



# Greeley West High School News

*Home of the Spartans*

*January 2018*



## HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM GREELEY WEST HIGH SCHOOL!

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Juniors- Register for the sat essay. For more information on how to register [Click Here!](#)

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## AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS & YOUR KIDS BRAINS

*By Roxanne Turner*



I had the opportunity this past weekend to tour the air traffic control tower at Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport located just outside Denver, Colorado, RMMA. RMMA is a general aviation airport servicing everything from student pilots in small propeller planes to sophisticated business jets. Even huge tanker planes that fight wildfires throughout the Rocky Mountains fly out of here. The view from the tower is incredible. High in the air with a backdrop of snow capped peaks to the west and downtown Denver to the east, I thought to myself this had to be the best "office" in town. I quickly realized however that this was serious business where highly trained professionals worked tirelessly with no room for error.

I sat in awe as the controllers guided a variety of planes through their airspace to safe take offs and landings. It was like a finely choreographed ballet, with aircraft all over radar screens being given detailed instructions constantly, one right after another. Their job is in the top five most stressful, responsible for remembering and recalling vast amounts of information, maintaining constant focus, and managing multiple tasks at once. On a

busy day, the work is so physically and mentally exhausting that the controllers switch off every hour to stay sharp and even nap on break to recharge

### Why am I talking about Air traffic controllers?

It got me thinking about students with ADHD and Learning Disabilities. The National Center for Learning Disabilities released a report that shows 1 out of every 5 students has Dyslexia or attention issues. These students are like an air traffic controller without a radar to help make sense of all the chaos in the air.

### Your brain is not your student's brain

Your student's brain does not see the world as you do. The frontal lobe where executive functioning (working memory, planning, organization, task initiation, attention, and self-regulation) occurs is not fully developed until the mid to late 20's. It is the last part of the brain to develop. If a child also has ADHD or other learning differences, their

*Continued...*

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*Air Traffic Controllers Continued...*

executive function skills can be three to five years behind their peers, which means it will take even more time, practice, and support to develop these skills. As parents, we must understand how our students process information and navigate day to day tasks. Understood.org has a great simulation you can use to visualize and experience the world through your student’s eyes. Once you understand how they learn and interpret the world around them, you can better tailor interventions, accommodations, and systems to gain skills and build self-confidence. Then your child can build their own radar to process and manage all the information that is coming their way while knowing they have a team behind them.

**Recharging the Brain**

For students with attention and learning deficits, going to school and completing homework is like being an air traffic controller on a super busy day. They will have worked hard to focus and complete tasks all day long and will be tired, frustrated and even cranky when they come home. Just keeping up will be exhausting as they are likely putting in two to three times the effort of their peers. They too will need lots of breaks to recharge. Take the time to talk to your student and discover the best way for them to recharge. Is it a physical activity like playing basketball, exploring their creative side by drawing, or simply kicking back and daydreaming? Most kids today will say they “need” time with their screens, but this should be limited as the constant stimulation only drains the brain further. Experiment with your student to find healthy options that work for them.

When I met the controllers at RMMA, it

was clear they were passionate about what they did and took great pride in keeping pilots, passengers, and their planes safe. They were given the training, community, and rest necessary to stay at the top of their game. Are we as a community supporting students with different learning styles in the same way; offering compassion and support while they learn and discover at their own pace? Meet them where they are in the developmental process and marvel as they keep the dots on their radar screen from colliding!

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*Roxanne Turner is a Board Certified Life Coach with extensive training in ADHD and executive functioning, focusing on the process of getting things done. Roxanne brings a unique and personal perspective to her coaching work drawing from her experience in both the corporate and equestrian worlds. Outside of work, Roxanne is a devoted wife and step-mother to two teenage boys and enjoys time spent with family, the outdoors, and pursuing epic adventures.*

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**Enjoy!**