

OCTOBER 2025 | ISSUE 37

ROCK RIDGE REPORTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ROCK RIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



EDUCATION TO INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION

LAURENTIAN GRADES PREK-6 4TH GRADERS START STRONG

Laurentian's 4th graders are kicked off the school year by showcasing their amazing leadership skills! They are taking the initiative to introduce themselves to staff and learn everyone's names - building strong connections throughout the school.



SHAKING UP SCIENCE

The 4th graders at Laurentian Elementary are putting their science and social studies skills to the test with an exciting earthquake engineering challenge.

Students are constructing model buildings and will test them to see if they can survive a simulated earthquake.

Their learning is enhanced by future mapping of real-world earthquake activity, connecting their hands-on work to a broader global context.



FIFTH GRADERS SHINE WITH SOLAR ENERGY PROJECT

This fall, our fifth graders at Laurentian Elementary took on an exciting Project-Based Learning (PBL) challenge: exploring solar energy and designing their own solar panel arrays.

In PBL, students don't just memorize facts—they investigate real-world problems, collaborate in teams, and apply their learning to create solutions. The result is deeper understanding, stronger teamwork, and a sense of ownership in their work.



Throughout the project, students stepped into the role of “The Sun Team” - engineers tasked with figuring out how solar panels could power a new building. They studied the basics of electricity and circuits, experimented with solar panel angles and directions, analyzed building designs, and even constructed models of their proposed arrays. Along the way, they researched professional roles, conducted an energy walk around the school, and practiced interpreting real solar data.



Why does this matter for our community? Laurentian Elementary is home to solar panels right on our own rooftop. These panels reduce energy costs for our district, lower our environmental impact, and provide hands-on learning opportunities for our students. By tying our own building's energy system to classroom learning, students see how science, math, and technology connect directly to their daily lives.



This project is wrapping up with students reflecting on what they learned and sharing their designs with classmates, staff, and families. Their curiosity and creativity remind us that the future of clean energy - and of our community - shines bright in the hands of our young learners.



STARS OF HONOR

We are proud to announce Laurentian Elementary's Stars of Honor! Each grade level has selected students who demonstrate outstanding character and work ethic in the classroom. These students will be recognized at the Minnesota Football Game vs. Michigan State University on Saturday, November 1, where they will receive a certificate, enjoy special photo opportunities, and be honored with an ovation from the crowd.

Congratulations to our Stars of Honor - you make Laurentian proud!





Safety and routines have also been a focus this fall. Students practiced bus safety and learned school routines and classroom expectations through our Leader in Me framework. These lessons help set a positive foundation for success throughout the year.



PARKVIEW

GRADES PREK-2

A FANTASTIC START!

We are off to a wonderful start here at Parkview Elementary! Our students and staff have jumped into the new school year with excitement, joy, and lots of learning.

The year began with an unforgettable entrance—our summer reading students arrived at school on a fire truck, which created an incredible buzz of energy and pride around their accomplishments.



First graders kicked things off with “magic play dough,” a fun activity that sparked curiosity and creativity.



We were also thrilled to welcome Minnesota Power, who presented their Safety Circus show. Students were engaged in a lively performance while learning important lessons about electricity and how to stay safe around it.



To cap off the first month, we celebrated together with our Family Carnival. Students and families joined us for an evening of games, prizes, and fun. The laughter and smiles were the perfect reminder of the strong community we are building together at Parkview.



It has been an incredible start, and we are looking forward to the many more adventures, learning opportunities, and celebrations that lie ahead this school year!



NORTH STAR GRADES 3-6 BUILDING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

The new Dean of Students at North Star Elementary, Mr. Byron Negen, has been visiting classrooms to recognize students for their positive behavior and effort. During his visits, he talks with students about what it means to be a great classmate—someone who shows kindness, strength, teamwork, and empathy—while also addressing behaviors that don't reflect being a supportive friend.

These visits reinforce a positive school culture and remind students that their actions make a difference every day.



5TH GRADERS LAUNCH INTO STEM AT STARBASE MINNESOTA

North Star 5th graders recently attended STARBASE Minnesota for a week of hands-on, high-energy learning at the 148th Fighter Wing in Duluth. STARBASE is a U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) educational program designed to inspire and engage students—especially those from underrepresented or underserved communities—in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Throughout the week, students explored areas such as physics, chemistry, engineering, robotics, and computer science. The program emphasizes teamwork, goal-setting, and real-world STEM applications, helping students see how what they learn in school connects to exciting careers and opportunities.

One of the highlights of the week was the Crash Landing “Eggstronauts” experiment, where students designed and tested protective devices to keep their “astronaut” (an egg!) safe during a crash landing. The combination of teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving made it a favorite activity for many.

Beyond rockets, robots, and experiments, our students walked away with new curiosity, confidence, and excitement for STEM learning. We are so grateful to the STARBASE Duluth staff for providing such a meaningful program, and to our teachers, administrators, and volunteer drivers who helped make this experience possible!



RRHS GRADES 7-12

ACCOUNTABILITY, OPPORTUNITY, AND COMMUNITY AT ROCK RIDGE

At Rock Ridge High School, a renewed focus on student accountability is helping shape a culture where expectations are clear, consistent, and shared by all. Through the school's hall pass system and the creation of a common language of accountability, students are learning responsibility and thriving within it. These routines ensure students understand where they need to be and why it matters, preparing them for success both in school and beyond.

Academic opportunities remain at the forefront as well. Rock Ridge continues to expand College in the Schools (CIS) and advanced coursework, giving students the chance to earn college credit before graduation. These courses not only challenge students academically but also provide a head start on their postsecondary journeys.



Responsibility at Rock Ridge doesn't stop in the classroom. Students are also taking ownership of the building itself — helping to keep spaces clean, safe, and welcoming. Whether it's maintaining hallways, supporting safety efforts, or simply respecting shared spaces, students are learning that a strong school community depends on everyone doing their part.



This fall also showcased the power of student-led learning. Seventh graders engaged in a Gold Standard Project Based Learning challenge where they created instructional videos and step-by-step guides for all students to learn from. Principal Scott Manni said the project reflects “the heart of PBL — solving real-world problems with a public product.”

Rock Ridge is also preparing to launch Unified Sports, a program that brings students with and without disabilities onto the same teams. “This is about breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for every student to shine,” said Manni. A kickoff meeting is scheduled for October 7 at 3:30 p.m. at RRHS.

Community partnerships continue to strengthen student experiences. Forty students attended the Discover Healthcare Career Exploration event in Grand Rapids, while Culinary Arts students represented Rock Ridge at the Iron Range Rotary's 6th Annual Chili Cook-Off. Building & Construction classes partnered with Ulland Bros. to connect classroom learning with industry expertise.



Mental health and well-being are also prioritized. All 9th graders participated in the 3rd Annual Youth Mental Health Day at the Minnesota Discovery Center, where they learned hands-on strategies to manage stress and support one another.



The school also recently celebrated its custodial team during Custodian Appreciation Day. Quoting author Joyce Giraud, Manni called custodians “the silent heroes of our schools” and thanked the Rock Ridge crew for their role in creating a safe and welcoming environment.

From accountability systems to college readiness, from student-led projects to community engagement, Rock Ridge is proving that excellence comes when everyone contributes. As Manni put it, “When everyone does their part, our whole school shines. That’s what ‘Our School, Our Responsibility’ is all about.”

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE MONTH

OCTOBER IS...

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

MONTH

Did you know...?

It's **FREE** to apply to all of MN State Colleges and Universities during the month of October?

APPLY! APPLY! APPLY!

October is a great time for seniors to focus on college planning. Throughout the month, students are encouraged to begin or continue working on college applications, financial aid, and postsecondary planning.

As part of this initiative, all Minnesota State Colleges and Universities are offering free applications during October, and many have also waived essay requirements. This makes October the perfect opportunity for seniors to apply and take the next steps toward their future.

For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/4nsYAwS> or stop by the high school counseling office.

JOIN Wolverine Unified Sports

Special Olympics Unified Sports is an inclusive program that brings people with and without intellectual disabilities together to play on the same sports teams, fostering friendships and mutual understanding.

Questions email:
ethan.stachovich@rrps.org (coach)
Or
amber.king@rrps.org

Meeting

Tues. Oct 7th @ 3:30

@ RRHS Rm 2321

Enter door 26

Special Olympics Unified Sports



Donations needed for:

LAURENTIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

COSTUME CLOSET!

Everyone is welcome to come
browse costumes & accessories!

ALL ITEMS ARE FREE!!!

OCTOBER 21ST & 23RD

**Will be open during Conferences &
Scholastic Bookfair from 3:00-7:00pm**

Donations of Halloween
costumes, new or used are
welcome.

Send them in labeled 'PTA'

Any questions email: rrlespta.org