

Principal's Corner

August 2010

Dear parents:

We are committed to continually seeking to improve instruction for our students. We hope that you will become involved in our school as we seek to improve on our past achievements. Last year we were named a *Georgia School of Excellence* by the Georgia Department of Education. We are grateful to be one of seven middle schools in Georgia to win the award. We also know that awards are for past efforts, and that to continue to be successful, we have to improve each period of each day.

The expectations for success at Rome Middle School are extremely high and we look forward to the challenges ahead. We have an outstanding faculty and staff at RMS that is dedicated to improving student achievement. Please join us as we try to improve on a *Georgia School of Excellence*.

Greg Christian
Principal

Class of 2015 & 2016 Be the Change!

At RMS we like to constantly remind our students to keep their eye on the ultimate goal of receiving their high school diploma. One way we do this is by giving all eighth grade students a "High School Ticket" to remind them of the prize that will be theirs if they continue to work hard and dedicate themselves to reaching this goal at the end of the year. We also provide a constant visual reminder in the form of a bulletin board located near the media center on which we display a high school graduation cap, gown and diploma. This display encourages our students to focus on the prize at the end of the journey as well as helps to foster a sense of pride associated

with being a member of their respective class, the class of 2015 or 2016.

As adults, we recognize that education is so much more than merely receiving a diploma, although that is a great achievement in itself. It is RMS's desire to help our students begin to realize the true value and worth of an education and to use it as a means to change the world for the better. In the words of Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." We challenge the class of 2015 and 2016 to "Be the Change." We believe in each of you!



Parent's Corner

Peer Pressure/Combat negative peer pressure by having a strong relationship

It's a myth that all kids will eventually give in to negative peer pressure. Some are actually never faced with it; others are able to withstand it.

What makes the difference? You, the parent! It's another myth that "parents can't do much" to keep a child from giving in to negative peer pressure.

Each moment your child feels your love, support and trust, is like a deposit in a bank. The larger the deposit, the more he is protected.

Remember that a loving relationship with your child fosters:

- **Independence.** Because you have given your child age-appropriate choices and responsibilities, he is independent and not afraid to "go his own way." He feels no need to follow the crowd and turns down offers he knows are not in his best interest.
- **A strong self-concept.** Your child thinks of himself as a worthy person. Why would he mess that up with risky behavior?
- **Good judgment.** Your child chooses friends who also think enough of themselves not to hurt themselves. These friends don't ask your child, a person they value, to hurt himself, either.

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ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Your teachers and your school have rules on the number of days you can be absent. That's because they want you to attend class! Here's why:

- **You're likely to get better grades.** You can't learn if you aren't in school. Students who come to class do better in school.
- **You're likely to get a better job.** The habits you set now will carry over into the workplace.
- **You're more likely to stay out of trouble.** One study found that 78 percent of those students who ended up in prison had a first arrest for school truancy.
- **You'll be more likely to graduate.** Miss-

ing too many classes is often the first step toward dropping out. Students who drop out of high school have a higher rate of unemployment.

Sounds good, but....

Here is a list of things that sound like good reasons to skip school-but they're really not.

- **Doctor or dentist appointment.** Schedule it before school, during your lunch period, or after school.
- **Family Vacation.** If your family has scheduled a vacation during the school year, talk with your parents. Could it be rescheduled during school break?
- **Babysitting for your younger sibling.** Your number one job is being a student, not a child care provider.
- **Being unprepared for class or a test.** If you didn't study or didn't complete your homework, it's your responsibility to face the consequences. Talk to your teacher. Together, you may be able to think of a way you can make up for it.

There are several other reasons why students need to attend school regularly:

- **Students** who miss over **10 days during a semester will not receive** credit for the class in which the absences occur, unless a doctor's statement is provided for those days absent in excess of the 10 days per semester.
- **Students** who accumulate more than **5 unexcused absences** will be reported to the school social worker who works closely with the Rome/Floyd County Truancy Teams and Floyd Juvenile Court.
- **Students** who miss more than **15 days**, regardless of whether the absences are medical or parent excused, will negatively affect our school's status with the federally mandated Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) Report Card. Failure for our school to meet the attendance requirements on the AYP report card would have very negative repercussions for our school and students.

Parent Reminder

Parents are reminded to send either a parent note or doctor note when your child has been absent from school. Failure to send a note will result in an unexcused absence, and at 5 unexcused absences a report will be filed with the school social worker. We encourage parents to use the form provided below (or something similar) when sending an excuse for an absence.

Rome Middle School Excuse Form
Please excuse

(Student's first name) (Student's last name)
for his/ her absence on

(Date of absence)
The absence was due to

Sincerely,

(Signature)

(Relationship to student)

Attendance Incentives

Because RMS knows how important attendance is to student success, we have the following incentives in place to encourage and reward good attendance:

- **Every Friday**, the names of students who had perfect attendance for the week will be entered into a drawing. One 7th grade and one 8th grade student's name will be drawn. These two students will be recognized on the intercom for having perfect attendance for the week. They will also be rewarded with a "treat" from the guidance office.
- **Students with perfect attendance** for a 9 week grading period will be allowed to exempt **one** final exam. Since there are two 9 week grading periods in a semester, students with perfect attendance for both 9 weeks can exempt **two** final exams each semester. Students will get to **choose** which exam (s) they wish to exempt.

Exam Exemptions Possible for 1st Semester

Students can earn an exemption from 1st semester final exam (s) by the following means:

- 1) Perfect attendance 1st nine weeks
- 2) Perfect attendance 2nd nine weeks
- 3) 50 Accelerated Reader (AR) points this semester

Mentors Needed!!

What is a mentor?

A mentor is a trained volunteer who serves as a friend and advocate for a selected student. The mentor acts as a positive role model for the student. The mentor helps the student by providing academic and emotional support, while encouraging the student to work toward improving grades, attendance and behavior. Mentors invest in the future of our youth by making a difference in the life of a child.

What are a mentor's responsibilities?

Attend a free 2-hour training session and agree to a free background check.
Meet with your assigned mentee once a week for 45-60 minutes at the school.

Who will I mentor?

Students are selected by teachers and counselors and are paired with mentors who may have similar interests and hobbies.

Who do I contact to be a mentor?

Martha Hufstetler
Graduation Coach
706-235-4695 ex 1423
mhufstetler@rcs.rome.ga.us

The training dates for both the mentor program and the parent volunteer program are posted on the website under parent resources.

Math Resources

Math resources can be accessed from the Rome Middle School homepage. Click "Resources" on the left. Select "7th and 8th Grade Math" on the page that follows. Select the appropriate tab at the top for your child's grade level. Calendars, assignments, PowerPoint's, notes, and handouts will be

added to the page each week. Please remember that the calendar is subject to change based on the needs of the students. If your child forgets their math homework, you can often find the assignment to download and print.

PTO NEWS

The following parents were elected to serve as PTO officers for the 2010-11 school year. We know everyone appreciates their willingness to serve. We encourage all parents to join PTO and get involved. Middle school students need their parents to be involved in

their education now more than ever. Together we can achieve even more success!!

Bill Fortenberry – President
Regina Detweiler – President Elect
Melissa Wood - Secretary
Susan Johnston - Treasurer

READ 180 Returns to RMS

This is the second year that RMS is using a unique and highly successful reading intervention program called READ 180. It is designed to help middle and high school students improve their reading fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary as well as enhance their writing skills. Students who did not meet or barely met the standards in reading on the CRCT given in April have been invited to take advantage of this program as one of their 2 Connections classes.

Mr. Brian Sikes is the READ 180 lead teacher, and he has carried the drama theme to this program by setting up his room much like a movie set. Students rotate through 2 stations where they practice their reading and writing skills. The LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION spot is for small group instruction; the BACK LOT is where students work on a highly individualized computer program that addresses reading comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling skills and allows students to practice and record their reading of leveled passages; the GREEN ROOM is a place for students to relax and read independently a

self-selected book within their Lexile range. In addition to these small group rotations, there is whole class instruction with engaging videos, lively discussion, and targeted skills instruction for a short time each day. Students take many computer-based assessments so that their reading level is constantly monitored and materials are adjusted for those changing levels. The ultimate goal is to have every student enrolled in READ 180 show marked improvement in reading and writing while learning to enjoy these as life-long skills.

Students who were in the READ 180 program last year increased their Lexile scores (a measure of their reading level) by an average of 13 points which is equivalent to one grade level! We are thrilled with the success of this program with our students and hope to see even greater gains this year.

You can read more about this program by going to:

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/read180/overview/faq.htm>

THE CLUB

The new South Rome Unit Teen Center is in its second year of operation. The Club is for students between the ages of 13-18. It is open Monday through Friday when school is in session from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm. If school is out, The Club is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Bus transportation is provided from RMS to The Club in the after-

noons. The Club offers a place for students to get homework help, play games, lift weights and just hang out with friends. All services are free of charge. The Club is located at 211 East Main Street in South Rome. For more information call 706-234-4863 or check it out online @ bgcnwga.org.

Grands Who Care

Grands Who Care is an organization that provides support services for grandparents/relatives who are raising children. The organization's goal is to provide grandparents/relatives with available resources and support. Social workers, nurses, counselors, nutritionists, law enforcement and other professionals lead support group sessions. Participants share the day-to-day joys and frustrations of their care giving responsibilities.

ties, exchange practical information about community resources and gain skills and confidence in their vital and rewarding work of raising children. Grands Who Care meet the first and third Wednesday of each month from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Please call Mercy Senior Care at 706-291-8496 to find out the location of each month's meeting.

Sonny's and Chick-Fil-A Supports RMS

Rome Middle School would like to thank Sonny's Bar-B-Q and Chick-Fil-A for sponsoring RMS's Wolf of the Week Program. Students who exhibit good citizenship and excellent character are selected by their team teachers and recognized as the Wolves of the Week. These students are presented with a Sonny's character card which entitles them to receive a free meal at

Sonny's Bar-B-Q as well as a free coupon for a chicken sandwich at Chick-Fil-A. Thank you, Sonny's and Chick-Fil-A for supporting RMS! If your business would like to get involved by contributing incentives to promote positive student outcomes, please contact the school.

Get Involved!!

We encourage all RMS students to get involved in extracurricular activities at school. Involvement fosters attachment to school and is a great way to learn something new, meet new people, make new friends and have a great time! Listed below are some of the opportunities for involvement at RMS:

Athletics: Football, Cheerleading, Cross Country, Softball, Volleyball, Basketball, Wrestling, Swimming, Soccer, Baseball, Track, Tennis, Golf

Student Organizations: Band, Chorus, Drama, Beta Club, F.I.S.H., FCA, National Creative Society, Academic Competitions, FFA, Chess Club, German Club

Calendar of Events

August 16th – Open House 7:00
August 26th – Pictures
September 2nd – Progress Reports
September 6th - Holiday
September 27th – PTO 6:00 Chorus Performance
September 21st – 7th Grade Parent Luncheon
September 28th – 8th Grade Parent Luncheon
October 4th – 8th – Fall Break