

APRIL 2021

VOLUME 2020/21, ISSUE 2
THE DISTRICT NEWSLETTER FOR REETHS-PUFFER SCHOOLS



ROCKET CITY NEWS

Our Collaborative Spirit is Our Foundation of Success!



Dear Reeths-Puffer Community,

As the Superintendent of Reeths-Puffer Schools, I could not be more honored to be part of this wonderful community. In my two decades with Reeths-Puffer, I have watched our district commit to being a great place to learn, contribute, and compete, every single day. Reeth-Puffer succeeds as a district with outstanding academic achievement, successful programs in athletics, and exceptional fine arts productions. While we are proud of our success as a district, what is most exemplary to me, as Superintendent, is the character of our students and

our community. Our collaborative spirit is the foundation of success in our district.

To ensure that we are building on this foundation, we must constantly evaluate the educational experience that we provide to our students. For the past several years, the district has been completing an in-depth investigation into all aspects of our facilities to ensure that they meet our goals as educators. During this time, district administration, along with the Board of Education, completed board work sessions, community conversations, staff meetings, and a community survey to gather input on our educational facilities. Based on this input, the Board of Education voted unanimously to place a \$23 million bond proposal on the ballot for May 4, 2021. This proposal asks voters to approve a 1.95 mill increase to complete the projects that resulted from our district-wide facilities study.

This proposal was initially planned for the May 2020 election. The School Board pushed "pause" on that election in response to the uncertainty of the impact the pandemic would have on our community. As we navigate these unique times,

we've heard from the community that it's important to prepare for the best future possible, which is why we are asking voters to consider the bond proposal on the May 4, 2021 ballot.

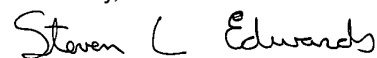
The proposal is focused on safety and infrastructure, developing modern learning spaces, fine arts improvements, athletic and physical education replacements, technology upgrades, and furnishing replacements. Some potential projects include replacing heating and cooling equipment for greater efficiency and better air quality, creating space for STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) learning, improvements to the auditorium and technology district-wide, the addition of synthetic turf at the stadiums for athletic, band, and community purposes, and the installation of furniture that is conducive to modern, 21st-century learning environments.

For a complete list of the proposed projects, please visit www.rp-bond.com/projects. The 1.95 mill increase required to complete these projects would generate \$23 million. For the average district homeowner, this is equal to about \$10 a month.

If you have any questions or would like to schedule a time to meet, please contact me at (231) 719-3101 or edwardst@reeths-puffer.org. I welcome any discussion or questions about the bond proposal.

Don't forget to vote on May 4, 2021, and go Rockets!

Sincerely,



Steve Edwards
Superintendent

Reeths-Puffer High School

~ Class of 2021 ~

TOP TEN GRADUATES



Valedictorian of the Reeths-Puffer High School Class of 2021 is Carmen Beekman. Carmen is the daughter of Jay and Joanne Beekman and Michelle and Jason

Ziskie. She has a weighted grade point average of 4.305. Carmen is a member of Student Council where she currently serves as Vice President and in the past has served as Junior Class Treasurer. She has been involved with dance at Cassell Training Center, Osteo Scholars and National Honor Society. Carmen has been accepted to Michigan State University and has also received the HAIL scholarship from the University of Michigan.



Salutatorian of the Reeths-Puffer High School Class of 2021 is Kendall Smith. He is the son of Matthew and Sarah Smith. Kendall has a weighted grade

point average of 4.305. He is a member of IMPACT, Rocket City Rotary Interact Club

where he has served as President and Vice- President, and the National Honor Society where he currently serves as President. Kendall also plays baseball and basketball. He will be attending a college or university where he would like to play basketball while earning a degree in the science field.



Eric Yang, son of Jin and Yu Yang, is graduating third in the Class of 2021. He has a weighted grade point average of 4.278. Eric is a member of Spanish Club, STATS,

Rocket City Rotary Interact, National Honor Society, and the varsity tennis team. He attended the Muskegon County Math Olympiad, volunteers at McLaughlin Grows (a farm that grows and distributes organic fruits and vegetables around the community), and works part-time. Eric will attend the University of Michigan's Stephen M. Ross School of Business where he has been awarded the HAIL Scholarship. He plans to pursue a bachelors in business administration with a minor in political science.



Graduating forth in the Class of 2021 is Aysia Kinnaird. Aysia is the daughter of Jacob and Tara Kinnaird. She has a weighted grade point average of 4.241. Aysia is a member

of the Rocket City Rotary Interact Club, National Honor Society, and Spanish Club. She is the treasurer of the Student Council, a tutor to other students, and works part-time. After graduation Aysia plans to attend either the University of Michigan where she has been awarded the HAIL scholarship, or Michigan State University, to obtain a degree in neuroscience.



Emma Boorman, daughter of Rick Boorman and Rikki Graves, is graduating fifth in the Class of 2021. She has a weighted grade point average of 4.195. Emma has been a

member of National Honor Society, Spanish Club, Be Nice, and Student Council. She is a member of the Varsity Volleyball Team, where she was named Academic All State, and

plays girls lacrosse. Emma plans to attend the University of Detroit Mercy where she has been awarded the Ignatian Award and will pursue a master's degree in architecture.



McKenna Monette is also graduating fifth in the class of 2021. She is the daughter of Craig and Amy Monette. McKenna has a weighted grade point average of 4.195. She is a member of

Impact, National Honor Society, and the TRT program. McKenna has played basketball, soccer, and also played with the West Michigan Storm Club Soccer team. McKenna will be playing soccer at Albion College where she has received the Presidential, and Experience scholarships. She plans to pursue a degree in child psychology.



Justin Nelson, son of William and Dawn Nelson, is graduating seventh in the class of 2021. He has a weighted grade point average of 4.194. Justin played basketball, and

football, where he earned All-Conference and All-Area honors. He has also been a member of the OK Leadership Council, Math Olympiad, STATS and National Honor Society. Justin has been awarded the Warrior Award from Wayne State University where he plans to study biomedical engineering.



Graduating eighth in the Class of 2021 is Caden Brainard. He is the son of Joe and Lynelle Brainard. Caden has a weighted grade point average of 4.186. He has been a member

of IMPACT, PALS, and he currently serves as Vice President of the National Honor Society. Caden has also played football, hockey, and lacrosse during his high school career. He plans to attend a college or university and play lacrosse while obtaining his bachelor's degree.



Alex Fuller is graduating ninth in the Class of 2021. He is the son of Mark and Jill Fuller. Alex has a weighted grade point average

of 4.111. His interests are creative writing and graphic design, as well as competing in a statewide stock market portfolio challenge in Personal Finance class. Alex will be utilizing the Muskegon Promise and attending Muskegon Community College before transferring to a college or university where he will obtain either a writing or film degree.



Jaxon Carpenter, son of Danny Carpenter and Renee Carpenter, is graduating tenth in the Class of 2021. He has a weighted grade point average of 4.102. Jaxon has

been on the high school soccer team and has also played football for the Midwest United Football Club in Grand Rapids. He has been active in Reeths-Puffer's choir and theatre program having performed in plays and musicals. Undecided on his major of study at this time, Jaxon will be attending the University of Michigan where he has been awarded the Hail Scholarship.

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NOTICE OF RIGHTS AND PRIVACY

Parents of Reeths-Puffer school children are hereby notified that the school often publishes for public view the names and/or pictures of Reeths-Puffer students. The purpose varies and may involve honor rolls, attendance lists, special awards, athletic rosters, etc. If, for any reason, you do not wish your child's name or picture to be published, please contact your school office immediately. This notice is in compliance with the Rights and Privacy Act, P.L. 93.380.

R-PHS Rotary Interact Service Club

R-PHS Rotary Interact Club is in its second year of existence with the mission being, "Service Above Self"

Recently, our club partnered with North Muskegon and Mona Shores Interact Clubs and completed a Hometown Heroes Project. Club members made 338 bags filled with goodies and thank you cards to send to local frontline workers. Each school is delivered over 100 bags to the following frontline staffs: Sheriff's Department, Pro-Med, and a Nursing Home.

A HUGE thanks to our Muskegon Rotary Club for all their help, Texas Roadhouse, and Yodels for donating the gifts to make this event a success. Kendall Smith (senior president), Sonja Schmidt (sophomore VP and secretary), and Amber Anderson (senior treasurer) have served our Interact Club well in getting it off the ground and soaring! Good things are happening at R-PHS!



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R-PMS Choirs: Changed... For Good



Though it seems like a lot has changed in the 20-21 school year, one thing that has NOT changed is the R-PMS Choir Mission Statement: Find Your Voice...Be One Voice. Instead of focusing on the things we couldn't do, we shifted our mindset to the things that COVID did not change...and one of them was our love for music & sharing with others.



The year began with our traditional Fall Y'All Variety Show...Virtual-Style! Over 100 students joined forces to write & perform skits, sing songs and share their unique talents. The finale of the show was a Music Video Parody of "Thriller", comprised of both staff & students. The video followed Principal, Mrs.

Anderson as she watched "Zomvid-19" take over R-PMS in this creepy but fun project.

The students faced the next challenge as the Holidays approached & school went Virtual for much of November - December. Rehearsing together over a Google Meet is tricky, but the students persevered and were committed to rehearse online & with practice tracks for several weeks. We were overjoyed when we were able to return to school face to face just in time to record five Holiday Videos to share with our school & community. The Holiday "Concert" brought together the MS and HS



Choirs as well as the Band. The concert was featured on "The Muskegon Channel" & spread some holiday cheer to many in our community.

As the Semester came to a close, the students decided they wanted to devote one final music video project to some VIPs at R-PMS...the teachers & staff. Performing a heartfelt rendition of Andy Grammar's "Don't Give Up on Me", the students bid farewell to 1st Semester & wrapped up an unforgettable



time together.

If you'd like to see the Fall Variety Show or Music Video Projects from 20-21, search YouTube for "Deidra Ross Reeths-Puffer Middle School Choir". Just as the characters from the Broadway hit, "Wicked" sang about being "changed for good", 20-21 proved to be a year of growth that we hope our students, parents and community will remember for a long time.





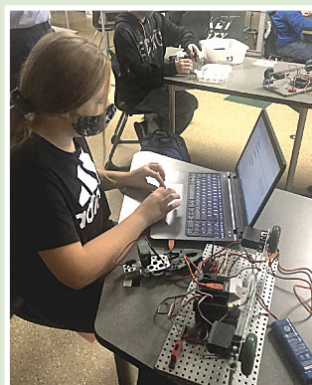
Unprecedented Opportunities

We have heard the words used over and over... unprecedented times. The evidence is also clear that the last year also provided unique, unusual, and new opportunities. Our student council has rallied to think about all of the things that can be done rather than what can't. They have added to our school culture with spirit days, guessing contests, school wide Kahoot games, and kindness challenges. Student leaders have stepped up to become game day videographers so our home events are now live streamed. Choir, band, and theater have redesigned what it means to perform and have been a light for our community. Teachers got creative on how to bring learning outside more often and how-to bring learners at home right into the classroom. Live announcements have replaced what might have happened at an assembly and



have helped maintain the connection and fun that is part of our school culture. Through every opportunity, a common thread of leadership, student opportunity, and school culture was clear. What the challenges have allowed us to see is the problem solving that is within us when we work together as a school community.

The Bond Proposal Through The Eyes Of A Middle School Student

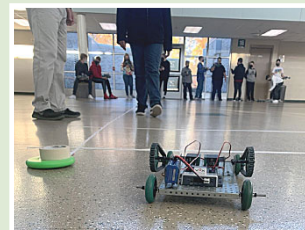


As you know, The R-P Board of Education is presenting a bond proposal for our community to vote on in May. Through the eyes of a middle school student, the improvements on the bond proposal would look like additional equipment and resources for our rapidly growing STEAM programs.

It would look like opportunities on athletic fields that are typically reserved for high school students in order to preserve field conditions. It could also look like spaces that allow for the collaboration that we know is

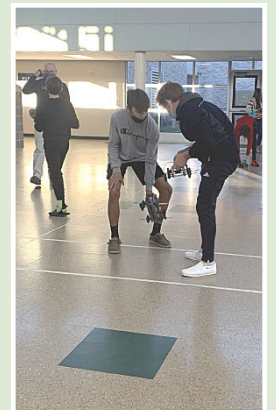


critical during adolescent years when our students are learning to work with others. If you were to walk into our building now, you would see our students engaging in a variety of robotics, coding, computer science, visual arts, and performing arts opportunities and the upgrades presented would provide even more exciting and relevant experiences for even more students. Adding furniture and technology specifically designed for teams of students to work together to solve



problems in real and relevant ways would help to prepare our students to be future problem solvers that can work as part of a team. In addition to what can be seen,

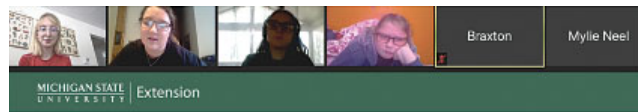
just as important are the things that wouldn't be seen such as an updated intercom system is necessary for the safety of our students and efficiency of the building. Teaching collaboration skills is just as important as the content we teach and the bond proposal reflects a priority to have spaces and equipment that are set up to support that work.





Food and Fitness Club

In a time when many clubs and other extracurricular activities are on pause, RPMS had the opportunity to form a partnership with a Michigan State University extension program known as the Food and Fitness Club. The Food and Fitness Club meets weekly for 1 hour in a virtual setting and is available to virtual and face to face middle school students. This club is focused around building healthy habits, learning and practicing culinary skills, preparing healthy meals, reading nutrition labels, and building habits around daily exercise. Students who participate in this club are



Thin Crust Veggie Pizza



Photo Credit: Pizza by Enjin_Akyart_pixabay.com

provided culinary gift bags to practice skills covered in the weekly meetings. Food and Fitness Club recently wrapped up the first 8-week session and will look to provide an additional opportunity for another group of 25-30 students.

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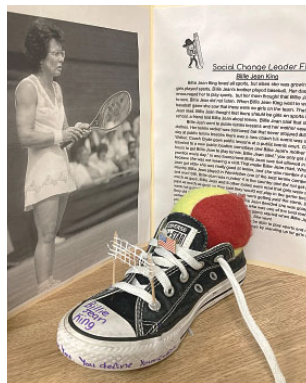
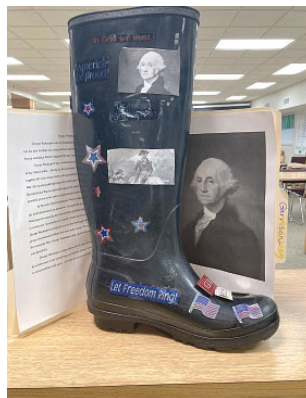
Greetings RP Family,

To say this year has been “different” would be an understatement for all of us. In the spirit of our work this school year with the Positivity Project, we wanted to create some articles that celebrate the successes we have seen throughout the school year! Not only have we been in session for all but three weeks this year, we have also done a tremendous job building a learning community that values relationships, collaboration and selflessness. One of my favorite quotes is: “Success doesn’t come to you, you go to it.” We have used this idea all year to guide all that we have done and because of that, this year has TRULY BEEN SUCCESSFUL. We will be highlighting some of our recent student projects that demonstrate this.

Thank you for trusting us with your students and believing that what we are doing is always focused on their successes and getting them ready for the future. These kids are amazing!

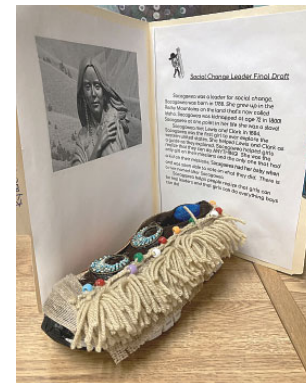
Yours in Rocket Pride,
Scott Panozzo

Fifth Grade Language Arts



Mrs. Peterman’s and Mrs. Coyne’s language arts classes had the chance to learn about leaders of social change in our society, both past and present. After students heard stories about social change leaders like Jackie Robinson, Harriet Tubman, and Albert Einstein, they could then dig DEEPER into other leaders of social change and choose someone they connected to the most.

They researched what these leaders did as children, what they did to impact our society, and then designed a shoe to represent this leader of social change. These projects are now on exhibit in the LMC for other students to see and learn about how a social change leader is someone who may have failed many times in their life and then finally succeeded. These leaders may have shown great courage and led others to freedom. These leaders of social change may have been the first female to fly an airplane, or even be



leading anti-bullying campaigns all around our world. The true lesson here is for our students to believe that they can also be leaders of social change by standing up for others, overcoming any obstacle in their lives with perseverance, and facing life head-on with kindness and integrity!



Mrs. Coyne’s and Mrs. Peterman’s classes have also been learning about the Rainforests and Informational Writing. They are busy publishing their own informational stories using a site called Story Jumper. Their books tell about the different kinds of rainforests, plants and animals found in them, as well as the deforestation that is happening. Soon, they will be sharing their stories with younger students in the district. “I like learning about the rainforest, but it’s cool we get to share our books with the little kids,” said one student. Students get to use what they’ve learned to teach and entertain others.





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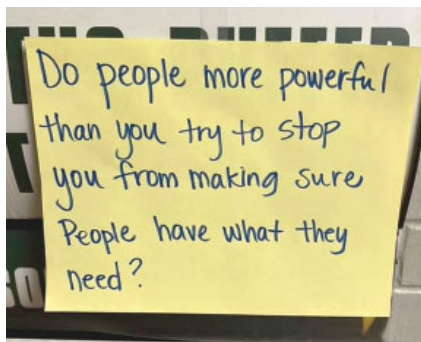
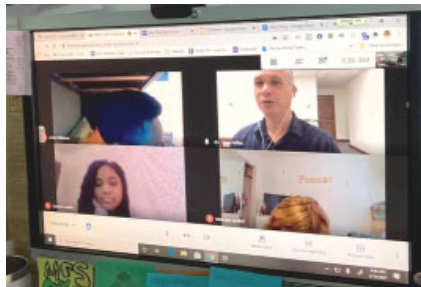
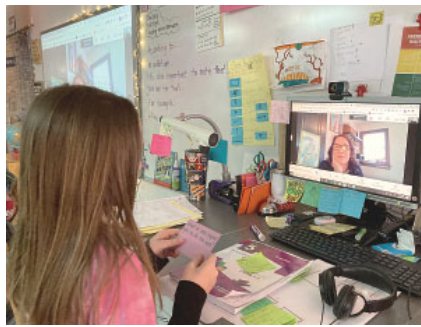


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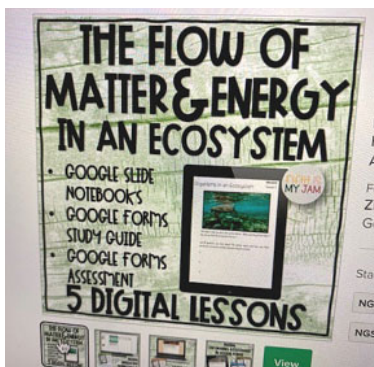
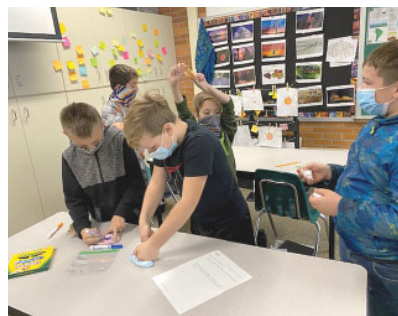


Mrs. Overway's students spent weeks digging into what factors lead to successful social change in a community! We researched stories of Jackie Robinson, Jim Abbott and the Little Rock Nine. We welcomed Mr. Dean Millar into our classroom via Zoom to share his experience living and speaking out during the Apartheid in Africa. We also had the wonderful experience of talking with Governor Whitmer's Chief Equity and Inclusion officer, Ms. Poppy Sias-Hernandez! To round out this project, we are writing poetry to capture the deeper layers and significance of social change across the globe and the factors that make change a success.



Our Fifth Grade Scientists

worked on social skills through following directions as a team to make fake snow. The team that worked together has the best fluffy snow which also taught us about matter and how chemical reactions work in the science world. Reading as a group also helps students work together to problem solve. The pandemic has socially isolated people and sometimes we need reminders how to work with others to have a better community.



Sixth Grade Project Based Learning Experiences:

Our sixth graders have been exploring culture around the world through project-based learning. This unit was launched virtually, and students started their day off with many strange requests. They had to slurp drinks, remove any purple clothing, hide the palms of their hands, and many other things that represented behaviors around the globe. After that, students began their work as anthropologists to study how people live. These anthropologists are now taking all of their expertise and knowledge to create a public digital library. Viewers will be "traveling" around the world through virtual field trips, podcasts, and videos! Our digital library will be up and running by the end of this month, and

we are so excited to share what makes this world so unique!



Upcoming May Bond Vote

On May 4, 2021, the Reeths-Puffer Board of Education is asking for voters to consider a 1.95 mill increase that would generate \$23 million for school upgrades, updates and improvements.

These critical upgrades, updates and improvements would address many of the needs and issues that permeate the RPI/RPEL campus. In addition to replacing many of the windows and doors that were not addressed in our last bond but also would repair our leaking roofs, improve our ability to provide consistent heat in our classrooms, improve parking and traffic flow at drop off and pickup! (And we all know how much that needs to be done!) Lastly, we are working to purchase new classroom furnishings. While these pictures are borrowed from the Steelcase Education Website and are not an exact rendering of our spaces, this is potentially what our classroom furniture could look like. This is a really exciting time for our community.



“Reeths-Puffer is an Energy Star”

Energy Management is the process of monitoring, controlling and conserving the energy usage in a building. In Reeths-Puffer Schools we have had an active and successful Energy Management Program in place since 2005. Every Reeths-Puffer employee is a member of our Energy Management Team. Because of the awareness of the staff to our energy needs and their dedication to reducing their usage, Reeths-Puffer has avoided paying utility companies over \$5,000,000 since the inception of our Energy Management Program. It is hard to imagine what an impact this had for our students by keeping this money in the district instead of being paid out to utility companies. We are continually working with our energy providers to be sure we are getting our gas and electricity at the best prices and our buildings are being billed at the best rates possible.



Another important aspect of our Energy Program at RP has been the pursuit of funds available through incentive and rebate programs offered by our utility providers. Since the start of our program with our aggressive pursuance of these funds we have received over \$260,000 in rebates. This money has been used solely to fund projects throughout the district to further reduce our energy usage which has further reduced our energy costs. Our latest project using these funds is the placing of new energy efficient LED light bulbs throughout the district. This job being completed by our maintenance staff will further reduce electric usage and costs and provide excellent lighting in the classroom for our students. Our maintenance staff are also very valued members of the RP Energy Management Team. They do an excellent job of maintaining, repairing and monitoring of all the HVAC equipment throughout the district. By ensuring that all of our equipment is performing at optimum levels and only running at times when the equipment is needed we have greatly reduced the usage and costs in these areas.

Our Energy Management Program has also used the Energy STAR program to give us an unbiased evaluation of our buildings to assess how we are doing with our energy usage. ENERGY STAR is a program developed by the EPA (Environment Protection Agency) to rate buildings on their energy efficiency. After a thorough review of our records and documentations and a site visit by ENERGY STAR engineers each building is given a score. To become an ENERGY STAR certified building, you must score a 75 or higher. This means that your building is more energy efficient than 75% of similar properties nationwide. We are proud to say that we have just received notification that all of our buildings have been awarded the EPA's ENERGY STAR certification as top energy efficient buildings. This is quite an accomplishment as many of our buildings in the Reeths-Puffer district were built in the 1950's. Our two biggest buildings RPHS and RPMS and because of their size our two biggest energy users both received scores in the 90's. We feel this is a nice reward and a validation for all of our efforts as an Energy Management Team throughout the entire district.

It has been stated that good energy management is an important aspect of good management in a business or school district. We can confidently say because of the involvement of 100% of the staff at Reeths-Puffer that goal is being met.



RP STATS Receives Multi-Year Grant

Exciting opportunities are presenting themselves to RP students come the fall! Thanks to the amazing work of our peer to peer leadership education program STATS (Straight Talk About Tough Stuff), Reeths-Puffer Schools has received a Drug Free Communities grant from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The DFC grant provides \$125,000 per year for the next 5 years. Coalition members worked closely with STATS students last year to identify what the key reasons were that students were using drugs or tobacco products. Through these workshops we created an action plan with activities, programming and training opportunities to help combat these issues. These meetings helped to secure this grant funding.

Over the past month former STATS members have come back together to begin planning the new future of the program. The goal was to focus on how we can increase education, not only to the youth, but also to parents and educators regarding youth substance abuse. To say our high school students are excited about this opportunity is an understatement. Historically, STATS has been a peer to peer leadership program that has educated RP high school students on the dangers of substance use. They then used this knowledge to present at the middle schools throughout Muskegon County the message of freedom from alcohol, drugs, tobacco and vaping. While this will continue to be a part of STATS through our continued partnership with Mercy Health and the Health Project, we will be expanding our programming in the RP district in multiple ways.

In the fall, STATS will be adding an after-school program for RP middle school and high school students. Current STATS students are helping to create a graphic novel that teachers and students can use in the classroom to highlight the dangers of using substances. STATS students will also be working on tools to provide to parents to help them talk to their teens about difficult topics.

If you have any questions or would like to join the STATS coalition at RP please e-mail Jennifer LaChapelle, STATS Project Coordinator, at lachapellej@reeths-puffer.org.

Pictured above: 2019-20 STATS team.

Fever Free in R-P

It is certainly not a secret that 2020 - 2021 has tested all areas of our school, community, state and country. COVID-19 has brought about fear, anxiety, sickness, polarization, and protocols meant to address all of these things.

Without the amazing community partners we have, one of the most important tools in early detection of COVID-19 would not be readily available to our schools. While masks, hand sanitizer, and space dividers were made available by CARES funding from the state to help address our response, the installation of rapid, touchless temperature scanners is invaluable to our cause.

With the donations and partnership with several companies, we were able to have amazing rapid temperature scanners installed in high traffic areas throughout every building in the district.

While we will continue to navigate this challenging time, having an "objective" screening tool to help us be "fever free in R-P" is amazingly helpful.

Please help us thank the following companies for making all of this happen:

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New Systems of Care Clinician

We are pleased to introduce a new member of the MyAlliance Systems of Care team for Reeths-Puffer.

Zach Gray, MSW joined our team in August. Zach has earned degrees in psychology and social work. He has a range of experience working in both public and private sectors. Zach has served as a youth treatment specialist, foster care case manager, and CPS investigator. He has provided personal counseling services as well as career and school counseling. Most recently he worked with the HealthWest juvenile justice team.

As a clinician of the school-based team at HealthWest, Zach has a specific focus for Reeths Puffer - breaking down barriers, advocating for mental health needs, and empowering students through evidence informed practice. Zach is able to conduct individual assessments, individual therapy, group therapy, crisis intervention, mental health education, and coordination of care. With this mental health integration, it allows students and families endless opportunities to develop skills, resources, and tools to serve their needs now and in future endeavors.

Zach is a passionate, hardworking individual who enjoys working with families and individuals that are in need of additional support and resources in order to help enhance their life experiences in a positive manner. His aim is to make a strong, positive impact on the community and the individuals with whom he works. We are excited to have him join our Rocket family!

MyAlliance Systems of Care collaborates with several Muskegon County school districts to integrate mental health services. Services started at Reeths-Puffer in 2017. The Systems of Care office is located at RP Intermediate. The services are available to all RP students.

Contact Information:

Zach Gray, MSW, Clinician

Email zach.gray@healthwest.net

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Ila Cox
John Cox
Mark Hekkema
Jason Cox
Jon Johnson



Nate Smith
Director of Instruction
and Learning

Why do I have to go to School?

This might be one of the most asked questions by our kids and I have heard responses by families that range from, “because you have to.” to “you want to grow up and be something, right?” These statements have been passed down and shared through families for the last 120 years. In the year 2021, our kids have experienced virtual learning, distance learning, hybrid learning, face to face learning, shortened school days, no sports

activities, no club activities, limited sports activities, limited club activities, adapted specials classes and many more modifications to make school work.

How do we answer the question?

Are we prepared to answer the question?

As we guide our kids do we know the “why”?

Some kids magically just figure things out in life and have a plan. For others, when they ask “why” it is our chance to have a conversation, to ask them some powerful questions to help them reach their own answers as to why they “get” to go to school.

Maybe, there is truth that school helps many families function each day, I can’t buy that school is only here to provide a spot for kids while parents work. There has to be more.

Maybe, school is a stepping stone for those who have a vision for what they want to be and do in the future, I can’t buy that school is only here to give kids credit so they can move onto their next step in life.

Maybe, hanging out with friends, joining clubs, obtaining a role in fine arts events and participating in sports can make each day better and provide huge incentives for motivation, I can’t buy that school is only here to provide these activities.

In a way this list could go on and on. If your child asks you, “Why do I have to go to school today?” Think about responding with any of the following, if you are like me and sometimes struggle with this question when different kids ask me.

“Rocket City needs you. They need the creative, perfect, curious you who asked that question. Rocket City needs your energy, your insecurities, your talents and your passions. They need you to contribute in class, they need you to compete in the classrooms, in sports and for performance roles. Rocket City needs your thoughts, ideas and genius.”

“You have to go to school because you are what makes school: your dreams, your wonders, the perfect you, this is what builds the community, the learning, and the culture. . . you matter, you matter a lot.”

“You give the community hope that our world can be better, dream bigger, and compete in the world.”

“You need to go to school because you need to grow, make mistakes, you need to mature, you need to lead, you need to support, you need to be empathetic of differences, you need to disagree with people, you need to agree with people. You need to learn, learn about you, others, our community, and our planet. You need to be the change.”

Why do you have to go to school? Because Rocket City needs YOU. Thanks for believing in Rocket City and sending us your best each and every day!



Early Literacy Coaching Study

We want to be better each day for our students.

I am very excited to announce that our 3 elementary schools will be partnering with Michigan State University, and Muskegon ISD to investigate the impacts of deep coaching in schools.

Michigan State University has partnered with Muskegon ISD around the Early Literacy Coaching Study. The goal of this study is to examine to what extent literacy coaching impacts teacher’s classroom instruction. The Muskegon ISD is partnering with Reeths-Puffer to identify nine (9) teachers to participate in the Early Literacy Coaching Study. Of the nine (9) teachers, six (6) teachers will be in the comparison group and three (3) will be in the control group.

Reeths-Puffer Schools has been identified as one of the comparison schools for 2020-2022. The study will include teachers from 1st grade, 2nd grade and 3rd grade. This is a great opportunity for our teachers to grow their craft of teaching and become a lead learner in their building.

What will our teachers experience in the MSU coaching research pilot?

Recording Lessons: Our teachers will be teaching a designated literacy lesson and one content area (e.g. social studies or science) which will be recorded and submitted to the review panel.

Participate in MSU Literacy Coaching online survey once a month for input into the statewide study.

Participate in on-going coaching cycles with a dedicated ISD Early Literacy Coach from October 2021 to April 2022.

Upon completion of the research pilot, each participant will receive resources in books and/or materials to support their classroom

We will be using this opportunity to continue to grow our practices to best maximize our students.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

What does this mean and why am I hearing so much about this term these days?

This term will most likely be shared in Facebook posts, on social media sites and could be a buzzword that is associated with the future of education. Based on multiple sources and definitions that are emerging in educational journals I have landed on the following definition.

Smith's Definition: SEL is the process of developing skills to manage emotions, build positive relationships, set goals and feel empathy for others as we navigate life.

As a leader in the community, a neighbor and a parent, this sounds like a great thing for our kids to develop while at school. We have been on this journey for the last 12 years, starting with the MiBLSi grant in the year 2004 when our elementary buildings were part of a statewide grant. This is when we started to target the idea of positive expectations in schools while being purposeful in recognizing students for doing the right thing. This movement has had many iterative over the years.

Later our community supported a model called Family Resource Centers. This was located at our R-PI/RPEL campus and was one of the first site based integrated services models in the county. The purpose of this countywide family model was to allow the school to be a conduit for families to access community resources and allow for direct support to students/ families. This program has grown into an embedded support system and now has positions with community partners including Success Coaches, Parent Liaisons and a Health West Social Worker located in our district.

As we continued to understand the importance of these things in our school and to build support throughout our schools, 5 years ago we began to explore the idea of having coaches focus on SEL with our teachers district wide. To build on the MiBLSi work and Family Resource Centers we began to explore the process and need for the "Rocket Way" at R-P schools. The common, positive, expectation, "Treat others as you would like others to treat you.", has been able to express what we want and expect from each other in our community. This does not mean that everything is perfect every day, we are a diverse community that continues to strive to improve, but knowing and acting with Respect, Pride and Integrity allows us a common language to continue to move forward.

We recently partnered with our Muskegon ISD, pulling our "Rocket Way" work, Family Resource Center, and building cultures together to form a group called Project Safe. The partnership with the ISD along with a grant allows us to train, explore curriculum around Social Emotional Learning and implement strategies in our classrooms,

The work with Project Safe will begin to help establish a process for our kids, including developing a district wide curriculum over the next three years that is predictable and allows them to develop their skills with emotions, empathy and relationships allowing them to contribute and compete as they navigate the world around them.

R-P has been on the relationship driven journey for years and it is something that many love about our community. With Project Safe the future of SEL at R-P will be more purposeful and the process will be designed to allow our students to have skills that are used well beyond their years at R-P.

For more information: <https://casel.org/>

STEAM Science + Technology + Engineering + Arts + Math

The future looks bright for our Computer Sciences curriculum with the possibilities of STEAM labs at R-PMS and R-PHS. The type of jobs and the type of work that our kids will be doing in the future will look different. Technology, certifications, endorsements, online learning and upgrades will be part of their work life.

Knowing that this path is viable and would provide our kids access to endless entry levels positions, professional paths within coding, manufacturing and design and engineering, we as a district cannot miss an opportunity to build on our current Robotics, programming, and coding processes at R-P.

In the Middle School we have classes that are designed around STEM principals, coding and ultimately robotic design and programming. This track continues into the High School with robots, game design and programming. Participating students have entry level skills but our process can lead to certifications and college tracks within engineering and design.

To continue building this opportunity for our students, R-P will ask the community to vote in May on a bond proposal that has a STEAM component on the ballot. This will allow us to update the components students use at the middle school, purchase current and updated software for both coding and programming. We would also update the Middle School facilities to allow for collaboration, increased machines and ventilation upgrades.

At R-PHS we will be investing in machinery that includes laser cutters, programmable routers, prototyping with 3D printers and certifiable curriculums that will allow our students to receive endorsements before leaving R-P schools on their way to impact the world.

This program supports recent data indicating non-traditional college paths including entry level positions with endorsements are becoming the way for a majority of 4-year college graduates. These graduates are taking classes aligned to entry level jobs where employers are helping with college reimbursement or to their career tracks involving entry level, management, supervisory and capstone careers including lead engineer and supervising designers.

Please look for information from the volunteer bond committee, for the May vote and know that this is a critical path we need to develop for our students who excel in the computer sciences and will allow our students to contribute and compete

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PBL and Philanthropy

4th grade students at Central have taken a Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach to their Economics unit in social studies. PBL puts students in the driver's seat of their learning in an inquiry-based setting.

"How does product impact profit?" was the challenging question posed to students. Their end goal was to create a market at school to sell their products. Exploring this driving question led to a host of student wonderings and compelled considerable student research as student interest and competitive spirit grew. Students even participated in a question and answer session with Mr. Tom Hinken, a social studies consultant with the MAISD. Students then began



creating their own original products, or upgraded existing products, to sell to their fellow Central Elementary Rockets. Products included items such as original artwork, painted rocks, beaded bracelets, dough ornaments, dog ropes, decorative hand sanitizer, and pet rocks.

Philanthropy was also a part of the project. Students voted on two local non-profit organizations to donate their profits to. The list of 7 organizations was narrowed to the top two, namely Pound Buddies and the Johnson Family Cancer Center, each receiving a \$200 donation.

Mrs. Langlois is currently spearheading another PBL unit centered on lumbering, immigration, and philanthropy, and bringing other teachers and students into the fold. Students will partner virtually with the Lakeshore Museum for a week of learning and inquiry through the BIG Lesson program. Students will become Junior Historians and research to discover the effects of lumbering and immigration.

Innovation continues to grow at Central through PBL and essential project design!



Tools Rule!

First graders at Central Elementary took their study of "tools" to a whole new level! Students kicked off their learning with a visitor from City Hub Cyclery to talk about the tools used to fix and build bikes. Families were invited to ride their newly tuned up bikes around the trails of Muskegon Lake. Next, a local beekeeper visited virtually



to show tools they use to manage honeybees. Students loved watching an observation hive and seeing how bees get their work done without any tools. Our tool unit continued with a visit from a dental hygienist and culminated with the making of a "magnificent thing." Students are using tools to do a complete overhaul of a playground, knitting hats for people experiencing homelessness, planting trees at the Winter Sports Complex, and printing 3-D objects to solve classroom problems. Of most importance are the tools we keep in our hearts: Respect, Pride and Integrity. It is a great time to be a first grader at Central!

Health and Wellness at Central

Central Elementary has committed to making the overall well-being of its students and staff a priority during this unique school year. Throughout the many changes and challenges that have occurred this year, health and wellness opportunities have paved a path for promoting and maintaining self-care.

Staff have been provided multiple opportunities to practice self-care through socially distanced activities and events, including yoga, hiking, biking, and snowshoeing. During the months of February and March, staff were encouraged to complete a BINGO sheet centered on wellness. These types of efforts have allowed teachers to hold each other accountable in fun, active, and supportive ways.



In addition, multiple classes have partnered with the YMCA to provide lessons to students promoting healthy lifestyles and keeping their bodies strong. Students have learned the importance of taking care of their bodies and eating a well-balanced diet. Students are encouraged to be active for at least sixty minutes each day.

Central Elementary was recently awarded the Building Healthy Communities Grant. This grant will be used to provide different opportunities to staff and students around wellness for months to come!



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R-PEL Community,

On May 4th we will vote on a bond proposal for the students of Reeths-Puffer Schools.

What are the benefits for R-PEL? Much of the work at R-PEL will go unnoticed by the community. The upgrades that have the students excited are not the roof, HVAC system or the new classroom furnishings but the PLAYGROUND! If you were a student at R-PEL, you will recognize the same playground equipment that was here when you were a student. It is time for safer equipment and playing surfaces for our students. Our maintenance team does an amazing job of keeping our playground usable. Unfortunately, the equipment has outlived its life expectancy. If the bond passes, R-PEL will receive much needed upgrades to our playground. This is a huge investment in our children. Please be sure to vote on May 4th. Visit our school's website at www.reeths-puffer.org for more information.

From Drab to Fab

The PBIS committee at RPEL wanted to revamp the incentives for student recognition of Rocket Slips during our daily Rocket Slip drawings on the announcements. Teachers Lisa Bignall and Jessica Radecki found a rundown gumball machine looking for some TLC. With a deep clean, some new paint,



and a facelift, they transformed trash to treasure, now lovingly known as "The Green Machine". The machine is filled with prizes that include bouncy balls, bracelets, fun erasers, etc. but also includes opportunities to earn extra recess for the class, take a scooter ride around the school, win RP gear, tell a joke on the announcements



and even eat breakfast or lunch with Mr. Siembida or Mr. Klimsza! This has helped to rebuild the excitement and value of demonstrating the Rocket Way within our building! We would also like to thank one of our business partners, Meijer, for supporting our PBIS initiatives

The Rocket Who Rocked It

Let's face it, 2020 was a rough year all around for both staff and students. RPEL's PBIS committee made it their mission to honor students for their hard work and perseverance during both face-to-face and distance learning. Teachers are recognizing students who have gone above and beyond each month and are bestowing upon them the title of "The Rocket Who Rocked It". A certificate is sent home with each student, as well as hung outside of the classroom for passersby to see. During an all-school Google Meet, Mr. Klimsza has been announcing the winners of the month and each name is put onto a wheel for a chance to win a prize from a local business. Mr. Klimsza even joined in on the fun and has started recognizing two staff members each month for their hard work and dedication within Rocket City. This new addition of student recognition has been very well received by everyone and has created a new excitement within the building!

January Winners

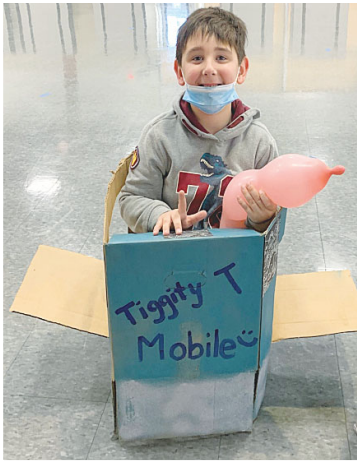
DK: ShyAnne Griswold & Everett Gifford

Kindergarten: Reese Goven, Aaliyah Bilek, Trevor Boyd, Jace Szot

1st: Alaina Chester, Blake Austin, Mariah McCune
2nd: Tanner Vanderooi, Sophia Gibbs, Paige Marr, Atticus Roethlisberger, Garrett Videtich
3rd: Chloe Kops, Bentley Eek, Abby Davis, Aleigha Gould, Masyn Rudicil, Patience Sherwood
4th: Chloe Wescott, Emily Delong, Elijah Chevez, Karilyn Kiel

February Winners

DK: Carter Tennison, Naida Beegle
Kindergarten: Grayson Holmes, Lauren Stidham, Myles Grinwis, Rylin Achterhoff, Alison Ferguson
1st: Azlan VandenBosch, Braxton Sherrell, Gabriellah Lager, Cameron Perry
2nd: Gwenth Hower, Kyler Sweet, Daniel Zimmer, Haley Pruitt, Adrianna Perez
3rd: Alainah Spring, Gia Do, Cassandra Walters, Addalyn Makowski, Zachary Ranum, Jaidyn Riley, Jaxson Metty
4th: Parker Secrest, Carson VanderLaan, Kinley Parker, Ian Holman, Jacob Martinez
Staff: Ms. Tina & Mrs. Krukowski



Drive-In Movie at RPEL!

Our Discovery Kindergarten classes distanced themselves in their home-made cardboard cars for a movie! This year is unlike any other and we know how crucial family engagement is in the life of our learners here at RPEL! Our families really amazed us with their creativity in bringing learning to life! We have been discovering and learning about how things are planned for, designed, and constructed along with how we can use our imagination in exciting ways! Many of our families chose to create something amazing together! We read *Not a Box* by Antoinette Portis. In the story there is a bunny who uses his imagination to transform his cardboard box into things like a rocket ship, a fire truck, a mountain, and so on. Some of our children were fortunate enough to spend time with grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, or close family friends to guide them. Others were determined to create their "Not a Box" creation all on their own!



Discovering Kente Cloth

Every year in February we celebrate the contributions that many African Americans have made in our country. We learn about the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and how he used the idea of love to drive out hate. We learn about the courage of Rosa Parks and Ruby Bridges. We learn about the heroism of Harriett Tubman as she led hundreds of slaves to freedom on the Underground Railroad. We learn about notable African American inventors and the trailblazers who paved the way for African Americans in sports, politics and business. However, celebrating Black History does not



have to be limited to a specific month or group of events in history.

This year, the students in Mrs. Harris' third grade class spent some time learning about African culture through art! They began by listening to the story "The Spider Weaver: The Legend of the Kente Cloth" by Margaret Musgrove. "It is said that long, long ago, a beautiful spider created a web so intricate and magnificent that the Ashanti weavers of Ghana still tell the story today. The colorful patterns of this magical web were soon woven into a unique new fabric: kente cloth. This is the legend of that master spider weaver and the remarkable gift she gave to people everywhere!"

Kente cloth was once reserved for royalty in the country of Ghana because of the time and cost that went into creating it. Today, Kente cloth can be found mass produced in print, which is very popular and often used in the academic stoles for graduation ceremonies. Handcrafted Kente cloth by master weavers is still highly sought after but it is also more readily available.

Kente cloth uses very bright and vibrant colors and patterns that have significant meaning to those wearing it. In our classroom, we studied the colors and designs that are used and what each color and design stand for. The students had an opportunity to choose colors and designs that represented them and then used paper to create their own Kente cloth. After weaving, the students spent time drawing the intricate details on their paper, carefully thinking about which designs were most important to them. They also wrote a description of their Kente cloth to hang in the hallway with their masterpiece.

Here is what the students had to say about their project!

Madi S. - "I liked the designs because it helps you get better at art and you had to work really hard to do those designs. It would be hard to do that with real cloth. I learned that Kente cloth celebrates happy moments in someone's life."

Chloe - "I liked the designs because it represents you."

Kolton - "I like how the symbols show different things."

Ka'liece - "It was really fun to make and I learned it can represent you."

Ella - "I learned that the colors and patterns in Kente cloth represent something special."

Easton - "I never knew about Kente cloth until we started doing it!"

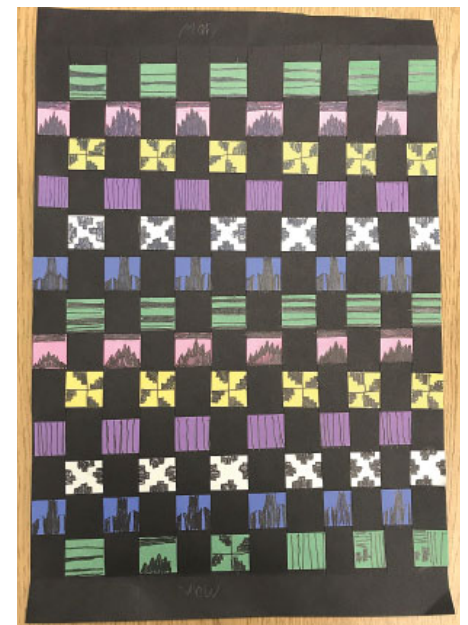


Photo top right completed by Mary Grotenhuis. Photo center right completed by Chloe Kops.
Photo bottom right completed by Ella Wierenga.



On March 4, 2021, Mr. Tim Wheeler and Mr. Tyreece Talbert visited Mrs. Krukowski's fourth grade classroom for Reading Month! Mr. Wheeler is the creator and writer of the free cartoon series Rocketoons and is the author of the new book called Zoo Pool. Mr. Talbot is the illustrator of Zoo Pool and came along to give my students a lesson in drawing. Mr. Wheeler read Zoo Pool to my students and we participated in a cartoonversation about the book afterwards. This is an excellent book about diversity and is a much needed read aloud for the times we are currently living in.

Mr. Wheeler also surprised Mrs. Krukowski's class with a free Zoo Pool book for all of her students! Mr. Wheeler did not stop there, he also donated a copy of his book to every third and fourth grader in every single public school in Muskegon County!! Mrs. Krukowski's class was the first class to get their hands on this brand-new book! Wow! Happy Reading Month Everyone!

Cardio Desk Drumming



Layla Barrett uses pool noodles to participate in cardio desk drumming.

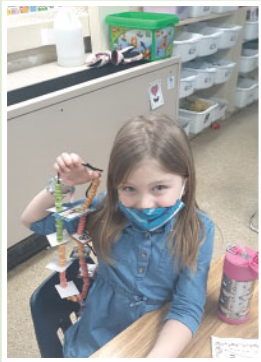
Late this past fall, Mrs. Kinstner (2nd grade teacher at Twin Lake Elementary) needed help. She wanted to find foam pool noodles so that her students could practice cardio desk drumming. But by this late date, pool noodles couldn't be found in any store...not even on Amazon! So, she enlisted the help of a good friend and retired R-P guest teacher, Sue Pollingue. Mrs. Pollingue shopped all local thrift stores to find pool noodles. And she delivered a classroom set! Mr. Kinstner cut the noodles to size and the kids were ready to rock!

Students in Mrs. Kinstner's classroom are making the best of Covid restrictions. They may not get to participate in physical education or music classes this year, but that doesn't mean they don't get exposed to fun! At least once per week, students get their hearts pumping while they drum out the beat to kid-friendly pop songs. Students watch videos of teachers performing simple cardio drumming exercises and follow along. (Search for "cardio desk drumming" on YouTube.)

When the second semester brought five more "face to face" students to the mix, the class didn't have enough pool noodles for everyone! But Mrs. Kinstner came across a Facebook post from another teacher who incorporated cardio desk drumming in her classroom. She used a pack of soft hair curling rods, found on Amazon, to do the trick. So, if you wander by this classroom and see students beating their desks with pool noodles or hair curlers, keep in mind that this teacher is teaching her kids to beat their current situation and just rock and roll with it!



Isabella Mulling and Neiko Sharlow use flexible curling rods to rock and roll!



The 100th Day of School

By Mrs. Mary Palazzolo

Reeths-Puffer Twin Lake Elementary celebrated the 100th day of school on Wednesday, February 10th. Mrs. Palazzolo's Kindergarten Class had an amazing day of learning. Students created necklaces made out of 100 pieces of cereal. Students created and enjoyed a delicious snack by counting out 10 sets of 10 different kinds of yummy snack foods. Families worked together at home to collect 100 objects, then Kindergarten students brought them to school to share. We practiced counting to 100 by 10's and by 1's all day. It was a very fun, busy and special way to celebrate 100 days of learning.



PARTNER TALK!

What makes a good learning partner? This is something learners' practice in class every day while learning reading and math. What does collaboration look and sound like? Here are some of the things we hear and see throughout our lessons and activities:

- "Would you like to go first?"
- "I'm ready. Are you?"
- "I'm thinking... What are you thinking?"
- "Are we both ready to go on?"
- "I agree with you because..."
- "I'd like to add on to what you said."
- "That looks great! Way to go!"
- Side by side (and spaced out!)
- Similar work.

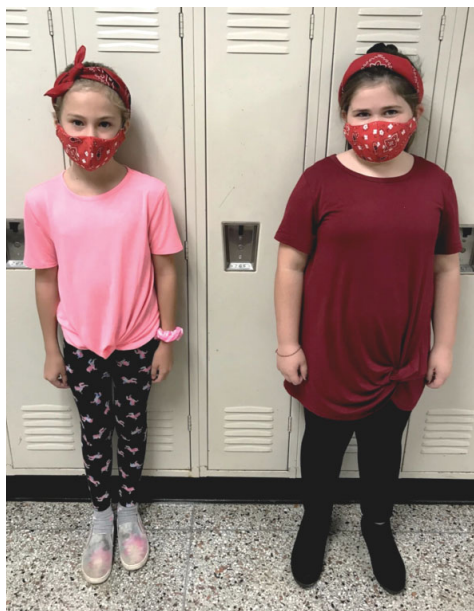
We encourage and learn from our peers every day in class. Go Rockets!





Have you heard of the Red Bandana Kids at TLE?

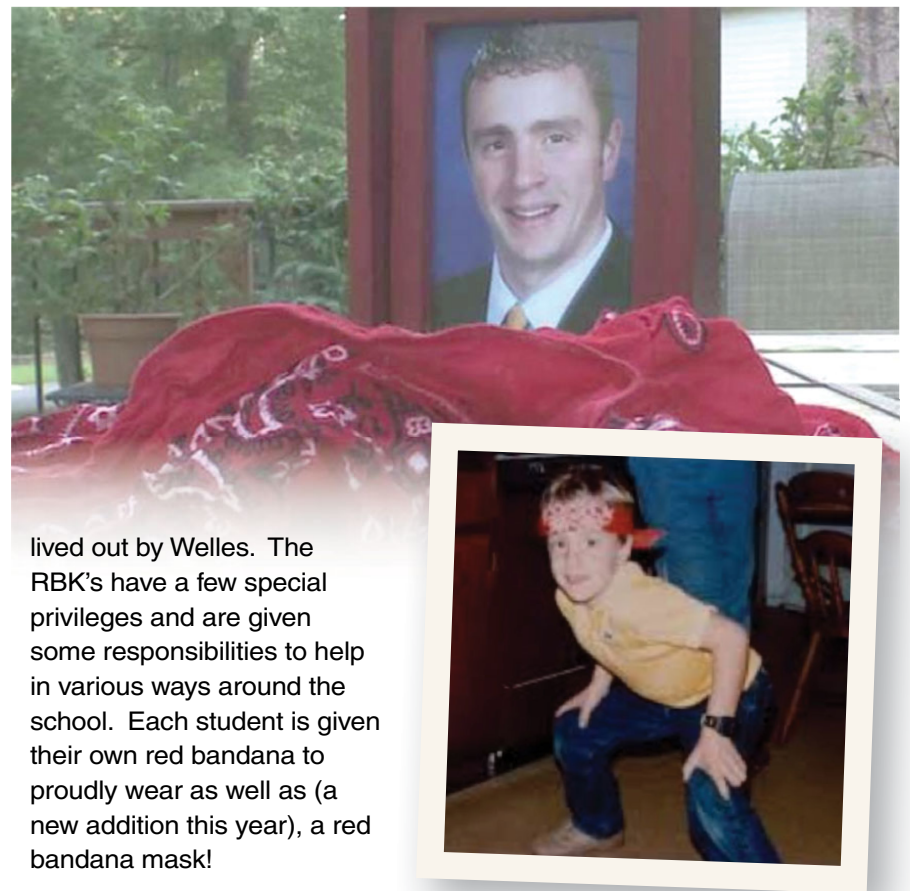
Two years ago, on September 11, 2018, in an effort to educate her students about the tragic events of 9-11-01, Mrs. Rose Olsen showed her 4th graders a video clip about a young man named Welles Crowther whose heroic efforts helped save the lives of many people trapped in the burning towers. Welles' life story is one of service to others, compassion, and



unselfish acts of kindness. As a boy, he received a red bandana from his father, and always kept one with him. The people who were saved by Welles only knew that it was a "man with a red bandana" (which he was using as a face mask to protect himself from the smoke and debris.)

The students were mesmerized by this story. The idea of using Welles' story as an example for the behaviors we want to see from our students developed organically, and within a few weeks, The Red Bandana Kids came to life.

Since October 2018, the fourth graders at Twin Lake Elementary have strived to show the Rocket Way of Respect, Pride, and Integrity as well as following the character traits of service to others, compassion, helpfulness, and being a great friend. Every two weeks, a new group of students is chosen to be the RBK's. They are chosen by their teachers for being exceptional role models to their peers and for displaying the characteristics



lived out by Welles. The RBK's have a few special privileges and are given some responsibilities to help in various ways around the school. Each student is given their own red bandana to proudly wear as well as (a new addition this year), a red bandana mask!

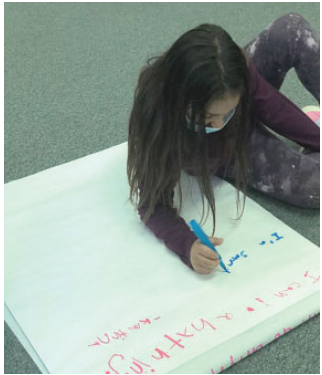
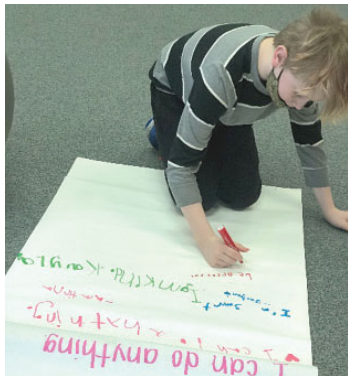
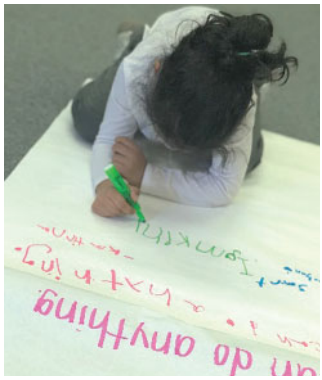
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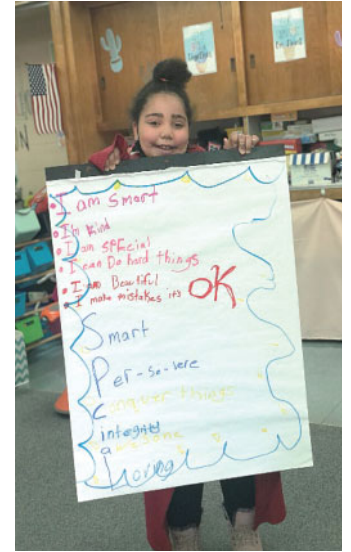
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Twin Lake Students Enfold Positive Affirmations



Students at Twin Lake Elementary are diving deeper into their self-confidence through learning about affirmations. The learners start their days together by stating 5-10 positive affirmations about themselves using phrase starters such as “I can...” or “I am...”. Some learners take this task above and beyond by coming up with adjectives they desire to be by making statements along the lines of “be kind” or “be grateful.”

Positive affirmations help create a belief in oneself that one is capable of conquering hard tasks. Through the use of these statements, the students are more fearless to try new things, and step out of their comfort zones. Their reading fluency has increased, as well as their ability to keep moving forward when a mistake is made. When a child believes they are capable of hard tasks or skills, it is harder for them to become discouraged or defeated. When one believes great things, they can achieve great things.



Friendship Skills Sharpened in DK

Developmental Kindergarten classes across the district are using Connect4Learning (C4L) which is an interdisciplinary early childhood curriculum, the development of which was funded by the National Science Foundation. C4L aims to synthesize research-based approaches in four domains of learning: mathematics, science, literacy, and social-emotional development. Unit 1 introduces Friendship Skills. Students practice the following skills: Give a toy, Help a friend, Give a compliment, Give a play

idea, Ask to play and Give friendly touches.

These skills are introduced through the rich literature provided for read alouds so that students can hear about the skill and talk about it with peers. Sharpening these skills help students become more compassionate classmates, solve problems independently and learn and grow through play.

Pictured above:

Left: *These students are practicing “Give a play idea” when one suggested having a dinner party.* Center: *A COVID friendly “Friendly Touch”.*

Right: *These two are playing the Friendship Skills board game during a small group. The teacher reads a scenario card and they have to decide what Friendship Skill should be used and why.*



Penn Outdoor Classroom Receives National Certification

Reeths-Puffer Pennsylvania Elementary school has received national certification for our outdoor classroom. This is quite an honor as we are the 1st public school to receive this certification in Michigan. <https://certified.natureexplore.org/reeths-puffer-pennsylvania-elementary-kindergarten/>. This link will take you to our page and give you a glimpse into some of the happenings at Penn!

Our interest in the Nature Explore Certification program was a natural next step as we were excited to take on the challenge of refining our already in place rich outdoor learning environment. Our school does not begin and end in the

classroom and oftentimes throughout the day, you can find us cleaning the chicken coop, amending soil in the hoop house, making mud pies in the outdoor kitchen, planting seeds in the greenhouse, weeding and harvesting in the Community Garden, observing caterpillars in

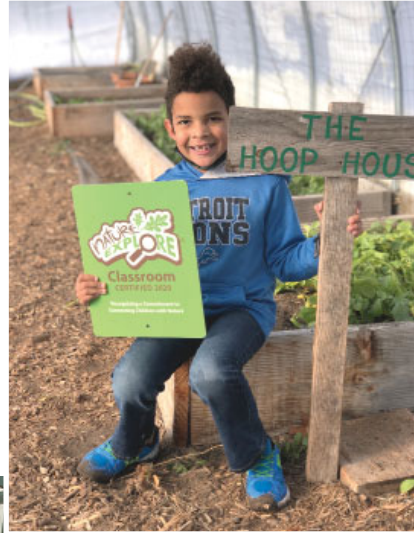
the butterfly garden, turning the compost piles, measuring the dimensions of a new garden space or engaging in a whole host of other meaningful, scientific investigations that involve interacting with the air, water, earth, and friendships around us.

In addition to all of these beautiful areas, our students can



immerse themselves in the rest of our outdoor classroom areas such as: wheeling down Rocket Road; digging for dinosaur bones in our digging area; splashing in the water and watching it create energy and movement; putting on hard hats to build houses and towns with all sorts of materials in our building area; using materials they have found in nature to make beautiful masterpieces in our nature art area; reading a book, laying on the ground or practicing yoga in our grassy gathering area; caring for our feathered friends from the hen house; and of course using our hands to grow food in our hoop house, greenhouse and garden.

We are honored to collaborate with the team at Nature Explore and look forward to our continued growth in helping children discover themselves in our outdoor classroom



- Driveway Grading
- Recycled Asphalt
- Crushed Concrete
- Dolomite
- Slag
- Screened Topsoil
- Beach Sand
- Play Sand
- Fill Sand
- Clay

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Reeths-Puffer Schools
991 West Giles Road
Muskegon, MI 49445

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Steve Edwards
Superintendent of Schools
edwardst@reeths-puffer.org
719-3101

Rob Renes
Assistant Superintendent
renesr@reeths-puffer.org
719-3108

Nate Smith
Director of Instruction and Learning
smithnate@reeths-puffer.org
719-3120

Tracey French
Finance Director
frencht@reeths-puffer.org
719-3110

Scott Green
Special Education Director
greens@reeths-puffer.org
719-3143

Pam Turner
Dir. of State & Federal Programs
turnerp@reeths-puffer.org
744-1647 x 3602

Adam Ingalls
Maintenance Supervisor
ingallsa@reeths-puffer.org
744-4736 x2400

Dan Beckeman
Principal, High School
beckmad@reeths-puffer.org
719-3107

Tony Schmitt
Athletic Director
schmittt@reeths-puffer.org
744-1647 x3774

Jennifer Anderson
Principal, Middle School
andersonj@reeths-puffer.org
719-3128

Scott Panozzo
Principal, Intermediate School
panozzos@reeths-puffer.org
719-3119

Cody Hamilton
Principal, Central Elementary
hamiltonc@reeths-puffer.org
719-3103

Paul Klimsza
Principal, Reeths-Puffer Elementary
klimszap@reeths-puffer.org
719-3133

Dawn Schmitt
Principal, Twin Lake Elementary
schmittd@reeths-puffer.org
719-3190 x2225

Molly Sieplinga
Site Director,
McMillan Early Childhood Center
mollysieplinga@wlace.org
766-3443 x2605

Jami Young
Site Director, Pennsylvania Elementary
719-3159
youngj@reeths-puffer.org

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Youth Environment Stewardship

The kindergarteners at RP Pennsylvania Elementary are so excited to interact with all of the new nature materials received from the Youth Environment Stewardship (YES!) grant provided by the Howmet Aerospace Foundation. With this grant money, we added to the nature room as well as our outdoor classroom in the greenhouse. Both of these spaces needed materials to foster environmental education for our young learners. These included STEM based manipulatives to use for investigation, nature inspired literature to enhance lessons, nature based materials to show environmental impact on indigenous plants and animals, and loose parts and manipulatives to meet counting, grouping and sorting math standards. We are so thankful to the Howmet Aerospace Foundation for their generosity which will help create nature-minded environmental citizens.



UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

May 17, 2021 ■ June 14, 2021

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kim Bramer
President
kellyk@reeths-puffer.org

Mike Weessies
Vice-President
weessiesm@reeths-puffer.org

Chris Brooks
Treasurer
brooksc@reeths-puffer.org

Susan Blackburn
Secretary
blackburns@reeths-puffer.org

Jennifer Romanosky
Trustee
romanoskyj@reeths-puffer.org

Sonya Hernandez
Trustee
hernandezs@reeths-puffer.org

Alex Keefe
Trustee
keefea@reeths-puffer.org