



RPS NEWS

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Surprise Reunion of RPS Parent Home for Holidays



Tuesday was a special day in the district with the return of army officer, Joshua Ochoa, Sr. from his nine-month tour in Africa. First, Staff Sergeant Ochoa surprised his daughter Lianie, a ninth-grader at Ridgefield High School. Next, he jumped out of a wrapped box in front of the Scotland Elementary community to delight his son fifth-grader, Joshua, Jr., before going to his youngest

daughter's preschool. Staff Sgt. Ochoa has served in the army for thirteen years.

Watch the heart-warming [SES](#) and [RHS](#) reunions.

Welcome home and thank you, Staff Sgt. Ochoa! Happy Holidays to all our RPS families!

The Sounds of RPS

December is a great month to reflect on Ridgefield Public School's inspiring music program. This month, 4th-grade strings and fifth-grade band students played in their first performances during elementary school holiday concerts. The combined East Ridge and Scotts Ridge Middle School Symphonic Orchestra concert shows students' musical maturation in just a few years. Finally, the Ridgefield High School professional-caliber holiday concert reflects the exponential growth and extraordinary dedication of our oldest students. Children's capacity to learn is amazing, and RPS is blessed to have such talented singers and musicians, music educators, and families to support their students. This is a gift!



Please visit this month's art gallery featured on page 2 for a sampling of student art across RPS.

Calendar

December 23-January 2

No School
Winter Recess

January 9

Early Dismissal
Professional Day for Staff

January 13*

BOE Meeting

January 20

No School
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

January 27*

BOE Meeting

*Board Conference Room
Town Annex 7:00 pm
Check [RPS Calendar](#) for Snow
Dates and Budget
Subcommittee meetings.

Names Day at RHS

This is the sixth year the Anti-Defamation (ADL) League has run Names Day for RHS 10th-graders. Names Day helps create a safe space for students to discuss discrimination, bias, and bullying in their everyday lives and begin the conversation on how to end those behaviors.



[Read Principal Gross and Assistant Principal Phostole's full account of Names Day 2019.](#)

Congratulations!



The photo left shows RPS Teacher of the Year Suzanne Meyer, flanked by Barlow Mountain Elementary Principal Rebecca

Pembroke and BMES Kindergarten Teacher Lisa Whelan (on left), and Superintendent JeanAnn Paddyfote (on right) at the CT Teacher of the Year Awards ceremony in Hartford. Ms. Meyer teaches first grade at BMES. This was a wonderful celebration of this excellent, caring, and hard-working RPS educator.

Mayhem Poets



Last week, East Ridge Middle School eighth-graders walked to The Ridgefield Playhouse to enjoy an urban hip hop poetry performance by [The Mayhem Poets](#).

Fall Art



RPS students have been busy painting, throwing pots, drawing, creating, and making kindergarten monster collages like this one by Olivia G. [Visit RPS Fall Art Gallery](#)

BES Musical

Last weekend, Branchville Elementary presented the musical *Seussical, Jr.*, based on the work of Dr. Seuss. Thanks to all who helped make this show happen. Bravo to the cast and crew!



Book Recommendation

At Ridgefield Library's lively event Battle of the Books, Ridgefield High School Reading Department Chair David Griffith persuasively argued that *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green should be included *1,000 Books to Read Before You Die*. Griffith, shown with fans, was first runner-up in the Battle.



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.

