To ensure that RMSEL consistently works to pursue excellence as we fulfill our school mission and vision it is imperative that we follow a continuum of community systems and structures. Organizational systems and structures establish clear expectations for students, parents, and staff, to ensure that our community is able to learn, grow, and thrive. Our expeditionary learning design principles articulate this as: *The Responsibility for Learning* – “Learning is both a personal, individually specific process of discovery and a social activity. Each of us learns within and for ourselves as part of a group. Every aspect of school must encourage children, young people, and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.”

The purpose of the continuum of community systems and structures serves as a guide for students to accept and take responsibility for directing their own learning. Learning is process which is guided by teachers and supported by ensuring student understand how to achieve and not simply respond to a series of four letters listed in tandem with a sentence.

Jacques Barzum articulates this well in the text *Begin Here – The Forgotten Conditions of Teaching and Learning*, stating, “In the name of progress and method, innovation and statistical research, educationalists have persuaded the world that teaching is a set of complex problems to be solved. It is no such thing. It is a series of difficulties. They recur endlessly and have to be met; there is no solution – which means there is no mystery…It will always be difficult to teach well, to learn accurately; to read, write, and count readily and competently; to acquire a sense of history and develop a taste for literature and the arts – in short, to instruct and start one’s education.”

Barzum is accurate in describing the process of learning to be difficult and not a mystery. While learning is a series of difficulties it is important to understand that true achievement of any learner is fulfilled only when the task is challenging, complex, and rigorous. This documents is to provide the framework for reaching the highest degree of success, understanding that learning is challenging and difficult. As community we understand and thrive to meet this level of challenge.

### 4/5 Grading Policy

**Portfolio Projects and Assessments Standards-Based Grading**

Teachers in the RMSEL lower school assess students using standards-based grading. Assessment through projects, tests, quizzes, presentations and other performance-based measures shows students’ progress on learning targets which are directly tied to state standards. Student work is evaluated using the following scale:
Standards-based grades reflect a student’s current level of progress towards a learning target. For that reason, we do not average grades. For instance, if a student scores Beginning on an assessment the first time and Accomplished on the target the second time, that student is Accomplished on the target, not Developing. A student’s current level of mastery of standards is what matters.

Habits of Scholarship: Homework, Classwork, and Supporting Pieces of Projects
We believe that a student’s habits of scholarship are essential for his/her success. However, we also separate a student’s habits of scholarship from student progress on learning targets that are tied to state standards. Things like homework, classwork, and notebook checks are recorded in the habits of scholarship standard for each class. When bigger projects are assigned, teachers report supporting pieces or check-ins in this category. These assignments will be recorded using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exemplary (E)</strong></td>
<td>The student exceeded the learning target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accomplished (A)</strong></td>
<td>The student mastered the learning target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developing (D)</strong></td>
<td>The student has almost mastered the learning target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning (B)</strong></td>
<td>The student is just beginning to master the learning target. This is a “flashing light” to students and families that further action must be taken by the student for successful completion of the working portfolio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Evidence (NE)</strong></td>
<td>The student shows no evidence of mastering the learning target. This is a “flashing light” to students and families that further action must be taken by the student for successful completion of the working portfolio.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Character Values: Responsibility, Courage, Discipline, Integrity, and Compassion
As an Expeditionary Learning School, one of the things that differentiate us is our focus on character. Starting in trimester two students will self-assess themselves on our five character values using RMSEL’s Lower School Character Rubric every three weeks. Teachers will also assess students on character standards in expedition every three weeks and at the end of the trimester. Character values are assessed using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turned-In (T)</strong></td>
<td>The student completed the work that was expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incomplete (I)</strong></td>
<td>The student turned in the work, however the student did not complete work accurately or thoroughly enough to be marked as turned in. He/she needs to complete this work with higher quality and turn it back in to the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing (M)</strong></td>
<td>The student did not turn in the work that was assigned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progress Reporting: Infinite Campus and Portfolios
Teachers update Infinite Campus at least every three weeks. Three-week updates include character rubric update, habits of scholarship (portfolio pieces turned in or missing), and class/crew assignments. Anytime a student receives B, NE, M, or AC on an assignment in the Portfolio Projects and Assessments category, teachers write a comment identifying next steps for that student to improve achievement on the standard. Three week notifications of any of B, NE, M, or AC will be sent to families. At the end of the trimester, the office generates student progress reports. Progress is reported on Colorado State Standards, Habits of Scholarship and Character Values for each course. Every standard must be at a Developing level or higher for students to be on track for mastery of standards.

Academic Probation
In the event that a student has a M or NE for any Portfolio Projects and Assessments category, they will be assigned to Academic Probation (AP) the following session. Sessions occur as needed on Tuesdays. The student will stay after school for an hour on Tuesday and have time to complete homework and other assignments.

Grading Practice
Student work will be graded and returned to students in an equivalent period of time as required to complete. For example, if a student completes a writing assignment that requires a week to turn-in to the teacher in final form the student should expect to receive his/her grade within one week on the assignment. Student classwork, homework, and other daily assignment will be reported in Infinite Campus as completion grades. Student assessments, projects, essays, presentations, etc. will be reported in Infinite Campus as academic grades and tied to applicable grade level standards.

Deadline vs. Deadline(s)
It is imperative for student work to be completely in the timeframe assigned by the teacher. Learning is an ongoing process and late or missing assignments impair students from achieving at the highest level.
At RMSEL, we do not have “late” deadlines for student work as all assignments are expected to be completed as assigned. Any work turned in past the deadline will be marked accordingly in Infinite Campus as “late” and the grade will go down a letter grade. For example if a student earned an A, but the work was turned in late the student will receive a D. After a week the work will not be accepted and students will receive a NE in infinite campus.

Students receiving accommodations through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and/or 504 will be granted extended time when necessary. Any extended time will be communicated by the Learning Specialist with the student and parents and final due date will be established accordingly.

**Homework**
As a group of educators we believe homework is a tool to build habits of scholarship that will prepare students to be successful lifelong learners. Homework is a place for students to practice and become experts in skills that are taught at school and allows families to stay connected to the content with their child.

Each Friday students will bring home their **purple** RMSEL homework folder with their homework plan and reading/book log that is expected to be returned to their teacher with a parent signature the following Friday.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Literacy</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Expedition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>Read 20 min. 5x week with log</td>
<td>3 or 4 nightly math skills</td>
<td>As needed for unfinished work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading response</td>
<td>worksheets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spelling/word work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occasionally grammar practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher Communication**
Teachers will communicate with parents and families through emails as needed for crew updates and announcements. All communication regarding assignments will be reported in Infinite Campus.

Teachers will respond to any request from a parent within 48 hours of receipt. Teachers will respond to families with email when a requested is received electronically and with a phone call when any message is left via voicemail. We strongly encourage conversation to take place over the phone instead of through email, as it is absent of tone. Every teacher has a voicemail extension that is posted on the RMSEL website for parent reference.
Fitness Program
With the exception of Wednesday mornings, all 4/5 students will start the school day with forty minutes of fitness training. Students should arrive at school wearing appropriate fitness attire and athletic shoes, including on the first day of school.

Attendance and Tardy
Student attendance is taken to begin the school day in all lower school classrooms. School hours are from 7:50 am – 3:10 pm (M/T/TH/F) and 8:50 am – 3:10 pm (W). To support parents in arriving to school in a timely manner the Administrative Team provides supervision on the playground starting at 7:30 am (M/T/TH/F) and 8:30 am (W). In the event that truant attendance habits are established by a family during the course of the school year as defined in School Policy (JH – Student Attendance) the family will be placed on a contract for attendance.

We understand that this contract is an agreement of prompt and faithful attendance when working with lower school parents, as students are unable to transport themselves to school at this time. A violation of an attendance contract may result in removal from fieldwork and/or crew trips.

Adventure Program Attendance

Fieldwork
Fieldwork is directly tied to the learning targets connected to each unit of study or learning expedition in the classroom. Students are expected to be prepared as learners to participate in fieldwork prior to departure. For example, students may be asked to come prepared with a series of questions to share with an expert upon arrival based on a reading or workshop in class the day before. If students are unprepared academically to attend fieldwork the teacher may request that the student remain on campus and forgo the fieldwork experience.

Crew Trip
Crew trips are a unique opportunity to extend learning experiences and build character outside of a typical school day. All students are required to attend crew trips unless a medical exemption is present. A student may be removed from a crew trip or prohibited from attending in the event they are in violation of the Student Responsibility Contract signed by families to begin the school year. Student safety on crew trips is our team’s number one priority and behavioral misconduct in the classroom and/or while on the trip is not acceptable.

Team Level Behavior Consequences
Consequences in the learning environment are not punitive however, a tool for correction and redirection. The team will use the tiered structure as a guide to respond in the classroom prior to requesting intervention by the Director of Lower School.

Tiers of Behavior Concerns:
- Level 1- Handled in the classroom
  - Lack of work completion
  - First warning of behaviors
  - Smaller behaviors that happen throughout day, but don’t require an office visit
• Level 2- Recess/Choice time/Fieldwork consequence, parent communication (meeting with some form of a tracker), then repeats of the behavior after parent meeting moves into Level 3
  o Repeat behaviors, or behaviors that could lead to escalation quickly
  o Rough-housing
  o Repeated conversations about behaviors without any consistent change

• Level 3- Send to office with a classroom behavior form that communicates why
  o Unsafe and/or Uncivil
  o Difficulty with regulating physical behaviors - unsafe behaviors, reacting physically in anger, punching others
  o Difficulty with emotional regulation

Teachers will communicate directly with parents when any consequence is issued at the classroom level. Teachers will seek assistance from parents as partners to support appropriate conduct at school.

**Teacher Team Leader Support**
Each school level at RMSEL has a designated team leader. The team leader is teacher at the school level serving in a leadership capacity to support students and families. The team leader is available to answer questions of any family at the school level. The team leader works collaboratively with his/her colleagues at the respective school level to respond and support students.