

One of our key enrollment goals is improving student retention at transition grades, particularly as students move from elementary to middle school. With multiple 6-12 education options in the area, we often lose families at this critical juncture due to perceptions about Richfield Middle School (RMS). To counter this, we needed a way to authentically showcase the strengths of RMS while fully engaging current students, staff and families in the process. To achieve this, we launched the Top 5 Reasons to Love RMS video series, a campaign built around community-driven storytelling. We began with an open-ended survey asking students, staff and families what they loved about RMS. After synthesizing responses, we created a Top 5 list, which was then voted on by the community. This process ensured that the final themes were genuine, relatable and reflective of the schools true strengths.

Implementation & Target Audience The videos were released one at a time over several weeks, generating anticipation and engagement. The primary audience included current RMS students and families (reinforcing pride in their school), elementary school families (addressing concerns and building excitement for middle school) and prospective families considering RMS (providing an authentic, student-centered view of the school experience). Videos were shared on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, using the hashtag #rms_top5 to unify the campaign. Facebook saw the highest engagement, averaging 1.8K views per video, with strong engagement across platforms.

Supporting Effective Communication The series worked by creating authenticity (featuring real students, staff and families built credibility and emotional connection), highlighting community input (the community-driven process increased buy-in and ownership of the message) and delivering content in an engaging format (short, digestible videos made information more accessible and shareable).

Outcomes & Impact While retention concerns persisted, they were less significant than in past years indicating the campaign had a positive effect. The video series was part of a broader retention strategy, which also included events for current and incoming families, increased storytelling about RMS successes and a new secondary guide launching this year. The Top 5 Reasons to Love RMS video series successfully shifted the narrative around RMS, reinforcing its strengths and fostering greater community pride and engagement. By centering real voices and experiences, the campaign made RMS more inviting and relatable, setting the foundation for

continued retention efforts.