

April 28, 2019

Dear Rheem Team Families,

In the event April showers really do bring May flowers, it's time to grab your gardening gear because May is here...can you believe it?

This Week at Rheem:

Monday, April 29th:

- 1st grade field trip to the Oakland Zoo (all 1st graders arrive by 8:25)

Tuesday, April 30th:

- Regularly scheduled Tuesday

Wednesday, May 1st:

- BMX Wheels of Freestyle Schoolwide Assembly

Thursday, May 2nd:

- 1st grade takes part in SUBS (Speak Up Be Safe)

Friday, May 3rd:

- Regularly scheduled Friday

School News and Highlights

- Rheem's 32nd Science Fair was another huge success. Students and families gathered last Thursday in the Frank to share a night of Science and community. A Special thank you to: Science Fair Co-Chairs Doris Chen and Brent Levenfeld; Amy and David Yee; Barbora Chindarkarova; Anna Lim; Jennifer Chen Speckman; Rich Souza; and Flora Shin. Without their endless hours of preparation and support, Thursday night would not have happened.

Coming Soon to a Classroom Near You...CAASPP Testing

Beginning next week, all MSD 3rd – 5th graders will participate in the state's academic testing program, known as CAASPP (CALifornia Assessment of Student Performance and Progress). The two-week testing window to take both the English/Language Arts and Mathematics portions of will begin Monday, May 6th and continue through Friday, May 17. (5th graders will have two additional days of testing the following Monday 5/20 and

Tuesday 5/21 as they complete the CAST “CALifornia Science Test”) Details about the testing program will be sent via email to all 3rd – 5th grade parents this week.

Students have been preparing for CAASPP tests by taking Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB's) throughout the year. These are short practice assessments focusing on related content in English Language Arts and mathematics. IAB's are a great opportunity for our students and teachers to become more familiar with the testing interface and for teachers to monitor student progress. This year our Rheem 3rd-5th grade teachers have administered IAB's focused on number sense, fractions, geometry, literary text, informational text, and speaking and listening. Teachers receive detailed feedback regarding student performance with the IAB assessments. (Above Standard,” “At/Near Standard,” and “Below Standard”), and they use this information as another tool to support student learning in their classrooms.

Ideas of how parents can help students prepare for standardized tests can be found [HERE](#).

SPRING PICNIC – Two weeks away

Friday May 10th – 4:30-7:00

Join us for one of the last big events of the Rheem School year! Climbing Wall, Inflatables, Food trucks, Ice Cream, Games, a Raffle, and more!

You can purchase your wristbands on the MTK website, as well as view the great raffle prizes. Raffle Purchase forms will go home with your students this week.
<https://rheempta.membershiptoolkit.com/springpicnic>

We have also included the sign-up genius and are looking for help from our wonderful community. Please consider helping out if you have some time.
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409094aaea723a6fe3-rheem>

Rotary Field Day Right Around the Corner

Calling all 3rd, 4th and 5th graders!! The 28th Annual Moraga Rotary Field Day will be held next week after school on Wednesday, May 8th at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. All 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders are encouraged to participate and represent Rheem School at this free, fun recreational event. Registration opens at 3:00 p.m.

Rheem students have earned a wonderful reputation of consistently demonstrating great teamwork and sportsmanship at this event. We are looking forward to that famous Rheem

Team Spirit shining bright again this year. Students have been preparing for Rotary Field Day during PE classes. Medals will be awarded to the top three competitors in each event listed below:

- Shuttle Relay
- Standing Long Jump/Running Long Jump
- Softball Throw/Football Throw
- 50 Yard Dash
- Sack Race

Hope to see you there! Go Rheem Team!!

Thinking About Next Year

As May approaches, parents and teachers begin to think about class placements for next year. I'd like to take this opportunity to outline the process we use at Rheem to ensure that the best interests of all students are considered.

First, I can assure you that this process will be completed very carefully. Current Rheem teachers and I will be involved in a team effort to create balanced, heterogeneous classes at every grade level. This process begins with grade-level placement meetings in which teachers divide their classes into as many groups as there are projected classes at the next grade level for the next year. Each new class is balanced in terms of boys and girls, special needs students, academic abilities, peer relationships, and social behavior. Clearly, many factors are considered through this process.

The teachers and I place students very carefully, and no parent input is expected or required. However, parents who feel they need to give input to this process may do so by writing a letter that addresses their child's special needs. In such a letter, parents should include their perspective of how their child learns best and any other information that relates to increasing their child's potential for academic success. This information will be considered in the complicated process of making up classes for next year.

Requesting a particular teacher for your child is not appropriate. Too often, these requests are based upon suggestions and talk within the community about particular teachers. I suggest that you ignore this talk. The entire teaching staff at Rheem School is composed of dedicated and qualified professionals, and one child's experience (good or bad) in a given classroom may not be predictive of another child's experience.

Furthermore, changes in teaching assignments and/or reorganization of existing classes can be made right up to the opening of school depending on enrollment, so having only a teacher's name does not tell us what is important to know about your child. If you choose to write to me, tell me about your child's needs and learning style and how you expect an educational program to best serve those needs. Parent letters or emails must be received in our office by Monday, May 6, as our placement meetings will begin shortly thereafter.

The Rheem staff is committed to working in the best interests of all our students. Thank you in advance for your understanding and support of our placement procedure; it is a critical factor in this effort.

Stay tuned for information coming soon about ordering School Kits for the 2019-20 school year!

Parent Ed Opportunity

Raising Awareness Around Anxiety

Parents, and students 10 years and older are invited see the IndieFlix presentation of "Angst - Raising Awareness Around Anxiety" on Tuesday, April 30th from 1:30-3:00 and Thursday, May 2nd from 7:00-8:30PM at St. Perpetua Community Center in Lafayette. Angst is a documentary designed to raise awareness around anxiety and help people identify the symptoms of it and encourage them to reach out for help. To RSVP for Tuesday's show please click [HERE](#) and to RSVP for Thursday's show click [HERE](#).

The Last Word...

I read an article recently called, "[The art of scientific thinking: Why science is important for early childhood development](#)" that discussed the importance of children having early exposure to science and providing them with opportunities to experiment, explore and engage in science play and practices. One of the things I liked most about the article is its focus on how families can take part in science and provide these opportunities. They recommend:

1. To share in their wonder by experiencing more of the outdoors with your child. There is no better place to watch science in action than to be a part of nature.
2. Ask open-ended questions and encourage questioning. The goal of questioning is not to focus on reaching the correct answer, but instead to encourage young children to communicate their thoughts and ideas based on their current level of understanding.

3. Documenting discoveries is important in building scientific thinking. Researchers recommend helping children take pictures and place them in a nature journal. A child's journal can very quickly become a collage with pictures, paintings, leaves, bugs and more.
4. Provide materials that provoke new ideas and experimentation in children. There are some great children's books out there that can provide a spark to a child's curiosity into science. Kobi Yamada's book "What Do You Do with an Idea," is a bestseller that stirs the reader with its narrative style that sees the world through the eyes of an innocent and hopeful child. When children see that something big can be done, it opens their minds to believing they can do the same thing.

To help a child build a skill that will support them throughout their lives, like scientific thinking, is not dedicated to a classroom or grade level or teacher or parent, but rather to all those who support them on a daily basis. With that said I recommend you take a walk this evening after dinner, even if it's only out your back door and look to start a conversation with an open-ended question about what your child hears and sees.

There's no place like Rheem,
Mr. Sullivan