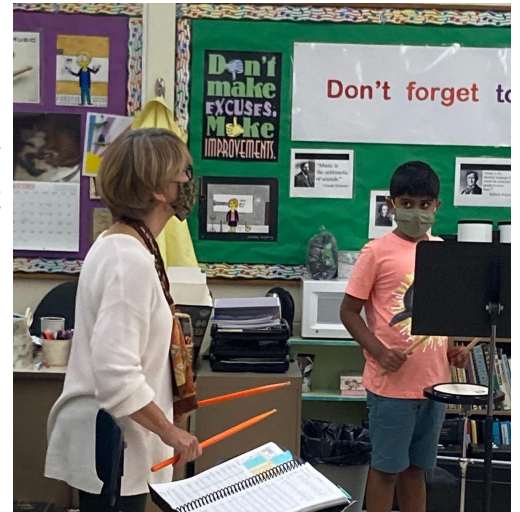




Music Teacher Sees What It's Like on the Other Side of the Baton

“Don’t forget to be awesome,” reads the sign in Hilary Brown’s East Ridge Middle School music classroom, where she stands giving a percussion lesson to a group of eight sixth-graders. “We’re piloting a new initiative this year,” explains Brown after class. Every six days, sixth-grade students in band and orchestra at both East Ridge and Scotts Ridge have small group lessons where they can focus on their instrument. “It’s something we’ve been talking about doing for a long time, and we’ve managed to schedule it so students don’t miss their other classes too frequently,” she continues, “about once every twenty-four days.”

Brown is the 2022 RPS Teacher of the Year and offers a unique perspective on music at the Middle School level. “Playing music at



this age is not necessarily about students becoming musicians when they grow up. Playing music touches on all aspects of our vision of the RPS Graduate. Grit. Determination. It is so good for the brain. It connects synapses on the right half of the brain with the left half.” Brown describes the wide variety of abilities of her students—from beginners to accomplished musicians—who all need to play together. “I’m not as much focused on the benchmark but on where they were and how far they’ve come.” She encourages parents to help their students find places to practice where they can play without being afraid of making a mistake or bothering family members. “Brain science reinforces the concept of smaller bits of regular practice being better for maintaining muscle memory so it’s preferable for students to practice a little every day than long stretches once a week,” says Brown.

When her younger son went off to college, Brown joined a Wind Ensemble in Sleepy Hollow with some very talented musicians. “It’s good for me to be on the other side of the baton. I can see what’s effective and what’s annoying. It makes me practice better and become a better conductor for my students.” Brown is always thinking about what will make the experience better for her students. They started “Bucket Drumming” last year because it was harder to sing and play wind instruments during the pandemic. She still uses them as a special treat or when introducing new rhythm concepts. She says, “if I’ve learned anything this year, it’s ‘everything is in pencil.’”

Calendar

October 11

No School/Columbus Day

[Full RPS Calendar](#)

October 12 and 25

BOE Meetings

[Link to Live/Recorded](#)

October 21

Early Dismissal for Students

Professional Development

[\(Other PD Days\)](#)

Bus Driver Appreciation Day on Page 2!

Cheers for Bus Drivers



Today, we celebrate RPS bus drivers! The photo above shows Scotts Ridge Middle Schoolers showering our bus drivers with love and appreciation. Families all over the District turned out to recognize the important work of getting our kids to school safely. Please submit your sign, shout-out, or bus stop photo to [RPS News](#). Thank you, bus drivers!

Turf Field at SRMS Reopens



Ridgefield High School Girls Varsity Soccer was the first team to face-off on the new Scotts Ridge turf. Dressed in pink socks and jerseys for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the team remained undefeated with a tie against league rival Greenwich.

FES Fifth-Grade Discovers



Recently, Farmingville Elementary fifth graders took a trip to The Adventure Park in Bridgeport, CT. FES teacher Elizabeth Robbins (photo top left) reports, “While there, students learned more about themselves and each other as they traversed the various courses. Some students chose to go through the yellow and green courses, while others tackled the more challenging blue and black courses. Regardless of which courses they chose, students used persistence, resilience, and empathy as they navigated through the ropes, boards, and platforms. ‘This was the best field trip ever!’ many of the students remarked. Each child was able to work at their own pace and do what was most comfortable to them. Once back at school, their experiences are serving as inspiration to write from as they write personal narratives in Writing Workshop.”

VPES Sounds Sweet



Veterans Park Elementary’s All-School Activity was filled with [song](#) and [dance](#). Please watch [this video](#) to hear how sweet it sounded to be together again.

Keep up with Ridgefield Public Schools News on our website [news page](#) and [calendar](#). We would love to hear from you, [contact us](#) with questions and feedback.

