



Romeo Community Schools

The **Bulldog** Bulletin

Summer/Fall 2024

Vol. 8 No. 1

Welcome Back!



Summertime Fun

Summer Camp at Croswell Early Childhood Center included some fun field trips and a special visit from a face painting artist.

Campers also ventured out into the community for several field trips. This included a visit to Frontier's Farm Market, where each child could pick their own bouquet of flowers. Afterwards the group headed to Frontier Town's Ice Cream Parlor for ice cream.





Letter from the Superintendent

Dear RCS Community,

Welcome back! We are so excited for the start of the 2024-2025 school year. Our staff is eager to greet students and their families. I want to thank our administrators, teachers and support staff for all of their hard work and dedication to preparing for a successful start to the year.

Each new school year brings with it excitement, curiosity and enthusiasm for what lies ahead. At the same time, it's natural for these feelings to be accompanied by some level of nervousness and anxiety. This is all part of transitioning back into the everyday routine of school.

While we await that much anticipated first day – a little delayed this year with the start after the Labor Day holiday – please enjoy this edition of *The Bulldog Bulletin* and its news of recent achievements along with introductions to some new faces and roles.

Despite a summer filled with heavy rainfall, our construction has progressed over the summer months. Major projects scheduled for completion at Indian Hills, Croswell Early Childhood Center and Romeo Middle School are where we need them to be for the start of the year. The new additions at Washington Elementary and Amanda Moore Elementary and the RMS STEM and Robotics Center will be completed later this year. We look forward to staff and students moving into these new learning environments. (Check out our progress on page 3 and look for updates on the bond page on the district website.)

In closing, our annual theme for this year is “PURPOSE” and we will be placing an emphasis on how this is the foundation of our work. We will explore this theme through three perspectives: MY Purpose, OUR Purpose and THEIR Purpose (how we build purpose in our students at all levels). Our district has a tremendous amount of momentum as we continue to grow and improve. The work is hard, but your support is both appreciated and vital to our success. Let's make this the best year yet for RCS!

Go Bulldogs!

Dr. Todd R. Robinson
Superintendent

MY - OUR - THEIR
PURPOSE

Fit to Teach

Prioritizing Wellness, led by Laura Rienas and Jessica Bennett, was one of many professional development sessions offered at Romeo High School on August 27. Other offerings included Enhancing Co-Taught Teaching, AP Teachers Fireside Chat, Brain Breaks Reimagined, Unlocking the Power of Student Engagement, and Taking Schoology to the Next Level. Teachers across the district had the opportunity to sharpen their skills during PD sessions as they prepare for the arrival of students on September 3.



Welcome New Bulldogs!

We are extremely excited to welcome a new group of educators to the Romeo family this school year. This talented group includes 20 teachers, a speech and language pathologist, and four administrators, one in a new role and three new to the district. Our district continues to be a destination of choice for dedicated, compassionate educators.

Mary Bak, Math, RMS

Lillian Baum, MCI/IRR, Hevel

Shea Burgeson, Special Education, Washington

Evva Dossin, CTE Director, RHS

Jason Eldridge, Assistant Principal, RMS

Leanza Garcia, EL, Amanda Moore and Indian Hills

Taylor Haddon, English, RHS

Melisa Halsall, ECSE, Croswell

Luke Heide, Physical Education and Health, 9GA

Renee Kakos, English, 9GA

Megan Khahil, Architecture, RHS

Lauren Korth, Physical Education, Hevel

Stacey Lotterman, Medical Sciences, RHS

Lindsey McNulty, English, RHS

Charlene McVety, Early Childhood Supervisor, Croswell

Kayla Parr, First Grade, Washington

Sara Petry, Art, Indian Hills

Heidi Radnick, Special Education, RHS

Kennedi Robinson, Fifth Grade, Hevel

Sophia Stamevski, Special Education, RMS

Shelby Van Maele, Speech and Language Pathologist, Hamilton-Parsons

Philip Vernengo, Social Studies, RMS

Juliette Vitale, Math, RMS

Lane Werth, Theater/Drama/English, RHS and 9GA

Abbey Wilkinson, First Grade, Hevel

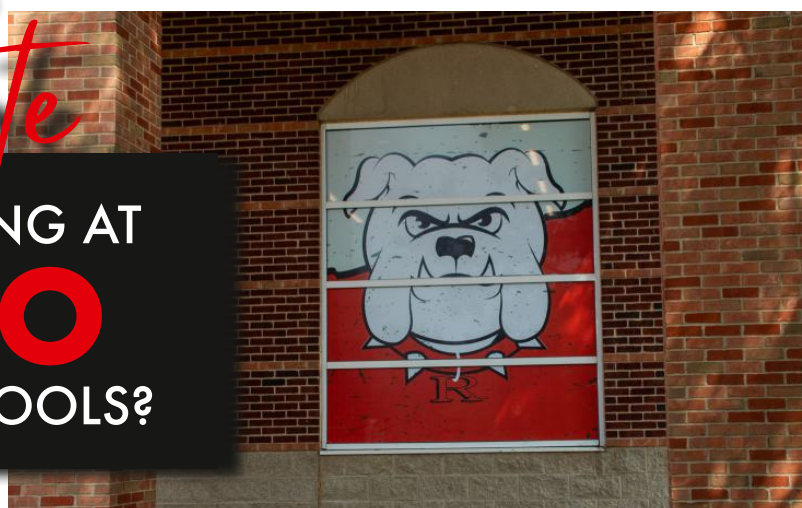
Aimee Wojciechowski, Principal, Amanda Moore



ROMEO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

BOND *update*

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT **ROMEO** COMMUNITY SCHOOLS?



INDIAN HILLS

CURRENT BOND PROJECTS

We are excited that construction and classroom enhancements are continuing throughout the district! Our project team has been hard at work throughout the summer break on nearly a dozen projects across multiple buildings.

READY THIS FALL:

- New addition at Indian Hills Elementary School featuring a new music room and STEM spaces
- New baseball and softball fields featuring synthetic turf for varsity teams at Romeo High School



RHS ATHLETICS

STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION:

- Renovation and addition at Croswell Early Childhood Center are complete and a new training center is coming soon
- New additions to Amanda Moore and Washington Elementary Schools supporting Art, STEM and Music
- New STEM and Robotics Center, as well as new outdoor athletics facilities at Romeo Middle School



CROSWELL



RMS STEM

what's coming next?



OCTOBER 2024

Administration Building Renovation



SUMMER 2025

9th Grade Academy Renovation
Classroom Refresh and Redesign



SUMMER 2025

Multiple Parking Lot Upgrades



SUMMER 2025

Playground Renovations

There may be loud noises during certain construction activities. However, Construction Manager Barton Malow commits to minimizing the impact to the community whenever possible.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF WORLD CLASS FACILITIES FOR OUR STUDENTS!

Summer Learning Adds Up

Teachers are lifelong learners, and Romeo High School math teacher Jennifer Boggio demonstrated this by taking a day during her summer vacation to participate in an externship with The Pond Guy, a company located in Armada that is dedicated to helping customers find innovative solutions to maintain and enjoy their ponds. Mrs. Boggio spent the day meeting with the company's engineers and other experts who demonstrated the many ways they use math to accomplish their jobs on a daily basis.



"Spending a day at The Pond Guy was an amazing experience," Mrs. Boggio said. "Everyone I met was truly interested in showing me how they use math every day and they clearly love their jobs."



Jennifer Boggio, a math teacher at Romeo High School, spent a day at The Pond Guy in Armada as part of a summer externship, learning about practical applications of math she could bring back to her classroom this school year.

Mrs. Boggio started the morning with a tour around the facility. Her tour guide, Anne Marie Treichel, who serves as the company's recruiting and training coordinator, shared with her a link to The Predictive Index Behavioral Assessment -- a personalized, science-backed human resources software for hiring, developing and

retaining top talent. Mrs. Boggio hopes to bring this tool to her Link Crew class this year.

She spent the next few hours with tech support manager Harrison Hugo, who took her through customer service phone calls. She used this experience to create a lesson for her Honors Geometry class.

In the marketing department, she worked with Romeo graduate Jordan Jenuwine, who led her through her data analysis process.

"Jordan uses various types of data and statistics to drive her decisions," Mrs. Boggio explained. "I would like to apply this to Statistics and AP Statistics lessons in the future."

After lunch, she spent the afternoon with Brendan Hathaway, the director of engineering, who showed her how he uses geometry and statistics throughout his day. They briefly discussed the possibilities of Algebra 2 and Pre-Calculus content.

"The employees at The Pond Guy were so welcoming and willing to share," Mrs. Boggio said. "I look forward to bringing these professionals into the mathematics classroom or taking my students on a field trip there."

Reaching New Heights

Tatum Lorway, an illustrator, muralist and art teacher at the 9th Grade Academy, was chosen to paint a mural on the support pillars of the Groesbeck Pedestrian Bridge at Metropolitan Parkway. The project was made possible through the DIA Partners in Public Art (PIPA) mural program, which was created in 2018 with the goal of collaborating with communities to co-create community-informed, highly visible public works of art.

Before embarking on the project, a partnership between the DIA and Clinton Township, Ms. Lorway had to submit three designs, each one incorporating responses from a survey conducted with Clinton Township residents. Responses on what residents would like to see included the Clinton River, nature, history, and the diversity of the population in the area.



"In my art, I was able to encapsulate a lot of those things," Ms. Lorway said. "The main piece of it is the Clinton River. I brought in the diversity aspect on the top and bottom with all the stones."

"In my pieces I really like to tell a story or portray a lot of symbolism," she continued. "In the rocks that border the river, I decided to make them all different shapes, sizes and colors because that truly is our community. We have a large spectrum of people who live here. I wanted to create that as the border of our river to show the structure and the strength that they give -- the form of our river, holding along that flow."

The rocks will be visible for passersby in cars. Pedestrians crossing the bridge will encounter something unexpected: arrowheads mixed in the rocks that are a tribute to the rich history of Native American tribes that inhabited the area.

Once her design was approved, Ms. Lorway got to work. Giving her confidence was not just her experience painting smaller scale murals -- in home basements, nurseries, a parking structure and an at-risk center for youth, to name a few -- but a philosophy she seeks to instill in her students at 9GA: Trust the process. That process begins with creative problem-solving and visual idea building.

"We teach the students how to ideate, which is really great for getting their ideas down, researching and exploring," she said.

While Ms. Lorway has been interested in art her entire life, she didn't always know she wanted to be a teacher. She attended the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, majoring in illustration and art education.

It was during her student teaching that she fell in love with it. An added bonus was that she could share her passion for art with her students.

"I grew up very excited about art so I wanted to see if this was something I could give back," she said.

New Roles, New Faces



Meet Jen Raicevich RMS Academy Coach

After 23 years in the classroom teaching math and science to middle schoolers, Jen Raicevich is taking on a new role as Romeo Middle School Academy Coach, where she will play an integral role in the school's transformation process.

Building on the Academies at Romeo High School model, RMS is embarking on its first year as the Academies at Romeo Middle School, with an emphasis on service and

community engagement. The goal is to facilitate powerful partnerships between students and community partners to bring relevance and real world experiences into the school and extend learning beyond school walls.

Mrs. Raicevich was drawn to the role ever since she accompanied a team to a middle school in Akron, Ohio in September of 2022 as part of creating a master plan for RMS's transformation. From the onset, this process has been supported by Ford Next Generation Learning (NGL) community coach Scott Palmer.

She returned with a different team in March of last year, witnessing the transition of those students in that year and a half.

"I'm really interested in and inspired by the Academy model," Mrs. Raicevich said. "It all just kind of fit. I always knew that if the board approved the position, I would apply for it."

Leaving the classroom was still a difficult decision. However, she will continue to play a role in shaping middle school students – an age she has grown to especially appreciate.

"People don't understand how great middle school students are," she said. "It's the perfect mix of still liking school and being old enough to handle yourself in the classroom. I laugh every day and I connect with those kids. It's fun watching them make their way in the world."

When she began her career, teaching middle school was not part of the plan. She received a bachelor's degree in elementary education at Oakland University, where she was certified in K-8 as well as grades 6-8 math and science. Her goal was to teach upper elementary students.

She subbed at Romeo Community Schools at the elementary schools before she was encouraged to apply for a math position at RMS. She didn't get the math position, but was offered a position teaching science instead. Since then she has taught both math and science.

"After that first year of middle school, I knew it was for me," she said. "So really middle school chose me; I didn't choose middle school."

When explaining her new position to family or friends, she describes it as "making the middle school experience more authentic for kids and making them realize there's a world beyond themselves."

The goal is to provide the students access to that world outside the school walls.

"In Romeo, we're all about 'Be Romeo,'" she said. "What does that mean? A lot of people in our community know that to be all in for your community. You help your community. You're involved in your community, and that means doing things beyond yourself."

Full implementation to the Academies at RMS will take three years, with the focus in year one on exploring, year two on engaging and year three on empowering. For example, as part of the exploratory year, the plan is to host a nonprofit fair to give students a taste of the range of options available.

Mrs. Raicevich's goal for the first year is to support teachers during the transition and make them feel "comfortable and heard, because they're the ones in the trenches."

"I'm not going to lose my 23 years of what it's like in the classroom," she promised. "I don't want to ever lose that perspective that the teachers are the ones doing the work and we need to make sure that they are supported and that they have what they need to do this work."

This begins with continuing what is already under way at RMS – building the school culture and creating a sense of community and belonging.

"We need to make sure the culture in the building is strong, most importantly for the staff," she said. "Once the culture is built, you can bring the students along. I want to inspire teachers to realize that this Academy model is great for kids and that we're going to make an even greater difference than we did before."

Meet Charlene McVety Early Childhood Supervisor



Pictured with Charlene McVety during a Croswell Summer Camp field trip to Frontier's Farm Market are, from left, Lucy Czarnik, Parker Todoroff and Ella Grasl.

As a young person in college, Charlene McVety had no idea what she wanted to do with her life, but fell in love with early childhood education after taking a few classes. She started working in the field and "that was pretty much it," she says.

She received an associate's degree in early childhood education, followed by a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in early childhood

education. She opted for the business administration degree to complement her chosen career path.

For the past 10 years, Ms. McVety has worked at Lake Orion Community Schools as the coordinator of early childhood education. Lake Orion Early Childhood is similar in size and scope to Croswell Early Childhood Center, she noted, as it houses a School Age Child Care (SACC) program, Head Start, Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), and a tuition-based preschool.

A newcomer to the school district and this area, her goal in her first year at Croswell is "to dig into the community and get to know people, families and kids." She is looking to grow into the role with Director of Early Childhood Education Jeanine Beck, helping the program grow and flourish, all the more important in light of the recent expansion of the building and the changes ahead.

Taking on a new role is a big change, she said, but one she embraces as her daughters are now in college and the time is right to make the move professionally.

"It's time to breathe some life into me and what I'm doing," she said. "And it has. This first month has been fun. I'm glad I'm here."

Meet Aimee Wojciechowski

Amanda Moore Principal



Aimee Wojciechowski always knew she wanted to be a teacher.

"I was the one teaching my stuffed animals in my bedroom," she said.

She grew up in Eastpointe and attended Wayne State University, where she majored in elementary education. One day in the dead of winter she was walking to class covered head to toe in layers of clothing, the

tears freezing to her face. She vowed to never live through another Michigan winter again.

For 10 years she kept that promise. After graduating from WSU, she accepted an offer to be a sixth grade science and social studies teacher in Arizona.

"I packed up my life and drove across the country," she recalls.

For four years she switched between teaching sixth and fourth grades, while also working to earn a master's degree in administration from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix.

Leadership comes naturally to Mrs. Wojciechowski. Even as a first year teacher, she sought leadership roles. Over the years she served as a student council advisor, led the PBIS team, and created a new teacher mentor program. It didn't take her long to realize she was ready to expand her role outside the classroom. She served as an instructional coach for two years before becoming an elementary assistant principal and then a principal.

Now married, she would return frequently to her home state with her husband to visit family. On one of those visits, she recalls driving through Romeo, which she compared to Stars Hollow from the popular TV show, *Gilmore Girls*. "All it needs is a gazebo!" she said to her husband – and lo and behold there, in fact, was a gazebo.

When the couple decided to relocate to Michigan to be closer to family, she saw an opening for a principal at Amanda Moore – and recalled that small town feel and sense of family values. She was offered the position and the choice was clear.

Since her arrival at Amanda Moore this summer, Mrs. Wojciechowski has met with each of her teaching teams during informal coffees and lunches to get to know them.

"A lot of Amanda Moore teachers have been here for a long time," she pointed out. "I want to learn from them, the traditions, what they love, what they want to see us do. What can Amanda Moore be?"

With families and students as well, her goal is simple: "Let's get to know each other and let's see where we are, but here's where we want to be in five years. And let's lay the foundation for that."

Meet Jason Eldridge

RMS Assistant Principal



Jason Eldridge spent his entire life in Oxford, where he grew up, attended school and devoted 17 years of his professional life.

His original dream, which he launched at the University of Michigan, was to become a rocket scientist. It took him a year to realize he wanted to teach. He made the

switch to education, majoring in physics with a minor in math.

Mr. Eldridge's first job out of college was teaching math and science at Oxford High School. After a few years, he was selected to coordinate the high school's International Baccalaureate (IB) program. He remained in this role for about eight years, then served for the last five years as a K-12 instructional coach for science, working with teachers on curriculum, growth opportunities, and improving their craft.

This role, which led to other building leadership opportunities at the middle and high school, sparked a passion for instructional leadership. He went on to receive a master's degree in curriculum assessment from Marygrove College.

When looking to move into a principal position, Mr. Eldridge said he had a short list of places to consider. Romeo Community Schools was on the list, not just because of its proximity to Oxford, but because of the district's reputation.

"From the outside looking in, what I see and what I saw is an investment in education and kids and programs that I'm not really seeing in a lot of other places right now," he said.

He was asked the question "Why Romeo?" during his interview. When reflecting on his answer with his wife, Jaclyn, she reminded him of a profound moment in his life when, as Oxford's head varsity football coach, he returned with the team for their first game after the tragic shooting in November of 2021. Oxford faced Romeo in Barnabo Stadium that night.

Jaclyn reminded him of what happened before the game.

"We met at the center of the field," he recalled. "We all said a prayer together. I was reminded that this community set everything aside for us and wrapped their arms around us. I might not have remembered it for all the reasons you wouldn't, but it threw me back to that and reinvigorated my feeling: I'm hearing great things about Romeo, but I'm also experiencing it. That moment made me ask, not why Romeo, but why *not* Romeo? Why wouldn't I want to be a part of that community that has been so supportive and shows that they are just good people?"

His goal for his first year is "to jump into the deep end and be as much of a Bulldog as I can be right off the bat. I hope to make a positive impact on the school as soon as possible, whether that's helping kids navigate whatever life brings them, or just helping everybody be better every day."



**ROMEO
COMMUNITY
SCHOOLS**

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2024-2025 BOARD OF EDUCATION

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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.

Bulldog Days!

Romeo Middle School welcomed 6th graders during Bulldog Days. The orientation included team building activities in the gym, a building tour, a technology overview of Schoology, Planbook and PowerSchool, a visit to the cafeteria for a snack, and the opportunity to practice opening lockers, among other highlights. Tours and activities were led by RMS student leaders and RHS members of the National Honor Society and SERVE.



2024-2025 District Calendar (First Semester)

Tuesday, September 3

First Day of School - Half Day

Friday, September 13

Varsity Football Watchdog Game, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, September 18

Homecoming Parade, 6 pm

Friday, September 20

Homecoming Varsity Football Game, 7 pm

Wednesday, September 25

No School
Teacher Professional Development

Tuesday & Thursday, October 8 & 10

Middle School Conferences
(Evening Times TBD)

Wednesday & Thursday, October 16-17

High School Conferences
(Evening Times TBD)

Wednesday, November 6

No School
Teacher Professional Development

Friday, November 15

Half Day (grades K-8)
Records Day
End of 1st Trimester

Wednesday & Thursday, November 20-21

Elementary Conferences
(Evening Times TBD)

Wednesday-Friday, November 27-29

No School - Thanksgiving Break
School resumes Monday, December 2

December 23-January 3

No School - Winter Break
School resumes Monday, January 6

Monday, January 20

No School - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Thursday & Friday, January 23-24

Half Day (grades 9-12) - HS Exams
End of 1st Semester