



August 26, 2020

Dear Ridgewood School Community,

I hope this letter finds you healthy and relaxed from what may be the most unusual summer of our lives. Many of you have walked by the Orchard School property to view the progress of the soil remediation project, and I would like to provide an update, as we are quickly approaching the start of the school year.

At this time, the removal of the contaminated soil has been completed, and replacement soil, plantings, and wood chips are being installed. The project has progressed extremely slowly due to the contractor's inability to mobilize and make necessary submittals to the engineer. With public bidded work, the timeline for the job is determined based on a mutually agreed upon schedule, and unfortunately, this contractor has been unable to adhere to the schedule. I can assure you that our engineering firm, WSP, our attorney, Jeff Merlino, and I have been in regular contact with this contractor to monitor the progress of the job. An engineer from WSP is on-site daily to meet with the foreman to review the progress and speed of the work, as well as to certify the work. The engineer also meets with the owner several times a week. Our attorney has been involved to push the contractor to get the job done. He has discussed our dissatisfaction with the owner and the bonding company. I visit the site at least once a day to check on the status.

The contractor assures us daily that they will get the job done according to the schedule, and we have made it perfectly clear that this is the last week they have to complete the project. In my opinion, if the contractor had put forth the same effort in the middle of the project as they do at the end, the job would be done by now, and this letter would be unnecessary. I am hopeful that the project will be substantially complete by the start of school, but I anticipate there will be punch list items that still need to be addressed next week. We will continue to work with the contractor to push for substantial completion for the start of school. Please know that this does not interfere in any way with the reopening of school.

The orange fencing will be in place until the grass grows, and the sprinkler system will be replaced. I do wish students and staff were going to return to lush green grass, but that will not be the case.

Thank you in advance for your patience, and I hope the remaining part of your summer is restful and fun.

Sincerely yours,

Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

C Ridgewood Board of Education

