

January 15, 2021

Dear Ridgefield Families,

Roughly two weeks ago, we welcomed our first cohort of students back to in-person instruction. I can tell you first hand the energy and excitement that comes from having students in the buildings is second to none. I have had a chance to visit both elementary schools to watch arrival, dismissal, and peek in on learning. I have heard from administrators and teachers alike that the counter-measures, procedures, and protocols we have put in place at school are working as intended. For those of you sending students to school for in-person services, please remember to complete your daily attestation before leaving the house. If your child is not feeling well or has exposure to someone not feeling well, please keep them at home. More than ever, we are dependent on each other to do the right thing.

We welcome back first-grade students when we return on January 19, following the three-day weekend to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Below is the current schedule for a return to in-person instruction for grades 1-5. To the parents of fifth-grade students, you will be receiving an email this afternoon with information on registering for your desired learning mode for the remainder of the second trimester.

- 1st grade starts Tuesday, January 19
- 2nd grade starts Monday, January 25
- 3rd grade starts Monday, February 1
- 4th and 5th grade starts Monday, February 8 (tentative - pending limited transmission at school sites)

Last week, I shared with you that our attention has now shifted to providing our secondary students opportunities to return to in-person instruction. I am pleased to share that beginning Tuesday, January 19, we will be welcoming in a limited number of secondary students. We are offering supervised learning support for select students in seventh and eighth grade and our seniors. The District will expand these services to other secondary grades in the weeks to come. Please see below for a more detailed phased-in approach.

- January 19 - limited in-person student support for 7th, 8th, and 12th graders
- February 1 - limited in-person student support for 6th and 9th graders
- February 8 - limited in-person student support for 10th graders
- February 16 - limited in-person student support for 11th graders

Thank you to everyone who has reached out to me the past many months to share their thoughts on in-person and remote learning. I am grateful to live in such a supportive and passionate community, and your feedback makes us better. Regularly, I hear the plea to extend in-person learning options to secondary students. Please know, the school board and I are resolute in our commitment to expand the in-person learning option for all students as soon as possible...safely and sensibly. That means we look closely at the various metrics to help inform our decision.

While the plan above is bringing back limited numbers of students for in-person support, the District is working diligently to provide the option for a return to in-person instruction for all secondary students. The current guidance suggests, among other metrics, that when COVID activity levels are above 350 per 100,000 people, school districts should prioritize elementary students. When the rate drops below 350 (but above 200), the focus is on middle school students' return. As the rate drops below 200, the return of high school students is prioritized.

I hope you're enjoying catching a glimpse of the resilience our community is showing during this ongoing pandemic. Please keep them coming! Use the email address (student.photos@ridgefieldsd.org) to share these candid moments.



Stay well and remain #RidgefieldResilient.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nathan McCann
Superintendent