



RPS News

Ridgefield Public Schools Newsletter | Ridgefield, CT | September 10, 2021

New Faces; New Roles



Ridgefield Public Schools welcomed many new teachers and staff members this year, adding strength and expertise to our fabulous faculty. One of these new faces is Megan Kounnas (photo left), who joins RPS as the art teacher at Farmingville and Scotland Elementary Schools. Ms. Kounnas is originally from Michigan, but lived in Argentina in middle school and spent high school summers in Switzerland with her father. She most recently taught art at Wilton High School and previously worked at a therapy center in New York City after five years teaching art at the International School in the Cayman Islands. She has illustrated two children's books by an author from the Cayman Islands, which show iconic spots on the island of Grand Cayman and also discuss self-esteem and resilience. In response to the question of who is her favorite artist, she wrote: "This is a hard one! I love Vincent Van Gogh because of his expressive colors and brushstrokes. I love Ai Weiwei because of his activism and immersive installations. I love Kara Walker because her artwork is simplistic, but tells important stories about American History that kids can understand just by her imagery." Welcome to RPS, Megan!



RPS also tapped some of our most promising leaders to fill important roles in the district. We announced in July that Jennifer Phostole is the new East Ridge Middle School Principal. A beloved Ridgefield High School Assistant Principal, Phostole received glowing recommendations from all who worked with her. Ms. Phostole's reflection on empathy reveals her perspective: "Based on my own personal and professional growth, I have come to realize that having empathy is the single most important characteristic of being an excellent administrator and an overall well-rounded human being. Empathy is the foundation needed to be a good listener, form strong relationships with all educational stakeholders, and the key to productive and compassionate decision-making."

We look forward to sharing more about our new and treasured RPS veteran staff throughout the year.

Calendar

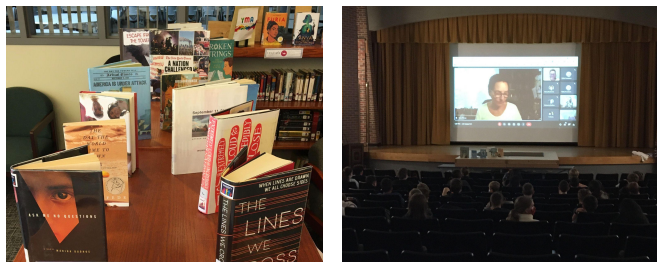
September 13 and 27
BOE Meetings
[Link to Live/Recorded](#)

September 16
No School/Yom Kippur
[Full RPS Calendar](#)

September 23
Early Dismissal for Students
Professional Development

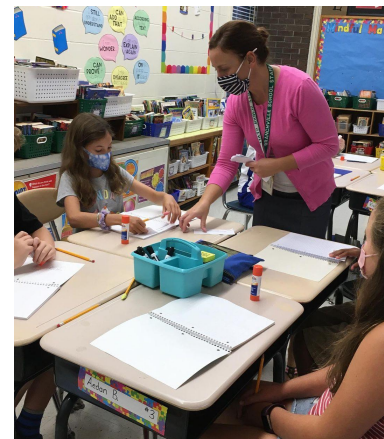
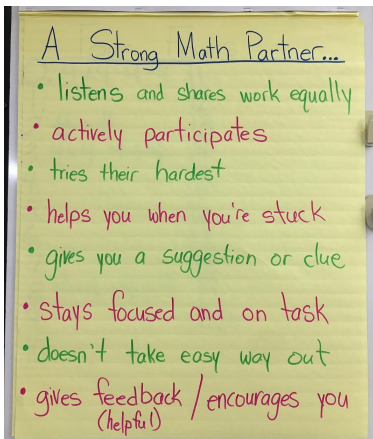
Please Check Your [School's Calendar](#) for Elementary/Middle School Open House Events and Picture Days Coming Up Later This Month

Remembering 9/11/01



Scotts Ridge Middle School seventh graders listened to three authors reading from their books about September 11, 2001, during a library-sponsored virtual readathon. These books included *The Memory of Things* by Gae Polisner, *Nine, Ten: A September 11 Story* by Nora Raleigh Baskin, and *Branches of Hope: The 9/11 Survivor Tree* by Ann McGee, illustrated by Nicole Wong.

How to Be a Strong Partner



Branchville Elementary fifth graders received their math partners this week and some amazing advice (photo left) about being a strong partner, which will serve them well for the rest of their lives. Doesn't everyone want partners at work and life who "listen and share work equally," "actively participate," "try their hardest," etc.?

Partner with Us, Join Your PTA



Just a cursory look at a school calendar will reveal the remarkable impact of our PTAs. From book fairs to BBQs (Veterans Park Elementary photos above), school plays to senior nights, coffees to teacher lunches, Ridgefield Public School PTAs add so much to the vitality of our school district. Find information and links for all nine schools on the Ridgefield Council of PTA's [website](#).

Make Wellness Routine



Ah, new school supplies! Barlow Mountain students (photo left) aren't the only ones taken in by new notebooks, a box of unused markers, or glue sticks. Many of us see these as a metaphor for a fresh start and an opportunity to get organized. Whether you reuse last year's or start anew, please try to prepare your student to learn by establishing evening and morning routines that promote learning and wellness.

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.

