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THE DISTRICT NEWSLETTER FOR REETHS-PUFFER SCHOOLS



# ROCKET CITY NEWS

## The Power of the word “And”



“I love you, but...”

How many of us, with good intentions, have tried to start a conversation meant to change one or more behaviors with a positive statement followed by the intent of the message and found the response to be negative? We end up perplexed; after all, we were just trying to help...

When we use the word “but”, much, if not most, of the positive intention is lost in the “fear” of what is coming next.

Imagine two different conversations:

“Daughter (or Son), you played a great game tonight, but... if you played superior defense, it would have been even better.”

OR

“Son (or daughter), you played a great game tonight, and... if you played superior defense, it would have been even better.”

Both phrases might be the “truth”, but one will definitely be better received, and is forward or future-focused. One focuses on a positive and builds upon it. One starts as a positive and is often canceled by the negative. As Rodolfo Costa once said, “For some people, their fear to lose is greater than their desire to succeed, so they end up doing nothing and their dreams become impossible.” “AND” is able to focus us moving forward. “BUT” acts as simple judgment.

As a district, we are striving to be an “**AND** District” for our kids **and** community. We are doing some things incredibly well. **AND**, we know that there is always more we can and need to do. We are providing many exemplary extra and co-curricular opportunities for our kids. **AND**, there are kids who don’t yet feel connected. We are implementing research-based instructional practices with a high degree of fidelity all across the district. **AND**, there are still children not meeting high proficiency standards. We continue to work hard to maximize our instructional dollars to balance our budget. **AND**, there are needs that we have that aren’t met with current funding.

As a district, and for some of us, as individuals, we can move forward by considering our biggest goal and acknowledging and stating our biggest fear, with a forward-thinking mindset.

Instead of “I want to be first chair in the trombone section, **but** there are three people in front of me”, let’s say “I want to be first chair in the trombone section, **and** there are three people in front of me.” Both acknowledge the current state, and one definitely is goal oriented and forward looking, while the other seems like a dead end.

Rocket City... let’s join together to eradicate “but” thinking. We are more powerful with “**AND!**”

Sincerely,

*Steven L Edwards*

Steve Edwards  
Superintendent

# School Year Kick-Off Event Successful

On Thursday, August 25th, Reeths-Puffer High School held their Rocket City Kick Off Event, featuring multiple health and wellness vendors, Reeths-Puffer athletic sports teams, food trucks, yard games, face painting, photo booths, and more. Attendees received a punch card, which meant that if they visited 20 out of the 45 vendors that support Rocket City youth, K-12 students could receive free entrance to the game that evening. Many of the Coalition for a Drug Free Muskegon County (DFC) initiatives also were present to have their own information booths and interactive activities for the participants to enjoy.



"This was a great community building opportunity and the perfect combination of education and fun for both adults and youth alike," stated Kaitlin Hermanson, Community Health Improvement Coordinator at the Health Project. "We have partnered with Tim Wheeler to provide Cartoonversation books at the Straight Talk About Tough Stuff (STATS) outreach booth. Tim and STATS youth are talking with parents about how the books will be utilized throughout the school year. We also have our Hidden in Plain Sight room." Some onlookers may mistake the Hidden in Plain Sight room as just a typical teenager's bedroom. When a parent goes into the "hidden" room and takes a closer look, things are not always as they seem. Water bottles, hats, key chains and more look like the typical item, however, these items are decoys for youth to stash substance

use paraphernalia.

STATS, Cartoonversation, and Ride with Pride partnered to bring other fun activities to Reeths Puffer's Rocket City Kickoff Event, including a sobriety course where students could ride go-carts through cones set up to simulate drunk driving. Most students found this a little too easy, until the drunk goggles were put on.

When wearing the drunk goggles, they simulate the effects of alcohol and drug intoxication. Students find it difficult to wear the goggles and to successfully complete the course. This activity provides an interactive and educational simulation of driving under the influence.

Many STATS students participated in the Rocket City Kick Off Event and could be seen riding the go-carts, testing out the sobriety course. Makenzie, a senior at Reeths-Puffer High school, who has been with STATS since her Sophomore year, explained why she participates in STATS. "I like the message that we spread throughout the different schools and that we are able to help other students like us. I feel like we definitely make a difference."



A new initiative called Rescue Childhood was a major theme of the STATS outreach table. Jennifer LaChapelle, STATS Coordinator at the Health Project explained the new initiative and how it became a major initiative among STATS and the other DFC Coalitions, "Rescue Childhood has become our new mission as we have launched our Ride with Pride program K-12 throughout the district, which teaches



healthy habits to youth. At the Elementary Schools, we talk about wearing seatbelts, wearing helmets, being kind to others, and why it is important to attend school. When we get to the High School level, we focus on more of those difficult conversations, such as saying no to substance use, why it is important to not drink and drive, promote other healthy behaviors, and highlighting overall how being a good student and/or person will benefit Rocket City and our community."

On Saturday, October 29th STATS, Ride with Pride, and Cartoonversation partnered to bring Rescue Childhood to the Playhouse at White Lake for Cartoonversation 2022. This event included Cartoonversation read-alongs, book giveaways, plays and skits on the mainstage to talk with middle schoolers about drugs, alcohol, and vaping.

Throughout the year STATS will be bringing in various presenters to reinforce the message that comes with the Ride With Pride Pledge. This fall the presenter for the middle and high school was Shattering The Myths. Shattering the Myths stresses the importance of the power of a choice and how one negative decision can change the whole trajectory of your life.

None of the events, presenters or giveaways this year would be possible without our generous sponsors.

Thank you to Rynberg's Car Company, Mary at the Style Bar Salon and Spa, and Enviro Clean for being major sponsors for this year.



For information about how to get involved with STATS or Ride With Pride or to be a sponsor please reach out to Jennifer LaChapelle at [lachapellej@reeths-puffer.org](mailto:lachapellej@reeths-puffer.org).



# Salmon in the Classroom Coming to Central Elementary!

Central Elementary is in the process of repurposing and reimagining its learning spaces to enhance the student learning experience and inspire innovation. Room 112, which was previously occupied by desktop computers, will soon become the home for Salmon in the Classroom. We will be receiving 150 salmon eggs in November to raise and release. This will be a highly engaging and super exciting learning opportunity for all. The salmon will then be released in the spring into the Muskegon River by the third-grade students. A recent visit to the Muskegon Nature Preserve and sometime along the river generated early excitement for the experience to come.

In addition to the salmon program, Room 112 will also house the Makerspace, a design and engineering laboratory accessible to all classes at Central. The staff at Central continues to search for new, improved, and creative ways to make our curriculum units truly awesome!



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# Leadworthy

Overall behavior referrals are down nearly 50% compared to this same point last year, and 94% of our student body have 0-1 referrals through 8 weeks. While there are certainly many contributing factors, our monthly Leadworthy themes through Capturing Kids' Hearts seem to be making a strong impact. These are launched at the beginning of each month during a schoolwide assembly, reinforced daily during morning announcements, and woven into classroom instruction. Students are embracing the themes, and teachers are using them to further shape our positive



culture. So far, students have learned about empathy and self-direction.

## UPCOMING THEMES INCLUDE:

November - Teamwork

December - Responsibly

January - Respect

February - Kindness

March - Courage

April - Perseverance

May - Integrity

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# Food Service Making Nutrition Fun!



District Wellness Team, provided apple sampling for all students during a designated lunch, and set up a healthy snack stand during our recent Family Fitness Night.

Lunch has returned to the cafeteria and food service is committed to putting great meals on plates as a pillar to meeting student needs and generating student success. Each day consists of a range of menu options and nutritious additions. We've also reintegrated our daily salad bar with multiple fresh veggies. Soon, a la carte will return! Next month, food service is eager to unveil an exciting menu that includes new recipes, made-from-scratch entrees, and soups!

In addition, food service continues to explore ways to expand its reach and impact by partnering with Central during school and community events. Thus far, they've supplied over 400 apples during the Great Apple Crunch, partnered with the





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# CELEBRATING 10 YEARS!



We feel so honored to have recently celebrated 10 years of leering, growing, playing, and becoming better stewards of the planet and our community! Last summer, we invited all of our alumni to a reunion where we revisited memories and planted a 10-tree fruit orchard at our school (over 5 trees are considered an orchard). Many thanks to all who could attend and to those that could not. We would not and could not be here celebrating 10 years without each and every one of our families.

We followed up with a one-week study of ORCHARDS, reading, writing, math, STEM, art, music, and outdoor experimental education. We are so excited to watch the fruits of our labor grow for all of our new friends who attend here in the future.

# RP PENN KINDERGARTEN



EST. 2012



Douglas VerBerkmoes,  
1st year Alumni



Austin Aamodt &  
Avonlea Britton



ONE SEED, TWO HANDS  
DIG A HOLE  
START TO PLANT  
WATCH IT GROW  
PASS IT DOWN  
ONE EARTH SPINS AROUND





# RPEL Summer BINGO

RPEL students worked hard over the summer completing activities on their summer bingo board. Students who completed all 25 activities were entered into a drawing to win a bucket of prizes. Congratulations to Allie Kaiser in 3rd grade and Emily Montney in 2nd grade for winning! We are proud of the reading and math work you did over the summer.



## Brownies Give Back



When most people think of Girl Scouts, they think of the sweet little girls selling the delicious cookies outside of storefronts and in neighborhoods. However, Girl Scouts are always striving to find ways to give back to their communities. Reeths-Puffer has several troops operating within our community and all of them are doing wonderful things!

This spring, the Brownies from Girl Scout Troop 8424 took on a project to earn their philanthropy badge as part of their Becoming Me series. Isabel Felcoskie, Virginia Haughney, Cadence Harris, Brynnley Lamphere, Avalynn Madole, and Kylie VanDyke were the 6 Brownies who came up with the unique idea to collect items to fill Birthday Party Bags for those in our community who may not have the means to provide a party for their children. The girls began by making posters that they hung throughout the halls of Reeths-Puffer Elementary and they announced their project on the morning announcements with their principal, Mr. Klimsza. The girls even recorded a video promotion which they emailed to all of the teachers in their school and shared through social media.



Throughout the spring and summer, the Brownies worked hard to collect items for their project and ended up filling nearly 25 bags with cake mixes, cooking oil, frosting, candles, and numerous party supplies! On Friday, September 30, the Brownies made their delivery to Every

Woman's Place in Muskegon! We are so proud to have these girls representing the Girl Scouts of Michigan Shore to Shore and Reeths-Puffer Elementary!

*Photos: Far left, Troop 8424 working together to select items for each of the bags. This column top, the rest of Troop 8424 helped their Brownie sisters put the bags together! This column bottom, The Brownies deliver their bags to Every Woman's Place. Pictured left to right: Isabel Felcoskie, Brynnley Lamphere, Cadence Harris, Avalynn Madole and Kylie VanDyke.*





# The Big Crunch at R-PEL

“CRUNCH!” “YUM!” These were just some of the sounds that were heard, when over 650 students and staff bit into a juicy, Red Delicious, apple simultaneously on October 13th, 2022 at 3:00. We joined other buildings in our district and many schools across Michigan (and other states) to celebrate National Farm to School Month, by collectively purchasing and crunching into locally and regionally grown apples. This event was promoted by our District Wellness Committee and our Food Service.



# Building Classroom Communities



This fall, the 4th graders at Reeths-Puffer Elementary School started their year with the unique experience of visiting the Muskegon Luge Adventure Sports Park. Although there were no writing assignments given or math problems solved, what they learned together through that experience was just as important to their classrooms. Throughout the day, many students faced fears by tackling the zipline and luge. They hiked together to the shore of Lake Michigan, taking in the natural beauty that our community has to offer and they spent time enjoying each other's company.

The students and teachers returned to school exhausted and fulfilled. In one classroom, during a closing circle a student raised her hand to ask if she could say "Thank you" to her classmates. "I just want to say thank you for not laughing at me when I was too scared to go on the zipline. You told me it was ok to be afraid and you made me feel better when I was sad," the student said. Many students spoke up to thank others in the room for their support and encouragement throughout the day. Another student said, "I am really glad you convinced me to try the zipline. Even though I was scared, I was so happy that I did it!"

The students in these classrooms learned that they could lean on their classmates for the support they needed, which is something they will continue to rely on throughout the school year.

At Reeths-Puffer Schools, we take pride in creating opportunities for students to feel included and safe within their classrooms. This is just one of many examples of the great things happening in RP!

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*Photos: Counterclockwise from top left. Top, left; Mrs. Walsh's class enjoying the views of Lake Michigan. Center, left; Calvin Foster, Cruz Mixter, Jayce Streit and RJ Bell ready for the zipline! Bottom, left; Mrs. Harris's class at Lake Michigan. Bottom, center; Mollie Reed and Cecelia Halmon ready for the zipline! Bottom, right; Mrs. Sheffer's group of students learning about native Michigan mushrooms on their hike.*





# Reeths-Puffer Elementary Does Art Prize



Friday September 30th, 2022, 4th graders at RPEL, along with several parents, traveled to Grand Rapids to experience Art Prize. Our grade level has been given the opportunity to use Place Based Learning as a basis for our EL units. We were kicking off our poetry unit for English Language Arts. Our guiding question for the unit was "What inspires poets to write their poems?" The students read the artist's statements at Art Prize and we discussed the artist's inspiration. What a beautiful day, filled with curiosity, conversation and an exciting way to make the abstract idea of inspiration come alive for our fourth graders and their teachers!





hand<sup>2</sup>hand<sup>®</sup>

# HAND2HAND IS HERE! FREE FOOD!

Thanks to a partnership with a group of local volunteers, Reeths-Puffer Elementary School has ninety-five families participating in the Hand2Hand program. The program helps to provide a student with food for the weekends and is intended for families who may be experiencing a financial burden. This program will be available to all of our kids and parents will give permission for their child to participate. We are grateful to the generosity of the volunteers in our community. Food is discreetly to children in the program each Friday.

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## CAREER TECH CENTER OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, January 26, from 5-7 p.m.

Area 8th-11th graders, parents, and community members are invited to the annual Career Tech Center Open House. Learn how students are exploring and accelerating their careers while in high school!

For details call 231-767-3613 | 200 Harvey Street, Muskegon

# Twin Lake Elementary First Graders Take Part in a Little Raking and Cleaning Time

Mrs. Essing's learners trekked to Twin Lake County Park to do a little raking and cleaning. They were very helpful and made a big difference for our local community. A "rocket three" to our first-grade learners!



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# Ms. Zweigle's First Friday Read Aloud



Each first Friday of the month that our learners are in school, Ms. Zweigle invites parents, caregivers, grandparents and/or community members into her classroom to read a favorite book. Last Friday was the first opportunity. Our kids enjoy listening to others read, particularly if the story is a favorite of the storyteller. A shout out to Santana's mom, Oliver's mom, Stanley's mom and Evie's mom for volunteering to read.

## Walk a Thon 2022 Pie Toss Rewards

Grand total Raised! \$7,675.21~ Thank you! We were blessed to have a beautiful day, and the kids hardly complained about walking 3.5 miles around the lakes. We'll start planning next year's walkathon at our October PTO meeting.

The picture to the left is Brady Palmer who earned being the Principal for the Day. Brady raised over \$1,000. The pictures to the right are of our teaching team prior to being "pied" by their learner.



# Twin Lake Elementary Fourth Graders are being inspired one study trip at a time...

The focus of our Language Arts work has been learning about how we are inspired to create and express ourselves in a variety of ways. By seeing some of these ways firsthand, our students are discovering what inspires them and how they may want to share their inspiration with others. Mrs. Kolbe and Mrs. Olsen's fourth graders took a trip to Grand Rapids to experience Art Prize! The excitement in their eyes was priceless! Not only was this the first time for our students to experience Art Prize, many of our students have never been to Grand Rapids! They were in awe of the art work as well as the beauty of the busy city! Along with our trip to Art Prize, we were also fortunate to visit the Muskegon Art Museum. Students explored galleries of art work where they were quick to make connections and find pieces of art that made them think and wonder what inspired the artist to create such a creative or even confusing piece of art.



Students also discovered a gallery where they could relate to the symbols expressed in the artwork! Seeing their excitement when they made those connections was a learning experience in itself. Our students also became poets as we were at the museum.

They closely studied a piece of art work and wrote a poem that expressed their thinking and connections as they studied the piece of art.





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# Feliz día de los Muertos!

Los estudiantes at Twin Lake have been learning and preparing for the holiday Day of the Dead, a celebration that honors those who have passed. To help our learners understand this Mexican holiday, we created that is celebrated in Mexico to. We made flowers and created a trail to a location that mimics and alter that would honor those who have passed. My classes are looking at four famous Hispanic people who have passed away to create a space to honor them with paper candles, skulls, flowers, and more. Check out Mrs. Olsen class creating papel picados to add to the festive decorations in my classroom! For a little more information about the holiday, please take a look at the short video below.

DAY OF THE DEAD (Día de los Muertos)  
Fun Facts for Kids | Mi Camino Spanish



## Twin Lake Students Transform into Superhero's

Students at Twin Lake Elementary are diving deeper into their superpower abilities through learning about acts of service and the Rocket Way. The learners selected a superpower quality they feel they most exemplified and wrote a paragraph supporting their reasoning for choosing their power. Students selected super powers such as “being helpful”, “encouraging”, “kind”, and “hardworking”. The students at Twin Lake feel they are these superheroes because “They help people face their fears.”, “give friends instructions”, “do the right thing”, and “make people laugh”, amongst so many other great actions.

Exploring further into the student’s superpower abilities creates a sense of belonging and purpose within the students here at TLE. The students have also boosted their self-esteem and confidence within themselves and their actions. TLE superheroes have created a sense of community within the building and put smiles on faces every day.





## Teachers Learning from One Another

Our D/K through fourth grade RP teachers spend the day learning together on Friday. There were several different professional development options and teachers were able to choose which area they felt would support their growth. Some of our teachers had a refresher in Brainframe training for writing. Others focused on revisiting their intervention practice with a brush up on data collection and using data to inform small group instruction. Our fourth-grade teachers continued to grow in their understanding of project-based learning and spend the day with a coach from our Muskegon Intermediate School District. Our teachers also had the chance to reflect on their math instruction and dove into ways to more deeply engage their learners in math conversations. It was a successful day of collaboration with colleagues and we are thankful for our partnership with our ISD. They are always eager to support our teachers' learning.



## OUR PTO MOMS ROCK!!

A "Rocket Three" to our amazing RP-TLE moms for helping with one of the best days of the month~ Popcorn Friday! We love the smell and of course the taste of the popcorn that our mom-team makes! Thank you for taking the time to help and being supportive of our learners!

# Celebrations to start the year!

To say that the start of the school year has been a success would be a tremendous understatement to our teachers and students. As I scrolled through our social media page since the start of school I was reminded of homecoming spirit week, our coin war sponsored by the PTO, tremendous athletic accomplishments, mindfulness in the classroom, parachute drops in 5th grade science, building social contacts, learning “The Rocket Way” expectations, and new books purchased for our library. All of this was intentionally planned and focused to help engage our students in the school community and have truly launched our learning in the right direction!

None of this would be possible without the support and communication that is present between your family and our teachers. We encourage you to continue to reach out, be present and get involved in our classrooms and our PTO! We hope that the following Rocket City News Articles continue to show you all the great things that are going on in our hallways!

Please reach out if you have any ideas of how we can continue to improve the student experience at Reeths-Puffer Intermediate!

Scott Panozzo,  
Principal



## Faster Than Warp Speed

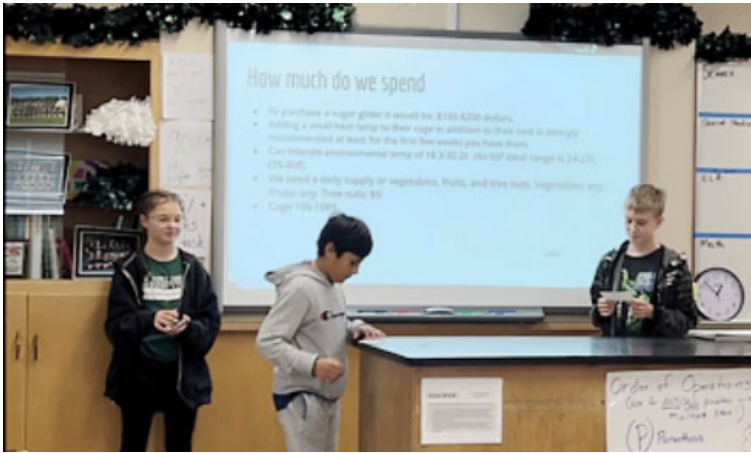
Each day, we are in awe at the speed our Rockets are learning! Their energy, excitement, enthusiasm, and positive drive for success is an inspiration. Currently we are working through the end of our Red Book on our way to exploring the opportunities that lie ahead in the Blue Book!



Our Holiday Concert with the Middle School Bands is just around the corner as well, and we are hard at work (Is having a blast considered “work?”) preparing the holiday music for your enjoyment. Come out to the Rocket Centre and see us on December 8th @ 7:00p for the Middle School/Sixth Grade Band Holiday Concert! Let’s celebrate the positive drive for success our Rockets have displayed as they carry on.



# Class Pet PBL



Mrs. Moore's 6th graders used science constraints and criteria to guide their research on the ideal class pet. After turning their research into group projects using the platform of their choice, students presented their information first to peers, then administrators, and finally to a PetSmart employee. Between each



step, students tuned their projects based on the feedback they received. Moving forward students will use Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning to persuade Mrs. Moore which of the presented critters best suits our classroom now that we've narrowed down our options. Students will further develop and advertise our fundraising tools to ensure that the pet is able to be cared for.



## TALENT SHARE DAY

Don't we all just love performing for our peers? You'd think the answer would be "no," but these talented and confident 5th & 6th graders showcased some amazing talent for our "talent share days." We saw everything: Skits, instrumentalists, singers, dances, awkward griddy's, "getting sturdy" to the Frozen soundtrack, animal sounds, artwork, burping the ABC's- you name it! It was enthralling to see such an array of wonderful and eager students expressing themselves for the class.



# Knowing Someone's Story Helps Build Empathy



5th graders had the opportunity to hear from Mr. Dean Millar as they studied how knowing someone's story can help them to develop empathy. Mr. Millar spent some time sharing about his time growing up in South Africa during the apartheid! He faced consequences because he participated in peacefully protesting for equality for ALL! Mr. Millar shared the importance of kindness, peace and being grateful for times of struggle because they can be used to bring about positive change!

## We Have Liftoff

The Fifth Grade Band has launched into an exciting new venture through the world of instrumental music! From the first steps of learning how to assemble/disassemble to the exciting moments of making our first sounds, our young Rockets are on their way to success. Our repertoire list includes *Hot Cross Buns*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Au Claire De La Lune*, *Lightly Row*, and many more!



# Mindfulness in the Classroom

We practice for sports, rehearse for concerts, but seldom practice skills that lead to happiness or skills to manage rough moments. This year each RPI class has the opportunity to learn a tool to help with difficult emotions. Understanding how our breath can reduce cortisol and settle us into our parasympathetic nervous system for smoother learning is one of the targeted lessons. Recognizing triggers helps us find effective problem-solving ideas rather than emotional responses which often lead to heavy regrets.



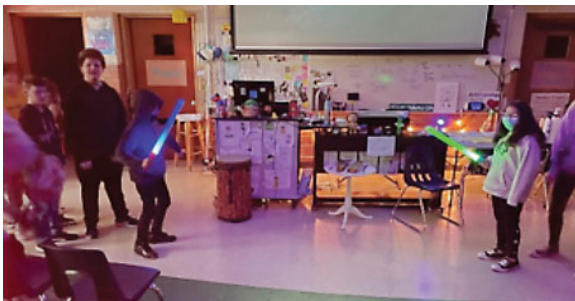
## Music in the Morning with Mr. Lawton (AKA...Triple-M)

**Music** has been a blast (*RP pun intended*) at RPI these past few months! From composition to ukuleles, the students have had a myriad of opportunities to safely grow and learn as young musicians.

**Jedi Rhythm:** MAY THE FORCE (of keeping a steady beat while composing & demonstrating a rhythm pattern in 6/8 time) be with you! This year at

RPI, Mr. Lawton donned his cloak, and instructed the student-I mean Jedi, in the ways of keeping a steady beat, and composing 6/8 rhythm patterns! The students were able to use lightsabers to help keep a steady beat, and present their rhythmic composition to the class! **NOTE:** No students were harmed during the youngling instruction, however, Mr. Lawton was fairly sweaty after wearing a robe all day.

**Ukuleles:** These past few weeks, our young musicians have been hard at work learning how to play the ukulele. In addition to actually playing “uke,” the students have learned about their history, culture, structure, various playing styles & musical significance.





**Nate Smith**  
Director of Instruction  
and Learning

## Brain Frames are here to stay at R-P

Reeths-Puffer formed a partnership with Dr. Bonnie Singer of Boston University 7 years ago. She ran a writing clinic and owned a business called Architects for Learning in downtown Boston. Over the last 6 years she has led multiple workshops at Reeths-

Puffer, developed a leadership track for teachers who desired increased mastery of the planning tool, and has most recently revised her classes so that Reeths-Puffer can continue to move forward with the use of Brain Frames in our classrooms for writing, content and visible learning.

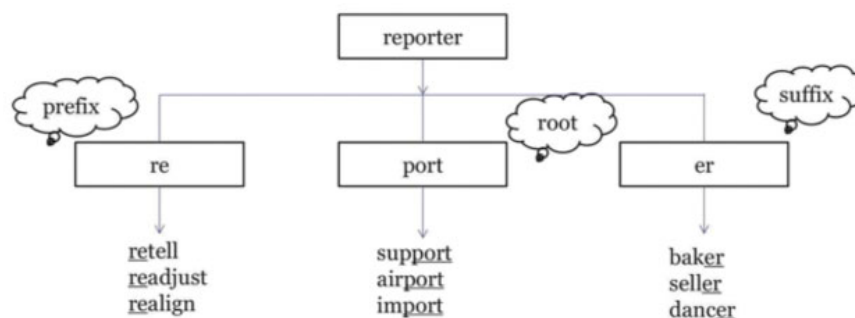
The key component of Brain Frames is that all planning should reflect text patterns, writing patterns, and be based on oral language at the outset. In addition to sharing ideas and organizing thoughts, this is essential for our students, regardless of their language development or writing barriers. Based on 25 years of research, these principles were developed to help students form ideas, share ideas, and then structure ideas in an understandable way.

It is important to use the Brain Frame process because it allows students to communicate their thoughts visibly and most commonly addresses the student's comment, "I'm not sure what to write about." Frames represent the thoughts and understanding of students in their own words, based on their research and interest. It can then be used for adding ideas, developing concepts, and ultimately becoming a visual for writing plans.

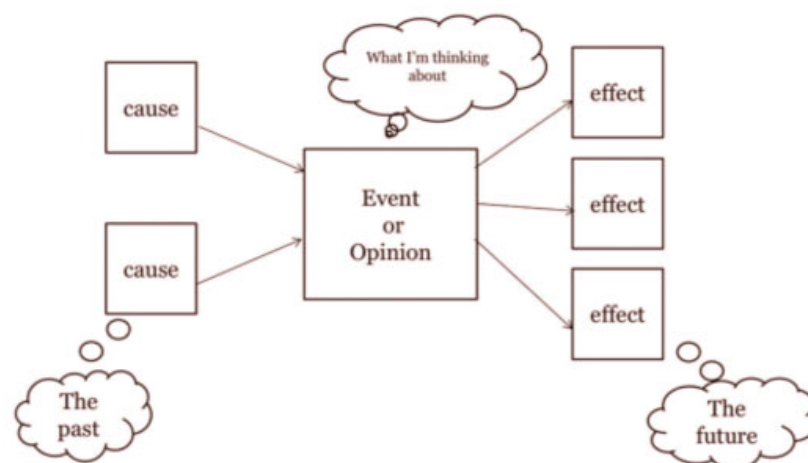
Six Frames are used to represent how text in books, articles, and communications are structured.

With the Frames, both language and knowledge can be made visible to our kids, who can begin to see patterns in writing, speaking, and sharing information.

## Categorizing Frame -word parts



## Showing Causes/Effects Frame



**Frame One: Telling Frame** - Tell what I know

**Frame Two: Compare and Contrast** - Takes ideas and compares and/or contrasts them

**Frame Three: Connections** - Ideas that through a connection share common idea.

**Frame Four: Cause/Effect** - Explains causes and effects on topics

**Frame Five: Sequence** - Places events in ideas in order

**Frame Six: Categories** - Sorts ideas into common categories

Our goal is to build better communicators and writers who can translate their wonderful ideas into visible learning!

## High Will/ High Skill Rockets

Dr. Robyn Jackson is an author who has created a learning framework around High Will and High Skill conversations. The students spend hundreds of hours a year focused on content and curriculum but equally as much time is spent developing strong relationships, leadership skills, and a sense of purpose here and beyond R-P. Dr. Jackson shares strategies that we all can use to support our kids. Developing these strategies takes time and some practice, but the impact on our kids will and skill could be tremendous.

As we participate in our classes, specials, project-based learning, and electives, we are continually working to maintain continuity of instruction and improve our kids' performance. There are many things that may cause temporary interruptions, such as injuries, moving, or changes in family, student progress is not halted by this and is not permanent. Raising student academic expectations and performance challenges us, as a community, to increase our student support.

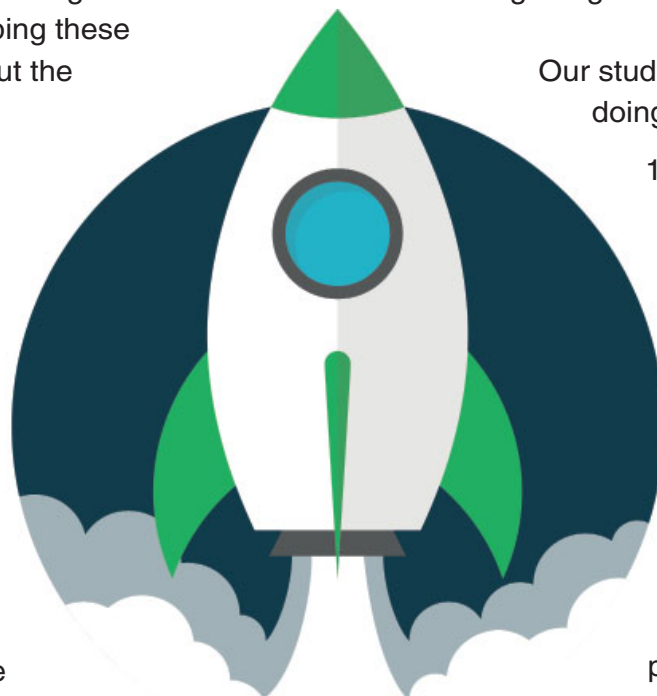
Dr. Jackson's work applies to all ages, their perspectives on school, and their general interest in learning. By spending just 2 more minutes a day writing for pleasure or purpose, reading, problem solving, or contributing to academics, a student will be more prepared for life beyond R-P.

If your child is overwhelmed with school work:

1. Help them pick the learning task they feel is the most manageable and work from there.
2. Get them talking about a person, moment or learning at school they were excited about.
3. Make sure you have access to their report cards, get feedback from a teacher, and make it about helping them with their learning.
4. Do not steal the struggle from them, it is part of the process to maneuver through being overwhelmed that is most important in learning and growth..
5. Increase our presence or proximity as your child works on their learning tasks. This connects us and can increase

what they have learned at school.

6. Be specific with strategies. Set up a schedule together or assign small tasks to help them improve their perception.
7. Change the space, a set time after they eat, with limited distractions, for homework or practice and keep the doors open.
8. Encourage them and remind them that they are strong enough to get through it.

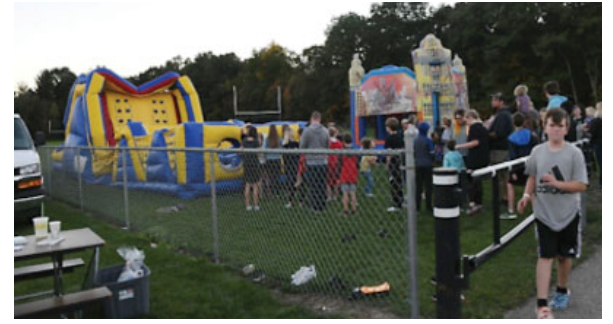


Our student does not see value in what they are doing:

1. Bring it back to their strengths.
2. Celebrate their accomplishments, even when they do not see value in it.
3. Focus on the process and need of sometimes doing non-desired tasks.
4. Ask them what they do not like about it, just to get it off their chest, but do not remove it.
5. Challenge negative statements, as they are not helpful to accomplishing the task.
6. Encourage them to work with a friend, partner, or sibling to make it interactive and not just an isolated task.
7. Be available for informal conversations, check in a few days later to hear how it's going.

Our student is fatigued by school and busy as a student

1. Make sure to discuss the accomplishments their hard work has provided, even if small.
2. Make a schedule and priority list with your child to help them manage their initiatives.
3. Connect learning to their personal lives, interests or goals
4. Keep them focused on themselves and their work not those around them who they think don't get it.
5. Honor their independence but always connect it to the positive impact their hard work is generating.
6. Try to anticipate when overwhelm or fatigue will set in and plan a break or something special for their recharge.
7. Emphasize the leadership they are showing in their work.
8. Give them the independence to self-reflect on how they are doing and not connect it to the outcome of their work.
9. Be truthful, good work is never done but it's worth the effort.



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

On Sunday, October 16th, the R-P Middle School Choir & Theatre Arts students hosted the 2nd Annual "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.

Proceeds from the event will help to purchase essential supplies such as sheet music & scripts, uniforms, instructional staff stipends & special event

scholarships for the coming school year. Our program theme this year is "We Can Build a Beautiful City". We hope to highlight the many beautiful aspects of R-P through the performing arts & these funds will help us to do just that!

Thank you, Rocket Community for supporting our students & hope to see you at an event in the coming school year.





# Reeths-Puffer goes to Europe!

This past June, Reeths-Puffer students were finally able to resume travel to Europe and continue expanding their education beyond the borders of our community. A group of students, parents, and a few teachers traveled to Switzerland, Italy, France, Monaco, and Spain. They saw such sights as the city of Lucerne, Lake Como, Cinque Terre, Nice, Avignon, Nimes, and Barcelona. Some travelers also got to explore Amsterdam due to an unexpected layover and see the Anne Frank House and cruise the beautiful canals!

They began the trip with a cruise across the beautiful Lake Lucerne and a trip up a 48% gradient 100-year-old cogwheel rail system to the top of Mount Pilatus (and then took gondolas and aerial cable cars back down). They spent time traveling by rail to three different villages in the Cinque Terre Region in Italy and enjoyed a lot of gelato and time on the Mediterranean beach. Students were also able to see the Pont du Gard aqueduct in France after visiting a perfume factory. They visited the Pope's Palace in Avignon, and toured an amphitheater in Nimes. They finally spent time admiring the work of Gaudi at Parque Guell and the beautiful unfinished Sagrada Familia in Barcelona before traveling home. It seemed that each destination was



more beautiful than the one before!

Trip participants were also given opportunities to try many different types of food and navigate through communicating in many different languages. They represented our community well during their travels and came home ready to take on the world and go again!

The Middle School plans a Europe Trip every two years. The next trip will be this summer (2023) to Madrid, Paris, and London for students currently in 8th grade and students who enrolled while in 8th grade last year. There are currently two spots available on the Madrid/Paris/London trip. The 2025 trip destination has not been determined yet. The 2025 trip will begin enrolling in fall of 2023 and will enroll next year's 7th and 8th graders. For more information, please email [luickj@reeths-puffer.org](mailto:luickj@reeths-puffer.org)



## HELP SUPPORT YOUR ROCKET CITY NEWS

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# Leadership, Pride, and Student Voice Make Homecoming Great



On the surface, homecoming might look like spirit days, student sections, crowns, and dances. Underneath, there are many layers of student leadership, pride, student voice, belonging, and hours of hard work by students to create great experiences for other students. From start to finish, students planned a variety of events that everyone could be part of. We started the week with a Powderpuff game where everyone left with a smile.

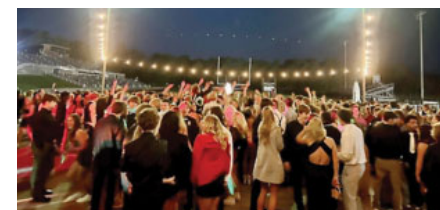
Student council planned a great week of spirit days that allowed students to be creative, clever, and show their pride. The halls were filled with a variety of creative items on “Anything But A Backpack Day” and so much green and white to show school pride.

As we approached the end of the week under Friday night lights, in every play and in every interaction, pride was evident as our football team battled for a win. The team is playing meaningful games, doing the right work, and is



proud to represent rocket city. Their pride from the field extends to our hallways and classrooms.

A dance, under the lights, right next to our stadium was a perfect way to end the week. Students danced from start to finish and had so much fun. Our student leaders worked hard on the music, decorations, and small details that made the night special for hundreds of their peers. Once the last song was played, without prompting, at least 40



students stayed after the dance to offer their help in cleaning up. Respect, pride, and integrity was on display.

We have so many reasons to be proud of our high school students and it is clear that they are proud to represent Rocket City.



# Leadership, Service, Character, and Scholarship

Our students are united through many things and recently, we inducted 44 new members to National Honor Society who are now united through our National Honor Society (NHS). Students must have a 3.5 grade point average to be eligible to apply for NHS and then must demonstrate leadership, community service, and character through the application process to be selected. The senior students in this group had

their freshman year interrupted by the pandemic and juniors started high school in the midst of the pandemic. Despite the challenges of virtual learning and uncertainty, this group found a way to achieve at a high level.

The collective work of this group will have a significant impact on our school and community. Each day, NHS tutors help tutor and facilitate the work of other students in Homework Workshop. They volunteer at the elementary buildings, run a blood drive, organize a Toys for Tots collection, ring a bell for Salvation Army, help with the Turkey Run, and serve in many other ways around the community. With plates full



of challenging classes, athletics, and performing arts, the students are still driven to find time to serve through this organization. Congratulations to our NHS inductees. The future is bright as a result of your priority to lead and serve.



# Advanced Placement Options Means Advanced Opportunity

A point of pride for Reeths-Puffer High School is that we are large enough to offer many class options while maintaining a small school feel. It is the best of both worlds. We can offer many elective choices, provide support for students when needed, and we were thrilled to expand Advanced Placement options and enrollment this year. Advanced Placement courses follow a set of learning standards by the College Board and offer students the option to take a national test at the end of the year which could result in college credits at many colleges and universities. This year, we added A.P. Human Geography and A.P. Environmental Science to the 14 Advanced Placement courses we already offered. Human Geography and Environmental Science are relevant and interesting areas to study as our world continues to expand.

In addition, we are proud of our students with the courses they selected for this year. Teachers and counselors worked hard to guide our students to make choices around future career preparation, passions, interests, and an appropriate level of challenge. Prior to the pandemic, during the 2019-20 school year, we had 347 total student seats in A.P. courses and the year prior in 2018-19, we had a total of 310 seats. This year, compared to the last “normal” year, the number of seats increased by 59% to a total of 553. Even without the new courses added, the enrollment in A.P. courses

increased by 25%. This growth is huge and goes well beyond the decisions at scheduling time. It reflects years of commitment by our students to invest in their education, engage in classes in order to be prepared, and step outside of their comfort zone in order to grow.



Advanced Placement is one way for our students to show colleges and universities that they are prepared to be successful at the next level of learning. Studies show that taking just one A.P. course increases confidence, the chance of attending college and outcomes in college. Advanced Placement courses are one set of choices that we are proud to offer our students. We have big school options with a small school feel. We are so proud of our students for choosing to challenge themselves and step outside their comfort zone



## Leadership Class

Year after year, the physical space of our building remains similar, but each year is special as energetic, thoughtful teenagers enter with unique talents and experiences. Each year, we get to create the culture of our school. It is critical that students feel a sense of belonging, ownership, pride, and recognition for their strengths. There is no better way to accomplish that goal than through student leadership. In addition to National Honor Society, Student Council, IMPACT, PALS, and many other clubs where students develop and practice leadership, we are excited to launch a new leadership class this year. Through the class, students will grow their leadership

skills while simultaneously planning and executing many initiatives that make our school a better place for all students.

Students started by assessing our school and community to better understand and prioritize the ways that they can make a difference. Already in the first marking period, the students



have left a fingerprint all over Rocket City. The student group has launched a weekly Pilot of Pit, which honors a student who demonstrates respect, pride and integrity throughout the school as well as within our student section (The Pit). The group also recognizes a staff member each week. A pantry with hygiene items available to students is already taking

shape. The interactions with middle school and intermediate students have been memorable and impactful for both buildings. The group welcomed our foreign exchange students and has set the tone for cleaning up the student section. They are planning live announcements each week and so much more. Most recently, students got up early to cook breakfast for staff and have started to provide free feminine products in the bathrooms. If you are interested in supporting or partnering with our students on any of these initiatives through talents or a donation, please reach out to the school.

Great leaders bring out the greatness in others and that is certainly what this group is demonstrating. They are working tirelessly to create a culture where students are connected, safe, and celebrated.



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# UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

December 12, 2022

January 9, 2023

February 13, 2023

March 20, 2023

April 17, 2023

May 15, 2023

June 12, 2023

July 17, 2023

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