



RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Susie Da Silva, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

1/15/2021

January 15, 2021

Dear Faculty and Families,

Next week will be shortened in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Enjoy the day, and what it means to each of us, and how we can continue to work together to ensure equity for all.

We have been enjoying calm weather- that said, it looks to be changing. Stay dry tomorrow and be reminded of our weather protocols distributed on December 16 (found [here](#)).

Warmly,

Susie

Susie Da Silva, Ed.D.

A Few Bits

School Status

As communicated on Wednesday, all schools will continue in the hybrid model until the week of January 25. We will communicate with families again on Wednesday, January 20.

CIAC

By now, parents and students who engage in athletics at RHS have heard from Athletic Director, Dane Street, regarding CIAC's recommendation for winter sports. We know how much athletics matter to all of our community stakeholders; and our goal is to have students balance their full school experience in a safe manner.

Communication

Our goal at RPS is to ensure transparent, frequent, and clear communication. Of course, we do this while always protecting the privacy of the individuals under our care. Social media is a great forum in which to communicate and/or disseminate information. That said, it is also a medium in which communication can lead to misinformation/misconceptions, which may cause alarm. I encourage all members of our school community to reach out to their school principal, or district-level staff member with any questions or concerns. Our role is to serve all stakeholders and provide timely and accurate information. We look forward to your continued partnership.

Health and Safety

Governor Lamont announced on Thursday that the first wave of phase 1b of COVID-19 vaccinations will prioritize CT residents over 75 years of age. We stand ready to upload our school staff to the vaccine

administration management system (VAMS) the moment we are given the green light to do so. Once uploaded to the VAMS system, RPS staff will receive an email to register and make an appointment to receive the vaccine. Governor Lamont has asked for patience, as phase 1b has over a million CT residents in it.

In collaboration with the CT Department of Public Health, we have concluded an outbreak investigation into the December cluster of cases at Farmingville Elementary School. The DPH determined that due to the high community prevalence of COVID-19, there were five index cases that came into the FES building from outside, and subsequently a number of cases stemmed from these five cases due to transmission in the building. The DPH has recommended that we continue to focus on reducing distance between individuals in classrooms.

Food Service

Food Service details can now be found under the Parent sections on the Districts website. Please check here periodically for exciting new updates.

Due to elementary schools operating on the hybrid model we will not be able to offer weekend meals at SES/BMES schools next week, but will start the program again as soon as students are back in full attendance.

With the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday on Monday January 18, and school buildings being closed for the holiday, evening meal pickups at East Ridge Middle School will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for next week.

The Federal Government continues to cover a free meal for all students through the end of the fiscal year or June 30. Because the Food Service program in Ridgefield is a self-operating program, **every student that chooses to take an in-school meal helps to fund the Food Service program for all the Ridgefield Public Schools.** Please see the flyer [here](#) for more information.

Budget Announcement

The Superintendent's 2021-22 Proposed Budget Presentation took place on January 11, 2021. You can find the presentation [here](#). Video can be found [here](#).

The full-day BOE Budget Workshop schedule can be found [here](#). It will be a virtual meeting held on Saturday, January 23, 2021.

RPS Highlights

Enjoy the RPS News [here!](#)

[Ridgefield Tiger Talk](#): We have an exciting show for you. In this episode we talk to Claire Griffin and Gianna Greco- two science research students from Ridgefield High School who have been spending the past three years studying the genetic modification tool known as CRISPR. Also joining them is their teacher Mr. Patrick Hughes. We'll talk about what science research is, as well as the amazing opportunities that it provides our students. Thanks for listening!

Twitter: @RPS_DaSilva Instagram: rpssuper

Martin Luther King's Day

On the third Monday of every January we remember Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Regardless of race, skin color, or religion, Dr. King believed ALL people should have the same opportunities in life. Dr. King dedicated his efforts in leading non-violent strategies to change laws. His speeches often included song lyrics and during peaceful protests, the lyrics of poems and the melody of songs provided courage, hope, and strength to people from all walks of life. Below are children's picture books with some of these very lyrics.

[My Dream of Martin Luther King](#)

By Faith Ringgold

[We Came To America](#)

By Faith Ringgold

[He's Got the Whole World in His Hands](#)

By Kadir Nelson

[We've Got the Whole World in Our Hands](#)

By Rafael Lopez

[Sing a Song](#)

By Kelly Starling Lyons

CSDE

The State Department of Education offers a professional support series for families, you can find more information [here](#).