Dear RMSEL Parent Community,

It is hard to believe that we are already closing in on Fall Break this Friday. Our students have traveled across multiple states in pursuit of challenging adventure experiences. I want to sincerely thank our crew of volunteers and staff that make our Adventure Program successful — everything from packing food prior to departure, driving a bus on fieldwork, or accompanying our students for a full week on the Colorado River. Last Friday, we wrapped up a successful fall crew trip season in which 397 students attending RMSEL participated in a wilderness experience beyond the walls of the classroom.

This week at our Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) Meeting, the board approved our annual calendars for two consecutive years encompassing 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. Our annual calendar is similar to past years, but will return to our historic calendars pre-dating the 2015-2016 calendar, meaning we will begin school one week earlier and end academic classes the Friday prior to the Memorial Holiday. Operating a school that serves students from five metro area school district presents a significant challenge in aligning our independent calendar with each district. Each school district has established their annual calendar to support the operations of their respective district. Our calendar is created with our school and district values in consideration. We value the spirit of adventure and ensuring that each student participates in two annual wilderness crew trips. We attempt to align with religious holidays that restrict students from being away from home and on a trip each school year. We value connecting with parents in six to eight week cycles through Parent Teacher Conferences and Progress Reporting. During the month of May, our students are focused on portfolio completion and presentation. Presentation Days are most effective when conducted within one week of Portfolio Reading Day. We understand that our calendar may not align directly with one of our five sponsoring districts, but aligns with the values of operating our high performing Expeditionary Learning School. Our calendars can be found on our website at:

http://www.rmsel.org/Who-We-Are/Calendars/index.html

This year Colorado Revised Statute 22-8-1013(7)(a) requires that all local education providers administering state assessments publicly post assessment descriptions, assessment calendar, and minutes per assessment per day. We have updated our website in compliance with this statute. Our assessment information can be found at:

http://www.rmsel.org/Parents/Assessment/index.html

We are in the process of drafting Policy IKA Grading / Assessment Systems which will be distributed to all community members upon board approval. This policy will outline additional guidance regarding compliance with the annual state assessment system.

At RMSEL, we value the ability of our students to engage and perform on standardized measures of academic achievement even though our students receive minimal exposure to these types of exams in the classroom. Our students will be required to take exams as they transition to
college and the work force. I applaud our students’ ability to apply their learning and achieve on standardized measures of achievement based on their ability to think critically and problem solve. Prior to this school year’s annual assessment, we will host an open forum on Friday, January 8, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. for parents to address any concern and/or ask questions prior to your child participating in the PARCC and/or CMAS assessment for the 2015-2016 school year.

I wish you and your family a restful and rejuvenating Fall Break. Our teachers and staff will be taking time to do the same and return for an exciting November filled with internships, exhibition nights, choir concerts, and academic showcases. Stay tuned for more exciting events as we continue what has started out to be an amazing school year!

Sincerely,

Chad