

RPS DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

October 29, 2018



Our Shared Purpose
Provide highly engaging, relevant
and personalized learning for all
members of the community.

JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Ph.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools
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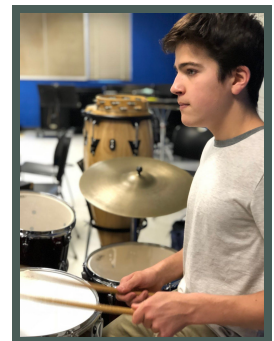
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A Day in the District

Concert and Symphony Orchestra, Concert Band, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band, Percussion, Chorus... for the 230 students enrolled in music classes at Ridgefield High School, the opportunities are expanding thanks to a dynamic team of educators who challenge and inspire them. Meet music teachers Michael McNamara, Robert Volo, and Kevin Haines and listen to the sounds of the talented musicians in our high school music classes. And 1, and 2, and... [Watch our Video Feature.](#)



Ridgefield High School is our “Day in the District” feature this month; however, there are always great things happening in all of our schools. Here are a few highlights we thought you would enjoy!

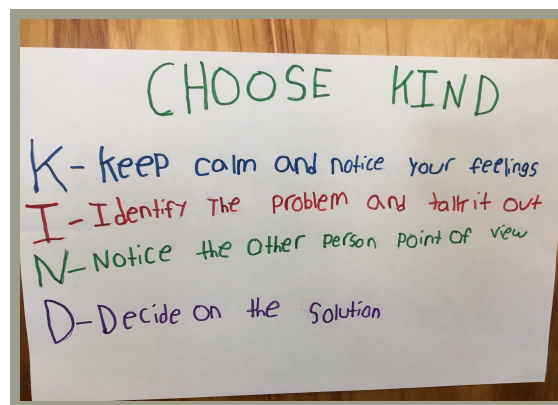


Barlow Mountain Elementary School

“To make recycled projects.” “To learn a new way of making art.” “To paint.” “To do my best.”—These are just a few of the hopes and dreams of Barlow Mountain Elementary School students. In keeping with the [Responsive Classroom philosophy of goal setting](#) for the new school year, art teacher Alana Devito, working with our K-5 teachers, asked students to share their hopes and dreams. From that she created “**Let Your Dreams Take Flight**,” a display for our atrium. Each feather represents an individual hope and dream for the year, reminding us all that working together, we can all take flight!

Branchville Elementary School

As we begin the new year, Branchville Elementary School staff and students are working together in many ways to establish a school environment that is healthy, engaging, and supportive. **One particular focus this year is empathy.** Our School Climate Committee, composed of staff and parents, is reading [UnSelfie: 9 Essential Habits that Provide the "Empathy Advantage."](#) Elementary Supervisor, Nick DeCesare, and School Psychologist, Katie Greges, are also leading an approach to conflict resolution called “Restorative Practices.” [Read more.](#)



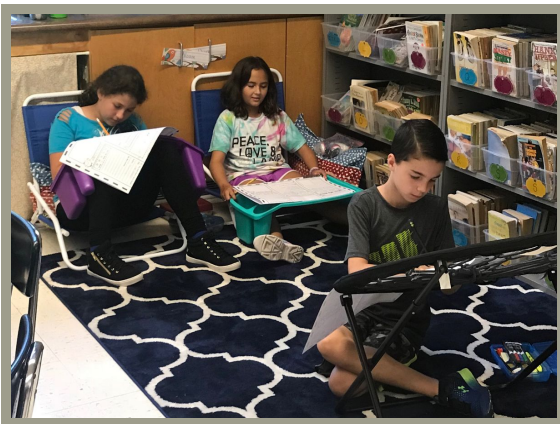


East Ridge Middle School

Art teachers Hillary Lewis and Christen Riegel began this year with a collaborative group project designed to inspire and motivate. In each class, **students were exposed to positive messages from their peers.** Our students were then challenged to reflect about what is important to them and what they would like to share with one another in the hallways of our school. [Read more.](#)

Farmingville Elementary School

We are pleased to announce that **Margaret Hastings has been selected the 2019 Ridgefield Paraeducator of the Year!** Ms. Hastings has worked for the Ridgefield Public Schools since 2003 as an instructional paraeducator at Farmingville Elementary School. She is a beloved and valued member of our school community, demonstrating each day a boundless dedication to her students and to the teachers and staff she has worked with throughout the years. [Read more.](#)

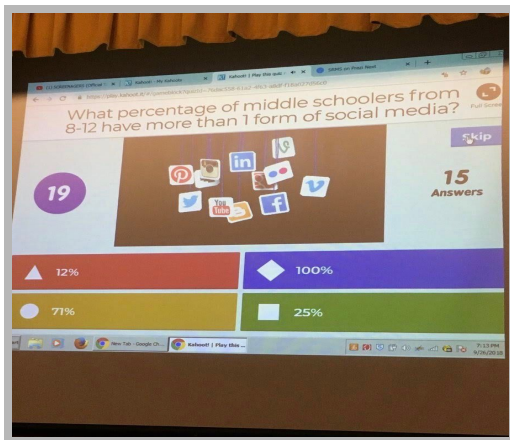


Ridgebury Elementary School

Ridgebury Elementary School has been focusing on building student-centered classroom environments with an eye towards flexibility and choice. **These learning spaces foster collaboration, communication, and engagement.** Teachers have purposefully considered furniture, chart, and materials placement, as well as classroom library organization to create spaces that are more student-centered and personalized for the students in their rooms. [Read more.](#)

Scotland Elementary School

Scotland Elementary School kicked off its six week long after-school enrichment programs in September and it is a smash-hit among the students. In fact, this year we have a record number of participants! **There are twelve after school enrichment activities** which meet three times weekly and stretch the students' learning experiences beyond the regular day with topics not presented during the usual school day. [Read more.](#)



Scotts Ridge Middle School

In September, Scotts Ridge Middle School hosted a Social Media Awareness event, co-created by the Scotts Ridge Middle School Staff staff and PTA. The focus of the event was to provide parents with insight on the multiple social media platforms students are accessing as well as the amount of time students devote to their online endeavors. Further, we used this **opportunity to provide strategies for managing social media** usage at home. It proved to be a great evening of learning and collaboration between educators and parents—a key part of our school culture.

Veterans Park Elementary School

Physical education teacher, Michael Fraioli knows that games can teach cooperation, sportsmanship, and problem-solving skills. Inspired by his example, Principal Ellen Tuckner decided to use the game Rock, Paper, Scissors during the October All-School Meeting to expand upon these themes. **All-School Meetings are a key community building tool** in the [Responsive Classroom](#) teaching approach. They provide a unique opportunity for the whole school to come together and connect with one another, strengthening the already positive and engaging school climate. [Read more.](#)





Ask a Teacher

Teachers work with children every school day. So who better to turn to than the experts in our midst to ask for advice, a little guidance, a helpful hint—as it relates to helping our children succeed.

This month, in light of our new homework regulations, we asked our teachers to give us their best advice as it relates to **homework success**. Here are a few ideas!

- ❖ Students should put their phones away, perhaps in a basket out of sight. If they do use their phone during a break, put on a timer so there is an end in mind for a return to their work.
- ❖ For some, beginning with the easiest subject may be best; a little success is good motivation.
- ❖ Study the material assigned daily and do not wait until just prior to an assessment.
- ❖ Parents can stay in the know with Google classroom and check the Powerschool Portal for missing assignments.
- ❖ Communicating and collaborating with the teacher is very important for students and parents.
- ❖ Do homework each day at the same time and in the same place. It helps to build good work habits.
- ❖ Students should have a little break after school before jumping right into homework.
- ❖ Parents can help by being involved in a quiet activity, if possible, while children are doing their homework.



And in light of our feature story this month, some advice for the student musician:

“For practicing music, I recommend putting it in the middle of your homework routine. Einstein used to take a break from his studies by playing his violin, and often found that he made his best discoveries after doing so.” —Michael McNamara, RHS

Student Spotlight



A Q&A with Vidur Hareesh of Ridgefield High School

If you have attended or viewed a Board of Education meeting this year, then perhaps you will recognize Ridgefield High School Senior and Student Government President Vidur Hareesh. His reports to the Board of Education are a highlight of every meeting! We invite you to learn more about his work at the high school and his motivation to serve as a student leader. [Read more.](#)



News Flash

RPS is now on Instagram



Starting this month, Ridgefield Public Schools will be on Instagram under the name [@ridgefieldps](#). Sharing photos and videos is a great way for us to keep you informed of happenings around our school district. Follow us and **see** the work of our school community.

RPS Virtual Art Gallery



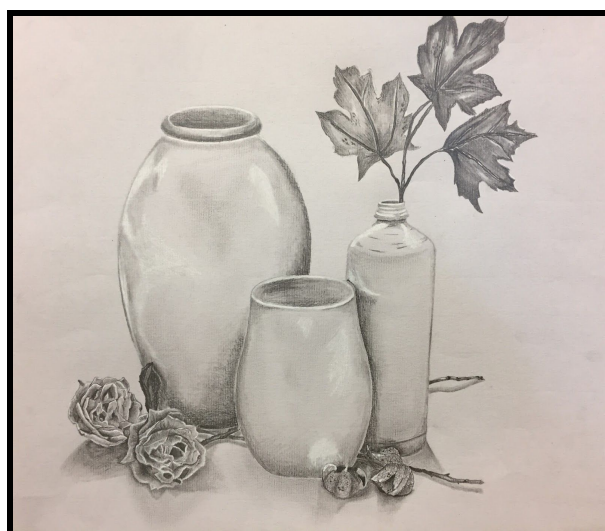
Tyler L, Grade 1



Clark J, Kindergarten



Susanna S, Grade 8



Emma G, Grade 12



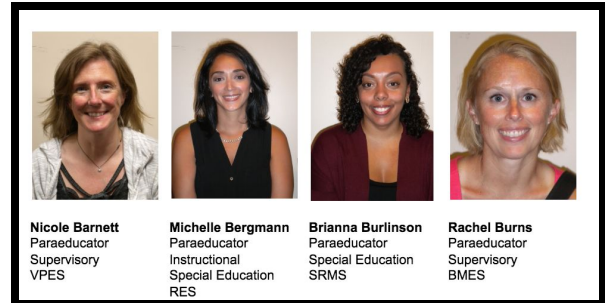
"Carolina Ugly Jugs" - Ridgefield High School Students

[**Enter our October Gallery for more!**](#)



New Staff Members

Last month we introduced you to many of our new teachers. This month we invite you to meet additional new certified and non-certified staff including many wonderful paraeducators. Wondering what a paraeducator does exactly? The [NEA \(National Education Foundation\)](#) defines it as follows:



“Paraeducators are school employees who work alongside and/or under the direction of a licensed or certificated educator to support and assist in providing instructional and non-instructional services to children, youth, and their families. Also known as paraprofessionals, teacher aides, teaching assistants and other titles, paraeducators are integral members of the instructional team.” - National Education Foundation.

[Meet our new staff!](#)

Calendar Highlights

Parent Workshop - November 14th



Project Resilience continues its ongoing series of parent workshops this month with “Survival of the Kindest, How Helping Others Fuels Kindness in our Children and Ourselves.” The featured speaker is Chris Kukk PH.D., author of *The Compassionate Achiever*, a Ridgefield Reads Book Club Book. Learn more about how being kind

not only improves the lives of others - it can transform our own lives and those of our children.

Wednesday, November 14 @ 7:00 PM, Scotts Ridge Middle School Auditorium

Please register at www.ridgefieldlibrary.org or call 203-438-2282.

[See Event Flyer for more Information](#) & [full schedule of Parent Workshops for 2018-2019](#)

Project Empty Bowls at Ridgefield High School – November 15th Supper, Theater, & Art Event to Support the Ridgefield Food Pantry



The Ridgefield High School (RHS) Family & Consumer Science department in collaboration with the Visual & Performing Arts Department present an evening that will entertain and delight audiences and serve our community.

Enjoy a simple meal of soup, salad, and bread, along with a ceramic bowl to take home, and a night at the theater! **Thursday, November 15 @ 5:00 PM in the RHS Faculty Lounge, Room G239.** The \$35 tickets must be purchased in advance; all proceeds go to the Ridgefield Food Pantry. [See flyer for full details](#) and visit www.rhsperformingarts.com/info for more information on “Almost Maine,” the RHS fall play running November 15–18.

Key District-Wide Dates



You may keep up with **news from the Ridgefield Public Schools** via our [news page](#) on the district site or via social media. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#) or [Instagram](#) as we share happenings, reminders of important events, and more. [Contact us](#) if you have any **questions or feedback**.

