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**Parent Bulletin**

**April 1, 2015**

Message:

As we approach Spring Break, I want to thank all of the staff, students, and families of the RPEMS community for your hard work and support of great teaching and learning. March has broughtus much to celebrate. We are making great progress on the goals established in our 5 Year Strategic Plan. The work will continue throughout the next four years and I’m excited for the currentand future successes our RPEMS community will experience. Our studentswill remain our top priority as we further develop actions to improve differentiated instruction for all students, improve school climate, and provide the technology and amenities our students need to remain competitive and successful.

Celebrations:

One very important aspect of our 5 Year Strategic Plan is the variety of extra-curricular offerings available to students. These opportunities extend learning beyond the classroom and instructional day. They also develop a stronger community by developing relationships among students from different homerooms and grade levels. I am happy to report some of the recent accomplishments of students participating in these activities:

* National Academic League team won their semi-final match against a school from Kansas and has advanced to the National Championship game!!!
  + The RPEMS Chess team recently competed in the Maryland State Championships and placed in three divisions, including 1st place in the Middle School division
* The Destination Imagination teams recently competed at Regional and State level competitions and received multipleawards for outstanding performances
* RPEMS athletics continue to achieve at high levels in all sports
* The Scholastic Book Fair Family Night was a huge Success – thank you to all the volunteers and others who participate!!!
* Due to our fundraising efforts in the Fall, our student to technology device ratio improved from 40:1 to 10:1 with the addition of iPadsand laptops – thanks to all who donated
* Our school psychologist, Ms. Thorne, was recently awarded the Baltimore City School Psychologist of the Year Award!!!

Middle School Placement

RPEMS strives to retain 100% of our fifth grade students into our middle school. As parents are receiving placement letters, we recognize that these must seem to be stressful times. Much of the RPEMS 5 Year Strategic Plan involves curriculum enhancements, improved climate, and facilities and technology improvements that ensure our students are challenged in all three of our academic programs and can learn from each other’s valuable life experiences. No one program is inherently better than another. Some are better equipped to meet students’ academic interests than others. We recently modified our middle school schedule to truly integrate our students across all academic programs during their special area classes (foreign language, physical education, music, art, theater, technology). Additionally, middle school students have a daily advisory period, affording us more opportunities to address their social and emotional needs, issues of character development, organization skill, study habits, academic assistance, and even a better understanding of domestic and international current events. In an effort to best support you and your children through this transitional time, I am happy to meet with parents (individually and in groups) to answer questions and offer additional information about our middle school. I am extremely proud of our middle school and would love the opportunity to share my goals for middle school and the work we are doing to achieve those goals. Please contact me by email to schedule an appointment.

5 Year Strategic Planning Updates (brief update – more to come throughout the Spring):

**Diversity Committee** – by the end of this year, the Diversity Committee will have conducted several diversity related activities, including: a diversity-related video; the formation of a student diversity group (Roland Park Student Group on Diversity); updated itspresence on the RPEMS webpage; and several events, celebrations, and diversity-related trainings designed specifically for elementary school students, middle school students, parents, and teachers/administrators.

**Facilities/Technology** – as indicated above, our fundraising efforts this fall has helped us greatly improve our student to technology device ratio; a team of parents have been working diligently to ensure our front playground area is fixed to the safest standard; and window installation will continue through May until all windows are replaced

### Enrollment Task Force – parents and staff are working to identifypoliciesand procedures that ensure our total enrollment and class sizes empowers our diverse community of learners to achieve academic excellence. RPEMS will ensure that teaching and learning here provides a positive, engaging and challenging environment for creative and critical thinking.

### Climate Committee – our school climate committee continues to assist our school with increasing character education opportunities through student Town Hall meetings and middle school advisory periods.

Reminders – Traffic:

In light of the recent article in the Baltimore Sun regarding double parking in school zones ([http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-school-fines-20150330-story.html](https://mail.bcps.k12.md.us/owa/redir.aspx?C=KgwvVz5zF0Cfo6Y9Kmqp_SKoNtlUP9JIubBb0whJ9_lJfoykR6sHnRS4yQsDrU97bTW8xw0MoH0.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.baltimoresun.com%2fnews%2fmaryland%2fbs-md-school-fines-20150330-story.html)), please remember the following traffic rules when dropping off and picking up your student. We want to ensure a safe and organized experience to and from school.

* Double parking is neverallowed on Roland Avenue.
* Parking on Roland Avenue in front of school is prohibited during the hours indicated on the traffic signs, please don’t leave your car unattended to walk students up to the school doors.
* We want to make the best use of all available curb space. When dropping off students in front of the school, Drivers are expected to pull their vehicle as far north on Roland Avenue as possible to allow others to pull close behind.
* Drop off should take no longer than 30 seconds. Please make sure your children exit the car on the right hand curb side.
* To avoid the most congested time of morning drop-off, consider sending your child to our free time and breakfast program. Supervised breakfast is available starting at 7:30 am every morning in the cafeteria.
* Only staff members with the appropriate parking tag are allowed to enter the school lot and park on school grounds during the hours of 7:15 am and 3:30 pm.

Below are some suggested measures that families can take to ensure a safe and efficient morning drop-off:

* Arriveearlier in the morning (7:30 – 7:45) – supervisionbegins at 7:30 am in the cafeteria; traffic at that time is much calmer and drop off is easier.
* Drop your child off safely at curbside further south or north on Roland Ave and allow them to walk to school (of course this depends on the child's age).

Reminder - Visitor Policy and Procedure:

All Baltimore City Public Schools have been equipped with new safety equipment and procedures for visitors (parents, other relatives, guest speakers, volunteers, etc.) when gaining access to the building. All visitors, regardless of purpose or length of visit, must present a valid Maryland Driver’s License or Identification Card in the main office. The license or identification card will be scanned through our new system and a sticker badge will be generated with the visitor’s picture on the label. The sticker label must be worn at all times while in the school building. **This new system is designed to keep our students safe at all times.** All visitors (including parents) will be subject to this new process. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.