



# RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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*Susie Da Silva, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools*

May 29, 2020

Dear Families and Faculty,

All of a sudden time seems to be going by very quickly. March 13 feels 'long ago.' We have learned so much since then. I hope you may take a minute to enjoy this short bed time story, "[Hindsight 2020](#)", for the many challenges that we have faced; I also know we have found our very own silver linings.

As Connecticut begins to re-open, it is starting to feel normal again and the world feels a bit lighter. I hope this feeling is shared by you and your families.

Warmly,

*Susie*

Susie Da Silva, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

## **COVID-19 and other Updates**

### **Graduation**

Finally! We have an exciting plan to share. RHS Principal, Dr. Gross, the facilities department, and a committee of educators, students, and families have worked hard to plan a memorable event for our Seniors. You can find a description of the 3-part event [here](#). Congratulations to all! Our elementary and middle school principals will be sharing the details of their plans with families in the coming days. Like RHS, we will follow all directives expected of us from our local health department.

### **Budget Update**

As you know by now, the Board of Education received a reduction in the 2020-21 Operating Budget. Recommendations for reductions were shared this past Tuesday with the Board of Education. The word 'recommendations' can be misperceived. We were required to make difficult choices this budget year, and with those choices we made efforts to create alternative plans or describe our rationale for our cuts. We realize these choices will not be satisfactory to everyone. That said, throughout this budget season, we have felt the passion and advocacy of

our families for our schools and programs, your voices did not go unheard, thank you. The May 26 Board of Education meeting can be found [here](#).

The Budget, Finance and Operations subcommittee will be meeting this coming Tuesday at 8:00am. Materials will be available on Monday.

## **Hiring**

We are in the final phase of our search for the RHS Principal. I expect that we will be in a position to announce our final candidate in the next couple of weeks. During this process, we have met exceptional candidates and I look forward to presenting our recommended candidate to the Board of Education, and to all of you, soon!

Our elementary principal searches have also begun. Our committees will include stakeholders from both Barlow Mountain Elementary and Farmingville Elementary schools. I will keep you posted.

## **eLearning**

RPS should be proud of its growth during the eLearning journey since March 13. Here are a few highlights from this week:

Catch our latest Podcast by clicking [here:Ridgefield Tiger Talk, with Dr. Deeeeesantis](#) or search 'Ridgefield Tiger Talk' in your favorite podcasting app. Joining us in this week's show is Dr. Marc Brackett of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. As you may know, all of our Elementary and Middle Schools (staff and children) are invested in

Dr. Brackett's 'RULER' work. For more information on RULER, click [here](#).

All Elementary District Music Festival: click [here](#) for video.

Veterans Park Elementary School 'Pillow Fight': click [here](#) for video.

Here is our latest link to [RPS News](#)

**Extra math classes:** ERMS and SRMS will be adding an additional math class for the remainder of the school year. Students can still get extra support by emailing teachers and taking advantage of Learning Labs and teacher Office Hours.

## **ESY and Summer School**

Plans are in the midst of being finalized for special education Extended School Year (ESY)services, as well as RHS Summer School. Parents of students eligible for summer programming can expect to hear the details of the District's plan by the end of business on Monday.

## **Reopening of Schools Committee**

The purpose of the Reopening of Schools Committee is to involve stakeholders in scenario planning for the safe return of students and staff to school in August, as well as ongoing

planning throughout the year. We are committed to working collaboratively with families and the Ridgefield community to design and execute a thoughtful plan for our students. The committee will be structured with Dr. Elizabeth Hannaway, Assistant Superintendent of Special Services and Ms. Karen Dewing, Director of Personnel, as co-chairs; a Steering Committee; and general committee membership of school and community stakeholders. These stakeholders will work in the following subcommittees to plan for various scenarios: **Health and Safety, Teaching and Learning, Facilities, Social and Emotional, Extracurriculars and Athletics, Transportation and Community Relations.**

The committee will work diligently throughout the upcoming weeks and months to properly plan for the fall and subsequent months. If you are interested in being considered for this important committee, please complete the questionnaire via the following link: [RPS Reopening of Schools Committee: Parent Participation Inquiry](#). Please note that participation in this committee will require weekly commitment for meetings throughout the summer. We are looking forward to establishing a diverse committee that can support this work. This questionnaire will be open until the afternoon on Wednesday, June 3. Thank you for your consideration.