

RAMSEY AROUND THE HORN

MIDDLE SCHOOL

A Monthly Newsletter for Ramsey Families

Volume 1, Issue 4
December 2012

An Update from Principal Marietta

Winter break will be upon us quickly. It is an incredibly busy time for both families and schools. As we approach our midyear point, I'd like to touch base on some of Ramsey's practices. One of the many transitions between elementary and middle school that our sixth graders are moving through is the purpose and practice of homework. In our classes, we try to maintain as much consistency as possible. This includes homework. If you haven't already done so, please read the [homework expectations](#) on our website. It is important to note that in [Standards Based Grading](#), homework constitutes a very small part of a student's grade. However, we still think it is an important part of the learning process. We believe that homework should be:

- Purposeful, with clear learning goals
- Efficient, in terms of the amount of time spent (e.g. no busy work)
- Owned by the student through relevancy and choice whenever possible
- Designed to help students feel competent, which may, at times, require differentiation
- Something that occasionally involves an adult at home

One of the greatest things parents can do to support their child is to take an interest in their work. I recommend creating a space and time where it is a regular part of their day. If a child is showing frustration at a task, stop. Homework is not meant to bring a child to frustration. We would rather a student return to school with questions and request further help than spend an evening getting more and more frustrated, and possibly learning inaccurate methods. Ramsey teachers are now offering [homework help](#) three mornings a week to give students the extra help they need.

As we start sending iPads home, you might also

Contact Information

[Join Our E-Mail List](#)
[Ramsey Middle School website](#)
[Ramsey PTA website](#)

612-668-4040

Important Dates

Fri, Dec 14
6-8 pm
School dance

Mon, Dec 17
7 pm
Ramsey choir concert
at Washburn HS

Dec 17-21
No ALC/Community Ed
classes

Tue, Dec 18
9 am PTA Coffee
6:30 pm PTA Meeting

Wed, Dec 19
Last day for toy
donations

Thu, Dec 20
7 pm
Ramsey music concert

Dec 24-Jan 1

notice homework is a little different. It is more about getting the students prepared for class as opposed to checking students' understanding. This is a huge shift. Traditionally the learning is done at school; then students demonstrate their understanding through a learning activity at home. With the iPads, we may deliver instruction through alternate methods such as video, blogs, etc. Then the students come to school to engage in the learning activities. This is known as a "flipped classroom." This will not be the case in every classroom or with every assignment, but we will be experimenting with this practice this year.

Remember that whoever is doing the editing is also doing the most learning. Similarly, whoever is asking the most questions is also doing the most thinking. Your greatest gift in supporting your child is to get them to ask questions, whether that be related to the topic, or otherwise.

Next PTA Meeting: Learn About Raising Joyful Adolescent Readers

Join us for our December 18 PTA meeting where the reading and language-arts teachers will be hosting a session about raising joyful readers. Come find out about the MPS middle-school reading framework, learn about our philosophy and instruction at Ramsey, discover the trends in young-adult literature, and share with us your hopes for your child's reading experiences. The meeting takes place in the Media Center at 6:30 p.m. on December 18. If you can't attend, feel free to join coffee and conversation that morning at 9 a.m. in the Media Center.

School Dance This Friday

Parents are encouraged to attend the school dance on Friday from 6 to 8 p.m. and enjoy coffee and dessert in the Media Center. If you haven't already submitted your Toys for Tots donation, please consider doing so on Friday. Toys will be collected through December 19.

Stop in to Buy Spirit Wear

Rhinos proudly wear their blue and gray! Hats, scarves, T-shirts, and pajama pants make a great gift for students and family members. Spirit Wear will be on sale during the Friday night dance and the December 18 PTA meetings. PTA members are also available to sell items before school, or items can be purchased in the office. To set up an alternate time,

Winter break
NO SCHOOL

Wed, Jan 2
School resumes

Jan 2-3
Classroom spelling bees

please e-mail [Jan Sadusky](#).

Ramsey Spelling Bee Coming Soon

Classroom spelling bees take place on January 2 and 3, followed by a school-wide bee for the top classroom spellers on January 11. Please e-mail [Holly Kragthorpe-Shirley](#) if you are able to assist with the school-wide event. The winner of the school-wide bee will attend the district spelling bee on January 24 at Sheridan School at 6:30 p.m. More details will be sent home before winter break. Gear up by reviewing these [spelling lists](#) on the website.

Come to Ramsey's First Concert

Come hear the work of Ramsey's talented young musicians from the advanced band, orchestra, and choir. Then end the evening with a short holiday sing-a-long. We hope to see you on Thursday, December 20 at 7 p.m. (Student performers need to report to school by 6:30 p.m. to warm up.)

Ramsey Choir Sings at Washburn's Holiday Concert

The Rhinos and Millers are teaming up for a performance you won't want to miss. Come see our sixth graders sing with Washburn's various choirs in a wonderful holiday show. The performance is on December 17 at 7 p.m. in the Washburn High School auditorium. Suggested donation: students, \$3; adults, \$5.

No ALC/Community Ed Classes Next Week

There will be no ALC and Community Ed after-school classes the week of December 17. After break, classes resume Tuesday, January 8 with the session ending Thursday, January 17. Spring session starts Tuesday, January 29. Spring registration forms will be sent home January 10.

Students Attend Creativity Festival

Ten Ramsey students from the GEMS/GISE program (Girls and Guys in Science and Engineering) spent November 29 at the Science Museum of Minnesota for the Student Creativity Festival. Students chose from workshops like *Introduction to Breakdancing*,

Mississippi River History, and Wind Tube Engineering. Katie McGinnis, a Ramsey sixth grader who participated, said, "I really enjoyed the trip. In *Storytelling*, I learned that creativity always comes in the form of a story. And in my engineering workshop, I already knew enough about the engineering process that the teacher asked me to slow down. That means Ramsey science teachers are doing a great job!" Kids were encouraged to embrace new topics and attended workshops without other Ramsey friends to gain independence. *See the work of all the GEMS/GISE students at the Lego Robotics tournament on January 19.* More details to come.

Next Publication Date: January 10

The next issue of *Around the Horn* will be published on Thursday, January 10. Please send any [submissions to the editors](#) by Friday, January 4. To sign up for the electronic version of the newsletter, please send an e-mail request to opt-in to the mailing list to ramseyscommunications@gmail.com.



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