Dear Students and parents,

With the holiday season upon us, I want to express my warmest wishes to all our RINI community for a safe and restful holiday. I am so proud of our school community and the resilience that our students, staff, and families have demonstrated this school year. Having students back in the building has been the highlight; however, we are still not “back to normal”. Many adjustments and reminders are still necessary, and our staff has done an outstanding job trying to navigate it all. Our students also need to be
commended for being flexible and following protocols that are in place to ensure the safety and welfare of everyone. I am continually grateful for the thoughtfulness, flexibility, and positivity our RINI community has brought to this school year.

The holiday season is always a special time, but it can also add stress to our already hectic lives. One challenge of the holiday season is that we often lose sight of ourselves. Some of us are energized by social gatherings, while others find it takes a lot of our energy to be social. Students, parents, and teachers alike should keep these key points in mind for holiday self-care:

1. Spend a few minutes each day to quietly do something you love.
2. Get up a bit earlier than everyone else, enjoy the quietness and sip some hot tea.
3. Take a walk during the day, both to get moving and to clear your mind.
4. Make sure you’re getting enough sleep and eating regular meals.
5. Take a break from technology. Turn off electric devices, TVs, and phones at least an hour before bed.
6. Allow time for small moments of relaxation like a bath or reading for pleasure—whatever relaxes you.
7. Play music that is grounding to you.

Be sure to practice self-care right through the break and back into the school year again. Self-care is essential for maintaining our mental, emotional, and physical health. During all of the chaos make time for yourself because you are worth it.

Finally, I would like to wish our students, parents, faculty, and staff a happy holiday and a celebration filled with family and friends. It is moments like this, when we can pause, catch our breath and look back, that we realize how honored and lucky we are to be a part of this community. I look forward to seeing you back in January with classes resuming on January 3rd.

Principal Ferland

**Holiday Break**

RINI will be closed beginning Thursday, December 23, 2021, and reopening
Monday, January 3, 2022. Please note that staff and faculty will be on winter break during this time and may not be responding immediately to emails.

**Important Dates in January**

January 3rd: Students return from winter break  
January 17th: Martin Luther King Day (No School)  
January 21st, 24th & 25th: Semester exams - Half-day schedule  
January 25th: End of Semester 1

**RINI Spirit Week**

It was a fun-filled week at RINI as students and staff celebrated Spirit Week. The RINI Student Council did a fantastic job planning a week filled with creative theme days. The students and faculty enjoyed participating and showcasing their RINI spirit.

**Celebrating the Holidays in December**

It’s called the holiday season for a reason: December is packed with different religious and cultural celebrations.

•Christmas: December 25th

Christmas is an annual Christian festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, observed on December 25 as a religious and cultural celebration. Most of the traditional customs of Christmas, such as gift-giving, tree decorating,
light hanging, and feasting, come from sources other than the Church. The historical roots of Santa Claus come from many sources. The earliest known inspiration for the legend comes from the fourth century in the form of Saint Nicholas of Myra, a Greek Christian figure known for his generosity to the poor.

• Kwanzaa: December 26th-January 1st

Kwanzaa is an annual celebration of African-American culture culminating in a communal feast called Karamu. The annual holiday affirming African family and social values is celebrated primarily in the United States from December 26 to January 1. Both the name and the celebration were devised in 1966 by Maulana Karenga, a professor of Africana studies at California State University in Long Beach as a response to the commercialism of Christmas in America. Kwanzaa is centered around seven principles: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.

• Winter Solstice: December 21st

The Winter solstice marks the official start of winter. It is the astronomical moment when the Sun reaches the Tropic of Capricorn, and in the Northern Hemisphere, we have our shortest day and longest night (based on hours of sunlight). This year the winter solstice is on Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 10:59 am EST. The Winter solstice has played an important role in cultures worldwide since ancient times. The Pagan celebration of Winter Solstice (also
known as Yule) is one of the oldest winter celebrations in the world.

• New Year’s Eve

New Year’s Eve on December 31 marks the final day of what is known as a Gregorian calendar year. Prior to the adoption of the Gregorian calendar as the global standard, most of the ancient world ran on many different and diverse calendaring systems to track the passage of time. Traditions across the world include:

- In Mexico and Spain, locals eat one grape for each of the first 12 bell strikes after midnight in the hopes that this will bring about a year of good fortune and prosperity.

- In Scotland, the first person who crosses through the threshold of your house after midnight on New Year's Day should be a dark-haired male if you wish to have good luck in the coming year.

- In Japanese culture, it is customary to welcome the new year with a bowl of soba noodles because the buckwheat plant used to make soba noodles is so resilient, people eat the pasta on New Year's Eve to signify their strength.

- In the Philippines, the Filipino culture celebrates the New Year by serving 12 round fruits. The round shape symbolizes coins, which represent prosperity and wealth for each month of the upcoming year. Apples, melons, oranges, and grapes are popular picks, but any round fruit will do.

Meet the RINI Staff

James Fusaro
Math Department Chair
I grew up in Connecticut in the small town of Westbrook. I went to college at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in Worcester, MA, and then UMASS Amherst to get my Master’s degree in business. I’ve worked in corporate finance for a good part of my career at Pratt & Whitney (a jet engine manufacturer) and Travelers Insurance. After many years in the corporate world, I decided to pursue something more personally rewarding which brought me to teaching math. I have always had a fascination with mathematics and love exploring the complexities of math and solving challenging problems. Prior to RINI, I taught in Hartford CT, East Hartford CT, West Greenwich, RI. My wish for each of my students is that they develop excitement and appreciation for learning, that they find something that they truly love to do, and that they gain the skills, confidence, and independence to be successful in school and in life. Being part of that brings me immeasurable satisfaction and sense of purpose.

**Book Recommendation: What to Read During Winter Break**

The Upper World by Femi Fadugba

If you had the chance to change your future, would you take it? Perfect for fans of Neal Shusterman and Jason Reynolds, this powerhouse, mind-bending YA debut follows two teens, a generation apart, whose fates collide across time—and outside of it.

Today: During arguably the worst week of Esso’s life, an accident knocks him into an incredible world—a place beyond space or time, where he can see
glimpses of the past and future. But if
what he sees there is true, he might not
have much longer to live, unless he can
use his new gift to change the course of
history.

Tomorrow: Rhia’s past is filled with
questions, none of which she expects a
new physics tutor to answer. But Dr.
Esso’s not here to help Rhia. He’s here
because he needs her help—to unravel a
tragedy that happened fifteen years ago.
One that holds the key not only to Rhia’s
past, but to a future worth fighting for.

Soon to be a major Netflix movie starring Oscar winner Daniel Kaluuya! (Get
Out, Black Panther, Judas and the Black Messiah)