Dear RMSEL Parent Community,

Welcome back to what we intend to be another amazing year filled with engaging learning expeditions and travel around the world! Each and every school year, our dedicated and committed team of professional educators is focused on improvement tasks tied to student learning and achievement. As we return for the 2015-2016 school year, our team will be focused on creating a diverse but efficient platform of communication. As we begin the year we intend to clarify each tool that will be utilized and the expectations of use.

School Website
The RMSEL website (www.rmsel.org) is a public communication tool that also serves as a document database of school forms. The website serves the general public as well as our internal community. This tool is intended for all public audiences which includes the following resources:

- RMSEL News – Biweekly Executive Director Communication
- RMSEL Calendar – Current and Future School Year Calendars
- Parent/Student Forms – Parent Student Handbook, Registration Guides, etc.
- Google Classroom Log In – Link to Teacher Websites
- Infinite Campus Log In – Link to Infinite Campus
- Governance – BOCES Agendas/Minutes, School Finance Reports, School Policy
- PACK – Parent Action Crew for Kids, Forms, Events, Volunteer Log, etc.

Field Notes / RMSEL News
This year we will send Field Notes bi-weekly throughout the school year. Field Notes will continue to have important dates, upcoming events, PACK events, and a bi-weekly RMSEL News Executive Director Communication. Field Notes are sent directly to parent email addresses on file submitted annually during registration.

Teacher Website
Each teacher will maintain a private website for the students and family of their crews. Teacher websites will maintain two key features: Announcements and Assignments. All RMSEL teachers will maintain a teacher website through Google Classroom and update the page weekly. Parents and students will receive all crew communication through the teacher website. Teachers will share instructions and log in information to their webpage during Back to School Night.

Infinite Campus
All teachers use our school database for taking attendance in grades K-12. In grades 6-12, teachers utilize this tool to report student progress. Teachers are required to update Infinite Campus weekly with student progress information as tied to assignments, projects, and assessments. In grades K-5, teachers will provide families with a weekly Academic Update that includes student progress in lower school. Timely and current updates are essential for student academic success.
IC Messenger
Infinite Campus Messenger is a tool that will be utilized in emergent or matters that are time sensitive. Messenger is capable of sending a message, text, and/or voice call to families. The Administrative Team and/or Office Staff will utilize this system.

RMSEL Social Media
As we transition to the 21st Century, our team has elected to be “behind the curve” when utilizing social media as a platform for school communication. This year we are piloting the use of Facebook as an additional tool for communicating with RMSEL students and families. We will post periodic weekly information in a celebratory manner from crew trips, classroom labs, events, celebrations, etc. Facebook will not be a primary communication tool but an additional way for our team to share real-time information with the community. If you have not connected with our page it is located at: https://www.facebook.com/rmsel.

Improvements in communication are essential to our ongoing success as partners in education with our families to support student achievement. In addition to electronic means of communication, I will continue to meet with RMSEL parents during our bi-monthly “Chat with Chad.” Over the past four years, this has been a welcome addition by our community. Last year we saw an overall decline in attendance unless we were approaching an event or a topic that may increase anxiety or concern in our community. For example, I held a Q/A for Statewide Assessment in addition to “Chat with Chad,” that saw a dramatic increase in parent participation. Not all topics are controversial or of concern, but a focus for each meeting may assist in guiding our conversation and allow families to ask questions regarding upcoming events. We are planning to kick off this new format on Friday, September 4, 2015 at 8 am, with our first topic of “Back to School – Q/A.” This meeting will focus on any questions/concerns parents have as the new year begins that can assist our team.

Upon returning to the office, you will be greeted by a new staff member. Nancy Leins, Academic Secretary, departed our team this summer after four years with our staff. We will miss Nancy and her contributions to our school. We are excited to announce that Karrey Turner has joined the office staff as the Academic Secretary. Karrey has an extensive background working with the Douglas County School District. Karrey has served in roles at the school level as well as purchasing and accounting at the central office level. We are excited to have Karrey join our team and look forward to your family getting to know her as you enter the building each day.

Along with improvement in communication, we are looking to improve daily systems and structures at RMSEL. One essential element on safe travel into the backcountry is the administration of student medications. Each year we have families rushing to submit medications prior to trip departure. This rush can lead to misinformation being included as students depart campus. All medications that will be administered during a crew trip must be submitted one week prior to each crew’s departure. In the event a medication is submitted after the deadline, the medication will not be added to the distribution schedule and returned to parents. Safe and proper distribution of student medication is essential to safe travel into the backcountry, and our staff needs ample time to prepare and communicate with all teams members prior to departure.

As you arrive at school, our drop-off lane will function in a one through lane drop off line. As you enter the parking lot please pull forward and allow your son/daughter to exit on the curb/passenger side of the vehicle. We close one lane so that no student is crossing traffic as they enter
school. In the event you are walking your son/daughter to the playground, dropping off equipment, or exiting your vehicle, we request that you park in the lot or on the adjacent street and enter the building. Please refrain from any unloading that will delay the drop off line. In the afternoon the “circle” is a fire lane and no vehicle may be left unattended in the fire lane. You may remain in your vehicle in the fire lane to pick up a student from campus. In the event emergency services require access to school, the fire lane must be vacant for access to the main entrance.

School hours are from 7:30 am – 3:20 pm daily. High School students begin class at 7:40 am and K-8 students begin class at 7:50 am. Doors to campus are unlocked daily at 7:30 am and an Administrative Team member accompanies students on the playground prior to lining up for teacher pick up at 7:45 am. In the afternoon, High School students are dismissed at 3:05 pm, and K-8 student dismissal is at 3:10 pm. All students are required to exit campus at the end of each school day unless they are under the direct supervision of a teacher, coach, and or enrichment leader. K-5 students are required to be signed out daily from his/her teacher to ensure a parent and/or guardian supervises them at the end of each day. As stated in the online registration process, any student on campus beyond 3:20 pm will be escorted to the YMCA after-care program and billed accordingly for this service.

As we start the year, we will be dedicating the new RMSEL Auxiliary Field during a ribbon cutting ceremony on August 6, 2015 at the Back to School BBQ. In addition to the dedication ceremony, parents will be provided with the opportunity to purchase a commemorative brick that will be placed in a sidewalk adjacent to the field space. PACK will share additional information about this opportunity with families as we begin the school year.

We are excited to be back and ecstatic to see your son/daughter as they meet their new teachers and begin another amazing year. If you have any questions or need any assistance prior to the start of the school year, our team is in the office each day from 8 am – 3 pm.

Happy continued summer,

Chad