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RIDGEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Over the past three years the Ridgewood Public Schools has implemented a 1:1 Chromebook initiative in grades 6-12 and increased instruction in 21st century skills and technology use in grades K-12. We use technology appropriately and with educational purpose.

In discussing technology with parents and community members, I have heard concerns about students' personal use (screen time) on their devices. I share that concern, yet understand that times have changed. For example, the writing of personal letters by hand has shifted with the wide use of telephones, and now smart phones, in the present day.

Last year, Catherine Steiner-Adair, Ed.D., author of *The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age*, addressed parents and guardians as part of our Community Outreach Program - Wellbeing Speaker Series. Following her talk, the Ridgewood Public Schools administrators began follow-up discussions that continue today. One outcome of these talks is the selection of Dr. Steiner-Adair's book for a One Book One District initiative that will encourage the entire community to read *The Big Disconnect*.

In addition, because the technology "invasion" into our world can be daunting, the following programs have been scheduled for the 2017-2018 school year:

October 11, 2017 Benjamin Franklin Middle School, 7:00 pm

Brief overview of the Ridgewood Public Schools' use of educational technology and its security, followed by breakout sessions led by Ridgewood Public School administrators on *The Big Disconnect*.

October 19, 2017 Ridgewood Public Library, 6:30 pm (*This is a League of Women Voters' program*)

The League of Women Voters will sponsor the showing of the movie, *Screen-agers*.

November 29, 2017 George Washington Middle School, 7:00 pm

The Ridgewood Board of Education, through our Wellbeing Series, will host Dr. Devorah Heitner in a program titled, *Screen wise: Helping Kids Thrive (and Survive) in Their Digital World*.

January 11, 2018 Ridgewood High School, 7:00 pm

We will host a hands-on technology and smart phone program for parents and guardians.

March 8, 2018 George Washington Middle School, 7:00pm

A panel of students will discuss their personal use of technology.

The Ridgewood Public School administrators and I are very excited about these offerings. I hope you will join us at one or more, or better yet, at all of the programs. I also hope that you will also put *The Big Disconnect* on the top of your summer reading pile.

Have a great summer.

Sincerely yours,

Daniel Fishbein, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools