

May 7, 2021

Dear Ridgefield Families,

This week is teacher and staff appreciation week! The Ridgefield community is truly blessed to have so many wonderfully talented and passionate educators and support staff. As the parent of two Ridgefield students, I see firsthand the great work happening daily. I am immensely grateful and proud of the collaborative efforts shown by our staff each day as they work to ensure meaningful, personalized learning experiences and opportunities for each student. If you have not already had the chance to do so, I invite you to join me in sharing your appreciation for their efforts.

The District was recently honored with a pair of recognitions highlighting just some of our team members' outstanding work. Last week, the Washington State Auditor's Office presented the Ridgefield School District with the Stewardship Award. This prestigious recognition is issued only to organizations that take great strides in ensuring public accountability and strict adherence to state and federal requirements. Ridgefield is one of just two school districts receiving the award this year. This is an organizational award that would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of many people working together with a shared mission of being good stewards of public resources. While this award belongs to the entire District, I would like to specifically acknowledge and thank Paula McCoy, the District's Executive Director of Business Services. Paula has established a high bar for the District's Business Services department, and I am immensely proud of her and the District for receiving this statewide recognition.

Ridgefield is also one of just four school districts in the state this year to receive a Zo8 Award from the Washington State Health Care Authority. Annually, the Health Care Authority honors member employers with the award to highlight the success of employers' wellness programs. Ridgefield's Human Resources staff are using the SmartHealth Worksite Wellness Roadmap to implement the award-winning program. In their award announcement, a representative from the Health Care Authority wrote, "with all that was going on in 2020, along with the huge changes to how we work, live, and play, we were very impressed and proud of their work." I share their sentiment and thank Jodi Fontyn, Kalin Heath, and Terri Cochran for their work establishing a successful wellness program and congratulate them for earning this well-deserved recognition.

As a reminder, enrollment is already underway for the 2021-2022 school year. Families seeking flexible learning options are encouraged to consider [Ridgefield's newest offering, Wisdom Ridge Academy](#). The new Alternative Learning Experience, or ALE program, opens in the fall of 2021 and will serve students in grades K-12. You can learn more about Wisdom Ridge Academy at www.wisdomridgeacademy.org. Additionally, we are hosting another family information night on Thursday, May 13, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Following a presentation that will highlight the student and family experience, staff will be on-hand to answer individual questions and meet with interested families. Families interested in attending this in-person meeting may [sign up here](#).

At last week's board of directors meeting, Cowlitz Tribal Chairman Philip Harju presented the District with a check for more than \$106,000. The generous donation will help fund the District's continued pursuit of expanding access to high-quality early learning opportunities, as well as providing educational programming that supports the District's commitment to the development of the whole child. We are grateful for this donation and the Cowlitz Tribe's ongoing generosity. We are proud of our strong community partnerships, and it is immensely gratifying to have neighbors who see the value in supporting the students and staff of the Ridgefield community.

I want to make sure I share some important information with you regarding the Emergency Broadband Benefit program. Eligible families can receive \$50 per month for broadband service (\$75 per month if households are on Tribal lands) and a one-time discount of up to \$100 for an internet-connected device. [This page outlines household eligibility requirements](https://getemergencybroadband.org).

The FCC recently announced that starting on Wednesday, May 12, eligible households will be able to enroll through an approved provider or by visiting <https://getemergencybroadband.org>. The program is available until it runs out of funds, or six months after Health and Human Services declares an end to the COVID public health emergency (whichever is sooner).

Sunday is Mothers' Day! I extend my wishes for an incredible day to my amazing mom, Mary, the equally extraordinary mom of our two boys, Amanda, and all Ridgefield moms. Thank you for all you do.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools. Stay well and remain #RidgefieldResilient.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nathan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Nathan McCann
Superintendent