

“Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower.”
Albert Camus

Grey Matters

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The weather over this long weekend was wonderful for everything from soccer tournaments to apple picking and hiking through the fall colors. I hope everyone enjoyed the Columbus Day holiday.

With the recent school shootings over the past few weeks, I was not surprised to get a few parental inquiries regarding safety procedures at RJG. While Acton and Boxborough are clearly safe communities, I can certainly appreciate these concerns and would like to offer some thoughts and information.

First and foremost, the RJG has worked hard to develop a comprehensive safety plan that includes the simple step of locking all exterior doors. You may have noticed that the only way to enter the building is through the front doors, where visitors are required to check-in at our main office.

We also have developed a thorough Building Evacuation Plan which was created by RJG staff and the Acton Police and Fire Departments. This plan includes emergency procedures for building evacuations as well as for emergency procedures where evacuation is not required. These procedures have been discussed extensively during faculty meetings, and include specific information regarding staff roles and responsibilities, evacuation locations and definitions, communication protocols, attendance and accountability procedures, and special emergency codes. All procedures have been thoroughly practiced by all RJG staff and students and, as I mentioned in an earlier issue of Grey Matters, all established systems have worked very well.

Recognizing that it is disturbing to think about any of these events, not preparing for them would be unwise. To ensure that our safety procedures are current and appropriate year to year, administrators and staff prioritize the updating and practicing of all safety procedures during the first month of school. Ongoing evacuation drills are beneficial to ensure that everyone is ready in case of an emergency. We have and will continue to teach our students the various emergency procedures we have in place and to offer practice opportunities throughout the year. School safety is paramount in all our minds and preparation is a key component for keeping RJG a safe environment.

Information regarding parent conferences, scheduled for early December, will be coming out with report cards next month. While the upcoming conferences are a great way to check in on your child's progress, they can seem very short and are more than a month away. As such, if you have current questions and/or concerns, please contact your child's

teachers right away. While teachers are not routinely at their desks, they can be reached by phone or e-mail. If you would like to meet with your child's team of teachers, simply contact the RJG Counseling Office to schedule a team conference.

Some of you may receive interim reports this week. An interim report does not necessarily mean a failing grade and sometimes, an interim report can be sent home to communicate good news! In general, however, interim reports are typically sent home mid-term when changes in behavior or performance need to be communicated. Should you receive an interim report, and have related questions, please contact the classroom teacher directly.

Finally, this coming Tuesday night, October 10th, I will hold my first "Drop-in Hour" from 6 –7PM for parents who might want to stop by the office, ask questions about the school, and/or share ideas. In past years, I have had a number of great conversations with parents during this time and I look forward to continuing our dialogue. Please join me.