

Parent Crew Foundation

3960 Trail Boss Lane
Castle Rock, CO 80104

June 4, 2020

Douglas County School District
620 Wilcox Street
Castle Rock, CO 80104

Dear Director of School Hiatt, Assistant Superintendent Knight, Superintendent Tucker, and Directors

Renaissance Elementary Magnet School (REMS) is an extraordinary example of what holistic, child-centered, visionary learning can be. The Renaissance mission statement is:

To empower everyone to explore, discover, and understand the world around them and the passions within them.

To be...

- Creative, reflective, fulfilled individuals
- Active, compassionate citizens
- Courageous builders of a harmonious and sustainable world

This mission is fulfilled through exceptional instructional programming that includes Adventure Education, Integrated Learning Expeditions, Student Showcases of Learning, Workshop Wednesdays, Drum Circles, and many other life-enriching, student-focused programs. Renaissance has produced leaders in our community both with academic excellence and as globally-minded citizens. This is most recently evidenced by the fact that all three Douglas County School District recipients of the 2020 Boettcher Scholarship were REMS 2014 alumni! Additionally, according to the Final 2019 School Performance Framework in the area of Academic Achievement, REMS earned an “exceeds” rating in both CMAS - ELA and CMAS - Math scores, and a “meets” rating in CMAS - Science.

We are aware that our status as a magnet school and our unique approach to learning may raise questions of expense (especially in this economic climate) in particular with Adventure Education and its overnight learning voyages. While we know that Outdoor Education is often considered an “extra”, we can assure you that Adventure Education is a **core** tenant of Renaissance. Social-emotional support goes hand in hand, as students are allowed to “do hard things” and put into practice learned tools to guide themselves



and each other through emotional growth zones. This hard social-emotional work and common language starts well before voyages, so that students are able to support one another through the inevitable challenges. It is important to note that the Adventure Education program is self-funded through fees and scholarships. The very first line item funded in our Parent Crew Foundation budget is scholarships; ALL Renaissance students participate, regardless of their ability to pay fees.

Additionally, Integrated Learning Expeditions do not require district funding per se, but rather only a leader dedicated to professional development in this methodology. This professional development is also supplementally funded through our Parent Crew Foundation funds. Our integrated learning model allows for all levels of learners to become immersively engaged, whether they are on an IEP, ALP, standard learning track, or are part of the Discovery Program. Showcases of Learning provide our 3rd and 6th graders the space to persuasively articulate their learning in front of community panels, and Workshop Wednesdays have allowed all our students to dive deeper into learning that they are inspired by and passionate about. Our social-emotional support team guides our students through their learning experiences with Perseverance, Empathy, Beneficence, Integrity, and Stewardship.

Finally, the culture of Renaissance is most often embodied by the phrase, “We Are Crew.” It is the second part of this quote from Kurt Hahn, “We are crew, not passengers, strengthened by acts of consequential service to others,” that truly speaks to our community. In every corner of our campus, you will find examples of how our students serve and enrich one another’s learning experiences. Our parent volunteers have contributed on average 10,000+ hours of service to Renaissance each and every school year, totaling nearly 150,000 over the tenure of our principal, Deborah Lemmer. Deborah’s commitment to the holistic growth of each student has become a cornerstone of the Renaissance experience. **We cannot stress to you enough that learning lives through ownership in this unique environment that is Renaissance.**

As elected parent representatives of the Renaissance Elementary Magnet School, we, the Parent Crew Board of Directors, emphatically implore you to seek candidates that will continue the long, hard work of Deborah Lemmer and Renaissance as we have shared it with you today. As such, we thank you in advance for the opportunity to help select leadership that will allow us to continue this mission and vision. Specifically, we ask that you allow members of the Parent Crew Board, our School Accountability Committee, a member of our social-emotional staff support team, and a staff representative of our Adventure Education program in the interview committee.

Additionally, we encourage you to take the time to ask questions of our community as you begin the hiring process. We are confident that you'll find an endless supply of how Renaissance has empowered our community to explore, discover, and understand the world around them and the passions within them.

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Respectfully,

The Executive Board of the Renaissance Parent Crew Foundation

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