

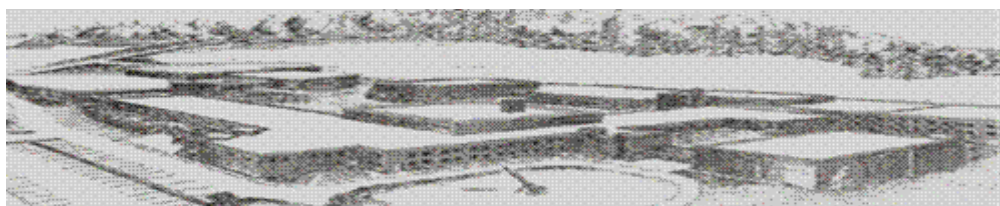
**March 2022**

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# Rockwood School News

***Published for the residents of the Rockwood School District***



*The mission of the Rockwood Area School District is to empower students to reach their full potential as well-rounded, lifelong learners and responsible members of society.*

## **From the Superintendent's Desk**

Community Members of the Rockwood Area School District,

I am hopeful this edition of the Rockwood School News finds you and your family healthy and happy. With signs of spring starting to show, students and staff are looking forward to the many activities occurring in the coming months here in the District. Spring is a time of class field trips, the school musical, spring athletics, academic awards assemblies, spring music concerts, the Junior-Senior Prom, and of course the graduation ceremony for the class of 2022.

## **Returning to Normal**

It has been nearly two years since the school community was first impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the toll it has taken on the students and staff has been significant. The impact on the educational, social, and emotional development of all students will be long lasting. The COVID-19 restrictions and mitigation efforts

imposed by the State and Federal government during the last two years have slowly come to an end, allowing the school community to experience a return to pre-pandemic normalcy.

During the 2020-2021 school year, hundreds of students were excluded from their education after being identified as close contacts in the school setting, with very few ever testing positive for COVID. As a result, the Rockwood Area School Board approved a Health and Safety Plan that only excluded sick individuals from school. In addition, the faculty and staff did a great job engaging in classroom practices that resulted in very few students having to be identified as close contacts when school-related positive cases of COVID occurred. The majority of students who did miss school during the 2021-2022 school year were students who were identified as being close contacts in their homes. In these cases, families were referred to their healthcare providers for further direction. The number of individuals testing positive for COVID this year was nearly the same as the 2020-2021 school year, even though the level of community transmission was much higher in recent months. In addition to fewer students being excluded from school this year, the District was not forced into remote instruction as was the case at the beginning of the pandemic and throughout the 2020-2021 school year when students missed weeks of in-person education. We are excited to see our students' school experience return to normal!

## **Snow Days - Flexible Instructional Days**

Speaking of normal, we have experienced normal Somerset County weather this year. As such, our students have experienced snow days and delays. While parents and students may be aware of other districts in the area operating under Flexible Instructional Days (FID) when school was cancelled due to weather, Rockwood's Board made the decision to allow students to experience traditional snow days the way they have in the past, when those days can be

made up on snow make-up days built into the school calendar. The Board's decision was based upon strong evidence that remote learning days do not provide the same quality of education as in-person learning when students are in classrooms with highly qualified teachers. In the event there are more weather cancellations than available built-in snow days, the District may consider using FID days to avoid extending the school year.

### **Ongoing Challenges**

In addition to the challenges the District has faced related directly to COVID, there have been other indirect challenges to the pandemic as well. Just like other areas of our community, the District has experienced challenges with staff shortages and supply chain issues. Our greatest challenge has resulted from a shortage of substitute teachers and paraprofessionals, as well as a shortage of candidates for custodian and maintenance positions, coaches, and other support staff.

The shortage of employees has also become a crisis in the area of school bus drivers. Transportation contractors throughout the region, state, and nation are unable to find qualified and licensed drivers. The driver shortage caused the District to reroute and combine bus routes in January and February when our normal number of drivers dropped from nine to six. The District had to resort to remote instruction for one day while the staff worked to communicate changes to families in order to ensure the safety of our students.

In addition to Rockwood Transportation advertising for new drivers, the District conducted two days of bus driver training in February for interested community and staff members. The two-day training was the start of an approximately 30 to 40 hour time commitment to becoming licensed. The Board approved an incentive program for any District employee to become licensed as a driver. Having district employees licensed will allow them to serve as drivers in emergency situations and on extra-curricular trips. Individuals interested in becoming licensed drivers can contact Rockwood Transportation or the Rockwood Area School District for additional information.

### **School Safety - Safe Schools Grant**

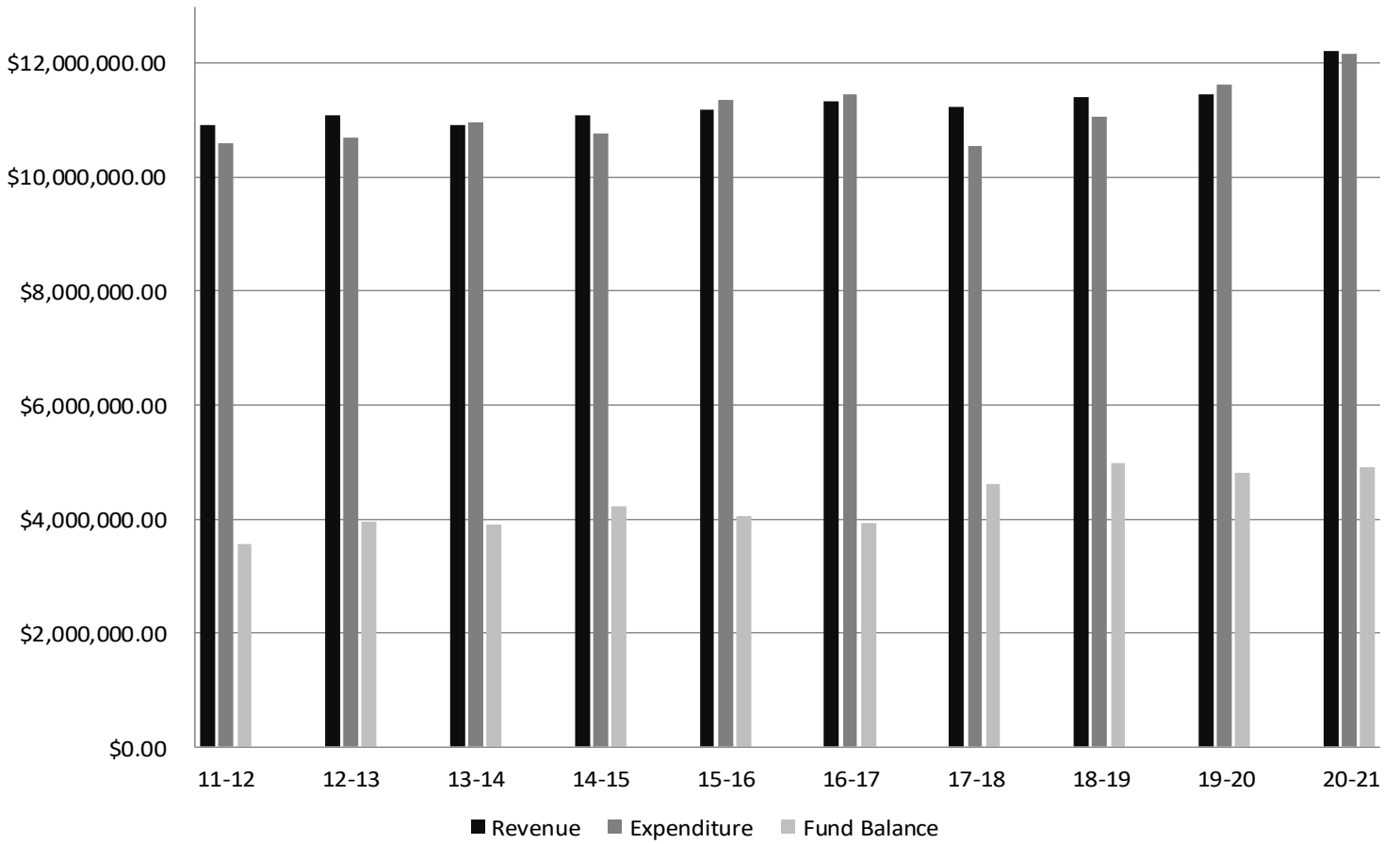
The safety and well-being of our students and staff is our highest priority. I am pleased to share that the District was once again awarded a PA Office for Safe Schools Competitive Equipment Grant. The grant was successfully written based upon feedback received from a Risk and Vulnerability Assessment completed by the PA State Police in the spring of 2021; identifying outdoor lighting as a deficiency. Rockwood's grant will fund the purchase and installation of new lighting and upgrading existing security lighting on the exterior of the high school and elementary buildings and classroom entrances.

### **District Finances**

The District remains in good overall financial health. Please take a few minutes to review the financial charts and graphs included on page 3 of this newsletter. The District ended the 2020-2021 fiscal year with a small surplus of revenue to expenditures.

The District has committed to several larger "one-time expenditure" projects. The projects are being funded through the use of funds budgeted in the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund and the District's fund balance or savings account. The projects include: replacing the final sections of roof that were last installed during the renovation project in 1993-1994, renovation of restrooms and locker rooms (several dating back to original construction in the 1950's), installation of new fiberglass exterior doors at the entrances of the buildings, replacement of outdated HVAC units, student Chromebooks, and "learning loss" programs after school and in the summer. With the higher rate of inflation we're currently experiencing on materials and supplies, we are expecting to rely on some of the transfer tax revenue that was recently received from the sale of Seven Springs Mountain Resort to help fund some of the ongoing projects in the District.

## Revenue/Expenditure/Fund Balance History



Year	Revenue	Expenditure	Fund Balance
11-12	\$10,925,366.00	\$10,598,964.00	\$3,567,400.00
12-13	\$11,087,956.00	\$10,692,823.00	\$3,962,536.00
13-14	\$10,927,893.00	\$10,978,079.00	\$3,912,350.00
14-15	\$11,092,170.00	\$10,774,720.00	\$4,229,800.00
15-16	\$11,194,089.00	\$11,370,769.00	\$4,053,120.00
16-17	\$11,343,107.00	\$11,461,423.00	\$3,934,804.00
17-18	\$11,234,083.00	\$10,551,305.00	\$4,617,582.00
18-19	\$11,418,576.00	\$11,054,549.00	\$4,981,609.00
19-20	\$11,466,281.00	\$11,641,501.00	\$4,806,389.00
20-21	\$12,211,284.00	\$12,166,728.00	\$4,905,593.00

## **Board Member Recognition**

Returning to normal, overcoming current challenges, and facing future unknown challenges will continue to require a team of dedicated people. In addition to teachers, administrators, staff, parents, and other community members, the nine members of our school board are a key part of this team. They are tasked with making informed decisions and shaping the future of our school district. In honor of the commitment and time school board members volunteer on behalf of our schools and communities, the school district observed and celebrated School Director Recognition Month in January. The work of these public servants is vital to the success of our students and schools. From voting on budgets to adopting policy to conducting strategic planning, school boards make key decisions that drive public education. The work is both complex and diverse. School directors devote, on average, ten hours each month to board business, which has only been made more challenging by the pandemic and related issues affecting the well-being of our students and families. Board service is unpaid, and school directors are often motivated to pursue the role out of a desire to benefit their community. The majority of school directors indicated their primary reason for serving is to give back or contribute to public education or to improve educational outcomes for students. All nine of our current board members' children have either attended Rockwood or are currently attending Rockwood. Furthermore, five of them actually once attended Rockwood as students themselves. School directors are locally elected officials, focused on improving the townships and boroughs in which they live. They are our fellow neighbors, local leaders, co-workers, parents and friends. As citizens and parents, the success of our schools is a collective interest. Please take time to thank your elected school directors for the time and effort they put toward this goal all year long. Their efforts help ensure each student has opportunities to thrive and to safeguard that our school district continues to have a bright future.

While we celebrated Board Member Recognition Month in January, we also recognized the long-time service of two board members who ended their terms of office in December. With nearly 40 years of combined service, Mr. Clair Saylor (23 years) and Mr. Dick Stoner (16 years) decided not to run for reelection in 2021. Although we will miss the contributions both of these individuals have made to our district, we welcome two newly elected members, Mrs. April Hutchison and Mrs. Melanie Monticue. The other seven members of the RASD Board are: President- Mr. Irvin Kimmel, Jr., Vice President- Mr. Adam Sembower, Treasurer- Mr. Brad Pletcher, Mrs. Ashley Baker, Dr. Hailey Miller, Dr. Tyler Pritts, and Mr. Noah Wareham.

## **Community Support**

I am excited to share some good news in the way the Rockwood community and organizations have stepped up to support our students. First, I am happy to provide an update on the GAP Trail Relay fundraiser, which occurred last fall. Students, staff, community members, and organizations stepped up to donate nearly \$13,000.00! The money is funding programs that support our students and families in need.

Next, Rockwood received PA Educational Improvement Tax Credits in the amount of \$11,875.00 from a local business in 2021, through the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. The funds are earmarked for pre-approved educational programs. Students enrolled in "dual-enrollment" college classes through Allegany College of Maryland, completed at Rockwood, received tuition reimbursements thanks to the generous funding by Wheeler Brothers Inc. of Somerset.

Finally, I would like to recognize the District's Engineering and Technology Teacher, Mr. Joe Kush and the PA Association of Rural and Small Schools. Mr. Kush and his students were awarded a \$980.00 PARSS grant to fund Saturday Soldering classes this school year.

Please contact me at 814-926-4688 with questions or concerns regarding the District.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Bower - Superintendent



## From the H.S. Principal's Office

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The second half of the school year is always very busy with many activities. Academically, the pace picks up in the classroom as well. Please encourage your child to stay on top of their assignments and responsibilities. During the first semester, the high school had 173 high honor roll (3.5 GPA or higher) students and 67 honor roll (3.0 - 3.4 GPA) students! Congratulations to all of the honor students! Keep up the excellent work!

Students continue working hard academically with their coursework. At the end of May, students will participate in the Keystone exams for Literature, Biology, and Algebra. The Keystone exams are for students enrolled in a Keystone related course or students who have not previously scored advanced or proficient on the Keystone exam. Students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade will participate in the PSSA's for Math, English Language Arts, and Science (8<sup>th</sup> grade only).

SAT School Day will continue for eleventh grade students. SAT School Day allows schools, districts, and states to offer the SAT to juniors and seniors in school, on a weekday, expanding access to a globally recognized college admission test that's accepted at all United States colleges. Students enrolled in College Prep English 11 will take the SAT at Rockwood High School during the regular school day at no cost to the student. SAT School Day is offered two times per year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Information is made available to students closer to the date of the exams. Any interested junior not enrolled in College Prep English is permitted to take the exam as well. The SAT will also be offered to twelfth grade students; however, there is a fee associated with seniors taking the test. Questions regarding SAT School Day should be directed to the High School Guidance Office.

All students in grades 9 through 12 are eligible to participate in micro scholarship opportunities through RaiseMe. RaiseMe helps students in 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade research colleges they are interested in attending and earn scholarships for their academic and extracurricular achievements. Students add achievements to their own online portfolio account on RaiseMe. They can see the micro-scholarship amount they have earned towards certain colleges. The achievements can include: good grades, participating in clubs, playing on a sports team, or community service. This is an excellent opportunity for your son/daughter to see how much they are earning. For more information, please visit [www.raise.me](http://www.raise.me).

New this year, and available to students, was a free electronic camp held in February. Students learned how to solder, build circuits, and built two electronic kits. Students received a basic understanding and introduction to the world of electronics. The mini-camp was sponsored through a grant by PARSS (Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools) and was taught by Mr. Kush. More information about the camp can be found on page 8 of this newsletter.

It does not go unrecognized that students and families have faced many challenges over the past two years. Mental and emotional support is offered and supplied to students through a variety of avenues. Teachers support students daily in the classroom. In addition, the district has a student assistance program (SAP). Additional support can be coordinated through the SAP team. The guidance counselor, Mrs. Patti Jo Opfar, and school social worker, Mrs. Susan Clark, actively engage with students to meet the many issues facing teenagers today. If you feel your child needs additional mental/emotional support, please contact the school district at 814-926-4688.

As always, please continue to visit our website [www.rockwoodschoools.org](http://www.rockwoodschoools.org) for news and student information. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,  
Mrs. Misty L. Demchak  
High School Principal  
Rockwood Area School District

# RASD Events and Information



## Important Dates & Events

### March

11 & 12	Musical
18	Snow Make Up Day
24 & 25	Kindergarten Registration

### April

12	Early Dismissal (pending use of snow days)
13 & 14	Snow Make Up Days (if needed)
15 & 18	Easter/Spring Break
19	Snow Make Up Day
25	Honor Society Induction Ceremony
28	H.S. Band Concert
30	Prom

### May

5	H.S. Chorus Concert
10	Elem. Chorus Concert
16	Scholar's Reception
TBD	Elem. Awards Day
TBD	K-3rd Grade Track & Field
TBD	4th - 6th Grade Track & Field
27 - 30	Senior Trip
30	Memorial Day - No School

### June

3	Graduation (tentative)
3	Last Day of School (tentative)

(Dates are tentative and subject to change)

## Kindergarten Registration



Children of the Rockwood Area School District, who are five years of age by September 1, 2022, are eligible to enroll in the Rockwood elementary full day kindergarten program.

**Registration is scheduled for March 24th and 25th.**

Parents/guardians must contact Cindy Miller at 814-926-4688 ext. 1117 ASAP to receive enrollment information and begin the registration process.

We are excited about serving your family!

**Note:** Parents/guardians are reminded to provide a list of each child's immunizations.

## Congratulations Class of 2022



Atchison, Savannah	Modrak, Karlie
Barkman, Maxwell	Mowry, Isabella
Blough, Sara	Murphy, Autumn
Buratty, Kaden	Newbaker, Keira
Conn, Jaxson	Phillippi, Callie
Conn, Shakhia	Pletcher, Elliot
Cramer, Elissa	Pletcher, Jack
Fazenbaker, Makaylah	Pletcher, Kaitlyn
Goodyear, Cameron	Pritts, Caitlyn
Grove, Catherine	Putman, Madison
Hager, Enrico-Giovanni	Rhodes, Brandon
Hearn, Kelly	Robosson, Kenadie
Herwig, Chase	Romesberg, Kyle
Johnson, Logan	Ross, Isabella
Judy, Jessica	Seese, Dakota
Kalp, Kendra	Smith, Thayne
Kemp, Olivia	Snyder, Austin
King, Kaitlyn	Terris, Adele
Kinney, Sophie	Trimpey, Stacey
Kritschgau, Benjamin	Trimpey, Titan
May, Evan	Wagner, Brooke
May, Michael	Weaver, Andrew
Mehrtens, Jan	Yoder, Alicia
Modrak, Carson	

## Rockwood High School Musical

Proudly presents:

# GREASE

March 11th and 12th

7:00 P.M. in the RASD Auditorium

"Grease is the word, is the word" have you heard? Come join us as we journey back to the 50's and relive those "Summer Nights." We are "Hopelessly Devoted to You" watching our 40 cast members in the High School Musical as they proudly present Grease: School Version by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey. Don't be a "Beauty School Dropout." Grab some friends and "We'll Go Together!!!"

Email Susie Branam at [smbranam1@icould.com](mailto:smbranam1@icould.com) to order tickets in advance or purchase tickets at the door.

**Ticket Prices: \$5 - Adults \$2 - Students**



## RASD Welcomes New Faculty and Support Staff

### **Mrs. Brooke Kroon - High School Special Education Teacher**

Brooke is a former graduate of the Rockwood Area School District. After graduating high school, she attended Saint Francis University, where she obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in both Elementary and Special Education. Brooke furthered her education and earned her Masters of Education Degree in Reading Specialist. Brooke has over 10 years of teaching experience and was a former elementary teacher in the District. Her work ethic, enthusiasm for teaching, and willingness to adapt has made her a great addition to the District.



### **Ms. Olivia Latuch - Elementary Teacher**

Olivia is a former graduate of the Rockwood Area School District. Following graduation, she attended Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education and Early Childhood. Before becoming a District elementary teacher, Olivia filled the position of Rockwood PreK Counts teacher through the Learning Lamp. Olivia is a highly dedicated educator who is passionate about teaching. Her love for education and commitment to her students have made her a valuable asset to the District.

### **Ms. Rebecca Enos - Elementary Special Education Paraprofessional**

Rebecca joined the district at the start of the 2021-2022 school year as an elementary special education paraprofessional. She graduated from Somerset Area School District and currently resides in Berlin. Rebecca has several years experience working with children. Her ability to empathize with students and adjust to their specific needs has made her a great addition.



### **Mrs. Heather Snyder - Elementary Classroom Paraprofessional**

Heather is a resident of the Rockwood Area School District and attended Somerset Area High School. She has several years of experience working with our district students, as well as their families. Heather enjoys working with children and helping them to reach their full potential. Her nurturing personality has made her a tremendous asset to the District.



### **Ms. Hannah Mitchell - High School Special Education Paraprofessional**

Hannah is a recent graduate of the Rockwood Area School District and currently resides in the area. Her assignment as a high school special education paraprofessional began in December 2021. Her love for teaching children and her ability to work independently have made her a great addition to the District. Hannah hopes to pursue a teaching career in the future.



### **Job Opportunities:**

The District continues to accept applications for the following positions:

- \* Substitute Teachers      \* Substitute Custodians
- \* Substitute Nurses        \* Substitute Instructional Aides

Coaching applications are accepted for each sport for a two-week window after the completion of the regular season, starting on the last playdate. Interested applicants should call 814-926-4688 for details.



## **Faculty and Staff Member Retirements - Congratulations & Best Wishes!**



**Mrs. Mary Gosnell**  
(23 years of service)

**Mrs. Karen Miller**  
(23 years of service)

**Mrs. Nicole Hetrick**  
(16 years of service)

*Thank you for your many years of service and dedication to the Rockwood Area School District!*

## Spotlighting Student Activity



### Engineering & Technology Department News

In November, students in the Engineering & Technology Club, as well as an art student, participated in the annual Christmas Display Contest sponsored by Somerset Inc. The challenge this year was to design and build a display with the theme of “Christmas Movies” to show in uptown Somerset. Rockwood Casualty Insurance graciously funded the project budget of \$300.00. The club built a scene from the movie *A Christmas Story*, using the character Flick, who was triple-dog-dared by his friends to stick his tongue on a cold flag pole during school recess. The students used many resources and tools to make the character from the movie look like a real person. This involved the character’s arms moving to spin around when activated by a big red button. The students used an iPhone scanning application and a 3D printer to create a life-like face. They also used windshield wiper motors to make the arms spin. The club members worked hard on the project and learned many useful skills, teamwork, and problem-solving techniques. The Engineering & Technology Club won first place in two categories and was awarded a grand total of \$800.00! The winnings from the contest will support future field trips, equipment, and material purchases. Congratulation team!!

We’re also excited to announce that the Engineering & Technology Department was awarded a \$980.00 grant from the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools (PARSS). Part of PARSS’ mission is to assist and advocate for rural school districts and provide grant resources for enhancing student learning experiences. The grant funded an extracurricular opportunity called ‘Saturday Soldering’. The program was open to twelve committed 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to enhance opportunities for available STEM career paths and advanced hands-on and problem-solving skills. The camp was held on three Saturdays in February. They met for a total of nine hours of instruction. Students learned the basics of electronics including: circuit theory, symbols, identification and functions of electronic components, safety practices, reading basic electronic schematics, soldering theory, hands-on circuit building, troubleshooting, and an introduction to BASIC programming for microcontrollers. Students who participated in the program built two electronic projects that they could keep. In addition, they each received a complete soldering tool kit to take home and use with future learning activities.

### Rockwood Future Farmers of America “FFA”

Rockwood FFA is celebrating the 2022 FFA theme “Embrace.” We are excited to “embrace” the opportunity to be back together and seek fulfillment in every opportunity available to us. Our students are as busy as ever this year, and our spring semester will see us at a variety of events and competitions.

During the fall, we were awarded the PA FFA Living to Serve Grant in the amount of \$1,725.00. This grant will assist our students in providing pollinator species (specifically mason bees and leaf cutter bees) to farmers, orchardists, and gardeners in our area. The Advanced Production Agriculture students are working on a presentation about these bee species that they intend to show 5th grade students. They also plan to share the presentation with Rockwood Young Farmers. Any farmer interested in having mason bees or leaf cutter bees should contact Mrs. Weimer. To view an informational video created by the students, please visit the Rockwood FFA Facebook page.

This year’s Keystone Degree students were awarded medals and certificates at the PA Farm Show. Students receiving this degree include: Steven Sanner, Elliot Pletcher, Evan May, Jacob Keller, Alyssa Hunt, Sara Blough, Ally Harrold, Shakhia Conn, and Chloe Bower. They have worked really hard and are committed to agriculture. These students are an asset to the future of agriculture and have represented our district well. We are very proud of them!





**(FFA cont.)**

Awards, Awards, Awards... our students are really bringing them home this year! In November, the FFA members participated in Fall Skills (a career development contest) and brought home the following awards:

Evan May 1<sup>st</sup> – Wildlife

Kelly Hearn 2<sup>nd</sup> - Wildlife

Emily Hutchison 2<sup>nd</sup> – Horse Judging

Chloe Bowers 5<sup>th</sup> - Horse Judging

Riley Weimer 6<sup>th</sup> - Tractor Driving

Students also participated in the State Farm Show Skill-A-Thon and placed as follows:

Makayla Peck 8<sup>th</sup>- Swine

Max Barkman 2<sup>nd</sup>- Beef and 2<sup>nd</sup>- Dairy

Connor Weimer 3<sup>rd</sup>- Beef

Ally Harrold 5<sup>th</sup>- Beef

Alyssa Hunt 7<sup>th</sup>- Beef

Cameron Goodyear 4<sup>th</sup> – Dairy

Glenn Millin 7<sup>th</sup> - Junior Dairy

Joey Sechler 8<sup>th</sup> - Junior Dairy

Kylee Grimes 2<sup>nd</sup> – Rabbits

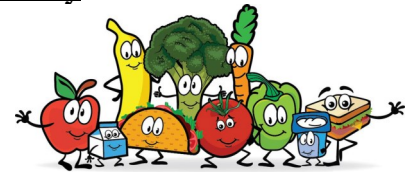
David Murphy 5<sup>th</sup> - Junior Rabbits

The spring semester will be even busier with events that include: Spring Skills CDE, Public Speaking LDE, and the release of catfish and rainbow trout with assistance from Don Anderson and the Fish and Boat Commission and Chestnut Ridge Trout Unlimited.

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### **Rockwood Area School District - Student Lunch Policy**

The district permits students to incur reasonable charges for school meals. In an effort to ensure the effective operation of the district's food service program, the district establishes the following procedures for student payment of school meals.



- ◆ When a student reaches a balance of \$2.50 in their account, the cashier will notify the student of their current positive balance.
- ◆ When a student reaches a debt of five or more meals in their lunch account, the parents will receive a courtesy letter from the School Food Service Liaison to inform the parents of their child's status. The School Food Service Liaison will attach a copy of these procedures and the District's Food Services Policy to the letter.
- ◆ When a student reaches a debt of five or more meals in their lunch account, students will only be able to purchase a school food program meal (reimbursable meal). Additional individual items (extras) and a la carte items will not be available for purchase. However, students may purchase a meal from the a la carte line if the meal qualifies as a school program meal.
- ◆ When a student reaches a negative \$25.00 balance, a formal letter will be sent home by the School Food Service Liaison. This letter will inform the parents that unless the balance is corrected, a meeting with the building principal and the School Food Service Liaison will be requested. Additionally, further action may result with the local magistrate.

If a student is not eligible for free or reduced-price school meals under federal school meal programs and the student's school meal account reaches a negative balance of more than \$50.00 in a school year, the district may provide the student with alternative meals instead of school food program meals until the unpaid balance in the student's school meal account is paid or a payment plan has been established with the district to reduce the unpaid balance.

- \* **NOTE:** STUDENT LUNCH ACCOUNT BALANCES CANNOT BE ACCESSED THROUGH POWERSCHOOL. TO ACCURATELY TRACK YOUR CHILD'S LUNCH TRANSACTIONS, YOU MUST USE THE PAYFORIT SYSTEM. THANK YOU

## **“Notes” From The Nurse**

### **The Effects of Caffeine on Children**

Caffeine is the most popular “behavior-altering substance” consumed by 9 out of 10 Americans on a regular basis according to the Mayo Clinic. For most people, small amounts of caffeine are not harmful; however, heavy daily caffeine use can cause many side effects including: restlessness, anxiety, irritability, muscle cramps and twitching, sleeplessness, headaches, nausea, and diarrhea. It can also cause abnormal heart rhythms, which can lead to heart attacks and strokes. Side effects such as these have increased in adolescents due to the increased consumption of energy drinks with high amounts of caffeine in them (mayoclinic.com).

While teens are increasing their consumption of energy drinks and coffee, younger children are ingesting caffeine primarily in the form of soft drinks. Studies have shown that “the majority of school-age children consume at least one soft drink daily” (Hecht). The toxic effects of caffeine can begin with the consumption of as little as 4.5 mg of caffeine per pound of body weight (Slattery). Caffeinated beverages often replace other healthy drinks that contain needed nutritional values. One example is the replacement of milk. The lack of milk may result in calcium deficiency, which increases the risk of osteoporosis and bone fractures. “Only 30% of U.S. kids take in enough calcium daily” (Hecht). In addition to the calcium deficiency, sweetened sodas also contribute to overweight and obesity problems, as well as dental cavities. Just one 12-ounce soda contains the equivalent of ten teaspoons of sugar! By consuming just one 12-ounce soft drink per day, a child’s risk of obesity is increased by 60% (cofei.com).

Along with the empty calories being consumed in sugar-filled soft drinks and flavored coffees, caffeine can interfere with getting adequate sleep that children need during their growing years. This may affect a student’s schoolwork. Caffeine also increases calcium excretion. When children don’t get enough calcium to begin with, and it is excreted quicker, this affects proper bone growth and development. Too much caffeine can set a student up for high blood pressure, high blood sugar, decreased bone density, increased heart rates and anxiety.

The next time you or your child picks up a soft drink, energy drink, caffeinated coffee or tea, please consider this information for you and your child’s health and well-being.

Amanda Custer RN, BSN, CSN,  
School Nurse

Item	Amount of Item	Amount of Caffeine
Mountain Dew	12 oz	55 mg
Coca-Cola	12 oz	34 mg
Diet Coke	12 oz	45 mg
Pepsi	12 oz	38 mg
Average brewed coffee	5 oz	115 mg
Average iced tea	12 oz	70 mg
5 Hour Energy	2 oz	138 mg
Amp Lightning Energy Drink	16 oz	160 mg
Jolt Energy Drink	23.5 oz	280 mg
Monster Energy Drink	16 oz	160 mg
Red Bull Energy Drink	8.46 oz	80 mg
Starbucks Double Shot Coffee	6.5 oz	130 mg
Starbucks Grande Coffee	16 oz	330 mg

Sources: U.S. Food and Drug Administration, National Soft Drink Association, [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com), [www.cofei.com](http://www.cofei.com), Hecht, [www.medicinenet.com](http://www.medicinenet.com), Slattery, [www.healthychild.net](http://www.healthychild.net)

# Guidance Information & Student Services

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## High School Guidance Information

**PSSA:** PSSA spring testing dates are as follows: (note: elementary and high school testing dates may differ)

- \* English Language Arts: **April 25 - 29:** Grades 3 through 8
- \* Math: **May 2 - May 13:** Grades 3 through 8
- \* Science: **May 2 - May 13:** Grades 4 and 8



**Keystone Testing:** The testing window for the Keystone exams is **May 16 - 27**. The exams are in the areas of: Biology, Literature and Algebra I. Testing is for students who are currently enrolled in those classes and for students who did not score proficient or above during the December Keystone testing.

**Parent cooperation throughout the state assessments is greatly appreciated. It is important that all students who are required to take the PSSA and Keystone exams are present during testing dates. Please keep these dates in mind when scheduling appointments/vacations. Detailed information regarding state assessments will be sent home closer to the testing dates.**

**Seniors:** Please view the Student Services webpage on the RASD website, [www.rockwoodschoools.org](http://www.rockwoodschoools.org), for college and scholarship information. Students planning to attend post-secondary education should have completed the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). If you have not done this, please complete the application ASAP. Please direct all transcript requests to Shanda Pletcher at [sjletcher@rockwoodschoools.org](mailto:sjletcher@rockwoodschoools.org) or by calling 814-926-4688 ext. 1127. Transcripts can take several business days to complete. Be sure to stop in the Guidance Office regularly for scholarship opportunities or if you have any questions.

**Juniors:** On **April 5**, interested juniors will have the opportunity to attend the College Fair at the Armory in Friedens. There will be over 50 post secondary schools represented. Interested juniors should sign up in the Guidance Office.

**SAT:** SATs will be given at the Rockwood Area School District on **March 23**, during the school day. Interested seniors may sign up. They will be responsible for the cost of the test, which is \$55.00. In addition, all juniors enrolled in CP English 11 will also take the SAT on this date. Other interested juniors are eligible to take the test as well. There is no fee for juniors to take the test. Please sign up in the Guidance Office.

**Financial Aid Events:** Our PHEAA representative will be giving a Financial Aid presentation in the High School Library on **May 11, at 6:00 pm**. The target audience is for parents of current juniors; however, parents of all grade levels are invited to attend. Our PHEAA representative will return on **September 21**, to give the same presentation for those parents who weren't able to attend the spring presentation. The PHEAA representative will then return again on **November 3**, to assist parents (Class of 2023) with completing the FAFSA. Information on both events will be provided closer to the actual dates.

**Sophomores & Freshmen:** Remember to stay on track with educational credits. In order to attend the Somerset County Technology Center, students must have successfully completed seven credits during their freshman year. Once enrolled in SCTC, students must successfully complete the four core courses to remain in the program.

**8th Grade:** All 8th grade students will visit SCTC in March. The trip introduces students to the programs available at SCTC. Applications should be completed during the 9th grade year to be eligible to attend in 10th grade. All 8th grade students will also be attending AG Career Day at Pennwood Farms in Berlin. Students will hear from presenters on a wide variety of agricultural career opportunities.

**Grades 7 - 11:** All students will be completing their scheduling forms for next year. Each student will bring home a scheduling sheet that needs to be signed by a parent/guardian. Please keep in mind, students are required to earn 26 credits between their 9th-12th grade years. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that their yearly credit requirements (at least seven per school year) are being met. If you have any questions regarding your child's schedule for next year, please contact the Guidance Office at 814-926-4688.

## From the Elementary Principal's Office

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Dear Families and Community Members,

Spring is on its way! Time sure flies when you're having fun and busy doing what you love. The joy of having children in the Rockwood elementary building is motivating to everyone within the school environment. The faculty, staff, and administration are very appreciative of the efforts each family and community member has put forth to keep our children in school. Children are truly the focal point of every instructional day.

During the 2021-2022 school year, students have grown academically, socially, and emotionally through quality instruction provided by certified educators. Parents, grandparents, and other adults have truly supported education throughout the years. It's important that adults hold education and learning as a priority in life. By communicating the importance of learning within the home, children will be motivated to succeed in school.

The students have been participating in quality educational experiences inside the classrooms. The Rockwood Elementary schedule supports extended learning experiences in: reading, mathematics, science (STEM), and social studies. Class sizes were reduced in grade levels, demonstrating the largest academic and or behavioral needs. Data was used to identify academic needs and instructional strategies implemented to improve academic outcomes for the students. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, school closures, and absences, children demonstrated learning gaps in core subjects. Our teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff members have worked diligently to close these gaps. The implementation of after school tutoring, summer course recovery, and daily interventions in the classrooms supported student growth. Data from benchmark assessments point to improvements in reading and mathematics.

The Title I and Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) programs that support children in kindergarten through third grade have been instrumental in academic success. Students are receiving supplemental instruction in reading and early literacy skills. Teachers are using traditional instructional strategies that support the development of letter naming, letter sound, phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. The Title I reading specialists and classroom teachers work collaboratively to provide interventions that account for 30 - 60 minutes of targeted instruction. Children in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade are supported through teacher interventions during the grade level acceleration period. These grades also have time allotted for math facts practice.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) instruction has been lead by Mr. Baker in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. With some adjustments to the schedule, Mr. Baker has been able to meet with these grade levels to develop scientific knowledge, incorporate engineering concepts, build mathematical connections, and motivate students to learn concepts that prepare them for future experiences. The use of technology, hands-on learning, and research have been successful within this program and supports preparation for success in academic areas and careers. Ms. Hemminger has served as a math interventionist to support students developing math skills. She has worked with children from all grade levels. Support related to progress monitoring and data collection has taken place as well. Ms. Hemminger supports fourth grade with science instruction as well.

STEM ties in well with our Positive Behavior Skills supported by Mrs. Wedge, elementary school guidance counselor, and Mrs. Clark, school social worker. These skills have supported student knowledge of social and emotional issues, peer interactions, friendship, and career exploration. Teachers have implemented SUITE 360 lessons in the classrooms to support a positive school environment. We appreciate parents for supporting student participation and focusing on positive behavior.

I would like to thank the students, teachers, school board members, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) members, and the community for their efforts towards maintaining a positive school environment.

(Elem. Principal cont.)

Children within the Rockwood elementary participate in a number of exciting activities throughout the year. They have participated in several educational field trips, classroom activities, Veteran's Day assembly, career fairs, the Health-a-Thon, Trunk or Treat, the geography bee, Scrabble tournament, reading competition, and a long list of other events, all through the support of these individuals.

I would like to invite parents, as well as community members, who have comments, concerns, or questions to contact me for assistance. My office door is always open. I am here to support our children and community so that all individuals are successful. Education is not just the duty of the school. We need to work together to support our children. Children learn through observation and practice. Each day is precious and important to reaching goals. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any need you may have related to the Rockwood Area Elementary School. I would like to thank each of you for your continued support of our students.

Yours in education,  
Mr. Jonathan Hale  
Elementary Principal  
Rockwood Area School District

## PTO News & Information



We can all agree, it's great to have our children back in school full time with the ability to plan events and activities at Rockwood Elementary.

Being that we are getting closer to the end of the school year, we feel it's an opportune time to provide the community with a recap of all the Rockwood PTO has accomplished and take a peek at what's yet to come.

In September, the PTO kicked off with one of it's largest events, the annual Health-A-Thon. This event has students participating in various outdoor exercises, games, and relays. The results of this annual fundraiser helps to provide funds for field trips, new playground equipment, and other fun events planned throughout the year. A special thanks to all who participated and donated to this fundraising event!

PTO held a weeklong Fall Book Fair in October. In addition to fueling our children's desire to read books, we were pleased to be able to purchase some new books and new releases for the elementary library.

In November, the PTO supported the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Christmas craft store event held in the elementary gymnasium. The community actively participates in this yearly event and supports local vendors and craftspeople.

Our largest fundraiser of the year, the Little Caesars pizza kit sales, was held in February. The PTO would sincerely like to thank the community and parents' for their support in purchasing items from the elementary school children. Funds are used to provide prizes for students throughout the year for special events, as well as sponsor Family Fun Night.

As we look forward to spring, we wanted to announce that the Spring Book Fair will be held the week of March 7<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>. The PTO is also planning a Family Fun Night in April. Watch for more information about this event.

For the most up-to-date information, please reference the Rockwood PTO Facebook page.

Keep in mind, the PTO is ALWAYS looking for new members and for volunteers who wish to help with specific events throughout the year. Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m. in the elementary library. Please come out and support us!

Current Officers:      President - Joanie Pritts  
                                 Secretary - Kristi Burkett

Vice President - Ami Miller  
Treasurer - Chasity Davis



**Rockwood Area School District  
Hall of Fame Nomination Form  
2021-2022**

**Criteria:**

- A Rockwood High School graduate of at least five years
- Achievement of excellence as recognized by peers and/or media
- Fields of excellence:
  - Letters and Humanities
  - Arts
  - Athletics
  - Science
  - A significant contribution to the health, welfare and/or freedom of the local, national or world community.

Awardees will be honored at the annual high school awards assembly in June, and their name will be added to a permanent plaque in the school. All nominations will remain on file for five years and can be reconsidered. If you would like to nominate someone, please complete the nomination form below and **return it no later than April 8, 2022** to:

Rockwood Area School District  
Attn: Sherry/Administration Office  
439 Somerset Avenue  
Rockwood, PA 15557

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Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

RAHS graduating class of (enter year): \_\_\_\_\_

Field(s) of excellence (please mark all that apply):

- ☐ Letters and Humanities
- ☐ Arts
- ☐ Athletics
- ☐ Science
- ☐ A significant contribution to the health, welfare and/or freedom of the local, national or world community.

**\*Please include a brief summary of the above nominee's achievements on a separate page.**

Nominated by: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## 2022 ATHLETIC SCHEDULES

(all schedules are tentative  
and subject to change)



### Varsity Baseball

#### Mar.

29	Shanksville	4:30pm
31	@ Turkeyfoot	4:30pm

#### Apr.

1	@ Hyndman	4:30pm
4	@ Con. Twp.	4:15pm
5	Berlin	4:30pm
7	Meyersdale	4:30pm
12	North Star	4:30pm
14	Shade	4:30pm
19	@ Salisbury	TBD
23	Boswell Jaycees Tournament	TBD
26	@ Shanksville	TBD
28	Salisbury	4:00pm

#### May

3	Ferndale	4:30pm
5	Turkeyfoot	4:00pm
6 & 7	Altoona Curve Classic Tourn.	10:00am
10	@ Shade	TBD
12	@ Meyersdale	4:30pm
13	Hyndman	4:30pm

### JV/Varsity Boys & Girls Track

#### Apr.

6	Blacklick Valley @ Windber	4:00pm
13	Portage @ Con. Twp.	4:00pm
20	@ Shade	4:00pm
22	Appalachian Meet @ United	TBD
27	Blacklick Valley @ Berlin	4:00pm

#### May

4	@ Meyersdale	4:00pm
11	WestPAC Championship @ Windber	3:00pm



### Jr. High Boys & Girls Track

#### Apr.

4	@ Meyersdale	4:00pm
21	@ Berlin	4:00pm

#### May

3	@ Con. Twp.	4:00pm
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\*\*\* REMINDER \*\*\*

**For everyone's safety,  
NO pets allowed on  
school property  
(except service animals)**

*Thank You!*

### Varsity Softball

#### Mar.

29	Shanksville	4:30pm
31	@ Turkeyfoot	4:30pm

#### Apr.

1	@ Hyndman	4:30pm
4	@ Con. Twp.	4:15pm
5	Berlin	4:30pm
7	Meyersdale	4:30pm
12	North Star	4:30pm
14	Shade	4:30pm
19	@ Salisbury	4:15pm
21	@ Berlin	TBD
26	@ Shanksville	TBD
28	Salisbury	4:00pm

#### May

3	Ferndale	4:30pm
5	Turkeyfoot	4:00pm
6	@ N. Garrett	4:30pm
10	@ Shade	TBD
12	@ Meyersdale	4:30pm
13	Hyndman	4:30pm

### Jr. High Softball

#### Mar.

29	@ Shanksville	4:00pm
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#### Apr.

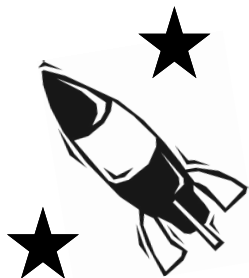
5	@ Berlin	4:00pm
21	Berlin	4:00pm
26	Shanksville	4:30pm

#### May

3	@ Ferndale	4:15pm
7	Meyersdale	10:00am
7	Meyersdale	11:30am

Rockwood Area School District  
439 Somerset Ave.  
Rockwood, PA 15557

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**RESIDENT**  
**ROCKWOOD, PA 15557**

**School Board**

Mr. Irvin Kimmel, Jr.

**President**

Mr. Adam Sembower

**Vice President**

Mr. Brad Pletcher

**Treasurer**

Mrs. Ashley Baker

Mrs. April Hutchison

Dr. Hailey Miller

Mrs. Melanie Monticue

Dr. Tyler Pritts

Mr. Noah Wareham

Mrs. Sherry Benford

**Board Secretary**

**Administrative Staff**

Mr. Mark Bower

**Superintendent**

Mrs. Misty Demchak

**H.S. Principal**

Mr. Jonathan Hale

**Elem. Principal**

Mr. Jordan Svonavec

**Business Manager**

**Student Services Staff**

Mrs. Patti Jo Opfar

**H.S. Guidance Counselor**

Mrs. Brandi Wedge

**Elem. Guidance Counselor**

Mrs. Amanda Custer

**School Nurse**

Mrs. Megan Hetrick

**School Psychologist**

Mrs. Susan Clark

**School Social Worker**

**School Phone Numbers**

High School Office	814-926-4688 Opt. 3
Elementary Office	814-926-4688 Opt. 4
Administration Office	814-926-4688 Opt. 5
Guidance/Student Services	814-926-4688 Opt. 6
IT/Computer Dept.	814-352-4269
Metz—Food Service Dept.	814-926-4688 ext. 1111

**Visit us on the Web**

[www.rockwoodschoools.org](http://www.rockwoodschoools.org)

Following is a partial listing of information and  
links that can be found on our website:

Cafeteria Menus

Cafeteria Balances-**PayForIt Program**

Contact Information

Forms & Downloads

Guidance Office Information

Lesson Plans for Teachers

Parent Notification System-**School Messenger**

School Board Meeting Info.

School Calendars

Sports Scores and Schedules

Student Grades & Attendance-**PowerSchool**

If you haven't visited our site yet,  
please take a few moments to check it out.

