Dear RMSEL Parent Community,

As the year comes to close, I want to celebrate our accomplishments with the community over the past school year, reflected by the responses to our annual community survey. Unfortunately, before jumping into our accomplishments I have to share news with you from a heavy heart.

On Sunday, May 15th, Sam Ackermann, an 8th grade RMSEL student in John's Crew, passed away following a long fight with cancer. Sam has been a student at RMSEL and a member of John's Crew for the past two years. Sam has been in and out of school during his tenure at RMSEL while he fought a trying battle with cancer. If you ever had the opportunity to meet Sam, through the grimace of pain on his face, he always interacted with his peers and members of our community with a smile. Sam had a huge heart and truly loved his classmates and crewmates at RMSEL. Even during his fight, Sam was able to see parts of the country with his crew on his crew trips over the past two years. Sam's parents, Stephanie and Fred Ackermann, will share additional details regarding any memorial service with our community in the coming days. Please keep John, his crew, our middle school students, and Sam's family in your hearts and prayers during this devastating loss.

Fred shared this message publicly through social media:

Sam Payne Ackermann passed away at 5:15 pm today (5/15). Stephanie and I are comforted knowing Sam is with The Heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ in the Celestial Kingdom. We are also comforted by knowing Sam is no longer suffering any more pain and agony.

This week has been challenging for our staff and students, as when you are in the business of loving and caring for students, this type of news is truly devastating.

To wrap up another amazing year, this weekend over 100 volunteers will be engaged in Portfolio Reading Day. Students have prepared detailed reflections supported with evidence from their school year to showcase their best work and tell each student’s “story of a learner.” The RMSEL portfolio process is one of the many highlights of a school year. If you are able to participate in this process this school year or the years to come, it will truly provide you with an in-depth look into all aspects of learning, both in and outside of the classroom. Please make it a point to thank Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Marci Elder, as she organizes this process every year. It is no small task to ensure that over one hundred student portfolios are read by a panel of three community members.

Finally, I would like to share celebrations with the community from our Bi-Annual Community Survey.

1) Parents attend RMSEL for Expeditionary Learning, Character Education, (#3 tie) Fieldwork and Crew Size.
2) 85.61% Meet/Exceed (M/E) Expectations in Academic Excellence
3) 86.42% M/E in Faculty Excellence
4) 92.59% M/E in School Safety
5) 91.41% M/E in Learning Expeditions
6) 85.27% M/E in Character Education
7) 86.93% M/E in Overall Program Satisfaction
8) 94.48% Agree/Strongly Agree (A/SA) “My child enjoys attending RMSEL.”
9) 91.34% (A/SA) “My child’s interactions with other students has been positive”
10) 92.85% (A/SA) “My child’s interactions with teachers have been positive”
11) 89.76% (A/SA) “My child’s interactions with administration have been positive.”
12) 92.06% (A/SA) “The school creates a supportive environment.”
13) 87.50% (A/SA) “Parents feel welcome and included in the school community.”
14) 96.09% (A/SA) “Front office staff is welcoming and helpful.”
15) 88.28% (A/SA) “Overall, it is easy to stay informed at RMSEL.”
16) 91.34% (A/SA) “The School Administration is performing its role effectively.”
17) 89.3% (A/SA) “The Executive Director is performing the role effectively.”
18) 91.87% Plan for their child(ren) to attend RMSEL next year.
19) 91.87% Would recommend RMSEL to close friends or family.
20) THIS IS ONE GREAT CREW!

While this list certainly highlights the many aspects of our school in which we meet or exceed the expectations of our community, it does not define perfection. Perfection is not only unattainable, but also undesirable to attempt to obtain. An unknown poet wrote:

Perfection is being right.  
Excellence is being willing to be wrong.  
Perfection is fear.  
Excellence is taking a risk.  
Perfection is anger and frustration.  
Excellence is powerful.  
Perfection is control.  
Excellence is spontaneous.  
Perfection is judgment.  
Excellence is accepting.  
Perfection is taking.  
Excellence is giving.  
Perfection is doubt.  
Excellence is confidence.  
Perfection is pressure.  
Excellence is natural.  
Perfection is the destination.  
Excellence is the journey.
At RMSEL, we will continue to strive for excellence and look forward to an upcoming summer of rest and rejuvenation. I am humbled to work with such an amazing team of professionals in an invested community of parents. Every year our team strives for improvement in service of our students.

Have a great summer,

Chad