



RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

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Dear Families and Faculty,

This communication is intended to clarify questions that we have received regarding our plan to move to a full, in-person learning model for the middle and high schools beginning on April 19th.

In order to best prepare, a survey was sent to you by your child's school administrator asking families to indicate their child's commitment to the full in-person or the full remote learning model by March 29. This commitment allows for the least disruption to the learning experience, appropriate planning for administrators and teachers, and consistency for students and families.

We realize that there may be families that need to change their commitment after March 29 due to extenuating circumstances, if so, they may contact their building administrator and request to change from the full in-person or full remote model, with 72 hours notice.

RPS has not offered a full in-person learning model at the secondary level for more than a year. We have heard from parents of current "hybrid" students that they are concerned that the hybrid option would not continue to be offered after April 19th. As a point of reference, when the full in-person model is in use at the elementary school level, the hybrid model is not offered; and this will be the same at the secondary level.

While it is our plan to fully return on April 19, we will assess the learning models weekly, as we have with elementary schools. This assessment is done in collaboration with town of Ridgefield Health Director Ed Briggs, RPS Medical Advisor Dr. James Ahern, and Director of Nursing and COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison Aaron Crook. During this weekly meeting, the team looks at a number of variables, including and not limited to:

- evaluating local transmission data to determine if it is reasonably safe to keep our schools in the full in-person learning model
- local test positivity rates, and rates of new cases
- specific information about events or contexts in the community that lead to transmission and a number of positive COVID cases

As you have noticed from our recent communications, the COVID prevalence data can change rapidly. Ridgefield's local numbers had been steadily dropping for weeks, and Mr. Crook communicated yesterday that there has been a recent uptick in prevalence rates. RPS is watching this data carefully each day and week, and will use this information to finalize the full, in-person return plan for April 19th. With this said, our in-school transmission has been low, and we believe that our schools continue to be safe.

Families can expect a communication right before April vacation to confirm the full reopening plan status.

Kind regards,

Susie

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