



Romeo Community Schools

# The **Bulldog** Bulletin

Summer 2024

Vol. 7 No. 5

## 2023-2024 Year in Review

### Congratulations Class of 2024!

Anyone who has experienced a Romeo Community Schools education knows what it means to BE ROMEO. This year, district leaders have formalized this popular catchphrase into a Profile of a Romeo Graduate. The essential values embodied in this profile are respect, responsibility, service, compassion and pride. A Romeo graduate learns how to apply the three "P's" (purpose, perseverance and professionalism) and the three "C's" (collaboration, communication and critical thinking), whether it involves self, team, others, school or community.

The Class of 2024 represents these character traits and attributes in a host of ways. As these graduates leave the halls of the Academies at Romeo High School career, college and life ready, we hope they always keep with them what it means to BE ROMEO.



Sophia Sunderlik



Roxana Herrera



Ava Kafoury



Julia Schneider



Katharine Wenz

### *Romeo High School Top 10 Class of 2024*



Daniela Lukaj



Hannah Tymitz



Gabrielle Eichhorst



Rhianna Arkan



Aiyssa Makott





## Letter from the Superintendent

Dear RCS Community,

I'm pleased to share with you the 2023-2024 year-end district newsletter. This year brought some new initiatives to Romeo Community Schools as well as furthering some of our key strategic efforts. We have moved into the second year of implementation of the 2023 RCS Strategic Plan that has lifted up some new planning efforts along with helping us gather critical feedback on other goal areas. This year

we completed a second administration of our School Climate Survey that allowed us to evaluate our progress in the past two years, but also receive new input from parents, staff and students. We have a comprehensive set of reports available on the district webpage summarizing the results.

I often talk about how students are the focus of our work and this year they have responded with some amazing effort. I want to congratulate all of our students for their hard work, success and commitment to their learning, our district, and the community. Thank you to our parents, guardians and family members for their unwavering support of not only their loved ones, but our district and community. Our community is special and so much of our success wouldn't be possible without our many partners whose support continues to amaze me more each year. Most importantly, let's thank our teachers, support staff, building administrators and district leaders for all they do.

Throughout this edition of *The Bulldog Bulletin*, you will find examples of amazing accomplishments of our students and staff at all levels. We are proud of our achievements in the classroom, fine arts, on the playing field, in our technical programs, and other activities. It is not possible to represent them all, but we hope this newsletter contains examples of the great programming and people who are invested in providing a well-rounded experience for all of our students.

We are proud to honor the Class of 2024. Although they began their high school experience impacted by the pandemic, they have soared past those challenges to a tremendous level of success and aspirations for after high school. Our 2021 Facilities Bond efforts continue this summer and we have recently updated our construction timeline that is referenced on page 3.

We have spent this past year with a focus on "Choosing Joy" and it has been the most vibrant annual theme we have had to date. There is so much to be grateful for and although our work is hard, it is rewarding as well. I hope your summer is filled with all that you desire along with the opportunity to rest and recharge. We look forward to all that 2024-25 has in store for us.

**Go Bulldogs!**

**Dr. Todd R. Robinson**  
Superintendent



## Teachers of the Year

All three of this year's Teacher of the Year recipients are exemplary role models of excellence in teaching. They set high standards for themselves and invest themselves in their students' success. Below are samples of what their colleagues had to say about them in their nomination forms.

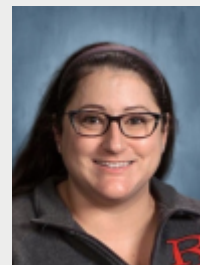


### Krista Miller

Krista is a 1st-grade teacher at Indian Hills Elementary.

"Students and adults alike thrive in Krista's presence because she is an advocate for all learners, a reflective

thinker, a warm and nurturing soul, a humble and trustworthy partner in learning, and an all-around exceptional human being."



### Amanda Mazzio

Amanda is the Multilingual Learner Interventionist at Romeo Middle School.

"Amanda consistently goes above and beyond for her

colleagues and for her students. She is always reflective in her practice and seeks out information and strategies to continuously improve."

In addition to achieving the distinction of being named Romeo Community Schools' Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Mazzio was chosen as Macomb County's 2024 Outstanding Teacher of the Year at the Middle School level.



### John Phillips

John works with all of Romeo's instrumental music students as the Romeo High School band director.

"You can find John at every building, and at every game and pep

assembly. When you are in John's class, you can see how he works hard for his students so that they become leaders by teaching each other. You can see his pride in their achievements and growth, and that is what teaching is all about."



## Retirees

Romeo Community Schools is saying goodbye to a number of teachers and professional staff this year. We appreciate their years of dedication to our noble profession and the difference they have made in the lives of our students.

**Janet Austin**, Teacher, Washington Elementary

**Kristine deVaux**, Teacher, 9th Grade Academy

**Laura Forro**, Teacher, Romeo High School

**Kendra Knoblock**, Teacher, Romeo High School

**Kathy Kurkowski**, Teacher, Indian Hills Elementary

**Robert Maedel**, Teacher, Washington Elementary

**Dave Mineau**, Supervisor, Romeo Virtual Academy

**Lori Parker-Losey**, Romeo High School

**Erwin Slava**, Romeo High School

**Colleen Vanderhoff**, Washington Elementary

**Denise Winston**, Teacher, Hevel Elementary

**Suzanne Ziel**, Teacher, Romeo Middle School

**We are also celebrating our support staff retirees for their years of service and commitment to our district and students. We wish you all the best in your retirement!**

**Judy Bettcher**, Administrative Assistant, Romeo High School

**Kelly Grzegorzewski**, Cook, Romeo High School

**Monica LaCroix**, Bus Driver, Transportation Department

**Vicki O'Toole**, GSRP Paraprofessional, Amanda Moore Elementary

**Donna Picklo**, Administrative Assistant, 9th Grade Academy

**Lori Pulis**, Food Service Associate, Washington Elementary

**Patricia Rizo**, Cook, Romeo High School

**Susan Simons**, Bus Driver & FSA, Transportation Department

## 2024 School Climate Survey

Earlier this year our district gathered feedback from all our constituents as part of the 2024 School Climate Survey. This was a follow-up to the original 2022 survey. We have taken the past few months to fully analyze the results in isolation and compared to the previous survey administration. Thank you to all who participated. We hope you will take the time to review the Executive Summary and more comprehensive reports available on the website (simply scan or click on the QR code). The results from this survey are very positive and consistent with the previous survey. We also added a few questions related to the district's Strategic Plan. Please consider taking some time this summer to review the results and we will continue to incorporate them as we look to next school year and beyond.



## 2021 Facilities Bond Project



The Board of Education recently approved an updated Design and Construction Schedule for the 2021 Facilities Bond. We are nearing the midway point of the approved projects and have experienced a significant level of escalation on supply and labor costs in the first two years of this bond program. The district has recently conducted a full review of current bond funds and projected available funds for the future projects in Groups 3 and 4. This review and the updated timeline forecasts funding for the remainder of the bond program. Additionally, the board approved a list of "Deferred Projects" that have been placed on hold until there are available funds. Group 2 projects are all under construction this summer and we have started the design phase on Group 3. Please review the updated schedule on the district webpage under the "Bond Projects" page.



*On left, progress is made on the STEM and Robotics Center at Romeo Middle School.  
On right, the entrance to Croswell Early Childhood Center.*



*Progress continues on the RHS athletic complex improvements. Pictured here is the new baseball field.*

**Thank you again for your continued support of Romeo Community Schools and investing in our facilities that will benefit our students both now and well into the future.**

## RCS Band Program Highlights

We had another exciting year for our Romeo Bands. During the course of the year, our students at the middle and high school levels had the opportunity to perform at many different venues and events. During the second semester, students performed at school concerts, competed at band festivals, and performed at solo and ensemble events. As always, our Bulldog Bands brought their absolute best and did an outstanding job representing our district.

In January we had nearly 130 events that performed at the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association (MSBOA) **District XVI Solo and Ensemble Festival**. Nearly all of these performances earned first and second-division ratings, which are the highest possible ratings. The students prepared solos and small groups and performed for an expert adjudicator on their instrument. In addition, many of our high school events qualified for **State Solo and Ensemble** and represented our school at Port Huron Northern High School in March. During that festival, our **RHS Woodwind Choir** was selected as an "Outstanding Ensemble" for the State of Michigan.



Our full bands also performed well in the **MSBOA Band Festival** in March. We had five bands perform at Dakota and Anchor Bay High Schools and all of them did outstanding work. All

three high school bands earned a Superior (highest) rating and our middle school bands earned a Superior and Excellent rating. Each group performed three pieces of music and sight-read music for an expert panel of judges.

We finished up our year with several performances. This year, we were able to bring back our Romeo Bands Collage Concert featuring all of our bands from 6th to 12th grade. We also were able to create our inaugural class of the Tri-M Music Honors Society. These outstanding students will be working within our community for service, charity, and excellence in music.



We closed out the year by honoring our community members who have served in the armed forces in the Romeo Memorial Day Parade. This performance featured members of our 8th grade in addition to the RHS marching band. We look forward to another great year in 2024-25!



For the second consecutive year, Romeo Community Schools achieved the designation of **Best Community for Music Education** by the NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) Foundation. The recognition considered various factors, such as course offerings, competition scores, enrollment, and school and community support. We are thrilled to receive this well-deserved honor in recognition of excellent music programs across the district.

## ROMEO MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND AND CHOIR

### RMS Music Excels

The Romeo Middle School Bands and Choir continue to excel. Along with school performances throughout the year, both groups went to the Michigan Band and Choir Festivals. Throughout the school year there were 164 students that participated in choir, three choir concerts totaling 40 pieces of music, and a first ever showing at both the Michigan School Vocal Music Association (MSVMA) Solo and Ensemble and Choir Festival. Eighth grader **Hudson Rice** participated in Solo and Ensemble at Chippewa Valley High School and received a Division 1 Superior rating.

The 7th and 8th grade choir participated in the MSVMA Choir Festival at Stoney Creek High School and received a Division 1 Superior rating, with an almost perfect score in the sight reading category.

At the Michigan School Band & Orchestra Association (MSBOA) festival, the 8th Grade Symphony Band received a Division I (Superior) rating with straight 1st ratings from all the judges. The 7th/8th Grade Concert Band received a Division II (Excellent) rating. The band also performed at school events such as the OSCAR ceremony and Student of the Trimester celebrations.

Our Romeo Middle School bands have been busy visiting the elementary schools to show our younger students all of the various instruments that



they can learn to play. We also had **Owen Kuchenmeister, Ivana Misajlovich, Kathleen Gray, Aidan Phillips, and Kayla Kranson** represent our school in the **MSBOA District XVI Honors Band**. The students were part of an all-star group from Macomb, Oakland, and St. Clair Counties who performed a concert at Lakeview High School in April. Our 8th grade Symphony Band also provided the music for the annual OSCAR ceremony at RMS and performed in the orchestra pit.





## Romeo Theatre Company

Romeo Theatre had an amazing season with three full productions, scholarships awarded at Michigan Thespian Festival, and two students chosen to perform at MSU Wharton Theatre for the Sutton Foster Standing Ovation Awards.

It was Kendra Knoblock's final bow as director of RTC after 35 years and over 100 productions. The final season opened with the classic drama **12 Angry Jurors**. The skill and maturity was evident as many commented that after the first few moments one forgot these actors were high school students. The crowd was hushed as audience members waited for the final verdict.

The second production, chosen by the Theatre I students, brought back the popular **You're a Good Man Charlie Brown**. The musical captures

classic moments of the Peanuts gang with the stage transforming into a comic strip, right down to outlining the costumes.

The final production was the musical **Shrek**, a show Mrs. Knoblock wanted to create for years, but needed the right group to make it possible. She says her only regret was not having a second weekend available, as the show sold out days before the performances. The costumes, make-up, and technical design looked professional, but were still created by students. The 20-foot dragon and costumes have already been sold to another school! Congratulations to Kayla Sak (Fiona) and Sawyer Lackowski (Farquar) for being chosen as the Sutton Foster Recipients. We would also like to congratulate Chloe Allen and Kayla Sak for the scholarships they received at the Michigan Thespian Festival to further their studies in musical theater.

## ROMEO MIDDLE SCHOOL THEATER

### On Stage at RMS

On December 15-16, the RMS Theater program presented **The Best Christmas Pageant Ever**. The over 80 member cast and crew worked hard to put on amazing performances for their families and the Romeo community. On April 26 and 27, the RMS theater students returned to the stage with their performance of **The Wizard of Oz Youth Edition**. An ensemble group also previewed the show for the Board of Education. The students involved worked hard learning music, choreography, and blocking, along with keeping up with their school work, and were able to perform for over 950 people between the two performance dates. In both productions, students not only acted on stage, but also ran lights, sound and served as the backstage crew. RMS Theater also hosted an after



school drama club where over 75 students gathered once a week to work on theater skills to prepare them for the play and the musical and to enhance their skills in theater. The students in both productions and Drama Club were led by RMS Theater Teachers Patrick Salembier and Chelsea McKay.

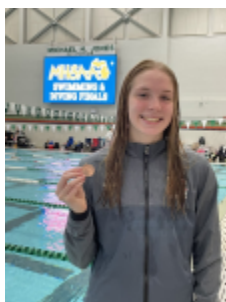




## Athletics Recap

Our sports teams ended the 2023-24 school year with some notable accomplishments. These include four **MAC Division Championships** – the **Boys Soccer** team, **Girls Cross Country** team, **Boys Bowling** team and **Girls Bowling** team. Both the **Volleyball** and **Wrestling** teams won **District Championships**. The **Hockey** team and the **Boys and Girls Cross Country** teams also brought home **Regional Championships**! Our Dance team finished in fourth place in Pom and eighth place in Jazz at **Nationals** and 11 sports were represented in the **State** finals.

## State Finals



The **Boys Tennis** team finished in 18th place and the **Girls Tennis** team finished in 14th place. Among individual competitors representing their teams were: Maddy Raska and Cam Hill from the **Bowling** team; Alyssa Chambers from the **Girls Swim** team; and the following individuals from the **Girls and Boys Track** teams: Connor Clor, James Brickel, Bryce Goodsell, Vince Guaresimo, Lillian Deskins, Annie Hrabovsky, Emmerson Clor, Violet Hrabovsky, Natalia Guaresimo, Olivia Purdy, Trevor Siemen, Dereon Foster, Evianna D'Angelo, Layla

Babich, Samantha Sackfield, Eve Goedge, Sydney Fabbri and Josie Finkbeiner.

The **Boys Cross Country** team finished in 17th place while the **Girls Cross Country** team (Annie Hrabovsky, Natalia Guaresimo, Emmerson Clor, Lillian Deskins, Olivia Purdy, Violet Hrabovsky and Gracie Youngblood) won the State Championship. The **Boys Wrestling** team sent six wrestlers and the **Girls Wrestling** team sent four wrestlers. Sisters Belicia and Kaili Manuel each won an Individual State Championship in **Wrestling**!



## All-Conference Awards

**Boys Tennis** – Marko Dimovski, Austin Habicht, Drew Roth, Brandon Apil

**Volleyball** – Hannah Tymitz

**Cross Country** – Vince Guaresimo, Bryce Goodsell, Michale Magnoli, Owen Gould, Luke Allen, Annie Hrabovsky, Emmerson Clor, Violet Hrabovsky, Natalia Guaresimo, Lillian Deskins, Gracie Youngblood, Olivia Purdy

**Girls Swim** – Alyssa Chambers, Giselle Stone, Victoria Laverell, Sarah Jespersen, Isabella Greco

**Girls Golf** – Anna Gergueson, Lydia Asman

**Boys Soccer** – Alex Cappuso, Joey Casuccio, Andrew Taseski, Brayden Burke, Aiden Odren

**Football** – Victor Earl, Ryan Relyea, Joey Celaj

**Boys Swim** – Connor Stone, Dylan Hlavin, Carter Vinson, Gianmarco Maltese, Antione Chemali

**Girls Tennis** – Jade Salvatore, Alexa Mackovski, Kayla Deguzman

**Baseball** – Joey Badalamenti, Nick Kaminski

**Boys Basketball** – Aidan Tague

**Girls Basketball** – Aya Mosley, Jacqui LeBlanc

**Bowling** – Maddy Raska, Emilee Inwood, Brody Gniech, Ethan Amormino

**Competitive Cheer** – McKenna Hale, Brooklyn Robinson

**Hockey** – Alessandro Evangelista, Spencer Groszkiewicz, Drew Basha

**Softball** – Jacqui LeBlanc, Liz Pugh, Aubrey Rich, Katie Murphy

**Lacrosse** – Joey Zyrek, Jackson Rice

**Girls Soccer** – Ava Kelley, Jillian Wilkinson, Annelise Frank, Addison Ayris

**Boys Golf** – Dominic DeLaura, Chase Laverell

## Coaching Awards

Eight of our coaches were recognized by their peers as Macomb Area Conference **Coach of the Year**. These coaches were Laura Rienas and Jaclyn Delamielleure – Cheer; Dennis Gniech and Eric Sisco – Bowling; Mike Buslepp – Girls Cross Country; Vinnie Vasilevski – Boys Soccer; Matt Burke – Hockey; and Matt Burr – Girls Tennis.

## All-State Awards

All-State Awards were handed out to the following individuals:

**Ryan Relyea**, Football

**Annie Hrabvosky**, Cross Country/Track

**Emerson Clor**, Cross Country/Track

**Lillian Deskins**, Cross Country/Track

**Natalia Guaresimo**, Cross Country/Track

**Vince Guaresimo**, Cross Country/Track

**Alyssa Chambers**, Swim

**Joey Casuccio**, Soccer

**Alex Cappuso**, Soccer

**Owen Youngblood**, Wrestling

**Owen Perry**, Wrestling

**Bryce Holt**, Wrestling

**Valentino Adamo**, Wrestling

**Ama Manuel**, Wrestling

**Belicia Manuel**, Wrestling

**Kaili Manuel**, Wrestling

**Bryce Goodsell**, Track

**Connor Clor**, Track

**James Brickel**, Track

**Violet Hrabovsky**, Track

## After High School

The following seniors will be continuing their athletic careers at the next level:

**Addison Ayris** – University of Detroit Mercy, Soccer

**Ava Kelly** – Saginaw Valley State University, Soccer

**Annelise Frank** – Rochester University, Soccer

**Jillian Wilkinson** – Rochester university, Soccer

**Gabriella Ruffino** – Oakland University, Soccer

**Joey Casuccio** – Tiffin University, Soccer

**Hannah Tymitz** – Newman University, Volleyball

**Emma Pagliarella** – Notre Dame College, Volleyball

**Ava Orlando** – Northwood University, Volleyball

**Trista Ameal** – Saginaw Valley State University, Volleyball

**Kara Plutschuck** – Ohio Christian University, Volleyball

**Lexi Hill** – Davenport University, Stunt Cheer

**Brooke Buechel** – Michigan State University, Cheer

**Gracie Youngblood** – Saginaw Valley State University, Track & Cross Country

**Maddi McCullough** – Madonna University, Track & Cross Country

**Ethan Wilkie** – Ohio Northern University, Track & Cross Country

**Michael Magnoli** – Nova Southeastern University, Track & Cross Country

**Vince Guaresimo** – University at Buffalo, Track & Cross Country

**Victor Earl** – Central Michigan, Football

**Ryan Relyea** – Northwood University, Football

**Jake Watson** – Mount Union University, Football

**Matthew Whiteman** – Lansing Community College, Baseball

**Buster Debol** – Macomb Community College, Baseball

**Jade Salvatore** – Lawrence Tech, Tennis

**Dominic DeLaura** – Saginaw Valley State University, Golf

**Ama Manuel** – Grand Valley State University, Wrestling

**Jacqui LeBlanc** – Lawrence Tech University, Softball

**Anna Iwanicki** – Northwood University, Softball

**Annabell Power** – Oakland University, Softball

**Aubrey Rich** – Macomb Community College, Softball

**Elizabeth Pugh** – Oakland Community College, Softball

**Allison Wineski** – Macomb Community College, Softball

**Nick Wiers** – Oakland University, Hockey

**Cole Paquette** – Oakland University, Hockey

**Lily Kosal** – Delaware State, Equestrian

## RMS Bulldogs Athletics

Romeo Middle School had another successful sports year. We had a high participation rate in our athletic teams, with students having the opportunity to participate in six interscholastic, eight club teams and four intramural offerings. The teams continue to offer students a chance to improve or acquire new skills, build friendships, promote teamwork, and have fun!





## THE 9TH GRADE ACADEMY

### End of a Journey

The 9th grade journey formally began and ended in the same place: Barnabo Field. In September, the students signed the Class of 2027 banner and gathered for an opening assembly to recite the Commitment to Graduate pledge.

Stops along the journey included

Career Day at Romeo High School, the Michigan Career Quest Southwest, a visit to Macomb Community College, online career card sorting to help determine a pathway for 10th to 12th graders, a tour of all the pathways at RHS, the Pathway Reveal Ceremony, and college tours based on which Academy they elected to attend (Northwood University for the Academy of Business, Entrepreneurship and Innovation; Kettering for the Academy of Design, Engineering and Manufacturing, and Detroit Mercy for the Academy of Health, Human and Public Service).

At the end of May, 9GA students and staff celebrated a successful year with the Academy Awards, which recognized achievement in core classes as well as outstanding character traits. The afternoon concluded in the stadium for the announcement of which team – Discovery, Expedition or Quest – received the most points based on overall academic performance and participation. The winner of the coveted Bulldog Trophy, with a grand total of 21,772 points, was Team Expedition.



*Pictured with the Bulldog Trophy are Team Expedition leaders, from left, Scott Taubitz, Sophie Kimmel, Brittany Blaska and Jenn Cubitt.*

### Freshman Seminar Interviews

Seminar was a time built in the 9th graders' schedule when they learned a lot of skills they will bring with them next year when they transition from the 9th Grade Academy to Romeo High School. From getting to know one another in the opening module, to improving their communication skills – tuning in to others, using active listening, connecting with peers, and giving and receiving feedback, to name a few – and learning how to resolve conflicts were all valuable lessons they explored.



*Dan Wesner, owner of Wesner Tuxedo, interviews 9th grader Noe Orozco-Beccerra.*

The culminating activity was a presentation to peers in Seminar class. To practice for this, the 9th graders participated in mock interviews with adults, including business partners and Romeo staff. Questions included which Portrait of a Romeo Graduate value they demonstrate most regularly (and ways upholding that value has been challenging) along with two “pros” and one “grow” as they looked back on their freshman year.

Interviewers were asked to complete a rubric to provide helpful feedback to the students in helping them prepare the “Four P’s” to a successful presentation: purpose, plan, poise and practice. For example, pointers for “poise” include maintaining eye contact and positive facial expressions, having good posture, and speaking clearly and confidently.

## THE BEI ACADEMY

### A Cross-Curricular Celebration of Food

In its second year, the food truck project has expanded to include students in the Academy of Business, Entrepreneurship and Innovation (BEI) as well as pathways in other academies. The project was spearheaded by BEI teacher Shelly Bartolotta, who guided students along the way in her business classes while working with Chef Jerry from the culinary classes. The theme this year was state-inspired cuisine, with 20 states represented. The culminating event was a Staff Appreciation lunch on May 7, in which teachers and staff at Romeo High School enjoyed visiting the food trucks and sampling food prepared by culinary students while learning about the culture of the various locales, from Michigan to Hawaii.

History students researched and wrote about the state's history with food for each truck, science students tested and made hand sanitizers for the crowd, math students calculated the space configuration and made maps for the courtyard, and English students wrote about the state's history. In addition, construction students helped build the trucks.





## Future Entrepreneurs in the Making

Students in Julia Lengemann's entrepreneurship class in the Academy of Business, Entrepreneurship & Innovation (BEI) learned what it takes to be an entrepreneur as part of a special learning opportunity provided by Velocity, a business incubator, accelerator and coworking space located in Sterling Heights.



Participating in the morning session in January were local entrepreneurs or professionals who work in the entrepreneurial environment. These business people were assigned to individual table groups, serving as coaches to guide the students through each section of a business canvas exercise while using their own personal business experience and real-world insight to help them form a solid solution.

The goal of the event, according to April Boyle, Velocity's Senior Advisor for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, was to introduce entrepreneurship as a realistic option to the students while they are still young.

"We know that with the right support, information, resources and education, it is a very viable option as a career path and we want to give the students the tools and resources that are necessary to try it," she said.

## THE DEM ACADEMY

### The Future of the Ford Engine Plant



Students in the architecture pathway in the Academy of Design, Engineering and Manufacturing (DEM) came up with their own vision for the future of the Romeo Ford Engine Plant property. On May 29, they shared their innovative ideas with the public at

Romeo Graubner Library during an open house. Their designs were also on display in storefronts throughout the community through June 6.

Natalie Lawrence had the idea of a Romeo performing arts center featuring two big professional performance halls, an additional covered venue, an open air theater and a welcome center. Braylon Welch created Romeo Raceway as a nod to Ford's history with racing "and since Detroit is the Motor City, it is fitting to have a racetrack located in Romeo."

Zandr Kryscynski pictured above, designed the Romeo Village Mall to create more employment and support recreational fun for the communities of Romeo, Washington, Bruce Township and other neighboring counties.

"The Romeo Ford Engine Plant created a lot of jobs," he said. "It created a community — people who worked in that area of expertise — so I thought we should replace it with another place that can create community."

From architecture teacher Evva Dossin's perspective, the project was exceptionally worthwhile.

"They got to experience a real-world application," she said. "They gained practical experience in applying theoretical knowledge to real-world engineering challenges. They also learned to work with many different types of professionals within the field, learn common design software, and explore new upcoming technology used in the industry."

### MITES Awards

Among the 81 projects from architecture, machine tool, mechanical design, drafting and construction classes entered into the Michigan Industrial Technology



Education Society (MITES) 2024 regional competition, 49 advanced to the state competition. Three projects won the **Regional Grand Award** for best in their combined division of Architectural Design, Wrought Metal and Electrical.

At the state level, 33 projects ranked in the top 10 with four first places, five second places and three third places. Romeo High School also won the **Grand Award** for Electrical Best in the State and Architectural Division B award.

The top award winners were senior **Vincent Guareimo** for his electrical project and senior **Brianna Komaromi** for her drafting interior design project.

Junior **David Atkinson**, pictured above, won the Grand Award at regionals and second place at states for his wing sculpture. The sculpture is designed for people to take selfies, then post the selfie with a hashtag "to draw attention to the school and everything that is going on at the DEM Academy," David explained. The sculpture is made out of aluminum, with the individual feathers either sandblasted or polished.

David, a member of the National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society, hopes to study mechanical engineering in college.

## THE HHP ACADEMY



*Pictured, from left, Cora Ferrington sits in on class with her mom, education pathway teacher Lori Ferrington; Bradyn Labish, son of RHS School Resource Officer Deputy Scott Labish, works on a birdhouse with high school helpers in the construction shop; and Catherine Garrisi, daughter of RHS math teacher Jill Garrisi, has fun with clay in Lisa Joseph's art room.*

## Introduction to Education Projects

The children of staff at Romeo High School took advantage of National Take Your Child to Work Day on April 25. The event was organized by students in the Introduction to Education class in the Academy of Health, Human and Public Service (HHP) who helped teachers plan fun activities throughout the day. These included getting fingerprinted in Timothy Bussineau's law and public safety classroom, watching the morning announcement in Stephany Harbison's video production studio, exploring pottery and drawing in art with Lisa Joseph, painting pots and planting with Laura Rienas, making a T-shirt in the school store with Julia Lengemann, and building bird houses in the construction shop with Craig Bryant.

Other students in Mrs. Ferrington's Intro to Education class helped organize the 5th grade mixer (see page 12) and organized the Ultimate Renovation: Classroom Edition, in which they renovated Mike Archutowski and Dominic Downs' classrooms on a budget of \$500 each.

## Senior Capstone Gallery Walk

English 12 students at Romeo High School presented their Senior Capstone Projects to parents, business partners, community members and the RHS student body on Tuesday, May 14 and Wednesday, May 15.

The Capstone Gallery Walk, held in the main commons, gave the seniors the opportunity to research a topic of interest, write a paper, create a podcast (a QR code was provided at the presenter's table), and present their findings on a tri-fold poster board.

Pictured here is Brooke Buechel, who is attending Michigan State University in the fall to study journalism and plans to pursue a future career path in sports broadcasting. Brooke learned in her research and interviews with women in the industry that while sports broadcasting has historically been a male dominated field, women are moving past the challenges to close the gender gap and inspire future generations.

"Over the past 20 years, there's been a whole new generation of female sports reporters," Brooke said. "Women in this industry support each other, create their own opportunities, and defy these gender stereotypes."



## Job Shadowing at Ascension Hospitals

Students in the health services pathway in The Academy of Health, Human and Public Service (HHP) completed their job shadowing at Ascension Hospitals in May. Students had the opportunity to visit one-on-one with a preceptor in each department.



## Romeo Middle School Year in Review

Romeo Middle School completed another successful school year! We continue to shape our middle school culture in order to help our students succeed both socially and academically. Our work with the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) and Ford Next Generation Learning (NGL) is evolving, leading to the Romeo Middle School Transformation and the introduction of the Academies at Romeo Middle School. The three-year roll-out of this transformation will begin with the 2024-25 school year. We look forward to continuing our work with AMLE and NGL so that we can provide the best middle school experience to our RMS community.



### Washington, D.C. Trip

For the second consecutive year, over 150 middle school students headed to Washington, D.C. to see the sights and history of our nation's capital. Our students and chaperones had an exceptional three-day learning experience, and we look forward to continuing this tradition next year.



### Diversity Summit

Leadership students attended the Macomb County Student Diversity Summit at the Macomb Intermediate School District with a handful of SERVE members from Romeo High School. They learned about ways to celebrate and embrace diversity in our community through various breakout sessions and interactive opportunities with leaders in Macomb County.

### ELA OSCARS

Romeo Middle School hosted its annual OSCAR (Our Students Care About Reading) ceremony for sixth grade ELA students before spring break in honor of March is Reading Month. The sixth graders nominated their favorite books, authors and characters. Their picks were then narrowed down to the top four in each category. The students spent the month reading as many of these books as possible to be educated voters. They then cast their votes and the winners were announced at the OSCAR ceremony on March 21, with Patrick Salembier serving as Master of Ceremonies and student volunteers coming on stage to give their acceptance speeches.



## Clubs

One way to make the middle school experience worthwhile is to provide opportunities for students to participate in numerous clubs and activities. One particularly popular extracurricular activity was Builders Club. This club is a community outreach group that connects RMS to our local community. Members of Builders Club visited nursing homes, raised money for a local animal shelter, and beautified the school with their planting skills. These students spent lots of time helping improve the community!



Another group that drew in a lot of students was the Science Olympiad team. Our Science Olympiad team continued to find success at the local and state level.

It is always great to see our students active in our school community beyond the classroom – from Road to Success Club to intramural and interscholastic sports. We will continue to provide additional opportunities for our students to be involved at RMS.



### Dodgeball Tournament

One of the highlights every year is our annual Dodgeball Tournament hosted by the RMS Student Council. Teams were decked out in matching uniforms and had the chance to win the prize jug for their grade level.

Whether participating in the event or cheering on their peers in the stands, everyone had a great time!





Photo courtesy of Mike Nicely

## Fifth Grade Mixer

Janga. Tug 'o war. Duck-duck-goose. Good old-fashioned fun was the name of the game during the 5th grade mixer held at Barnabo Field on May 22. The event was planned by students from the Health, Human and Public Service (HHP) Academy education pathway, who organized fun games and activities for the students. The purpose of the morning was to bring together fifth graders across the district so they could meet one another before they come together in the fall at Romeo High School.

Special thanks to the Romeo High School National Honor Society and SERVE students, Introduction to Education teacher Lori Ferrington, and the PTO Council for making this event possible.

## Little Inventors

The fourth graders had the vision – and the drafting and engineering students from the Academy of Design, Engineering and Manufacturing (DEM) brought them to life.

Out of 10 finalists selected from all five elementary schools, one winner was chosen to represent each school and the high school students got to work to create a prototype. These five prototypes were presented at the Little Inventors “Romeo Style” awards ceremony at

Romeo High School on May 29.

The “Romeo Style” winners were the Fun Ball, created by Nathan Martin from Amanda Moore; the Plant Care Clip, created by Lauren Warner from Indian



Hills; the Plastic Boater, created by Gabby Newsome from Hamilton-Parsons; the Fix-It Sharpener, created by Penelope Tomasino from Washington; and The Lego Lifter, created by Nick Ess from Hevel.



*Pictured with their inventions (and students from the College of Creative Studies) are, from left, Scarlett Willin, Amanda Moore (Baby Playtime Crib product design by the College of Creative Studies); Lily Smith, Hevel (The Tallhouse product design by PTI Engineered Plastics); and Bella Cercone, Washington (the Coral Fan product design by College of Creative Studies).*

In addition to the Romeo winners, three Romeo students were included among 10 finalists for the Macomb Intermediate School District (MISD) Born to Invent contest and their designs made into prototypes. Their inventions were unveiled at the 2024 Little Inventors Celebration on May 30. Sabrina Serra, last year's winner from Amanda Moore Elementary, served as a special guest emcee.

## Amanda Moore Elementary

As we bid farewell to another great school year at Amanda Moore Elementary School, we reflect with pride on the extraordinary academic growth and achievements of our students. This year has been a testament to their hard work, resilience, and dedication to learning. Our students have grown in every subject, demonstrating improvements in their reading, writing, math, social studies, science, social skills, and behavior.



Our exceptional staff have gone above and beyond, delivering engaging lessons, cultivating curiosity, and ensuring students know that positivity always wins. Their commitment to professional growth and improvement has ensured that each student receives the support they need. Our staff continues empowering ALL students to succeed.



*From left, kindergarten students on a farm field trip; parents join in during Family Literacy and Math Night; fun with LEGOs during Family LEGO Night.*



This year, we also witnessed an overwhelming surge of support from our community and parents. Their involvement has been a cornerstone of our success, providing invaluable resources and encouragement. Thanks to their generous contributions, we were able to organize more field trips and assemblies than ever before. These enriching experiences have broadened our students' horizons, bringing their classroom learning to life and providing unforgettable memories.

We will also experience a significant transition in our school leadership. After 15 years of service, Principal Roger Bennett is retiring.

"It has been an honor, privilege and blessing to serve this incredible community," Principal Bennett said. "I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to foster a supportive, dynamic and loving educational environment at Amanda Moore Elementary. As I say goodbye, I extend my heartfelt best wishes to everyone for continued success."



*Principal Bennett joins the PTO Foam Fun Run.*

Looking ahead, the Amanda Moore community is excited to welcome Aimee Wojciechowski as the new principal this fall.

"Mrs. Wojciechowski brings a fresh perspective to our school," Principal Bennett said. "We are confident that her leadership will continue to build on our strong foundation and guide us toward even greater achievements."

## Hamilton-Parsons Elementary

It has been so awesome to see Hamilton-Parsons live out the Romeo mission, "Embracing our community while engaging, educating and empowering students to inspire the future."



We have EMBRACED one another with love, acceptance, understanding, and collaboration. Our staff decided to pick a new character education program. We gathered a search team that consisted of a group of our staff.

We visited schools, spoke with students, staff, and administration from other districts. We made great connections and landed on two awesome programs that we cannot wait to share. They are "The Positivity Project" and "Capturing Kids' Hearts." We are so excited to kick off next year with these two amazing programs.

We have ENGAGED in assemblies, talent shows, PBIS Celebrations, learning new routines, and highlighting JOYFUL leaders. Students and staff were chosen each month for leading with JOY.



We have EDUCATED our learners and have inspired them to be lifelong learners. Our days have been full of learning the new ELA curriculum. Our students have had rigorous Tier 1 instruction in reading and writing.

We have EMPOWERED our students to take action and make a difference. Students take time to do good for others. Students share how they contributed to our troops and encouraged others to donate for researching children's cancer.

Overall, this year has been successful and we will forever EMBRACE our memories, ENGAGE in new life experiences, continue to have a hunger for EDUCATION, and EMPOWER others.

## Hevel Elementary

The Hevel FAMILY came through with another positive and uplifting school year. We continued our trend of celebrating our We Are 1 Team

philosophy and character building program with a twist this year. Each month we focused on a life skill characteristic and celebrated a couple students from each classroom as our Hevel SuperHeroes.



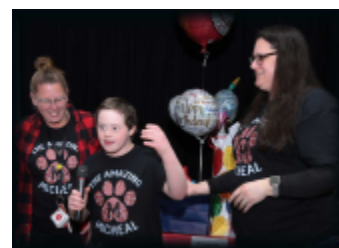
In the fall, the SuperHero theme came from our beginning of the year assembly where Parker Basketball Jones talked to

the students about being SuperHeroes, not superstars. The motto was "Look Out to Help Out." We had a T-shirt design competition and two of our students collaborated on our awesome T-shirt design.

"I really enjoyed having McDonald's lunches each month with roughly 35 students," said Hevel Principal Paul Essian. "I also loved seeing our students wear their SuperHero shirts all year."

In the winter, the students learned about a student's battle with cancer and were able to tap into the SuperHero theme, as Micheal Monterosso's favorite superhero is Spiderman.

"The birthday bash that ensued really showed how our Hevel families embrace our family values," Principal Hevel said. "They really came out to celebrate and support this student and their family in the most memorable way."



In the spring, Hevel sent about 30 intensive resource room students to the MISD to compete in the Special Olympics. "The smiles and joy on their faces were absolutely priceless," said Principal Essian.

There are many other things Hevel students and staff have to be proud of this year because of all the growth they experienced together academically and emotionally.

## Indian Hills Elementary

"We're Going Places" at Indian Hills Elementary! The school's annual theme emphasized how when we Begin with the End in Mind, we set our sights on a goal and take action to work toward those goals.

At a special Career Day event in March, students learned about interesting careers from 35 professionals who shared their passion for their work. From audiologists and automotive engineers to realtors and restaurant owners, students got to explore and envision themselves in a wide variety of future paths and develop an understanding of what it takes to get there.

Students also set more immediate goals for themselves. As a school, the Indian Hills staff team set their sights on math improvement. Students worked toward math growth through personalized action steps. They tracked their progress weekly in their Leadership Notebooks, and successes were celebrated monthly in the school's student-led Bulldog Round-Up Assemblies.

A year of hard work paid off as Indian Hills student growth in math from the fall to the spring was in the 99th percentile as compared to all other schools in the nation, according to the NWEA MAP Growth assessment.

"When students recognize how their efforts can lead them toward success, they begin to see all the places they can go," said Indian Hills Principal Lisa Wujczyk.



*Clockwise from top left: Brandon Jetts, owner of Jet's Pizza shows students how to make their own pizza dough; students demonstrate wearing personal protective equipment; Nurse Katherine Rice demonstrates the use of a stethoscope with a student; Dr. Christin Peyerk, audiologist, teaches students about the ear and hearing aids.*

## Robo Bulldogs Tackle Worlds

When the Indian Hills Robo Bulldogs began building their robot in August for this year's FIRST Robotics LEGO League Challenge season, they never dreamed that their work would take them to Long Beach, Calif., to compete with FIRST Robotics teams from all over the world.

This team of 4th and 5th graders Jonathan Aymen, William Cherfoli, Julian Francis, Ben Miller, and Jonah Peter worked for three months to build and program a robot to complete various challenges and designed their own real-world Innovation Project, which emphasized efforts to "Save the Penguins" from habitat loss and the harmful effects of pollution.

After taking home Champions trophies from their Regional Tournament and the State Tournament, they were one of only eight elementary teams from Michigan to be invited to the World Invitational Tournament in California. Thanks to the generosity of the high school FIRST Robotics team, the Byting Bulldogs, who paid their \$1,800 registration fee, the sponsorship of Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick, Inc., Ares Technology, L&L Products, and the support of parents and the Indian Hills community, the team was able to participate in three days of "Co-opertition," a core value of the FIRST Robotics program that emphasizes a collaborative approach to friendly competition.

Prepared for the challenge from their experiences at the regional and state levels, the boys faced teams from all over the world with players as old as 16. In the "On the Spot" competition, they worked in an alliance with teams from Pittsburgh and Brazil to program a robot in a variety of missions overnight.



*From left, Jonah Peter, Jonathan Aymen, Julian Francis, Ben Miller and William Cherfoli at the FIRST Robotics LEGO League World Championship in Long Beach, Calif.*

While the Robo Bulldogs didn't place in the top three in any of the three categories, they declared the experience an overall success. It allowed them to build their coding and presentation skills, bond as a team, and spread their message about saving the penguins.

"They worked so hard all year round," said Julia Cherfoli, who coached the team along with parent Rachel Miller. "They met multiple times a week. They did weekend activities and projects. I'm really proud of all the effort they put forward."



## Washington Elementary



This has been an exciting year at Washington Elementary as we welcomed more than 50 new families through the redistricting of a small portion of our community. We have enjoyed getting to know these students and families. Our teachers spent the year implementing a new reading and writing curriculum, which was an adjustment not only for them, but for our

students as well. Students are reporting that they are enjoying the knowledge they are gaining, and many parents are commenting that the conversations around the dinner table are fascinating as students share what they learned at school.

We remained committed to our Caring School Community with many special assemblies, along with opportunities to learn problem-solving, self reflection, and collaboration skills. We participated in many community service projects, including food drives, sock/mitten/hat



*On left, Afternoon LEGO Club; on right, students prepare for their Student Showcase on May 8.*

drives, and raising awareness around childhood cancer with a penny drive for St. Baldrick's Foundation. Our PTO supported our work through many events aimed at bringing our families together, including three Family Fun Nights, skating parties, gymnastics nights, Book Fairs, and dinner nights. We were also able to host a Family Literacy Event, Family Math Night and Family STEAM night. Students were able to leave with books, math and literacy games, and LEGO kits to keep the learning alive at home.

Washington is in full swing with our construction project of adding onto our building for the addition of a dedicated STEM room for our students. We are also in the planning stages of redesigning our playground space to enhance what we can offer students during recess time in the coming years.

## Croswell Early Childhood Center



After 14 months of construction, Croswell is in the home stretch. Romeo Community Schools will open a beautiful new addition for our toddler to preschool age children and we look forward to meeting new families and growing our programs.

Croswell has served over 265 children under the age of 5, and over 400 children in the elementary School-Age Child Care (SACC)



*Pictured are children from Washington Elementary preschool welcoming summer, on left, and Croswell preschool children walking in the Memorial Day parade, above.*

programs. Our summer camp will be underway June 17th, and we are ready for some special visitors, off-site field trips, and fun in the sun.

Fall programming will kick off in alignment with Romeo Community Schools grades K-12. The doors to our new rooms will open and children will be able to use our fantastic new playground. In addition, we will be able to welcome back our Macomb County programs – Head Start and Macomb Infant Preschool Program (MIPP) to Croswell. We have missed them and look forward to having them back in our building.



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## Become A Bulldog Today!

Enroll your child in Romeo Community Schools for the 2024-25 school year. **Schools of Choice** is available for non-district residents entering Young 5 to 8th grade and a limited number of applicants will be accepted for grades 9-12. We are also accepting applications for **Romeo Virtual Academy**, an online program for grades 6-12.

Visit [RomeoBulldogs.org](https://romeobulldogs.org) for enrollment information and application deadlines. Questions? Contact the Enrollment Center at (586) 281-1404 or email [enrollment@romeok12.org](mailto:enrollment@romeok12.org).



Scan or  
click the QR  
code for  
enrollment  
information!

## 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



## Fall Community Events

### Mark your calendar now!

- Varsity Football Watchdog Game  
Friday, Sept. 13
- Homecoming Varsity Football Game  
Friday, Sept. 20

### 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.