



Romeo Community Schools

# The **Bulldog** Bulletin

Fall 2023

Vol. 7 No. 2

# Fall Highlights

## Homecoming 2023

Our community has many treasured fall traditions, but one of the most popular is homecoming. Families come out in full force to watch the homecoming parade and see our marching band and drumline, dance teams, cheerleaders and student groups of all ages show their Bulldog pride. The pep assembly at Romeo High School is a highlight among students, providing more performance opportunities for our talented students. A spirited week culminates with the annual homecoming football game and the crowning of a new king and queen.



*RHS marching band and homecoming court during the homecoming parade on Oct. 11.*



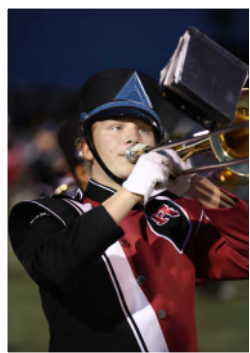
*The varsity dance team performs during the pep assembly.*



*Beneficiaries of this year's Watchdog game fundraisers – the Rainbow Connection, The Cassie Hines Shoes Cancer Foundation and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital – received \$10,000 each.*

*The RHS marching band performed during the homecoming football game; Ben Turner and Trista Ameel were named homecoming king and queen; QB Kaden Burroughs makes a run against Grosse Pointe South.*

*Photos courtesy of Mike Nicley*





## Update from the Superintendent

Dear Parents, Families and Community Members,

It has been an action packed start to this school year and it is hard to believe we are already into the holiday season. Our students are excelling both in and out of the classroom. Let me take a moment to congratulate our State Champion RHS Girls' Cross Country team who ran away with this

year's Division 1 state title. Congratulations to Coach Buslepp and his staff who work with students all the way down to the elementary school level. What an incredible accomplishment for the cross country program and these exceptional student athletes. A special thank you to all of the parents and family members who have supported their success.

We continue to work on the goals set forth in the 2023 RCS Strategic Plan. As we move into the new year we will wrap up the year one action plan initiatives and move right into year two of our work. One of the most exciting efforts in our year one work has been the Romeo Middle School transformation planning. This steering committee includes students, staff, parents and community members who have been hard at work with a series of intensive meetings this fall. Their work will be coming to a close with their final planning meeting in early December. We look forward to seeking board approval of the Academies at Romeo Middle School Master Plan a few months from now.

We are excited to see another 2021 Facilities Bond project come to completion with the opening of the new classroom addition at Hamilton-Parsons Elementary. Students in all grades will soon be experiencing their art, music and STEM learning in these amazing instructional spaces. We are so grateful for the support of our voters who allow us the resources to provide the best facilities we can for our students and staff. You will find additional information on our other current bond construction projects in this newsletter.

Our district has placed two very important millage renewal proposals on the February 27, 2024 Presidential Primary Election ballot. We are committed to providing a variety of informational resources about the ballot proposals. You will find an overview of the two proposals in this newsletter. Please take a moment to review the information provided in this publication and I encourage you to visit the "Election Information" tab on our district website, [www.romeok12.org](http://www.romeok12.org). A combination of electronic, print and on demand resources will be provided over the next several weeks. These election resources are all designed to make sure our voters are prepared whether you plan to vote via absentee ballot or at the polls.

In closing, we continue to embrace this year's annual theme "Choose Joy." As we experience this holiday season, please find time to enJOY time with family and friends. As I give thanks this holiday season please know that it is an extreme JOY to serve as your Superintendent.

Thanks for your continued support of our schools and GO BULLDOGS!

**Dr. Todd R. Robinson**  
Superintendent



## 2023-2024 District Calendar

### Monday, November 27

School Resumes from Thanksgiving Break

### December 20-January 2

No School - Winter Break  
School Resumes Tuesday, January 3rd

### Monday, January 15

No School - MLK Day

### Thursday & Friday, January 18-19

½ Day Grades 9-12  
High School Exams  
End of First Semester

### Monday & Tuesday, February 19-20

No School - Mid-Winter Break

### Wednesday, March 6

No School (All Students)  
Teacher Professional Development

### Friday, March 8

½ Day Grades K-8 - Records Day  
End of 2nd Trimester

### Tuesday, March 12

High School Conferences\*

### Wednesday, March 13

Middle School Conferences\*

### Thursday, March 14

Elementary Conferences\*

### March 22-29

No School - Spring Break  
School Resumes Monday, April 1st

\*Evening Times TBD

## Mission

Embracing **R** community while engaging, educating, and empowering students to inspire the future.

## Vision

Forging pathways through academic exploration guided by...

- Passions of our students
- Dynamic learning environments
- Invested community advocates

### Notice of Nondiscrimination

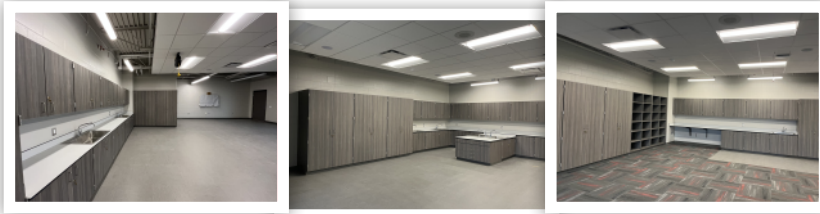
In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, and the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act of 1977, it is the policy that the Romeo Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex (sexual orientation or gender), disability, age, height, weight, marital status or any other legally protected characteristic, in its programs, services or activities, including employment opportunities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Director of Employee Services, 316 North Main Street, Romeo, MI 48065. (586) 752-0230.

## Bond Projects Underway!

We are very grateful for the support of our voters on the 2021 Facilities Bond. It is exciting to see the projects come to life from design to construction and eventual use by students and staff. Although we are experiencing some significant increases in supplies and labor costs from our original Department of Treasury approved application, we remain committed to stay on track the best we can with the priority projects in each annual group.

### Group 1 Projects

**Hamilton-Parsons Elementary** – We couldn't be more excited to unveil another 2021 Bond Group 1 project as we open the doors on the new addition at Hamilton-Parsons Elementary. This project is being completed ahead of schedule and includes new art, music and STEM classrooms for students in all grades. In addition to the new learning spaces, we have also reconfigured a significant portion of the school site to develop an interim addition to the main parking lot.



*The STEM, art and music rooms at Hamilton-Parsons await new furniture.*



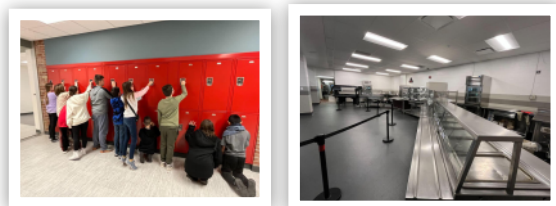
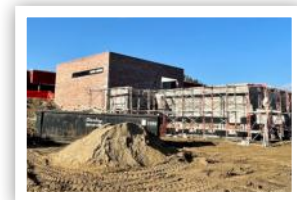
*An exterior view of Hamilton-Parsons.*



*At Croswell, the new addition is underway and preschoolers are enjoying renovated classrooms.*

**Croswell Early Childhood Center** – The biggest of our Group 1 projects is the renovation and new addition at Croswell. The 300-wing renovation was completed prior to the beginning of this school year with full classroom updates and new classroom furniture for our youngest learners. The 100-wing renovation and new addition to the building, which includes a welcome center and secured entry, in addition to four new classrooms and a large group activity area, will be completed in mid-February. The remainder of the project will continue through spring/summer of 2024 with a fall completion date.

**Indian Hills Elementary School** – The new addition to Indian Hills is progressing on schedule in spite of some delays over the summer months. Current efforts are aimed at getting the new addition closed up prior to winter so the inside construction work can continue uninterrupted. We are targeting a spring completion date.



**Romeo Middle School** – The student locker replacement and cafeteria serving area renovation are in full use and have helped improve the daily operation of the school for staff and students.

### Group 2 projects

Over the next two months, Group Two projects will complete their bid processes and go to the Board of Education for approval.

This next round of projects will begin in the spring/summer of 2024.

This group includes:

- Amanda Moore and Washington new additions
- Hevel STEM Room redesign
- New Varsity baseball and Varsity and JV softball fields at RHS
- A new STEM and Robotics Facility at RMS
- Complete redesign and renovation of the RMS outdoor athletic facility and north parking lot.

## MAASP State Recognition for 9GA Principal



Congratulations to Melissa Arendts on her nomination for the **2024 Assistant Principal of the Year**. Melissa was among 15 assistant principals from across the state of Michigan who are being recognized by the Michigan Association of Secondary

“Mrs. Arendts communicates with staff effectively – often with words of praise,” wrote one teacher, adding that “her words lift us all up, always encouraging us to be greater and do better for our students, for each other and for ourselves.” Another teacher described her as “a vault, an expert at forgiveness, and a role model for service.”

Writes a student about Mrs. Arendts: “She helped me to move my education forward to a level I have never imagined possible at my age. She has been an amazing mentor and an amazing assistant principal to everyone who has come through her school. . . . She is a supportive and hard-working person and keeps everyone engaged whether it be in the classroom or during school-wide spirit weeks and competitions. I have never had so much fun in school and at the same time still learning new things every day. Mrs. Arendts has turned the 9th Grade Academy into a safe and comfortable space to learn and grow into a better person.”

School Principals and the Michigan Association of Student Councils and Societies for excellence in their prospective school communities.

A host of staff members contributed to Mrs. Arendts’ nomination application, sharing their perspective on why Romeo’s 9th Grade Academy principal is deserving of this recognition.

## Building Future Trailblazers

Representatives from TK Mold & Engineering visited Romeo High School on November 2 to present a check to support The Academies at Romeo’s manufacturing pathway.

TK Mold won back-to-back awards from the American Mold Builders Association – Mold Builder of the Year in 2022 and Tooling Trailblazer of the Year in 2023. With each award comes a \$5,000 endowment to be donated to an educational institution of the company’s choice. Gifted to RHS for two consecutive years, the additional funding will support renovations to the shop along with new paint, lights, equipment, and machinery repair and replacement.



Architectural design teacher Evva Dossin, who serves as the CTE and Work Based Learning Coordinator, applauded the company not just for its financial support, but also for exposing students to the benefits of a

career in manufacturing and providing opportunities for them to work on real-world projects. For example, plans are underway to design and manufacture a cell phone holder, with students involved in the process from start to finish.

In an industry constantly evolving with new innovation and technology, TK Mold owner Tom Barr said there are even more opportunities for young people to advance and excel than there were in his day. Another benefit to a career in manufacturing, in his view, are the tangible results.

“We’re making something every day,” he said. “You get to see what you’re making – the fruits of your labor. It’s pretty cool.”

## A CTE Celebration

Romeo High School hosted its first Career and Technical Education Advisory Board meeting on the evening of November 9. Students in the culinary arts program served Mexican-inspired cuisine to approximately 220 guests. The dinner was followed up by breakout sessions for community partners to share their expertise and provide recommendations for the continuous improvement of each CTE program.



## Career Day at Romeo High School

Students in the 9th Grade Academy and Academies at Romeo High School had the opportunity to delve into their potential career interests during Career Day on October 18. Approximately 75 businesses set up tables in the RHS gymnasium for students to visit, gather information and fun give-aways, and even participate in hands-on activities.

Ninth graders had free rein of the gym when the doors first opened. Their assignment in Seminar class was to approach at least three booths with a list of questions. Expectations were set for how to present themselves and talk to the representatives at each table in a professional manner.



All the students had the opportunity to “dress for success” and earn a raffle ticket for a host of prizes generously donated by many of the participating businesses. Video production students were on hand to take “step and repeat” photos on the Bulldog red carpet.

While 9th graders are still in the process of choosing a pathway for next year, the 10th, 11th and 12th graders focused on businesses within their academies.

Academy of Health, Human and Public Service students had the opportunity to try on fire safety gear or learn how to intubate a patient from public safety officers, while Academy of Business, Entrepreneurship and Innovation students learned financial literacy lessons on how to manage their money. Finally, Academy of Design, Engineering and Manufacturing students spun a wheel to answer trivia questions about consumer energy while learning about the array of careers available, including construction, electrical, technology, communications and community affairs.

For businesses, Career Day is an opportunity to showcase the range of careers offered in their industries.

“We’re always looking for young talent,” said a representative from HIROTEC, an automotive tooling company. “We offer a lot of entry level jobs, especially on our manufacturing floor. It’s a great opportunity to explain what we do to the students and hopefully give them job opportunities when they graduate.”

Sean Earle, RHS Class of 2008, founded two businesses – a music school and party rental company. He talked to the students about what it means to be an entrepreneur.

“It’s essentially following your passion and turning your passion into a profession,” he said. “Whatever you do, there’s opportunity in every field.”



*On left, students learn about careers in consumer energy. On right, a student has the opportunity to try on fire safety gear courtesy of the Addison Township Fire Department.*



## Romeo Theatre Co. Presents '12 Angry Jurors'

Romeo Theatre Company grappled with a difficult dilemma in its production of the classic drama, *12 Angry Jurors*, in early November. The actors transformed for the stage a performance that was true to the original silver screen production, bringing to life a story that is as powerful today as it was in 1957.

This classic drama, originally titled *12 Angry Men*, "could have been written yesterday, with its provocative look at power, prejudice and clashing perspectives," Kendra Knoblock writes in her Director's Note. "The play also casts a particularly penetrating eye on various American

viewpoints, exposing the differences that education, economics, age, immigration status, and exposure to diversity have on the forming of those viewpoints."

*12 Angry Jurors* featured an ensemble cast of 14 along with student involvement behind the scenes. The production team designed a program and organized orders, paperwork and tickets, while the technical crew created spreadsheets and did the research to make sure the time period and characters were accurately represented.

"They have learned how to be leaders, meet deadlines and run a crew of their peers," Mrs. Knoblock writes. "They shine as much as our actors."

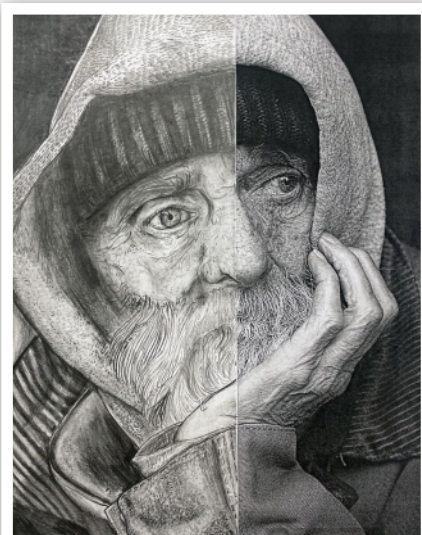
After directing over 100 productions, Mrs. Knoblock has announced her retirement at the end of the school year. Her greatest reward during her years as the director of Romeo Theatre Co. is seeing "our alumni shine in the outside world both on stage and off. I believe theater gives students the tools to work in a collaborative environment, while learning how to find the best version of themselves."



## Visual Arts Roundup

The Art department is in full swing at Romeo High School, with many exciting projects underway and ideas being developed for public arts projects within the community.

At the 9th Grade Academy, Art Foundations worked on creatively combining an animal with an object into something new. Demonstrating their mastery of new skills and using their creative problem solving skills, they successfully completed a set of self portraits (one stylized and one realistic).



*"Split Value," by Riley Frederick, demonstrates techniques learned in introductory drawing class.*

In Computer Graphics, the students are learning the tools of the Illustrator program as well as basic design and color theory. In this project they embark upon an open ended thematic design, involving various digital depictions of an "eye."



*Artwork by Kayla Sims*

Digital photography has been learning how to control the manual settings on a DSLR camera (a camera with removable lens). One of students' favorite activities was using a slow shutter speed to paint with light. They set up the camera on a tripod and used a LED glow stick to create their images.

Painting for Design class has been focusing on elements and principles of design in their recent paintings.

Autumn is always a fun time in Pottery class. Students learn basic handbuilding techniques to create all sorts of pottery projects, but a fan favorite this time of year is making ceramic

pumpkins. Students in Advanced Ceramics are learning how to use the pottery wheel, and discovering that, while it is fun, it's also a lot harder than it looks.

Lastly, AP Art and Design students are busy building their college art portfolios and preparing for upcoming art competitions this winter.



*Ryan Sosnoski used a DSLR camera to "paint with light" in digital photography class.*

Students in introductory drawing classes are studying foundational pencil techniques for creating accurately rendered artworks. One of these projects involves printing a picture, cutting it in two, and re-creating the missing side using applications of line, value, and texture.



## Community Connected Transformation

The Romeo Middle School transformation steering committee met with students, staff, parents and community partners on October 5 and November 8 to continue planning for the future of the middle school, with a final meeting planned in December. The Steering Committee, in partnership with Ford Next Generation Learning, is the primary advocate for the community-driven transformation of our middle school program, which will begin to prepare our students with the skills necessary for college, career, and life success. The Steering Committee makes decisions, advises and provides strategic



*On left, the team broke into smaller groups to share ideas and brainstorm. On right, student leaders work on their presentation to the group on wellness, integrative learning and creating a welcoming environment. Pictured, left to right, are eighth graders Tenley Debol, Sarah Amormino and Krystina Earl.*

insight throughout all phases of the Ford NGL roadmap, mobilizes the community behind the transformation, and cultivates deep, community-wide ownership.

Seventh and eighth grade student leaders participated in the meeting, as student voice plays a key part in the planning process.

## The Art of Video

Eighth graders at Romeo Middle School have the opportunity to sign up for media broadcasting with Brad Wenz and explore the world of video. So far the students have learned different elements not just of video, but storytelling as each project weaves in new components, from creating a statement about themselves that includes three truths and a lie, to creating narrated story books.

Vivienne Vernier said she loves “to be creative and bring light to the people who deserve it.” In her “What’s going on at

RMS?” video project, she chose to highlight work from her art class and give her fellow students “credit for making our school a more beautiful place to be.”

One of the most important things she has learned from the elective is how to “get people’s attention and to think out of the box.”

“When putting something out to my class, I want to make sure they’re listening and processing the content,” she said. “To accomplish that I need to stand out and make something they

haven’t seen before, and I think from trial and error throughout this course, I’ve gotten better at it.”

Vivienne also appreciates what she has learned from Mr. Wenz, who has inspired her to consider taking video production in high school.

“I like how Mr. Wenz gives us the creative freedom to express what we feel is important in our school, or what would improve the quality of our output,” she said.



## RMS Theater Co. Presents Holiday Classic

Mark your calendar for the Romeo Theater Middle School Theatre Department’s production of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* at 7 p.m. on Friday, December 15 and Saturday, December 16. The show runs one hour and tickets are \$5.

In this Christmas classic, a couple struggling to put on a church Christmas pageant is faced with casting the Herdman kids – probably the most

inventively awful kids in history. You won’t believe the mayhem – and the fun – when the Herdmans collide head-on with the story of Christmas!

This delightful show is adapted from the bestselling Young Adult book, and has become a holiday staple for groups across the country. This all middle school cast can be a good family show to bring in the holiday spirit.



## Day of the Dead

Fourth and fifth graders at Washington Elementary School learned about *el Día de los Muertos* (the Day of the Dead) on November 2 from English Learners teacher Lolita Walker.

“Last year, Lolita and I wanted to do something to celebrate the Hispanic diversity in our school and figured that Day of the Dead would be a perfect opportunity,” fifth grade teacher Jodi Zeno explained. “Because many of our students have parents or grandparents who celebrate *el Día de los Muertos*, it gives them an opportunity to become ‘the experts.’”

Making the experience all the more meaningful is a tie-in with the new Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) curriculum, in which the students learn about the Aztecs, Mayans and Incas.

To teach the children about the holiday, Mrs. Walker asked a series of questions and the students had “True” or “False” cards they raised in response. They learned, for example, that the Day of the Dead is not a scary holiday or a sad time, but a happy day of remembrance. A popular

tradition is to create a home altar for departed family members and other loved ones called an *ofrenda*. These displays range in size and are filled with favorite foods, beverages and objects of the deceased. Traditional items on display are marigolds, water and lit candles.

“You are offering your loved ones different things through your *ofrenda*,” Mrs. Walker said. “It might be some of their favorite foods. You might set out something that they loved or that they cherished, or display photos.”

Giving the EL students the opportunity to share and teach other students about their customs and traditions is important for many reasons, in Mrs. Walker’s view.

“Many times our students’ culture and ability to speak Spanish is viewed as a hindrance instead of an asset and I want to show them that it’s quite the opposite,” she explained. “I want them to know that they have so much to contribute and that they should be proud of where they come from, their ability to speak two languages, and their rich culture.”



From left, ELL students Victor Vargas Vega, Estrella Paramo, Santiago Zepeda, Jimena Reyes Aguilar, Itzel Hernandez, Leslie Flores, Victoria Barragan, Melanie Chaires Sanchez and Jade Arreguin Flores.



## Fight for Romeo

Second graders from all five elementary schools braved the driving rain to sing Romeo’s Fight Song with the RHS marching band during the varsity football team’s pre-game festivities on October 20.



## Honoring Veterans

Led by students from the Lighthouse Team, Indian Hills Elementary School recognized veterans during a special Bulldog Roundup assembly on November 10.

## I'll Huff and I'll Puff...

Kindergarten students at Hevel Elementary School celebrated the end of their Knowledge domain with a Stories and STEM Swap. Students rotated to each kindergarten classroom, working as a team to complete projects related to popular children's stories while building their skills.

In Katie Evans and Lauren Marley's classroom, the kindergarteners built the houses of the three little pigs.

In Linda Mayle and Isabella Contesti's classrooms, the young engineers constructed a bridge for the billy goats gruff to cross.

In Dominique Shaver's classroom, the students built the chairs of the three bears.



## Are You Smarter than Rocky the Bulldog?

Hamilton-Parsons Elementary School held its first Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) assembly on October 20, and students were able to match wits with the school mascot, Rocky the Bulldog.

Rocky was asked a series of questions about appropriate behavior on the playground, in the lunchroom, the hallway and the classroom. Typically Rocky got it wrong, but the students got it right!

For example, for the category of arriving or leaving school, kindergarten students were asked

whether it was appropriate behavior to: A. Run fast to get to your destination; B. Arrive late and not be prepared; or C. Wait quietly and patiently at your designated area.

Rocky gave this some thought and decided on "A". The kindergarteners disagreed, opting for "C" as the correct answer.

In response to a question about how to be respectful on the playground, the children cheered when Rocky identified the correct answer – include everyone and play fairly.



## Fun Run Highlights



### Fun with Foam

Amanda Moore Elementary School held its annual fun run fundraiser on September 22, adding foam to the fun to spark excitement and

enthusiasm in the students as they ran the course. Thanks to the generosity of parents, community members and local businesses, this year's run generated a gross total of over \$30,000.



### Getting Slimed

Hevel Elementary School students enjoyed a martial arts demonstration, bounce houses, a slide and an obstacle course during the school's annual Fun Run on October 27. Following the annual Halloween Parade, Principal Paul Essian and a host of willing staff members were "slimed" by students who met their fundraising goals. Proceeds will go toward a new playground set for lower elementary and to support activities and events throughout the year.

## Fall Sports Summary

We are nearing the end of our fall sports season, with many teams in the hunt for MAC championships and aspirations for more.

- The **boys soccer team** finished the season 15-3-2 and won the MAC White championship. They defeated Utica in the first round of Districts in overtime, but lost to the eventual district champion in Rochester Adams.

- The **girls golf team** had an outstanding season, finishing in second place in the MAC White with a record of 8-2.

- The **varsity football team** made a strong push to get into the playoffs and traveled to Clarkston for the opening round of the tournament. The team played hard, but was ultimately defeated by Clarkston to end the season.

- The **girls swim team** continues to make a splash in the water and placed second at the MAC White Division meet at Marysville on November 4. Sophomore Alyssa Chambers not only was named Swimmer of the MAC Division meet, but she has also qualified for the State Finals in the 100 Freestyle on November 17 and 18.

- The **boys tennis team** finished with a 7-5-3 record and in second place in the MAC Red. The team also advanced to the state finals and finished in 17th place, which was the best result in Romeo history.

- The **varsity volleyball team** finished near 500 on the season. They opened the state tournament with a victory against Lapeer and then defeated Port Huron Northern and Anchor Bay to win the District Championship!



## State Champions!

The boys and girls cross country teams hit the ground running this season. Both teams won the Regional title and competed at the State Finals at Michigan International Speedway on November 4. The boys team placed 17th and the girls won the State Championship! Annie Hrabvosky, Natalia Guaresimo, Emmerson Clor, Lillian Deskins and Vincent Guaresimo earned all-state honors.



*Girls volleyball, district champions*



*Boys soccer, MAC White champions*

*Photos courtesy of Mike Nicley*



**ROMEO  
COMMUNITY  
SCHOOLS**

316 N. Main Street  
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**2023-2024  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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**Dr. Todd R. Robinson**, *Superintendent*



## Continuing Down a Promising Path

Seven years ago our school district headed down a path of renewal, renovation, construction, and financial stability. Thankfully, **R** Bulldog community provided the necessary support.

Along the way, with community support, we renewed a non-homestead millage, renewed a sinking fund to improve and repair our school facilities, and passed a facilities bond proposal that didn't increase the tax rate.

Now we have a new high school, a revamped Barnabo Field, redesigned media center and collaborative space at the 9th Grade Academy, a new secured entry at RMS, an expanded early childhood center at Croswell, a much needed transportation facility, updated classrooms at all elementary schools, and several other facility enhancements. We have kept our promises and our students and staff are the beneficiaries of our continued growth.

Now we need to continue our work together with phases four and five of our long-term facilities and financial plans. During the February 27 presidential primary election, Romeo Community Schools will place two proposals on the ballot. The first calls for renewal of the 1.25 mill building and site sinking fund that Romeo voters last approved in 2019. The second calls for the renewal of an operating millage levied on non-homesteads such as businesses, second homes, rental property, and vacant land. (If approved, it will have no effect on the taxes paid on the homes in which Romeo Community School District homeowners live.)

Our path forward is clear, thanks to our parents and community. More information is available at [romeok12.org](http://romeok12.org). Scan the QR code to learn more.

**We have a lot to be thankful for in our school district... thanks to you!**



**STUDENTS  
FAMILIES  
COMMUNITY**

*Keeping Promises. Moving Forward.  
February 27, 2024*

