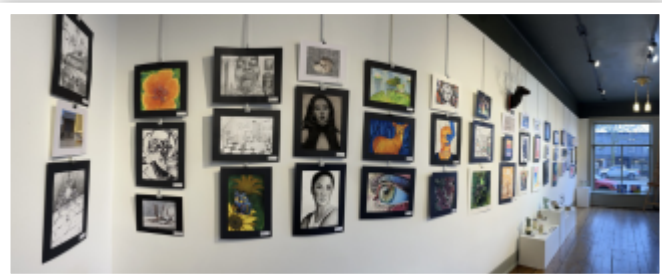




Student Artists Shine



Student artwork was on display in April during the annual K-12 Student Art exhibit at Starkweather Arts Center in the Village of Romeo. See more artwork on page 8.

RCS Outstanding Teachers of the Year



Romeo Community Schools' Outstanding Teachers of the Year, from left, Krista Miller, John Phillips and Amanda Mazzio, were honored on April 11 for their dedication and service to our students and families. The annual Macomb County Outstanding Teachers of the Year awards banquet was presented by the Macomb County Association of School Administrators and the

Macomb Association of Curriculum Administrators. Mrs. Mazzio was also recognized for being named Macomb County's Outstanding Teacher of the Year at the Middle School level. See pages 3, 5 and 7 for more information on each teacher.

Solar Eclipse 2024

Students and staff across the district enjoyed safely viewing the solar eclipse on April 8 – a rare phenomenon that took place across North America. The last time a total solar eclipse was visible in Michigan was in 1954 – and the next opportunity won't be until August 2044.



Pictured here, Amanda Moore Elementary students, from left, Blakely Sunde, Emelia Plawecki, Raeleigh Williams-Lee and Layla Seigneurie joined their peers in witnessing 98.2% maximum coverage at 3:14 p.m.



Harlem Wizards Challenge Romeo Staff in All-District PTOC Fundraiser

The Harlem Wizards came to Romeo High School to challenge Romeo Community Schools staff to a fun match-up of basketball wizardry on May 1. The evening event included the singing of the National Anthem by Amanda Moore Elementary fifth grader Josie Mirjavadi, antics on the court as Romeo staff members met their match, and a dance party on center court led by the players.

During the school day, several players visited Romeo Middle School and all five elementary schools to get the students fired up for the night.

Sponsored by the District PTO Council, the all-district fundraiser brought in a profit of approximately \$10,000 for district-wide PTOC items such as recognition luncheons, kindergarten signs and other initiatives that benefit our schools.





Letter from the Superintendent

Dear RCS Community,

As you read this, anticipation is building for the end of the school year. Our staff and students have accomplished so much since our last newsletter in February that we felt it was important to send an electronic version of *The Bulldog Bulletin* this spring to our district families and staff. We still plan to publish our annual "Year in Review" newsletter that will be mailed to all residents later this summer.

Spring is such a fast-paced time of year full of celebrations, special events and milestones. We are

so proud of our students and the progress they have made this year. While this newsletter can't possibly capture it all, it does share some highlights from this past semester.

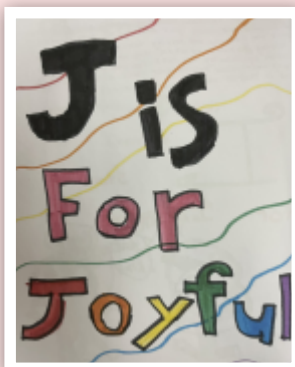
We have been diligently planning for next year over the past several months and in the next two months the Board of Education will approve the 2024-25 preliminary budget. Additionally, the board will be asked to take action on updating the design and construction schedule for the 2021 Facilities Bond that is approaching its halfway point in completion. Unfortunately, due to consistent escalation in materials and labor costs, we will not be able to finish all of the projects outlined in the Department of Treasury approved bond application from July of 2021. A list of "Deferred Projects" will be approved along with the updated timeline at the May Board of Education meeting. We will share this important information on our website once it is finalized.

We have received several inquiries about the school calendar for next year. The calendar is part of the negotiations process with the Romeo Education Association. Negotiations on a new contract are ongoing and we will share this important information as soon as it is available.

Please take a minute to review the great news contained in this e-newsletter and enjoy the remainder of this school year. Additionally, allow me to be the first to wish you a safe and relaxing summer break.

Go Bulldogs!

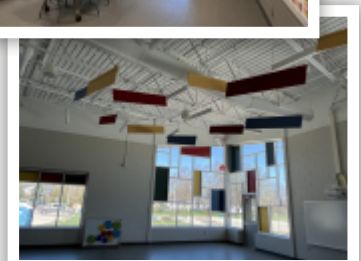
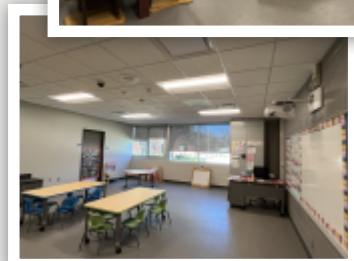
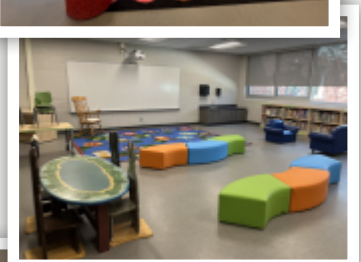
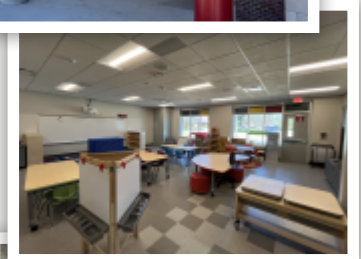
Dr. Todd R. Robinson
Superintendent



This year's Kindness Club at Hevel Elementary School wrote and illustrated a book called *Hevel Shares Kindness from A to Z*. In keeping with this year's theme, fifth graders Mya Henry and Zachary Sellars chose joy to represent the letter "J." In "J is for Joyful," they wrote: "Compliment someone in a joyful way. Have a positive impact on others to make them want to be kind. Celebrate our differences, and remember even though you can't always be happy, you can still be kind. You might not see kindness, but still believe it. Kindness—spread it and receive it."

New Addition at Croswell Near Completion

Anticipation builds as staff at Croswell Early Childhood Center prepare their classrooms in the new addition before a move-in date is official. Stay tuned for details on a grand opening in the fall.



Pictured, from top to bottom, are the entrance to the new addition, Discovery 4 classroom, GSRP classroom, library, preschool classroom, and small gym.

9GA Pathway Reveal Ceremony

The envelope, please ...

On March 8, 9th graders gathered in the Romeo High School auditorium for the long-awaited pathway reveal ceremony, in which they were given envelopes containing their pathway for the remaining years of their high school experience.



At the opening of the ceremony, 9GA Principal Melissa Arendts reminded them of the steps they had taken along their journey of selecting that pathway. These included participating in Career Day at Romeo High School, attending the Southeast Michigan Career Quest at the Suburban Collection Showcase in Novi, visiting Macomb Community College, and touring the pathways at RHS before reviewing their top choices with their parents.

After opening the envelope, each 9th grader discovered whether they will be joining the Academy of Business, Entrepreneurship and Innovation (BEI), the Academy of Design, Engineering and Manufacturing (DEM), or the Academy of Health, Human and Public Service (HHP).

Speakers during the ceremony included Superintendent Dr. Todd Robinson and Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel.

“Romeo has been a role model and you are so lucky to be a part of this pathway program you have here,” said Hackel.

Said Dr. Robinson: “If I was to think about who you were when you left the eighth grade and I think about what you’ve become today, there might not be a single greater period of growth in terms of maturity and independence in K-12 education outside of that.”

Scan or click the QR code to watch a brief video from the ceremony.



Visit from the Lieutenant Governor

Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II visited Romeo High School on March 19, touring all three Academies to learn about what sets RHS apart, from work-based learning experiences to our career pathway approach. His tour was led by student ambassadors who shared with him how RHS sets them up for success using real-world applications.



Stops along the way included the school store, broadcast studio, advanced manufacturing, construction shop, and architecture, robotics, health sciences, computer science, and law and public safety classrooms. He spent time visiting with students at every opportunity and learned from business students about a cross-curricular project to create, market and package an apple cake at both the RHS Dawg House and Blake Farms. At the close of his tour, the lieutenant governor was presented with a Romeo Schools T-shirt custom-made for his size.



Photos courtesy of the Lieutenant Governor's Office

RCS Teacher of the Year: John Phillips



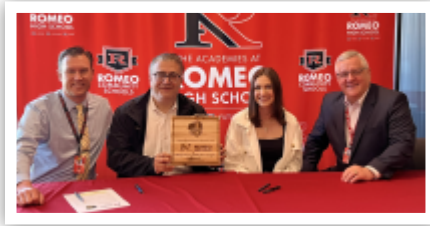
John Phillips, a 1999 Romeo High School graduate, returned to the district 10 years ago as a teacher to help rebuild the band program.

Here’s what Mr. Phillips’ nominators had to say about him:

“You can find John at every building, and at every game and pep assembly. He tries to make all meetings while in between buildings even if it means he can only catch some of it. He never complains, but just stays the course, giving a full commitment to everything he does. He bleeds Bulldog and you can see his passion for what he does just by the way he talks about his students. His excitement for their pieces of music or their learning is admirable. When you are in John’s class, you can see how John works hard for his

students so that they become leaders by teaching each other. Watching John watch his students conduct is pretty endearing. You can see his pride in their achievements and growth, and that is what teaching is all about.”

New Partner Signing



Pictured, from left, are RHS Principal Bernie Osebold, Washington Twp. Supervisor Sam Previti, Romeo 2023 graduate and Washington Twp. employee Isabella Cardella, and Superintendent Dr. Todd Robinson.

The Academies at Romeo celebrated new partners Blake Farms, Suburban Ford of Romeo, Visit Detroit and Washington Township on May 2 with a breakfast reception and signing ceremony. Among the speakers were students and alumni who shared their experiences with these organizations created learning opportunities and opened doors for them.

RHS senior Emily Vargas Vega spoke during the signing ceremony about how what began with asking a lot of questions during RHS's Career Day led to her current internship in Washington Twp.'s Assessing Department. Emily also acts as a translator for Spanish-speaking residents.

"Emily had a genuine interest and we were very impressed with her," Mr. Previti said. "Assessing is a unique career path that nobody talks about. It's a very high demand and lucrative career path. Whether she pursues it or not, it's great exposure for her and we're very grateful to have her."



Photos by Ella Salembier '26

Language Classes Open a World of Culture

What does dancing have to do with teaching world languages? More than one might expect.

Three world language teachers at Romeo High School dedicated class time to having their students learn different styles of dance – salsa, bachata, merengue and Latin ballroom dancing for Spanish classes, and the Viennese waltz for German classes.

Professional ballroom instructor Sherrad Glosson led the dance workshops for students from Andrea Page's German classes and Rosana Hunsberger and Hayley Kelso's Spanish classes. Mrs. Kelso's international business students also joined in the fun.

All three teachers agree that dance is culturally important. For example, festivals, holidays, family parties and music revolve around dance.

"When I studied abroad, that was one of the first things we did," Señora Hunsberger said. "At the welcome ceremony at the hotel, literally three hours into my study, I was taking a dance lesson."

Frau Page's German students were introduced to the waltz during a school trip to Germany some years ago.

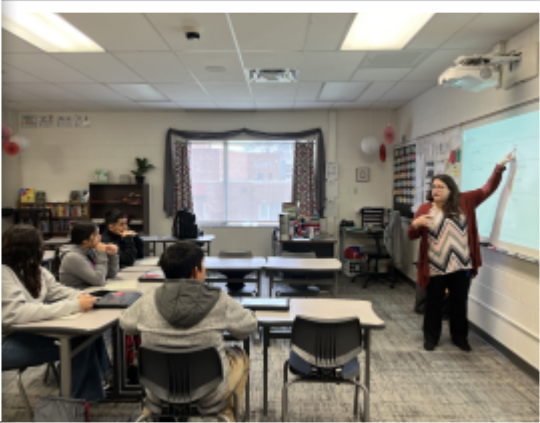
Inviting Mr. Glosson – who also happens to be Señora Kelso's dance instructor – offered a way to celebrate different cultures while allowing the students to relax and have fun outside the classroom.

"The kids love it," Señora Kelso said. "I love watching them enjoying each other's company, completely unself-conscious, team building. They're learning a valuable skill but in a fun way. They're so supportive of each other. Nobody is critiquing; there's no judgment."



A Celebration of Food Across the States

Students in the Business, Entrepreneurship and Innovation (BEI) Academy at Romeo High School joined forces across pathways to bring back the popular food truck project—just in time for Staff Appreciation Week! To create 20 trucks representing popular food from 20 states, business management students pitched food truck ideas to the marketing department at Lombardo Homes, who helped with the concepts and delivery. Culinary students tested the recipes and made the food, marketing students designed T-shirts representing each truck for students to wear, 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 indoors in the event of rain), and English students wrote about the state's history. In addition, construction students from the DEM Academy helped build the trucks and journalism students wrote an article showcasing the event.



Left: Amanda Mazzio, second from right, is pictured with RMS Principal Brad Martz, her mother, Paula Mazzio, and Superintendent Dr. Todd Robinson. Right: Students in Mrs. Mazzio's Language Acquisition class, from left, Oscar Garcia Nava, Estefania Rodriguez Cabanas, Evelin Esparza and Cristobal Alvarez Vargas.

Fifth Graders Visit RMS

Every morning for a week, Romeo Middle School hosted fifth graders from each elementary school for a comprehensive preview of what to expect next year. Instrumental in planning for the visits, leading an icebreaker activity, serving as tour guides and answering questions were eighth graders from the RMS leadership class pictured below. The students also created an informational brochure for the fifth graders to take home.



The morning began in the cafeteria, where the fifth graders learned from the eighth grade leaders, school counselor Cara Skover, and Assistant Principal Katelyn Ebert what to expect next year. Following a tour of the building and a scavenger hunt, the group reconvened in the gym for a Q&A session to end the morning.



RMS Teacher Named Macomb County Middle School Teacher of the Year

Romeo Middle School Language Acquisition teacher Amanda Mazzio was chosen as Macomb County's 2024 Outstanding Teacher of the Year at the Middle School level. Mrs. Mazzio was surprised with this news at a morning assembly on March 21, hours before she received a notification letter from the Macomb Intermediate School District via email. Scan or click the QR code for a video of the announcement.



According to math support and reading intervention teachers Lyndsy Bickmann and Michelle Schommer, who nominated their colleague for the district's Outstanding Teacher of the Year award, "Amanda Mazzio consistently goes above and beyond for her colleagues and for her students. She is already masterful in her role as the RMS Multilingual Learner Interventionist and leader of the 31a team, yet she is always reflective in her practice and seeks out information and strategies to continuously improve."

Mrs. Mazzio's personal philosophy of education is that teachers are gardeners and their role is to "discover what each of our students need to grow and provide conditions in which they can thrive. . . . Each student is unique and deserves to be seen as such. In order to care for the whole child, we must understand their background, interests, learning styles, wealth of experiences, prior knowledge and more so that we can give each student what they need to flourish."

This is especially true with her multilingual students in the English Learners program as well as the "newcomers," the English language acquisition students who are new to this country and learning English for the first time.

"I have never had the personal experience, other than studying abroad, of living in a new place with a new language and trying to figure everything out all at the same time," Mrs. Mazzio said. "To be able to offer any amount of help and support to students who are doing something that is really quite incredible is very meaningful to me. Mrs. Mazzio also prides herself on striving for equity in her classroom and advocating within the school and district to ensure all students have access to food, internet, school supplies and anything else they need to be successful.

In addition to receiving a \$1,500 Professional Development voucher, Mrs. Mazzio was recognized on April 11 at the Outstanding Teacher of the Year Awards Banquet, held at the Italian American Cultural Society and Banquet Center in Clinton Township.

"Amanda's positive impact on students goes way beyond her classroom to the school and the community," said RMS Principal Brad Martz. "I could not be more proud of Amanda's accomplishments. She is very deserving of this award."



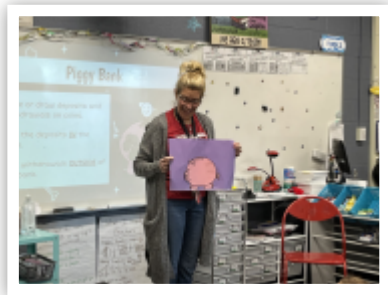
Dog Dens Create Sense of Belonging at Indian Hills



Dog Dens, on hiatus during the pandemic, have returned this year to Indian Hills Elementary School.

Dog Dens are small groups of kindergarten through fifth grade students led by a staff member. In fact, every adult on staff – with the exception of the administrative assistant, who mans the front desk during the meetings – is assigned to one of these small groups.

“It’s been really exciting because the whole purpose of Dog Dens is to build this sense of community across the school,” said Indian Hills Principal Lisa Wujczyk. “Kids who wouldn’t normally connect with one another and kids who wouldn’t normally connect with particular adults get that opportunity to make those connections.”



The group remains together throughout the year – and across the years. For example, next year students will remain in the same den, with the exception of the fifth graders who will move on to middle school. New kindergarteners will join in, along with any other new students.

“It helps to build that greater sense of community across the school so that when kids see each other in the hallways, they say, “I know you from Dog Dens,”” Mrs. Wujczyk explained.

This is the case when they see teachers as well, increasing their sense of comfort wherever they are in the school building.

Hevel Heads to Special Olympics

On May 8, the Macomb South Campus was abuzz with excitement as athletes of all ages and abilities gathered for the Special Olympics local games. Hevel Elementary School took 20 kids from their Intensive Resource Rooms, joining the event that was a celebration of determination, courage, and sportsmanship, showcasing the incredible talents of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Athletes competed in a variety of events, from track and field, displaying their skills and inspiring all in attendance. The atmosphere was filled with joy and camaraderie, as families, friends, and volunteers cheered on the participants. The Special Olympics local games at Macomb South Campus were not just about winning medals, but about celebrating the unique abilities of every athlete and fostering a community of inclusion and acceptance.

Washington Principal Receives 2024 Youth Ambassador Award



Congratulations to Washington Elementary Principal Dana Hepner on receiving the Greater Washington Area Historical Society's 2024 Youth Ambassador Award. Mrs. Hepner is pictured here with Hamilton-Parsons Elementary Principal Rita vanStaveren, on left, and Indian Hills Elementary Principal Lisa Wujczyk, on right. Superintendent Dr. Todd Robinson, who was present at the awards dinner, called the recognition “a tremendous honor that is well deserved.”



Pictured at the Detroit Zoo recognition ceremony are, from left, Amanda Moore Principal Roger Bennett, students Lincoln and Lucy Anderson, parent and Green Team co-sponsor Stephen Anderson, and Macomb County Commissioner Don Brown.

Amanda Moore Recognized as Evergreen School

Amanda Moore Elementary School was recognized at the Tri-County Green Schools celebration event at the Detroit Zoo on April 23 for its Evergreen status.

Amanda Moore was first named a Green School in 2012, and has maintained this status thanks to the efforts of the Green Team, parent volunteers and Principal Roger Bennett.

This year's team has 50 students in grades 3 through 5 and is led by Green Team co-sponsors and parents Joanna Serra and Stephen Anderson.

To become a Green School is a rigorous process, involving completing an application documenting activities in the four categories of Reduce/Reuse/Recycle, Energy, Environmental Protection, and Miscellaneous Environmental Activities. Evergreen status is the highest among designations and requires documentation of 20 total activities within these categories.

In 2018-2019, Amanda Moore was named the top Evergreen School in Macomb County. Projects it completed over the years include holding a community drive for bottle caps and creating the world's first endangered species bottle cap interactive wall mural, and building a greenhouse that is still in use today by the Green Team.

RCS Teacher of the Year: Krista Miller



Krista Miller started at Indian Hills as a student teacher in fifth grade, and since that time has taught third, second, and most recently, first grade.

Here is what her nominators have to say about her:

"The respect and admiration for Krista is universal. It is not an exaggeration that every colleague, family, and student who has had the opportunity to know Krista has been positively impacted in some way. As Krista's colleagues, we continue to learn and grow by watching her interaction with others and speaking with her about teaching and learning. 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."

Showstoppers at Hamilton-Parsons



Students were the stars of Hamilton-Parsons Elementary's Talent Show on April 30, with over 50 students performing acts, but Principal Rita vanStaveren and Ham-Par staff stole the show with a performance of "Space Jam" to close out the night.

The staff performed a hip-hop inspired choreography created by Kindergarten teacher Haley Fraeyman, who also coaches Romeo High School's dance team.

"It started out as a joke," admits Mrs. vanStaveren. "I was talking with the two moms who were putting on the show. I danced and cheered in college and I said maybe I'll put on a dance to close the show. I was telling our music teacher, Adam Busuttill about it, and he offered to join me. Haley heard us laughing about it and said she would choreograph it. It kind of snowballed from there."

Among the 16 dancers were teachers, a lunch mom, and a few paraprofessionals.

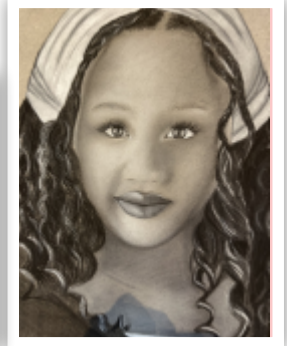
"We had a ball," Mrs. vanStaveren said. "I feel like it was a good connector for staff – and we doubled our sales."



Money raised from the talent show – approximately \$1,800 – will go toward new musical instruments at the school.

K-12 Artwork Showcased at Starkweather Arts Center

The K-12 Student Art Show at Starkweather Arts Center represented student artists in a range of media, including sculpture, pottery, print-making, drawing, painting and photography. *Scan or click the QR code to watch a video of more artwork.*



From left to right: "Heart" by Victoria Forro, grade 1, Washington Elementary; Photo by Maria O'Connor, grade 12, RHS; Oil pastel by Gianna Vermiglio, grade 12, RHS; Charcoal by Sophia Mirjavadi, grade 12, RHS.

RMS Theatre Presents 'The Wizard of Oz'



Sophia Skakun as Toto, Olivia Pignanelli as Dorothy and Lucas Flynn as the Scarecrow in RMS Theatre's production of 'The Wizard of Oz.'

RMS Theatre presented *The Wizard of Oz: Youth Edition* on April 26 and 27 with a cast of 120 young performers. The production was directed by Patrick Salembier and Chelsea McKay.

Students performed on the stage as well as worked on the technical side to put together a family friendly show for all to enjoy, entertaining the audience with their version of a beloved classic with a positive message.

"I think what's really cool and what sets our program apart is that we have students not only on the stage, but running the lights, running the sound," said Mrs. McKay. "They are responsible for all of these big elements that a lot of the time you don't get a chance to be a part of in a middle school level production. Getting those kids ready and able to find their passion so early is something that is really cool."

Scan or click the QR code to watch a brief video that captures some moments from the show.



Romeo Theatre Company Presents 'Shrek the Musical'

Drama teacher Kendra Knoblock promised to "go big or go home" for her final production for Romeo Theatre Company before she retires this spring. She chose *Shrek the Musical*, a large-scale, ambitious show that she knew her performers and behind-the-scenes helpers were up to the challenge.

Romeo Theatre Company has been in existence for 35 years. The extracurricular program is the largest in the school, with nearly 200 students involved both on stage and backstage, from costumes, lighting and set design to choreography.

"The students run it all, which is really exciting," Mrs. Knoblock said. "I think that's the best thing about our program. We're not a parent run organization; we're a student run organization."

She added that the experience of participating in RHS's productions equips students with the skills future employers are seeking.

"We've gone to several work-related sites and the first thing employers say is, 'We want people to think out of the box,'" she said. "We want people who can work

as a team. We want people who can be hands on. We want people who can be adaptable.

"These kids have to work together," she continued. "They work as a team. They are creating with as little a budget as possible and making things look absolutely amazing. These are skills the kids are going to go out and use in whatever field they're going into. All of the skills learned in the arts are something they can use."

Scan or click on the QR code to watch a brief video from the show.



Winter Sports Round-up

The 2023-24 Winter Sports season was one that had its fair share of triumphs and excitement.

The **Girls Basketball** team was dominant through much of the season and finished with a 16-7 record, placing second in the MAC White.

The **Boys Basketball** team competed hard and were able to put together some inspiring victories which they will be able to build upon next season.

Another team that was able to showcase their talents in the gym was the **Dance** team. The ladies represented Romeo proudly at Nationals and came home with a fourth place finish in Pom and an eighth place finish in Jazz.

The Bowling teams kept their success rolling and both the **Boys and Girls Bowling** teams won the MAC Blue Division and also the MAC Blue Tournament. Cam Hill from the boys' team and Maddy Raska from the girls' team competed at the state finals this season.

On the ice, the **Hockey** team brought home a championship trophy. The team won the MAC Red Division and went on to win Regionals this year. They finished as a top 8 team in the state.

In the pool, the **Boys Swim** team competed in the MAC Blue and finished the season with a .500 record.

On the mat, the **Cheer** team was electric all season. They used that momentum to finish in second place at Districts and competed well enough to finish in the top half at Regionals.

Another team that was successful on the mat were the **Boys and Girls Wrestling** teams. The Boys Wrestling team won Team Districts and, combined, the boys and girls sent 10 wrestlers to the state finals – Owen Youngblood, Bryce Holt, Valentino Adamo, Owen Perry, Landen Fetty, Tommy Jaynes, Jolene Thompson, Ama Manuel, Belicia Manuel and Kaili Manuel. Sisters Belicia and Kaili Manuel each won individual state championships!

Scan or click the QR code to watch a winter sports recap video produced by Kaitlyn Wisniewski, a member of Romeo's Student Creative Team.





**ROMEO
COMMUNITY
SCHOOLS**

316 N. Main Street
Romeo, Michigan 48065
(586) 752-0200

**2023-2024
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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Romeo Named 2024 Best Community for Music Education

Romeo Community Schools is proud to announce it is a 2024 Best Community for Music Education. This is the second consecutive year the school district has received this national designation from NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) Foundation for demonstrating outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students.

Romeo is one of 21 school districts in the state of Michigan to receive this award and one of over 1,000 nationwide.

“It really is a community award,” Band director John Phillips said. “They start with the schools and accomplishments of students, classes offered, enrollment. It continues through administration and financial obligations. And then it goes out to the community. What does the community have to offer?”

“It’s a recognition overall of the teaching and the support for the schools and throughout the community,” he continued. “It’s a very cool designation to have for a second year in a row.”



Scan or click the QR code to watch a highlight video from Romeo Community Schools' family night with the Harlem Wizards.



Keeping Up With 'R' Community

Check out our new podcast, dedicated to highlighting programs, initiatives and progress at Romeo Community Schools from the perspective of our leaders, teachers, staff and students. *Scan or click the QR code to go there now!*



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.