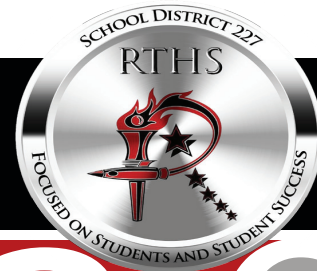


RICH TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 227



The Message

THE OFFICIAL RICH TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 227 NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2024

Chicago Area School Superintendents and UNCF Host Successful Gala, Raising Over \$400,000 in Scholarship Funds for Local Students

In a remarkable display of collaboration and commitment to education, superintendents from the Chicago area joined forces with the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) to host the 2nd Annual "Investing in Our Future" Scholarship Gala. The event, which took place on Friday, January 19, at the Tinley Park Convention Center, successfully raised \$400,000 in scholarship money for local students.

The Superintendents' Commission for the Study of Diversity and Demographics (SCSDD), a collective of elementary and secondary superintendents from 37 school districts in Cook County and the collar counties, partnered with UNCF for the second consecutive year. This partnership underscores their dedication to providing quality educational opportunities for all students.

Dr. Johnnie Thomas, president of the Superintendents' Commission and Superintendent of Rich Township High School District 227, said, "Our collaboration with the United Negro College Fund means more money for more students. That translates into more support for our students to fulfill their dreams."



From left, Dr. Johnnie Thomas, president of the Superintendents' Commission and superintendent of Rich Township 227, Dr. Blondean Y. Davis, superintendent of Matteson School District 162 and CEO of Southland College Prep, Lisa Rollins, UNCF regional director and Dr. Creg Williams, executive director of the Superintendents' Commission



Superintendent's Commission Choir

Last year's gala exceeded expectations, raising more than \$210,000—double the initial goal of \$100,000. This year's event, commemorating the 80th year of UNCF, achieved even greater success, with a sold-out crowd of 1,000 people, raising over \$400,000 in scholarships.

The event also honored the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, with several state legislators in attendance. Additionally, the high school choirs of Bloom Township, Rich Township, Southland College Prep Charter High School, Hillcrest, and Kankakee School District 111 joined together as a mass choir, providing entertainment for the gala attendees.

The success of the gala and the significant scholarships awarded demonstrate the profound impact of community and educational leaders working together to support and uplift the next generation.

THE SUPERINTENDENT

Board Members

Andrea D. Bonds
Board President

Andre Allen
Vice President

Tiffany Taylor
Secretary

Mia Carter
Board Member

Lamekia Davis
Board Member

Janice Preston
Board Member

Dr. Kristine Rucker- Morrow
Board Member

Superintendent's Cabinet

Dr. Johnnie Thomas
Superintendent

Dennis Forst
Assistant Superintendent of
Business & Operations

Dr. Jeff Bonomo
Assistant Superintendent of
Human Resources

Dr. Kevin Gallick
Assistant Superintendent of
Educational Services

Lynn Fields
Co-Principal

Janice Wells
Co-Principal

Dear Rich Township Students and Families:

As we reflect on the first semester of the 2023-2024 school year, we are overjoyed to celebrate the exceptional achievements of our scholars and staff at Rich Township High School. It is with immense pride that we highlight these milestones, which exemplify our commitment to academic excellence. The co-principals will speak more of these achievements in their message.

Our Freshman on Track rates have been remarkably high, a clear indicator of the strong start our new students have made in their high school journey. This success is mirrored in our impressive Average Daily Attendance, showcasing the dedication and enthusiasm of our students towards their education. Furthermore, a significant number of our scholars have made it to the Honor Roll, a testament to their hard work and the supportive learning environment fostered by our dedicated staff.

We extend heartfelt congratulations to our staff member, Sue Lundgren, for her outstanding achievement in receiving National Board recognition. This accolade is not only a personal triumph for Sue but also an honor for our entire school community. Our community engagement initiatives have been a resounding success, with programs like Black Men Speak and Enterprising Women making meaningful impacts. These efforts have not only enriched our students' learning experiences but also strengthened our bonds with the community.

The Facilities and Operations team at Rich Township High School has been at the forefront of exciting innovations, enhancing our school's infrastructure, and creating an optimal environment for both learning and teaching. Their dedication and creativity have significantly contributed to the positive changes within our school.

The vibrancy of our school life is further evidenced by the highlights of our activities. The Special Olympics Basketball team has shown remarkable sportsmanship and skill, the Winter Arts Showcase has displayed the diverse talents of our students, and our Big Dipper Basketball tournament was a thrilling experience for everyone involved.

Lastly, we acknowledge and appreciate the vital work being done by our partners, Pepper Construction, in promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on our work sites. Their commitment to these values aligns seamlessly with our mission and is integral to the success of our capital improvements.

These achievements are just the beginning. We look forward to continuing this journey of excellence together, fostering an environment where every student is empowered to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to Rich Township High School. Let's make the rest of the school year as remarkable as the first!

Respectfully,

Dr. Johnnie Thomas
Superintendent



MESSAGE FROM THE CO-PRINCIPALS

Celebrating Growth in the First Semester

Rich Township High School Parents and Students,

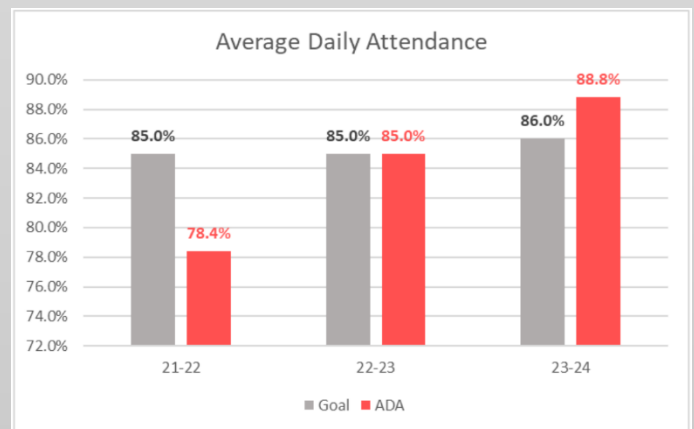
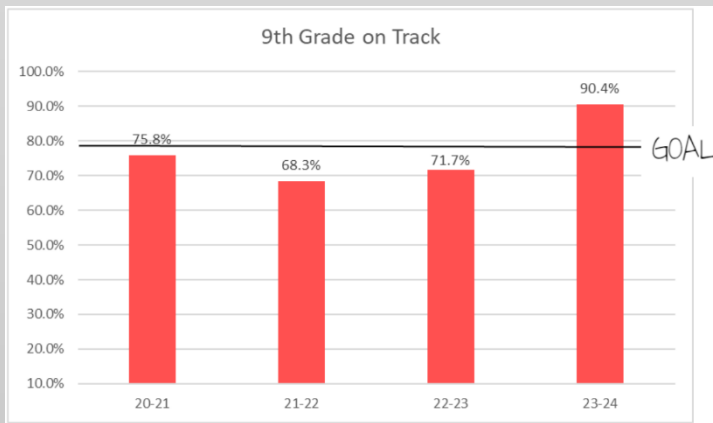
We are thrilled to share the remarkable achievements of our students and staff in the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. These accomplishments are not just numbers; they represent the hard work, dedication, and commitment of our entire school community.

One of our most notable achievements is the exceptional Freshman on Track rate, which has soared to an impressive 90.4%, significantly up from 71.7% in the previous year. This remarkable improvement is a clear indicator of our commitment to early academic success. It highlights the effectiveness of our support programs designed specifically for incoming students, ensuring they have the best start in their high school journey.

We have also seen a notable increase in our Average Daily Attendance, reaching 88.8%, up from 85% last year. This increase is more than just a statistic; it reflects the growing engagement of our students and the positive impact of our initiatives to promote regular attendance. It's a testament to the inviting and supportive learning environment we strive to create every day.

Our Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) program participation has reached a new high, with 792 students enrolled in at least one of these programs, up from 674 in the previous year. This surge in enrollment underscores the ambition and dedication of our students to engage in challenging academic pursuits, preparing them for future success.

Another significant accomplishment is the academic resilience demonstrated by our students, with 38% of our student body earning a GPA of 3.0 or higher. This achievement speaks volumes about the academic excellence and commitment of our students across a wide array of subjects.



At Rich Township High School District 227, we provide a nurturing and challenging educational environment. We encourage every student to reach their highest potential and are excited to build upon these successes. We look forward to continuing our pursuit of academic excellence, making our school a place where students not only learn but thrive.

To keep up with the latest information and events follow us on all social media platforms @RTHSCoprincipals and @RichTownshipHS.

Sincerely,

Mr. Lynn Fields & Ms. Janice Wells



On A Roll to the Honor Roll!!

Congratulations to all the students who made it to the Semester One Honor Roll! It's an impressive achievement, and it reflects the dedication and hard work of the students.

A special shout-out to the 892 students who made the honor roll and the 216 students who earned a spot on the **Gold Honor Roll** with a GPA of 4.0 or higher. This is an outstanding accomplishment that highlights their commitment to academic excellence.



Additionally, recognition goes to the 284 students on the **Silver Honor Roll** with a GPA ranging from 3.5 to 3.99. Their consistent effort and high academic performance deserve acknowledgment.

Finally, a commendation to the 392 students on the **Bronze Honor Roll** with a GPA of 3.0 to 3.49. Their dedication to maintaining a solid academic standing is commendable.

Overall, the entire Raptor community can take pride in the collective success of its students. Keep up the work in the pursuit of knowledge and personal growth!

Nationally Board Certified

Susan Lundgren's journey to earning her National Board Certification in Social Studies-History for Adolescence and Young Adulthood is a testament to her dedication and expertise in the field of education. As the most prestigious professional certification in education, the National Board Certification not only recognizes exceptional teachers but also plays a vital role in the continuous growth of schools around the country.

The National Board's certification procedure is a demanding one that centers on obtaining evidence of proficient teaching practice that is grounded in standards.

Four Essential Components:

Content Knowledge, Differentiation in Instruction, Teaching Practice & Learning Environment and Effective & Reflective Practitioner.

Susan's accomplishment in fulfilling these demanding requirements is a testament to her dedication to both professional excellence and her student's success in social studies and history fields. The National Board Certification she obtained is noteworthy professional achievement that attests to her extraordinary qualities as an instructor.



Rich in Student Success



Top 10 Class of 2024



Destane Williams, FAC



Kayla Dawson, FAC



Jordan Pierson, FAC



Angelina Hughes, STEM



Taylor Wilson, FAC



Valarie Loekle, FAC



Jessica Garcia, FAC



Allegra Biney, FAC



Jaiden Parker, STEM



Skylar Chriss Jackson, FAC



Community

Black Men Speak

Over the past three months, RTHS has commenced an enriching adventure at the center of our community. Our prestigious series "Black Men Speaks," which ran from November to January, provided a meaningful forum for Black men both inside and outside of our community. This project has been a source of mentorship, direction, and thought-provoking conversation rather than merely a collection of activities.

"Black Men Speaks" has fostered the exceptional chance to unite young men from disparate origins who are bound by common experiences and goals. Our speakers, who come from both the RTHS family and beyond, have kindly offered their time to interact with our young male scholars. They have created a two-way flow of knowledge and inspiration by not only speaking but also listening.



Every session of the series has been a patchwork of achievements, career paths, and life narratives. Our guest speakers, who come from a variety of backgrounds, have provided insightful advice on overcoming obstacles, loving oneself, and aiming for excellence. Their stories have served as a tribute to the virtue of remaining loyal to one's roots and principles as well as the strength of resiliency.

The importance of mentoring in influencing young people's lives has been emphasized throughout the series. Our speakers are now considered role models, exemplifying tenacity, honesty, and leadership. They have demonstrated to our young men that success involves bringing others up in addition to oneself while achieving one's own goals.

The capacity of "Black Men Speaks" to promote a sense of community has maybe had the greatest influence. Seeing leaders with comparable experiences and backgrounds has been encouraging and affirming for many of our young guys. It has strengthened their feeling of community and given them confidence that their goals and desires are real and attainable.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to each speaker that has graced this series as we look back on the incredible adventure of the last three months. Our young students will never forget the profound impact you have had on their hearts and minds through sharing your wisdom and experiences. Not only have you talked, but you have sparked hope and dreams.

We appreciate your participation in and support of this important series. Your contribution has been essential to "Black Men Speaks" becoming a source of empowerment and inspiration.



Engagement



Enterprising Women Seminar

In an inspiring display of commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion in STEM fields, Rich Township High School recently hosted a groundbreaking seminar, focusing on encouraging young women to explore careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). This event was a part of a larger initiative to break down gender barriers in traditionally male-dominated fields.

The seminar was a collaborative effort, orchestrated by the Enterprising Women organization, renowned for its dedication to encouraging young women to pursue STEM careers.



The organization's vision of a balanced and inclusive future in these fields resonated throughout the event.

Enthusiasm for the seminar was palpable, with an impressive turnout of 125 female students from Southland College Prep. These young ladies, brimming with curiosity and ambition, participated actively in the event, signaling a positive shift towards greater female representation in STEM careers.

The seminar included interactive sessions, workshops, and inspirational talks from notable figures in the STEM world. It provided a platform for students to engage with successful women in STEM, learn about various career paths, and understand the importance of diversity in these fields.

A special note of appreciation was extended to Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller, who played a pivotal role in bringing this opportunity to Rich Township High School. Her support underscores the importance of community leaders in shaping educational initiatives and empowering the youth.





Alumni Recognition

Kendall Gill #13



On January 27th, the Rich Township High School Athletic Department held a special ceremony to reconfirm the jersey retirement of basketball legend and alumnus, Kendall Gill. This event celebrated Kendall's extraordinary journey from Rich Central High School to becoming an iconic figure in the world of basketball.

Kendall Gill's legacy began at Rich Central, where he graduated in 1986. His remarkable talent led the high school team to a second-place finish in the IHSA Class AA State Boys Basketball Tournament. As the leading scorer and a member of the All-Tournament team, Kendall set the stage for a stellar athletic career.

Following high school, Kendall's passion and skill for basketball flourished at the University of Illinois. Playing four years for the Fighting Illini, he was instrumental in the "Flyin' Illini" team's journey to the 1989 Final Four. His senior year was marked by leading the Big Ten in scoring and being honored as a first-team All-American. He left the University of Illinois as the seventh-leading scorer in school history and an NCAA Slam Dunk Champion.

In 1990, Kendall's professional career began when he was selected fifth overall in the NBA draft by the Charlotte Hornets. His rookie season was highlighted by his inclusion in the NBA All-Rookie First Team. Throughout his 15-season career, Kendall played 966 games for seven different teams, showcasing his versatility with 2,945 assists and 4,002 rebounds.

Tonight's jersey retirement ceremony is not just about Kendall's achievements on the court but also a celebration of his spirit, determination, and dedication throughout his career. We are proud to honor Kendall Gill, a true role model who has inspired countless athletes and fans with his skill, passion, and commitment to the game of basketball.



Special Olympics Basketball Back to Their Winning Ways



Events like these are not only about the game itself but also about fostering a sense of unity and support for individuals participating in Special Olympics. It's heartwarming to see the integration of PE classes, as it promotes awareness, empathy, and understanding among students. Such occasions provide an excellent opportunity to showcase the talents and determination of Special Olympics athletes, while also breaking down stereotypes and promoting inclusivity. It's not just a game; it's a chance for everyone involved to come together, have fun, and appreciate the abilities and achievements of each participant.

Events like these contribute significantly to building a positive and supportive school culture, reinforcing the values of diversity, acceptance, and respect for all. It's likely that memories from this special day will stay with the students, creating a lasting impact on their perspectives and attitudes towards inclusion and acceptance.



Holiday Spirit Week

Staff and students participated in a variety of events the week before winter break. This included pajama day, hot chocolate day, all white day, and coffee for bus drivers.



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RICH TOWNSHIP RAPTORS IN ACTION

Winter Arts Showcase A Symphony of Flavors, Visions, and Performances

This past December, our school community was treated to the annual Winter Arts Showcase, a celebration that illuminated the rich tapestry of talent within our halls. From the savory creations of the culinary arts to the vibrant expressions of the visual arts and the dynamic presentations of the performing arts, the event was a feast for the senses.

Culinary Delights The showcase kicked off with a taste of the extraordinary as our culinary arts students presented an array of gourmet bites and treats. These dedicated young chefs had whisked, kneaded, and flambéed their way to perfection, offering a menu that tantalized the taste buds. Their commitment to the craft of cooking was on full display, providing a delectable start to the evening's festivities.



Visual Arts Spectacle As guests savored the flavors, the masterpieces of our visual arts students transported them through varied landscapes of imagination and creativity. The exhibition featured paintings, sculptures, and digital art, each piece a window into the soul of its creator. This year's visual arts segment included an interactive gallery walk, where attendees met with the young artists and learned about their inspirations and processes.

Performing Arts Extravaganza The crescendo of the night was the stellar performances by our Band and Choir, whose melodies and harmonies resonated deeply with the audience. The evocative power of music filled the air, setting the stage for the final act of the night.



Culminating the showcase, our Drama Group took the spotlight with their rendition of the timeless classic, **"Mr. Scrooge."** Through their interpretation, our actors brought to life the transformational journey of its central character, echoing the enduring message of the holiday season.



Raptor Spotlights Clubs



YEARBOOK/NEWSPAPER



CHESS CLUB



DRAMA/MUSICAL THEATER



PEP CLUB



JUNIOR CLASS COUNCIL



CULTURE CLUB



ANIME CLUB



FRESHMAN CLASS COUNCIL



SPEECH TEAM



MATHLETES



BOARD GAME CLUB



NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY



KEY CLUB

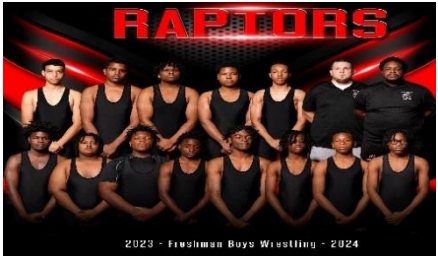
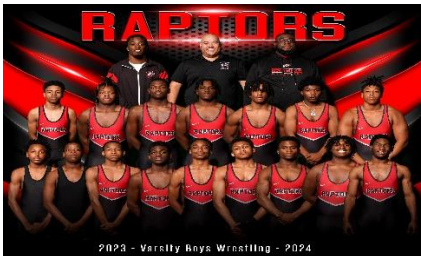
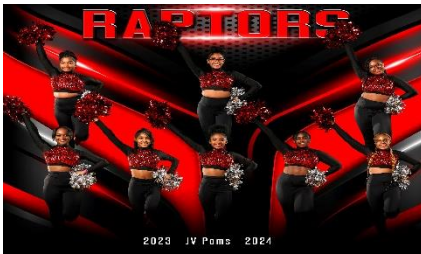
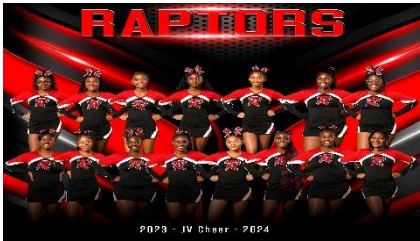
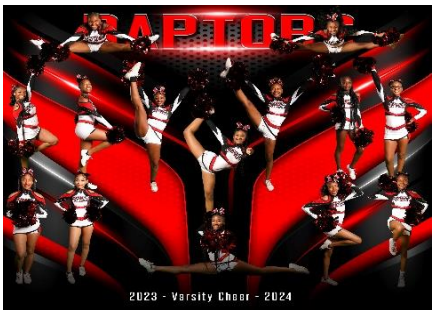
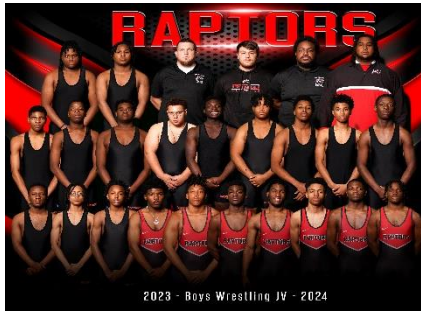
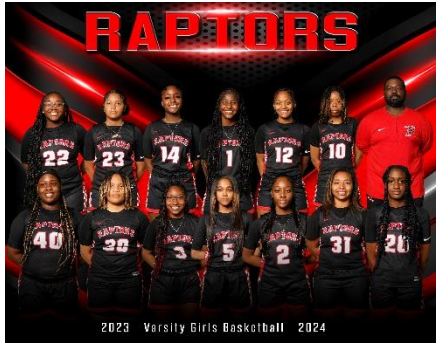


FRENCH HONOR SOCIETY



SPANISH HONOR SOCIETY

RICH TOWNSHIP RAPTORS IN ACTION

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50th Years of the Big Dipper!



Rich Township hosted the monumental 50th year of the Big Dipper: Tournament of the Stars! The Boys Varsity Basketball Holiday Tournament showcased talented lineups from the Chicagoland area. Players, coaches, fans, and communities came together forging a bond and memories that will last a lifetime. Everyone witnessed unforgettable moments, a few upsets, along with the rise of stars who are just starting their journey.

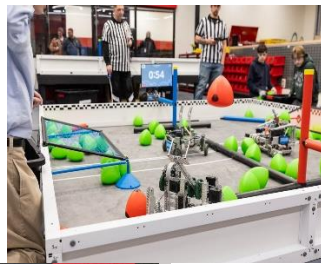
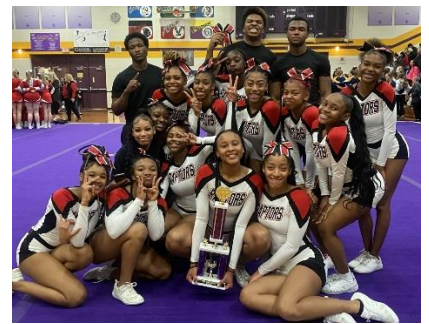


We could not be prouder of all the teams who took part in this year's event. The camaraderie and sportsmanship shown this year will remain for many years to come. We congratulate all the teams for participating. The sold-out event for the evening sessions, shows us that the community helped us celebrate the love of basketball.



We can't wait to see what Big Dipper: Tournament of the Stars 51 brings! Make your calendars for December 2024 to be right here with us.

RICH TOWNSHIP RAPTORS IN ACTION



RICH TOWNSHIP RAPTORS IN ACTION

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**RICH TOWNSHIP
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RESIDENTIAL POSTAL CUSTOMER

Upcoming Events

February 19th
President's Day (No SCHOOL)

March 4th
Harriet Tubman Day (No SCHOOL)

March 21st
Parent/Teacher Conference
(No SCHOOL)

March 22nd
Institute Day (No SCHOOL)

April 1st through April 5th
Spring Break (No SCHOOL)

Board Meetings Dates

**All Regular Board Meetings
start at 6:30 PM**

February 21st

March 20th

April 17th

Innovation Corner

The Buildings and Grounds Team, under the visionary leadership of Director Elliot Echols, has been at the forefront of integrating cutting-edge technology to revolutionize facility management and maintenance. This innovative approach is exemplified by the adoption of three groundbreaking technologies: the Neo Floor Cleaner, the Turf Tank autonomous robotic field painter, and the Somatic commercial cleaning robotic.



The Neo Floor Cleaner represents a leap forward in floor maintenance, delivering unparalleled cleanliness with its advanced algorithms and efficient design. Complementing this, the Turf Tank autonomous robotic field painter has transformed the way athletic fields are marked. With precision and consistency, this robot can layout complex designs and standard field markings, reducing labor costs and ensuring that fields are game-ready in record time. Lastly, the introduction of the Somatic commercial cleaning robotic into the team's arsenal highlights a forward-thinking approach to cleanliness and sanitation. This robot, designed for commercial spaces, automates the cleaning process, ensuring thorough and efficient sanitization. By leveraging such advanced technology, the team not only enhances the cleanliness of facilities but also contributes to the well-being and safety of the community.

