOL STORE April 2026

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

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



LBX is not an ISD 883
sponsored program

SUMMER 2026 LBX REGISTRATION

REGISTRATION DUE BY MAY 24TH

LBX is a RiverWorks program that helps ensure all children residing in the Rockford Area School District have access to nutritious meals during the summer season.

IMPORTANT DETAILS

- Deliveries every Wednesday
- June 17th - August 12th
NO delivery on July 1st
- Meals delivered between
10:30 - 11:30 AM



Scan the QR Code.

When you complete the application hit submit; and it's that easy you are registered!

IS LBX FOR MY FAMILY?

- Students must live within the boundaries of the Rockford School District.
- Your family receives free or reduced school lunches.
- Financially the cost of groceries is a concern for the summer months.

Questions? Please email The RiverWorks Food Shelf at foodshelf@riverworksonline.org or call 763-477-6098 and leave a message



REF News & Updates

April 2026

Empowering Every Student, Every Day

Growing Opportunities. Inspiring Potential. Stengthening Our Schools

The Rockford Education Foundation is proud to fund more than just equipment. We are committed to enriching the student journey by removing barriers and opening doors to new possibilities.

This work is only made possible by our amazing donors.

Whether you support us through **Rocket Launch** monthly giving, event sponsorships, or by participating in our fundraisers, your generosity creates these experiences:

Field Trip Access: From the **MN Zoo** and **Children's Museum** to **Stages Theatre** and the **Historical Society**, the Foundation regularly funds admission for every grade level to ensure all students participate in these vital learning experiences.

Career Pathways: We are helping our high schoolers build their futures! We've provided essential supplies for the **CNA program** (scrubs, watches, and exam fees) and the **Craftsmanship Pathway** (grinders and metal supplies) to name a couple.

Technology & Arts: Our funding has brought cutting-edge technology into classrooms and supported creative milestones like the **REAMS All School Song Production**.



Upcoming Events



FREE Family Fun Bingo Night + Swap!

Friday, April 17th
REAMS Common Area (Door #35)
Doors open at 5:30pm
Bingo starts at 6:00pm

The Fun

Enjoy multiple rounds of bingo for prizes and concessions are available for purchase

Community Swap

Bring a gently used boardgame, book, or puzzle to swap for a “new to you” items!

This event is free, but registration is required

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



Staff Appreciation Luncheon

Wednesday, May 6 (Teacher Appreciation Week: May 4-6)

We're celebrating our incredible staff with a catered lunch from Tacos La Chule, and we need your help to make it a success! We are currently looking for:

- **Monetary donations** to help cover food and decor
- **Donations** of beverages and desserts
- **Volunteers** to help with setup, serving, and cleanup

**Sign up to Donate
or Volunteer
Here**

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: Visual Arts



Mrs. Weber

Art 1: Multimedia Expression

Students in Mrs. Weber's Art 1 classes are working on building visual arts foundational skills and the creative process in order to apply these skills to their own development of personal style.

Students are making connections to various art movements, artists, and art styles.

Responding to art by inquiring about different processes and techniques play a key part in this course.



Art 1 classes are currently learning about artistic foundation unity and the art style of Pop Art. Students examine leading pop artists, past and present, for inspiration in their group large sculpture works.

From this, students are asked to identify and apply techniques of unity and characteristics of pop art in their work.

Drawing

Students in Mrs. Weber's Drawing Courses began with observation drawings using various contour line methods.

Currently, students are learning about different drawing techniques and how to apply those techniques in their art. Some of the drawing techniques include: Stipple, crosshatch and blending.

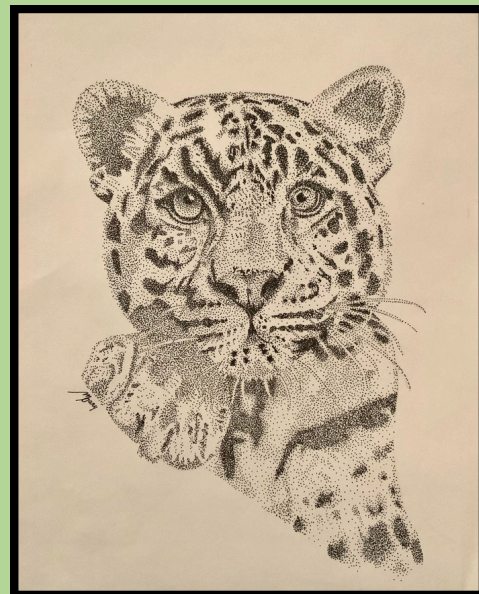
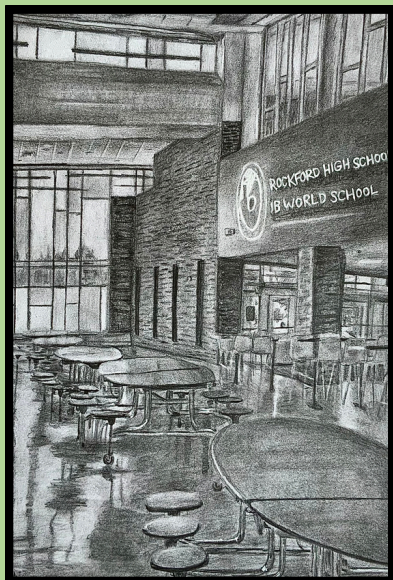


Painting Studio

Students in Mrs. Weber's Painting Studio classes are introduced to painting through direct observation of subject matter, painting concepts, painting styles, and painting techniques. Painting mediums include acrylic, tempera, and watercolor.

Currently, the Painting Studio classes are exploring color theory by applying the following color schemes in their still-life composition: Analogous, Complementary, Monochromatic and Triadic.

Students are learning about different painting mediums and applying those into different sections of their work.



Meet The Teacher!



Meet Mrs. Weber!

Mrs. Weber has a Master's Degree from the University of Minnesota in Art Education. She is a practicing artist in many mediums (including drawing, oil painting, ceramics, printmaking, stained glass and other glass techniques).

She has had exhibitions at many Minnesota and east coast galleries (e.g., Minneapolis Institute of Arts). Artistic commissions include major Minnesota companies and the Arch-bishop of Minnesota. Her many years of teaching experience covers all age levels (Kindergarten through Twelfth grade, University, International, and ages 50+)

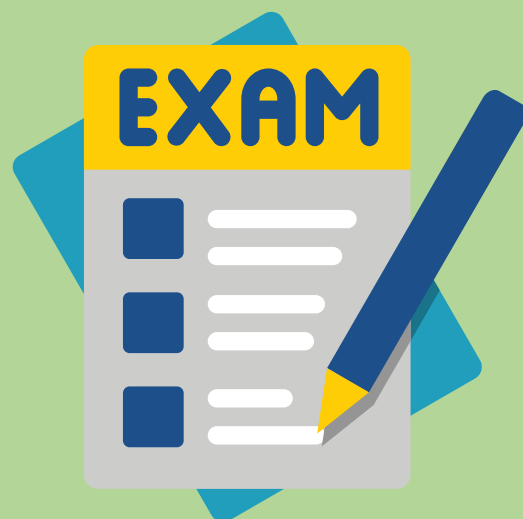
IN THE CLASSROOM: Social Studies



Mrs. Young

In European History HL2, preparation for the International Baccalaureate exams is in full swing.

European History is a two-year course which can earn students college credit in two ways. First, they may earn eight credits as a concurrent-enrollment student with the University of Minnesota, Duluth. Second, they sit for IB exams in the spring of senior year which can earn additional credits depending on their choice of post-secondary institution. The exams are also a requirement of the Diploma and Career Programs.



The exam consists of three parts. The first part assesses the student's ability to work with primary sources and evaluate their content as well as interrogate their biases and perspectives. Practice for this component is embedded throughout the course as students work regularly with primary sources (written, visual, and statistical) to build an understanding of the past.

The second part of the exam requires students to write two well composed 5-7 paragraph essays addressing world history topics and the way they impacted the development of two different regions. Students receive a "menu" of possible essay prompts on the day of the exam and they must utilize their knowledge of the past and their writing skills to generate their essays. Timed practice essays are completed in class so that students are familiar with the intense time pressure of these exams as well as the endurance it takes to hand-write responses in the given timeframe.

The final part of the exam requires students to write three well composed 5-7 paragraph essays addressing topics specific to European history. Here too, students have a "menu" of prompts from which to choose. Most students gravitate toward the Renaissance, Reformation, French and Russian Revolutions, World War I, or the Cold War when choosing their topics. The timed practice essay is also utilized to prepare students for this component of the IB exams.

Students are encouraged to take care of their health and well-being during testing season. Sleep, hydration, and self-care are as important as study.

IN THE CLASSROOM:

Social Studies



Mr. Pennings

We are beginning a unit on American Expansion and Imperialism in the early 1900s. Students will explore how nations competed for power and influence, similar to a real-life game of Risk, and how the United States entered the global stage later than many other countries.

We will examine cause and effect, looking at why nations pursued imperialism and what consequences followed. Students will also consider the lasting impact of these decisions and how they continue to shape the world today.

Mr. Tauber

Students in the IB-DP Economics course are working on their Global Economics Internal Assessments (IAs), where they analyze a current global economic issue. Each student writes a report focused on one of the IB's Key Concepts and includes a diagram to illustrate a specific economic idea.

This task helps students deepen their understanding of economic concepts, develop analytical skills, and demonstrate their ability to evaluate policies using clear explanations and appropriate diagrams.

Mr. Houghton

In Mr. Houghton's Psychology class, students are taking on a creative and thought provoking challenge. "Build a brain" without actually making it look like one. Instead of crafting a traditional model, students design or select an object that symbolically represents the brain and its many functions. For example, they might compare the brain to a computer, a sports team, or even a busy city—explaining how different parts represent structures such as the frontal lobe (decision making), amygdala (emotional processing), hippocampus (memory), and cerebellum (balance and coordination). Students must clearly define each brain function and justify why they placed it in a specific part of their chosen item, demonstrating both creativity and understanding of the brain. This engaging project encourages critical thinking, deeper learning, and real world connections as students explore how the brain's structures work together to shape behavior and experience.



IN THE CLASSROOM: Social Studies



Meet The Teachers!



Meet Mrs. Young!

Ms. Young has been teaching Social Studies at RHS since 2002. A graduate of Annandale High School, Ms. Young attended college at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She graduated with honors in 2000 and received a Masters Degree in Education from the University of Minnesota in 2008. In 2024, she received a Masters Degree in American History from Gettysburg College. She has earned several awards and honors. She was a 2012 Candidate for Minnesota Teacher of the Year. In 2017 Ms. Young was named the Gilder-Lehrman Minnesota History Teacher of the Year. She was the 2021 RHS LEEA award winner. She was a 2022 Semifinalist for the Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

Meet Mr. Houghton!

Mr. Houghton started teaching in 2000 and has taught for 26 years. He started at Rockford in 2004 and has been here for the last 22 years. He is currently a Social Studies teacher at the High School and is the head football coach for the Rockford Rockets. Mr. Houghton grew up in Olivia MN, graduated from BOLD High School. He graduated with an A.A. from Anoka Ramsey Community College and graduated from St. Cloud State University with a B.S. in Social Studies with an emphasis in History and a teacher's license. He graduated from St. Mary's University with a M.A. in Education. Mr. Houghton has taught previously at Dassel-Cokato High School and Montgomery Lonsdale High School.



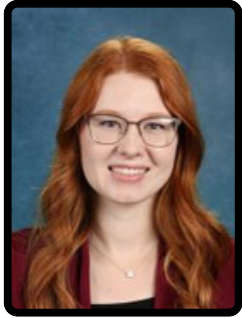
Meet Mr. Tauber!

Mr. Tauber has been an educator at Rockford High School since 1999. A graduate of Wheaton High School he attended the University of Minnesota-Morris and graduated in 1999 with a degree in Social Studies, a minor in Economics and a History Area of Emphasis along with a licensure in secondary education and a coaching certificate.

Mr. Tauber earned an M.Ed in Teaching and Learning from St Mary's University in 2008 and has continued with additional Graduate level Economics courses through the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs and the Foundation for Teaching Economics.

RHS | Counselor's Corner

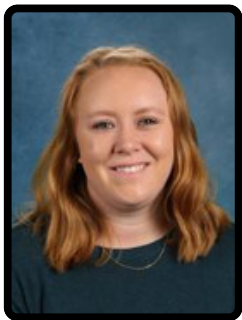
Meet The Counselors



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!

MCA Testing

10th and 11th graders have begun MCA testing this week!

The Rockford High School staff have worked hard all year to ensure that students are as prepared as possible for the upcoming assessments. Parents often ask how they can best help their child during the testing. The following tips will give your child some additional assistance on testing days:

Explain testing to your child:

- Encourage your child to try their best on these tests. Student scores tell our school how well students are mastering reading and mathematics, and give teachers specific information about your child that teachers at the next grade level use as they plan your child's education.
- Remind your child to read directions carefully and look at all the answers before choosing one. There is no time limit on the test. Tell your child to take his or her time!
- Tell your child to check his or her answers before finishing each section. Once you finish a section, you can't go back and change your answers.
- Send your child off to school with confidence building words of praise and support - things like "You'll do great!" or "Believe in yourself!"

Tips for Test Days:

1. Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep before each test.
2. Provide a healthy breakfast on test day. Options for a healthy breakfast include whole grains--whole wheat bread or oatmeal, protein--eggs, meat, fresh fruits/vegetables and dairy--milk, yogurt and cheese. Avoid sugary cold cereals, donuts or sugary juice.
3. Have your child dress comfortably and arrive at school on time.
4. If possible, do not schedule trips, dental or medical appointments or early pick-ups on testing days.

MCA Testing Dates:

- ***Math and Reading: April 16th***
- ***Science: April 22 - 24***

Important Dates to Know!

- **Wednesday, April 15th - End of First Period**
 - 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.

Celebrate Your Senior!

The Rockford Education Foundation is continuing its tradition of honoring our graduating seniors accomplishments by providing senior yard signs to all graduating seniors - FREE OF CHARGE!

If you would like to request a yard sign, please fill out the following form: [Senior Yard Sign](#)

You have the option to have the sign delivered to your home as a surprise (which will be delivered in early May) or you can have the school counselors give the sign to your senior.

Orders are due Friday, April 24th.



Thank you to the Education Foundation for helping celebrate our amazing seniors!

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 achievements or superior achievements in one or more sports.

Lilly will be joined by family members 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!



Varsity Boys Golf Win!

The Varsity Boys Golf Team delivered an outstanding performance at the Watertown Invitational, finishing in an impressive second place out of 11 competing teams.

The strong showing highlights the team's hard work, determination, and growing momentum as the season continues. Leading the way were Benton Blanchard and Easton Pikkarainen, who achieved a remarkable milestone by capturing the individual championship title. The duo combined for an exceptional score of 67. Their achievement stands as a testament to their dedication and teamwork.

The excitement doesn't stop there. The team is set to return to action tonight at Shamrock, with play beginning at 4 p.m. as they compete in their Conference Meet. Supporters are encouraged to come out and cheer on the Rockets as they look to build on their recent success and continue their strong season. Go Rockets!

RHS | Athletics & Activities

Band and Choir Take Over Orlando!

The Rockford high school band and choir program recently completed its trip to Orlando, Florida.

The trip dates were March 27-March 30. The high school choir and band programs at the high school participate in a major trip every two years. Past destinations have included: Anaheim, New York, New Orleans, and San Antonio.

Highlights of this trip included 3 days at DisneyWorld as well as a recording session at Disney. 60 students from both band and choir took part in this trip.

We would like to thank our wonderful chaperones for their help as well as our administration for their support to make these valuable experiences happen for our students!



Speech Community Night!

The Rockford Speech team will be holding a community night on April 12th at 3 PM at the high school auditorium!

Admission is free. Come and see just what it is we do. We have spent the season working hard, earning team awards, a number of individual awards, and even qualifying for a spot to compete at the national tournament.

Come watch our students perform and send them off to the section tournament with their community support!