Dear RMSEL Parent Community,

Welcome back to a new year and a new decade, we have so many things to be thankful for, as well as to be excited for what we will accomplish in the decade to come. During break, I had the opportunity to connect with a former staff member; during our exchange it was apparent what an impact RMSEL has on both our students and staff as they make transitions from our school. Every student and staff member who may be on to their next journey has a story that is a part of what makes up our community. RMSEL is a mission-focused and vision-driven organization that is deeply connected to our design principles and the values that Kurt Hahn laid out over one hundred years ago. On the Thursday prior to winter break, the High School hosted the final showcase for the year. Prior to the doors opening, one by one, former graduates trickled in to be a part of sharing in the evening. This Monday, as other districts did not have school, former students came by to say hello to their teachers and once again share in their RMSEL experience. I am fortunate to be a part of this community that has such a lasting impact on the lives of our students, staff, and families!

Building Habits & Partnership

While away from the office, I was afforded the opportunity to spend time with my own family and to catch up on my stack of books to read. I enjoy break as it provides the time to dig into books, reflect, and be inspired for the continued work at our school. Recently, Denver Public Schools passed a resolution honoring one of their former teachers who recently passed, Ms. Marie Greenwood. Marie Greenwood was the first African American teacher in Denver Public Schools; she was also the first to receive tenure, and to break the barrier of segregation teaching in an all white school. Marie Greenwood was 106 years old when she passed and her legacy will live on in our local community. At 97 years old, Ms. Greenwood wrote a book about her experiences, titled Every Child Can Learn. As an educator, Ms. Greenwood understood the importance of every student and ensuring that each child had access to the fundamentals to establish a foundation to build on as students advanced in school. Ms. Greenwood taught first grade and believed deeply in the importance of strong teaching methods and fundamentals for success.

Over break, this was one of the books I was fortunate to read and it was certainly the most inspiring. As she summarized her book in the final paragraphs, it reads:

    Education is the same as building a house. There must be a sound foundation to build on so the structure will last. The beginning of a strong foundation in education is laid in first grade so that teachers in the following grades can continue to build on it.
First grade is the introduction of formal, scheduled, planned instruction that a child will face the rest of his or her school days. Here’s where the preparation for the future begins.

Education is not a lot of “fun and games,” it is hard work; the joy comes in learning. Parental cooperation is vital in inspiring a child to achieve. Analyzing a child’s problem and dealing with it on an individual basis is essential.

“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it!” Improve on teaching methods, but do not discard the unchanging factors that work. Continue to teach the following by whatever method it takes: phonics, the key that unlocks words; commit to memory math combinations that never change – addition, subtraction, and later multiplication and division; correct spelling at all times; proper grammar and legible penmanship.

Computers and calculators are essential, but one needs to be able to function when there is no computer or calculator.

Along with basic instruction of reading, math, spelling, and penmanship it is important to teach music, art, drama, science, and social studies and include games with a bit of fun to create balanced personalities.

Some children will learn more than others, but EVERY CHILD CAN LEARN – SOMETHING!!!

As we embark on the second part of the school year, Ms. Greenwood’s closing words are directly applicable to the work happening at RMSEL. It is of vital importance for parents to work with our teaching staff to support your children as partners in their learning experience. Outside of the classroom, ensure that work of high quality is completed with legible penmanship and that students are supported in the revision process to include correct spelling and proper grammar. Work together as you ensure that your child is reading a paper-based book each evening for up to thirty minutes, read with them and model that literacy is the key that unlocks the doors throughout their entire life. Each of these fundamentals is key to an Expeditionary Learning experience, as we want to provide students the opportunity to think critically about a compelling topic and communicate their learning. To engage in complex text and think about current events and issues, students must have a strong foundation. As we begin the year, join us in building habits that will continue to support learning opportunities at RMSEL.

Professional Development – Gallery Walk

Do you ever wonder what is next for your children as they begin a new school year? This year, our teaching staff worked diligently during the first semester to prepare independent expeditionary case studies that include exciting projects and fieldwork for second semester. To showcase this learning, the Case Study Overview for every grade level is on display in the hallway adjacent to the gymnasium on the display panels. The next time you are in the building, take the opportunity to walk the hallway and see what lies ahead for your child this spring and into the next grade level or school level. We are excited to share this amazing work as a staff community with our parents and families. I greatly appreciate the work of our instructional coaches and professional development leadership team for setting a vision for this work and providing support to create amazing new expeditions!

RMSEL Lottery

Thank you to our community for providing your re-enrollment commitments this week. This is vital to preparation for the upcoming lottery and subsequent school year. We are excited for families to return to RMSEL next year and wish those in transition the best as you seek new experiences. Once re-enrollment is
complete, we are able to provide the number of openings for the 2020-2021 school year to be entered into the lottery software. The lottery for new families, and current families with siblings wishing to enroll, closes January 31, 2020 at midnight. The link to the lottery application is http://rmselapplication.com/site.php. The lottery application is not required for current students who plan to stay at RMSEL. Please share this link with a friend if they are considering RMSEL as an option. Finally, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Cris Veteto in the main office at 303-759-2076, x 2223 for assistance.

Happy New Year,

Chad