

RAMPAGE

SPRING 2025 | VOLUME 42 NUMBER 4



Rockford Public Schools

Quality Community – Quality Schools
Together Building a Tradition of Excellence



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A MESSAGE FROM DR. MATTHEWS

Children love to explore.

Whether it's following a trail in the woods or looking through a microscope, kids have a natural curiosity. Kids like to see if they can figure things out.



Dr. Steve Matthews

This year, in an attempt to capitalize on those instincts, our district expanded our STEAM experience for elementary children. (STEAM represents a set of experiences in science, technology, engineering, art, and music.) Over the past couple of years, we have tried to provide our elementary students with a STEAM experience once a month. This year we expanded to providing our DK – 5th grade students a STEAM experience once a week.

Our STEAM experiences encompass a wide variety of activities. Students code robots, build Lego® cars to race down a track, or create parachutes out of napkins. The goal is to encourage creativity, develop a sense of wonder, and look at problems from a variety of perspectives.

I have been fortunate to visit our STEAM classrooms and watch our STEAM teachers engage our kindergarten through 5th grade students in a wide variety of activities. Our students' interest is high and their willingness to try is exceptional.

Why is it important that we provide this experience for our students?

Students, at times, can feel like the only thing adults care about is how well they do on a test. We talk to our students a lot about setting goals and preparing for the future and making sure they are paying attention to this critical content.

Continues on page 2

ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PODCAST



Hosted by:
DR. MATTHEWS

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VISIT THE ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEBSITE AT WWW.ROCKFORDSCHOOLS.ORG

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We can, unintentionally, communicate that what matters most is the grade you get on an assignment.

The STEAM experiences that we provide our students help remind all of us – teachers and students – that we come to school not to get a grade but to figure out how to learn. School is really about developing the skills we need to figure out problems, find information, and apply information in meaningful and, hopefully, magical ways.

Last week I was in one of our STEAM classrooms and the teacher held in her hand a small Ozobot Evo robot. It flashed a few lights and that caught the attention of the kindergarten students sitting before her. Then the teacher drew a line on a paper and showed the students how the robot could follow that line.

Our kindergarten students were mesmerized.

And the hope is that we can build upon experiences like this to create in our students a desire to explore and find answers.

Our district mission states that the Rockford Public Schools will be a community of educational excellence, where students are challenged to think critically, act compassionately, and succeed boldly. Our teachers understand their role to engage students not only with the content of the class but with the curiosity to explore. Make the subject come alive. Help students understand not only the information but how it impacts their lives.

And I am proud to say that I see our teachers doing this each and every day.

Dr. Steve Matthews,
Superintendent



The mission of the Rockford Public Schools District is to provide the teaching and learning environments which will ensure, with the support of the students, parents and community, that all students, upon graduation, will have the academic and social skills and strategies to be successful, lifelong learners.

SPRING CALENDAR

APRIL

SPRING BREAK: April 3 – April 11 (no school)

14: School Resumes

23: Early Release, 12:30 (Gr 6-12), 1:30 (Gr DK-5)

MAY

7: Early Release, 12:30 (Gr 6-12), 1:30 (Gr DK-5)

23, 26: Memorial Day Weekend (no school)

JUNE

5, 6: Half Day, 10:55 (Gr 6-12), 11:55 (Gr DK-5)

6: Last Day of School (Half Day)

9-13: Reserved for make-up days

BOARD MEETINGS

Check individual Board agenda for access to Board meetings; Board agenda posted on website no later than the Friday preceding the meeting.

ADULT EDUCATION HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

WANT TO EARN A ROCKFORD HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR PREPARE FOR THE GED?

Let us help you! Our dedicated teaching staff tailors instructional methods and curriculum options for each individual student. Students are given a clear plan and the help needed to achieve their goals.

Teachers are highly qualified in their teaching major and are aware of the unique needs of the adult education student. One-on-one time is given in each class.

Small class size, competent teachers, individualized learning plans, accelerated classes, online and onsite classes, a safe environment, a flexible class schedule, including day and evening classes, and a convenient location near US 131 and the E. Beltline are reasons students choose our FREE program.

NOW ENROLLING FOR THE 2025/2026 SCHOOL YEAR

Please contact: Jenny Thompson
Director, Adult/Alternative Education, Rockford Public Schools
616.863.6324 | jthompson@rockfordschools.org

ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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SCHOOLS

Belmont Elementary	616.863.6362
Rachel DeKuiper, Principal	
Cannonsburg Elementary	616.863.6344
Teya Cotter, Principal	
Crestwood Elementary	616.863.6346
Kyle Avink, Principal	
Edgerton Trails Elementary	616.326.1030
Shannon Ouellette, Principal	
Lakes Elementary	616.863.6340
Matt Zokoe, Principal	
Meadow Ridge Elementary	616.863.6342
Blake Bowman, Principal	
Parkside Elementary	616.863.6360
Mindy McGinn, Principal	
Rogewood Elementary	616.863.6374
Amie Santillan, Principal	
Valley View Elementary	616.863.6366
Jeremy Karel, Principal	
East Rockford Middle	616.863.6140
Adam Burkholder, Principal	
Derek Dillon, Assistant Principal	
Jennifer Domagalski, Student Activities Coordinator	
North Rockford Middle	616.863.6300
Lissa Weidenfeller, Principal	
Jesus Santillan, Assistant Principal	
Jennifer Domagalski, Student Activities Coordinator	
RHS Freshman Center	616.863.6348
Dr. Kelly Amshey, Principal	
Al Reickard, Assistant Principal	
Rockford High School	616.863.6030
Tom Hosford, Principal	
Eric Cavalli, Associate Principal	
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River Valley Academy	616.863.6324
Lisa Jacobs, Principal	
Rockford Virtual	616.863.6320
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The Rockford School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, height, weight and marital status in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Korie Wilson-Crawford, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources, Rockford Public Schools, 350 N. Main, Rockford, Michigan 49341, Telephone 616.863.6554.

New Student **ENROLLMENT**

NOW OPEN
for ALL STUDENTS
for the 2025-2026 school year!

Enroll your developmental kindergarten or kindergarten-age child before June 1, 2025.

Children who turn five on or before December 1, 2025 are eligible to enroll for the 2025-2026 school year.



Please visit www.rockfordschools.org/enrollment/ to review the online enrollment procedures and required documentation.



Schools of Choice applications will be available on April 14 to all students, including those residing outside of Kent county.



EDGERTON TRAILS ELEMENTARY NEWS

It has been a busy Winter at Edgerton Trails! In February, students participated in a school-wide post office. Students wrote and sent letters to each other. Our 3rd grade students delivered the mail with the help of parent volunteers throughout the month. This fun project helped our students practice writing in a fun, real world way.

During the last week of February, Parent Teacher Conferences were held. Conferences provide an opportunity for teachers and families to connect and celebrate student growth. Book Fair Week was a great success and allowed students to celebrate their love of reading while supporting our library.

Students from across the district have been spending time at the Nature Center behind Edgerton Trails. Maple trees have been tapped in hopes of making maple syrup. The acres of land with a pavilion, boardwalk, pond, dock and trails has served as a great space to learn and appreciate nature.

Our Kindergarteners celebrated the end of their King and Queen unit with a Royal celebration. Students made shields, dressed as royalty, and had a royal feast.



Support Rockford Schools!

ROCKFORD EATS GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER



APRIL 21 – MAY 2, 2025!

Make a \$100 donation to REF and receive a \$50 gift certificate to one of our fantastic restaurant partners.

Empowering Kids, Sustaining Local Flavor: Your support fuels education and directly benefits community restaurants.

rockfordEDfoundation.org

READING ROCKS IN ROCKFORD

**Saturday
May 31, 2025
9:45 AM—1:00 PM
at the Krause
Memorial
Library**

**Featured author:
Deborah Diesen**

Fun For All Ages!

Great books by Deborah Diesen:

- The Pout-Pout Fish
- The Perfect School Picture
- Equality's Call: The Story of Voting Rights in America
- Bloom: An Ode to Spring

Opening Ceremony, Mayoral Proclamation, Rockin' Reader Awards, Book Sale, Face Painting, Therapy Dogs, Storybook Characters, Authors' Row, Pluck-a-Duck, Rockford Book Bus and more!

Sponsored by:



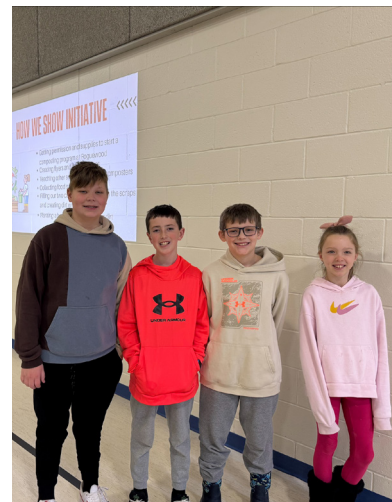
Roguewood Elementary Students Take Initiative to Improve Their School and Community

At Roguewood Elementary, students are stepping up in big ways to make their school and community a better place! February's Character Trait of the Month was Initiative, and our students truly embraced this theme by launching several incredible projects that are already making a positive impact.

One of the most exciting student-led initiatives is the Composting Project, designed to reduce food waste during lunch. A group of students, along with their teacher, took the lead in researching and organizing a system to separate compostable food scraps from regular trash. They then presented their project to the entire school, educating their classmates about the importance of reducing waste and helping the environment. Thanks to their efforts, less food is ending up in landfills, and students are more aware of how small actions can lead to big change.

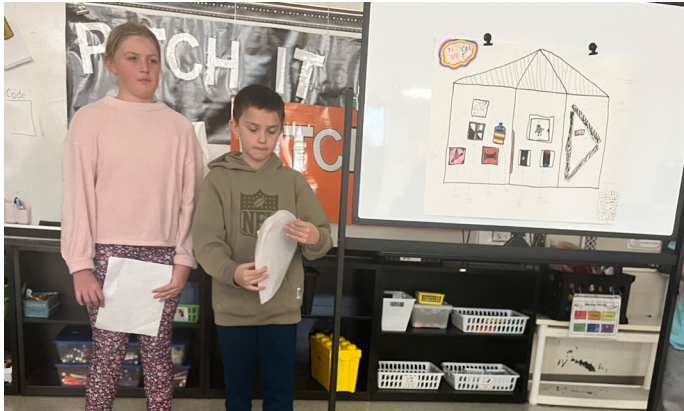
Other students have also taken the initiative to form groups that help their school community in meaningful ways. The Helping Hands group has organized students to help in all areas of the school. They wanted to be more involved and wanted to give back. The Scrub Club is dedicated to keeping Roguewood Elementary clean and welcoming. The Fun Club is an initiative all about making sure everyone has a variety of activities to choose from during recess.

Roguewood Elementary is proud of its students for taking action and making a difference. When kids take the lead in positive changes, it creates a stronger, more connected school community. Initiative isn't just a word—it's something our students are putting into action every day!



CANNONBURG ELEMENTARY NEWS

Cannonsburg Elementary fourth grade inventors launched their first episode of Pitch It or Ditch It?! game show. Students worked in teams to identify a problem that could be solved with a new invention, wrote a pitch, and created an informative diagram. District leaders, including Dr. Matthews, provided students with feedback and asked questions about their process and collaboration skills. Fourth grade teachers Lauren Arnett and Carrie TenBrink were proud of the effort their students put forth throughout this entire experience!



Third graders at Cannonsburg Elementary learned about the first people that lived in Michigan: the Ojibwa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi Native American Indian Tribes. They needed to find shelter for warmth and food for survival. Students immersed themselves in the experience by building shelters in their outdoor classroom. After their shelters were built, they added in French and British groups to see what it was like during the fur trade. The shelters became trading posts like Fort Pontchartrain and Fort Michilimackinac. Finally, they explored how pioneers lived in these shelters until their log cabins were built and the land was cleared for farming.






Hosted by: DR. MATTHEWS

ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PODCAST


Rams News and Views is a new Rockford Public Schools podcast. **Rams: News and Views** will share stories about the people and the activities of Rockford Public Schools and education in the 21st century. Our school district intersects with the lives of our students, families, and community members in a wide variety of ways. We hope to explore many of those intersections here on **Rams: News and Views**.

Subscribe to our podcast!





Listen to us on your favorite podcast app!



RHS Theatre Presents

INTO THE WOODS JR.

May 8-10, 2025

\$12 Adults | \$8 Students
Tickets at rocktix.org

Well Minded Matters

Springing Forward: Navigating Change in Childhood

Our next Well Minded Matters newsletter is designed to offer support, guidance, and practical tips to families navigating life's many changes. Focusing on transitions, we will have information on keeping a family routine, handling big moves, supporting children during change, and prioritizing well-being. Our goal is to make life's transitions a little smoother, giving families tools to feel empowered and connected.

www.rockfordschools.org/departments/special-services/special-services-newsletter/



Rockford Public Schools

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The Taste

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rockfordEDfoundation.org

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Thank you to our local restaurants and sponsors for making The Taste a success! Your support directly benefits Rockford students, and we are grateful for your commitment.

EVENT SPONSORS AT THE TASTE!

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Rockford
**Preschool
 & Child Care**
 services



Preschool For Little Rams!

Fast and Easy Online Registration
rps.digitalsignup.com

The following preschool opportunities are offered through Rockford Preschool and Child Care Services. All of our programs are state licensed and help prepare preschoolers for school success. Daily experiences include literacy, math, music, art, and gross and fine motor development. Social skills such as taking turns, sharing and learning to be a part of a group are reinforced and practiced in our child-centered environments. Each program requires a non-refundable deposit, due at the time of registration and payable by credit or debit card.

For more detailed information and to view our virtual tours, visit www.rockfordschools.org or call the Child Care office at 616.863.6560.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT LAB PRESCHOOL

Morning and afternoon availability for 3 and 4 year olds.
3 Year old T/TH 9:00-11:30am OR 12:30-3:00pm
 Child must be 3 by September 1, 2025
 Program costs \$1150 per year.

4 Year old M/W/F classes

9:00-11:30am OR 12:30-3:00pm
 Child must be 4 by September 1, 2025
 Program costs \$1700 per year.

MONTESSORI

Availability for 3 and 4 year olds.
M-F 8:30-11:30am or 12:00-3:00pm
 Child must be 3 by September 1, 2025
 Program costs \$3900 per year.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION PRESCHOOL

3 Year old T/TH
8:15-10:15am OR 10:30am-12:30pm
 Child must be 3 by September 1, 2025
 Program costs \$900 per year.

4 Year old M-TH

8:45-11:15am or 11:45am-2:15pm
 Child must be 4 by September 1, 2025
 Program costs \$1950 per year.

SPANISH PRESCHOOL

Availability for 3 and 4 year olds.
M/W/F 9:15-11:45am or 12:30-3:00pm
 Child must be 3 by September 1, 2025
 Program costs \$1950 per year.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

You will need to create a user account prior to enrollment at our registration website: rps.digitalsignup.com

TO REGISTER:

- Return to the landing page of the registration site.
- From the list of programs on the left, select the preschool you want to register for. The screen will then show you the class offerings for your chosen program.
- Select the class/session your want
- Select "REGISTER" on the right
- A credit/debit card deposit is required to register
- If the class is full, the computer will indicate "join the waitlist" and will prompt you to put yourself on a waiting list.
- If an opening occurs, you will be contacted.



PRESCHOOL ENRICHMENT CHILD CARE

**THIS PROGRAM ONLY
REGISTERS BY PHONE
616.863.6560**

- Full day, year-round preschool
- Half day summer option available from 7:00am-12:30pm
- Children can enroll at the age of 3 or 4*

*Must be 3 or 4 by September 1, 2025.

Please call the Child Care Services office at 616.863.6560 for availability.

Daily cost:

\$48/day (set 2 day minimum per week)

Summer half day cost:

\$28/day (set 2 day minimum per week)



School Age Programs

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE (BAC)

Our BAC programs in each of the RPS elementary schools provide parents with the security of knowing their children are in a safe, fun and nurturing environment before and after school hours. BAC is offered every day that school is in session, as well as on teacher in-service and conference days. BAC is also offered on some school vacation days. Table games, crafts, gym time, outdoor play and homework time are planned each day.

Information and registration packets will be available online and in the Child Care Services office beginning May 7-May 21.

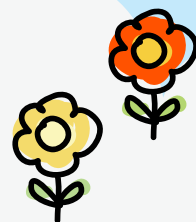
Registration Rate: \$40

Morning BAC - \$10 per day

7:00am - start of school

Afternoon BAC - \$10 per day

End of school day - 6:00pm



** Due to limited staffing, some sites may be on a waitlist very soon after enrollment opens.*

Get Ready for

School

Upcoming DK/Kindergarten Students

This four day program is designed for students entering Kindergarten or DK in the fall and helps students get excited and ready for school.

Taught by RPS teachers

REGISTER AT [RPS.DIGITALSIGNUP.COM](https://rps.digitalsignup.com)

JUNE 16-19:

Monday-Thursday	9:00-11:00am	#2886-U25A
Monday-Thursday	9:00-11:00am	#2886-U25B

JUNE 23-26:

Monday-Thursday	9:00-11:00am	#2886-U25C
Monday-Thursday	9:00-11:00am	#2886-U25D
Monday-Thursday	12:00-2:00pm	#2886-U25E

JULY 7-10:

Monday-Thursday	9:00-11:00am	#2886-U25F
Monday-Thursday	12:00-2:00pm	#2886-U25G

Includes 4 days of 2-hour classes and a snack each day.

\$100/student (no scholarship opportunities)

Meadow Ridge Elementary - Parents must drop off and pick up



Help end cancer as we know it.

Fighting cancer takes many things like research, free rides to chemo and lodging near hospitals, and our 24/7 helpline. But we can't do any of that without you. Join Relay For Life, the largest, most inspiring, and supportive cancer fundraising event on the planet.

Relay For Life of Rockford – Fantasy Theme

Friday, May 16 | 4 PM – 10 PM | North Rockford Middle School

Free Kid Zone 4 PM – 8 PM

Face painting, inflatables, crown making, musical thrones, coloring contest, and more!

Survivor Celebration 5:30 PM

Celebrate our local cancer survivors! Survivors and their caregiver enjoy dinner on us.

Pizza Palooza 6 PM

All you can eat pizza for a \$10 donation.

Luminaria 9 PM

Honor a loved one that has been affected by cancer with a luminaria bag.

RelayForLife.org/RockfordMI | 1.800.227.2345