



# SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES

May 8, 2024

Good afternoon,

May, in a school district calendar, is the month of rumors. As plans start being made for the next school year, people begin to anticipate what the plan will be. Everyone thinks they know.

This is especially true this year in Rockford because of the impending opening of Edgerton Trails. Even though we have known for years that with the opening of our new elementary school there would be changes, it is still a bit unsettling.

This email will explain some of the changes that are coming – especially administratively – for next year.

But I want to start by providing some context.

Our district is in a really good place.

- RAMS XII, our updated strategic plan, will be introduced in June and approved by the Board of Education in August.
  - A new vision and mission statement, included as part of the RAMS XII process, will guide us forward.
  - Strategic points of emphasis will be identified that will guide and focus our work.
- Edgerton Trails Elementary will open for school this fall.
- New elementary boundaries will be implemented.
  - Staff movement is a by-product of these changes.
- New spaces at North Rockford Middle School – 6th grade wing, orchestra room, and removal of the portables.
- New spaces at Roguewood Elementary – gym.
- Updates to Valley View – new bus loop, parking lot, and removal of the portables.
- New Transportation Office and Bus Garage.
- Commitments of staff to elementary STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) and outdoor education.

We are in a very good place as a district.

But there are a couple of headwinds.

Our enrollment is down marginally. We have 75 fewer students this year than last. That is about 0.7% less - less than one percent down. I believe that this is primarily due to housing prices in our district, people whose children have graduated staying in their houses longer because of the difficulty of moving because of interest rates, and lower birthrates everywhere. But fewer students, even just a few, does translate to a decrease in revenue to the district. Our loss of 75 students means a loss of about \$700,000. Some of that will be made up by a state enrollment stabilization fund.

In addition, we will have increased costs next year because of the opening of Edgerton Trails. We are excited about our new building, but it does mean we have additional costs that we did not have this year – secretaries, custodians, utilities, and other costs. This is not unexpected, but it is still additional expense.



# SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES

To manage less revenue and increased cost, we are identifying ways to manage our budget effectively. One piece of the puzzle is making some administrative changes.

We currently have two administrative openings in the district – Parkside, due to Larry Watters retirement and the Assistant Principal at the high school due to Rachel Dekuiper’s appointment to Belmont. To manage and to try and impact our budget in a positive way, we will not hire these two administrative openings. We will instead fill them internally. That means that we will shift some administrators into new assignments. Here are the changes for the 2024-2025 school year:

2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR	Position	Administrator
Cannonsburg	Principal	Teya Cotter
Parkside (+ District Media)	Principal	Mindy McGinn
Lakes	Principal	Matt Zokoe
Roguewood (+K-5 Spanish Immersion)	Principal	Amie Santillan
ERMS	Assistant Principal	Derek Dillon
NRMS (+6-12 Spanish Immersion)	Assistant Principal	Jesus Santillan
Rockford Freshman Center	Assistant Principal	AJ Reickard
Rockford High School	Assistant Principal	Not filled Add Behavior Specialist

Our administrative team is strong. Over the two years that I have been in the district we have worked hard on building leadership capacity and working to build on our strong culture. I believe that these changes will continue to allow our administrative staff to lead our buildings in a positive way.

As we looked to make these changes, we worked to place administrators in positions where they could make a difference and have a positive impact. We will support our administrative team and monitor these changes to make sure everything goes well next year. These changes will help us continue to move forward.

Change is hard. With new elementary boundaries, filling teacher positions internally, the shifting of teachers, the movement of administrators, and the tightening of budgets, the new school year will look different.

I am excited for the future of our district. We are in a good place. But continuing to build a strong district means that we need to be responsible and proactive in managing the things that we can control.

If you have concerns or questions feel free to reach out.

Steve

Dr. Steve Matthews  
Superintendent  
Rockford Public Schools