



**GO REBELS!**  
2024-2025 School Year

# THE RANKIN REVIEW

Rankin School District #98 - Community Newsletter - Vol. 5 April 24, 2025

## RANKIN SCHOOL DISTRICT #98

**MISSION:** Empowering all students to reach their maximum potential and become productive, respectful, responsible, and well-rounded citizens.

**VISION:** Building the foundation of the future by engaging youth through rigorous and diverse educational opportunities.

**MOTTO:** Our School is a Great Place to Learn

**CONNECT WITH US:** Website: [www.rankin98.org](http://www.rankin98.org)

Email: [rankinoffice@rankin98.org](mailto:rankinoffice@rankin98.org)

Facebook: Search for "Rankin School District #98" - "Request to Join"

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@Rankin98> - "Subscribe"

**RANKIN - "EXEMPLARY RATING"**  
**TOP 10% IN ILLINOIS -**  
*2nd Year in a Row - 4th of 5 Opportunities*



Rankin's Excellence continues! For the 2nd consecutive year and for the 4th time out of the last 5 possible opportunities, Rankin is rated "Exemplary" and is amongst the top 10% of schools in Illinois via the 2024 Illinois Report Card.

On October 30, 2024, this news was celebrated via a "RANKIN REVEAL" in which students and staff acknowledged, embraced, and celebrated this major accomplishment. Dr. Matt Gordon, Superintendent, commented, "It's not just about having a few good days; rather, it's about everyone on a daily basis working as a TEAM, giving their best, and making good choices. While we certainly celebrate the "Exemplary" Designation, we want to be clear that what we are most proud of is what EVERYONE is doing EVERY DAY!" Rankin's annual report card can be found at the [illinoisreportcard.com](http://illinoisreportcard.com) website.



Rankin's Parents for Kids (PFK) is a nonprofit, parent-run organization that benefits the students, teachers, and staff of Rankin School District #98. PFK typically meets the fourth Monday of each month in our science classroom.

Thank you to PFK President, Gina Perry, and her team as PFK's support is invaluable! To get involved in PFK or volunteer, please email Mrs. Perry at [pfk@rankin98.org](mailto:pfk@rankin98.org). Also, please follow them on Facebook at "Rankin PFK"



Rankin creates a theme every year that aligns with our Mission and Vision statements. The theme each year is designed to unite our students, staff, and parents, and generate excitement for the new school year. This year "Embracing Our Roots, Branching Out Together"

was selected as the 2024-2025 School Year theme. It signifies that we are proud of the foundation we have here at Rankin, while we all seek to work together to grow, improve, and overcome challenges! The theme also aligns with our second year of our Rankin Families program as well. We continue to strive for Rankin to be a second home for all!

## 8th Graders - CLASS OF 2025 Presented "KoKonut High"



On April 9, 2025, Rankin 8th Graders, Class of 2025, under the guidance of Mrs. Lisa Thompson, Director, worked together to provide a wonderful performance of "KoKonut High." The 8th Grade Play is a culmination of hard work, perseverance, and dedication from the students and Mrs. Thompson each year. The work begins in December and concludes with the Spring performance. Dr. Matt Gordon, Superintendent, commented, "It's about the journey! To have our entire 8th Grade Class work together for 4-5 months each year for one culminating event is invaluable. Each class goes through numerous ups and downs and must problem solve and overcome. Ultimately, the pride and ownership each class develops for the play and their sense of accomplishment after the performance is so very special and creates lifelong memories. Congratulations and thank you to the Class of 2025 and to Mrs. Thompson! Bravo!"

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT ~ *Meet Mrs. Wattles!*

Math can offer a variety of challenges for students of all ages. At Rankin, we offer additional math support to individual students who need it via our Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered System of Supports Program. Providing support is a result of our ongoing progress monitoring of each of our individual students. Periodically, it is determined that individual students need and will benefit from additional support and guidance. This is where Mrs. Diane Wattles steps in to help!



Mrs. Wattles began at Rankin as a substitute paraprofessional/aide eleven years ago. After three years of substituting, Mrs. Wattles was then hired as an RTI Paraprofessional. Now, she is completing her 8th year in this position. Dr. Matt Gordon, Superintendent, commented on Mrs. Wattles success, "She is very knowledgeable about our math content, curriculum, and learning standards across the K-8 grade levels. She is an expert at providing the specific, individual support and guidance that each student needs to help them feel more comfortable and confident in their math skills. Mrs. Wattles is a great asset to Rankin, as working with students in an individual or small group atmosphere can be instrumental in improving their foundation, which leads to greater future success."

Mrs. Wattles was asked about working at Rankin, "I love working as a Math/RTI Aide. Assisting students to understand their math and gain confidence is rewarding." Along with her perspective as an experienced staff member, she is also a parent of three children who graduated from Rankin. Mrs. Wattles was asked to describe our school, "Rankin has experienced and caring staff and a small teacher-to-student ratio, which helps the staff get to know the students and help them grow." Education runs in the Wattles family as her oldest son, Jacob, is working on his Bachelor's degree in physical education at Illinois State University. Also, he substitutes at Rankin and spent the last two seasons as our very successful Head Boys Track and Field Coach.

Thank you to Mrs. Wattles for her dedication and commitment to our students at Rankin! She is a tremendous example of our talented, caring, and student-focused staff here at Rankin!

## FIRST EVER AT RANKIN! Kennett Sisters Qualify for STATE!



To our knowledge, we believe a first ever in the history of Rankin occurred this past fall. The "Kennett Sisters" (Brooke -5th Grade, Leah-8th Grade, and Averi-7th Grade) all qualified for the IESA Class 2A State Cross Country Meet. This historic event took place on October 19, 2024, in Normal, IL. This group of talented sisters' positivity is contagious, and they represented us very well in the State Meet. A friendly sister rivalry has helped push all three to be the very best runners they can be! Congratulations to the "Kennett Sisters!"

## DID YOU KNOW?

Rankin History – on June 6, 2024, the Rankin Board of Education adopted the first ever Rankin School Song. The song was written by Mr. Dustin Hyatt (Rankin's Music, Band, and Chorus Teacher). On September 9, 2024, during our first Rankin Family Day of this school year, the song was proudly sung for the first time by the entire school. Make sure to check out our school song on our website [www.rankin98.org](http://www.rankin98.org). Go Rebels!



On November 11, 2024, Rankin hosted their annual Veterans Day Assembly to honor and recognize all of our military veterans and their families. Rankin's K-5 students and Junior High Band and Chorus performed to honor all Veterans. Also, Staff Sergeant Darin Kennett of the United States Air Force was the keynote speaker. Staff Sergeant Kennett thanked all Veterans for their sacrifice and service and provided a motivating message about developing a plan for success of which attitude is key!

This winter, Mr. Bill Wheat "Mr. Bill" and Mrs. Nicole Washkowiak teamed up to teach our 7th and 8th grade students "hands only" CPR. In addition to this course, Mr. Bill and Mrs. Washkowiak offered a certified CPR Babysitting course to those who were interested. Our students were highly engaged and intent on learning lifesaving skills.



Rankin offers multiple co-curricular activities and events each year. This includes Band, Challenge Club, Chess, Chorus, NJHS, Scholastic Bowl (pictured here), Science Club, Speech Team, Spelling Bee, Student Council, and Young Authors. These activities and events offer a variety of ways for our students to develop and display their many talents while learning life-lessons and connecting at a deeper level with our school.

## THE TRADITION CONTINUES - RANKIN TRACK AND FIELD TEAMS EXCEL!

The Rankin Track and Field Teams continues to excel! In the 2024 season, the 8th Grade Girls Team finished 2nd place in the IESA Class 2A State!

The 8th Grade Girls 4x200m Relay Team (Barbara Barrientos, Sydney Cox, Bella Sisk, and Tinley Webb) won the STATE CHAMPIONSHIP and broke the school's State record and the All-time IESA State record in the event!

For the boys, Wes Thompson won the STATE CHAMPIONSHIP and broke the school's State record and the All-time IESA State record in the 800 m!



IESA 2024 State (Girls– alphabetical order) Emily Antonio, Barbara Barrientos, Sydney Cox, Lainey Gardner, Averi Kennett, Leah Kennett, Presley Kohl, Macie Lamberson, Ivy Mitzelfelt, Mallory Roepenack, Emma Seidell, Bella Sisk, Tinley Webb, and Rylie Whitman . (Boys - alphabetical order) Lewis Beckham and Wes Thompson.