

AUGUST 2021

VOLUME 2021/22, ISSUE 1  
THE DISTRICT NEWSLETTER FOR REETHS-PUFFER SCHOOLS



# ROCKET CITY NEWS

## Back to BETTER



Time has a funny way of changing perspectives.

When we know better, we can do better. But sometimes, learning to do better takes a while. In the 1890s, Bayer Pharmaceutical sold heroin as an over-the-counter cough medicine. And do you remember watching the snow fall during the “Wizard of Oz?” Those drifting flakes were made of asbestos.

Only time will tell how the past year will be remembered. The pain of those months, from a pandemic to social and racial injustice to

a divisive political landscape, was enough to send the toughest of us reeling.

People were angry, confused, sad, tired, and, at times, numb. All, understandable feelings.

Wherever we are today, good or bad, sad or tired, angry or confused, it’s OK. But we just can’t stay there.

Starting today, we can shape our future perspective of the past year. Will we recall a time that drove us to our knees and then broke us? Or will we view it as challenging months that motivated us to do better.

I’m aiming for the latter.

It makes me think of a quote recently shared with me: “Remain hopeful that humanity has the capacity to trust in such a way as to avoid suspicion and fear, to act and walk with integrity, not simply out of necessity, but as a reflection of sound judgment, upright character, and

good will.”

In the days ahead, those who move our community forward will be those who can remain hopeful. 2021 is likely closer to the end of my life than the beginning. It’s definitely closer to the end of my career than the beginning. I hope that when I look back in the coming years, I’ll smile at the way our community emerged all the stronger from these difficult days.

A time when we reimagined and worked out our challenges out of a sense of determination, resolve, and strength. A time when we sacrificed for the good of others, not for fame or recognition, but because it was the right thing to do.

Our work is the right work, Rockets. Our time is now. We cannot choose the “time”, but we can shape it. And in doing so, we can change our perception.

We can create a better world, where “liberty and justice for all” is finally true for all. A better community, where compassion consistently overrides cynicism. Better schools, where all Rockets achieve their full potential.

We are not going “back to normal.” We are going “back to better.” Stay well, Rockets. And here is to a GREAT 2021-2022 school year.

Sincerely,

*Steven L Edwards*

Steve Edwards  
Superintendent

Central Families,

The staff of Central Elementary extends a warm welcome to the 2021-2022 school year! We are excited to continue our mission of maximizing the potential in all of our learners. To that aim, we are using the summer to grow and develop professionally through improvement and collaborative efforts that center on positive responsive culture, literacy culture, numerical thinking, instructional design, and data practices. As signaled in this year's learner profile, our primary focus is to use strengths-based approaches in providing all students a joyful experience of purpose and meaning.

We value the role you play in your child's education, and recognize the impact that strong partnerships between school and home can have on student achievement. Your support and input are essential to our ongoing success. In the ensuing months, please consider participating in engagement events, math and reading nights, and volunteering when needs are communicated. Additionally, please be sure to download the R-P app to follow our success stories as they unfold. While it will remain a priority to communicate pertinent information throughout the year, please be aware of a few important upcoming dates:

**Office Reopens** Monday, August 9

**Welcome Back & Placement Letters Sent Out** Week of August 16

**Open House** Thursday, August 26

- In-Person Option: 6:00-7:00pm
- Virtual Option: 7:00-7:30pm

#### First Week of School

Monday, August 30 – Thursday, September 2

- Soft Start: Monday and Wednesday A-L, Tuesday and Thursday M-Z

#### First Day of School with ALL Students Together

Tuesday, September 7

We are looking forward to a wonderful 2021-2022 school year, and our collective return to better!

Yours in Education,

*Cody Hamilton*

Cody Hamilton, Principal  
Central Elementary

# Summer Wellness










Central students entering grades 1st – 4th have been challenged to complete as many squares as possible on their BINGO cards by taking part in health and wellness experiences during summer break. Prize drawings will occur in the fall for students who submit their cards, indicating their commitment in summer activity.

Teaching healthy habits and promoting wellness remains a priority at R-P as we search for improved ways to enrich and enhance the student experience, support students in getting plugged in, and better serve as stewards of our community. While many efforts to this aim take place during the school year, bolstering summer health and wellness initiatives is a goal that directly connects to the Building Healthy Communities Grant our school recently secured.

Similarly, our Wellness Committee has challenged R-P staff members to commit to their own summer wellness and self-care by logging miles traveled while walking, hiking, biking, swimming, and kayaking. Our goal is to engage in at least 100 miles of physical activity before fall.

Summer presents the perfect opportunity to increase activity, recommit to self-care, and enjoy the many outdoor wonders of beautiful west Michigan. Stay active! Stay well!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_  
Return to your teacher the Friday, September 10th

Make a bird feeder and do some bird watching 	Go on a walk or run	Do something active outside	Do something that makes you smile 	Go at least one day without watching TV or playing video games
Clean your room	Take a bike ride 	Do a craft of your choice	Build a fort inside or outside	Go on a nature scavenger hunt 
Write a letter to someone and mail it to them	Cook your favorite meal with your family	 Free	Do a puzzle	Go for a walk with your family in a new place
Build an obstacle course in your yard for you and your family to go through	Play your favorite outside game 	Take time to do something that makes you happy (ex: your favorite hobby)	Go swimming with adult supervision	Build a sandcastle 
Read a book 	Play your favorite board game	Watch your favorite movie with a bowl of popcorn	Take a nap 	Play hide and seek

# Stewardship at Central

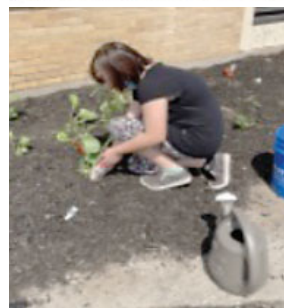
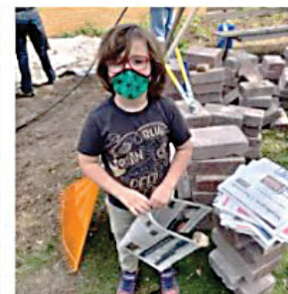
Some of the best learning this past school year took place outdoors, as students grades K – 4th took part in a host of stewardship activities to transform our campus and community.

After learning about native plants and how various needs are met within a given ecosystem, fourth grade students decided to remove the rock landscaping at the south side of the building and create a Native Plant Garden instead. Students researched plants, types of soil, sunlight amounts, and other survival needs to determine the most sustainable options. In addition, the garden will attract pollinators to the area.

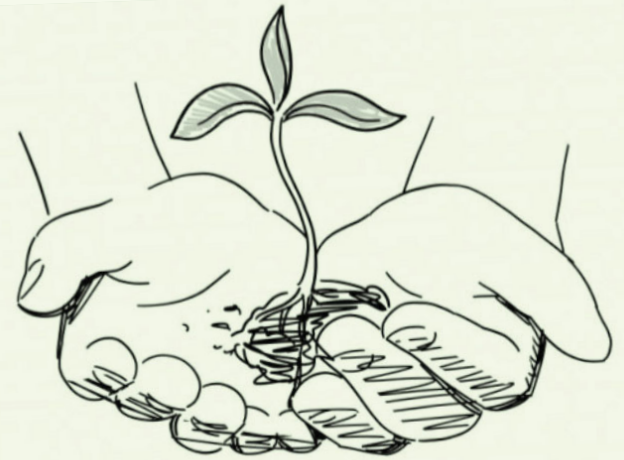
Kindergarten students completely transformed the east end of the building by adding a Sensory Garden to their playground. The Kinder-Garden includes two “taste” garden beds with tomatoes, beans, and peppers, a “smell” garden with lavender, mint, basil, and thyme, a “touch” garden with plants of cool texture, and a “see” garden with beautiful flowers that attract butterflies. See the sunflowers bloom later this summer!

Our courtyard has been another area of focus. Second grade students used their EL modules to enhance their learning around pollinators. Students researched various native plants that attract pollinators and voted on four different plants to include in the Pollinator Garden. In partnership with the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve, our first grade enhanced the EL Bird modules by supplying both the courtyard and local nature preserve with bird houses and bird baths to better care for our local wild bird population. First grade students also planted trees at Snug Harbor and the Winter Sports Complex.

Giant thanks to our PBL consultants, community partners, and parent volunteers. We look forward to the difference our students will continue to make as problem-solvers of real-world problems in the years to come!



# Community Gardening!



**SOME OF  
OUR 2021  
GARDENING  
TEAM!**



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Welcome back RPEL students and families, hopefully you have enjoyed an amazing summer in West Michigan! We are looking forward to an exciting year of learning at Reeths-Puffer Elementary School. The upcoming year is full of opportunities for all of us to continue to learn and grow together. Please look for opportunities to engage with our school this year, we want you involved!

As we start the transition from summer fun and relaxation to the fast-paced scheduled days of school, please savor the rest of your summer and make the best of your remaining days. Students, please continue to read every day, avoid the summer slide!

Our building and grounds look great and are ready for students. The school office will open on Friday August 6th. Student placement letters will be mailed out the week of August 16th.

Meet and Greet Information:

- August 26th - Meet and Greet at R-PEL
- In-Person Option: 6:00-7:00 pm
- Virtual Meet Option: 7:00-7:30pm
- Asynchronous video offered by classroom teacher

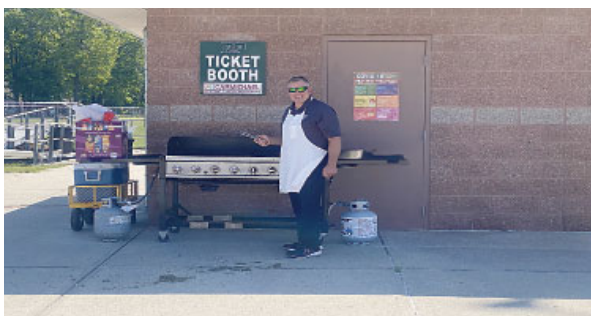
School Pictures will be available in our cafeteria on August 26th from 5:00-8:00 for anyone that would like their picture taken early. We will also be taking school pictures **during the school day on September 1st and 2nd**. Order forms will be in the welcome back letter that will be mailed to individual homes in August.

Feel free to call me in my office, 744-4777 if you have questions or concerns. We look forward to seeing all of you this fall and we are excited about another great school year at Reeths-Puffer Elementary School.

Paul Klimsza

*Paul Klimsza*

Principal, Reeths-Puffer Elementary School



*Mr. Klimsza all smiles at the grill.*



*Mrs. Reeds class were rocking it out at the flamingo toss.*



*Mrs. Oyler's Kindergarten class having fun with the big parachute.*



*Mrs. Oyler's Kindergarteners were "bouncing their way to lunch".*

## Kindergarten Field Day Fun

The kindergarten team at RPEL wanted to give their students a fun day in the sun to celebrate their accomplishments this year. Students showed resilience, determination, and pride during a worldwide pandemic. Whether it was face to face, or virtual learning, our kindergarteners made us prouder than we ever could have imagined. It was time to recognize all kindergarten students for their hard

work. There was no better way than to lead them out onto the big soccer field to have some fun! The field was filled with a variety of games and activities. The students started out completing an "American Ninja Warrior" course. After completing the course, the students rotated around the field to all other games and activities. The games and activities included egg races, a flamingo toss,

bubbles, chalk, a big parachute, and lastly students used the hopper balls and "bounced" their way towards lunch. Students were served hotdogs fresh off the grill from Mr. Klimsza himself. Mr. Klimsza braved the 90-degree weather that day to grill over 130 hotdogs for our kids, and he did it with a smile the entire time. Thank you to our students, teachers, principal, and the amazing PTO staff who helped make this day happen. It was a day filled with love, laughter, and fun.



*Mrs. Medama's class enjoyed the bubbles and hopper ball races too.*

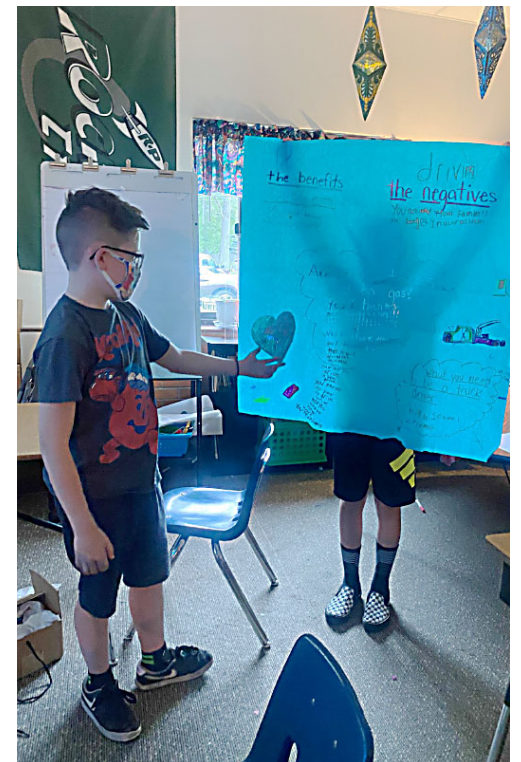


# Career Exploration at RPEL

Fourth graders at RPEL engaged in a ten-day career exploration project where they learned, researched, wrote, and presented on a given career pathway.



Students were introduced to the six different career zones through various video interviews from community members which were followed by a class discussion and a reflection piece. The accumulating project was for students to choose one of the given career zones and further explore a career of their choice within that zone. Students were asked to create a 3-5-minute presentation about their chosen career for their classmates. Students had the freedom to present this in any way that interests them. As a teacher, it was awesome to see my students get excited and dive into their projects. I was very proud and impressed with the students' presentations, it was a fun and engaging experience. It exposed our students to a variety of careers which built their curiosity surrounding career options while making connections to their learning which begins to lay the foundation for future career exploration.



## RPEL Garden on the Move!

Sunday May 16, 2021 teachers, students, and their families gathered to move our garden from its original location, to a smaller location that could be managed by our current student body. Thank you to our community partners Emil and Sue Gardner for coming out to help move our garden rings with their tractor, Ben Medema for building our raised bed to make it accessible for all students, and R and R landscaping for our dirt. The plants that were planted by students were purchased in partnership with our other community partner Twin Lake Greenhouse. Summer Acceleration students are brainstorming what to do with our new wide-open space - we've heard of an outdoor classroom, more playground equipment, a rock-climbing wall, a splash pad, and a bigger Kindergarten playground. The GLSI team is looking forward to using our new space to promote learning about plants and bugs.





Juliah Lager & Savannah Church in the GOTR 5k

# Girls On the Run is so much FUN!



Destani Major running during the GOTR 5K

Students at RPEL and RPI wrapped up another successful Girls on the Run season in June with an awesome 5K run! Throughout the season, the girls worked hard to build their stamina and confidence

with running to meet their end of the season 5K goal. The girls encouraged each other to do their best and celebrated each other's success. Girls on the Run focuses not only on making healthy choices with exercise, but on how to be mentally healthy as well. The girls learn about positive self-talk and how to view themselves through a positive lens and love themselves for who they are. GOTR encourages girls to be a positive influence on those around them and to model that positivity in everything they do. Throughout the season they also learn about having a positive impact on their community. This year, the team decided to clean up the Meijer Trail by the school as part of their Community Impact Project.

That moment showed exactly what Girls on the Run is all about! It's not about being the best or fastest runner, it's not about finishing before everyone else, it's about being the best you can be, while encouraging and supporting others to do the same. We are so proud of the accomplishments of this team and the impact they will continue to make on the RP community!

We asked a few of the girls what they liked best about Girls on the Run!

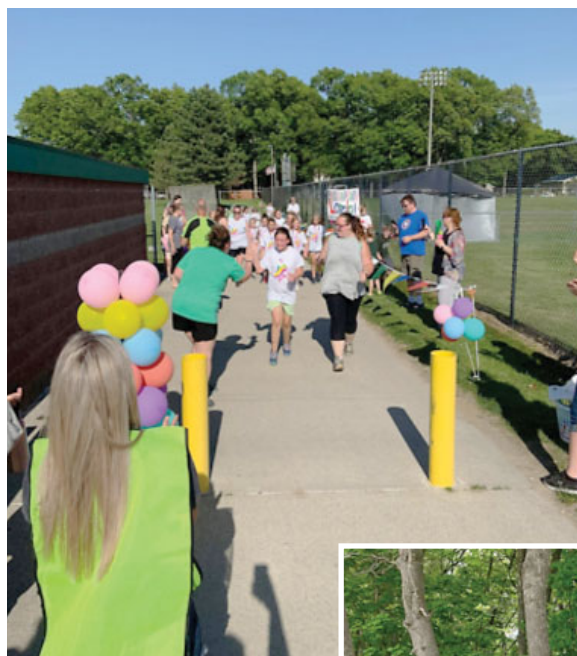
*"The activities are super fun!"* - Skyler Olivas, 4th Grade RPEL

*"I loved giving out energy awards to our teammates and doing our part to help the community by picking up trash."* - Ella Wierenga, 3rd Grade RPEL

*"I loved running with all of my friends and the big 5K at the end was my favorite!"* - Jailyann Zuniga, 4th Grade RPEL

*"I loved doing the activities."* - Leah Zuniga, 3rd Grade RPEL

Thank you to our coaches Kara VanDyke, Ashley Wierenga, and Krystina Shaw for leading the girls through this successful season, even with all of the changes and adjustments they had to make with starting the season virtually and following COVID-19 protocols!



Above: Lorelai Whipple crossing the finish line with her whole team behind her!

Right: Community Impact Project - Cleaning up the Meijer Trail



One of the greatest moments of the season happened during the 5K run on June 4, 2021. After most of the girls had finished, they were waiting for one more team member to cross the finish line. The girls decided on their own that they didn't want her to cross the finish line alone so they all ran back down the trail so that they could all cross the finish line together.

# REETHS-PUFFER SCHOOLS 2021-2022 SCHOOL CALENDAR

The date and times for Open Houses & Conferences will be communicated by the Building Principal.

## AUGUST 2021

August 24.....New Teacher Orientation  
August 25 .....Teacher Professional Development  
August 26..... Teacher Professional Development  
August 30..... **First Day of School**

## SEPTEMBER 2021

September 3.....**K -12 No School - Labor Day Holiday**  
September 6.....**K - 12 No School - Labor Day Holiday**

## OCTOBER 2021

October 8..... **K - 12 No School.** Teacher Professional Development

## NOVEMBER 2021

November 24 - 26.....**K - 12 No School - Thanksgiving Holiday**

## DECEMBER 2021

December 20.....**K - 12 No School - Winter Holiday Begins**

## JANUARY 2021

January 3.....School Resumes  
January 17..... **K - 12 No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

## FEBRUARY 2021

February 17.....**K - 12 No School - Teacher Professional Development Day**  
February 18 & 21..... **K - 12 No School - Mid-Winter Break**

## MARCH 2021

March 25.....**K - 12 No School - Teacher Professional Development Day**

## APRIL 2021

April 1 - 8.....**K - 12 No School - Spring Break**  
April 11.....School Resumes

## MAY 2021

May 30.....**K - 12 No School - Memorial Day**

## JUNE 2021

June 10..... Last Day of School for all Students

Greetings RPTLE Families,

Welcome to a new school year! Fresh beginnings are so exciting and your team at RPTLE is looking forward to facilitating an impactful year of learning. We've been using our time this summer to grow stronger in our practice and deepening our knowledge of curriculum, instruction and social emotional learning. Thank you for sharing your children with us, so that we can implement what we've learned this summer!

### Our Schedule for the First Week of School:

#### August 30th- September 2nd.

"Soft Opening" Schedule:

Last Names A-L: Attend on Monday and Wednesday (30th and 1st)

Last Names M-Z: Attend on Tuesday and Thursday (31st and 2nd)

No School on Friday, September 3rd and Monday, September 6th

**\*\*\*First Day with all kids will be on Tuesday, September 7th.**

We'll be using the same drop off and pick up system that we had used last year. If you're bringing your child to school, bring them directly to the door that their grade level will be using for entry and exit. Your child's teacher will take your child with the rest of their classmates into school. At the end of the day, pick up your child at the same door. Be sure that your child's teacher is aware that you have taken your child.

**D/K~ Door #3 1st: Door #2 2nd: Door #1 3rd/4th: Door #10**

There will be specific information shared during our Family Orientation on Thursday, August 26th. We are offering a "face to face" option from 6:00 - 7:00 pm and a virtual option from 7:00 - 7:30 pm. Classroom learning placements will be communicated by the third week of August, so that you'll know which classroom to visit on the 26th. The link to join the virtual meeting will be shared by your child's classroom teacher.

***Consider checking out our district website for a detailed school calendar, including dates when school will not be in session. [www.reeths-puffer.org](http://www.reeths-puffer.org)***

We use our Twin Lake Facebook page to share lots of important information, as well as pictures of student learning. Please be sure to "like us" at: <https://www.facebook.com/Twin-Lake-Elementary-700068830010334/>

Mark your calendars and join our RPTLE community on Wednesday, September 8th from 6:00 - 7:00 pm for a PTO sponsored Ice Cream Social. What a great time to come out and meet other RPTLE families, and have some fun!

We can't wait to take our learning from last years' experience and make this year the best yet!

With great excitement,  
Mrs. Schmitt and your RPTLE Teaching Team



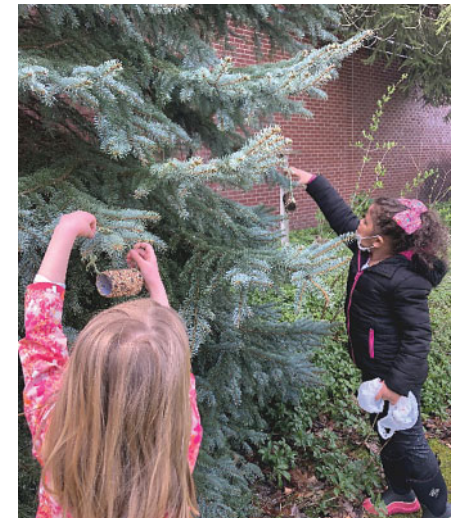
# 1st Graders Love Birds

First graders have been learning about the physical characteristics of birds and researching to learn about how different body parts of birds help them to survive. Students began by bringing in nests and feathers for observations.

Then each student made bird feeders and then used their own toy binoculars to observe birds in our nature garden. They discovered that camouflaging themselves and staying very still and quiet were important for bird watching!

Students also enjoy listening to read alouds, researching specific birds in groups, writing down facts they discover to make bird riddles, singing songs about birds, and making scientific drawings from bird observations. We even hatched our own chicks from eggs!

Bird research has been a great way to spend time outside learning both at school and at home and making connections to the world around us!





## Laketon Bethel Church

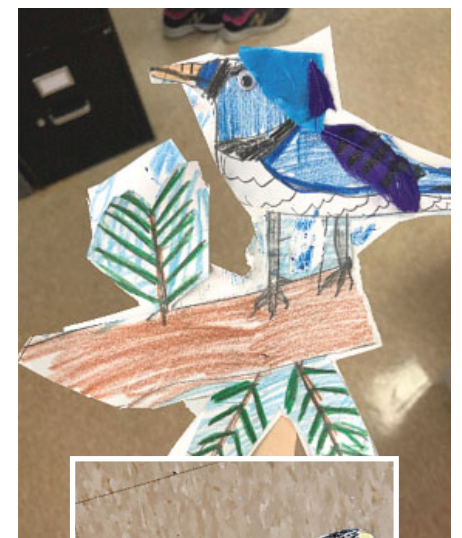
Laketon Bethel is a safe and accepting place to explore your relationship with Jesus.

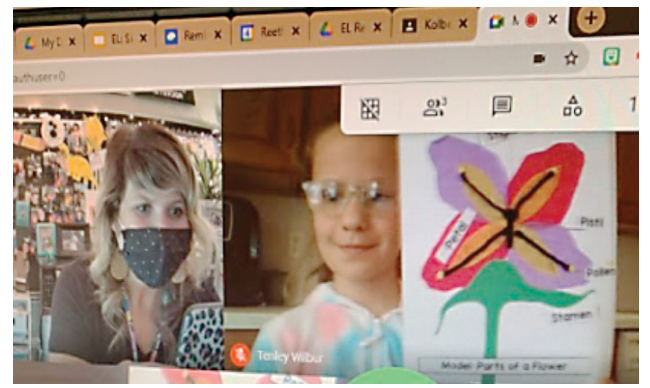
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# It's Pollination Time!

The second graders at Twin Lake Elementary have been taking their learning outside and getting their hands dirty! The EL Curriculum module that we are in, teaches students how to be a researcher. Our task as researchers is to be able to answer these two guiding questions as we finish the learning module:

What is Pollination? Why is it important to us?

Right now, their learning has them discovering what pollination is and the different types of Pollinators (some were shocked that Bees aren't the only type of Pollinator).



This module has allowed the students to play in the dirt as we learn! It's so exciting to see! We have worked together to clean up our school's garden by weeding and planting new flowers. The second graders in Mrs. Kolbe's classroom family took on a BIG project this spring. The students wanted to add some color to the outside of the building. It took a lot of team work and effort but they transformed a boring looking flower box into a beautiful rainbow of colors for all to enjoy. Ms. Zwieg's first graders enjoy being able to look outside their classroom at the pretty flowers every day!

Their classroom family has been talking a lot about **collaboration** and taking the **initiative** to get the job done...and that is EXACTLY what these **PROUD** and **hardworking** second graders did!

Want to know what their next project is?

**They will be planting a Twin Lake Elementary Pollinator Garden!**



# Water Walk

*By: Mrs. Miller and Mr. Richards*

Did you know some children around the world have to walk more than 15 minutes to get water? They collect water for the day for drinking, cleaning, and cooking, and return again the next day.

The 3rd graders at Twin Lake Elementary have been learning about water resources around the world in reading. To help us gain a better understanding of how water is collected around the world, we went on a Water Walk to Twin Lake Park. The 3rd graders walked with empty milk/water jugs. At the park we filled up our jugs and returned with our collected water to school. The water was used to water plants in our garden. We sketched a sequence brainframe of our experience and also wrote a reflection.

3rd grader Alex, challenged himself to carry two jugs of water. He said, "His back was very sore!" Skylar said, "It was hard to carry the water, I had to take lots of breaks, but I did it!" Calvin and Landon worked together to carry a 5-gallon bucket of water back to school.

After our Water Walk experience the kids now have a better understanding of what it might feel like to walk to get water for our daily needs. They also have a better appreciation for the water they have every day.



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SCHOOL BASED HEALTH

WELCOME BACK, ROCKETS!

After a school year unlike anything we have seen before and because it was so successful, we are excited to be looking forward to the potential that 2021-2022 holds. As a team, we continue to learn more and more about the power of deep and meaningful relationships with our students, project based learning and other instructional best practices and new tools to help all students engage in their learning. In addition to this, we have the pleasure to introduce Ms. Desiree San Miguel as our new Assistant Principal. She states: I'm super excited to be joining the RPI team! I am originally from Grand Rapids, MI, however for the last 12 years I have been working and living in San Antonio, Texas. I was an English teacher for 9 years and for the last three years I was a middle school assistant principal at Brentwood STEAM Middle School for Innovation. I'm looking forward to meeting everyone and being a part of such an amazing school!

#### MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Open House is on Wednesday, August 25, 2021. A schedule is listed below to allow for our incoming 5th graders to really get to know the building. You are broken up by the elementary you are coming from. If you are new to Reeths-Puffer, please plan to attend the Twin Lake timeslot. (Subject to change...you will be emailed a final copy before this date!)

#### 5th Grade:

- 5:00 - 5:45 || Twin Lake Students with a parent meeting at 5:45p in the cafeteria
- 5:45 - 6:30 || Central Students with a parent meeting at 6:30p in the cafeteria
- 6:30 - 7:15 || RPEL Students with a parent meeting at 7:15p in the cafeteria

#### 6th Grade:

- Students with last names A-K will have open house from 5:00 - 6:00p.
- Students with last names L-Z will have open house from 6:00 - 7:00p.

*\*\* If these times don't work for your family, please feel free to come when it does! \*\**

#### Soft Start Plan:

We will run our soft start much the same as the middle school and high school.

**Monday (8/30/21): Last Names A-K**

**Tuesday (8/31/21): Last Names L-Z**

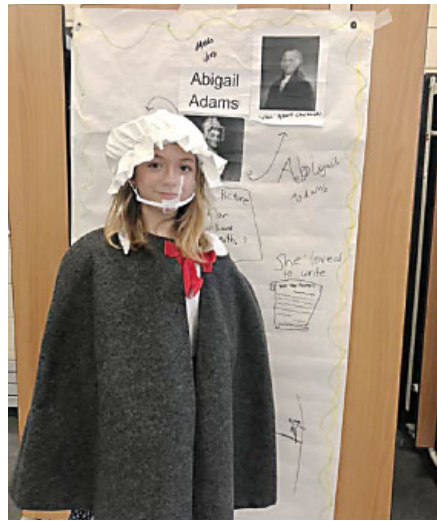
**Wednesday (9/1/21): All students report**

**Thursday (9/2/21): All students report**

**Friday (9/3/21): No School**



Mrs. Kingma's fifth grade class donated money to UNICEF and to Flint Public Schools so that students may have access to clean water. This class made bracelets and necklaces and sold them at the fall and spring Farmers Market. It was a chance to work as a small community but also to go global. These students also sent slideshows in Spanish to other schools in Latin America so others can learn how to make water filters from household items. We learned that all students have the right to have clean water #agualimpia.



# Project Based Learning Continues To Thrive at RPI!



As we wrapped up the 2020-2021 school year, there were so many great learning opportunities for our students. We look forward to next year and creating more meaningful learning experiences for our students. Here are some highlights that we posted on our Facebook page!



Mrs. Hazard and Mr. Carter's classes created a Living Museum of American History.

The students researched a historical figure that was connected to their social studies learning this year. They wrote an essay and then created a background poster describing their figure. In costume, the students acted as wax statues. When the museum visitor pressed the play button, the students came alive and gave a short speech about themselves as the historical figure.



Students in Mrs. Kingma's class made water filters today with slide shows in Spanish to send to students in Costa Rica and Cuba where Mrs. Kingma has taught in the summertime. The filters worked and this service project taught students how to share knowledge about clean water and its importance about children having rights to clean water. We are fortunate to live by Lake Michigan and have clean filtered water here.

Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Meekhof's 6th grade class invited Dr. Michael Smith to their classroom to expand on their learning surrounding transmission of infectious diseases. A great way to apply science to all the information we are all learning while living through a pandemic.



# A Long Walk To Water Strength Auction

Our fifth-grade students, once again, studied the book *A Long Walk To Water* by Linda Sue Park. In the book, students followed a “lost boy” from Sudan fleeing from a war near his village and also a 10-year-old girl who walks for water twice a day for her family. Working through this project allowed kids to get a glimpse of the struggle that many face by having to walk for water. As a group we loaded up our own gallon jugs and jerry cans (5.3-gallon jug) to walk to the Muskegon River (3 miles there and back). We filled up and carried them back for 3 consecutive days. This was so eye opening for many kids. It was hard work. They began to find more gratitude for the things they had easy access to. We used this experience to drive many conversations about what strength looks like and the many ways people can demonstrate their strength.

As a public product and the piece of this project that allowed our own students to have a great deal of human impact, they each created a piece of art that represents STRENGTH. Each piece of art was unique to the talents and interests of the student artist and the money raised by the sale of each piece would go to the water charity the artist chose.

At the conclusion of the project a check for \$1,873 was sent to Waves for Water; a global charity that focuses its efforts on getting clean water to everyone who needs it. A check for \$1,277 was sent to Water for South Sudan; a charity that provides access to clean and safe water in South Sudan. And 135 weeks of clean water were purchased through Mudlove, a company that partners with Water for Good providing clean water to people in the Central African Republic





# Camp Invention

Reeths-Puffer Intermediate, under the leadership of Mrs. Peel were able to bring back Camp Invention this summer. And to say it was a success is an understatement. We hosted over 120 students for five days in June from Kindergarten to 6th grade. Students created light powered robots, made electric cars and had catapult challenges. It was such a great experience for the kids. Thanks to all the teachers, parents and community members that made this happen!



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Welcome to RPMS

Wow, time sure does fly! We can't wait to meet the incoming 7th grade class while continuing our journey with a talented 8th grade group! As the new principal of Reeths-Puffer Middle School, it is my pleasure to welcome students back this fall. Our staff have been hard at work preparing to provide the best experience possible for RPMS students! Collectively, we recognize that this is a formative time in students' lives filled with many opportunities to conquer new challenges and persevere by failing forward. As a middle school student, you will experience a level of independence, voice, and decision-making that comes with a great deal of responsibility. We look forward to supporting students through this time of transition by engaging in positive interactions and providing the tools, knowledge, and experiences necessary to be successful.

As we begin the 2021/2022 school year, it is important to place the following events in your calendar:

#### **Registration and Student Schedule Pickup**

*During registration, work stations will be available for parents to complete the registration process online. You may complete the registration process in advance to make the process quicker. Parents must have a **Parent Powerschool** account (get a code from our office if needed). Specific registration directions will be e-mailed in August. Once registration is complete, schedules will be provided and the building will be available to walk your schedule, take your school photo, & find your locker.*

**Wednesday, August 18th  
(12pm-3pm & 4pm-7pm)**

**Thursday, August 19th  
(8am-12pm & 5pm-7pm)**

#### **Open House**

Opportunity for parents, students, and staff to connect on building and classroom information.

**Tuesday, September 7th (6:30pm-8pm)**



# Rocket Club

Did you go to Laketon Junior High? How about Reeths-Puffer Junior High or Reeths-Puffer Middle School? If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions, more than likely you had an opportunity to build and launch rockets at the end of your 8th grade year. The Reeths-Puffer Rocket Club was started in the early 1970's by former 8th grade teacher Ms. Toy. In 2010 Ms. Toy retired and at that time, her former student and current colleague, Mr. Pallett took over and continued the tradition. This past year the club was managed by Mrs. Cumbee, Mr. Knapp, Mrs. Knapp and Mr. Pallett. After almost 50 years the Reeths - Puffer Rocket Club is still providing an opportunity for 8th grade students to build and launch rockets.

This year, a total of 32 8th grade students chose to participate in the Rocket Club. This group of students met on multiple occasions after school where they learned how to follow the procedures to build their very own rocket. Students measured, sanded, cut and glued parts together to get their rockets to launch specifications. Each student finished their rocket by spray painting unique designs to set them apart from one another. During the rocket building process, students also learned about aerodynamics and Newton's 3rd Law of Motion. Rocket Club members were provided the opportunity to launch their rockets during the last week of school as a “send off” to Reeths-Puffer High School.







# Pride Day 2021



Thanks to the planning and preparation of middle school student leaders, we were able to execute Pride Day 2021, a tradition that was missed last year due to Covid. Pride Day is filled with competitions, lessons, and activities aimed to demonstrate an individual and collective sense of what it means to be a Rocket! The event included lessons centered on grit and goal setting, a school-wide Rocket Recognition to celebrate students demonstrating The ROCKET Way, a fitness challenge known as the color run, and a rotation of events for students to participate in.

Pride Day also marked the end of our class competition with the 8th graders edging out the 7th grade to earn a slushy day! We have a lot to be proud of at RPMS!



Welcome RPHS Students!

Each August, we begin the countdown and this year feels even more exciting as we plan to welcome back many events and activities that we have missed over the last year and a half. We know that developing students as critical thinkers, problem solvers, strong communicators, leaders and citizens happens in cafeterias, clubs, arenas, stadiums, theaters, and spectator stands as well as the classroom. We are thrilled for the opportunity this year will bring. As we approach the 2021-22 school year, we are not just getting back to normal. Through our experiences, reflections, and new perspectives, we are excited to get back to better and make this a great school year!

To assist in the start of a great year together, below are some important events to place on your calendar:

#### Registration and Schedule Pick Up Information

You can begin pre-registering your student from home in August. An e-mail will be sent to parents and students with specific directions. Workstations will be available at registration to access the on-line process if assistance is needed. Once the on-line portion is completed, during registration, you will get your schedule, be able to walk your schedule, get a parking pass if needed, and take your school photo. Complete your on-line registration in advance to make the process quicker. Like years past, you must have a parent Powerschool account.

#### Schedule Pick-up/ Registration at High School:

	8-11:00	12-3:00
Thursday August 19	Seniors	Seniors & Juniors
Friday August 20	Juniors & Sophomores	Sophomores
Monday August 23	Freshman	Freshman

#### RPHS Open House

The RPHS Open House is scheduled for the evening of **Wednesday, September 8th**. In addition to an opportunity to meet teachers, we will be hosting informational presentations including opportunities specific to freshman parents, senior year preparations, college athletics, mental health, and more. A schedule will be e-mailed to parents and students in August.

## September 10

### 4:00—6:30 RPHS

## Activities

Drunk Driving Simulations  
Photo Booth  
Tobacco Reduction  
Activities  
Prizes  
And MORE!!!

## Participating Organizations

Alcohol Liability Initiative  
Alliance for Marijuana Prevention  
Knowsmoke  
My Alliance  
Reeths-Puffer STATS and More!!

# Fun, Informative and FREE Family Event Scheduled

Start your school year out right and come out and enjoy a fun, interactive family event! On September 10 from 4:00pm – 6:30pm before the RP home football game, STATS (Straight Talk About Tough Stuff) will be hosting a family fun event to encourage families to start talking about the tough issues. The event will be held at the high school.

In cooperation with Muskegon area coalitions, there will be areas designed for different ages, including parents! From mental health awareness activities and information substance abuse prevention activities to bike safety and more, there will be activities that will interest everyone! Enter our drawings to win fun prizes! Winners will be announced during half-time of the football game.

Watch for more activities sponsored by STATS. There are so many exciting things happening this year at RP!

# Afterschool Program is Launched at RPHS

Looking for a place to go after school? Join us in RP's new afterschool program! Funded through the Drug Free Communities grant and the STATS (Straight Talk About Tough Stuff) Coalition, this afterschool opportunity will run from 2:45 to 5:30pm every school day at RPHS. This is a free offering for our middle and high school students. While students will have to be pre-registered for the program, attendance can be on an "as needed" basis. Middle school participants can be bused to the high school.

This program will provide a place for students to hangout, play games, learn life skills, relax and chat. Tutoring and quiet spaces for homework will also be available. This program will continue to evolve based on the needs of students.

Registration information will be available at the beginning of the school year. Please contact Jennifer LaChapelle for more information at [lachapellej@reeths-puffer.org](mailto:lachapellej@reeths-puffer.org).





## Rotary Spreading Kindness

The RPHS Rotary Interact Club is a high school club that helps students build leadership skills and applies these skills within the school and community. This spring, the club wanted to spread some kindness, positivity, and school spirit with all of the excitement of spring break around the corner. Club members used sticky



notes to flood the school with positivity. This allowed students to experience some of those fun and positive emotions with their peers and to maybe forget about some of the stress they were experiencing!



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*E'Vonna Longmire*  
Former CTC Health Science Academy student

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# Senior Traditions and New Beginnings

The graduation ceremony for the class of 2021 was moved outside to the Rocket Stadium right on our beautiful campus. After years of celebrating our graduates in the L.C. Walker Arena downtown (now Mercy Health Arena), the move to our stadium was made as a result of local health ordinances. Like many other situations over the last year, great challenges have also led to great opportunities. The weather was beautiful, the ceremony was meaningful, and the fireworks that concluded the event were a great reflection of the evening.



decorations and were celebrated by family and friends along the route. The traditional paper toss returned with a new location and students signified the end of their K-12 journey together in the arena.

During the ceremony, the graduates also designated an honorary graduate and named



messages to graduates. While graduates waited in anticipation to walk onto the field, they could read the messages left for them. The uncertainty of a ceremony in 2020 also started a new tradition with a parade of graduates along a short route near campus. The graduates personalized their vehicle



In 2020, sidewalk chalk was used to mark the ground six feet apart for graduation line up. The chalk inspired a new tradition in 2021 and parents, younger students, and community members were able to use sidewalk chalk to leave heartfelt



Dan Beckeman as part of the graduating class of 2021. Dan has retired after serving Reeths-Puffer High School for 31 years and has left a legacy of integrity, selflessness, service, and passion. It was a special part of the evening to honor Mr. Beckeman as part of the graduating class.



**Nate Smith**  
Director of Instruction  
and Learning

## Hello Rocket Families and Friends

I am very excited to welcome everyone to the 2021/22 school year, the year we are calling... "Back to Better".

As our new school year approaches, much of the focus is on schedules, busses, teacher names and getting back into the routines of school life.

I wanted to give everyone a "cheat

sheet" of curriculum jargon that you might hear your kids or school staff say to you in the upcoming weeks.

As a parent, I know LOL, BTW, BFF and BRB are codes used when texting or in chat rooms. R-P classrooms have some codes as well and if you are like me, knowing some jargon gives me the opportunity to prompt conversations with my kids about their day at school.

1. **IM = Illustrative Math:** This is our core math program Kindergarten through Algebra 2. We started using this program at the Middle School 6 years ago and have now expanded this to be our program district wide. Your child might say, "I have work in my IM workbook tonight."
2. **EL = Expeditionary Learning:** This is our district's Language Arts curriculum K-5. The program emphasizes learning to read, in early elementary, within engaging modules and then continues to take students through themed based modules that incorporate authentic writing, project design and aligned assessments. Your child might say, "I have to find a picture of a frog for my EL project." This is common as the books, learning goals and projects all connect back to a common engagement theme in science or social issues.
3. **180 Days =** This is our core Language Arts curriculum in grades 6-12. It

is composed of EL modules, MAISA units (Michigan based Language Arts Curriculum) and self-created units. 180 Days are the principles that guide our instruction to develop literacy skills in writing and ready at the secondary level. We have 24 staff members that have trained with the authors of 180 Days over the last 3 years and are implementing the principles in their classrooms. The principles of high-quality literacy instruction are: Purposeful reading and writing every day, students collaborate and talk in groups about what they read and write, students will read required text and interest-based text daily, teachers' passion for reading and student interest are part of the instructional practices. Your child might say, "I am in a literacy circle and committed to read 30 pages tonight for our meeting tomorrow."

4. **FB = Fastbridge =** This is the national assessment used to assess how students are progressing year to year in their math, literacy and social skills. The information is not used for grading purposes but allows for the district to respond with some classroom instruction changes to better meet their needs. This assessment is given district wide 3 times a year. Your child might say, "I have to Fastbridge today in my English class."
5. **PBL = Project Based Learning:** We have many classrooms engaging in project-based learning, connecting the content in their classrooms to people and projects around Muskegon, Michigan and the world. This allows our students and teachers to demonstrate learning by collaborating together and creating projects as a classroom, grade level or content area. Your child might say, "Can I get pipe cleaners or some sticks, I need to build a protocol for my PBL project?"
6. **Mi-STAR = Michigan Science Teaching and Assessment Reform:** Over the last 6 years we have been leaders in our state utilizing the Mi-STAR curriculum through training and question-based instruction in grades 6-8 but many of the practices are utilized in classrooms 5-12. The principles of this curriculum are curiosity, increased exploration, problem solving and student lead collaboration. Your child might say, "My teacher doesn't answer my questions, they just ask me another one." THIS is on purpose so that the student continues to seek answers and solutions instead of seeking a teacher to tell them.
7. **SEL = Social Emotional Learning K-12:** This is part of our PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) system and the "Rocket Way". Our district continues to move forward emphasizing a positive learning environment, valuing relationships and teaching social skills to



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give our students an edge in the world to contribute. Your child might say, "In a circle this morning we shared a time we were frustrated and how we overcame the frustration."

**8. CKH = Capturing Kids Hearts:** We are in our 3rd year as a district utilizing CKH strategies. These strategies enhance student connectedness to others by promoting healthy bonds with teachers, coaches, and school staff. Your child might say, "We shared good news in 3 of my classes today, it sure is different starting my science class like that."

I hope that this list is a good starting point to continue our support of each other and our kids with the R-P learning jargon!

## R-P Summer Acceleration

Rocket City was a busy place this summer! Our community extended the school year for 8 weeks with programs for all grades, K-12. The Programs ranged from Camp Invention with our US patent office to Projects with our community partners to help students identify their internal strength and how their strength can be used to contribute to the world around them. This was a way to help support our students for the 20-21 school year and part of our mission for the year of "Return to Better". As we continue to learn the pandemic's impact on our kids we are confident that through creative programming, human relationships, community support and our teachers that we will have stronger learners and be a stronger community in the upcoming school year.

During our summer program students participated in project-based learning (PBL) with visits to various locations in our community to add authentic learning experiences to their day.



## Our Active Community Learning Partners Include:

Michigan State University  
Grand Valley State University  
Muskegon Area ISD  
Muskegon Community College  
Muskegon Sports Complex  
US Patent Office  
Career Tech Center  
Lakeshore Museum Complex  
Silverside Museum  
Muskegon Farmers Market

Muskegon State Parks  
Duck Lake State Park  
Camp Pentalouan  
Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve  
Nipotes Italian Kitchen  
Breathe & Believe  
YMCA  
Muskegon Township Fire Department  
Country Dairy  
Heritage Landing

Thank you for all the support on behalf of our 600+ students who participated in programs this summer! It takes a community that values learning to make something like this happen!



## Keeping our Focus on our Long-Term Learning Goals

When I was young, I asked my grandma “Why don’t we have eyes like fish?” “What do you mean?” she asked. “On the sides of our heads looking in different directions,” I answered. My grandma laughed and then told me... “Look out that window and enjoy the view.” I feel like that small moment, sitting on my grandmother’s couch on Stony Lake, held a question and a response that has somehow led me to where we will continue to set goals for learning at R-P.

I will never forget her simple guidance and now I realize that my eyes are “on the front of my head” to look forward, move forward and enjoy the view.

Over the last 18 months we have learned a lot about each other and the ways that our community responds to challenges. We have probably adapted more in the last 18 months than in the last 35 years. The list of school related changes would take up the entire page for this school year alone, but one thing I can confidently say is that we keep showing up and adapting to make sure that our kids are learning and ready to contribute.

Looking ahead, as a community, we must use what we have learned from the last 18 months to rethink, retool and maximize our time. Heading into the new chapter at R-P we have discovered a few things that will shape us moving forward.

1. The voices of our students and families can help guide what we do to maximize our kids’ learning experience. I had a mom say to me while on the phone, “I know you are busy but...” I stopped her and said, “You and your child are my business, I’m not too busy at all.” She spoke about an improvement idea for her child, who was a Rocket Virtual Edmentum student. She wondered about the possibility of her child participating in school-wide activities, joining through Google Meet, to help her feel connected to R-P. This comment prompted multiple events, within the district, in which our Rocket Virtual Edmentum students became a priority for inclusion to increase their R-P community connection.
2. The feedback from our community matters to support our kids. Throughout the year several surveys have been sent out. Many times, they are passive surveys asking for impressions or thoughts on choices the district has made. Some of the surveys were active surveys meaning, due to legislation timelines and changes in the state’s covid response, action had to be taken. This feedback was purposeful in helping to support students and families in structural, instructional and cultural decisions and has proven to be priceless as we continue to navigate improvements at R-P.
- 3 Flexibility matters and can improve learning experiences. We have implemented 7 different instructional models and each building has variations of these based on our community needs. WOW! As a community we are adaptable and can handle change respectfully while our kids have, and will continue, to watch us navigate their future.
4. Change is OK when we are in it together. Often, I am asked if I like leading change, I laugh because I really believe that I get to walk with people through change.
5. We have launched a R-P Summer Acceleration Program that was based on student feedback and questions our families have asked about over the last 18 months.

As we start the next chapter for learning at R-P we must take with us the learning and improvements from the last chapter that allowed the processes we are growing from. Remember “Our eyes are in the front of our head for a reason.” especially as we move forward, together, as a community.



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