

**August 2021**

## **Greetings Parents/Guardians,**

It is with great enthusiasm that I welcome you to the 2021-2022 school year. As we prepare for the new school year, we do so with much anticipation of the challenges and triumphs ahead.

The staff has been engaged throughout the summer to prepare for the 1500+ students registered to attend Rockford Area Schools. We continue to learn and grow as a professional learning community to find ways to address the unique needs and learning styles of all our students.

Within this newsletter, you will find important school information. I strongly recommend that both parents/guardians and students read it from top to bottom. Several items will provide dates and timelines, along with important expectations that will ensure each student and family is prepared for a successful school year.

### **Safe Learning Plan**

Rockford Area Schools is committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for all staff and students. Attached is our Safe Learning Plan for the 2021-2022 school year. At this time, face coverings are highly recommended but not required. We understand that the pandemic is not over and there are variables that will impact our school year. However, we believe that with mitigation efforts and our past experiences, we can safely return to school five days a week where students are best served by our dedicated teachers and staff.

### **Learning Formats**

**All students in grades K-12 will return to in-person learning five days a week.** RAS will provide limited opportunities for families requesting online learning. Rockford Area Schools has partnered with Southwest Intermediate School District 288 (SW Metro) to provide full-time online options for K-12 families for the 21-22 school year. Rockford students will have access to Minnesota licensed teachers and a standard-based curriculum provided through our online portal with SW Metro. Families will be required to receive administrative approval from the building principal before applying. More information and a link for pre-registration will be available on the district website by August 23rd.

### **Back to School Guide**

The Back to School Guide will be sent to families electronically this year. It contains information regarding Lunch Forms, Transportation, Safety, and Student Accident Insurance coverage information and form. This year we are adding the Parent Calendar.

### **Transportation**

Bus routes will be available the week of August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Information will be sent to families via Infinite Campus and will also be posted on our website. Please be patient the first few days of school as we get things rolling. If you have questions or concerns, please call the transportation office to speak with Stephanie at 763-477-6100.

### School Start Times

The first day of school for students in grades 5-12 will be on **Tuesday, September 7, 2021**. Students grades K-4 will start school on **Thursday, September 9**, following two days of assessments (see REAMS Newsletter for more information on Assessment days).

As a reminder, some school start times and ending times have changed slightly for the coming year:

- |                          |                |              |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| ● Rockford Middle School | Start: 7:50am  | End: 2:45pm  |
| ● Rockford High School   | Start: 8:00am  | End: 2:50pm  |
| ● Rockford Elementary    | Start: 8:05am  | End: 3:00pm  |
| ● Early Childhood (AM)   | Start: 8:05am  | End: 10:45am |
| ● Early Childhood (PM)   | Start: 12:15pm | End: 2:55pm  |

### Free and Reduced Lunch (F/R) Application

During the 2021-2022 school year, the federal government will continue to provide all students with free meals during the school day. Please complete a Free/Reduced lunch application to help our schools. The school district receives additional funding based on the number of residents who qualify. Last year, RAS lost over \$100,000 in revenue due to a significant reduction in Free/Reduced lunch applications. Filling out the form helps us secure additional funding for teaching and learning, transportation, athletics, etc. In addition, students who qualify for Free or Reduced benefits may also be eligible for discounted rates on SAT/ACT Tests, Financial Aid, Scholarship Opportunities, etc. The forms are attached. If you need help filling out the forms, please call your school.

### Volunteers/Visitors

We welcome the return of volunteers and partner organizations to our schools. Please reach out to your school to make arrangements for your visit. All visitors are encouraged to call the school before arrival to facilitate access and availability.

### Open House

There is a slight change to the open house schedule. Due to a number of athletic events, the high school open house will move to Wednesday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, which is the same night as the middle school. **The middle school open house will be Wednesday, September 1, 4-6 p.m.** (as previously scheduled). **The high school open house will follow at 6-8 p.m.** This will allow families to attend both open houses on Wednesday and attend the several athletic events on Thursday.

On behalf of the entire staff in the Rockford Area School District, we welcome each of you to the new school year.

Respectfully,

Rhonda Dean,  
Superintendent