



RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Susie Da Silva, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

August 21, 2020

Dear Faculty and Families,

I hope you are enjoying this last full week of summer vacation. It's hard to believe we are almost at the start of school. In preparation for the start of school on August 27, a significant amount of communications, meetings and videos were prepared and presented to families and faculty this week. You will likely receive a few additional school and District updates as we continue on the road to reopening school. I realize that you are likely inundated with information, but all of these pieces are designed to support the smoothest possible transition for all of our stakeholders.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming RPS students back next week- and will work to make this year the best that it can be. Thank you in advance for your patience, as we navigate these very unique circumstances and transition for our entire school community.

Warmly,

Susie Da Silva, Ed.D.

The Road to Reopening

Faculty Return

Our faculty returned this past Wednesday for the start of six days of Professional Learning. Our faculty was welcomed back with a virtual convocation featuring addresses from myself, the 2021 Teacher of The Year- Lori Peck, and President of the Teachers Association- Steve Ruland. We are thrilled with their arrival and look forward to them bringing our reopening plans to life.

Important: Start Date for Classes Via Live Streaming

Grades PK-8

Live streaming in grades PK-8 will begin on Monday, August 31. On Thursday, August 27 and Friday, August 28, all remote learners will participate in asynchronous activities (pre-recorded videos) using Google Classroom.

Grades 9-12

Live streaming at RHS will begin on Tuesday September 1. On Friday August 28 and Monday August 31, all remote learners will participate in asynchronous activities (pre-recorded videos) using Google Classroom.

Grade 9 students will follow their freshman orientation schedule as designed on August 27.

This will allow faculty and students to have adequate preparation in the remote learning experience, more specifically, using the hardware and software tools- logging in, webcams, google meets, etc. The time spent on these first two days will allow for in-person instruction utilizing these technological resources, and for remote learners to review and practice information shared in pre-recorded video lessons.

You will receive more information from your schools on how students will access these pre-recorded video lessons. We remain committed to provide for live instruction within the remote experience.

Powerschool

Please be sure that all personal and emergency contact information is updated in Powerschool. This is our primary mode of communication, and we do not want anything to be missed.

The Reality of Distance Learning

As you know, we are planning and preparing for a Distance Learning experience- short-term and possibly long-term. We know that the more synchronous instruction the better-for student accountability, engagement and connectedness. We also know that this experience can not replace live, classroom instruction. We are on this journey together, and will work as hard as possible to provide a meaningful learning experience for all students. We ask for your patience, as we work through (and at times pivot) through the many different pieces in bringing school to 'life' in a whole new way.

Student Independence during Distance Learning

We realize that some students will require more support than others (at least initially) during the at-home digital experience. That said, it is important that students engage in their learning from home as independently as possible. The relationships fostered between teachers and their students is the most powerful tool that educators have and we also know that students engage and interact differently when they are out of the classroom. Please help us recreate the 'classroom' environment as much as possible. You will hear about these expectations in the coming days.

Curriculum

During a typical school year, the first 3-6 weeks of school is focused on establishing routines, expectations and relationships, while interweaving the content into a child's school day. This year will not be different, although the curriculum will be compacted to ensure the students have the skills they need to access the digital learning environment. This will look different by level.

Website

Our team has created a site that will allow you to access information related to particular topics related to the Reopening of Schools. You can find that site here. [RPS Reopening](#)

Reopening of School Opt-Out Forms

In order to open school with the least amount of disruption possible, we ask families who are electing to transport their children and/or are intending on temporarily learning from home, to complete the surveys below by the close of day on Sunday, August 23. We realize that families may need to make changes, but we ask that these changes be carefully considered as they cause disruption, as well as an imbalance of cohorts.

[Temporary Remote Learning Form](#)

[Bus-Ridership Opt Out Form](#)

Bus Schedule

Bus schedules are currently in Powerschool. The routes in Powerschool are updated each night to capture any changes. Questions about busing should be directed to: rlupinacci@ridgefieldps.net Phone: 203-894-5550 ext 1126

Visitors in our Schools

We know that many important events happen in our schools at the start of the year that require the support of the PTA and others. Thank you for your patience as we work through this next piece of reopening school.

Update from CIAC

This message was received this morning from Glenn Lungarini, Executive Director, CAS-CIAC:

The CIAC Board of Control met this morning to review last night's discussion with the DPH and establish a timeline for decisions on the start of fall sports. The CIAC has requested that the DPH consider allowing our member schools to resume the non-contact conditioning workouts which they have been conducting since July 6, 2020 as early as Monday. Additionally, the CIAC understands that, at today's ReOpen CT Rules Committee meeting, consideration will be given to the inconsistent guidance issued for CIAC interscholastic athletics versus non-CIAC youth sport opportunities. The CIAC and the DPH will continue our collaborative work once an update from those discussions is available, either later today or over the weekend.

For our member schools' planning purposes, the CIAC Board of Control has established the following timeline:

*The CIAC Board of Control will meet again at 7:00PM Sunday.

*The CIAC Board of Control will submit modified fall sport plan options to the DPH for consideration, which it has indicated it would welcome for review.

*The CIAC will delay the first date for all fall sports to Saturday, August 29, 2020.

This timeline will allow the DPH adequate time to consider CIAC's revised fall sports plans, which it will submit early next week, and athletic directors the time necessary to begin a sports season. The CIAC will

update member schools on the return to conditioning workouts as soon as more information becomes available.