

August 1, 2008

Dear Students and Parents,

I hope that you are all enjoying a wonderful summer with family and friends, and that you are beginning to look with excitement towards the end of August and the start of what promises to be a super school year. For our Middle School August Mailing, we are only mailing home forms that need to be returned to school by August 14, along with a few other key pieces of information. You will also find those same documents available to you on the RHSM website. These documents are being made available digitally to increase their accessibility to you. We hope you find this change helpful in keeping track of the materials that amass when the school year begins.

To begin with, we have some new faces in the Middle School staff and faculty. Perhaps most importantly, we will have two relatively new faces in our Middle School office. Andrea Beckman and Emily Eardley will be the two new front voices and front faces of our school community. Andrea and Emily started last May, and spent six weeks working alongside MaryAnne and Emily before they took over on July 1. It has been a wonderful summer working alongside Andrea and Emily. Their warmth, humor, work ethic and grace combined to make them extraordinary assets and colleagues. I know they join me in saying that whatever we can do to make your school year better, please let us know and we'll do all we can to help you.

Secondly, with Middle School student enrollment at record numbers and to better serve our community, we created a new part-time role of Dean of Students, and we hired MaryJo Marker to fill that position. MaryJo is a veteran faculty member, with over a decade of experience working at RHSM. She has taught sixth grade Language Arts / Social Studies for 8 years, and before that worked in the Upper School for 4 years, where she taught U.S. History and was the Social Studies department chair. In addition to continuing to teach her sixth grade advisory and classes, she will take over the reigns of such responsibilities as scheduling students, monitoring discipline, and fostering pro-active advisory, grade-level, and all-school student initiatives that will enhance our understanding of ethical citizenship. I greatly appreciate having her on board as a fellow administrator in the Middle School and I look forward to you getting to know her better.

At the helm of our Middle School French program will be Christa Sinclair. For the past five years Christa has been working at Solebury School in New Hope, PA, where she has taught French to sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. Trilingual, she has also taught Middle School Spanish and ESL, becoming the Director of the Solebury's Summer ESL program in 2007. With a range of talents and interests, Christa is also an accomplished graphic designer and student of metalsmithing. We look forward to her joining our foreign language team.

Also new to our foreign language team is Betsy Caldwell, who will be teaching Spanish in our Middle School starting this fall. Betsy comes to our school after having taught Spanish for the past three years at Ensworth Academy in Nashville, TN. She earned her Master's Degree in Spanish from Middlebury College and has taught in Spain and Argentina as well as the United States. In addition to being a runner, Betsy was a fly-fishing guide for a summer, and loves the outdoors. She is eager to start at RHSM and we are excited to have her working with us.

In the office of Academic Support Counselor, we give a hearty welcome to Donna Booher, who will take over for Ryan Hoglund who became the Upper School Assistant Principal last spring. Most recently, Donna served as the Learning Center Director at the ORME School in Mayer, AZ, where she coordinated teaching strategies, student progress reviews, test accommodations, study skills instruction, and a host of student academic supports. Donna has over nine years of experience mentoring, teaching and coaching adolescents. I am confident that she will be a trusted and highly valuable resource for our students, teachers, parents and administrators.

A familiar face in a new role will be Bill Tatomer, who was a long-term substitute teacher last year when the seventh grade World Studies teacher left on maternity leave. We knew a great teacher when we saw it, and so when the vacancy appeared, Bill was hired to teach the eighth grade math classes starting this fall. With a twenty-year career as a Navy pilot, Bill brings to the classroom unique experiences with both academic and applied mathematics. He was beloved by his students last year as much as by the faculty, parents, and administration of our school, and we couldn't be happier to have him as a permanent member of our faculty.

We will have a fun and busy Orientation Day itinerary on Tuesday, August 26, with students getting their schedules, checking lockers, going over important information, meeting new friends and rekindling past friendships. Please refer to the list below for the times and dates of your grade level's orientation, as well as some additional important dates for the first few weeks of the school year.

Tuesday, August 26	Orientation (<u>parents are invited to attend as well</u>) 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. Seventh and Eighth Grade Orientation 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Sixth Grade Orientation 11:30 - 12:30 p.m. Sixth Grade Welcome BBQ <i>(All family members welcome)</i>
Wednesday, August 27	First regular day of school, 8:15 a.m. -3:40 p.m.
Thursday, September 4	Back-To-School Night: 6:00 - 6:25 p.m.: Rowmark, Boosters, Patron of Arts Information 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.: Faculty Introductions and Classroom Visits
Friday, September 5	Picture Day (This is a dress-up day: dress shirts / slacks for boys and dresses or blouses / skirts / slacks for girls)

Middle School uniforms will continue to be sold this year in partnership with Lands' End as the on-going supplier. Additionally, we will begin partnering this year with a local company named Initially Yours, which will provide high quality organic cotton t-shirts. Contact information for both companies is included on the RHSM website. We hope that these two sources will provide you with adequate options you need to start the school year.

Enclosed in this mailing you will find a "Curb Your Carbon" hanger on your rearview mirror, helping to remind us all to turn off our cars while waiting in carpool. These decorative hangers also make for great conversation starters in parking lots, carpool lanes, and ATM lines, empowering us all to do what we can to improve air quality in the Salt Lake Valley.

As the year unfolds, be sure to keep in touch with what is going on in the Middle School by checking the Friday FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions). The weekly Friday FAQ's will include such information as what current units of study are being covered in your child's classes, the location, times, and directions to athletic and artistic events, practice times for bands and sports teams, and lots, lots more. To view the Friday FAQ's, either click on the link in the email sent out each Friday to all of our parents, or go to www.rhsm.org, click on the "school divisions" link, then the "Middle School" link, and finally "Friday FAQ's."

Once again, please review the attached cover letter from Andrea & Emily detailing the contents included in this mailing and also detailing the contents that are found exclusively on the RHSM website.

We look forward to seeing you at Orientation on Tuesday, August 26. Until then, enjoy your summer plans!

Sincerely,

Stephen Bennhoff
Middle School Principal