Dear RMSEL High School Students and Parents,

Based on the recent resignation of high school teacher and crew leader, Auston Brecht, and the current student population of the high school at less than 70 total students, we are electing not to hire a teacher to replace Auston for the 2019 – 2020 school year. This is a temporary, single year adjustment until enrollment returns close to our student cap of 100. While this change is based on staff transition and size, as a team we felt strongly that it also presents some unique opportunities.

Our current freshman class is coming in at capacity and we look forward to their success over the next four years. Our current 10th and 11th grade classes are both below our class size cap of 25, and we are going to combine the two classes into a single class for next year. By combining the 10th and 11th grade, we will have a total class size of 23 students. This provides our students with the opportunity to collaborate and problem solve in a larger group and support one another with course material. Our senior class will continue without interruption.

Students in the high school align content by course and not a specific grade level. To ensure students will have access to all required courses, the course loop has been adjusted to accommodate the combining of the 10th and 11th grade classes. In the 2020 – 2021 school year, we will once again adjust the course loop to ensure student transcripts reflect four years in each content area without repetition and alignment to the Higher Education Admissions Requirements (HEAR). The students will have three core content courses daily (Humanities [ELA & History] / Science / Mathematics).

As we transition, the teacher team is also committed to teaching a single day weekly internship course for all students to have access to Mini-Challenge, Internships, and SLE next school year. Students will need to continue to meet eligibility standards to participate in the off campus experience. The experiences are scheduled for:

*Mini-Challenge (9) / Internship (10/11) – March 30 – April 10, 2020*

*SLE – March 24 – April 24, 2020*

In addition to the internship experience, we are also going to return to an abbreviated grade level trip in the spring that is scheduled for grades 9-11 on March 24-27, 2020. We are currently working on the details and location for these experiences with our adventure department. Based on budget adjustments with the Colorado Trail Trip, we are excited to be able to accommodate this additional travel experience.

Finally, to support academic content and work completion, students who have a “B” or above in all core content classes will be eligible for Off Campus Lunch. Students who need additional support will be scheduled for Office Hours during lunch with a teacher, in service of maintaining above a “B” in their respective classes. Teachers are excited to have a structure that
rewards students for maintaining above a 2.0 GPA and a daily workshop to support students when they need assistance.

As this plan is a one-year adjustment, Auston’s crew of students will remain together for crew, trips, etc. We are working to determine a crew leader or co-crew leaders from our staff and team to work with this amazing group of students. When we return for the 2020 – 2021 school year, we will have four teachers and crew leaders in the high school team. I am personally joining this crew for the first portion of the trip from August 14-17 from Leadville to just outside of Buena Vista. Once we determine crew leadership, they will accompany the students along with our adventure staff and contract Wilderness First Responders.

We have so much to celebrate with our current student body: they have obtained the highest class averages on the PSAT and SAT in our school history and outperformed the average for the state of Colorado! We have outstanding students and families and we look forward to building on our successes! We understand the uniqueness of our present situation and feel strongly that our plan to move forward is in the best interest of our students and staff; we look forward to next year and to planning for the 2020 – 2021 school year.

Sincerely,

Chad