Dear RMSEL Parent Community,

Colorado Department of Education Awards

Yesterday, you received an email on behalf of our Board of Directors regarding a series of steps they are electing to engage in over the next few months. As expressed yesterday, many of you were caught off-guard by this and may have additional questions. I am open to assist in answering any questions you may have, so please do not hesitate to contact me or plan to attend our community conversation at “Chat with Chad” on Friday, November 1, 2019 at 8:00 am.

I want to reassure our community that we continue to be a school grounded in the original design principles of Outward Bound and our founding school mission, which as to date remains unchanged. As a K-12 community, the mission of the Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning (RMSEL) is to empower students and staff to be learners, thinkers, citizens, and explorers engaged in and inspired by the real world. “We are crew not passengers.”

This mission is our foundation, which is carried to action through our school vision. “RMSEL scholars will demonstrate pride and ownership as they grow into responsible citizens who strive for high academic achievement and character excellence. RMSEL staff will equip our students with tools for success in order to make a positive impact on our local and global community. Through our actions, our community will exemplify Expeditionary Learning.”

As a staff we are deeply committed to providing excellence in education through the implementation of Expeditionary Learning. Yesterday, I received a communication from Melissa Colesman, Associate Commissioner of Education – Colorado Department of Education, to attend the annual department awards ceremony. We have been invited each year to receive our Accreditation with Distinction Award for being one of the highest performing school districts in the state.

I was surprised to also receive an additional award for High Academic Growth – Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning. This award recognizes our ability to outpace the median growth percentile of the state at a significant level. This means that not only are our students achieving at a high level annually, students that are identified as needing to catch up are exceeding the growth of students at other schools across the state.

This is the first time in our school’s history that we have received multiple awards for a single school year. I am humbled by the dedication of our staff and students who strive for excellence in education through our model.

High School Student Elective – Podcast

http://traffic.libsyn.com/bravemonkeys/Expedition_Podcast_Episode_1.mp3

A group of high school students have been engaged in an independent study of media productions through podcast. High school Crew Leader, Marshall Moore, is serving as their advisor and resident expert three
days per week to support them in editing and producing their work. The link above will take you to the first podcast produced by the students. Take the opportunity to listen and celebrate this amazing work! Our students truly are our best storytellers!

**Quest Bridge Scholarship Finalist**

It is a great honor to share with the community that high school senior Kalon Shepard has been selected as a finalist for the Quest Bridge Scholarship. The Quest Bridge Scholarship is one of the most prestigious scholarships a high school student can be considered to receive. It is a full, four-year scholarship worth over $200,000. It is a fully inclusive scholarship in which students receive tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and travel expense. Please join us in celebrating this amazing consideration and wish Kalon the best as she enters the next round of college matching. ([https://www.questbridge.org/high-school-students/national-college-match/scholarship-details](https://www.questbridge.org/high-school-students/national-college-match/scholarship-details))

**4th/5th Grade Colorado River Trip**

Our 4th / 5th grade students are returning today from their time on the Colorado River last week. This section of the Colorado River from Chisco to Moab is a magical place surrounded by 300’ sandstone canyon walls. The sunset and sunrise over the canyon is second to no other place on earth and truly provides students the experience of being explorers and adventurers. This is a challenging trip for all parties, 250 lb rafts, oar rigs, dry bags, equipment, shuttles, wind, frost, and sand... did I mention sand? I want to thank our staff and parent volunteers for accompanying our students on this trip, this experience in our slate of trips is probably my personal favorite; the river truly, in the words of John Muir, “washes your spirit clean.”

I wish our community the best as you take time to rejuvenate next week, read a great book, take a hike in the snow, ski the single run at the resort, walk in the park, rake some leaves, and just enjoy the fall here in Colorado. If you are traveling, be safe and we look forward to seeing you on Tuesday, October 29, 2019.

Best,

Chad