

MARCH 2026 | ISSUE 42

# ROCK RIDGE REPORTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ROCK RIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



EDUCATION TO INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION

## LAURENTIAN GRADES PREK-6 STEPPING INTO THE SHOES OF EARLY EXPLORERS

Fourth grade students at Laurentian took advantage of the beautiful winter weather during Social Studies classes! As they explored the West Region of the United States, students stepped into the shoes of early explorers heading west through the elements. They made careful observations of the trees around us, discussed how geography affects daily life, and experienced firsthand just how challenging it can be to travel through deep snow. It was an engaging, hands-on learning experience that truly brought our studies of the West to life!



## SUPPORTING EVERY STUDENT AT LAURENTIAN ELEMENTARY

At Laurentian Elementary, we believe that students can tackle even the most challenging tasks—and they never have to do it alone. Our dedicated special education teachers and paraprofessionals work closely with students every day, offering encouragement, guidance, and the tools they need to succeed.

With this support, students not only face challenges—they grow, persevere, and achieve their goals. At Laurentian, every student has the opportunity to thrive!



## FROM DOMINOES TO DONATIONS

First graders at Laurentian Elementary set a goal to collect 100 boxes of food for the 100th day of school to create a domino chain, and they exceeded it with over 130 boxes!

Now that the dominoes have fallen, students will tally and chart the donations before delivering them to three local food shelves. This is just the beginning of their Needs and Wants Project-Based Learning.



# PARKVIEW

## GRADES PREK-2

### STUDENTS GO FOR GOLD DURING "READING OLYMPICS" FOR I LOVE TO READ MONTH

February was filled with excitement, friendly competition, and a whole lot of reading as students across our school celebrated "I Love to Read Month" with this year's theme: *The Reading Olympics*.



Throughout the month, students were encouraged to strengthen their reading habits while working together toward school wide goals. Classes competed to earn "reading medals" by completing books, passing reading quizzes, and logging reading time. Each grade level determined the best way to track their progress, but the goal was the same for everyone—read as much as possible and cheer each other on along the way!



The entire school worked together to reach three achievement levels. If students earned 400 medals, they unlocked the Bronze Level, earning the whole school extra recess time. At 800 medals, the school reached the Silver Level, celebrating with a classroom popcorn party. The ultimate goal was the Gold Level, reached by earning 1,200 medals.

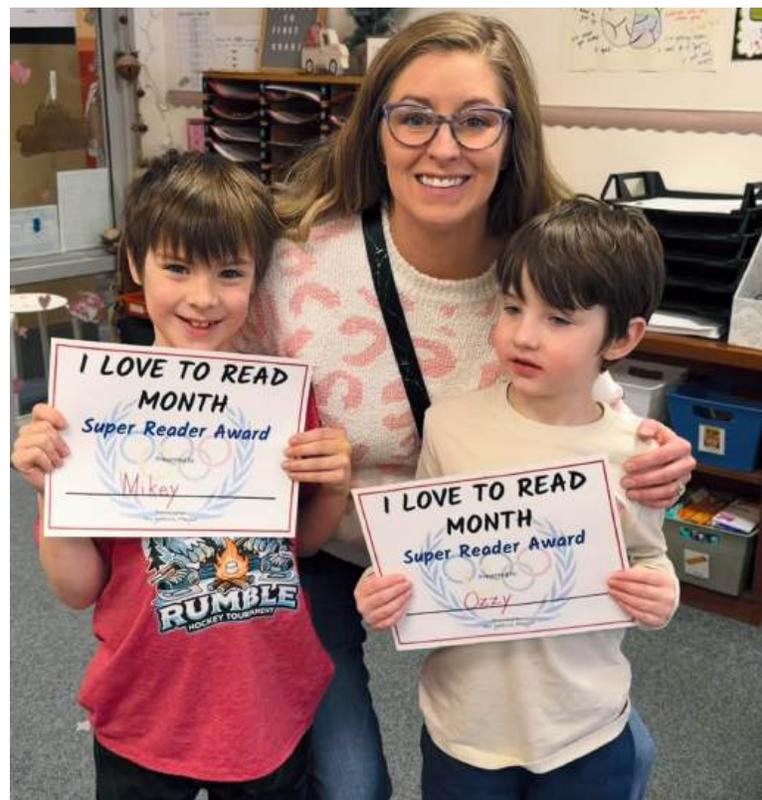


When the school reached the Gold Level, the celebration was truly Olympic-worthy! Students gathered in the gym for a Teachers vs. Students Olympics, where top readers from each class competed in fun activities and games. Medals were awarded during a schoolwide assembly as students celebrated their hard work and love of reading.



To keep the excitement going all month long, each grade level also recognized a Weekly Gold Medal Class. These classes were celebrated with medal stickers and a fun snack celebration, helping keep the momentum strong as students raced toward the schoolwide goals.

The Reading Olympics was a wonderful reminder that reading can be both fun and powerful. We are so proud of our Parkview students for their enthusiasm, teamwork, and dedication to becoming stronger readers. Way to go, readers!



# NORTH STAR GRADES 3-6 A WILD MONTH OF READING

February was a busy month as it was “I Love to Read Month”, but it sure was a jungle at North Star! The theme “It’s A Jungle Out There” engaged students to become wild readers throughout the month. The school had a goal set of 20 million words, and by the end they had almost doubled it!

There were dress up days that made them look like hunters or prey, very cozy in their “bear necessities” pajamas, cool like penguins, and colorful in school pride. The school even had a special visit from North Star Credit Union and their special friend Star the Yeti!





Finally, to end the month off, we celebrated everyone's hard work by announcing the top classes per grade, the top three readers per grade, and the top three readers overall in the entire school. Our first-place student read as many as 1,259,746 words! Then because they had reached the goal of 20 million words, the top three students per grade got to pie Mrs. Stefanich and other staff members who very kindly volunteered. Overall, it was a great success and the students can't wait to see what's in store for next year!



# RRHS GRADES 7-12

## RRHS STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY, AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

At Rock Ridge High School, learning extends far beyond the classroom. Throughout the past month, students have demonstrated leadership, creativity, and community service in ways that reflect the school's guiding principle: Our School, Our Responsibility.

### STUDENTS LEAD VISION DRIVE TO HELP COMMUNITIES IN GUATEMALA

February is Low Vision Awareness Month, and Rock Ridge students took action to make a global impact.

The Rock Ridge LEO Club, working alongside Rock Ridge DECA, organized an eyeglass drive at the high school that collected 125 retired pairs of glasses. The glasses were donated to local Lions Club member Clint Hanson, a retired ophthalmic technician who travels annually to Guatemala on Lions Club vision missions.

Hanson recently visited the LEO Club to share stories and photos from his work. During last year's mission, Hanson and fellow volunteers screened over 1,800 people in just four days, providing vision care to individuals ages 4 to 70 years old. For many of them, it was the first time they had ever received glasses.



According to the World Health Organization, approximately 120 million people worldwide are visually impaired due to uncorrected refractive errors, such as nearsightedness or farsightedness. While these conditions can often be corrected easily with glasses or contact lenses, millions of people lack access to these basic services.

To support ongoing donations, the Rock Ridge High School Wood Technology class built a permanent donation box for eyeglasses, sunglasses, and hearing aids. The box is now located in the high school office, and community members are encouraged to donate unused eyewear – especially children's glasses.

### REVIVING A 30-YEAR TRADITION: THE MADRIGAL DINNER RETURNS

Another highlight of the month was the return of the Madrigal Dinner, a beloved Iron Range tradition that had been absent for nearly three decades.

The event showcased the incredible talents of Rock Ridge students. A four-course meal was designed, prepared, and served entirely by students in the school's culinary program, while the evening's entertainment featured performances by the band, orchestra, and vocal ensembles.

The event was a true demonstration of student ownership. After the evening concluded, many students stayed late to help clean up and reset the space – further demonstrating pride in their work and commitment to the experience they created for the community.



# HANDS-ON LEARNING ACROSS THE BUILDING

On any given day at RRHS, students can be found learning in a variety of ways that reflect the school's commitment to both academic rigor and career readiness.

In one class period alone, students may be learning auto maintenance and hands-on mechanical skill, solving advanced calculus problems collaboratively, baking and studying food science in Culinary Arts, or investigating quantum numbers and excited electrons in Chemistry.

This wide range of opportunities reflects Rock Ridge's goal of offering multiple pathways to success, whether through college preparation, skilled trades, or career exploration.



## CHARACTER ON DISPLAY BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Rock Ridge students also continue to demonstrate strong character and pride in their school community.

Following a recent Rock Ridge hockey victory at AMSOIL Arena, students were photographed helping clean the stands after the game – a small but powerful example of the values the school hopes to instill.

“These moments matter,” said Principal Scott Manni. “When students take responsibility for their environment and represent their school with pride, it shows that our message is working. Our School, Our Responsibility is not just a slogan – it’s a mindset.”



## A SCHOOL CULTURE BUILT ON RESPONSIBILITY

Throughout the building, staff and students continue to work together to create a culture of accountability and pride.

“Our goal is to help students grow not only academically but as people,” Manni said. “When students take ownership of their school, support each other, and give back to the community, that’s when we know we’re doing something right.”

With service projects, revived traditions, hands-on learning, and strong community partnerships, Rock Ridge High School continues to show what can happen when students embrace a simple but powerful idea: Our School. Our Responsibility.

## A WILD ADDITION TO THE WASCHKE FAMILY ACTIVITIES CENTER

Visitors to the Waschke Family Activities Center may notice two new residents on display—full-body-mounted wolverines! These impressive additions are eye-catching, educational, and a unique way to celebrate Rock Ridge’s Wolverine pride.

The displays were generously donated by Frank Klabecek, EHS Class of 1963 and retired owner of Frank’s Taxidermy. The wolverines were ethically harvested by an Indigenous Canadian in northern British Columbia and have been preserved as educational pieces that highlight wildlife, craftsmanship, and regional heritage.

We are grateful to Frank for sharing his expertise and for this meaningful donation to Rock Ridge Schools. The displays provide students and visitors with an opportunity to learn more about wildlife while also showcasing the artistry involved in taxidermy.

Be sure to stop by the Activities Center to see these remarkable additions in person!



## A BOOT-SCOOTIN’ GOOD TIME: REACH FESTIVAL COMING MARCH 21

REACH at Rock Ridge stands for relationships, education, accountability, character, and hard work. The students of the Wolverine’s Rock Ridge REACH Club promote a wide variety of positive-culture activities for the students and staff of our school district. They are currently busy preparing for the country-western themed, family-friendly fun festival to take place throughout the entire high school on Saturday, March 21. The event runs from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and is open to the public. The REACH club students are involved in all aspects of the planning process and will run the many areas of the festival. They really look forward to bringing our community together in a fun way!

Some of the activities at this country-western festival include line dancing lessons, H-O-R-S-E basketball tournament and other gym activities, concessions, country karaoke, games, root beer floats, contests, arts and crafts, silent auction, face painting, kiddie country activities, and so much more. The PAC will host musical entertainment all day including current students, alumni, community members, and staff to include North Star’s own Mr. Little! Local service organizations will be spotlighted. Cook Country Connections will be there from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and food trucks will be outside of the gym door #24.

Ticket cost is \$10. Ages 5 and under are free. Students grade 12 and under are \$5. Ticket sales help cover the festival costs and help fund annual REACH activities, local community volunteering costs, and a senior REACH service day trip.

Join REACH on March 21 with your friends and family to celebrate a day of fun. Oh, and the best country-western outfit wins a prize!



# WOLVERINES

## Girls Basketball



**SECTION 7 AAAA**

**2023-2024 | 2024-2025**

**2025-2026**

**3-PEAT**

**2025-2026 TEAM:** Amelia Hillman, Jordyn Schroeder, Ada Boe, Maija Lamppa, Lexi Lamppa, Aili Lautigar, Megan Zika, Liz Olson, Jacinda Wilcox, Allison Anderson, Sophia Lamppa, Marley Kaivola, Liz Fultz, Ella Bialke, Abigail O'Malley, Brooklyn Smith, Kendall Hedley, Alice Johnson, Annika Pontinen, and Erin King-Neuttilla. **MGRS:** Madison Roen and Brylie Lang. **COACHES:** Byron Negen, Kyle Lawrence, Kyle Lamppa, Dave Hillman, and Alicia Schroeder.