

ROCKFORD PUBLIC

SCHOOLS

Outdoor Learning Programming











Presentation Q and A Optional tour of the space





Current State of Outdoor Learning

	Fall	Winter	Spring
DK, K, and 1	Sounds in Nature	Thriving in the Winter or Animal Tracks	Taking Care of the Earth
2	Cycles in Nature ½ day Field Trip to E.T.	Thriving in the Winter or Animal Tracks	Cycles in Nature ¹ ⁄ ₂ day Field Trip to E.T.
3	Animal Evidence and Classification	Thriving in the Winter or Animal Tracks	Building Observation Skills
4	Building Observation Skills for Zoo School	Thriving in the Winter or Animal Tracks	Geology
5	Observation Skills	Native Species AND Thriving in the Winter or Animal Tracks	Tree Planting AND Stewardship Project with Community Partner

Individual teacher projects, grant writing, working with Explore students

Our Outdoor Space

At Edgerton Trails

- 27 acres
 - Meadow
 - Woods
 - Two ponds
 - Wetlands
 - Covered pavilion
 - Dock and porch area around pond
 - Boardwalk
- Plans this summer include:
 - Developing trails
 - Clearing out the camper quarters
 - Prepping spaces for more learning

















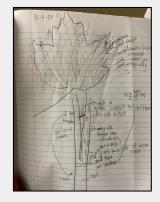




Current Programming at the Nature Center













2025/26 Programming

- Goal: by school year 26-27 have a Magnet Outdoor Education Program with a 4th and 5th grade. Students commit to participating for two years.
- School Year 25-26- Year 1
 - 26 4th Grade students admitted into the program
 - 1 classroom teacher
 - School Year 26-27-Year 2
 - Inaugural Class moves to 5th grade
 - New 4th grade of 26 students enters

Continued Outdoor learning opportunities for all RPS elementary students

- Field trips to Edgerton Trails Elementary
- Visits to the outdoor educations spaces at each elementary school



Program Structure

- Outdoor learning is more than learning curriculum outside. In an outdoor learning program students are collaborating and using PBL to meet standards.
- Early programming:
 - All District Math priority standards will be taught
 - All District ELA priority standards will be taught
 - Science and Social Studies: Project Based Learning determined by district representative, classroom teacher and administration.
- Specials Classes
 - Art, Music, PE and STEAM. The schedule and opportunities for specials will be determined by the curriculum department.



PROFILE OF A STUDENT



- Inquisitive
- Genuine interest and experiences with the outdoors
- Can work both independently and collaboratively
- Has an intrinsic motivation when it comes to learning, school work and responsibility
- Positive attendance record
- Positive behaviors







PROFILE OF A TEACHER

- High Level of outdoor experience and interest
- Familiar with RPS Curriculum, structure and expectations
- Professional expectations and realization that this program and structure do not fit the typical certified staff hours and planning time.
- Commitment to outdoor programming and learning that includes prioritizing students being outside.
- Flexibility
- Ability to collaborate with similar programs and agencies outside of RPS.



Next Steps Timeline

- March: Board Presentation
- April: Post and hire certified teacher for 4th grade
- March 24-April 11: Application Opens
- April: Student Interviews
- May: Lottery
- May: Acceptance Letters

*Approximate Timeline





APPLICATION PROCESS

Application Process:

- Parent Recommendation: Opens March 24
 - Link in your communications from the district and under the Academics~Outdoor Ed on the district website.
- Current Teacher Recommendation: RPS will communicate with teachers.
- Student Interview
- Lottery-April
- Family communication in May/June

