

DECEMBER 2021

VOLUME 2021/22, ISSUE 2  
THE DISTRICT NEWSLETTER FOR REETHS-PUFFER SCHOOLS



# ROCKET CITY NEWS

## The Next “Greatest Generation”



Time has a funny way of changing perspectives. Mark Twain once said “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes.”

In 1998, Tom Brokaw coined the term “The Greatest Generation” in his book by the same name. It described Americans who grew up during the Great Depression and fought in World War II or whose labor helped win it. That generation, facing adversity unlike anything previous generations could have imagined, confronted major issues at home and abroad.

Our students, too, are currently confronting major issues most of us could never have imagined. In addition to social justice conflict and political unrest, our kids have experienced three school years impacted by a worldwide pandemic that disrupted the economic, social, political, cultural, and educational universe.

The generation in schools now has been and will continue to be confronted with challenges unlike any in history.

We’ve all heard about Generation X, Generation Y (the Millennials), and Generation Z. What comes next? If our experience in schools is an indicator, it will be Generation “Why?” Our kids have access to more information than any generation in history. Consider this: Only our oldest students were born prior to the launch of YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Our kids have never known a world without Google or Wikipedia.

Students today seldom hesitate to ask “why.” It’s easy for adults to automatically view that “why” as argumentative, and, yes, sometimes it is. As a parent and educator, I know the endless “whys” can be exhausting. But more often than not, “why” is an attempt to understand and grow. That question is analysis at its most fundamental.

And schools have had to adapt to Generation Why. It is no longer enough for schools to be just disseminators of information – there are endless other sources students can turn to. Neither can schools regard learning as regurgitation of information – the ability to problem-solve teaches students what to do with those facts.

Americans, when faced with adversity, rise to the challenge. We adapt, develop, and evolve. Our students are and will continue to be at the forefront of that. Today, one of the biggest challenges is to question more and to question better. Our kids, even amid all the chaos of the past two years or perhaps because of it, are rising to that challenge.

When you look at our kids and their friends... you are looking at the next “Greatest Generation.”

**And, with this group... I like our chances!**

Stay well, Rockets!

Sincerely,

*Steven L. Edwards*

Steve Edwards

# REETHS-PUFFER SCHOOLS 2021-2022 SCHOOL CALENDAR

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

## 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 9 ..... K - 12 AM Only

K-12 Records Day PM

June 10..... K - 12 AM Only

K - 12 Records Day PM

Last day of School of all students



# Reeths-Puffer Debit Card

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SCHOOL BASED HEALTH





# Getting to Know and Appreciate Poetry

Fourth graders begin the school year reading a book called *Love that Dog* by Sharon Creech. We learn about famous poems and poetry along with the main

character, Jack. We learn about the structure of poetry and how it is different from prose. Our eyes are opened to a genre that is new and exciting to many of us. During our all school “apple crunch” in September, our fourth graders read a concrete poem about apples. It was challenging and fun to try to keep the beat of the poem, as we read fluently together.



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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.





## Caught Learning in Mrs. Essing's Class

Our Red Bandanna kids visited Mrs. Essing's first grade learning community to catch what they were learning. They wrote a few notes and took a few pictures to share with the rest of us.



Skylar and Amber wrote: "Mrs. Essing's kids were working together on stations that helped them learn to read and write by sounding out words. They were making letter sounds using Playdoh, rolling a dice and reading and writing a word, catching a fish and reading the word and reading books. We can't believe how well they can read! Mrs. Essing was sitting with the kids and playing games, too. This looked like a fun way to learn how to read!"

Thank you, Mr. Essing's community, for letting our fourth-grade learners catch learning!

## Caught Learning in Mrs. Greene's Community

Mrs. Greene's learners have been working hard learning how to play together. Their community has 4 play commitments, or promises, to make their play more fun. Their play commitments are: include others, share, take care of materials and use kind words.

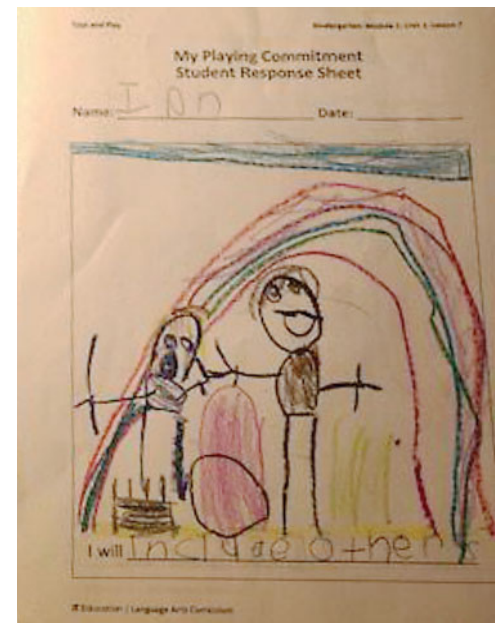
Including others: You can invite a friend to play.

Share: You can take turns.

Take care of materials: You can treat them gently.

Kind Words: You should always use the words please and thank you.

They are hoping that you'll come and visit their classroom to watch them play. They would love to show you how they are working together and following their play commitments.





# Introducing Our Foster Grandparent Volunteers



## Mrs. Bradford is Recognized by the United Way

Lakeshore United Way held a school supply drive across our county and requested nominations for a “hero teacher” from our community who might benefit from classroom donations. After hundreds of nominations, only 11 teachers were selected and Mrs. Bradford was one of them. Quite an honor! She received many classroom supplies that will benefit her kindergarten learners for a while.

Thank you to all of our amazing teacher heroes for your work and to Lakeshore United Way for finding a way to recognize them!

Last year, we missed our volunteers. Our school community appreciates having extra ears, hands and hearts to support our learners at Twin Lake Elementary. We are grateful to be able to have two of our amazing volunteers back in our building this year~Grandpa Tom Doran and Tina Trulsen aka Ama.

Ama loves to read, cook and watch her grandson, Eric's, sporting events. Her favorite food is chili, but she says she'll eat just about anything. She is a proud Army veteran who has traveled all over the world. Ama supports learning in several classrooms as a volunteer.



Grandpa Tom enjoys spending time with kids. He is also a proud Army veteran who was in the Vietnam War. An interesting fact about Grandpa Tom is that he was a Paratrooper, meaning that he jumped out of helicopters and airplanes during the war. Grandpa supports learners in both of our first-grade classrooms.

We appreciate our Foster Grandparent volunteers!



# Gardening at Twin Lake Elementary



The kindergarteners at Twin Lake Elementary couldn't wait to get their hands dirty in the Twin Lake Elementary hoop house this fall. In September, the kindergarten classes focused on cleaning up the garden and the hoop house in preparation for planting. Once the garden beds were ready, the kids researched hardy plants to grow in fall. They found that kale, lettuce, carrots, and bush beans were great, hardy options for a fall harvest. After a visit to the Twin Lake Greenhouse, they decided to plant kale. The kids worked together using gardening tools to plant 24 kale plants. Every day the kids check on the plants, pull any weeds, and take turns watering the plants. This will provide a great connection when they start learning about trees this Spring, and it is teaching the kids responsibility and pride (which is part of their social contracts)!







# Make Work Easier

First graders have been learning that both tools and habits of character make work easier. They listen to read-alouds about tools (chef, science, math), sing songs about tools, and write/draw about why we need tools. Habits of character (initiative, collaboration, perseverance, responsibility) are reinforced in small groups to solve tool challenges to decide which tool is best for the job. Small groups then plan, create, and revise a magnificent thing just for our classroom (something the class needs) and also write about their creation. Students learn that habits of character and the right tools help to get the job done! Great lessons for young learners!



## Mathematics

This year our elementary students adopted a new math curriculum called Illustrative Mathematics. The kindergarteners are really enjoying diving into the first unit of the new math. The students are learning how to count forwards, they are identifying numbers 1-10, and they are learning about more/less/equal. Their favorite part of the curriculum is the build in small group and center time. During this time, the students are able to apply and practice math concepts in a hands-on way.







# Johnny Appleseed Day



Mrs. Greene's kindergarteners at Twin Lake Elementary celebrated Johnny Appleseed day in September. Johnny Appleseed was a real person who lived in the 1700s and was known for planting many apple trees in America. Johnny Appleseed's birthday was September 25th. To celebrate his birthday and the impact he made during his life, we made our own applesauce, did apple crafts, and learned how apple trees grow and why they are important. In the Spring we will learn about trees and why they are important, so this fun day provided us with a lot of prior knowledge that will help us be successful during our EL module.



It is hard not to notice the changes in math instruction and learning over the last 8 to 10 years. Recently, publications are being released that define and explain the mathematical classrooms we desire for our kids. If you are like many who continue to seek more information about “why” math is different in 2021 from when we were in school please checkout the following resource.

## Our Values

- 1. We value** children seeing themselves as mathematics knowers, doers, and contributors to the field of mathematics.
- 2. We value** children's differences with respect to age, race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and geographic context (e.g., urban, rural, suburban).
- 3. We value** mathematics as a broad, creative, and collaborative discipline for sense making and problem solving.
- 4. We value** learning mathematics in a variety of ways - both socially and cognitively.
- 5. We value** mathematics teaching that focuses on connection, care, and authentic relationships.

To learn more, go to: [www.gomaisa.org](http://www.gomaisa.org)



# How might R-P continue to increase performance and develop needed social skills?

We work to balance this question every day. We all want our children to have the content knowledge that keeps them ahead of their peers from other districts and/or schools around the state. We also want them to have work skills that allow them to contribute, share in successes with others, compete, collaborate and communicate.

I sometimes think that this is the “alignment” we all look for in our curriculum and classrooms.

The only way to truly have “both” is to design learning in a way that allows for both to happen every day in all classrooms. At R-P we do this with purpose. The most obvious examples are our PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) system and the “Rocket Way” (Respect, Pride, Integrity). Students are recognized for doing the right things around our community and we have supports in place to help our students who are working through areas in which they need new strategies. We have priority learning standards established at all grade levels containing a balance of academic skills but...most importantly the identified skills can be applied to post-secondary work and study.

The less obvious way we are increasing performance is the way we are designing our classrooms by utilizing Student Voice, Collaboration and SEL (Social Emotional Learning) instruction. Classrooms are not set up in rows. At the high school level, classrooms are designed around a real-world problem and students are asked to provide “solutions” to the problem through collaboration, writing and creations.

Teachers and administrators alike want a balance that allows students to share input in their classrooms and then design instruction around these ideas to create classrooms in which our students can master academic standards. When we allow for peer support and collaborative conversations around tasks and problems our students are more likely to work together, with other people in school, at work and with their families as they acquire these skills. Finally, with the integration of Social Emotional strategies more students have access to classroom support and are building their skills to have empathy for others while being healthier themselves.

The more time our kids spend engaging in these practices the more likely they will be ahead in their abilities, academically and socially, to impact communities, families and workplaces in the R-P way.



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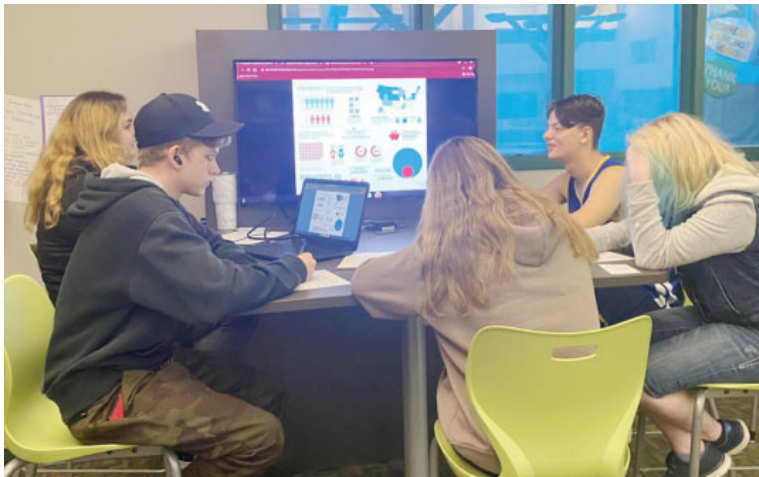
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# Building a Community of Rocket Readers

Our RPHS library is undergoing a season of change with the goal of creating a community of engaged readers within our Rocket City. The transformation has focused on student choice, partnership with our local libraries, and creative learning spaces which support “learning by doing” in the 21st century. The library has been rebranded as a “Learning Commons” in which students can engage in literacy with a coffee shop feel, use electronic resources such as ebooks and audiobooks, and experience hands-on learning in our Maker Space—a student centered, collaborative space used to create, invent, tinker, explore and discover using a variety of tools and materials.

Currently, our RPHS Learning Commons is looking for donations of the following items: cardboard boxes for building materials, fabric and fiber supplies, a wide variety of paper, cutting tools, drawing tools, connectors like pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks, plastic drinking straws, legos, bamboo skewers, and adhesives like duct tape, Gorilla glue, Play Doh, and hot glue guns.



## Chromebook Rollout

Covid has presented many challenges for families, educators, and students over the last year and a half but that hasn't stopped Reeths-Puffer Schools from expanding ways to keep our students connected. Over the past few years we've purchased nearly 3,500 chromebook devices to provide students with effective and modern ways to learn during their K-12 experience at Reeths-Puffer.

Chromebooks are web-centric computers that integrate with Google cloud services. They run on the Chrome operating system and are affordable at under \$300.

Chromebooks are manageable which allows the technology department to push policies and links to the devices. Chromebooks are also manageable at the classroom level giving teachers the ability to deliver lessons, share or blank screens, and monitor progress.

This year we've issued a chromebook to every High School and Middle School student to use at school and at home. For grades K-6, classrooms are outfitted with a charging cart containing 30 chromebooks for students to use during the school day.

We live in a digital era and the technology skills our students are developing will have immediate and future impact. Higher education, trade schools, military, and the work force continue to implement the use of technology and our students will be better prepared for any path they choose.



**Mike Beidler**  
Director of Technology





# Teacher Learning Labs for Improvement

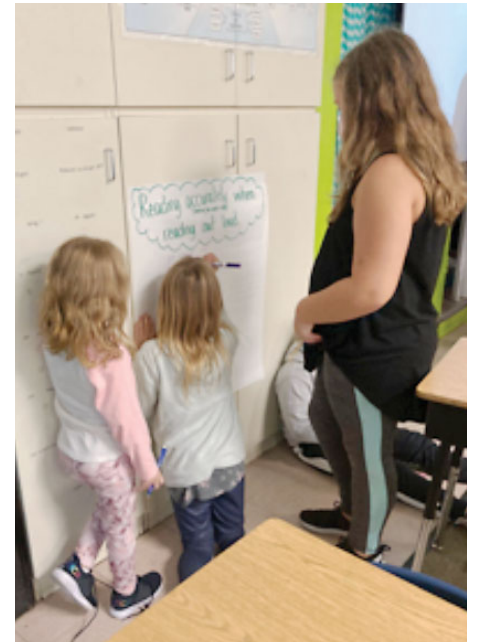


In 2021, our teachers and staff continue to look for opportunities to improve instruction.

We often compare schools based on their sports, test scores, proximity to a highway, average family income, amount of property on water, zoning, parks, etc. This list could go on and on listing what makes us proud of living in our community.

Recently R-P Elementary welcomed 37 teachers and administrators from Orchard View into our classrooms for a learning lab experience based around the gains our students are showing in literacy with our EL curriculum. Our teachers modeled lessons and strategies for the visiting teachers and then held a 1-hour question and answer session to discuss observations and press for clarification. We are better together when it comes to literacy practices.

Learning labs consist of observations of student and staff practices, reflections, sharing observations and asking questions around the topic.



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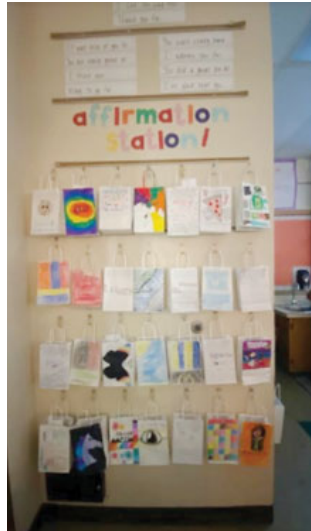
# Positive Culture is Soaring at Central Elementary!

We know that when people feel good about where they are, they perform better. Central Elementary is taking this seriously. We want our students, teachers, staff, and families to feel excited and safe to come to school everyday. We need this More Than Ever!

Our Positive Culture Team has launched efforts to make Central even better than it already is. This is done mainly through enhancing our PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) systems. Our behavior is driven by Respect, Pride and Integrity as it is across the entire district. Students are acknowledged through Rocket Slips for demonstrating the Rocket Way. When surveyed recently, 100% of teachers have given Rocket Slips this month and 90% of students have received at least one. Once received, students have a number



of ways to “cash in” on good behavior, including the Rocket Shop. The store itself is run by one of our classes, giving these students another dose of learning and owning Respect, Pride and Integrity.



Social and emotional learning is directly embedded into our daily work as we communicate how it looks to live together in a community. Some of our classrooms are piloting a curriculum that helps navigate the concept of teaching the

whole child. This helps to increase engagement by supporting students in removing barriers that get in the way of their learning.

Many of our teachers were trained in CKH (Capturing



Kids' Hearts) over the summer, a platform for thinking about how we reach our students relationally in order to teach them deeply. We're embracing a mindset that “if you have a child's heart you have a child's mind!”

Through all of this work, we have seen behavioral referrals decrease at an exciting rate and students are reporting they feel better and safer at school. It is also evident by the daily smiles and giggles!

Want to have some fun with your kiddo? Ask them about the Rocket Way and how they see it displayed at school and at home.

Students at Central designed and created their dream school entirely out of materials they found. The schools were specially designed to withstand a natural disaster of the engineer's choice. Students simulated their natural disasters to see how their designs were able to withstand the elements. This was just one of the latest examples of teachers using project-based learning and design to increase student engagement through voice, choice, and hands-on experiences.

The staff at Central, in partnership with the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative and MAISD Science consultants, have a wealth of PBL/PBE (Place Based Education) learning experiences planned for the 2021-2022 school year. Upcoming initiatives include:

**DK:** Students will study our environment and the habitats around us. In November, they will travel to the local nature preserve to create eco-friendly bird feeders for bird viewing areas.

**K:** Students will work to rejuvenate and



regenerate their sensory garden with a focus on purpose and sustainability.

**1st:** Students will become bird experts and work to make the Kindergarten playground and school courtyard more bird-friendly. Teachers also plan to enhance school-wide recycling, with emphasis on lunch-related waste.

**2nd:** Students, now bird experts from last year's EL experiences, will work to transform the front of our building with an intentional focus on attracting



more native birds.

**3rd:** Students will study frogs and take their expertise off-site to better understand, appreciate, and improve local watersheds and the native amphibians within.

**4th:** Students will continue their self-expression projects and soon host a Display Night in partnership with the Lakeshore Museum. This spring, they'll expand their native garden and study sustainability.

We are incredibly proud of the problem solving and difference-making our students continue to demonstrate as stewards of Rocket City. Momentum around PBL and GLSI continues to grow at Central, DK-4. Long-range, we strive for our campus grounds to serve as a clear representation of what students learn about within the curriculum, and care about as Rockets!





# Wellness Committee Sets Goals for Healthy Future

The Wellness Committee is ambitious to make 2021-2022 the best year yet. 10 staff members completed the 100-mile challenge over the summer and we currently have a health and wellness bingo challenge that runs through November. Recently, students participated in the Great Lakes Apple Crunch to promote healthy eating and celebrate farm-to-school education. Also, in October, over 80 people joined our first ever community hike. Upcoming wellness events and initiatives include:

- Staff Cornhole Tournament
- Hike the Lights community event at the Winter Sports Complex
- Night Hike community event at Snug Harbor
- Family Fitness Nights
- Run the Spruce with Dr. Seuss in December

Be looking for more information regarding these upcoming events along with others as the year unfolds, and please consider joining us in promoting and practicing a healthier R-P. The more we give a little bit to ourselves, the better positioned we'll be to serve and support those around us!





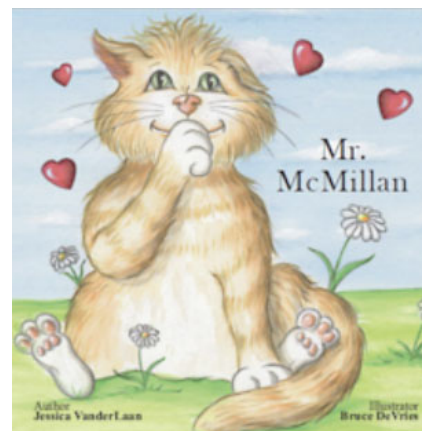


## Local author helps us to fund raise for our Pennsylvania Elementary gardening program.

***There is never a dull moment in Mr. McMillan's life. Bullying, hunger, and freezing temperatures are just a few of the obstacles McMillan faces. Step into the "true story" journey through life to see if Mr. McMillan can find his place in the world.***

At Pennsylvania Elementary, we love gardening, not only because it allows us to grow our own food, but it is a great way to get kids outside and give them a better sense of where their food comes from. Our families here are a very important part of keeping our gardens going through the summer months.

Family involvement is nothing new at Penn, which is how this fundraiser idea came to life. Jessica VanderLaan, author of Mr. McMillan, is a Penn mom, who spends time with her family helping animals in our community. This book is a reflection of a true-life experience they had with a cat that was found on McMillan



Road. We immediately LOVED the book and how the theme of compassion and caring aligns with our Team Mastermind curriculum. When the opportunity came not only to share this book with the

world, but also to help fund our gardening needs, we were thrilled. We invited Jessica to read the book to the kids and they were transfixed by the caring message of the story. After she was done reading, many of the kiddos approached her to ask questions or share their own pet stories. Mr. McMillan is a story that will resonate with all ages and we are thrilled to partner with Jessica to get this book out into the community. For more information about how you can purchase this sweet book, please contact Jessica at [jessvanderlaan11@gmail.com](mailto:jessvanderlaan11@gmail.com).



# Every Month is Reading Month at R-PEL!

Why celebrate reading month only in March when you can encourage reading all year long?! The reading team at R-PEL has been working hard to bring our students an opportunity to participate in monthly reading activities through a digital calendar. The calendars will start in September and run through May. That's 9 chances for each student at R-PEL to join in on the fun! These monthly calendars will take the place of "March is Reading" Month. Instead of focusing on reading participation once a year, we now have the ability to engage our kiddos in at-home reading adventures more consistently.

Each calendar is shared out by each teacher and is also shared in Mr. Klimsza's weekly Parent Communication. At the end of each month's calendar there will be a link to a google form. The students (or an adult for our youngest learners), will answer a few questions about the monthly activities and submit the form. The reading team will keep track of the participation and begin awarding prizes along the way.

Enjoy Every Month is Reading Month!



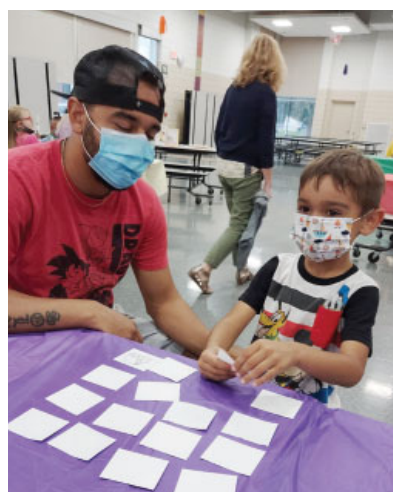
## RP Engaging Families in Children's Literacy Development

### A Complete Workshop Series

Central, R-PEL and Twin lake Elementary Schools hold a 4-session workshop at the start of each school year. The workshop is designed to help preschool and kindergarten families learn how to support their children's literacy by including it in everyday life. Each session includes a copy of a book and materials that families get to take home and use with their children.

Workshop leader, Nancy Jaskiw, is a literacy expert, currently serving on the Board of Directors with Michigan Reading Association. Nancy has been a Reading Recovery teacher, has developed and directed a successful reading intervention program for struggling students, and serves Reeths-Puffer preschool and elementary students as a School Psychologist.

It is a fun, engaging and informational evening with our families. A light dinner was provided at each workshop. This is a great way for our kindergarten families to launch their literacy journey!





# RPEL Harvest Trips



Reeths-Puffer Elementary Discovery kindergarten and kindergarten students went to Weesies Farms to explore agriculture. At Weesies, students learned about “Spookley” and how it was “ok to be different”. Spookley the Square Pumpkin was founded to promote anti-bullying. The students were able to learn about anti-bullying by reading a story, participating in a scavenger hunt, and exploring a pumpkin patch full of unique pumpkins. The Weesies family has been a wonderful community partner for the past 10 years and continue to promote kindness in our community. Back at school, the students have been engaged in many kindness activities throughout the month of October which promote the “Rocket Way”.

After Weesies, the Discovery Kindergarten students went to Hillcrest Nursing Center to wave and bring smiles to the residents. The residents were so excited to see all of the children dressed in their costumes.







# R-PEL's Pumpkin Patch

The PTO at R-PEL hosted our second annual Pumpkin Patch. This event began last year with the intent of bringing joy to the students at R-PEL during a difficult time. Our PTO partnered with Weesies Farms for our pumpkins. Each student is able to take home their own pumpkin from our magical pumpkin patch. Thank you PTO!



## R-PEL's PTO Trunk or Treat Event

R-PEL's PTO sponsored its first annual Trunk or Treat event on Friday October 22nd. It was a huge success with hundreds of families in attendance and many families that ran a host vehicle. The Halloween spirit was definitely present. There were decorated trunks, scary costumes, music and a concession stand. It was a fun family event. R-PEL would like to say thank you to our families that showed up to support our school at this fun event.





# The Big Crunch!



Students and staff at R-PEL participated in the Big Crunch on October 14th.

What is the Big Crunch? It is an activity that celebrates National Farm to School Month. Our food service department purchased local Michigan apples for RP students to crunch into. Students were pleasantly surprised about how good our apples were! It was a fun activity to collectively crunch and then have follow up activities and lessons about apples back in their classrooms.

K-12 schools, early care and education sites, hospitals, colleges and universities, farms, state and local agencies, non-profit organizations, local businesses, groups, and even households were encouraged to Crunch this year! Anyone who wanted to show support for local farmers and school food could join!

This event took place in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. In 2020, 807,796 students, children, teachers, and good food supporters across the region crunched. The goal this year was ONE MILLION CRUNCHES in 2021! R-PEL hopefully helped everyone reach the one million crunches goal!

# The AMAZING Avery Cooper



Mrs Peterman, Mr. Grant, Mrs. Coyne, Ms. Carter, Mrs. Overway and Mrs. Marvin had the AMAZING AVERY COOPER come visit their classrooms to kick off their "How does hearing other people's stories help us learn about EMPATHY?" PBL unit. Avery told her personal journey with having Pfeiffer Syndrome and how she has learned to overcome so many challenges that have come her way in life.





# Operation Supply Drop!



The fifth graders on Mrs. Marvin's and Mrs. Overway's team have been learning about gravity through "Operation Supply Drop"! We worked together to answer the question, "How do we design an air drop parachute?"

Mr. Bolden from Mills Manufacturing in North Carolina met with us virtually to help us understand how parachutes work, what Mills Manufacturing does and what components to include in our parachute.

We conducted many trials (broke dozens of eggs) and collected data to help us to prepare for the final drop.

As part of the final drop, students worked in small groups to design a parachute that would successfully drop an egg. Sponsors helped us to collect 1 box of prepackaged snacks for every unsuccessful drop and 2 boxes of prepackaged snacks for every successful drop.



We took those prepackaged snacks and prepared our "supply drops"! We shipped 9 boxes to soldiers full of goodies and cards with the help of Kuerth's Disposal and Dr & Mrs. Cooper.



This is our way of "successfully dropping" supplies to our heroes.

The 5th grade students of Mrs. Marvin and Mrs. Overway



## Mrs. Matz Class learning the design process with a marble run in STEM class





# A Blast in Choir Class

This past month in Choir Class has been an absolute blast. Not only have we been working on establishing a safe, fun space for singing, but we rigorously prepared for our optional Homecoming Performance as well! The students had the opportunity to perform alongside the MS & HS Choirs, and the HS Band! We learned the RP-Fight Song, and our National Anthem. We had 154 RPI students sign up to attend, and over 400 singers total! GO ROCKETS! The students have done an excellent job demonstrating our classroom mantra each day:

**Everyone is Welcome. Everyone is Respected. Everyone Matters. Everyone is Loved.**



Mrs. Moore's 6th graders learn through discovery when surface area is constructed with cards. Students determined the number of faces, edges, and vertices in a variety of polyhedral and recognized shared characteristics like common edge lengths of net diagrams.

These skills are transferable to so many math-related jobs such as construction, engineering, architecture, and more!





# Music in the Morning with Mr. Lawton (AKA... “Triple-M”)



We started off our year implementing a true CKH staple- classroom social contracts. All 18 5th & 6th grade classes created their contracts with Mr. Lawton- it was AWESOME to hear such great feedback from the kids, and construct our daily classroom expectations, culture, and routine together as a team!

These past few weeks, we have been focusing on rhythm in music, and the students have had the opportunity to learn about different percussion instruments, such as the shekere,

vibraslap, rainstick, ocean drum, maracas, and we even somehow figured out how to make a rubber chicken into a percussive instrument...yes... you've heard it all folks. Additionally, we've spent some time reading various rhythm notation in music, and creating our own!

The students have also had the opportunity to play as a percussion ensemble, experimenting with our African Drums, Djembes, Bongos, Talking Drums, Hand Drums, and Gathering Drums! We have worked on keeping a steady beat, experimenting with different rhythmic dynamics and playing styles, and let's be real...it's always satisfying to just (gently...) hit a big drum...LOL!

We are SUPER excited to have music in the mornings here at RPI! Thus far, we've had so much fun...let's just say, it can't be beat! (Drum humor...) :-). Cheers to continuing to create tuneful, beat-ful, and artful musicians!







# PBL TENT PROJECTS



With a partnership between the ISD and Mrs. Fitzpatrick's sixth grade math classes, a Project Based Learning (PBL) unit was created to explore surface area, nets, and the attributes of 3-dimensional shapes. The end goal was for students to design their own tent and explore the

sixth-grade geometry curriculum standards. First, students were able to explore tents. They looked at a variety of shapes and areas that camping tents can have.



Students then had the opportunity to virtually meet with TentCraft, a company located in Traverse City, Michigan who produce custom tent projects for personal use and companies across the U.S. This opportunity gave students the chance to see the engineering, detail, and time that goes into designing a real tent and actually producing it. Students appreciated the opportunity to speak with a real company and it gave them a starting point for their own tent prototype.

Next, was the drafting and feedback phase of their tent creating process. Many questions were asked



during this phase: What will your tent be used for? How many people should it hold? What shapes will your tent be made out of? The possibilities were endless.

Last, students used a variety of materials to create their final tents

and display them. Students created a net of their 3-dimensional tent, calculated the surface area, and reported how many faces, edges, and vertices their structure had.

It was so much fun to bring the learning into a hands-on project for the students. During the final reflection phase, students learned much about themselves, how creative they are, how well they worked in groups, and how much FUN math can truly be!!





# STATS Events



Thank you to those who came out to Rocket City Safety Bash, It's All About the Kids on Sept. 10th. We had such a great time we decided to do it again!



STATS will be hosting another event on Friday, Feb 18th before the varsity basketball game. Come join us for some mid-winter break fun. Keep an eye out for more news and updates about this exciting event.



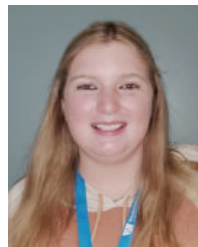
## Ride With Pride

Special Thanks to Jim Ferez and Preferred Auto group for sponsoring our Ride with Pride program at the high school. This program is designed to bring together community, law enforcement and schools to support positive behavior from students. Students K-12 have been asked to sign a pledge to be a part of the program. Pledges are age-appropriate but include things such as pledging to be kind, wearing a bike helmet, wearing a seatbelt, no negative communications with law enforcement or school officials, demonstrating "Respect, Pride, Integrity," and not using substances or riding with someone who has used. Students who uphold the pledge are entered in their school's end of year drawing for prizes ranging from bikes to a car.

If you are interested in being a sponsor please contact Jennifer LaChapelle at [lachapellej@reeths-puffer.org](mailto:lachapellej@reeths-puffer.org).

## New Systems of Care Staff

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



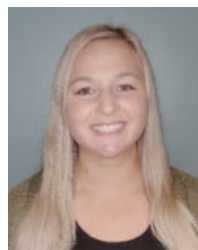
Jessica Kowalkowski, LPC joined the Reeths-Puffer team in September. Jessica graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology then from Northwestern with a Master of Arts degree in Counseling. Her focus is in child and adolescent counseling.

Jessica spent a little bit of time working at the Wayne County Jail in Detroit before transferring to Ohio. While in Ohio she spent three years working for an inpatient residential facility. Her experiences have included school-based services and collaborative planning around client needs. Jessica's husband recently relocated to the Muskegon area, which brought her to us!

Personally, Jessica loves to spend time volunteering. She is a member of the Junior League of Grand Rapids and serves on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. She also continues to advise her sorority at Michigan State University. She participates in literacy events designed to ensure at-risk youth have access to quality literature. She is co-chairing an event in February that will get 20,000 books into communities throughout Michigan!

Jessica has hit the ground running and providing valuable mental health assessments and services for Reeths-Puffer students and families. We are excited to have her on our team!

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Our new Parent Outreach Specialist is Logan Parmelee. Logan's experience includes working as a title clerk for a car dealership for a few years and as a recruiter for Manpower. Logan became a stay-at-home mom when her child's mental health needs made it hard to keep him in a daycare and get him to all the supports he needed.

Logan has worked hard to advocate for her child and to address his needs. She had to learn how the mental health care system works, how IEPs work, and how to navigate the systems. It became such a big passion that in 2020 she was asked to apply to become a Parent Support partner with HealthWest.

Logan helps with the PTO when she can. During the fall you can often find her coaching youth cheerleading. She loves to be involved and stay active in the Reeths-Puffer community.

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# Checkmate!

At Reeths-Puffer Middle School, we strive to get students plugged into opportunities outside of the classroom to create a well-rounded experience. With the help of Makayla Smith (7th grade student) and Mrs. Cumbee (8th grade science teacher), Chess Club was formed with a small group of students that quickly grew to over 25 Rockets. Students enjoy Chess Club as an after school opportunity to engage in positive interactions with peers and learn a game they can play for a lifetime. One parent referenced chess club helping students to, “feel a part of something, their confidence has boosted, and they honestly have so much fun!” Chess Club has quickly grown to be competitive, leading to an in house tournament with the winner taking home a trophy for bragging rights!

# Expanded Counseling Supports at RPMS

Exciting changes have made their way to the counseling department at Reeths-Puffer Middle School! We are creating new and inventive ways to support students’ emotional well-being while they are here at school. As part of that process, we have expanded our services by adding two new positions! This will afford us the opportunity to reach more students and to provide on-time support and emotional education services.

While Mrs. Mitchelson continues her work counseling students, we are proud to add Mr. Schlaff and Mr. Gray to our team! Both men bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to our staff.

Mr. Schlaff is in his 28th year at Reeths-Puffer. A graduate of Hope College, he began as a teacher at the High School in 1994, where he taught English and psychology for the first 15 years of his career. During that time he was earning his Master’s Degree in School Counseling at Western Michigan University, and 13 years ago moved into the high school counseling office full-time. This year he has the opportunity to work as a “counselor liaison,” servicing students at the high school some days and the middle school on others. He is currently the R-P 8th grade Boys’ Basketball Coach, and in the spring he is an assistant coach for the Varsity Baseball Team. Mr. Schlaff is excited to have the opportunity to get to know more of our middle school students, and plans to help them bridge the transition from the middle school to the high school.

Mr. Gray comes to us with a vast amount of experience in a wide range of settings. He has done work with agencies including, but not limited to, working with the foster care system, working with mental health care agencies, and now in the school system. He holds a degree in social work services, and supports students 3 days a week here at RPMS (2 days at Central Elementary). Mr. Gray is excited to help support students, families, and staff. He has a great way of connecting with students while encouraging them to adopt positive behaviors and attitudes.

Welcome Mr. Schlaff and Mr. Gray to Reeths-Puffer Middle School!!!!



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# Taste of the Arts Food Truck Festival helps RPMS Performers go from ON-line to ON-stage!

On Thursday, October 14th, the R-P Middle School Choir & Theatre Arts students hosted the first-ever "Taste of the Arts Food Truck Festival" at R-PMS! The fundraising event featured performances by 200+ R-P singers & actors, the R-PHS Jazz Band as well as eight local Food Trucks & other supportive small businesses. Like many school programs, the pandemic changed the way we approach music & the performing arts. The Food Truck Festival was the first live performance our students/families have enjoyed since December of 2019. Proceeds from the event will help to restore many essential supplies such as sheet music & scripts, uniforms, instructional staff stipends & special event scholarships for the coming school year. Thank you, Rocket Community for supporting our students & hope to see you next year!





# Beyond the School Day

There are so many things we are excited for this year and our after-school program is one of them. The day doesn't stop at 3:00 and we are excited to be able to recognize that and extend the day for students with many different opportunities. If there is something we have learned over the last year, it is to be agile and responsive to needs and the after-school programming is an example of that. Every day of the week, our after-school program runs from 3 until 5:30. Students don't need to attend the entire time or every day, but they do need to sign up. A student might attend before practice, after practice, or until they have a ride. Students are taking the lead on programming around things they are interested in and we know many life lessons will come from this group. In partnership with the after-school program our Homework Workshop offers more specific support on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3-4 with study skills, organizational skills, tutoring, or just a quiet place for homework. It is great to watch our students succeed and gain confidence through the support of this program.

# RPHS Rides With Pride

We have amazing students and we love to recognize their positive contributions to our school culture shaped by the "Rocket Way". The "Rocket Way" is about showing respect, pride, and integrity and can be seen in thousands of actions in the classrooms, hallways, theater, and arena every single day. This year, we are using live YouTube announcements on Fridays to have some fun while we recognize some of our awesome students with the support of local business donations such as Yodel's, Subway, and Brooklyn Bagels. We are also thrilled to partner with Preferred Auto Dealerships to give away a car at the end of the year to a deserving student. Yes....a car! Ride With Pride recognizes our students for a commitment to Respect, Pride, and Integrity at school and in the community. We are thankful for the shared commitment from our community partners to create a positive culture by affirming the actions we want to see.

# Friday Night FAMILY

After a season that looked significantly different than last year, our school family fully embraced Friday nights and a uniting ubuntu theme which celebrates the power of human connection when everyone brings something different and plays a part. The Friday Night Family included the band, football, and cheer teams and created a special energy that was felt all over our campus on Friday nights. Beyond just the ubuntu theme, the Friday Night Family was united by a few other commonalities. In every area, our high school students created opportunities to serve as leaders and role models for hundreds of younger students through youth camps and partnerships. Each interaction becomes part of a story of the future of Rocket City. The commonality of hard work, team collaboration, creativity, growth, and pride brought the groups together and an abundance of appreciation just added to it. It might be hard to actually see or quantify appreciation, but it was clear that there was an appreciation for each other, for the support of the community, and for the opportunity to connect on Friday nights.





# Homecoming!

The 63rd annual homecoming week was a success and great display of student leadership. In addition to the homecoming court and ceremony organized by our students, the week included a first, and likely a new tradition, as RPHS hosted the very first outdoor semi-formal dance outside at the stadium under the stars (and lights). Students danced for two straight hours, played yard games, and enjoyed the beautiful night. Student leaders planned the event, sold tickets, decorated, set up the sound, served as the DJ, cleaned up, took down all sound equipment, and walked away with more ideas for next year. In a similar display of leadership, students organized Powderpuff which created an opportunity for Juniors and Seniors to “compete” in a flag football game and for so many others to be involved and connected. The Homecoming week events were great because of the voices and leadership of our students and the lessons learned go well beyond the fun and enjoyment experienced that week.







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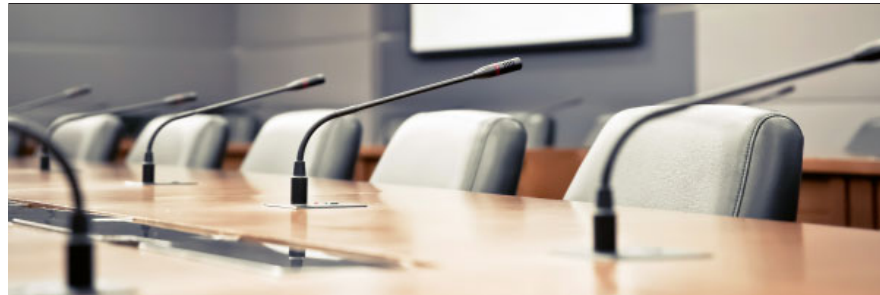
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# UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

December 13, 2021

January 10, 2022

February 14, 2022

March 21, 2022

April 18, 2022

May 16, 2022

June 13, 2022

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