Lost and Found
Right inside of the front doors of the Ricks Center, there is a rack of clothes labeled Lost and Found. If these items do not find their way back home by Thursday, December 22, they will be donated to a charity on December 23.

Severe Weather – School Closure Procedures
The safety of Ricks Center students, families, faculty, and staff are the primary consideration in the decision to close the school due to severe weather. Ricks Center will follow Denver Public Schools closure decisions due to severe weather. We encourage families to monitor the media or DPS website in order to ascertain if DPS has decided on a school closure. If dangerous weather conditions occur after the school day has already started, Ricks Center may close early, depending on the specific conditions. In the event of an early closure, parents will be notified by telephone.

In the event that DPS announces a late start for some or all of its schools, we will have a late start. An email will be sent via RenWeb to confirm the start time, which will generally be around 10:00 am, weather permitting. However, we encourage families to arrive only when they can do so safely.

Family Night with the Giant Traveling Map of Europe
About 30 people braved Wednesday night's bone-chilling cold to experience the Traveling Map of Europe from National Geographic. Students and adults walked across the continent, looked for countries, capitals, and landforms, and enjoyed spending time with other families. All of Ricks' students have had the opportunity to explore the map during this week; we will have the brand new Traveling Map of Colorado here for a day in early April, thanks to the Colorado Geographic Alliance based at UCCS.

Piano Preparatory Program – from Lamont School of Music
As we have begun our inaugural year of the Piano Preparatory Program at the Lamont School of Music, we are absolutely delighted that our first class of piano students is comprised of 8 bright and eager
children from the Ricks Center! These students were selected this past summer from among over 40 elementary age children who reside in Denver, and they are an outstanding group!

We are beginning interviews for our 2017-2018 Piano Preparatory Program in January for our beginner class, ages 6-7 (1st & 2nd graders in Fall 2017) and would like to offer priority interviews to children and their parents from the Ricks Center. Attached is the initial information form that parents may complete and email back to MaryBeth.Shaffer@du.edu. Further information about the Piano Preparatory Program can be found on our website at: http://www.du.edu/ahss/lamont/faculty-staff/faculty/tan-piano-preparatory-program.html

Report Cards
Administration and teacher team leaders have been working to refine student report cards (formerly referred to as Educational Reports or ERs) for grades 1-8. We started the shift to a more standards-based approach to reporting on student progress in order to reflect best practices in student assessment.

What does this mean? When assessing using a standards-based approach, the goal is that student knowledge and ability is assessed separately from effort, participation, and other behaviors, and grading is directly related to stated student learning goals. Grades and reports are consistent, accurate, meaningful, and supportive of learning. If you'd like an overview of the practice, watch this video clip of Ken O'Connor, an expert on standards-based grading. If you'd like to learn more, you may wish to read his book How to Grade for Learning, K-12.

What are the grades being used?
In Primary classes, the following grading scale is used:

- **Exceeding (EX)** – The student consistently and independently demonstrates and applies the skill/concept above the grade-level standard.
- **Proficient (PR)** - The student consistently and independently demonstrates and applies the skill/concept at the grade-level standard.
- **Developing (DV)** - The student demonstrates and applies the skill/concept according to grade-level standard with regular teacher support.
- **Emerging (EM)** - The student is beginning to develop and/or apply the skill/concept, however is working consistently below grade-level standard.
- **Not Applicable (NA)** – Does not apply (see comments).

In Middle School, the following grading scale is used:

**Collaboration, Compassion, and Curiosity**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ricks Center Website</th>
<th>Ricks Center for Gifted Children</th>
<th>RenWeb</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ricks Center Facebook Page</td>
<td>University of Denver</td>
<td>District Code: RC-CO (parent access only)</td>
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<td>2040 South York Street <a href="https://www.google.com/maps/place/2040+S+York+St,+Denver,+CO+80208">map</a></td>
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A – The student consistently and independently demonstrates and applies the skill/concept according to grade-level standard (90-100%).

B – The student demonstrates and applies the skill/concept according to grade-level standard with increased independence (80-89%).

C – The student demonstrates and applies the skill/concept according to grade-level standard with increased independence (70-79%).

D – The student is beginning to develop and apply the skill/concept according to grade-level standard with regular guidance and support (60-69%).

F – The student does not demonstrate application of skill or understanding of concept according to grade-level standard (59% and below).

After report cards are distributed, please feel free to contact the teacher(s) or administration should you have any questions.

Drivers for Student Field Trips
Earlier in the fall, Ricks was faced with added requirements for parent and teacher drivers as DU has aimed to reduce potential liability on field trips; the use of parents and teachers is no longer a viable option for the school. We are working on several solutions. We have posted job openings to hire bus drivers who hold a current "S" license. There is a shortage of qualified drivers in the Denver area, so progress has been slow. Another solution has been to work with RTD in arranging trips. At times, RTD is able to send an extra bus along a set route to accommodate a class. Several of our classes have conducted trips on the light rail, and we are keeping surplus RTD passes in the office. Finally, our sports coaches have been working to obtain "S" licenses, as they drive the student athletes on a regular basis. Ricks Center is working hard on solutions. Please let us know if you have any referrals for the S-qualified bus driving position whom we might contact.

Strategic Plan – Progress Update
The school staff and administrative team have developed a streamlined strategic plan template so our community can monitor our progress. This will be posted on the Ricks website and updated approximately every six months.

Ricks Mission/Vision Parent Workshop
Please join us on Thursday, December 15, from 8:45-9:45am as we host a World Cafe discussion session on the Ricks Center vision. While our strategic plan focuses on the mission statement, we first need to reflect on and solidify our vision. This will be an initial dive into our vision; we plan to host several
sessions of this workshop over the second semester, including evening sessions, and hope you can join us for this work.

RSVP [here](#) if you plan to attend the December 15 session and have not already notified the front desk.

[Here](#) is some information on World Cafe style workshops if you are interested. Ours will follow a similar format, focused on 3-4 discussion questions.

**Lunch Information**

Pizza Orders are due by January 11, 2017 for the Winter -> Spring Pizza Fridays.

For those who ordered on Thursday 12/8, lunch was delivered at 12:30. We apologize for the inconvenience, and Wholesome Foods will be issuing a double credit to your account.

**Save the Date**

- Parent Workshop: Ricks Center Mission/Vision, Dec 15, 8:45-9:45 am
- Grade 8 Semester report cards distributed to families, Dec 23
- Half Day, Dec 23: 11:45 am dismissal for EC and Primary, 12:00 Dismissal for MS
- Winter Holiday
- Semester 2 begins on Jan 9
- Grades 1-7 report cards distributed to families, Jan 13
- [Parenting Safe Children Workshop](#) hosted by Fisher Early Learning Center, April 15, 2017