Thank you, parents!

We are full – both literally and figuratively! Thank you for filling us with your love and support during conferences, and for the delicious and sustaining meals both days. We appreciate the opportunity to meet with each of you to discuss your child’s learning journey, and we are looking forward to an excellent and strong finish to the 2016-17 school year!

Now Enrolling for 2017-18

We are currently accepting new applications for the 2017-18 school year; please spread the news! Did you know that Independent School Management data indicates that approximately 80% of new independent school enrollments are due to word of mouth referrals from current students and families? Help us market Ricks by sharing the wonderful experience your child is having when you chat with other families. Thank you!

Program Updates for 2017-18

As the school continues to grow and evolve, we are looking toward some minor changes in our programming at different levels. Our intention is to continually reflect best practices in education that support the Ricks mission, beliefs, and goals. We have unique learners and want our program to best reflect and respond to their needs. Here is a summary of some things you can expect as we head into the upcoming school year.

In the Early Childhood:

- We have added food service for Preschool and PreK, and we are also piloting the service with Kindergarten in May. The service will include healthy morning and afternoon snacks and lunch. It provides opportunities for children to engage in social learning through sharing and manners, expand their tastes, and avoid competition around food. Specialty menus are available for allergies and food intolerances, and the cost is fully covered by tuition fees.
- We will be using teaching assistants and practicum students to reduce our student - teacher ratios even further.
- Our class schedules next year will be based on longer, uninterrupted blocks of time to allow for deeper exploration, increased student choice, and integrated curriculum. Connections such as art, Spanish, music, and PE will also be incorporated into the homeroom as more integrated subjects so students can make cross-curricular connections. For example, PE may manifest as a...
station during outdoor learning, and incorporate elements of music and dance; Spanish may happen during the lunch hour as children learn the language related to eating and casual conversation.

*For questions about Early Childhood, please contact Jessica.Kennedy@du.edu (Early Childhood Associate Director)*

Schoolwide:

- After meeting with DU’s Center for World Languages and Cultures Associate Director, we will shift our language programming so the goal is language acquisition rather than exposure. We will increase the number of Spanish sessions from KG to grade 8 to provide regular practice toward acquisition. Latin will begin in grade 5 (word roots and mythology will be taught as appropriate through language arts and units in younger grades). French will still be offered for our grade 7 and 8 students who are on the French track, according to the prior planning made for the French program. In middle school, students may elect to take one language: Spanish, Latin, or French (grades 7 and 8).

- We will have more consistent daily schedules across the school to foster independence and allow students to focus on learning.

In the Middle School:

- We are expanding a 3rd trimester Passion Pursuit elective for all 7th and 8th grade students in their areas of interest. Students will be paired with mentors who are experts in their field; mentors may be DU professors or students, Ricks staff, or parents. Students who want to continue their Passion Pursuit can elect to continue through all or part of 8th grade.

- Connections classes in music, art, and PE will be held for all Middle School students. We are exploring music options at this point and will provide more information regarding format (for example, choir and strings as options) as plans solidify.

- We will have back-to-back blocks of English/History so we can run integrated humanities units and Math/Science blocks. This will allow for deeper learning involving concepts that cross between content areas.

- Grade 5 will be full incorporated into the Middle School, rather than presenting as a hybrid Primary/Middle School model. The children will continue to attend core classes, and will participate in all connections (PE, music, art, world languages) and as well as in electives.

- The seminar classes will take place regularly at the end of the day to allow for consistent social-emotional learning and development of the Habits of Mind. Each grade level will be assigned to a core teacher who will serve year-long as the seminar teacher, and will be the primary point person for parent questions and concerns that span across content areas.

*Collaboration, Compassion, and Curiosity*

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<tr>
<th>Ricks Center Website</th>
<th>Ricks Center for Gifted Children</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Site URL]</td>
<td>University of Denver</td>
<td>District Code: RC-CO (parent access only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricks Center Facebook Page</td>
<td>2040 South York Street [map]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 303–871–2982</td>
<td>Denver, CO 80208</td>
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We look forward to continuing to embrace our mission school wide to the fullest extent possible as we evolve our programming into next school year.

*For curriculum questions, please contact Anne Wolf at Anne.Wolf@du.edu (Associate Director for Curriculum)*

*For Middle School questions, please contact Ted Brooks at Edward.Brooks@du.edu (Associate Director)*

**MAP Testing Overview**

Students in grades 3 – 8 took the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests in reading and mathematics this month. This assessment gives us information from a single point in time, and will be used by teachers as they assess areas of strength and relative weakness in instruction. We will test students again in May so we can assess student growth and instructional need.

The results from the first testing session are positive overall. Looking at the school as a whole, 96% of the assessed students are reading at or above the national norm (50th percentile), with 91% scoring in the top third, and 39% scoring in the top 5% percentiles. In math, 84% of our tested students scored at or above the national norm, and 23% scoring in the top 5% percentiles.

If you have questions about the MAP assessments, feel free to contact Anne Wolf anne.wolf@du.edu or 303-871-6045.

**2016-17 Yearbook Orders**

Congratulations to the Yearbook Committee and Photographers - the Yearbook is finished and on its way to print. We have a very short window to finish ordering. If you have not had a chance to order your yearbook, please follow these instructions:

1. Go to Balfour.com
2. Search Ricks Center for Gifted Children
3. Double check the next page, upper left corner directly under Balfour logo to be sure you’re in Ricks Center
4. Click Yearbook
5. Click Shop Categories then go to Yearbook and Accessories
6. Select your preferred option and number of yearbooks, and follow the rest of the ordering process as directed.
Yearbook Ads
The ordering of the ads will be done in a similar fashion, but the option is not available just yet. Karie will let us know when it’s ready to go. As you see on the ordering, the deadline is May 1st so you have time if you want to order your ad along with your book when the option is available – no need for 2 separate orders.

Contact Karie Wyckoff (karie.wyckoff@du.edu) or Balfour directly (link available on the ordering site) with any questions. Thank you all for your support.

Giant Map of Colorado
The Giant Map of Colorado will be visiting Ricks on April 6 and 7 (Thursday and Friday). We will have a “Colorado Map Open House” Thursday afternoon, 4/6/17, from 3 – 6 pm. Feel free to stop into the gym to see the map, enjoy the activities, and meet others. FYI, to walk on the map, one must be wearing socks.

Congratulations!
Congratulations to our 2017 River of Words winners from Gay Carlson and Kim Hammond’s class! Our winners in the Grade K-3 poetry category are Sabrina Jamrich – 1st place, Ryan Phillips – 2nd place, and Matthew Welch – 3rd place. In the Grade 4 – 6 poetry category, Emma Sipe received an honorable mention. Wonderful work by all!

Summer Fun at Ricks – Half Day Available
Due to popular demand, we are now offering a half day option for the camp.

Summer at Ricks blends fun summer activities with rich learning experiences. Children ages 3-6 will get a chance to play outside, explore DU and the surrounding community, participate in special enhancements, and much more.

Camp will run from June 12-August 4, half day 8:30am-12:00pm, full day 8:30am-3:30pm. You can register by the week or by the session (4 weeks.) Click here for more information or to register. For questions, please call 303-871-3715.
Camp is more fun with friends! You do not need to be a current Ricks Center student to attend camp, so feel free to share with anyone who might be interested.

**EC News**

We are working hard on our accreditation for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Please fill out and return your family surveys by 4/7/17. We look forward to reading your feedback and using the information to help refine and evolve our program.

**Math Fun**

If your child likes math games, there are a number of interactive activities at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) [website](#) that they might enjoy. Know that some of the games are old and may not load well, but there are plenty of new ones aimed at students from preschool through high school. Enjoy!

**Save the Date**

Mar 27-31 – Spring Break  
Apr 8 – Future Problem Solving State Bowl  
Apr 15, 1:00-5:00 PM – Parenting Safe Children Workshop  
Apr 21, 8:40-9:10 Assembly with theme of "courage"

**Around DU and Denver...**

**Storm Warning Exhibit**  
At DU, a [climate change exhibit](#) that’s thoughtful, shocking and sometimes even humorous...“Storm Warning: Artists on Climate Change & the Environment” continues through April 30, at the University of Denver’s Vicki Myhren Gallery. It’s free.

**Let's Put the Femme in STEM with the University of Denver**  
Girls will visit labs and engage in activities that line up with research being done at the University of Denver and within STEM fields. The members of the Pioneer Leadership Program, Society of Physics Students, and Women in Computing invite you to come put the femme in STEM! ON: May 13th 10-3pm AT: University of Denver, Colorado Women’s College FOR: Girls aged 9-13 Please email femminstem@gmail.com or visit our website at femmeinstem.org to register.

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  District Code: RC–CO (parent access only)
- **Phone**: 303–871–2982
School Days Off Sports Camp
Make sure to check out http://ritchiecenter.du.edu/youth/school-days-off/ to learn about sports camps held on the days that there is no school for the Ricks Center.

Summer Reading Skills Classes
We have received information about Summer Reading Skills classes for children in PreK – rising 11 grade being offered through Regis University. Each child received a flyer about the program; here is the link to the information as well.