

June 9, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is astonishing just how quickly we have reached the end of this school year! I can say with confidence that this has certainly been a year filled with high academic rigor, hands-on-learning, and students rising to the challenges that have been presented to them. My first year at Rye Junior High School has been an exceptional one, and I am truly grateful for all of the support from the community, staff, and students this year.

This school year was truly a wonderful experience, and I am eager to begin the next one! We have a lot of new and exciting changes coming to Rye Junior High School that will provide students with a remarkable academic experience.

Staffing Updates

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Robin Ellwood will be taking on the role of our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) teacher beginning next year. In this position, Dr. Ellwood will work closely with classroom teachers to integrate science, technology, engineering, and math into the existing curriculum in various content areas. Through the use of the resources in our building, Dr. Ellwood will utilize an interdisciplinary and applied approach that allows students to make real-world applications in the classroom.

The STEM position is a transformation of the current technology education program we have. As you may know, Mark Visciano is retiring this year. He has taught the Technology Education class at RJH for the past 27 years. In that time, he has had a positive influence on many students. Through hands-on construction of various wood projects, he has taught skills to students that will serve them well throughout their lives. Students will continue to learn those skills as part of the STEM class as well as in our enrichment block.

Currently we are in the process of hiring for our Music, 8th grade Science, and 8th grade Math positions. At present there are two excellent finalists for the music position and they will be spending some time at RJH next week to teach a model lesson for a group of 6th grade students. The interviews for the math and science positions will be held in the next couple of weeks and we will keep you advised as we go through this process. We have had quite a few qualified candidates apply and are confident we will be able to hire teachers who will be the right fit for our school and students.

Enrichment

In addition to the academically rigorous opportunities afforded to students through the implementation of the STEM position, students will also receive enrichment instruction two days a week next year. All teachers will be available during this scheduled time for the enrichment periods to provide students learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom. Students will be allowed to select enrichment classes that meet their specific and individualized

needs and interests. Class sizes will be small in order for teachers to build and maintain personalized relationships with students and assist them in enhancing their current, academic and interest levels. Listed below are just a few of the offerings that students will be able to select from next year during the enrichment time:

Cut Away!

Turn your ideas into professional-quality projects. Make cards, decorate t-shirts, frames etc. Using our new technical cutter (Circuit Machine) you can cut over 100 different materials, upload your own images, and design on the go!

Dog House Building

Learn how to build a dog house! You will learn some of the fundamentals of framing/building including how to frame walls, windows, doors, and a roof.

Yoga

Are you looking to de-stress, increase your flexibility, and energize your body and mind? Then come enjoy a relaxing, yet challenging class that incorporates Bishnu Ghosh, Vinyasa, and Ashtanga styles of yoga with a certified yoga instructor along with guided meditation. Namaste!

Laser Cutter

Learn how to use the Laser Cutter! Using the graphic design program CorelDraw, we will program the laser cutter to etch and/or cut into a variety of materials (wood, Plexiglas, leather, stone, marble, etc.) in order to create cool projects! Come be creative and have fun designing and creating projects using a laser!

Typing and Cursive

Are you a fast texter with speedy-fast thumbs? That's great if you are, but does it help you finish your schoolwork more quickly on the computer? Have you always been curious about how people type so fast? Do you love watching people write in cursive and wish that you knew how to as well? In this enrichment course, you will have the opportunity to dedicate time to learning to type very quickly! Additionally, you will have the chance to learn and practice with cursive handwriting so that you feel confident in both typing and cursive. The class will be paced individually, and the instructor will work with you where you are at to improve these two important skills.

Changing Spaces

We will be changing some of the spaces around the school to make them more interesting. For example, would you like to change a staircase so it will make music as you go up? We will use different tools and techniques to make it happen. We may use computers, sewing, copper tape, Makey Makeys, and LED lights to start. Don't know how to do it? It's easy to learn. Just bring your imagination!

Ridiculous Readers

Hey, motivated readers! Come to our Ridiculous Readers enrichment group, and challenge yourself with other inspired readers. We will use two enrichment blocks to try to read EVERY Isinglass Teen Read Award nominees. There are ten books to read, and we will attempt to read one, and discuss it at the next meeting.

American Red Cross Babysitters Training Course

Do you want to be prepared to be the best babysitter in the neighborhood? Then join this course where you will learn to be a safe, professional and reliable sitter. You will also have the opportunity to become certified!

Technology

Another noteworthy change being implemented next school year is the chance for students to take their laptops home with them from school. In order to maintain the continuity and convenience of assignment completion and communication with teachers, students will be given the opportunity to keep their laptops with them beyond the allotted hours in the school day. If you and your child would like to participate in this program, there is a small insurance fee of \$20.00 to protect the equipment, should anything happen to it outside of the building. The same technology rules outlined in the Rye Junior High School handbook apply to students while the laptops are in their personal possession at home. More information regarding this new endeavor will be sent home with students at the beginning of next year.

I cannot emphasize enough how pleased I am with the progress that the students have made this year, thanks to you, the parents, as well as the devoted staff of Rye Junior High School. I look forward with great anticipation of the growth that is to be made next year with the implementation of our new undertakings. If you have any questions concerning next school year, please do not hesitate to contact me. I wish you all a relaxing and happy summer!

Sincerely,

Marie Soucy
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