



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RCS Foundation awards the largest gift in its history, \$137,000 for the RCS orchestra program!

ROCHESTER, Mich. – The Rochester Community Schools Foundation awarded its largest gift ever: \$137,000 to help fund the newly established orchestra program within the Rochester Community School District.

“I am proud that the RCS Foundation board of directors voted unanimously to support the strings program. This gift fully supports our mission to advance learning for RCS students. It also ensures sustainability, allowing the program to build and grow to benefit future students,” said Robert Justin, chair of the RCS Foundation board of directors.

The majority of the donation, \$75,000, will be used for purchasing violins, violas, cellos and double basses, which will be added to a school’s musical instrument library. The remaining amount of the RCS Foundation gift covers the cost of instrument cabinets, music stands, seats for students, music books, and other essential program items.

“Launching an orchestra program is a significant undertaking that requires a great deal of support,” said Superintendent Robert Shaner, Ph.D. “It takes time, expertise and funding to build a high-quality program. We are truly grateful for the generosity of the RCS Foundation to assist us with the initial start-up of the program.”

The idea of adding a strings program was first introduced in 2016 when two community members provided a presentation at a Board of Education meeting. The district then initiated a task force to research, explore, and discuss the feasibility of having a strings program. An orchestra implementation specialist was also employed at that time to study options and produce a cost analysis and logistics report.

After much discussion, deliberation, and refinement, the work was then presented back to the Board of Education in the fall 2017. The study included the recommendation of starting a strings program at the sixth grade level, indicating that this level of education provided an opportunity for more frequent instruction and supported a strong retention rate for students.

Rochester Community Schools Mission

To provide a quality education in a caring atmosphere for students to attain the necessary skills and knowledge to become lifelong learners and contribute to a diverse, interdependent and changing world.

On February 12, 2018, the Board of Education approved the initiation of the strings program to complete the district's music curriculum, which also includes band and choir.

The initial offerings at the four middle schools attracted students quickly. "We were thrilled with the number of sixth-grade students who embraced the opportunity to learn to play a string instrument," said Erin Holden, RCS music teacher and orchestra program director. "Our students have come a long way since playing their first notes just a couple months ago, and we are proud of our students' progress and growth."

You're invited!

Students from the inaugural orchestra class will be featured at the regularly scheduled RCS Board of Education meeting on **Monday, Dec. 10, from 7-7:30 p.m.** in the Administration Building's Harrison Room, 501 W. University Drive, Rochester.

The RCS Foundation continues to accept donations to support the education of all RCS students.

If you have a passion to advance learning in the areas of academics, arts, and athletics, please call (248) 726-3140. You can make a difference!

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About the Rochester Community Schools Foundation

The RCS Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a mission to support and advance the learning for all RCS students by obtaining contributions for academics, arts, and athletics. The RCS Foundation was established in 1995. Since its inception, the RCS Foundation has raised more than \$10 million for RCS schools.

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