One Team. One Mission. One Rock Hill.

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN



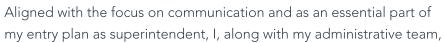


Dear Rock Hill Team,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Rock Hill Schools employees for the work that you done each and every day over the course of the school year to benefit students in our community. Each of you continue to use your gifts to make this an amazing place that remains focused on doing what is best for our students every day. It has been a joy to observe the level of student engagement during my visits to each school, and I continue to be impressed by the outstanding educators in our school district.

We continue our Focus Five for the 2018-19 year which serves as the foundation for our work, and will be embedded into our continuous improvement efforts and our Strategic Plan. The areas are:

- 1. Safety & Security
- 2. Recruitment & Retention
- 3. Student Achievement
- 4. Organizational Culture & Effectiveness
- 5. Communication with All Stakeholders





have hosted a series of monthly Listen & Learn sessions with teachers representing each school in our district. We held eight sessions, and I have enjoyed being able to hear from our teachers about successes and areas for continued growth for our district, as well as share important information about what is taking place across our district. Responses to questions can be found on the following pages. These responses are not all-inclusive, and we would certainly welcome the opportunity to further discuss these questions and other relevant topics in more detail within specific levels and school settings. If you have follow up questions or desire more information, please contact one of our Cabinet team members. You may find an organizational chart with contact information on the next page.

I am confident our schools and district will benefit from this open dialog regarding the needs that exist for our students, staff, and organization overall. It has been a joy this year to meet with representatives chosen by the principals of each school. Working together as One Team on One Mission for One Rock Hill, we will move our district forward to be the best in our state!

Sincerely,

Bill Cook

ROCK HILL SCHOOLS DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM



DR. BILL COOK SUPERINTENDENT WCOOK@RHMAIL.ORG

In the following pages, questions raised at the most recent Teacher Listen & Learn are answered. Due to the nature of some questions, we are not able to provide a complete response since we may not be aware of the context in which the question or concern is shared. If you desire additional information or have additional questions, please contact a member of Cabinet. Our team members are ready to assist you with more information.



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I appreciate the Listen and Learn sessions. I find it so helpful to read the answers each month. It's informative and helps keep things transparent. Thanks!!

Thank you for the feedback! Our team has enjoyed meeting with teachers this year and providing open and honest feedback.

Why are some students not being disciplined after going through the PBIS process? Students are "written up" for severe behaviors, and are sent back to the classroom. There is no consequence and so the same behavior happens over and over again. This may have something to do with so many teachers leaving the profession. Is there going to be anything done to prevent this from occurring?

PBIS is an Implementation framework or maximizing the selection and use of evidence-based prevention and intervention practices along a multi-tiered continuum that supports the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral competence of all students. PBIS does not take the place of the discipline code or consequences which are established both at the school and district levels. Also, PBIS does not ever dictate that a student "may not be written up". The handling of disciplinary processes and consequences should be directed to the administration of the school. If there are further questions, do not hesitate to contact Dr. Nancy Turner, Dr. John Jones, or Dr. Keith Wilks.

We are seeing more students with severe Mental Illness in our schools. Will there be professionals trained to handle Mental Illness in the future? As teachers, we are not trained to handle these behaviors and need help.

The school district is approaching the mental health crisis in a variety of ways. First steps have been to make sure that all staff and administration at schools had ACE's awareness training, access to immediate and practical strategies to assist in de-escalation, avoiding power struggles resiliency training, as well as re-direction (and many more strategies) through the on-line modules of 321 Insights. This program has an open license for all Rock Hill Employees. The District has also offered Mental Health Symposiums, with guest speakers to share specific information for our staff, administration and community stakeholders in reference to substance abuse, family court issues, and other struggles of our students with mental illnesses. The District has also provided a District-wide book study on Teaching to Strengths, supporting students Living with trauma, violence, and chronic stress. It is imperative that everyone working with our children in crisis have a basic foundation of understanding, strategies for the classroom. In elementary schools, there has been an addition of the behavior management assistants, trained to work with children in crisis and to work with them so they can return to their classroom ready to learn. In June, 2019, the District is sending a team of 16 staff, including administrator, counselors, and school psychologists to be trained as the District Resilience Team through Winthrop University. Rock Hill Schools continue to contract with Catawba mental Health for services that work with over 450 students in crisis. The District continues to look at alternative ways to offer crisis assistance and mental health services for our children in crisis. The proposed budget for the district includes additional mental health counselors.

When a ESL student enters our district, what criteria is used to decide to place them in the Immersion Program? We are seeing an influx of students who do not speak any English at all in 4th and 5th grade. Would it not be more beneficial to be in a regular classroom where the student is fully immersed in English?

The support of ESOL services and placement in an immersion program are separate. Students who may qualify as ESOL can benefit from immersion programs as formal instruction and strategies embedded are designed to support and educate all students. Regardless of programming, ESOL services should benefit all students who qualify in their academic placements in Rock Hill Schools. The criteria for placement in the immersion program is for all students and does not discriminate based upon the origin language spoken. All students are monitored and evaluated as to their placement in programs throughout the school system.

What we are doing to retain teachers is not enough. As a former School Teacher of the Year and a member of this years Teacher Forum, I have to be honest in saying that we are not doing enough. Why are teachers going to choose Rock Hill when other districts close by seem more appealing due to stipends? Charlotte has given multiple raises since I left on top of the stipend that they give. Does Rock Hill have any intention on creating room in the budget for a stipend?

Administration is discussing options of recruitment and retention during the FY 19-20. All budget/needs request for next year will go through a prioritization process and is dependent on available funding. The Teacher Forum discussed recruitment and retention during its meetings and are suppose to be sharing their suggestions with district leaders. The proposed budget for the upcoming will include a recruitment and retention bonus.

What discussion has there been in consideration of alternate service models, such as suggested in Dr. Joyce vanTassel-Baska's 2017 Audit? Are we moving moving toward implementation of any of the other suggestions in the Audit? How many waivers does the district currently operate under for GT instruction, and where are the waivers in place?

The recommendations from Dr. Van Tassel-Baska's audit are under consideration and some, such as the purchase of and professional development for the William and Mary resources and development of curriculum maps, have been implemented. The district follows state guidance and regulations regarding gifted education. Specific inquiries regarding waivers can be directed to Dr. Lisa Gibson, Dr. Missy Brakefield, or Jennifer Morrison.

Can phones get put into all classrooms? There are times when parents need to be notified of student behavior at that very moment and teachers should not have to use their personal cell phones for this.

Independent telecommunications from the classroom has been identified as one of the possible safety and security enhancement measures for our school system in the future. There are several technical solutions available with different capabilities, benefits and costs. We are currently assessing these with Comporium and other partners to determine feasibility for implementation. Implementation will also be subject to the budget prioritization and approval process.

Does Rock Hill Schools anticipate a teacher shortage next year? If so, I remember talk about teacher retention but I would love to hear more about any progress on the topic.

We are experiencing a teacher shortage throughout the state and most of the nation. We have engaged in conversation around the topic of incentives for current and future employees. This is still a conversation in progress and is heavily dependent on the budget

Laptop use for elementary or at least Third Grade - Why do we allow students to take them home?

The focus of the 1:1 Initiative is for students in grades 3-12 to have access to information and continue their learning beyond the school day.

What plans does the district have for meeting the mental health needs of our students? There are students who do not know how to handle anger or frustration and they take it out on peers and teachers. These students need counseling on how to deal with these emotions. Classroom teachers do not have time nor are they trained to properly counsel these students.

The school district is approaching the mental health crisis in a variety of ways. First steps have been to make sure that all staff and administration at schools had ACE's awareness training, access to immediate and practical strategies to assist in de-escalation, avoiding power struggles resiliency training, as well as re-direction (and many more strategies) through the on-line modules of 321 Insights. This program has an open license for all Rock Hill Employees. The District has also offered Mental Health Symposiums, with guest speakers to share specific information for our staff, administration and community stakeholders in reference to substance abuse, family court issues, and other struggles of our students with mental illnesses. The District has also provided a Districtwide book study on Teaching to Strengths, supporting students living with trauma, violence, and chronic stress. It is imperative that everyone working with our children in crisis have a basic foundation of understanding, strategies for the classroom. In elementary schools, there has been an addition of the behavior management assistants, trained to work with children in crisis and to work with them so they can return to their classroom ready to learn. In June, 2019, the District is sending a team of 16 staff, including administrator, counselors, and school psychologists to be trained as the District Resilience Team through Winthrop University. Secondary students will have a special focus as we look at teams to assist in conflict resolution, peer mediation, restorative practices and other strategies that are specific to secondary students in crisis. Rock Hill Schools will continue to contract with Catawba mental Health for services; working work with over 450 students in crisis. The District continues to look at alternative ways to offer crisis assistance and mental health services for our children in crisis.

May we have unlimited copies? To properly implement LDC and MDC, it would be nice to not have to worry about having enough paper. Copies are something that a teacher needs at their disposal.

Our goal is to fully support all teachers with materials needed. We offer two ways to print: through the school's RICOH multifunction devices (MFD's) and through our Print Center. Allocations do not apply to copies you make through the Print Center, only to those made on the MFD's. These MFD allocations are managed solely by the school and may be further allotted to each teacher or team as building administration chooses.



Schools have the ability to increase MFD allotments during the year as required to support you, either through the school's reserve or district reserve. Our records indicate all schools have an ample supply of allocations remaining for this school year. We realize that allocations have become an issue in the schools. We plan to work on ways to improve this over the summer. For better quality and lower cost, using the Print Center is encouraged for print jobs over 30 pages, and strongly recommend for jobs over 100 pages. No order for the Print Center, however, will be rejected. This year our Print Center has easier ordering and faster delivery service, now fulfilling your order in less than two days. "Rush" jobs (determined by the teacher) can be potentially fulfilled on the same day, please contact the Print Center directly at x1026.

Teacher work days - having a PD during, why are we not allowed time for us to work in our rooms for the whole day?

Having days designated on the district calendar for professional development allows us to conduct professional development on days that do not interfere with student instruction. Next year's calendar will allow more opportunity to have both workdays and professional development days at the end of grading periods.

I know there has been some discussion about technology in the K-2 classrooms. Is there an update of what K-2 may receive and when?

The Technology Council will be forming a subcommittee that will include K-2 teachers to decide the best devices for those grades. There are a lot more options that are on the market since iPads were first used in the district. The subcommittee will be able to examine a variety of devices in order to select the most appropriate one. Once the decision is made, we will work on getting the devices to the classrooms this fall.

If the new Education Reform Bill is passed, how will it affect the general education and special education teachers in the classroom? Also under the bill they are looking at making changes to the R2S requirements, how will this affect classroom teacher and other certified staff?

As new laws and bills are passed, the District will need to review and determine which laws are aligned with IDEA and the practical, daily practices that would need to be reorganized. The last day of the regular legislative session was May 9, 2019. We will not know the impact of H.3759 or S.419 Education Reform bills until the General Assembly approves the bills. H.3759 has been passed by the House and was debated in the Senate. H.3759 is currently in the Senate Committee on Education. S.419 is still being deliberated in the Senate Committee on Education. The Education Reform bill did not pass this year.



- Information on H.3759 can be found at http://bit.ly/hb3759
- Information on S.419 can be found at http://bit.ly/s419info

Will the 4th nine weeks report card for K-2 be the same or will it look similar to the proposed report card for next year?

There are no changes to the K-2 Report Card format for the 19-20 school year.

ATC inventory is tracked based upon funding source, and not having individual 100 accounts would make it less difficult to track the equipment needed for each class. ATC is different than other schools because of the required resources that are needed to conduct each individual class.

In FY 2016-2017, the district conducted a Student Activity Study. A recommendation of the study and a directive by the Board was to realign the account numbers for comparability. This was implemented in FY 2017-2018, and bookkeepers were instructed to maintain additional reporting needs for their school using Microsoft Office.

Why is reimbursement being denied for field trips that are required because of Direct classes and because of the desire for students to be involved in competitions? State Superintendent Spearman has pushed forth in her agenda that more students have opportunities to compete at the state and National levels and teachers should be reimbursed as a teacher or a chaperone.

The Academics & Accountability Department is unaware of any required field trips that have been denied. Rock Hill Schools agrees with Superintendent Spearman that more students should have opportunities to compete at state and national levels. Please e-mail contact Dr. John Jones at JAJones@rhmail.org or 803-981-1062 with more details so that we may assist. Thank you for the question.

SPHS is consistently a lone wolf with the scheduling of events that affect classes at ATC. Why can't SPHS schedule their shadowing or testing events at the same time as NHS and RHHS? How is the school district meeting the requirement that every student who graduates in South Carolina be taught CPR?

Our high schools continue to work together to make certain special events like jump up days, shadowing, or testing events are scheduled in tandem or in concert to reduce disruption in the district. CPR is required to be taught as part of the comprehensive Health curriculum (S.C. Code 59-32-30) and is incorporated in the Health standards used by teachers to teach that course.

Will there be sessions during the summer conference that will be geared towards performing/visual arts? Have we started a process of partnering with Winthrop to set up PD and grad class opportunities for music educators? Often, we see summer PD opportunities for general curriculum, but would love to have some music/arts offerings?

The Professional Learning conference will feature a variety of breakout sessions. We have shared information about presenting at the conference with our peers from Winthrop including fine arts; however, we would love if some of our own fine arts teachers would submit proposals to present as well. We are also planning to partner with the university to offer PD for our arts teachers for next year.

Would the school board consider a vote on starting school 5 minutes earlier or adding 5 minutes to the day (2019-2020) so we have enough instructional hours to eliminate bad weather make up days?

Lengthening the school day would not, by itself, circumvent state law which requires districts to schedule at least three make-up days. There are several districts in our state piloting "e-learning days" and "digital make-up days". Given our district's commitment to and availability of one-to-one technology, we may be able to consider similar approaches in the event state law is changed to allow all districts the flexibility in constructing the school calendar.

Our special education students are not getting the adequate help needed in their classrooms. More staff should be hired to assist in the special education classrooms and to assist those students when they are in their inclusion classes as well. During middle and high school, they should also have an opportunity for a study hall within their schedule and eliminate a related arts class.

It is the IEP team that determines the services and the accommodations for each student with disabilities. If there are concerns from parents that the services are not adequate, the team must look at the data (summative and formative) involved with each student. Co-teaching classes, with both teachers planning the lessons, offering instruction for all students in the class is a service that is not appropriate for all students. Many students with disabilities need intensive services in reading or math. This type of small group, intensive service with specific instruction such as with the Lindamood-Bell Program, cannot be delivered in the general classroom. Academic support is always an option, determined by the IEP team. The proposed budget for the upcoming year includes additional allocations for ESE.

Uniforms: there needs to be a very clear and direct dress code for all of the middle schools if the students are going to be required to wear uniforms. There is TOO much flexibility within what each school is allowed to wear and not wear.

The code of student dress is addressed for all schools through Policy JICA. Discretion of dress code is left to district administration, and schools have input into the dress code for their schools. This is vetted through the School Improvement Councils (parents, teachers, etc.). All school dress codes should be specific and easily understood by stakeholders.

Can RHSD increase the teacher pay scale? We are asked to incorporate 1-2 new initiatives each school year; along with our regular duties and this year even cover multiple classes each week due to a lack of substitutes.

In FY 2016-2017, the district conducted a salary study for teachers, maintenance, and OT/PT. The district implemented ¼ of the recommendations in FY 2017-2018 and another ¼ in FY 2018-2019. During our budget process, all requests will be considered and prioritized and is dependent on funding. Recruitment and retention bonuses are being considered in the budget process.

With after school tutoring being in place, is the district considering providing common, research-based lesson plans and assessments for tutors?

This idea will be shared as we evaluate the tutoring efforts this year and how we can both improve and further support this district intervention.

I admire our districts efforts to address the needs of the modern learner. I feel as if we might be missing one important piece. The modern learner is coming to us today having spent more time on screens and: less time with face to face social interactions, less conversation, less fine motor and gross motor experiences. In order to address these needs for today's modern learner it is more important than ever to consider providing a Pre-K for ALL students that has a strong social curriculum. Not only would this help with student academic skills but it would more importantly benefit some of our mental health concerns allowing students the opportunity to learn how to socially interact with peers and adults while learning appropriate necessary coping skills when things do not go their way. My question is – What is our district doing to consider being pro-active in order to meet the needs of our youngest modern learners. Is universal pre-k for ALL students an option?

The District continues to look at ways to increase Pre-K opportunities for all students. Currently, we have: Full-Day Tuition Pre-K Programs housed at Old Pointe Elementary and Ebenezer/Montessori; Full-Day Pre-K Programs housed at each of the Title I Schools; Half-Day Programs at Central Child Development Center ATC; and K-Prep Programs for Exceptional Ed students throughout the District. We currently serve approximately 525-550 Pre-K students within our RHSD programs & schools. We have secured the following SCDE Office of Early Learning & Literacy PD for our Aug. 12th PLC Conference:Purposeful Play Leads to School Readiness Participants will learn how purposeful play provides a context for learning so that it is meaningful to children and results in long-term understanding and concept development. While session one focused on intentional, purposeful planning of Dramatic Play centers, this session will allow participants the opportunity to explore and plan other developmentally appropriate learning centers which link the classroom environment to the SC-ELS and the 5K South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards. Barbara Fewell has led the following Book Study for Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers: Play is Serious Business: Join us if you teach K4 or K5 and are interested in the following:

- 1. Optimizing and balancing different types of play to deepen regular classroom learning
- 2. Teaching into play to foster social emotional skills and a growth mindset.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends preschoolers use screens no more than 1 to 2 hours a day. In our tech-savvy world, that includes TV shows, streaming videos, games or apps, and websites. Our Pre-K teachers try to limit the use of iPads and technology at school because we know so many of our students are plugged in to TV shows, games, using tables and smart phones when they are at home.

For the 2018-2019 school year, Pre-K staff were trained in the newly adopted Big Day Pre-K Curriculum. Mr. Damon Ward, Principal of Central Child Development Center, conducts monthly Pre-K PLC meetings to allow and strengthen collaboration in planning across the District. Dr. Cook held the first Pre-K Partners Listen and Learn on April 4, 2019 which included attendees from Pre-K Providers, Support Agencies, Community Members, and Central Office staff. The District continues to work with outside agencies to provide information to our families regarding additional services and programs available throughout the community. Any additional programs or positions for FY 2019-2020 will be part of the district's budget considerations. All budget needs for next year will go through a prioritization process and is dependent on available funding.

Is there a possibility that Reading Recovery teachers will be placed back at all schools at some point in the future? Or is there a possibility of Reading Interventionist being available a few days a week to work with students?

Any additional positions for FY 2019-2020 will be part of the district's budget considerations. All budget needs for next year will go through a prioritization process and is dependent on available funding.

Will the math tutors be returning next year or will there be funds?

This will depend on the academic success measured from this year's provision of tutors and funding levels for 2019-2020. The district believes in the benefits of tutoring for students. 4th and 7th grades were selected this year as a result of data analysis. We are glad that this has been a positive addition to the schools. Many thanks to principals and teachers who are making this occur successfully within the total school environment. Funding for additional tutoring will be included in the proposed budget for next year.

Is there any possibility of moving away from MAP as a district assessment towards some other assessment?

Although there is not immediate possibility of moving from MAP assessments to support instruction, the Instruction Division would be open to input and ideas as to what tools would be specifically helpful in ongoing, formative assessment and evaluation of student progress during the year. Input on this can be shared at jajones@rhmail.org.



Would the district reconsider establishing a staggered start for kindergarten students with the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year?

Guidance from the South Carolina Department of Education implies that kindergarten students are accountable to the 180-day school year calendar. Staggered starts reduce the number of school days for students in kindergarten.

Due to the current choice schools having a wait list, do we have any plans to add additional choice schools in the district?

The current goal for Choice is to continue the enhancement of the current programs. We remain open to exploring and expanding existing and new programs.

What is the current news about rezoning school populations in Rock Hill Schools?

No new information about rezoning at this time. The Board of Trustees received the results of a demographics study on Monday, May 13. Additional data will be reported and discussed at future board meetings.

Will the January 6, 2020 professional development day be in your home school or will offsite PD happen again? There were some inconsistencies with the most recent PD day and we believe that PD in our own buildings would be beneficial and would offer schools the chance to re-group prior to students returning on January 8th.

The elementary PD day was onsite for all core elementary teachers. More onsite professional learning opportunities are in the plans for next year.

Is there any consideration for strengthening programs by consolidating AP to one high school, IB to one high school and dual credit to one high school?

Regarding AP and IB, we do monitor numbers; however, Rock Hill Schools has made a commitment that students in all high schools will have access to Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses and that our efforts are grounded in both equity and equality of opportunities. We are monitoring the number of courses and participants for the programs.

Are there any new incentives teachers can look forward to?

All budget requests, including recruitment and retention options, are being considered during the budget process. All requests will be prioritized and are dependent on available funding. Recruitment and retention bonuses are being considered in addition to the state increase.

Can a Year-Round-School format be a consideration for our district? I believe it has many benefits.



There were efforts many years ago to offer a year-round program, and after implementation at one elementary school, the district returned to a traditional calendar for all schools. Year-round schools can be considered in the future as we are constantly looking at ideas and opportunities that will support and benefit all students. Length of time in school (academic day), transportation, schedules aligned with elementary-middle-and high schools, and other resources must also be considered when considering implementing two, or more, calendars within the school district.

As a district, how can we collaborate better with parents, and place more responsibility on parents to be primarily accountable for their children's learning, discipline, well-being, etc.

We are providing resources through student services, community outreach coordinators and our early learning partnership. Family nights hosted by the schools, the district, and community partners are available throughout the year to provide information sessions, training and connectivity to resources. Additional opportunities will be explored.

What is the long term plan for replacing technology devices in K5 - 2nd grade?

We will be working with a subcommittee of the Technology Council that will include K-2 teachers to identify the next generation device for these grades. The device needs to be able to fold into the system that the students will use in the 3rd grade. We will also need to decide the number per classroom.

What is the long term plan for transitioning classrooms to Cleartouch panels?

The goal is to replace all projectors with panels in a reasonable timeframe. We are working on the student laptop refresh plan that should set the budget for the next few years. This will dictate how many panels we can purchase each year. We are also exploring LED displays for those classrooms that don't require the touch capability. These would allow us to stretch our budget without sacrificing what is needed. The panel application will be released soon.

Will teachers get to have a full day(s) to work in classrooms? Every teacher work day has had PD tied to it, whether it be from the district or our own school. Teachers are very burned out and simply want time to get their own work done. We don't have time to implement district initiatives because there is no time to sit down, figure them out, and plan. I have asked my coworkers what their questions are, and this is overwhelmingly the main question!

Having days designated on the district calendar for professional development allows us to conduct professional development on days that do not interfere with student instruction. Next year's calendar will allow more opportunity to have both workdays and professional development days at the end of grading periods.

Can the Central Office and Administrators have some honest discussions about PBIS and its effectiveness? If it is something we still get funding for, can we look at whether it's actually beneficial to the schools. I have found that discipline issues have risen, respect for teachers has declined and accountability for parents has shifted to the teachers/admin. The concept of PBIS seems like a great thing, but in actuality it leads to disruptive behaviors in classrooms, lost class time, and overall low morale. While the numbers of referrals, ISS, OSS, and expulsions may be down for some schools, it doesn't seem that the school climate has actually improved.

Yes. PBIS is a systematic practice. It only works when staff and administration embrace and implement the strategies, majors, minors, interventions, etc. on a daily basis throughout each classroom., PBIS is a data driven process, reviewing the discipline data that is available through Tableau (for administrators) to share with staff. It is updated via powerschool, on a monthly basis with specialized tabs that reveal information on student grade, areas in schools with the most referrals, specific areas of discipline, etc. PBIS can only be successful if it is implemented with fidelity, discussed and review data, and provide strategies for staff. Once the staff has buy in and has the understanding that the adults must change their approach, there will be a change in student behaviors. Please contact Dr. Nancy Turner to further discuss and be part of any future discussions.

What steps are we taking to make sure that more documents are translated for our EL families? Report cards, etc. Those families need to be included in more activities.

We are currently having discussion as to the development of documents/letters/resources within a bank of materials that have been translated and may easily be reached. We are considering storing these items in Google. Working to have effective translation and access to resources is currently being worked on from our Federal Programs office.

NATIONAL MERIT FINALISTS







Rock Hill High School seniors Grace Atkinson, Lucas Moyon, and Amelia James shared stories with teachers on April 12 about the importance of authentic student engagement and the impact it has had on their success. The trio are the first National Merit Finalists in the district in more than a decade.

STAY CONNECTED









@ROCKHILLSCHOOLS