



# Continuum of Community Systems & Structures: Grade 6 SY 2026-2027

Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning

1700 South Holly Street

Denver, CO 80222

303-759-2076

303-757-7442 (fax)

## I. Mission and Vision

*As a K-12 community, the mission of the Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning (RMSEL) is to empower students and staff to be learners, thinkers, citizens, and explorers engaged in and inspired by the real world. "We are crew, not passengers."*

*RMSEL scholars will demonstrate pride and ownership as they grow into responsible citizens who strive for high academic achievement and character excellence. RMSEL staff will equip our students with the tools for success in order to make a positive impact on our local and global community. Through our actions, we will exemplify Expeditionary Learning.*

To ensure that RMSEL consistently works to pursue excellence in fulfilling our school mission and vision, it is imperative that we follow a continuum of community systems and structures. Organizational systems and structures establish clear expectations for students, parents, and staff to ensure that our community is able to learn, grow, and thrive. The continuum of community systems and structures serves as a guide for students to become leaders of their own learning.

As a community of educators, we believe all students need both accountability and support to be successful in building the confidence and capacity to achieve academically and demonstrate excellent character. The purpose of this document is to provide the framework for reaching the highest degree of success while understanding that both success and failure play vital roles in academic and character development.

## II. Academics and Character

### Grading Scale

Habits of Scholarship: Homework, Classwork, and Supporting Pieces of Projects (35%) - We believe that a student's habits of scholarship are essential for his/her success. Grades within the Habits of Scholarship category portray a student's ability to complete work on time, take notes, read directions, and follow classroom instruction to demonstrate understanding. Skill-building habits such as completing homework, participating in classwork activities, and taking notes for notebook checks are recorded as habits of scholarship assignments for each class. When bigger projects are assigned, teachers report supporting pieces or check-ins in this category.

Academic Content: Assessments and Projects (65%) - Teachers in the RMSEL 6th grade assess students through projects, tests, quizzes, presentations, and other performance-based measures. These measures show students' progress on learning targets which are directly tied to state standards. Student work is evaluated using the following scale:

E - Exemplary	100%
AE - Accomplished Exemplary	95% - 99%
A - Accomplished	90%-94%
DA - Developing Accomplished	85%-89%
D - Developing	80% - 84%
BD - Beginning Developing	75% - 79%

B - Beginning	70% - 74%
LE - Limited Evidence	60% - 69%
NE - No Evidence, Turned In	50% - 59%
M - Missing	0%

### Progress Reporting: Infinite Campus and Portfolios

Teachers update Infinite Campus weekly. Any time a student receives a LE or NE, teachers write a comment identifying next steps for that student to improve achievement in the course. At the end of the grading period, the office generates student progress reports. Progress is reported on Projects and Assessments, Habits of Scholarship, and Character Values for each course. Every standard must be at a Developing level or higher for students to be on track for mastery of standards. Please develop a plan to check IC weekly to best keep track of your student's grades.

### Academic Support

In the event that a student has a 'Limited Evidence' or 'No Evidence' for any core class, they will be assigned to Academic Support. Sessions occur after school for one hour (Tuesdays 3:00-3:50pm). During this time, students will receive the appropriate support as determined by their Crew Leader or Content Teacher. The registrar will notify students and families of the need to attend academic support at least one day in advance via email generated from Infinite Campus. Attendance is mandatory for students who are notified.

### Grading Practice

Student work will be graded and returned to students in an equivalent period of time as required to complete. For example, if a student completes a writing assignment that requires a week to turn in to the teacher in final form, the student should expect to receive a grade within one week of the assignment. Student classwork, homework, and other daily assignments will be reported in Infinite Campus weekly. Student assessments, projects, essays, presentations, etc., will be reported in Infinite Campus under the Projects/Assessments category.

### Deadlines

It is imperative for student work to be completed in the timeframe assigned by the teacher. Learning is an ongoing process and late or missing assignments impair students from achieving at the highest level. All assignments are expected to be completed as assigned. After an assessment/project is due, students have 1 week or until the end of the quarterly grading period, whichever is sooner, to turn in the assignment for up to 60% credit.

Students who have extended time accommodations due to a 504 or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) should work with the classroom teacher to establish an alternative deadline. Interventions and supports relating to work completion will vary depending on a student's individual needs.

### Homework

#### *Homework Purpose and Philosophy*

Homework is designed to reinforce, extend, and support classroom learning while fostering independence, responsibility, and strong executive functioning skills. We recognize that students have meaningful lives beyond school, and we aim to ensure homework is purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and balanced.

#### Homework will:

- Reinforce and practice skills taught in class
- Extend learning and support completion of ongoing projects

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prepare students to engage meaningfully in upcoming lessons</li> <li>● Build habits of organization, time management, and self-advocacy</li> </ul> <p><i>Daily independent reading is strongly encouraged across all grade levels as a foundational practice.</i></p>
<p><b>General Expectations (K–12)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Homework is assigned with clear purpose and aligned to learning targets</li> <li>● Assignments should be manageable within a reasonable timeframe for each grade band</li> <li>● Students are expected to record, track, and complete assignments independently with increasing responsibility over time</li> <li>● Teachers will communicate expectations clearly and provide appropriate supports</li> <li>● Families are encouraged to support routines, not complete work for students</li> </ul>
<p><b>Commitment to Balance</b></p> <p><i>We acknowledge concerns about homework load and are committed to ensuring that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Homework is purposeful and not excessive</li> <li>● Students have time for extracurricular activities, family, and rest</li> <li>● Reading remains a consistent and valued daily practice.</li> </ul> <p><i>*This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure alignment with student needs, family feedback, and best practices in teaching and learning.</i></p>

Homework Policy				
Team Level	How Much/How Often	Purpose and Rationale for Homework	How is it graded?	How are we preparing our students to be successful with executive functioning skills around homework?
Intermediate (Grades 4-6)	<p>Typically 1–2 assignments per night depending on subject</p> <p>Estimated time: 20–60 minutes total per night</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reinforce and extend classroom learning</li> <li>● Provide practice in math skills and concepts</li> <li>● Support completion and refinement of literacy, humanities, and science work</li> <li>● Prepare students to actively engage in class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Primarily graded for completion rather than accuracy</li> <li>● Some assignments contribute to larger projects or classwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strong emphasis on independence</li> <li>● Students are expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Track assignments in planners (“training plans”)</li> <li>○ Manage time effectively</li> <li>○ Take responsibility for completing work</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Students are encouraged to self-advocate and seek support</li> <li>● Families are encouraged to help establish routines and balance commitments</li> </ul>

As a group of educators, we believe homework is a tool to build habits of scholarship that prepare students to be successful lifelong learners. Homework is a place for students to practice and become experts in skills that are taught at school and allows families to stay connected to the content with their child.

Sixth grade students should expect up to one hour of daily homework. In addition to daily homework, students are required to read a book of their choice for 30 minutes every night. At times throughout each grading period, students may be required to exceed the one-hour guideline when working to complete a final project, essay, presentation, debate, etc.

In order to best communicate this with families, daily homework will be communicated with students and families via a training plan. We encourage you to log in to Infinite Campus with your student to monitor your child’s work completion. Middle school is a crucial time for students to establish positive study habits as they begin thinking about high school and post-secondary options.

## **Training Plan**

In order to best communicate this with families, daily homework will be communicated with students and families via the Training Plan. Students are responsible for recording assignments and due dates in their Training Plans. Training Plans will be provided to students at the beginning of each year, free of cost. In the event that students lose/misplace their Training Plans, families will be responsible for replacing them at a charge of \$5.

## **Service Hours**

Sixth graders at RMSEL are required to complete 10 hours of community service. We encourage students to complete at least half of their hours through a community organization. Students may use [2026-27 Service Log](#) to track their hours.

Parents are asked to contribute 20 hours of service throughout each school year. They should log their hours [here](#). This can be done by attending crew trips, chaperoning fieldwork, serving as a crew parent, helping coordinate potlucks, or participating in crew trip de-rig. There are many opportunities available throughout the year. Please know that we cannot run this programming without you and appreciate your support.

## **Portfolios**

All students in Expeditionary Learning schools complete 'Portfolios' that display their high-quality work and highlight their academic and character growth throughout the year. Every 6th grader will complete a Portfolio that represents their learning. Students in 8th grade are in a 'Passage Year,' which means they present their Portfolios to a panel of community members at the end of the school year. Completion of the 8th grade portfolio is a requirement for participating in the 8th grade passage ceremony and entry into RMSEL High School. Sixth grade portfolio development lays a critical foundation for passage readiness by the end of middle school.

The creation of student portfolios is supported throughout the year by academic content teachers who remind students to keep ALL completed/returned project work in their Working Portfolios as potential Presentation Portfolio reflection pieces. Then, the written reflections and the organization of the portfolio itself, as well as practice for presentations, are supported throughout the year.

## **Character Rubrics**

We are dedicated to ensuring that our students and staff model our character values in their actions in the learning community. The RMSEL Character Values (Compassion, Courage, Discipline, Integrity, and Responsibility) will be integrated and assessed authentically throughout projects, presentations, lessons, and activities. Students will complete quarterly character reflections, and grades for those will be in the homeroom section on IC. The character rubric will provide the opportunity for growth and reflection in their portfolio.

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is the foundation of a learning environment. It means being honest about your work, giving proper credit to others, and taking responsibility for your learning. Acts such as cheating, plagiarism, copying homework, or using unauthorized assistance undermine the purpose of education and violate our core values. The first offense for academic dishonesty will result in parent contact and zero credit, with the student being given the opportunity to redo the assignment for up to 70% credit. Any further violations of academic integrity will result in zero credit, represented by a 'CH' in the gradebook and disciplinary action.

## **III. Fitness and Adventure Programs**

### **Fitness**

With the exception of Wednesday, all 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will have thirty minutes of fitness training. Students should arrive at school wearing appropriate fitness attire and athletic shoes. Outdoor recess and fitness will continue if the temperature is above 20°F. Please help your child with appropriate clothing choices for the weather conditions.

## Nutrition

As we continue to nurture a healthy and inclusive learning environment, we want to share some thoughts and reminders around food, snacks, and celebrations at school.

We *highly encourage* families to send snacks and treats that support student energy, focus, and well-being. In particular, we ask that snacks and celebration items be minimally processed and low in added sugars when possible. Research shows that ultra-processed foods and high-energy-density snacks (like candy, chips, and sugary drinks) can impact student behavior, focus, and long-term health.

At the same time, we *recognize that sometimes* convenience, access, and family resources play a role in what's packed. We never want to shame any student for what they bring to school. Socio-economic factors can impact food choices, and we strive to hold compassion and understanding at the center of all conversations.

To help maintain a healthy classroom culture:

- **Soda and energy drinks are not allowed. If these drinks are seen in school, they will be disposed of.**
- Candy should not be used for regular snacks or classroom celebrations.
- For **Crew parties or birthdays**, we welcome simple, wholesome options—fruits, veggies, popcorn, etc.—that all students can enjoy.
- If you're planning to send in a special treat, feel free to check in with us ahead of time to ensure it fits within our classroom needs and dietary considerations.

Thank you for partnering with us in building a community that supports both health and kindness. We appreciate your flexibility and support as we continue to grow together.

## Fieldwork

Fieldwork is directly tied to the learning targets connected to each unit of study or learning expedition in the classroom. Students are expected to be prepared as learners to participate in fieldwork prior to departure. For example, students may be asked to come prepared with a series of questions to share with an expert upon arrival, based on a reading or workshop in class the day before. If students are unprepared to attend fieldwork, the teacher may request that the student remain on campus and forgo the fieldwork experience. Additionally, students will be asked to complete a fieldwork journal for crew trips and fieldwork experiences. Those may require some additional work time at home and are due the day after the experience.

## Crew Trips

Crew trips are a unique opportunity to extend learning experiences and build character outside of a typical school day. All students are required to attend crew trips unless a medical exemption is present. A student will be removed from a crew trip or prohibited from attending in the event they are in violation of the Student Responsibility Contract signed by families to begin the school year. Out-of-school suspension and/or three or more behavioral referrals in a quarter may result in the removal of students from their Crew Trip and required parent supervision on fieldwork. Student safety on crew trips is our team's number one priority, and behavioral misconduct in the classroom and/or while on the trip is not acceptable. It is expected that parents/guardians are available to receive phone calls in the event of a medical emergency with their student. Parents/guardians are financially responsible for all medical expenses that may occur in the field.

In order to attend a landmark trip, the additional fees related to that trip must be paid in full.

Students must be passing all classes (core classes and specials) during the 1st Semester, and passing all classes in Q3 in order to attend Crew Trips. Additionally, students who receive three or more disciplinary referrals in a semester, and/or students who continuously cause behavioral disruptions, may lose privileges for fieldwork and crew trips, along with dismissal due to phone policy. Students who are unable to participate in fitness or adventure activities due to medical reasons should provide documentation from a medical provider.

## **IV. Accountability and Behavior**

### **Attendance and Tardies**

Student attendance is taken to begin the school day in all primary school classrooms. School hours are from 7:45 AM – 3:00 PM (M/T/TH/F) and 8:45 am – 3:00 pm (W). To support parents in arriving at school in a timely manner, students are permitted to enter the building at 7:30 AM. Teachers will provide supervision in their crew classrooms.

Excused Absences - The following shall be considered excused absences:

1. A student who is temporarily ill or injured, or whose absence is approved by the administrator of the school of attendance on a prearranged basis. Prearranged absences shall be approved for appointments or circumstances of a serious nature only, which cannot be taken care of outside of school hours.
2. A student who is absent for an extended period due to physical, mental, or emotional disability.
3. A student who is pursuing a work-study program or fieldwork under the supervision of the school.
4. A student who is attending any school-sponsored activity or activities of an educational nature with advance approval by the administration.
5. A student who is absent in observance of an established religious holiday.
6. A student who is suspended shall be considered excused.
7. A student whose absence is approved by the Executive Director at the request of the parent or guardian.

*The district may require suitable proof regarding the above exceptions, including written statements from medical sources.*

Unexcused Absences - An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the foregoing exceptions.

Unexcused absences may be deemed unacceptable by RMSEL regardless of prior notice or knowledge of the parents. Absences not properly reported by parents are unexcused.

Continued absences and/or repeated tardiness may be considered cause for disciplinary action. In accordance with the law, the school may impose academic penalties that relate directly to classes missed while unexcused. The administration shall develop procedures to implement appropriate penalties. Students and parents/guardians may petition the BOCES for exceptions to this policy or the administrative procedures, provided that no exception shall be sustained if the student fails to abide by all requirements imposed by the BOCES as conditions for granting any such exception.

When a student returns to school after a period of absence, a note signed by one of his or her parents should be sent indicating that the student was absent with parental permission. The note must contain the parent's full name, the date, and the number of days the student was absent. A parent may also contact the RMSEL Academic Secretary to report student absences. In the event that a student is placed on an Attendance Contract, the parameters of the contract may require sustainable proof, including written statements from medical sources.

Any student who has been absent from class for six consecutive weeks or more in any one school year, except for excused long-term illness or death, is considered a "dropout" and shall be reported to the Department of Education by the school. However, if the student is in attendance at the end of the school year, or enrolled in another school, home study course, or online program, such a student is not considered a dropout and shall not be reported.

Make-up work - Make-up work may be allowed for excused absences only. Make-up work shall be provided for any class in which a student has an excused absence unless otherwise determined by the administrative or executive director. It is the responsibility of the student to pick up any make-up assignments permitted on the day he or she returns to class. Students are required to complete any make-up assignments within two school days per excused absence, not to exceed one week from the original assignment date, unless otherwise arranged with a crew leader.

Procedures for Monitoring and Compliance of Compulsory Attendance - The following procedures will be utilized to monitor the excused and unexcused attendance.

1. 3 absences per quarter – Initial contact: concern about missed class time.
2. 5 absences per quarter – Letter: missing instructional time.
3. 7 absences per school year – Parent Meeting with Administration and School Support Staff.
4. 10 absences per school year – Attendance Contract and Plan - Any absence in excess of 10 after an Attendance Contract and Plan is established without prior approval by the Executive Director will result in a referral to the school psychologist, who will file with the court system.
5. 15 or more absences per school year – Referral to RMSEL Attendance Review Board - Request for referral to the school district of residence.

*On our website, under Governance > BOCES > BOCES Policies > JH-Student Absences and Excuses*

### **Attendance in the Learning Environment**

Students are required to be present in each class period when attending school. When attending class, it is required of students to be prompt and ready to engage in the learning environment. Every minute of every class period is important and relevant to learning; therefore, students may not exit the classroom during the first 15 and last 15 minutes of each period. This time is essential to ensure students engage in each class period and do not miss essential information that may require completion outside of class.

Students are respected as scholars in the learning environment; in the event they need to leave class for the restroom, copier, printer, etc., they are to do so in a professional manner. When students depart the learning environment, they may exit one at a time, **not in groups**. They are required to sign-out / sign-in when departing the room (we are required to account for all students in the event of an emergency).

The hallway is not a learning environment; it is filled with distractions, and not centered on the learning taking place by the teacher. Hallways will be for passing to/from class, but not as an extension of the classroom.

### **Dress Code**

The purpose of the dress code is to establish an environment that allows for a collegiate atmosphere, one where learning is at the forefront of our experience.

The following items are deemed disruptive to the classroom environment or to the maintenance of a safe and orderly school and are not acceptable in school buildings, on school grounds, or at school activities:

1. Articles of clothing or sunglasses that cover your face.
2. Clothing that bares or exposes traditionally private parts of the body, including, but not limited to, the stomach, buttocks, back, and breasts (e.g., midriffs, halter tops, backless clothing, tube tops, garments made of fishnet, mesh or similar material, muscle tops, etc.).
3. Any clothing, paraphernalia, grooming, jewelry, hair coloring, accessories, or body adornments that are or contain any advertisements, symbols, words, slogans, patches, or pictures that:
  - Refer to drugs, tobacco, alcohol, or weapons
  - Are of a sexual nature
  - By virtue of color, arrangement, trademark, or other attribute, denote membership in gangs which advocate drug use, violence, or disruptive behavior
  - Are obscene, profane, vulgar, lewd, or legally libelous
  - Threaten the safety or welfare of any person
  - Promote any activity prohibited by the student code of conduct
  - Otherwise disrupt the teaching-learning process

*On our website, under Governance > BOCES > BOCES Policies > JICA - Student Dress Code*

## **Technology and Cell Phones**

At the Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning, we are committed to actions to ensure that we develop Healthy Compassionate Scholars. As school staff, we understand that technology has a place in the educational setting when utilized as a tool per the teacher's instructional plan. Based on our review of instructional plans and the educational environment, we are committed to a 90% device-free learning environment. We strive for the school day to be filled with collaborative learning experiences that engage students in complex problem solving absent an electronic device. No more than twenty instructional days per year will require the use of an electronic device.

This technology position statement is our commitment to providing exceptional learning opportunities in a safe school environment. To establish this environment, the following will be required of students and families:

- In 6th grade, students should not bring any electronic device to school, including a cell phone. Electronic devices are tablets, iPads, Bluetooth headphones, earbuds, computers, smartwatches (iWatch), and cell phones. If a student needs to bring a device, it must be off and secured in their locker. In the event that a student needs to communicate with a parent during the school day, they may use the telephone in the main office. If students do not adhere to these guidelines, they will be required to follow the middle school guidelines and Yondr their device.
- When devices are required for use on campus or per a student's accommodations as outlined in a 504 / IEP, they will be provided by RMSEL accordingly.
- To ensure equitable access to technology usage, any student who does not have a computer for use outside of the school day may check out a device for annual use at home. The device will remain the property of the school and BOCES J policy JS Student Use of the Internet and Electronic Communication.
- Consequences for misconduct: Cellphones and smartwatches are not to be used during the school day. Failure to comply with this rule will result in confiscation of the personal equipment. Inappropriate use of school-provided technology will result in a loss of privilege to use the equipment.

Our commitment to a limited-device learning environment demonstrates that we understand that 43.75% of a student's waking hours (16 hours daily) should not include the use of a device. We expect that our students will thrive in this environment in all three domains of student achievement: Mastery of Knowledge & Skill, Character, and High-Quality Work.

At RMSEL, we believe that maintaining a phone-free environment, whether in the classroom or in the field, is essential to accomplishing our mission. Students and families must commit to leaving phones at home (in the event a cell phone needs to be brought to school, the student will turn it off and store it in their locker or Yondr their phone at the front entrance and can un-Yondr at the end of the school day at the front entrance). If a student's phone is out, it will be kept with the school-level administrator for the remainder of the day, and parents/guardians will be notified. Students will get three chances if caught with a device out; upon the third chance, students will lose attendance on the Crew Trip. Students will be able to "buy back" their Crew Trip by allocating 5 hours of volunteer time at Food Bank of the Rockies with signed verification submitted to the grade level administrator. After the third chance, if a student has repeated infractions, each infraction will equal an additional 5 hours of volunteer time.

## **Student Behavior**

Consequences in the learning environment are not punitive; rather, they are a tool for developmentally appropriate learning and redirection. Crew leaders will use a tiered structure as a guide to respond in the classroom in partnership with families prior to requesting intervention by the Director of Elementary Education. It is the expectation that teachers and families will act as partners to support appropriate conduct at school.

Repeated patterns of misbehavior may necessitate a meeting between the family and teacher, as well as a behavior tracker/contract to be implemented at the discretion of school staff. A RMSEL staff member will communicate directly with parents when any consequence is issued for Level 2 or Level 3 behaviors (uncivil, unsafe, policy violations). School staff will be guided by RMSEL BOCES policy in their response and interventions to student misbehavior.

## **V. School-Home Communication**

The teaching team will provide weekly updates on crew and academic announcements to students and families via email and the students' training plan.

Positive communication between parent/guardian(s) and teachers is encouraged to support the development of students' holistic learning. Teachers will communicate frequently with parent(s)/guardian(s). Teachers will communicate behavior concerns, information regarding a student's individualized learning plan, and other conversations where sensitive information may be discussed over the phone or in person. In the event that you need to reach a teacher by phone, your call will be forwarded to their voicemail box. Teachers will respond to communication within 48 hours.

To encourage face-to-face interactions, teachers will have conference hours M/W/Th/F from 3:00-3:25 **by appointment only**.

The content itemized above makes up the structure and foundation in which work of high quality can and will be produced by students. RMSEL provides an opportunity to exceed the expectations of a traditional learning environment, not simply provide an alternative learning environment. The work that we do with students will serve as a catalyst for great success as they transition to middle school, high school, post-secondary education options, and the workforce. We look forward to another amazing school year at RMSEL!

Sincerely,

Sixth Grade Crew Leaders