Dear RMSEL Parent Community,

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High School Community Alumni Panel

Upon returning to school after winter break on Thursday, January 11, 2018, the high school teacher team, led by Science teacher Eric Dinkel, organized a panel of RMSEL Alumni to share their experience in high school and how they transitioned to college. The RMSEL Alumni Panel was a welcome addition to our internal 8th to 9th grade shadow day as it provided prospective students and families the opportunity to observe the present high school experience as well as a look into the values and design that assist in preparation for post-secondary institutions. The panel consisted of RMSEL alumni from 2010 to 2016; each graduate present provided a diverse perspective ranging from professional entry into the workforce, including receiving an EMT certification directly out of school, a current mechanical engineering student in his senior year at the University of Colorado, and a recent graduate of the University of Denver who is transitioning to the University of Florida to attend law school. While each of the students shared his/her unique and individual experience, one theme resonated throughout the conversation: “what you put into this place is what you get out of this place.” This is powerful to hear from former students that when you activate and engage in the experiences afforded by RMSEL, your success can be exponential. To listen to the success of these young men and women was captivating and humbling; while each graduate is on a different pathway, they are each amazing adults!

Re-enrollment/Relinquishment – 2018-2019 SY Lottery

We appreciate the response to our annual Re-enrollment & Relinquishment process. This process allows our staff to determine the number of open spots at RMSEL to enter into the annual lottery. The lottery deadline for this school year for new and prospective students and families is Friday, January 26, 2018 at midnight. If you have a friend and/or family member interested in applying to RMSEL, they are required to complete the application to be entered into the lottery. If they have started an application, they are also receiving updates from the system as reminders to ensure they are included. This is an exciting time as we will run the lottery on Monday, February 5, 2018 and begin contacting accepted students and families. I personally call every accepted student and family; this series of annual phone calls is always a highlight of the year. Throughout the month of
February we will be conducting Shadow Days, Open Houses, and Q/A Forums with new families to ensure we assist in their transition to our community.

District Accountability Committee (DAC) – Gala for Green

The RMSEL DAC, along with RMSEL Community Events and Volunteer Coordinator Sarah Mullaney, released a “Save the Date” for our annual Live and Silent Auction. The 2018 Gala for Green will take place in the Sante Fe Arts District at the Space Gallery (400 Sante Fe Dr., Denver, CO 80204) on St. Patrick’s Day, March 17, 2018 from 6:00 to 10:00 pm.

In preparation for the annual auction, the team will begin sending donation requests and logging all donations into the software for the event. I appreciate the forward-thinking and vision of this team. New for this year is the ability to participate in the auction from a mobile device even if you are unable to attend in person. You can bid on items throughout the evening from your mobile device even if you are in Ireland celebrating the holiday!

If you have any questions or would like to get involved in assisting DAC, please contact dac@rmsel.org, auction@rmsel.org, and/or smullaney@rmsel.org.

DAC Bi-Annual Community Survey

The 2017-2018 school year DAC Bi-Annual Community Survey was sent to RMSEL families on Monday, January 22, 2018 through Infinite Campus. The survey link is not publicly posted to our website as this is a survey targeting feedback from current RMSEL families. DAC took the opportunity to review and revise this survey prior to the launch date to ensure each question was designed to solicit feedback for continuous improvement. The survey will remain open until Monday, January 29, 2018 at midnight. The survey takes approximately 30 minutes to complete and the results will be reviewed by DAC and the RMSEL BOCES, as well as shared with the community as we continue to strive to fulfill our school mission and vision. Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback.

February Conference Sign-Up

Keep an eye out for a link to sign-up genius from your child’s crew leader or teacher team leader by the end of this week to sign up for winter conferences on Thursday and Friday, February 22nd and 23rd from 7:30 am – 3:30 pm. In advance of winter conferences, all grades will be posted in Infinite Campus to assist families with a complete update of performance prior to your conference.

If you have not seen a link at this time, do not hesitate to contact me and I can follow-up accordingly. We understand the challenge of scheduling and wish to provide ample planning and notice to support students and families.

Fieldwork Challenge – Marcus Eriksen Visit

During our January Staff Meeting, I proposed a challenge to our entire staff to plan at a minimum one fieldwork at each school level per month until the end of the school year. Every fieldwork planned will be entered into a drawing for a $150 gift card to Ester's for the team to celebrate together if they win. While I have elected to incentivize this as an element of “fun,” fieldwork is vital to the integration and mastery of expedition content. EL Core Practice #7 in one aspect describes fieldwork as “teachers bring experts from the community into the classroom to collaborate with
students on projects, teach them skills from the field, and critique their work using professional standards."

This challenge has sparked an increase in planning and implementation for fieldwork for the second half of the school year. In support of this, I have planned a fieldwork at RMSEL for Thursday, January 25, 2018 with research scientist Marcus Eriksen. Marcus has been featured on CNN, National Geographic, and other major media outlets for his work with “Oceanic Junk." Marcus will be working with our High School students regarding conservation practices as aligned to the mission of the More Ocean Less Plastic 5 Gyres Institute (https://www.5gyres.org ). In addition to his time with high school students, Marcus will share his experience in sailing a “Junk Raft” (http://www.beacon.org/Junk-Raft-P1260.aspx) from Los Angeles to Hawaii with our upcoming 4th and 5th grade sailors.

If you have any recommendations for integrated fieldwork to the topics of study in your child’s classroom, please reach out and share with your crew leader. I am excited to see an increase in fieldwork as it enhances our students learning experiences.


We have received many requests for next year’s school calendars. At this time, we have published the calendar frameworks on the website. We do not have each calendar complete at this time with crew trip dates as we are currently in the permit window with multiple government agencies. The framework of the calendar dates for the next two years is set. As we complete the crew trip calendars, we will update and share accordingly. The annual date to file permits is February 15th, 2018. We apologize if this has created any delay in planning for next year.

Snow Notification

I want to apologize in regard to the absence of notice on the RMSEL website of the late start on Monday. With the development of the new site, we conducted a test of the banner announcement in a development portal. When testing the banner in the portal, everything worked as expected. When attempting to update the banner on Sunday evening the banner was locked in our live site and Elizabeth and I were not granted access to update. We did send an Infinite Campus Messenger twice to notify families. Infinite Campus Messenger is unfortunately the best tool for communicating extremely time sensitive information. For example, on Sunday evening when we sent the first communication to families, it notified us that our message might not go out to every phone due to the volume and timing of the message.

Please note for cancellations and closures we:

1. Post a red scrolling banner on our website that is located directly across the main images.
2. Notification to all major news outlets (9 news, Fox 20, CBS 4, and the Denver Channel 7).

Thank you for taking the time to read this lengthy update; I understand my communications can take some time to get through, but as a team we strive to get all information to our community.

Best,

Chad