



RIDGEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
(201) 670-2700 x10530
dfishbein@ridgewood.k12.nj.us

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Dear Ridgewood School Community,

It is hard to believe that we have just completed the twelfth day of school. Following the relaxed pace of summer, everyone feels that dramatic shift at the start of the school year. For me, September always seems to pass by quickly, yet it is a very tiring month for students, parents, and staff. Although this school year looks different, there are still many demands on all of us. I hope you are taking some time for self-care and establishing strong support networks. Our School-Based Mental Health Team is reaching out to students and working to support their mental health and overall wellbeing.

Now that Phase 1 is in progress, I would like to give you a brief update on what we have learned so far and where we are headed. At the elementary level, we have received positive feedback about the structure of the at-home learning days from both parents and teachers. Offering specials on these days, along with an afternoon check-in with the classroom teacher, has provided more face-to-face interaction for our youngest learners, which has been beneficial academically and socially. The hybrid and remote schedules at the secondary level are functioning smoothly, and the reopening of school has been welcomed by staff and students alike. However, we have heard from students and teachers that having all eight periods in a day has been quite challenging.

Administrators have begun to explore possible scenarios for Phase 2 of the reopening plan and are taking all of the input we are receiving about Phase 1 into consideration. Shortly, parents will be receiving a survey to collect feedback on the possible scheduling scenarios with video explanations to elaborate on the details. Our goal continues to be to provide the best educational experience with the most in-person instructional time for all of our students. Parents are encouraged to participate in their Home and School Association. These groups will also be gathering input from the greater school community, which will be shared with Pandemic Response Teams to inform next steps.

As a reminder, please continue to be diligent with wearing masks, practicing social distancing, and washing or sanitizing hands. These small steps go a long way to keeping our community safe. Also, cooperation with the local health department will ensure proper contact tracing. Finally, if at any time you are advised to quarantine, it is vital that you follow all guidelines for the full duration of the quarantine period. We must all work together to keep our community safe and our schools open. Be well!

Sincerely,

Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

C Board of Education

