



# Rockford Area Schools

## Independent School District #883

[www.rockford.k12.mn.us](http://www.rockford.k12.mn.us)

### Rockford Area Schools District Office

Paul D. Durand, Superintendent  
6051 Ash Street  
Rockford MN 55373  
763-477-9165  
763-477-5833 Fax

### EXCEL Gifted and Talented Program

Samantha Heitke, Coordinator

Rockford Elementary  
Arts Magnet School  
7650 County Rd 50  
Rockford MN 55373  
763-477-5837  
763-477-5025 Fax

Rockford Middle School  
Center for Environmental  
Studies  
6051 Ash Street  
Rockford MN 55373  
763-477-5831  
763-477-5832 Fax

### Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School (K-4)

Brenda Nyhus, Principal  
7650 County Rd 50  
Rockford MN 55373  
763-477-5837  
763-477-5025 Fax

### Rockford Middle School Center for Environmental Studies (5-8)

Amy Denneson, Principal  
6051 Ash Street  
Rockford MN 55373  
763-477-5831  
763-477-5832 Fax

### Board of Education:

Ted Botten, Chair  
Kris Abrahamson, Vice Chair  
Chuck Tryon, Clerk  
Todd Anderson, Treasurer  
Kathy Smith, Director  
Lisa Hall, Director

September 15, 2015

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to the 2015-2016 school year! Thank you for trusting Rockford Area Schools with your child's education! I would like to share some information with you about our EXCEL program. It's one of the ways we support the unique needs of students in grades one through eight at Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School and Rockford Middle School – Center for Environmental Studies. The mission of the EXCEL Program is to recognize gifted and talented students and appropriately meet their unique academic, social and emotional needs, to continue Rockford Area Schools' tradition of excellence, one student at a time. We will accomplish our mission by working toward the following objectives:

- Identify students who exhibit unique abilities or potential significantly beyond that of their peers of similar age, experience or environment
- Provide levels of service to meet the diverse needs of highly able learners
- Enrich and extend the general education curriculum to engage and challenge highly able learners
- Discover and nurture the unique talents and interests of individual students
- Develop exceptional citizens who are life-long learners

The EXCEL program is built according to a levels of service model. Different opportunities are available at each grade level but all follow the same model. All EXCEL services are grounded in research-supported best practices in gifted and talented education. Services are provided both by general education teachers and the EXCEL resource teacher. Please watch for grade-level specific updates as the year progresses and we respond to student needs. I will be working closely with teachers to determine the best way to enrich and extend the education we provide at REAMS and RMS-CES.

- Level 1: Differentiated learning opportunities and groupings in general classroom
- Level 2: Extension and enrichment opportunities throughout academic year
- Level 3: Accelerated classroom placement and talent development opportunities; mathematics and/or language arts; extra programs provided by EXCEL resource teacher
- Level 4: Separate class during WIN/BOOST time with EXCEL resource teacher; further individualization/acceleration as needed; students have demonstrated ability (in multiple ways) that is significantly above that of age-level peers.

If you are interested in finding out more about the program, please consider attending an informational open house. It will be a great chance to hear a program overview and to learn more about the Levels of Service model.

### **EXCEL Gifted and Talented Program Open House**

*Tuesday, September 29, 2014; 5:30-6:15 pm*

*Media Center; Rockford Middle School - Center for Environmental Studies*

There is a wealth of information on our website as well, including facts on the levels of service, our definition of giftedness, identification process, program goals, and answers to frequently asked questions. There are also links which can lead you to resources about gifted and talented children.

I am very much looking forward to the new school year and the opportunities ahead of us! Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Samantha Heitke  
EXCEL Gifted and Talented Program Coordinator  
[heitkes@rockford.k12.mn.us](mailto:heitkes@rockford.k12.mn.us); 763-477-5837 x1700