

“It would appear that we have reached the limits of what it is possible to achieve with computer technology, although one should be careful with such statements, as they tend to sound pretty silly in 5 years.”

John Von Neumann (ca. 1949)

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I hope everyone had a wonderful weekend. Although Saturday was a sloppy mess, Sunday proved to be beautiful. It was nice to get out and play in the sun.

Only twenty years ago the first Commodore 64 and Apple IIe hit the market; today our use of technology and computers is staggering. Methods of communication and access to information are simply mind boggling. As a member of this modern society, RJG continues to utilize technology, such as email and our web page, to help families stay in touch with the ins and outs of the school.

There are strengths and weaknesses to this use, and occasional dependency, on technology. For example, email, not only a quick access route for parents to reach teachers, is also a method for unwanted advertisements (spam) and an access route for virus spreading freaks who wish to bog down or destroy our computer system. In order to stop these unwanted intrusions, we use extensive filters to block out the spam and viruses. Our TRC department has taken on the Herculean task of monitoring and updating these filters to keep our systems safe and they are doing an amazing job. Unfortunately, there is no perfect filter and occasionally, the filters have a hard time separating the wheat from the chafe. A legitimate question, for example about a cheerleading team, could be construed as “inappropriate” and immediately quarantined. Periodically, legitimate emails, often from parents, get filtered out. This means that you may send an important question which we don’t answer. Please don’t jump to the conclusion that we are ignoring you. We are either weeding our way through all the emails we get, a time consuming task, or we never saw the message because it got caught in a filter. If you have not received a response within a few days, please send a follow up email, or simply give us a call. We all thank you for your understanding and patience.

There are also occasional issues with the outbound emails from my office as well. As happens at the beginning of every school year, we are continually updating our email list, adding and deleting addresses everyday. If you have sent in a request to be added to our list but are not receiving our information, please be patient. Regular delivery is just around the corner. In the mean time, our daily announcements are now posted on our web site, <http://ab.mec.edu/rjweb/index.html> under the “What’s New” link, and all issue of *Grey Matters* can be under the “Publications” link.

On a different note, I need to address the issue of school buses and bus passes. On a regular basis, students ask for a bus pass to ride a different bus in order to: go to a friend’s house after school, go to a babysitting job across town, or go to activities, such as ballet lessons. While these are all reasonable requests, we cannot automatically give our approval because a number of our buses are already at full capacity. Parents/guardian, whenever possible, please call the office to confirm your alternate transportation request so that we can review the bus lists and let you know if there is a problem.

Another bus issue relates to where parents drop off their children. **Please remember that student drop-off in the morning is at the stairs in the lower parking lot only.** Students should not be dropped off in front of the building or at the gym because of safety and bus issues. We greatly appreciate your support of our efforts to maintain a safe environment for all of our students.

Parents often ask, “How can we get involved at school?” Here is your chance. R.J. Grey is looking for an adult in the community who would be interested in running our Mathcounts program. Mathcounts is a nationwide organization focused on encouraging math knowledge and education in the middle school years. The organization provides support materials used in a weekly after-school activity. These meetings take place one afternoon per week from 2:20 – 3:30. Students work together as they solve math puzzles and problems in the areas of statistics, discrete math, geometry and algebra. Although no homework is assigned, enthusiastic students often work on the challenges at home, too. In January, our students compete to determine who will be part of the team which represents R.J. Grey at a Mathcounts Chapter competition to be held in February. The top individuals and school teams from that meet will be eligible to compete in the State competition in March. Last year we had approximately 25 students who regularly attended the weekly sessions. The teacher who has run this program in the past is willing to provide guidance and support. You can find out more about Mathcounts at their website mathcounts.org. If you are interested in running this program at R.J. Grey, contact Joyce Kelly at jkelly@mail.ab.mec.edu.

This is going to be our first full week of school. Let’s have some fun.