

The bad news? We've had an unusually high amount of winter weather and snow days during this school year in Rockwood. The good news? That's given us the opportunity to roll out our series of snow day announcement videos, which our community has absolutely loved! In total, we have produced four complete snow day announcement videos, as well as shortening two of them to use for two further snow days. All of the videos have gone over resoundingly well, judging by the sheer volume of views, likes and shares on our social media, as well as positive comments, online and in person, about the content, ingenuity and quality of the videos. The four original videos have been viewed a total of more than 310,000 times across our social media channels. They make up three of our top seven -- and four of our top 20 -- Facebook posts in terms of engagement this year, four of the top five-watched reels in the history of our Instagram account and our top three -- and four of our top nine -- X posts this school year in terms of impressions. The overwhelmingly positive tone of the discussion around the videos has built up a lot of goodwill in the community -- toward the district and our superintendent, specifically -- around what could possibly be the contentious issue of calling off school for inclement weather. Moreover, we've seen community members from other school districts in our comments sharing these videos with friends and expressing a desire for their district to produce videos like ours, so we are serving as exemplars. Sample Facebook comments about the videos state "Whoever Rockwood School District hired for videos this year should get a raise. They made me half smile while the despair of having my kids home for the 4th day this week sets in," "Love the creativity of the communications department!" and "Thanks for the entertainment! Appreciate the creativity and collaboration... We have amazing students!" To that last point about our students, over the past three years, the Rockwood Communications Department has placed an increased emphasis on amplifying student voices in our offerings. This goes hand-in-hand with increased opportunities for students to have their input heard regularly by district leaders, through Student Advisory Committees that meet with our superintendent and the Board of Education, as well as student membership on our current Strategic Plan Steering Committee. One of the ways we involved students this year was bringing a group of them into the brainstorming session for creating our snow day video announcements. They helped us come up with the two mascot-themed videos

and then worked with us -- and some of their friends in the costumes -- to produce them. Having our students involved in the entirety of the process gives them buy-in to what we're doing, a learning opportunity about video production and -- perhaps most importantly -- pride in a job well done and the joy the pieces they helped create is bringing to our community.