

January 21, 2019

Dear Rheem Team Families,

At this week's spirit assembly, we discussed how we've made it halfway through the school year, and no matter how much success and fun we've had so far, the best is yet to come. Students also found out more about this year's Read-a-thon and how each of them has been invited on a journey.

Take a look at the rest of the week.

## **This Week at Rheem:**

### Monday, January 21st:

- NO SCHOOL: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

### Tuesday, January 22nd:

- Mr. Greer's class on a field trip to Martinez Courthouse
- School Site Council meeting (3:15-4:30 in Room 19)

### Wednesday, January 23rd:

- 3rd grade field trip: Lawrence Hall of Science
- PTA Association meeting in the Frank from 9:30-11:00

### Thursday, January 24th:

- Wellness Committee meeting from 3:30-5:00 at Rheem in Room 25

### Friday, January 25th:

- Regularly scheduled Friday

## **Did you Know?**

Last Thursday, 1/17, was the halfway point in the school year. Below is the year over year attendance rates. Daily attendance has improved 2 tenths of a percent, while unexcused absences and tardies have improved from last

year as well. With flu season in full swing it's important we do everything we can to help our kids remain healthy and in school.

|                                   | <u>2018-19</u> | <u>2017-18</u> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Absences</b>                   | 97.7%          | 97.5%          |
| <b>Truants/Unexcused absences</b> | 209            | 250            |
| <b>Tardies</b>                    | 501            | 633            |

- **Attendance Counts**

Did you know the Moraga School District only receives funding for students that are “in their seats,” regardless of the reason for their absence? That’s right, the state does not distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences for revenue purposes. However, parents can help mitigate the loss of funding by choosing to complete an Independent Study packet in the event their child qualifies for one.

- **Independent Study**

An “Independent Study” can be developed for a student who will be absent a minimum of five days to a maximum of eight weeks. Independent Study forms can be obtained from the child’s teacher or in the front office, and require the signature of the teacher, principal, parent and student. The district receives attendance reimbursement for successfully completed independent studies.

## **National Geographic Bee**

*4<sup>th</sup> graders, Zoya C. and Drew K take Top Honors in Annual Competition*

On Monday, January 14, Rheem’s 3rd– 5th grade students watched an impressive battle of wits and knowledge at the school’s annual National Geographic Bee. Forty-five minutes into the competition, only two 4th graders, Zoya and Drew, remained. The two engaged in an intense and record-breaking championship round. Finally, Zoya was named school champion after correctly identifying the capital city of Turkey (Ankara).

Eight 4th and 5th grade students (listed below in alpha order) took part in the final competition:

Adam S.

Anton K.

Cassidy W.

Drew K.

Kai P.

Matt J.

Zayden B.

Zoya C.

The above listed students qualified as finalists after being the top scorers in a preliminary written test that was given to all interested 4th and 5th graders in December. All finalists gave an impressive performance and received a certificate and ribbon acknowledging their accomplishment as well as a National Geographic Bee pencil to commemorate the occasion.

The contest consisted of several rounds of questions, which challenged the finalists' knowledge of U.S. cities and states, continents and world geography. After several rounds of questions, the field of finalists was reduced to two: Zoya and Drew. The Championship round consisted of the two simultaneously writing their answers (Jeopardy-Style) on a small white board. The Championship round ended in a tie, pushing both students into an intense "single elimination" tie-breaker. After several more suspenseful rounds, Zoya earned the title of champion!

As school champion, Zoya received a gold medal, a championship certificate, and the thrill of taking yet another test (!) to see if she will be eligible to compete in the state Bee in April. Also, Zoya received a copy of The National Geographic Bee Kids Book of WHY: 1,111 Answers to Nearly Everything and Drew took home How to Ace the National Geographic Bee. We certainly expect to see both students in next year's annual bee!

As an extra bonus, a raffle was held for all 4th and 5th graders who tried out for the bee, whether or not they became finalists. The lucky winner of a “Where in the World?” geography game was won by 4th grader Charlie R-G.

Again this year, Ms. Frank returned to be the MC of the Geo Bee, and she brought with her another recent Rheem Retiree, Ms. Gala, who served as the official scorekeeper along with 4th grade teacher, Ms. Culleton. Ms. Frank and Ms. Gala felt honored to be back at Rheem for this unique competition (because, of course, *Once a Roadrunner, Always a Roadrunner!*)

Anyone can brush up on geography by visiting the “Study Corner” at [www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee). Check it out to find lots of interesting games and quizzes to test your skill and increase your knowledge!

## **School Climate Survey Results**

Over the next several weeks, I will continue including results from the 2018-19 Climate Survey that was sent out in November, 2018. 168 Rheem families responded as follows:

96% respondents agreed with the statement “The school has systems in place to encourage and reward positive behavior and contributions.”

Actual breakdown: 64% strongly agree; 31% agree; 3% disagree; 1% strongly disagree and 1% didn’t know.

## **Reading Takes You Places – Rheem’s Read-a-thon**

ALL ABOARD!!! Last Thursday marked the opening of Rheem’s Read-a-thon. The Read-a-thon lasts four weeks and goes through Thursday, February 14th. I’ll be reminding you each week to enter your child’s reading hours online. In addition to home hours, your child’s teacher will enter how many classroom hours reading hours your student has achieved. The goal of this year’s Read-a-thon is 100% participation. The emphasis is reading for fun! For more information on this year’s Read-a-thon please click [HERE](#). ([HERE](#) is the link to log your student’s hours spent reading)

The Read-a-thon is Rheem’s annual literacy program that also raises funds for our school. Happy reading!

## **Hot Lunch Volunteers Needed**

Thank you to those who have signed up to help with Hot Lunch, but there is still a need for additional volunteers, no past experience necessary!! It is fun and a great way to see your student(s) during their day. Please see the Signup Genius link below and sign up for any available slot you're able to help.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0b4badae2ea5ff2-201819>

## **The Last Word...**

Did you know that 83% of students 6-17 years of age stated that being read to was something they loved or liked? When I first saw that stat, it made me wonder how many 17-year old's still have their parents read to them. I would have to assume there are few and far between high school students who still have the great fortune of being read to, however how many of us still read to our children? A recent study showed that only 17% percent of families still read to their 9-11-year-old children (or 3rd-5th grade). The expectation has always been for us to read to our children until they are capable of reading independently in a fluent and comprehensive manner. However, research shows that when we continue to read to our children they: enjoy stories more; strengthen their fluency; have an expended vocabulary; have access to new authors and genres more readily; are made more aware and empathetic; and improve their long-term reading success.

With that said, the Read-a-thon is a great chance for us to pick (back) up a book and share a good story with our children. It will not only bring your closer to your child but just as importantly it will help strengthen their love of literature.

There is no place like Rheem,  
Mr. Sullivan