

Welcome to SCSS at RBMS!

I am excited to offer SCSS services to our students this year. Just a few notes to start our year off well.

My name is Ellen Deckinga and I have taught Special Education at RBMS for the past 8 years, the last 4 being specifically with SCSS. I approach SCSS from a team aspect. I believe that the student is the center of the team, but that we are all there to support them in achieving their goals. Communication is an essential part of the team approach. Please feel free to contact me with anything, especially ideas on how to better serve your child. With that being said I have created a sheet of ways to communicate with me. Some ways are me sharing blasts of information (Twitter, Remind), others are ways to get more details (my web page), and you can always contact me through my phone number or email. I am frequently out of the classroom and it may take me until the next day to get back with you, but I promise to get back to you as soon as I can.

Our classroom is also supported by Mr. Muench and Mrs. Hancock. They both look forward to helping students achieve their learning goals this year.

Last year I worked toward including more technology in my teaching. This year I am shifting my focus to more of facilitating students utilizing technology for learning, and specifically how to use that technology to create personal learning networks. Everyone has their methods of learning, and utilizing technology to support our learning styles is essential in our society.

Our schedule this year:

8:15-8:45am - **0 Hour**. We will be offering direct instruction on a targeted academic skill every day at this time. Any students in the SCSS classroom at this time will be expected to participate. If students want to "hang out" they will need to go to the cafeteria.

8:45-8:55am - **Check In**. Students will need to bring their agenda and completed homework assignments for us to check off that they completed the assignments. If they did not complete the assignments they will be offered opportunities to complete the assignments.

8:55 - 4:05 - **Classes**. SCSS teachers rotate through classes of all SCSS students to provide inclusion support.

4:05 - 4:15 - **Check Out**. Students will bring a completed agenda and any work they need to complete at home. This is an opportunity for students to make sure they have everything they need to bring home. We are not in every students classes and cannot know every assignment assigned. We encourage students and parents to register for Remind notifications offered by many of our teachers in order to help remember assignments. Students can use their device to take pictures of assignment boards if this is a strategy that will help them be more successful in class. We will sign your students agenda each time that we see it. Please check for a morning initial and an afternoon initial.

Group - I will see students in small groups weekly. I rotate the class period that we meet so as to not remove students from the same class repeatedly. It turns out that they will miss class once about every 5 weeks. Teachers are aware of this and supportive in our team approach.

Sometimes errors occur and your child will get counted absent while they are in group. Please forward me the email from the school stating there was an absence and I will do my best to get it corrected.

There is so much going on in our day that parent visits must be scheduled. This includes before and after school. Please do not “pop - in” on our classroom. It can be disruptive to the work we are doing and distracts me from meeting the needs of my students. I am happy to meet with you by scheduled appointments.

Students come to me from all over the district and all over the country. They each have different expectations of SCSS. I approach group time from a teaching perspective. Students are lacking a skill that they need direct instruction on and group time is where I am able to give direct instruction. Practice and reinforcement is usually done in other settings. Students cannot expect to grow in a skill if they only work on it once a week in group. Each week I will be emailing a sheet of “Risk Activities” for you and your student to work on. It is expected that you treat these risk activities as homework and utilize them to reinforce skills. They will include academic, executive functioning, and social skills. Please help your student by treating SCSS risk activities as you would any other classes homework. If there are extenuating circumstances please feel free to contact me and let me know the situation. We can work something out.

One of the things mentioned at training last summer is a little catch phrase, “Begin with the end in mind”. Ironically, I have used this phrase to guide me in my work with students. I think about the goal for this student in life after high school and step back from there in trying to lay the foundation toward that goal. Knowing what parents imagine for their child after high school, and what students imagine for their life will help guide what we do in middle school. Middle school is a time of transition. It is establishing the foundation for high school, and beyond. Look at where you imagine your child will be in 10 years and lets work as a team to get them there.

I look forward to an exciting year together and appreciate you sharing your children with me.

Sincerely,

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RBMS SCSS

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