Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning  
Executive Director Communication  

Wednesday, September 13, 2017  

**Communication Summary**  
1. Student Led Conferences  
2. Infinite Campus  
3. Community Events and Fundraising Coordinator  
4. RMSEL Run and Ride  
5. EL Work Plan  

Dear RMSEL Parent Community,  

At this time, you should have received an invitation from your son/daughter's teacher and/or crew leader regarding sign-up for Student Led Conferences next week on Thursday, September 21st and Friday, September 22nd; many teachers use a tool titled, “Sign Up Genius” to assist with this process. If you have not received an invitation, please contact the teacher and/or crew leader directly and cc: cburns@rmsel.org. We want to make sure teachers have the support in making sure every child and family is scheduled for a conference.  

Prior to conferences next week, we request that all families have logged into and accessed Infinite Campus Portal ([http://www.rmsel.org/Parents/Infinite-Campus-Parent-Portal/index.html](http://www.rmsel.org/Parents/Infinite-Campus-Parent-Portal/index.html)). Every parent received login information at registration; at the end of registration 314 total log-ins were assigned and active. It is important to sign-in prior to conferences, as your son/daughter’s teacher will use this tool to report student progress throughout the school year. In grades K-8, teachers will provide updates every three weeks and continue to issue three final progress reports a year. High school teachers update weekly, notifications are sent weekly to families, and final progress reports are issued twice a year and posted to their official transcript. We are excited to provide more timely feedback regarding student achievement with families.  

We are excited to announce to the community that Sarah Mullaney has been hired for the 2017-2018 school year to fill the position of Community Events and Fundraising Coordinator. Sarah will work closely with the District Accountability Committee (DAC) to support fundraising efforts and event organization throughout the school year. In addition to her support to DAC, she will also work with teachers and families to build community through school-based events, crew parents, and other opportunities to foster our motto of “We are Crew, not Passengers!” We are excited to work with Sarah this year to grow our annual fundraising revenue, community engagement, volunteer database, and teacher support. Sarah will be on campus every day in the morning except Wednesday. She can be contacted at smullaney@rmsel.org.  

This Sunday, September 17, 2017, RMSEL DAC will host the annual Run and Ride at Cherry Creek Reservoir. The Run and Ride is a great community event that gets our community active and fosters community connections and relationships. I want to thank Karl Liedtke for his years of service in organizing and promoting the annual Run and Ride! We hope to see you at the Reservoir on Sunday.  

Finally, I want to share a take-away from our professional development that is extremely important to our staff as we engage with your children. As I shared previously, we set annual goals
and learning targets for our team that promote academic achievement and character development with students. Our impact goal for this year in the category of Effective Learners – Mastery of Skill and Knowledge is “RMSEL students will engage in productive struggle to problem solve, persevere, and put effort toward their work.” The typical buzz words tossed around in education circles include words such as effort, work, persevere, and problem solve; I find the phrase “productive struggle” to be compelling.

I want to commend our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) for naming “productive struggle” as important in our work with students. Neil Postman’s 1994 text, The Disappearance of Childhood, makes a correlation between the rise of electronic media and the traceable link to the “disappearance” of one’s childhood. He makes the comparison between the active engagements of reading to the passive engagement of television at the time. Reading takes work, time, and self-discipline, as compared to television that doesn’t know or care who is watching, the medium effectively “adultifies” children while infantizing adults; it doesn’t judge its viewers, nothing is shameful.

This text is now 23 years old; Postman, in a direct and indirect way, foreshadowed the modernization of electronic media and the further abstraction and passive engagement fostered through it as such. As a school of teachers, leaders, parents, and children, we must foster the importance of “productive struggle” both at school and at home. We need to cherish the importance of this in the development of our children as we compel them to become active contributors to our local and global community. Technology as a tool to innovate is important; technology to passively engage is detrimental to child development. I encourage you to think about “productive struggle” this weekend and the months to come with your children. Provide them opportunities to sweat during physical challenge, ask questions when reading a novel, unpack an aspect of current local events, and support them after they fail. I look forward to engaging in this work with our teachers; it is important and critical to the success of our community.

Sincerely,

Chad