

AUGUST 2024

VOLUME 2024/25, ISSUE 1  
THE DISTRICT NEWSLETTER FOR REETHS-PUFFER SCHOOLS



# ROCKET CITY news

## Happy August, Rockets!



When it comes to Rockets—I mean our schools and our kids—there's a lot to celebrate that often flies under the radar.

Just think about this: 93,000 flights take off and land safely every single day across 9,000 airports worldwide. That's nothing short of a daily miracle!

Small miracles happen here as well! At Reeths-Puffer Schools, our 3,600 students navigate through their days, successfully taking off and landing in our 7 school buildings. Despite societal challenges like poverty, social media drama, politics, and all the noise out there, it's truly amazing what our kids achieve.

Unfortunately, like the news often overlooks those countless safe landings, public schools don't always get the credit they deserve. Sure, the media tends to focus on the mishaps, just like they do with a plane that misses the mark. Imagine if we celebrated all of our successes the way we should celebrate the miracle of flight! If you need or want examples, I encourage you to read or re-read our May, 2024 edition of Rocket City News to see what's possible!

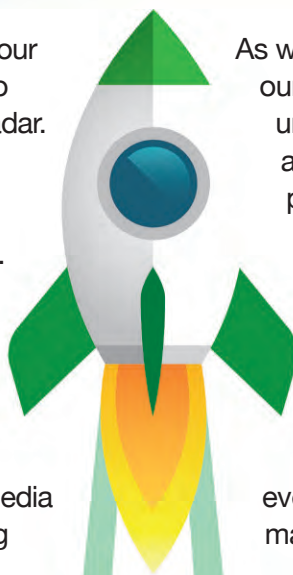
As we gear up for the 2024-2025 school year, safety remains our top priority. No student or staff member should ever feel unsafe at school. That's why we're dedicated to creating a secure environment, tackling issues head-on with programs like PBIS and Be NICE. We've bolstered our team with counselors, social workers, and school liaison officers, and we're working closely with emergency services to ensure a swift response to any situation. Are these measures flawless? Certainly not. But they're vital steps in addressing school safety, bullying, anxiety, depression, and other challenges our kids and society face. We can't always solve everything for everyone overnight — —but together, we're making strides.

Let's continue to rally behind our schools and our community. It's about more than just education—it's about creating a safe, supportive environment where every child can thrive.

Here's to a fantastic 2024-2025 school year!

Warm regards,

Steven L. Edwards







Central Families,

With great excitement, we extend a warm welcome to the 2024-2025 school year! We look forward to continuing our mission of maximizing potential for all learners and providing an experience nothing short of awesome. To that aim, we are using the summer to grow and develop

professionally through improvement and collaborative efforts centered on positive culture, viable curriculum, instructional design, data practices, and school safety. Consistent with the past two years, our continued focus from a school improvement perspective involves using strengths-based approaches to provide all students a joyful, meaningful, and purposeful experience.

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

**Office Reopens** Wednesday, August 7

**Welcome Back &**

**Placement Letters Sent Out** The Week of August 12

**Meet and Greet** Tuesday, August 20

**K-4 Open House** - 6:00 - 7:00pm

**First Day of School** Monday, August 26

In looking at the summer schedule for professional learning, I can confidently say that this off-season is the most actively engaged our staff has ever been from wire to wire. We are locked in and laser-focused on improving our impact and enhancing our students' experience. We eagerly await their return, look forward to an exciting year of learning, and aspire to make 2024-2025 the best year yet!

Yours in Education,

*Cody Hamilton*

Central Elementary Principal



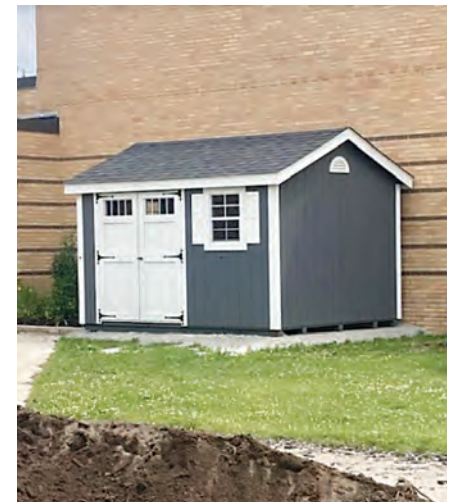
# OUTDOOR LEARNING SPACES

Roughly one year ago, we signaled a desire to transform our campus in ways conducive to outdoor learning and in alignment with our curriculum. Thanks to your support and generous donations, that dream has become a reality in just a short time. The pavilion-style structure now stands proudly in the courtyard. A storage shed, allowing students to quickly access materials and resources in support of their learning, has been added to the south alcove. Grade level teams are collaborating this summer around enhancing instruction with the resources purchased within the one-time collaborative learning grant. And, our new garden educators will soon begin working on a construction project to establish a designated garden center near the new shed.

Summer Work Bee sessions have been established this summer to prepare our outdoor spaces for student learning this upcoming fall. At our first event, 5 picnic tables were assembled to furnish the pavilion with seating. We have a lot of work ahead of us to ready these spaces for the 2024-2025 school year. If you'd like to lend a hand, please consider joining us on:

- Wednesday, August 14th at 9-11am

Thank you for your ongoing support around enhancing our students' K-4 experience at Central through outdoor experiences!





# RIDE WITH PRIDE

The Ride with Pride programming continues to get better and better each year, becoming a true pillar to our ongoing efforts in providing, promoting, and perpetuating a positive school culture. Ride with Pride gives students the opportunity to pledge our behavior expectations of Respect, Pride, and Integrity, while committing to the Rocket Way both in and outside of school. Through read alouds, discussion, and interactive strategies, Jen LaChapelle and her STATS team target instruction on important topics in age-appropriate ways to promote safe habits and character development. RWP also affords Central the opportunity to further partner with our local law enforcement friends and assist students in recognizing those partners in supportive ways.



As a culminating event to celebrate our third full year with Ride With Pride, we held a school-wide assembly to celebrate another positive and successful year. Students who made the pledge back in the fall, and more importantly, upheld their commitment throughout the year with good attendance and minimal (0-2) behavioral referrals, were entered into a drawing for rewards.

The enthusiasm within the gymnasium was tremendous, and so many awesome kiddos were recognized. In true Central fashion, however, the event was more about students honoring and celebrating one another. Regardless of whose name was called, the whole place went nuts! Our kids truly do care about one another, and realize we are better together!

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# YOUTH EXHIBITION OF LEARNING

Central was once again well-represented at the 2024 Youth Exhibition of Learning, held at the Career Tech Center to close out the year. Of the 27 teachers from across the county who registered for the event, 9 were our very own. In addition, several teachers and students sat and spoke on a panel regarding their unique experiences. They performed beautifully, inspiring others!

In general, the event gave students and staff an opportunity to showcase and celebrate the awesome learning that took place this year both at school and off-site throughout Muskegon County using 3P (project, place, and problem-based learning) approaches. Exhibits included Gardening at Central, Waste-Free and Earth Saver initiatives, Poetry and Pottery, Salmon in the Classroom, the Frog Unit, the Importance of Pollination, and Trees and the Community. Most impressive was the level of expertise students were able to speak and lean into for those visiting their displays as a result of



their studies and explorations throughout the year.

We continue to explore new and improved ways to enhance our core curriculum through hands-on, authentic, and outdoor learning experiences. With considerable momentum continuing to build, we look forward to new innovations for 2024-2025 and beyond!





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Greetings R-PEL Parents/  
Guardians and Families,

Welcome back R-PEL students  
and families, hopefully you have  
enjoyed an amazing Summer in  
West Michigan! There is no better  
place to enjoy all that Michigan  
has to offer.

We are excited for the start of the 2024-2025 school year! The entire R-PEL team has been working really hard this summer to prepare for the first day of school. I will be communicating information about the first day and first week of school in August.

Our focus continues to be on student safety, creating a positive learning environment and providing high quality instruction that allows for positive learning opportunities for our students.

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

The school building is ready to go. The school office will be open Monday through Fridays from 8:00-4:00 each day. Stay tuned for our return to school information and process. You can also find informational updates here in my Parent Communication: <https://secure.smores.com/n/smb4f>

Meet and Greet Information: August 20th from 6:00-7:00 PM. Please report to your student's classroom. This is for all Kindergarten through fourth grade students.

School Pictures will be taken during the school day on September 9th. Order forms will be in the welcome back letter that will be mailed to individual homes in August. Picture retakes will be on October 11th.

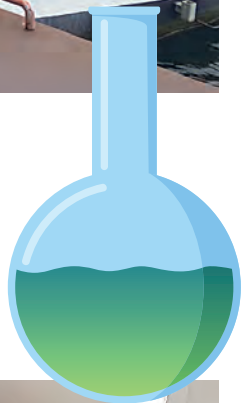
Feel free to call me in my office, 744-4777 if you have questions or concerns. We look forward to seeing all of you this fall and we are excited about another great school year at Reeths-Puffer Elementary School.

*Paul Klimsza*

Principal, Reeths-Puffer Elementary School



# Fourth Grade Water Scientists



Mrs. Boes' Fourth Graders spent a morning in May being Water Scientists aboard Grand Valley State University's W.G. Jackson water vessel. Students worked with a crew from The Water Annis Institute to collect and analyze water samples from Muskegon Lake and Lake Michigan. Testing and comparing the water's temperature and quality at different depths along with testing the water's turbidity, PH, and alkalinity. They used new tools; Secchi disks and plankton nets, and got to observe and identify the plankton under a microscope. They learned the biological, physical, and chemical dynamics of our great Lakes and inland lakes. It was a great day of learning and an unforgettable experience for the students and their teacher.



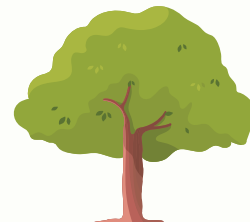




# First Grade Students Explore Snug Harbor

R-PEL first grade students explored at Snug Harbor Muskegon State Park. We are beyond grateful for the hard work and dedication our students have put into learning about agriculture, birds, and career opportunities in their own community. Thank you Mr. Greg Sherburn, Unit Supervisor, for helping us make this trip happen for our students.

We want to give a special shout out to Blandford Nature Center for joining us at the park to present their birds to 150 first graders. First graders studied birds in their ELA module learning units. The students loved seeing all the different birds they researched in the classroom. Students were amazed, and families enjoyed their time at Muskegon State Park, Muskegon, MI. Go Rockets!





# Young Voices Making Big Impacts in Our Community

Sometimes we find inspiration in things we never expected. But oh, how magical it is when that inspiration comes from a book! Fourth Grade students at RPEL read the novel “The Hope Chest” written by Karen Schwabach. This novel told a story of a young girl and her sister who were living during the 1920’s when people around the country were working tirelessly to have the U.S. Constitution amended to give most women the right to vote. The story highlighted the theme of “inequality” in multiple instances, as well as the themes “standing up for what is right” and “do something meaningful”. The discussions flourished in the classroom and the students were empowered to make connections to their own lives. Following the story, students were given the guiding questions:

*How can stories inspire us to take action to contribute to a better world?*

*How and why can we encourage and support others to contribute to a better world?*

The students took action alright! Between the 4 fourth grade classes there were certainly strong and positive differences made in our community.

In Mrs. Boes’ class, Henry worked on his own to pass out flyers around his neighborhood and collect donations for the Noah Project! They were very thankful for the supplies!

Liam and Alex wanted to work to make our community beautiful again! They traveled around to local parks and the Meijer trail to clean up trash! Cadence, Katie, and Jordyn sold stickers at recess

to raise money for the Big Lake Humane Society. Individually, the girls also made phone calls and sent out fliers to raise money. In total, they raised nearly \$400 to purchase supplies! The girls will be making a trip soon to shop for and deliver those supplies!

In Mrs. Harris’s class, Georgia, Malia, Emma, Ariana, and Mabel set out to raise money and collect donations for Pound Buddies. Part of their plan was to set up a shop during lunch to sell items or accepted donations for toys and trinkets. They

presented their plan to principal Paul Klmsza and assistant principal Lisa Bignall who gave the girls their full support. In just 3 days, the girls raised \$714 and collected a significant amount of donation items. They delivered their haul to Pound Buddies who were very appreciative! They took the girls on a tour of the facility and let them play with some of the puppies they were housing! The girls were also featured on WZZM 13 for success with this project.

Calen, Avalynn, Jillian and Brady set their minds on cleaning up our community. They called Meijer to secure donations of gloves and trash bags that they passed out to the whole school during the Earth Day clean up that they organized. Students from every grade level worked together to clean up different parts around the school! These students also organized a sucker sale to raise money for trash grabbers. They ended up raising so much money,

they were able to take a trip to Muskegon Beach to clean up trash! Meijer was again extremely generous with supplying snacks and water to the kids who cleaned up. The students donated the remaining money to the school’s Earth Force committee for future projects.

Cade, Julia, Jacob, and River wanted to bring awareness

to water pollution in the area. The students reached out to Brenda Moore, the Muskegon County Water Resources Commissioner, who they invited in to speak to their class. After the presentations, Ms. Moore met with the students to help them brainstorm ways they could help our waterways.

Mrs. Walsh’s class created signs to bring awareness to threatened and endangered species (some focusing on those that are native to MI) and what we can do to help. Others researched and created PSA’s that focused on water pollution and keeping our waterways clean. Mrs. Machinski’s class worked together to make donations to the Noah Project.

# meijer

We want to give a special thanks to Meijer, our community partner, who helped our kids find success with their projects.







Dear Reeths-Puffer Community,

It is with great pleasure that I introduce myself as the newly appointed Principal of Twin Lake Elementary. This summer I'll be working hard to get to know our staff, our building and our community. I have already

been meeting with the Reeths-Puffer leadership and administration teams. For those of you on staff at TLE, there will be some fun get-to-know-you activities coming soon - watch for more emails and updates!

I am passionate about education. Most recently, I was the Director of a local charter school. During my career, I have also been a classroom teacher and a principal at North Hero Elementary in Vermont and locally at Oakridge Lower Elementary. I am delighted and honored to be appointed to this amazing school, where I can work closely with the students, staff and parents.

As I join the Rocket Nation, I will work hard to continue the legacy of success established at Twin Lake Elementary by building strong relationships with parents, students, staff and community partners. We will focus on the use of data to inform instruction and continue emphasizing academic, social, and emotional growth. I look forward to working together to provide exciting and challenging enrichment opportunities that focus on meeting learning standards.

While getting to know our school this year, it is my hope to forge relationships that will provide the best opportunities in preparing our students for the world and creating learners ready to master challenges placed in their path. As Principal, my door is always open and I welcome your input. Please feel free to stop in or call to make an appointment to discuss your concerns, suggestions, or ideas to help make this year the best it can be!

Sincerely,

*Joanna (Joey) Bennick*

Principal, RP - Twin Lake Elementary



# The WORLD at Your Fingertips



Check out Mrs. Kinstner's class wanting to expand their understanding about the world around them! These estudiantes were exhausted from field day but still wanted to learn more about where to find Spanish speaking countries throughout the world. Students would pick a flag and work together finding their flag on the world map. (that's pictured behind them) Then I had students

ask if they could use the globe to make the connection to the country's name by trying to find the shape of the country from the other map. It was amazing to hear students work together and see how excited they were when they successfully found a country on their own.





# Water Around the World

On Thursday, May 23rd, third grade students from Twin Lake Elementary took their learning outside of the classroom for an exploration experience into water. At school, students had been learning about “Water Around the World” including water as a resource and water conservation. They have been working to answer the guiding questions of “Why are the world’s freshwater sources threatened?” and “How do people convince others to take action to contribute to a better world? During their study trip, students took a visit to nearby Twin Lake Park. Here they completed water testing on the lake and practiced taking the temperature of the water. They searched for tiny living creatures along the shore of the lake. Lastly, they took part in a trash clean up to help keep our park beautiful. This study trip allowed students to immerse themselves into their curriculum topic of water. They were able to bring their knowledge from their classroom learning, into nature with this hands-on experience.

- Driveway Grading
- Recycled Asphalt
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Mrs. Essing's and Mr. Mikesell's first graders went to John Ball Zoo to study birds. What an amazing opportunity to apply the lessons they have been learning in class around birds and their amazing bodies. They were able to see flamingos, eagles, toucans, owls, and much more! We have learned about the feathers and beaks of each bird and how they help each bird survive in the wild. Creating context around the environment or habitat for each bird and how the beaks and feathers relate to said habitat. It definitely helped make the classroom learning whole. Also, as a bonus, it was an exciting day since they were lucky enough to see all the lanterns throughout the zoo!

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# Just Keep Reading!

ADVENTURE Begins at Your Library was a Great Summer Reading program. Congratulations to all those who completed their reading hours, and got a Finishers Prize. You can still pick up your prizes through the end of August.

Look forward to meeting your friends and neighbors in the Dalton Library on Fridays to play games, compete in Lego challenges, or create a craft like a Fall Sunflower Jar.

This is the time of year we get to prepare for music with a visit for the Muskegon Recorder Players. Also, it is time to be creative and put our thoughts and dreams down on paper using poetry.

Dalton Branch – Muskegon Area District  
Library – Ms. Rachel Church



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Welcome Back!

It is so hard to believe that summer is coming to a close. For many of you it has been filled with trips to Michigan Adventure, Lake Michigan, Muskegon Clippers games or other great places around our beautiful state. Some of our students have been engaged

in Summer Acceleration...which might be the best summer program for kids in the state. Others, engaged in some of the great activities organized by our counseling staff at the Muskegon Luge, Duck Lake State Park, Camp Pendalouan or Snug Harbor. Whatever you have done, I hope you will encourage the kids to bring the positive energy that comes with those experiences into school this year! We are excited to have you back and really looking forward to helping your student(s) grow this year.

As you may have heard, Mrs. Peel (our counselor for many years) decided to retire at the end of last school year. We are excited to announce that Mrs. Alex Evan (RP Alumni and former WInterSun/ Pennsylvania School employee) will be filling this role! Mrs. Evans comes to us with a wide range of experiences that will help her be a great resource and advocate for our kids. We are excited to have her join our team!

Also, joining our team this year is Mr. Phil DeYoung as the RPI band instructor. Mr. DeYoung is no stranger to RP bands and he has served in many different roles in our performing arts department over the past several years. We are excited to welcome him and see what fun things he has in store for our music department.

ART IS BACK!!!! After a 2-year hiatus, we have been able to bring art back to our morning specials rotation. Each student will take art for 7 consecutive weeks before moving on to their next class. I am so proud that we were able to do this for our kids and cannot wait to see all the amazing work they produce!

Lastly, I will have specific information out as soon as possible in the mail and email about class placements, open house and school pictures! Look for something in the first couple of weeks of August!

Enjoy the rest of the Rocket City News Articles.

Yours in Rocket Pride,

*Scott Panozza*



# Summer Endurance Adventure

One of the things that all kids in this age band struggle with is how to manage the wide variety of emotions that come with the pre-teen life. Recognizing that, Mrs. Peel (now retired counselor) started this program several years ago and the results were almost immediate. Kids in this program spend time exploring this beautiful county and challenge themselves both physically and mentally. Through this work, they are able to better recognize their own emotions and deal with difficult social situations in a meaningful and productive way...something I think we can all agree on that is not done well in many parts of society today. We were fortunate enough to have Mrs. Evans (our new counselor) work with the kids this summer too so that she builds a great relationship with our students and starts off the 2024-2025 school year on a great note! Here are some highlight pictures from Duck Lake State Park, Camp Pendalouan, Muskegon Luge and Snug Harbor!







# RPI Choir End-of-Year Celebration!

Mr. Lawton, as many of you, LOVES to have fun! Well, in that same spirit, he and Mrs. Ross took their 5th-8th Grade Choir members to Michigan Adventure for a fun-filled and rainy day full of great memories. We cannot thank Mr. Lawton enough for the love, energy and commitment he puts into our students and helping them create lifelong memories. Thank you, Mr. Lawton, for all you do for RPI students! Special shoutout to all of the parent volunteers who helped make this amazing trip possible!





# 5th Grade Math PBL Project



One of the challenges, at times, is how to bring math to life. This year our 5th grade math teachers attempted to do just that. Students, after visiting the Muskegon Mercantile, created their own “stores” to sell products to students and staff. They sold Stanley toppers, Croc jibbits, Smencils, and a variety of other objects. Throughout this experience, they not only learned about decimals, but also about inventory, money, marketing, and how to appropriately price items for sale. At the end of this project, students raised enough money (\$1000) to donate \$500 to the Noah Project and \$500 so someone else could start their own business and hold a booth at the Muskegon Mercantile. What a great experience for our students AND our community partners!

#### Signage at the student booths read:

*This booth is sponsored by the 2023-2024 5th grade students of Reeths-Puffer Intermediate! Through project based learning, the 5th grade students of Reeths-Puffer understand that behind every small business, there's a person with a dream. They would like to THANK YOU for shopping locally and supporting the community!*



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# Cultural Festival



To close out the year in 6th grade social studies, students got to display their knowledge and understanding of different cultures throughout the world. This work was on display at the Career Tech Center and the turnout was great. Students studied language, food, clothing, schools, traditions and so much more. This idea started out as a crazy idea in December and took on many different looks and feels before culminating in a rich and engaging experience for our kids. Thank you to Ms. Carter and Mrs. Ulfax, with the help of our PBL coach Mrs. Kent for making this happen!

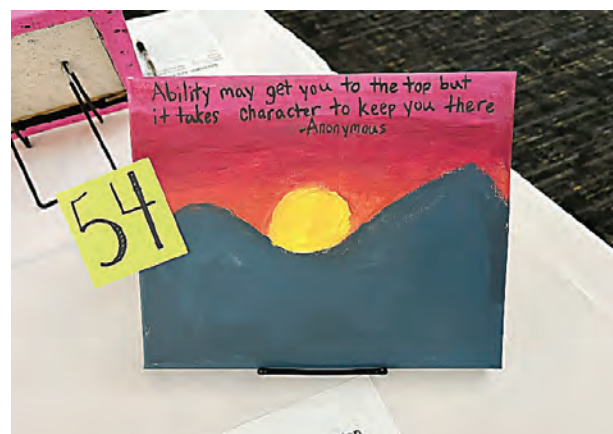


## Long Walk to Water Art Auction



5th grade students created art that represents 'strength' for their silent art auction. The art was created after reading the book A Long Walk to Water and learning about the civil war in Southern Sudan and the water crisis that so many face around the world. We chose 'strength' as our theme because it takes an enormous amount of strength to sacrifice so much just to have your basic needs met. After researching charities and choosing one to support, students create a wide variety of art, inviting their families and the community

to support their work in raising money! The students ended up raising just over \$1,700 to donate to Water for South Sudan. We are so grateful to everyone for their support!







WOW! What a week of learning, laughter, creativity and memory making. Nearly 100 students filled the halls of RPI for Camp Invention. The students got to experience and experiment many different science and problem-solving concepts then apply it to their own learning. From Kindergarten to 5th grade, our kids had a blast. Thank you to Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Marvin, Mrs. Sandee, Mrs. Hernandez, Mrs. Hildebrant for their commitment to giving our kids an inventive experience!





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## Open House!

meet your teachers ☀️ walk the gardens  
play with friends ☀️ enjoy a snack ☀️ make some music

say "hello" to the chickens ☀️ be happy!



### Reeths-Puffer Pennsylvania Elementary

August 20, 2024

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

*Bring the whole family!*

Radium Photography will be available starting at 5:30 to take your child's school picture, so please make sure to visit them!







## Penn kiddos lend a helping hand to create a healthier and more sustainable environment

What an opportunity! In the late fall, John Noling, past president of Muskegon Rotary, and David Bailey, City of Muskegon's arborist, stopped by Penn to inquire about using our hoop house as a temporary home for trees and plants that needed overwintering. They were excited to learn we were not only happy to share our hoop house and greenhouse spaces, but also eager to help care for over 700 trees and plants until they were ready to be planted in Muskegon's first micro-forest in the spring. In March, to thank the kiddos for their help, the team from Rotary, the City of Muskegon, United Way and WMSRDC came to spend a morning with us.

They taught us all about our state tree and brought saplings, pots, soil and mulch so every kiddo could plant their own white pine.

May 3, 2024 marked an extraordinary day for the kindergarten students of Pennsylvania Elementary as they embarked on a unique outdoor adventure.

Armed with boundless enthusiasm, the kiddos, many families from Penn and volunteers from Rotary, United Way, and WMSRDC set out to contribute to the creation of West Michigan's very first micro forest.

The area, once an empty patch of land, was now buzzing with excitement and purpose.

The concept of a micro forest, explained simply to the kiddos, captured their imaginations—tiny trees growing together to create a thriving mini-ecosystem right in their backyard.

Our young students not only planted trees, but also planted seeds of stewardship and love for nature. This micro forest will grow alongside them, reminding them of their role in caring for our planet.

Thank you SO much to all of the grown-ups who helped make this happen! Together, our RP Penn kiddos were able to plant trees & plants to get us one step closer to a healthier planet; helping to mitigate climate change, restore habitats for wildlife and beautify our community! So awesome that our kinders and their families were able to be part of this movement!

Big thanks also to John Noling and David Bailey for trusting us to take great care of all of the plants and trees we planted and also a huge thanks to WMSRDC and United Way.







### Get Ready to Rocket into a New Year!

The countdown is on! We're thrilled to be gearing up for the 2024/25 school year at Reeths-Puffer Middle School. We can't wait to welcome our incoming 7th graders and continue the journey with our awesome 8th grade class! As Principal, I'm excited to have everyone back this fall. Our dedicated staff is already busy preparing to make this year the best yet for all RPMS Rockets!

#### Launching into Growth:

We understand that middle school is a pivotal time in your lives. It's a period filled with exciting challenges, new discoveries, and opportunities to learn from both successes and setbacks. You'll experience a growing sense of independence, voice, and responsibility in your decisions. We're here to support you every step of the way!

#### Fueling Your Success:

Through positive interactions, we'll create a supportive environment where you can thrive. Our teachers are committed to providing the tools, knowledge, and experiences you need to conquer challenges and reach your full potential.

#### The Rocket Way:

At RPMS, we believe in "The Rocket Way." This means fostering a school culture built on respect, pride, and integrity. It's the foundation for everything we do.

#### Our Mission:

Our Mission is to maintain an inclusive, relationship-driven educational community that values all people and embraces empathy toward others. We promote confidence, collaboration, and critical thinking by providing students the academic and social-emotional tools to become thriving citizens.

Get ready for a blast-off into an amazing year at Reeths-Puffer Middle School! We're excited to have you on board!

As we begin the 2024/2025 school year, it is important to place the following events in your calendar:

#### Registration and Student Schedule Pickup

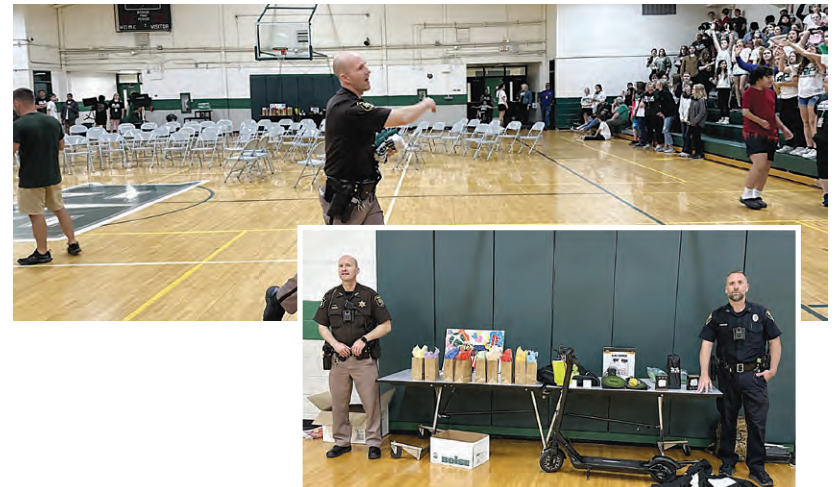
During registration, Chromebooks will be available for parents to complete the registration process online. Families are encouraged to complete the registration process in advance to make the process quicker. Parents must have a Parent Powerschool account (get a code from our office if needed). Specific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

- Tuesday, August 13th (12pm-3pm & 4pm-7pm)
- Wednesday, August 14th (8am-12pm & 5pm-7pm)

#### Open House

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

- Thursday, September 5th (6:30pm-8pm)



## New School Resource Officer Brings Years of Experience to Reeths-Puffer Schools!

Welcome Deputy Strunk, Reeths-Puffer Middle Schools first ever School Resource Officer!

We're excited to introduce Deputy Strunk as our new School Resource Officer (SRO)! Deputy Strunk brings a wealth of experience to the role, having served with the Sheriff's Department for the past seven years.

#### Building Positive Relationships

Before joining the law enforcement division, Deputy Strunk spent six years working in corrections and court services. He emphasizes the importance of building positive relationships with students and staff: "I believe a key part of this role is being a role model and showing how to interact with police in a positive way. This can have a lasting impact on how students view law enforcement."

#### Safety and Conflict Resolution

Deputy Strunk sees his top priority as "keeping students and staff safe." He also brings extensive experience in conflict resolution from his previous roles. "Most conflicts can be resolved when people are willing to listen," he says. "I hope to help students learn this valuable skill through positive interactions."

#### Getting to Know the Community

Deputy Strunk is committed to getting to know the Reeths-Puffer community. "My goals are to learn the needs of students and staff and identify ways to make our schools even safer," he shared.

#### A Family Man

Outside of work, Deputy Strunk enjoys spending time with his wife, Emily, and their daughter, Elliana. He's also a dog lover with two furry companions, Kai and Ori. When he's not on duty, you might find him cheering on his daughter at a sporting event, hitting the gym, or enjoying a movie night with his family.

Welcome aboard, Deputy Strunk! We look forward to having you as part of the Reeths-Puffer family!



# Calling All Colors Travel to Detroit



The Reeths-Puffer Middle School Calling All Colors group has met once a week this school year to investigate topics such as injustice, racism, discrimination, being an upstander, and using their voice. The group had the opportunity to cap off their learning through traveling to Detroit on May 29, 2024. They started the morning

by taking a guided tour through the Zekelman Holocaust Center. This afforded them to take a deep dive into the atrocities of the Holocaust and learn about the power of using their voice when they witness an injustice. They had a chance to hear the story of a survivor through the lens of his grandson. This powerful opportunity deepened their understanding and helped to reinforce the importance of humanity. According to student Jordan Walker, "It helped me learn a lot about the experiences of Holocaust survivors and gain a more in depth understanding of what they went through."

After the Zekelman Holocaust Center, the group moved to Comerica Park to enjoy a wonderful afternoon of Detroit Tigers baseball. Our students were free to explore the facility, eat tasty ballpark food, and see themselves on the



jumbotron! Student Colin English offered, "It was super fun to go there and see us on the jumbotron! The food was good too! It was amazing watching the game and spending time with friends! It was great to have so many parents and grandparents with us too! Everything was super fun!"

Powerful education, deepening understanding, and fun fellowship was the theme of the day.

Our RPMS students were exemplary in their



behavior and active participation. The Reeths-Puffer Community can be proud of this group of future leaders!



## PRIDE DAY 2024

Reeths-Puffer Middle School buzzed with excitement as we celebrated our annual Rocket Pride Day! Thanks to the tireless planning and preparation of our amazing middle school staff and student leaders, the day was a resounding success.

### A Day of Spirit and Competition:

Pride Day was a whirlwind of activities designed to showcase what it truly means to be a Rocket. Students participated in a variety of competitions, lessons, and activities that fostered both individual and collective school spirit.

### Highlights of the Day Included:

- **Rocket Recognition:** We kicked off the day by acknowledging and celebrating students who consistently demonstrate the core values of The ROCKET Way (Respect, Pride, and Integrity). Additionally,

our Ride With Pride grand prize winners were drawn after successfully finishing the year following the positive behavior pledge.

- **Color Run:** This energetic fitness challenge had students running (and walking!) to earn points for the grade level competition.

- **Class Competitions:** Throughout the day, students participated in various events, culminating in a thrilling competition between the 7th and 8th grades. The 8th graders emerged victorious, earning themselves a well-deserved "slushy day."



Pride Day was a fantastic display of school spirit, teamwork, and pride. It's a day that reminds us all of the many things that make RPMS such a special place!







# 2024 Washington DC



In May, 49 students took an 8th Grade trip to Washington DC. After a 14-hour bus ride we were greeted by the city with a rooftop dinner. Followed by visiting the US Air Force and the September 11th Pentagon Memorials.

We woke up the next day to a buffet breakfast before heading out for the day. We spent day 2 visiting the Iwo Jima Marine Memorial, a roof top view of the entire city, Arlington National Cemetery, and the National Museum



of the US Army. We also visited the Archives museum where we saw the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights and the U.S. Constitution. We wrapped up our day with World War II, Lincoln, Korean, and the Vietnam Memorials.

Day three started out again with a buffet breakfast before heading to Mount Vernon- The home of George Washington. Lunch was a crowd pleaser being at the Reagan International Trade Center Food Court with many options for all. With a full belly we headed to the White House and the White House Visitor Center. One of the students'

favorite memories is always the Holocaust Museum. With tickets to visit the whole museum, students have a somber experience of the multiple exhibits. We were able to meet a Holocaust Survivor and have one on

one conversations with her. Middle school students learn a lot about WWII and the Holocaust so this visit stands out. After a quick walk we visited the Natural Museum and ended our night at the Jefferson, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Martin Luther King JR. Memorial.

Our last day in DC was more than expected! We started by getting an unexpected tour of Capitol Hill which has some of the most beautiful architecture in DC. An underground tunnel led us to the Library of Congress and we ended our DC trip with a picture stop at the Supreme Court. We then began our trip back home with quick stops every two hours or so.



If you have a Reeths-Puffer student who will be in 8th grade for the 2024-2025 school year you too have the opportunity to sign up for this unique opportunity. Scan the QR code for more information. Fundraising opportunities will be available in the fall.







Welcome RPHS Students!

It is going to be a great year. Teachers have prepared by learning and planning. Student leaders have worked all summer long to plan new opportunities for the student body. Our campus has been full of student athletes, band members,

and performers putting in the work to be successful.

From a freshman walking in for the first time to a senior walking in for their last year, we hope the minute our students walk in the door, they feel valued, connected, and surrounded by opportunities and choices. We are proud of the connections and relationships that make our school feel small while offering big school opportunities with fine and performing arts, Advanced Placement, support classes, athletics, and a variety of clubs.

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

### Registration and Schedule Pick Up Information

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

Schedule Pick-up/ Registration at High School:

#### Thursday August 17

Juniors & Seniors 8 to 11 a.m. and 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.

#### Friday August 18

Sophomores & Seniors 8 to 11 a.m. and 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.

#### Monday August 21

Freshman 8 to 11 a.m. and 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.

For 10-12th grade students, plan on 30-60 minutes.

For incoming 9th grade students, plan 90 minutes.

# Rocket Pride and Ride With Pride Collide

At RPHS, Pride Day has been an annual tradition, in place since 1991. Each year, students plan the event to celebrate our great campus, the connections with each other, and all of the things that make Rocket City great. We have recently added the final Ride With Pride celebration to our Pride Day.

Ride with Pride goes on all year long and celebrates the positive choices that our students make.

The gym was filled with excitement and anticipation as our student emcees led their classmates through an assembly planned by the Student Council. It is always a highlight to recognize one member of Rocket City and the students made a great choice. Our Pride Day honoree,

recognized for his commitment to Reeths-Puffer, was our school liaison officer, Joe Luce. We are so thankful for everything Officer Luce does to keep our school and community safe and for his priority to build positive relationships with students.

At the start of the year, students were offered the opportunity to sign a commitment to positive choices around school and in the community. It was great to be able to give out amazing prizes to so many students that maintained their commitments to the pledge. A thank you goes out to Abbi



May's Fabric Shop, Hobo's, Bellacino's, Ace Hardware, Northside Vet, Riverside Automotive, Sholtz Dental, MR Investment Services and the Ride With Pride Coalition for the generous donations allowing us to purchase our Ride With Pride prizes on Pride Day and every Friday throughout the year.

Before students left the gym for a day of fun activities and games across the entire campus, five of our amazing students, who upheld their Ride With Pride pledge, got to open a giant box of

balloons, and one walked away winning a car. The entire gym counted down, student finalists lifted their boxes, and Noah Sapone was the lucky winner to walk away with a shiny, black Jeep Patriot. Thank you to our wonderful sponsors at Rynberg's Car Company for the generous donation. We are so thankful for your partnership.

We celebrate Respect, Pride, and Integrity every day, but on Pride Day, it is a great day to focus on the Rocket Way and on what makes Rocket City great; the people and connections with each other.



# Send Off Of The Class of 2024

From the sidewalk chalk messages created by some of our youngest students to the fireworks at the end of the night, June 4th was a special night of celebration. Right on our own campus, with the stadium packed, the class of 2024 was surrounded by a great community of people that were excited to celebrate them.



Prior to graduation, there were a variety of ways that students could reflect and celebrate the upcoming milestone. On the last Monday of their Reeths-Puffer career, as the sun rose over the stadium, many of our students joined together in a reflection about



their experiences, the community they are part of, and the opportunities ahead. The week started with Senior Sunrise and ended in an energetic tone with the Senior Parade where students could show off their creativity and personality. Senior Honors Night is also always a great celebration with recognition of excellence in so many ways. Millions of dollars in scholarships were awarded as well as accomplishments in academics, arts, athletics, CTC, and service. As evidenced by the quantity and variety of recognition at Honors Night, the class of 2024 has a bright future ahead.



The class of 2024 has raised the bar in many ways. This group has left a legacy through academic achievement, athletic accomplishments, performances, leadership, and service to their



community. There are many positive things at the high school that will continue moving forward because of their influence such as our hygiene pantry, daily tutoring, school store, and Pilot of the Pit, just to name a few. They are handing off the baton to the next group of student leaders to continue to improve and innovate.

Whether it is in student sections, on the stage, in arenas, or in our classrooms, this class has made Reeths-Puffer proud and has a bright future in front of them. They have had an impact through their leadership that will last well beyond their time as a student. They are forever ROCKETS!





# 3 Years of Ride With Pride

Smiles abound at the end of the 23-24 school year as we close out our 3rd year of Ride With Pride with 8 Assemblies around the district.

Thanks to the amazing sponsors in Rocket City, RP gave away a Jeep Patriot (thanks Rynbergs), a \$250 gift card, a year's supply of frozen yogurt, driver's training, an electric scooter, a game system, two mountain bikes, eight kids bikes, three scooters, and over \$2,000 in gift cards and other prizes. We are so grateful to our sponsors who make this program possible. If you have any questions or are interested in becoming a sponsor please contact Jennifer LaChapelle at [lachapellej@reeths-puffer.org](mailto:lachapellej@reeths-puffer.org) or check out our Ride With Pride table at the Rocket City Kickoff on September 6th.

## CAR SPONSOR

Rynbergs Car Company

## COMMUNITY SPONSORS

Thanks to the support of these sponsors, we can advance our Ride With Pride programming in the schools. Participating students had the opportunity to win amazing prizes by being all around good citizens.

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Joe's Creative Expressions  
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Riverside Automotive  
Scholtz Dental  
M3 Investment Services



If you are interested in becoming a sponsor for the 24-25 school year please reach out to Jennifer LaChapelle at [lachapellej@reeths-puffer.org](mailto:lachapellej@reeths-puffer.org) to learn more.



# Save the Date:

# 3rd Annual Rocket City Kickoff!



Attention Rocket City Community!  
Get ready to celebrate the spirit of our incredible community at the 3rd Annual Rocket City Kickoff. This year's event will take place on September 6th, just before the first home varsity football game. Mark your calendars for an evening filled with fun, excitement, and community bonding from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

The Rocket City Kickoff is a fantastic opportunity for everyone in the community to come together and

celebrate all that makes Rocket City special. Whether you're a long-time resident or new to the area, this event offers a chance to connect with fellow community members, discover local groups and organizations, and learn about various volunteer opportunities. This family-friendly event promises to be an evening of entertainment and activities for



painting, and numerous other activities that guarantee fun for everyone. This year's kickoff will be no different, with even more exciting attractions planned. Be sure to stay updated with the latest information by visiting our website at [Reeths-Puffer.org](http://Reeths-Puffer.org), or follow us on social media: Facebook @RPHS Athletics and Twitter @



RPAthletic. Community partners that are interested in participating please contact Cliff Sandee at [sandee@reeths-puffer.org](mailto:sandee@reeths-puffer.org)

Rockets of all ages. In previous years, we've enjoyed bounce houses, delicious food trucks, face

Don't miss out on this opportunity to celebrate our community and cheer on our varsity football team as they kick off the season. We look forward to seeing you there!

Go Rockets!



## 3rd Annual Rocket City Kickoff

Date: September 6th

Time: 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Location: Prior to the first home varsity football game





Nate Smith  
Director of Instruction  
and Learning

## Learning Deeply in 2024/25

“I can Google that..” or “Just type it into Apple maps.” or “Hey Alexa...”

Do any of these statements sound familiar when something is happening or there is uncertainty with trying to go someplace new?

Our world is moving at a different pace when it comes to the speed of answers to questions or trying to find out where we might be heading to a destination. This is

extremely helpful for travel and fact checking but does this speed and convenience apply to the speed of learning?

Learning does not always equate to quick and easy.

For our kids to develop strong connections to each other, a sense of belonging in community and compete in the world beyond R-P there needs to be time in their school and community to slow down and learn through the questions and their confusions life and community allow to happen.

This school year, I assure you, there will be many positive learning experiences and curriculum that connects to your child’s interests and talents. We will make sure that they feel safe both emotionally and physically in their classrooms but I also know that there will be ups and downs throughout the year. It is in these times that we want it fixed or remedied immediately. The issue that we have may be challenging but it may be an opportunity to grow in our patience with ourselves and others, learn to ask questions of people that may have more experience or ask for advice.

As we walk together for our kids in 2024/25, let’s always keep in mind that sometimes “Google” might have an answer or “Apple Maps” gives us the best route but how our students learn to navigate their learning, work through differences, lead, serve, rebound from disappointment, have an idea developed by others and work through all the ups and downs that go with deeper learning. This might be the most valuable learning that they take with them to impact the world beyond R-P.

Let’s make it a great year in 2024/25!

## Show What You Know Rockets

At Reeths-Puffer, we are always looking for ways to improve how students show what they have learned. Traditionally, students may take a

final exam or test at the end of a marking period to summarize what they have learned over the course of a unit or week’s worth of lessons. As we learn more about authentic learning and our students are spending more time considering what life choices connect to content or pathways they may be able to share their talents and gifts. The following forms of assessment are becoming more common in our classrooms, online programs, projects and internships.

Portfolio assessments are a dynamic way to evaluate student learning over time through a curated collection of their work. This method allows students to demonstrate their progress, skills, and understanding in a comprehensive manner. Portfolios can include various types of work such as written assignments, projects, artwork, and reflections. By regularly updating and reviewing their portfolios, students can track their own growth and set goals for future learning. Teachers can also use portfolios to provide personalized feedback, identify strengths and weaknesses, and tailor instruction to meet individual needs. This type of assessment encourages students to take ownership of their learning and develop self-assessment and critical thinking skills.

A personal Conference assessment involves one-on-one or small group meetings between the teacher and students to discuss their progress, understanding, and areas for improvement. These conferences provide an opportunity for personalized, in-depth feedback and allow for open communication about the student’s learning journey. During a conference, students can share their thoughts, ask questions, and receive guidance on how to enhance their performance. Teachers can use these sessions to clarify misunderstandings, set personalized goals, and offer targeted support. Conference assessments foster a supportive learning environment where students feel heard and valued, and they can be especially effective in building strong teacher-student relationships and promoting a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Gamification assessment integrates game elements into the evaluation process to enhance student engagement and motivation. By incorporating features like points, badges, leaderboards, micro certification and interactive challenges, gamified assessments transform traditional testing into a more dynamic and enjoyable experience. For example, students might earn points for correctly answering questions, completing tasks within a time limit, or progressing through different levels of difficulty. These elements create a sense of competition and achievement, encouraging students to actively participate and strive for improvement. Gamification not only makes assessments more fun and enjoyable but also helps to maintain student interest, providing immediate feedback and fostering a positive attitude toward learning.

These forms of “showing what you know” may be a different way but they allow our teachers and students to understand their growth, improvement areas and what content they have obtained and can access throughout their life!

*Portions of this article supported by ChatGPT*



# Reeths-Puffer Schools Wins the Certificate of Excellence Award

## Reeths-Puffer Schools Muskegon, MI

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) is pleased to award Reeths-Puffer Schools the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting (COE). ASBO International's COE recognizes districts that have met the program's high standards for financial reporting and transparency.

The school district earned the Certificate of Excellence for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the fiscal year ended 2023. This was the district's tenth submission for the award and the tenth year it was received. District leadership has been committed to this undertaking and is very proud of this accomplishment. The finance department, led by Finance Director Tracey French, compiled the necessary information in time for the annual audit. Brickley DeLong, certified public accountants assist with some technical aspects of the submission.

"For over half a century, ASBO International's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting has been the gold standard in promoting and recognizing excellence in financial reporting," according to ASBO International Executive Director Jim Rowan, CAE, SFO. "Communicating the financial and economic state of a district is so important when engaging with the school community and building their trust. Districts that receive the COE Award have demonstrated their ability to do that at the highest level."

By participating in the COE program, school districts demonstrate their commitment to financial transparency. Applicants submit their ACFR for review by a team of financial professionals who provide feedback to improve future documents. If the report meets the requirements of the program, it may receive the Certificate of Excellence. A district's participation in the COE program can facilitate bond rating and continuing bond disclosure processes. Reeths-Puffer Schools' strategic plan includes the valued goal of "the open sharing of district financial information". This award is another symbol of the district's commitment to this goal.

Reeths-Puffer Schools is the only district in Muskegon County that is a current recipient of this award, and one of only a handful in the West Michigan region and the State of Michigan as a whole. The Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for Reeths-Puffer can be retrieved on the district website at [www.reeths-puffer.org](http://www.reeths-puffer.org).



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UPCOMING  
BOARD MEETINGS

August 12, 2024	December 9, 2024	April 21, 2025
September 9, 2024	January 13, 2025	May 19, 2025
October 21, 2024	February 10, 2025	June 16, 2025
November 18, 2024	March 17, 2025	July 14, 2025

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