Dear RMSEL Parent Community,

It is hard to think that later this week our clocks will “fall back” and we will begin thinking about winter. The next two months are RMSEL are challenging and rewarding for students and families. Teachers are through their first one to two case studies and are beginning to wrap up their first learning expedition of the year. This is exciting as students are concluding analysis of their conjectures in science, establishing arguments are they dig into humanitarian studies, and crafting products that represent their mastery of learning. Parents during this block of time I encourage you to stay engaged with the work your child is completing in the classroom. While Google Classroom has received mixed feedback as we further implement this year, it is an excellent warehouse of information regarding assignments, projects, and assessments. I look forward to our upcoming showcases and exhibition nights where students have the opportunity to present to an outside audience.

 Prior to Fall Reflection, on Friday October 21, 2016, we celebrated with 70 students and family members as we launched our first quarterly RMSEL Leaders and Achievers Breakfast. In EL Schools it is important to recognize and celebrate with students and community members. This recognition is not however, an incentive, it does not have series of task or benchmarks, but a genuine recognition of achievement, character, and attendance. After our first breakfast, I was asked, what was the selection criterion for being recognized as a RMSEL Leader and Achiever? There is no checklist, standard, etc., this was an opportunity for Crew Leaders to select one student from their crew to recognize and celebrate their academic achievement, character excellence, and/or perfect attendance. Each of these three categories demonstrates the design principles that continue to serve as a foundation for our work.

In addition to our Leaders and Achievers recognition, Athletic Director, John Stene, hosted our fall sports banquet celebrating another successful fall sports season that saw student compete in Volleyball, Soccer, Cross Country, and Mountain Biking. The athletic program would not be successful without dedicated coaches, parents, and athletes. I look forward to our upcoming winter sports season and the sound of dribbling basketballs filling the lower level hallway.

The week prior to Fall Reflection was filled with additional excitement as we hosted the 8th to 9th Grade (RMSEL) Parent Lab and 8th to 9th Grade (RMSEL) Shadow Day. Parent Lab is an opportunity for current 8th grade parents to connect with high school administrators, teachers, and members of student government to ask questions, observe classroom instruction, and connect with student leaders in the high school community. In the past six years this lab saw the highest level of parent participation to date. It was exciting for parents to connect with the high school to determine if continued enrollment at RMSEL is the best setting for their son/daughter as they transition to high school. We look forward to the upcoming 8th to 9th grade recommitment date in service of determining the number of opening available to prospective parents as we run the lottery for next year in February.
During the first Wednesday of the month our two school leadership teams consisting of teachers and administrators convene to ensure that we are moving forward in service of our annual EL Work Plan Goals. Currently the Instructional Leadership Team continues to revise our targets as we develop high quality lesson plans during weekly professional develop. Lesson design has been organized through the Workshop 2.0 Instructional Framework that provides students opportunities to grapple with challenging content while making application to the main idea and topic of the unit or learning expedition. On Monday, October 31, 2016, teachers shared with one another a recent high quality workshop 2.0 lesson plan, sample student work, and a video from their instruction in the classroom. This process provided teachers the opportunity to observe instruction and receive critical feedback in service of continued improvement. As teacher professionals, this process ensures that we are continually improving and providing the high quality of instruction to our students. The Organization Leadership Team has launched into a yearlong review process of our grading system and grading tools. This review process is to determine if our current grading system accurately reports student achievement as well as feedback to the learning process. The team will analyze our current system at each school level providing feedback toward potential revisions for the 2017 – 2018 school year. In addition to our system of grading we are also evaluating several software tools to report student progress in a more efficient and effective manner to RMSEL students and families. We believe that communication regarding achievement and the learning process, builds a connection with parents as partners in your child’s education. I will strive to provide updates to the community of the important work taking place by our leadership teams.

We have six solid weeks of instruction prior to Winter Break; I am excited to see the exceptional work of our students and teachers as we dig deeper into the final weeks of our first learning expeditions of the school year!

Sincerely,

Chad