

David A. Stein Riverdale Kingsbridge Academy MS/HS 141 Principal's Newsletter



A Message from the Principal

Dear RKA Community,

It's hard to believe a month has already passed, but the school year has gotten off to a great start! The halls and classrooms are full of enthusiastic students and teachers, and everyone is happy to be "back in the routine" of learning! "Back to School Night" saw a great turnout. Parents always enjoy meeting their child's teachers and teachers love laying out the classroom expectations and talking about the great things they have in store for the coming months.

I'd like to remind you of the schools instructional focus for the year: "By working independently and by collaborating with teachers, peers, and their communities, RKA students will regularly engage in text-based discourse and develop, present, and reflect upon written informational and argumentative work. We are taking all of this on with a special emphasis on the use of rubrics with task-specific criteria and the use of ELL strategies in all subject areas.

We also held our grade-level parent meetings throughout

September and October, and imparted information specific to each grade (e.g. HS Admissions Process for eighth grade parents, senior dues and activities for twelfth grade, etc...) We had our first "Coffee with the Principal," and have opened our series of Fifth grade parent tours, where we introduce RKA to a new generation of parents! Soon both the middle school and high school will have their first dances of the year! It's been really busy!

Sincerely,
Lori O'Mara

College and Career Readiness

October is a critical month for college applications for seniors all over the United States. We at RKA continue to build our culture of college and career readiness, including a significant push during October to have all of our seniors apply for prospective colleges.

One of the biggest events of the year is our annual College Fair on October 14 from 6:30 – 8:00 PM. This year it takes place in the RKA gymnasium and will feature over 60 colleges and universities. All RKA students are invited to attend and hear directly from college representatives about their academic programs, student life, and admission and financial aid requirements. It is a great way to introduce our underclassmen to the idea of college and for our seniors to narrow down some of their top choices.

October 14 is also PSAT Day for our 11th graders. 11th grade students have an opportunity to take the PSAT at no cost here at RKA. After the exams are scored, each student will receive a personalized grade report and preparation guide through the College Board to better prepare them for the actual SAT in the spring. We decided last year to participate in a pilot program enabling RKA students to take the new SAT for free here in March during the school day. This is another wonderful opportunity for our students. Many students take the SAT two or more times, so taking it here for free will significantly reduce costs to families. In March, all 10th graders will have the chance to take the new PSAT for free.

Oct 7
Wear Blue to
Stomp Out Bullying

Oct 8
10/11th Grade
Parent meeting ,
6:30 PM RKA Aud

Oct 12
Columbus Day- No
School

Oct 14
PSAT Day for all
11th Graders

Oct 14 College Fair
6:30-8:00 PM
RKA Gym

Oct 14 7th Grade
Trip to the Top of
the Rock

Oct 16 End of
Marking Period 1

Oct 20
Tiger Token Ice
Cream Party

Oct 21
Wear Pink
to Promote Breast
Cancer Awareness

Oct 22
5th grade Parent
Meeting

Oct 23
8th Grade trip:
Circle Line

Oct 28
Mix It Up Day

Oct 29
HS Halloween
Dance 7-10 PM,
RKA Gym

Parent Committees

I am pleased to be working closely again this year with our Parents' Association leaders. Please join their efforts by attending their general PA meetings throughout the year (the first Monday evening of most months--see your family calendar) and consider joining the PA Executive Board, an important parent voice at RKA. RKADonate@gmail.com.

Parents are involved in many committees at RKA. Please see below each committee's function, and general meeting times. Please feel free to reach out to me, or to the parents on the committee to offer input for the next regularly-scheduled meeting.

Safety Committee - Meets the first Wednesday morning of each month. This is a joint faculty-parent committee that addresses matters of safety in the school. Angela Rodriguez, Amy Carr, and Elaine Ellison serve on the committee. The committee asks you to please avoid double and triple parking around the school, especially at arrival and dismissal times

School Leadership Team - Meets the third Wednesday afternoon of each month. This joint committee of administration/parents/faculty/staff/students considers long-term planning for the school, which includes researching and authoring the Comprehensive Education Plan. Members on this committee are Aida Cintron, Alan Merenstein, Claire Johnson-Hurry, Kelly Erickson Jorge, Kathy Fadda, and Nelson Uwague.

Parents' Partnership - Parent leaders, selected through the PA, meet with me monthly to address day-to-day issues.

No School
Columbus Day
Oct 12

At the Car Wash....

The RKA Parents' Association held its annual car wash on a spectacularly beautiful day. My thanks to all those (students and parents) who volunteered to help out, and/or bring their dirty cars to be washed. I can never thank enough our dedicated PA members who work so hard to raise money for the school through events like these, and also with their "School Spirit" sales. PA members also serve on important committees throughout the school, such as the School Safety Committee, and the School Leadership Team. I encourage you to join this organization, which generally meets on the first Monday of every month at 7:00 PM. And if you are able to make a contribution to their annual Direct Appeal drive, it is greatly appreciated!

Making Our World a Better Place

Students and staff have joined forces this month on three important initiatives:

***Stomp Out Bullying** is a nationwide organization that provides education about the culture of bullying, and strategies and initiatives for students to act and react in safe and appropriate fashion. I am so proud that our middle school is part of the program this year. "Stomp Out Bullying Week" is October 5th-9th, and in addition to everyone wearing blue this Wednesday, students will post "footprints" all over the walls of the school, with messages they will write themselves on their thoughts about bullying and how best to deal with it, and...better still...keep it from happening in the first place. I have to say, RKA is a very friendly place, and I just love when we all come together to help keep it that way.

***Breast Cancer Awareness Day.** This was a huge success last year, and I am pleased that we are once again teaming up with the "Fighting Pretty" organization to raise money to help bring a smile to the face of women battling cancer. This year, it is October 21st, and once again, we will be selling pink "Real Tigers Wear Pink" (RKA Tigers, that is!) t-shirts for \$10.00. Look for forthcoming information on the t-shirt sales. The halls will be filled with pink!

***Mix it Up Day.** On October 28, during 6th and 7th grade lunches, students will participate in various activities designed to promote interaction among individual students and have students meet other students than they normally interact with. We hope that the day helps to dispel stereotypes and make RKA an even friendlier place.

Upcoming MS Trips

Ms. Roberts, our tireless Coordinator of Student Activities, has arranged many wonderful grade level trips for our middle school students. Please be sure to adhere to deadlines for permission slips and payments as they are necessary to secure transportation and admission to events as well as ensure the safety of our students.

6th Grade Trip— Intrepid Air, Sea and Space Museum. Trip is Nov 2, deadline is Oct 16.

7th Grade Trip— Top of the Rock— Trip is Oct 14; deadline is Oct 2.

8th grade Trip—Circle Line cruise around Manhattan. Trip is Oct 23; deadline is Oct 9

HS Open Houses

Nov 16 and 17

8:30 AM

Register at www.rka141.org