

# R Schools

YOUR SOURCE FOR ROCKY RIVER SCHOOL NEWS

## Fourteen Students Recognized in National Merit Program

Five members of Rocky River High School's Class of 2009 have been recognized as semi finalists in the prestigious National Merit Competition. Justine Beres, Mary Farah, Sara McCormick, Matthew Mitcheltree and Bernadette Schneider are now eligible to continue in the National Merit Competition for over \$50 million in college scholarships. Less than 1 percent of high school seniors in the United States, and only 200 students from Northeast Ohio earned the distinction this year.

In addition, the following 9 students earned Letters of Commendation from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation: Grace Corrigan, Kristen Galbincea, Ryan Gallagher, Abigail Kacpura, Sarah Kessler, Emily Lewis, Grace Summers, Ian Trudell, and Celia Waggoner.

All of these students are to be congratulated for their fine showing in this rigorous academic competition.



RRHS National Merit Semi Finalists: (left to right) Sara McCormick, Bernadette Schneider, Matthew Mitcheltree, Justine Beres, and Mary Farah.

## New Website Goes Live

If you haven't been to the Rocky River City Schools' website recently, you'll notice a new look when you next visit. In beta testing over the summer, the new site went live on September 30. The address is still [www.rrcs.org](http://www.rrcs.org), but the look has been updated and lots of new information is available for students, parents and community members.



## Perfect Score!

For the third year in a row, a Rocky River High School student has earned a perfect score of 36 on the ACT. The ACT tests students in English, mathematics, reading and science. This score places Mary Farah as one of the top students in the US and Canada and ensures a wide range of future educational options. It's an amazing accomplishment for one student and to have one each year for the last three years speaks to the academic excellence of the students and staff at our high school. Congratulations to Mary for this wonderful achievement.

## State Report Card

The Rocky River City Schools received an "Excellent with Distinction" rating on the State Report Card. This is the highest rating available. To earn this designation, the Rocky River City Schools met 100% of the 30 state indicators. This includes 28 out of 28 test indicators met, attendance rate indicator met (96.5%), and graduation rate indicator met (99.1%). A copy of the district report card, along with each school's report card is available at [www.rrcs.org](http://www.rrcs.org).



# Bringing Lessons To Life

"Excited, energized, and rejuvenated," that's how Goldwood Primary School teacher Brain Salco describes his reaction to using a SMART Board in his second grade classroom. A SMART Board is an interactive whiteboard which, when connected to a computer, allows



software to be controlled directly from the display. Salco is in his second year of using the

SMART Board that was bought with monies from a Rocky River Education Foundation grant. When Salco first saw a SMART Board at a technology conference, he immediately saw the possibilities for "bringing lessons to life." During the first year he had the SMART Board, he was amazed at the speed with which his students picked up the technology. "They learned along with



me as I figured out how to use it," said Salco. "If kids can do something on a SMART Board, they can do the same thing on a computer, so

there is also a transfer of skills."

Kensington Intermediate School teacher Cheryl Zenko uses her SMART Board in every subject she teaches and credits the technology with captivating her students and engaging them in the learning process. Zenko's SMART Board was also funded by a grant from the Rocky River Education Foundation. After using it for just one month, Zenko can't imagine teaching without it. From map skills in social studies, the scientific method in science, practice games in math, to displaying the daily agenda, the SMART Board is an integral part of her fourth grade class.

The passage of the school levy last spring enabled the district to purchase additional SMART Boards for all the buildings, for a total of 42 across the district. Salco and Zenko both describe that an unexpected bonus of the new technology is the collaboration between teachers as they plan and share materials together.

# TLC Lab Grand Opening

Rocky River High School's new computer lab was officially opened on September 11, 2008. The ribbon cutting ceremony was performed by RRHS Principal Debra



RRHS Media Specialist Cherie Pandora, RRHS Principal Debra Bernard, Superintendent Michael Shoaf, and RRHS Assistant Principal Sam Gifford

provided additional funding, which enabled Mrs. Pandora to create a lab containing 30 student computers with wireless capability, a teacher workstation, a Smart Board, and a multimedia projector. Goals for the grant include improving students' 21<sup>st</sup> century skills through information literacy lessons and improving students' readiness for OGT, SAT, ACT and AP exams. The new computer lab reflects the district's commitment to increasing the use of technology to prepare students for the future.

RRHS Principal Debra Bernard, Class of 2007 Representative Nikki O'Callaghan, and RR Education Foundation President Becky Keith cut the ribbon for the new TCL computer lab.

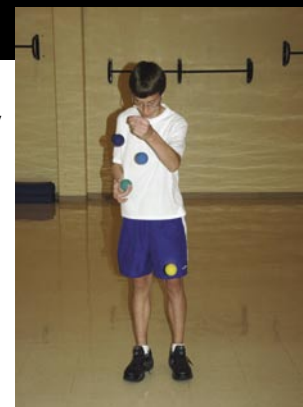
RRHS Principal Debra Bernard, Class of 2007 Representative Nikki O'Callaghan, and Rocky River Education Foundation President Becky Keith. TLC stands for Teacher+ Librarian Collaboration = Student Success.

RRHS Media Specialist Cherie Pandora secured a \$23,845 grant from the Museum & Library Services and the State Library of Ohio. The Class of 2007 and the Rocky River Education Foundation



# Bal-A-Vis-X and Brain Gym

Balls bouncing in a gym aren't an unusual sight, but if you go in the west gym at Rocky River Middle School on any morning before school you will see students bouncing up to 4 balls at once. It's all part of a program run by teachers Terri McNeely and Kathy Guzowski. Using a combination of the Bal-A-Vis-X and Brain Gym programs, they work with students to improve brain-body integration with a series of balance, auditory, and vision exercises. These activities help students' concentration, memory, reading, writing, organizing, listening, and physical coordination.



After students learn the skills, they teach them to new participants. This peer tutoring also helps to build confidence and develops leadership skills. McNeely and Guzowski are pleased to report that many students apply the skills they learn in these sessions to their other classes.

The program is voluntary and about 40-50 students participate over the course of the year. New participants are welcome and should see McNeely or Guzowski for further information.

## 2008-2009 Employee of the Year



This year's Employee of the Year for the Rocky River Schools is Laurel Maier, Executive Secretary at Facilities Operations. The award goes annually to a non-teaching staff member who exemplifies the many professional qualities desired in a school district employee. Laurel and her husband are the parents of three grown children. She has been with the Rocky River School District since 1988. Laurel works with facilities operations to reserve rooms and

equipment for both the school and community. She also provides support to the maintenance and buildings and grounds staff of the district. Laurel feels the best part of her job is the opportunity to meet and work with so many different people in the schools and community. She has helped groups that range from soccer and Little League to Scottish dancers and the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation. Laurel will be recognized by the Board of Education for this achievement and will receive a \$1000 stipend to be used for professional development.

## 2008-2009 Teacher of the Year

Rocky River High School visual arts teacher Patricia Tobin has been named the 2008 Teacher of the year for the school district. A member of the staff since 2000, Patricia teaches ceramics, sculpture, and painting. She also works with advanced art classes, the focus of which is portfolio development for future art majors. Patricia has served on many committees, including School Advisory, School Technology, and Curriculum Writing. The most rewarding part of teaching for Patricia is seeing students develop their own creativity and blossom as artists. She was recently presented with a 20 year Circa Recognition Award from the Ohio Art Education Association. Patricia and her husband have two grown children, whom they raised in Rocky River. Patricia will also receive board recognition and a \$1000 stipend.



## Rocky River Middle School Teacher One of 50 Chosen for Korea Program

Jeff Smith, Rocky River Middle School social studies teacher, was one of 50 U.S. teachers chosen to participate in the Korea Foundation's Study Korea Program for Educators. Selected teachers and administrators visited Korea for a series of lectures and cultural activities designed to enhance mutual understanding between the people of Korea and the United States. Smith credits this program with "putting a face on an otherwise faceless country." During his visits to Korean schools, Smith was able to discuss



curriculum, scheduling, and testing with Korean teachers.

The knowledge gained from his travel to Korea supplements the curriculum in the sixth grade social studies classes Smith teaches. "I am able to go beyond the textbook and share my personal experiences with my students," said Smith. An added

bonus is the relationships Smith has developed and maintained with the other participants he met through the program.

## The Lunch Ladies



Feeding up to 460 hungry 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders and their teachers is quite a job, but the ladies at the Rocky River Middle School cafeteria are up to the challenge. The cafeteria team of Joyce Becker, Joan Ellis, Peggy Malumphy, and Marina Blazevic are part cook, part nutritionist, and part mother. Each school day, the cafeteria staff makes soup, salad, pasta salad, sandwiches and wraps from scratch, along with a cooked meal.

Becker is happy to report that she sees many students making healthier food choices these days. An increase in food allergies among students has resulted in Becker working closely with parents to ensure that menu items are available to meet a variety of needs. "It's all worthwhile though," said Becker, "especially when we receive thank you notes from former students years later."

# Rocky River High School

## Safe Schools

The district has launched a Safe School Helpline, a 24-hour hot line service that allows students, parents and community members the opportunity



to anonymously report unsafe behaviors, threats or criminal activities. According to Dr. Shoaf, whose previous district used the service, helplines have proved effective in reporting issues such as vandalism, drugs and alcohol abuse, weapons, fights, threats, bullying and more. The service also provides 24-hour access to a trained mental health counselor to provide support for suicide intervention, family crisis support or other mental health issues.



## What Were They Doing?

You may have driven by the Wagar Road entrance to the high school in late August and wondered what was happening to the parapet above the door. As part of their annual review of our building and grounds, Facilities Operations decided that there could be a safety problem with the parapet in the future and wanted to fix the structure before any problems developed. As can be seen in the first photo, the parapet is hollow and water damage had begun to erode the mortar in the brickwork and cause leaks in the roof underneath. After consulting with a structural engineer, it was determined that shortening the structure would remove some of the problem areas while retaining the architectural appearance of the building. As an added bonus, water that collects in the parapet is now channeled through a downspout to the flowerbed below.

### Rocky River Board of Education



1st row: Kathleen Goepfert, Scott Swartz  
2nd row: James Schieda, Jay Milano and Jean A. Rounds

### Search for Children with Disabilities

The Rocky River School District, along with districts across the state, is participating in an effort to identify, locate and evaluate all children from birth to age 21 who may have a disability. A disability is a condition such as speech or language impairments, hearing impairments, visual impairments, learning disabilities, behavioral, multiple or severe handicaps, mental retardation, or other health impairments. If you have a concern about a child, please contact the Division of Learning Resources (LRS) at 356-6006.

### Grants

Each year the school district receives federal and state money through several grants. The yearly focus of the district's grant projects is developed with input from parents, staff and community members. If you would like to provide input for Title VI-B, Preschool Children with Disability, Safe & Drug Free Schools, and/or Title III, Limited English Proficient, please contact the Division of Learning Resource Services at 356-6006. If you would like to provide input for Title I, Title II-A, Professional Development Program and Title V, Innovative Programs or eTech/Ohio, please contact the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction at 356-6001.

### Rocky River High School Fall Play *Wait Until Dark*

*An innovative, highly entertaining and suspenseful thriller you won't want to miss!*

November 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 • Rocky River High School Auditorium  
For ticket information, call 440/356-6800

### Kindergarten Information Night for Parents

2009-2010 Kindergarten  
Thursday, March 5, 2009, 6:30-7:30 PM  
Goldwood Room, Goldwood Primary School  
*More information is available at [www.rrcs.org](http://www.rrcs.org).*

### Rocky River Board Of Education

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