



RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Good morning, Parents/Guardians,

The following message is sent on behalf of Dr. Da Silva and the RPS Reopening Steering Committee. It is appreciated that you take a few minutes to read through this update to our district's reopening plan.

Last evening, the RPS administration presented to the Board of Education the next phase of our district reopening plan. The district's plan was designed for a full reopening for all K-8 students beginning on 9/29, assuming Ridgefield continues to be considered "low risk" for COVID-19 spread. In the last three weeks, district administration has had the opportunity to observe the successes and challenges of our hybrid model opening, specifically in our ability to apply the three most important mitigating measures for health and safety: mask wearing, hand washing, and social distancing. The third of these has proven to be the most challenging to assess and maintain consistently, particularly in our middle schools.

In short, we are able to achieve proper social distancing to offer the option of full return to all K-5 students, and we are unable to consistently achieve proper social distancing in order to bring back all of our middle school students. At the middle school level, we surveyed parents to inquire if they'd be interested in continuing with a hybrid option, even if the middle schools reopened fully. Offering the hybrid "option" in a full return did not result in an adequate reduction to the daily middle school attendance to meet proper social distancing.

With the above in mind, we have consulted with the Ridgefield Department of Public Health, Ed Briggs, along with Dr. James Ahern, District Medical Advisor, and Mr. Aaron Crook, District Nursing Coordinator, to reach our next phase of our reopening - outlined below. It's worth reminding faculty, parents, and students that the points below for our next phase are with the assumption that we (Ridgefield) continue to be considered "low risk" for COVID-19 spread. Should we reach the "moderate risk" level, we will follow the "moderate risk" hybrid plan outlined in our reopening plan.

- Our PreK will continue with its full reopening, half days. Four days per week for AM classes, and five days per week for PM classes.
- Our K-2 students will return fully on 9/29, and our 3-5 students will return fully on 10/5. 3-5th graders will continue with the hybrid schedule for the week of 9/29 (AA/BB).
- Our 6-8th graders will continue in a hybrid model (A and B cohorts). Students with IEPs, students receiving MTSS intervention services, and students receiving English Learner services will be offered the option of returning fully, five days/week.
- Our RHS plan will not change - we will remain in a hybrid model until the end of the quarter. Assessment of social distancing at the high school is currently taking place and will be discussed at a future Board of Education meeting in October.
- Students will continue to have the option of learning from home/virtually as a "temporary remote learner."
- We ask that parents who are either newly electing or continuing to opt for the "temporary remote learning" option communicate their choice with their building administration directly via email.

- Parents of students who are shifting out of temporary remote learning to in-person instruction are also asked to communicate their choice with their building administration directly via email.

A revision to our reopening plan also includes a change for parents who are opting for temporary remote learning. We are now requesting that parents of students who are opting to participate fully remotely ("temporary remote learning"), make their selection for this option for the entire quarter (secondary) or trimester (elementary). The reason for this change is to limit the disruption to faculty and students. If a family has a circumstance that necessitates an immediate change, we ask that they contact the building principal directly.

There are operational shifts per school that will be communicated directly to parents from elementary and middle school administration as a result of implementing this next phase. One example of these shifts is that middle school parents will receive the continued hybrid calendar from their building administrators.

While it is our disappointment that we cannot bring back all students fully right now, we believe that we are maximizing our instructional opportunities while prioritizing health and safety mitigating measures.

Warmly,

Susie

Susie Da Silva, Ed.D.