September 11, 2013

Dear RMSEL Parent Community,

Today marks the anniversary of September 11th; this day will forever be a part of American history and also a reminder of the sacrifices of so many for the freedoms of our great nation. Take the opportunity, when presented, to thank a neighboring member of our armed services, law enforcement, and emergency responders for the work they do every day to protect our freedom. This freedom includes public education which we celebrate every day. We are fortunate to live in a democratic nation, which values the right to education for all!

Last week I shared work from our all staff professional development around common expectations for students tied to our school-wide character values. This was important work as it ties the actions of our students and broader community to our values. These expectations transcend spaces and places, and tie all aspects of our learning community to local and global communities of our school vision.

Character Counts 2013 – 2014

**RMSEL Mission**
As a K-12 community, the mission of the Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning (RMSEL) is to empower students and staff to be learners, thinkers, citizens, and explorers engaged in and inspired by the real world. "We are crew not passengers."

**RMSEL Vision**
RMSEL scholars will demonstrate pride and ownership as they grow into responsible citizens who strive for high academic achievement and character excellence. RMSEL staff will equip our students with tools for success in order to make a positive impact on our local and global community.

**Responsibility:** I recognize and do my part to improve my community, which is bigger than myself.

**Courage:** I have the courage to stand up for the right to learn, to have a voice, and to work hard, even through failure.

**Integrity:** I will speak and act truthfully. I will consistently reflect on the cause and effect of my actions and how these actions impact our community. I own my mistakes and recognize the positive contributions of others.

**Discipline:** I will demonstrate discipline by practicing habits and skills that encourage pride and ownership of our environment, our academic achievement, and our daily actions with others. I will embrace the skills necessary to persevere through challenges.

**Compassion:** RMSEL community members strive to be aware of those in need, and respond with kind thoughtful action.

Recently we have seen an influx in late arrivals to school in the morning. As a school of choice, we do not provide transportation to students. We understand that this creates an excessive volume in our parking lot during arrival and departure each day. We request that parents plan accordingly for our traffic patterns at school. Students have access to the building each day at 7:30
am; we encourage parents to utilize the entire 20-minute drop off window. For those of you unfamiliar with the neighborhood, you can turn right out of our parking lot and then right on Mexico, which will take you back to Hampden and then Evans. This is a bit longer but more efficient when exiting. Prompt attendance to school each day allows crew leaders to jump directly into valuable instructional time with students.

RMSEL teachers attempt to connect classroom instruction to the broader community during their learning expeditions. This connection can come both in the field away from the class however also embedded into the school day through classroom experts on a topic of study. Last week we were fortunate to have a member of the United States House of Representatives, Diana DeGette, Congresswoman serving the First District of Colorado. Congresswoman DeGette spoke with our 7th/8th grade students regarding legislative measures tied to their learning expedition on “Fracking.” Students are studying the engineering aspects of “fracking” as well as legislative measures both for and against this progressive aspect of science. These types of authentic experiences engage students in their learning allowing them to connect scientific research to current events.

On Thursday of last week we hosted our first Open House of the school year for prospective families. If you know of a family interested in attending RMSEL for the 2014 – 2015 encourage them to attend an Open House at 8:30 am on the first Thursday of each month. A schedule of Open Houses are listed on our website under the Prospective Parents tab. We look forward to providing the opportunity for new families to join our school each year.

Sincerely,

Chad