

RIDGEFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

# REPORT *to the* COMMUNITY

2019-2020



# Welcome from the SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Ridgefield Families,

Welcome to our Report to the Community. The Ridgefield School District is proud of our history and long track record of delivering excellent results. This begins with high-quality instruction delivered by dedicated, highly-skilled teachers who make a world of difference for our students in the classroom. We offer educational programs that nurture the growth of the whole child, and we strive to build and maintain safe and healthy learning environments for every student. Finally, we develop and nurture community partnerships that enable us to achieve together what we cannot accomplish alone.

We continue to be committed in our pursuit to become Washington state's premier school system, and we're proud in knowing that the reason so many young families flock to Ridgefield is because of our excellent schools.

Thank you for taking a few minutes to read our Report to the Community. This magazine contains significant information about Pursuing Premier, which clearly defines the district's goals and planning blueprint. Our feature story celebrates the 50th anniversary of Ridgefield School District's incredible history partnering with the Cispus Learning Center, which has provided generations of Ridgefield students with memorable outdoor learning experiences each year at Cispus Outdoor School.

Also within these pages, you will learn about new facility additions and enhancements that are positively influencing student learning, such as the district's new Early Learning Center for our pre-K students. Get an update on the landscaping projects surrounding the Ridgefield Administrative & Civic Center (RACC)--student-inspired with the Ridgefield community in mind. Read about the 2020 Bond Program, and learn about the newest programs provided by the Ridgefield Public Schools Foundation in support of our schools. Data on student achievement, school demographics and finance for the 2018-2019 school year are included in this issue as well.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please give me a call at (360) 619-1302. Thank you for your continued support of the Ridgefield School District.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nathan McCann

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



# PURPOSE STATEMENT

Ridgefield School District aspires to be the state's premier district, leveraging strong community partnerships to provide each student personalized learning experiences, opportunities, and skills that ensure success and unlimited possibilities.



## QUALITY INSTRUCTION

We ensure research-based instructional practices are implemented in every classroom utilizing access to professional growth and collaboration opportunities to reflect on and improve our practices.

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

We deliver a premier educational program dedicated to developing the whole child. We provide students with personalized academic and extracurricular opportunities while increasing student learning.

## LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

We strive to provide safe, well-maintained facilities with 21st century learning environments in which all students can succeed. We will maximize the availability of our facilities to support community use.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

We create educational partnerships to promote collaboration, improve communication and provide programs for greater learning opportunities.

# DISTRICT GOALS

- #1 Achieve high outcomes through quality instruction, personalized learning, and continuous improvement resulting in success for every student.
- #2 Provide safe, inclusive, and supportive environments that nurture the well-being of the whole child.
- #3 Provide collaboration and communication opportunities with families, staff, and the community resulting in strong partnerships.
- #4 Close the disparity gaps by ensuring high expectations, removing barriers, and providing opportunities for all students.



## AdvancED

AdvancED is the largest community of education professionals in the world. AdvancEd is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that conducts rigorous on-site external reviews of Pre-K-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential. While their expertise is grounded in more than a hundred years of work in school accreditation, AdvancED is far from a typical accrediting agency. Their goal isn't to certify that schools are good enough. Rather, their commitment is to help schools improve.

The Accreditation Process is a balanced, systemic approach combining standards, stakeholder feedback and student performance to measure quality programs, relationships and results. The Accreditation Process helps institutions make the most of their talents and resources. The process aligns accreditation with accountability, emphasizing learner outcomes when evaluating institutional quality. However, it is not the outcome but the course taken over time that yields the greatest return on investment.

During the 2015-2016 school year the Ridgefield School District was honored to become the first Washington state school district to receive AdvancED System accreditation. We have spent the last three years implementing improvements related to assessment practices, communication and professional development.



# DISTRICT PROFILE

## OUR SCHOOL FACILITIES

- RIDGEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL 9-12
- VIEW RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL 7-8
- SUNSET RIDGE INTERMEDIATE 5-6
- SOUTH RIDGE ELEMENTARY K-4
- UNION RIDGE ELEMENTARY K-4
- EARLY LEARNING CENTER PRE-K

## OUR TEACHERS

The district has highly qualified staff members in all classrooms. For those who would like to know about the training background of our staff, please contact Human Resources at (360) 619-1306. All paraprofessionals working in the Title I program meet the federal standards.

## TEACHER STATISTICS

CLASSROOM TEACHERS	170
AVERAGE YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE	12.2
% TEACHERS WITH AT LEAST A MASTER'S DEGREE	71
NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO ARE NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED	20

Ridgefield School District No.122 complies with all state and federal rules and regulations and provides equal opportunity in programs and employment and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin/language, marital status, HIV/Hepatitis C status, sex, sexual orientation-including gender expression or identity, creed, religion, age, veteran or military status, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. Ridgefield School District will also take steps to assure that national origin persons who lack English language skills can participate in all education programs, services and activities. For information regarding translation services, bilingual education or inquiries regarding compliance procedures, contact Chris Griffith, Title IX/Section 504/ADA Coordinator, 510 Pioneer Street, Ridgefield, WA 98642, (360) 619-1304, or by email at [chris.griffith@ridgefieldsd.org](mailto:chris.griffith@ridgefieldsd.org).

## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS 2018-2019

<b>ENROLLMENT</b> as of October 1, 2018	<b>3,230</b>
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<b>GENDER</b>	
MALE	50.3%
FEMALE	49.7%

<b>ETHNICITY</b>	
AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE	0.5%
ASIAN	1.3%
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	0.6%
HISPANIC	12.2%
WHITE	79.6%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN/OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	0.2%
TWO OR MORE RACES	5.6%

<b>SPECIAL PROGRAMS</b>	
FREE OR REDUCED-PRICED MEALS	20.0%
SPECIAL EDUCATION	10.6%
TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL	3.1%

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ADJUSTED 4-YEAR COHORT GRADUATION RATE: CLASS OF 2018	89.5%
ADJUSTED 5-YEAR COHORT GRADUATION RATE CLASS OF 2018	91.6%
GRADUATION RATE, CLASS OF 2019	90.5%

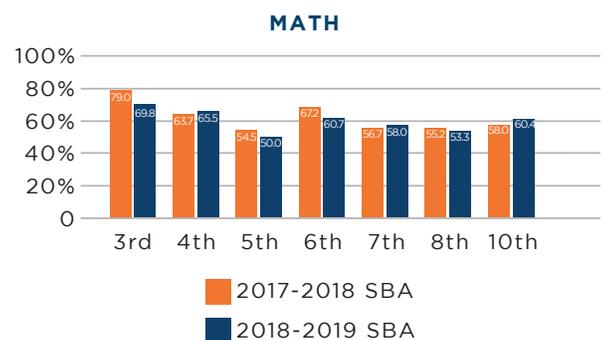
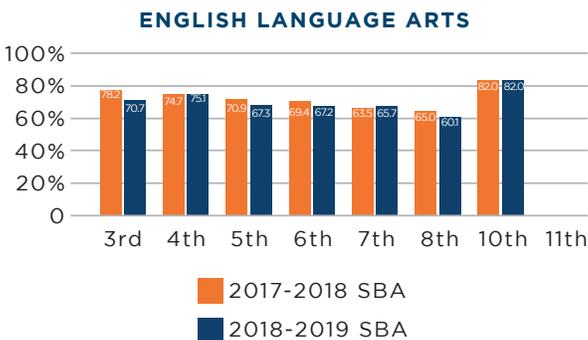
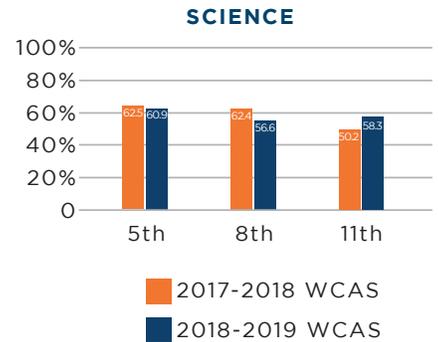
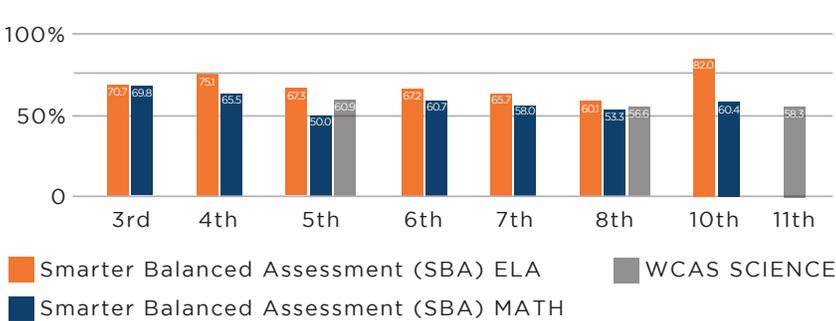


## STATE TESTING SCORE DATA

The Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) maintains demographic and test score data for every district and school in the state. Below, we have provided you with the OSPI Report Card information for the Ridgefield School District as a whole. Detailed district and school information can be found at <https://www.ridgefieldsd.org/o/district/page/curriculum-instruction-assessment>. On this site, disaggregated student achievement data can be viewed by clicking on the links to the left for the specific OSPI report card for each school within the Ridgefield School District. These report cards will provide more detail about individual school performance. The links to each school can be found under Curriculum Instruction. Click on State Reports.

If you would prefer this information in printed form, please contact the Assistant Superintendent of the Ridgefield School District at (360) 619-1304.

### 2018-2019 RESULTS



# BOND



Every  
VOTE  
counts.

**The rapid population growth of the community has added 1,400 students since 2014 and is projected to add another 1,760 students by 2024.** To put this into perspective, this equates to an additional 55% student enrollment increase between now and 2024. This is the equivalent to adding the total enrollment of Hockinson School District to Ridgefield School District!

**Without the 2020 bond our elementary schools will be over student capacity.** Crowded classroom conditions not only make it difficult for students to concentrate on their lessons, but inevitably limit the amount of time teachers can spend on innovative teaching practices that promote increased relevancy and student engagement that produce better learning outcomes.

**Vocational education programs will suffer without updated facilities and equipment to properly train our students.** “Why do companies struggle to find the right talent, despite the fact that we have never been better educated as a society? It all points to a major mismatch between the skills our students are being taught and its relevance to the employment market.” - Forbes

**Many play areas will be reduced or eliminated to make room for portables.** “The science shows pretty clearly that taking those breaks in the day makes students better able to encode memory and learn and perform academically. There’s a lot on the table in terms of the child’s health, well being and academic success. But just as critical to cognitive improvement, recess also is crucial to developing social and communication skills picked up on the playground - lessons that usually don’t get taught inside a classroom. Recess is the only place in school, maybe the only place in their social life, where kids have the opportunity to develop social skills with their peers.”- American Academy of Pediatrics.

Thanks to the continued efforts of the Capital Facilities Advisory Committee (CFAC), the District has a well-conceived plan to serve the growth. **A NEW K-4 ELEMENTARY** with 72,000 square feet will relieve overcrowding at South Ridge and Union Ridge, two of the state’s largest K-4 elementary schools. **A NEW 5-6 INTERMEDIATE** school with approximately 50,000 square feet will serve fifth and sixth grades, alleviating serious overcrowding already taking place at Sunset Ridge/View Ridge. **A HIGH SCHOOL EXPANSION** will include new classrooms for general education and a new vocational building is needed to replace the existing one built in 1975. Building new is expected to be less expensive than a full renovation and will deliver a learning environment that more effectively supports current industry standards. The existing vocational education building will be re-purposed to support the district’s warehouse and facilities department needs, both of which have grown considerably as enrollment continues to increase. **NEW ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUNDS** at South Ridge and Union Ridge Elementary Schools..



The estimated bond is approximately \$107 million with a projected tax rate of 97¢ per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. For a home valued at \$300,000 the tax increase is \$291 annually, or \$24.25 per month.

Please keep in mind tax rates are lower today than in 2013.

Issuing bonds now at low interest rates can allow the district to complete these projects while saving millions of dollars for the taxpayers.

## NO VOTE MEANS

- OVER CROWDING
- 114 CLASSES IN PORTABLES AND A BOND TO PAY FOR THEM
- ELIMINATION OF PROGRAMS
- ELIMINATION OF PLAYGROUNDS
- POSSIBLE DOUBLE SHIFTS AND ALTERNATE SCHEDULES
- INABILITY TO PROVIDE COMPETITIVE VOCATIONAL SKILLS

## PORTABLES ARE NOT THE ANSWER

First and foremost, the District doesn’t have sufficient space available to place all the additional portables needed. Nor does the District have the financial resources to purchase and place that many portables. In fact, we would need a bond in order to pay for all the portables required to serve our students!



# STUDENT-INSPIRED LANDSCAPING PROJECTS TAKE SHAPE IN DOWNTOWN RIDGEFIELD

Two years ago, Superintendent Nathan McCann presented a large-scale volunteer project to the 12 students in his Student Advisory Council. With support from professional architects and landscape designers, the students were asked to redesign and landscape the open spaces surrounding the former View Ridge Middle School. The project would coincide with the repurposing of View Ridge into the Ridgefield Administrative & Civic Center (RACC) and would be implemented with help from local businesses, organizations and community volunteers.

Students in the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council (SSAC) meet monthly with Dr. McCann and is comprised of students from each Ridgefield school in Grades 4-12. Not only were the students eager to tackle the project, they came up with some innovative ideas for the design team, including a community garden, a playground for early learners, and an amphitheater, to name a few. The kids were excited to provide ideas that not only benefit their community, but leave a lasting personal legacy in downtown Ridgefield.

Three of the landscaping projects have already been completed and are making a positive impact. In December 2018, the students, with help from community volunteers, helped to plant shrubs in the rows above the rock-filled gabion cages installed along 5th Avenue to modernize the landscaping in the open space behind the building.

In Spring 2019, the students helped organize a fundraiser to commemorate Ridgefield's original high school, which once stood on the View Ridge site. The high school's historic steps on Pioneer Street, which remains on the property, were preserved as part of the repurposing project. Personalized brick pavers made available for sale to the community, were installed in the space above the historic steps and Coral Bark Japanese maple trees were planted with seating nearby. Last June, students helped install pavers from the first fundraiser. Pavers from a second fundraiser are scheduled to be installed in January 2020, and over time, pavers from future fundraisers will fill the remaining space.

The playground at Pioneer Park, located in front of the RACC, was completed in November 2019. This project, designed for children aged two to five, was inspired by the students specifically for early learners. The playground includes a large climbing and motor skills structure, four interactive panels, four musical components, logs, stepping stones, and a climbing rock. Landscaping, sidewalks, benches, picnic tables and a security fence complete the new play area. It is the first phase of Pioneer Park, which occupies a section of the former varsity baseball field. SSAC recommendations for the remainder of the park include additional youth sports fields and recreational opportunities for all ages. Look for more projects at the park over the coming years as we expand opportunities for the Ridgefield community.



The district is grateful to the following 2017-18 SSAC students for their contributions to the ongoing success of this large-scale community project: Emmanuel Andrade, Jacob Bell, Samantha Class, Payton Grimm, Jolie Gullickson, Damion Jiles, Jr., Ben Neil, Brandon O'Dell-Nguyen, Tanner Roberts, Madison Syring, Jacob Thompson, and Emma Waddle.

# A Fifty Year Legacy

The drive to Cispus is a slow drift away from civilization. You pass fields and farms, houses and cows. The road climbs, bordered by the tall, old growth trees of the Gifford Pinchot forest. Mist rises along the foothills. A coyote ambles slowly across the road. When your cell phone loses service, you are disconnected—and reconnected to the nature all around you. Welcome to Cispus Outdoor School.

## CISPUS BEGINNINGS

Cispus Learning Center looks much the same as it did fifty years ago, when the first class of Ridgefield students came for a week of outdoor school. Small, rust-colored cabins and long, low buildings nestle into the clearing. While many things about the camp have been updated in fifty years, the spirit remains the same. For one week, students become a family, bonding not only with each other but with all the campers who preceded them, year after year.

Union Ridge Elementary School principal John Hudson, Sr. founded Ridgefield's Cispus Outdoor School in 1969. He hoped to inspire a lifelong love of the outdoors in students. Cispus has remained an essential part of the Ridgefield curriculum for 50 years, making it one of the longest running outdoor schools in the northwest—and for good reason. There are generations of Ridgefield students who have taken part in this life-changing experience of outdoor learning.

Allene Wodaeye helped found Cispus with Hudson, leading Cispus for 25 years as a camp coordinator. Even fifty years later, the experience still resonates deeply with her. "I have never really let go of Cispus in my heart. It's still there. I hold it close to me." And Cispus continues to inspire the same feeling in students to this day.



# CISPUS TODAY

Sunset Ridge Intermediate School principal Todd Graves explained why Cispus is still so important to the school. “This is a once in a lifetime experience for many of our students. Outdoor school is filled with opportunities for hands-on learning and life skills building.” Students still take classes, like biology, astronomy, and geology. But they also learn to build survival shelters and fires, practice manners at family-style meals, and clean the cabins and dining room. For many students, it’s a first taste of independence away from home. It changes how they see themselves, as well as the world around them.

Almost every experience at Cispus is new to the students, and also steeped in tradition. The surrounding woods have heard decades of children’s voices telling stories and singing campfire songs. Each class of fifth graders graduates from Cispus with memories they will cherish for a lifetime. When they return home, they’re new members in a club with fifty years of campers. And they will become the next generation to lead.

## BRIDGING GENERATIONS

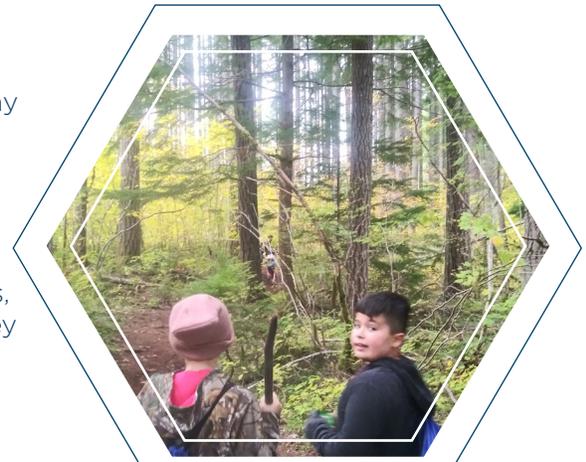
Bill and Susan Yaddof attended Cispus as fifth graders, as did their daughters, and they have volunteered there for ten years. The Yaddofs believe Cispus is a vital part of our community; the fact that it continues year after year makes our schools special. “We see how important it is for these kids to be outside and exploring, going on hikes, studying water and soil and plants. Even being without their parents, some of them for the first time ever. It’s a rite of passage.”

Founder John Hudson Sr.’s family remains committed to the program as well. One of his granddaughters, Stephanie Natterstad, said, “It’s nice for our family to be part of such a long tradition. I know he’d be proud to see it’s still going.” Hudson’s son, granddaughters, and great-granddaughters all attended Cispus.

The Ridgefield School Board and the Ridgefield City Council both honored the 50th anniversary. They recognized Cispus’ impact on Ridgefield, with bridges of outdoor learning spanning generations. Superintendent Nathan McCann noted that students join a long legacy of Ridgefield residents who came together at Cispus as students, counselors, teachers, and volunteers. “Whether you’ve lived in Ridgefield six months, six years, or six generations, you are now part of a fifty-year tradition that is important to our community.”

As Ridgefield schools move forward, Cispus will continue to be a unique experience for our students. Long-time Cispus director Wodaeye said, “Cispus is part of the DNA of Ridgefield. This is a tradition. It’s a legacy. It’s important.” Cispus is woven into the very fiber of the Ridgefield community, a week of camp that changes lives.

1. Cispus in the 1930s, when it opened as a Civilian Conservation Corps camp. (Photo Credit: Cispus Learning Center) 2. Students hike to the waterfall and can even hike directly behind it. 3. Students set off on one of many hikes. (Photo Credit: Jessica McCombs) 4. John Hudson, Sr.’s granddaughters and great-granddaughters accepted an award from the Ridgefield School District on his behalf. 5. Allene Wodaeye, co-founder of Ridgefield’s Cispus Outdoor School received an award this year to recognize her 25 years of service leading the district’s Cispus program. 6. The entry to the Cispus Learning Center showcases the large stone fireplace that remains from the 1930s.



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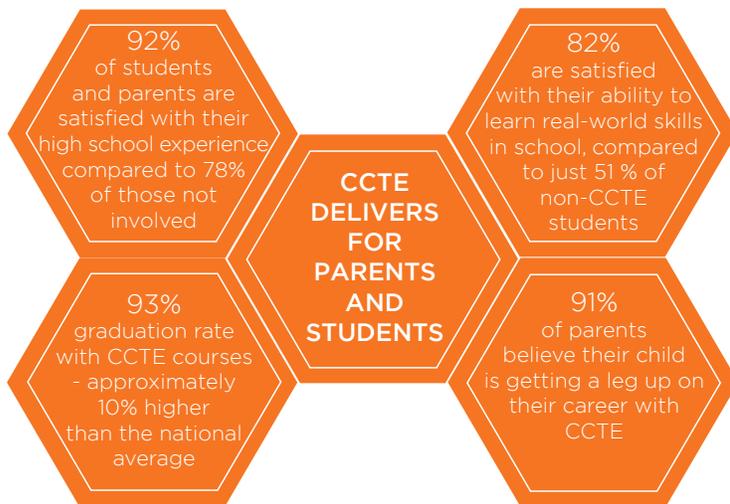


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# CAREER, COLLEGE AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Ridgefield High School's Career, College & Technical Education (CCTE) program is an educational option that provides students with the knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for college and careers. It emphasizes real-world skills and practical knowledge within a selected career focus. Students can select courses in Art, Audio/Visual Technology & Communications, Marketing, Hospitality & Tourism, Health Sciences, Architecture & Construction, Engineering, Manufacturing and Human Services.



**THE CENTER FOR ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL STUDIES (CAPS)** at Innovation Ridge is part a network of nationally-recognized, innovative high school programs. It gives students an opportunity to be fully immersed in a professional culture, solving real world problems using industry standard tools while being mentored by actual employers. It's an example of how business, community, and public education can partner to produce personalized learning experiences that educate the workforce of tomorrow in high-skill, high demand jobs. Ridgefield's CAPS program, the first established on the west coast, offers students three different program strands:

- Business, Marketing & Entrepreneurship
- Engineering & Industrial Design
- Health & Medical Sciences

## REAL OPTIONS FOR COLLEGE AND REWARDING CAREERS

- CCTE programs allow students to explore a range of options for their future inside and outside the classroom.
- Through CCTE, students can start their path toward a career that they are passionate about while earning valuable hands-on experience.
- CCTE students are more likely to have a post-high school plan (including college) compared with other students. Just 2% of CCTE students are unsure of what they will do after high school.

## REAL WORLD SKILLS

- CCTE is a unique opportunity for hands-on learning, putting students at the center of the action.
- CCTE provides the skills and confidence students need to pursue career options, discover their passions and get on a path to success.
- CCTE students and their parents are three times as likely to report they are "very satisfied" with their and their children's ability to learn real-world skills as part of their current education compared to parents and students not involved in CCTE.

## REAL HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE WITH MORE VALUE

- CCTE programs are a part of high school, allowing students to continue to participate in the other activities they enjoy, such as sports, the arts or social activities.
- CCTE takes students even further by providing opportunities for specialized classes, internships and networking opportunities with members of their community.
- Students in CCTE programs and their parents are twice as likely to report they are "very satisfied" with their high school education experience compared to prospective CCTE students and their parents.

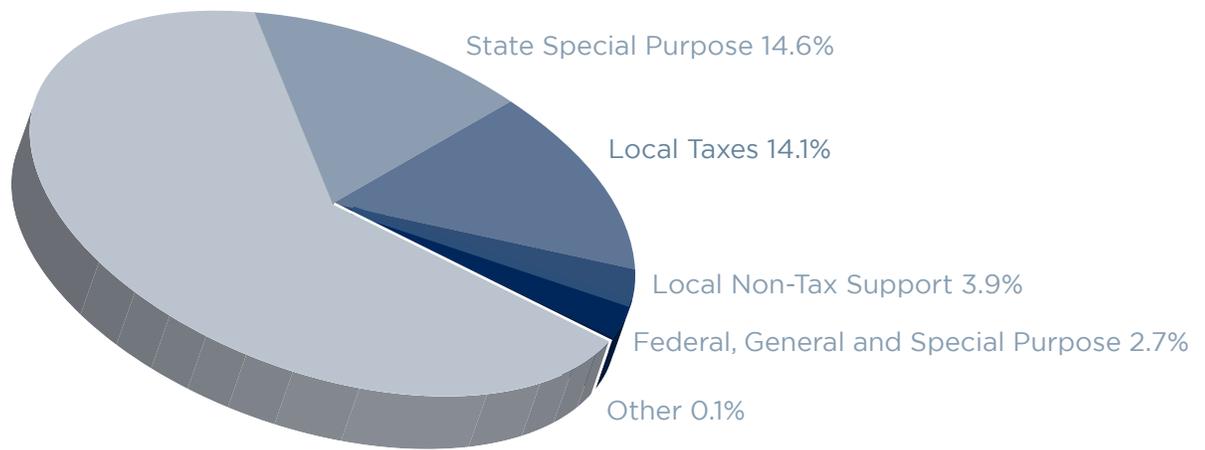


# FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The fiscal year for the district begins September 1 and ends August 31. The following charts show revenue sources and expenditures for the 2018-19 school year. The district budget for 2018-19 was \$41.3 million.

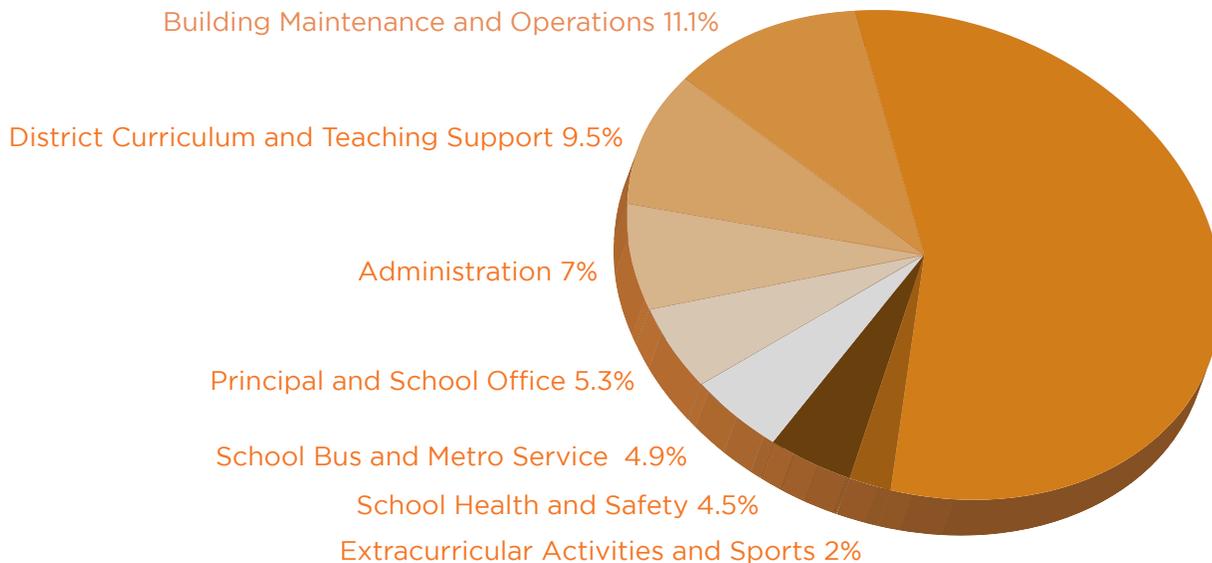
## 2018-2019 REVENUE

State, General Purpose 64.6%



## 2018-2019 EXPENDITURES

Teaching and Student Support 55.7%





## HOURS OF OPERATION

### BEFORE SCHOOL CARE K-4

7:00 am - 8:45 am  
9:45 am on Wednesdays

### AFTER SCHOOL CARE K-4

3:35 pm - 6:00 pm

### PRESCHOOL AGES 3-5

8:30 am - 12:30 pm  
12:30 pm - 4:30 pm

### DEVELOPMENTAL PRESCHOOL AGES 3-5

8:30 am - 11:00 am  
12:30 pm - 3:00 pm

### TO LEARN MORE AND OBTAIN AN APPLICATION

visit [www.ridgefieldsd.org](http://www.ridgefieldsd.org)  
click Sites and choose Ridgefield Early Learning Center.



The Ridgefield School District is proud to be able to provide our Ridgefield families with the Early Learning Center (ELC) at the Ridgefield Administrative & Civic Center (RACC). The ELC offers full- and half-day learning opportunities for preschoolers (ages 3-5) in addition to before and after school care for students in Grades K-4. Four former View Ridge Middle School classrooms were renovated last summer and transformed into bright, colorful learning spaces specifically designed for the district's youngest students. The ELC now serves more than 50 preschool families and 25 school-age families.

"Ridgefield had a need for more high-quality, licensed child care, and the school district answered that call to action with a facility that is child-centered and inclusive of all learners," said Erika Muir, Early Learning Center Coordinator. "We're very proud of our new beginning and look forward to future growth to continue supporting the community needs. Ridgefield is the best village to care for our 'hashbrowns'!"

Every child in Ridgefield, Washington has diverse strengths rooted in his or her family's unique culture, heritage, language, beliefs, and circumstances. Early learning that supports the full participation of every child builds on these strengths by fostering a sense of belonging and supporting positive social relationships.





## The Ridgefield Public Schools Foundation

(RPSF) supports students through a variety of scholarships and grants. The Innovation Grant, in its second year, funds applicants who have innovative and creative ideas that generate enriching experiences and go beyond the classroom. The Education Enhancement Grant (EEG) provides teachers, counselors and staff with specific materials to assist them and their students in day-to-day learning. For example, recently funded EEG's included Primary Sources & Civil Rights Study for the third grade at Union Ridge Elementary and digital keyboards for the music program at Ridgefield High School. The grants have the potential to impact students in a single classroom, an entire grade and sometimes, an entire school over multiple years.

Since our inception in 2009, the Foundation has proudly funded the following:

- Educational Enhancement Grant** \$171,000
- Golden Grad Alumni Scholarship** \$35,000
- Sierra Maldonado Scholarship** \$23,000
- Innovation Grant** \$27,000
- Ridgefield Family Resource Center** \$12,000
- Tanner Trosko Music Scholarship** \$5,000

RPSF is dedicated to academically supporting the whole student. In 2018 and 2019, we expanded our scholarship opportunities to include two scholarship programs for Ridgefield graduates planning to attend technical or trade school programs. RPSF also added a music scholarship designed for students who would benefit from private or group lessons in music, but are unable to do so without financial support.

Most recently, the RPSF has identified Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as a priority and is working to identify areas of need as we increase funding for SEL-based programs and supplies. In 2019, the board worked with the district's new SEL program director to fund a SEL Library at each school in the district. The library will be available to all teachers and students and will support the SEL curriculum taught in the classrooms.

## How can you help?

### MAKE A DONATION

Visit [www.ridgefieldpsf.org](http://www.ridgefieldpsf.org) or mail a check to Ridgefield Public Schools Foundation, PO Box 1402 Ridgefield, WA 98642.

### ATTEND AN EVENT

The Ridgefield Public Schools Foundation hosts several community events to raise funds for our programs. In 2020, keep an eye out for our 11th Annual Golf Tournament and 4th Annual Turkey Trot 5K/10K Fun Run. In 2019, both events raised approximately \$33,000, which will provide significant resources and funding for our programs in 2020.

### BECOME A PARTNER

For business owners looking to connect to an established non-profit organization in Ridgefield, sponsorship opportunities are available for all our events. Community partnerships are also available and help us provide consistent and long-term funding for each of our program areas. Currently, we have an annual partnership with Columbia Credit Union and FDM Development. In 2020, we hope to see this list grow. It is through these partnerships that RPSF is able to support more students in impactful ways.



## *We genuinely want to thank the community for their continued commitment and support!*

We could not continue to have the impact needed to help create successful learning environments for students and teachers without the generous donations, volunteers and business partnerships we have developed throughout our community.



# Where are they Now?

## SPUDDER GRAD SUCCESS STORIES

### PAIGE VANARNAM

When thinking back to her high school years, Paige VanArnam remembers always having an interest in nursing or public health. Science was appealing because it provided concrete correct/incorrect feedback, and she loved anthropology for its study of humans, motives and communication, allowing learning in a more fluid way--expanding critical thinking skills while connecting with others.

As a Spudder, Paige excelled in academics. Named class valedictorian, she spoke at her graduation for her Class of 2011. Her many extracurricular activities included tennis, cheerleading, ASB and leadership committee. Being a member of a dance company, Dance Fusion Northwest, also filled her busy schedule during high school. Following graduation, Paige attended the University of Washington where she received a Bachelors degree in Global Health. She went on to attend Duke University in North Carolina where she earned an Accelerated BSN degree in Nursing.

Today, Paige is a registered nurse in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Randall Children's Hospital in Portland, caring for newborns and infants in a critical care setting. "I am responsible for attending deliveries and resuscitating babies as early as 23 weeks' gestation," she said. Often, the tiny patients in her care (sometimes weighing as little as one pound) require surgical intervention (cardiac, neuro, GI, etc.)—babies with severe infections, cancers, birth defects, or birth traumas. Paige is currently working towards becoming certified as an ECMO Specialist. ECMO stands for Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation. The ECMO machine replaces the function of a patient's heart and lungs. With this certification, she will be able to care for patients ranging from infants to 18-year olds in need of the ECMO machine while they recover from illness or trauma.

When asked for a favorite Ridgefield K-12 moment, class or teacher that helped prepare her for her current occupation, a favorite teacher came to mind.

"I am still inspired by Mrs. (Jill) Uhacz to this day!" she said. "She brought more passion, creativity, and innovation into her classroom than I could ever imagine. She sees potential in every student and is phenomenal in providing life context to understand why education is the best thing you can do for yourself!"

*An education  
is not so much  
about making a living  
as making  
a person.*

When asked what advice she would give today's Ridgefield students, Paige quoted Tara Westover, an American essayist, historian and author of a memoir entitled *Educated*.



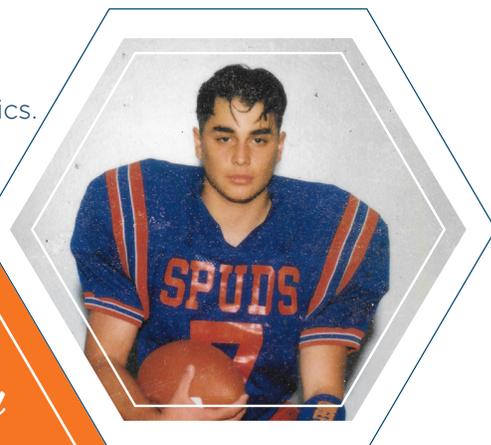
# BRYAN HENDERSON

As RHS class valedictorian in 1997, Bryan Henderson excelled in academics. He also participated in many extracurricular activities, including football, basketball, baseball, Knowledge Bowl, Mock Trial and student government. Spurred by an interest in studying medicine, he volunteered in the pediatric unit at Emanuel Hospital in Portland.

At the University of Washington, Bryan earned Bachelor of Science degrees in both Physics and Astronomy and a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. He went on to earn two Master of Science degrees from Portland State University – one in Physics and the other in Education, and he holds a PH.D. in Science Education from Stanford University. His studies resulted in an academic research career that began in astrophysics and now focuses on the human brain and how people learn.

Today, Dr. J Bryan Henderson is a professor at Arizona State University, a fellow of the National Academy of Education, and an editor for the prestigious Journal of Research in Science Teaching. His research at ASU specializes on “Learning Sciences” – the study of how the brain works to make learning more effective for students.

*Resist the temptation to use being unsure of what you want as an excuse for not trying things out*



“A big part of my work involves developing new technologies to help promote a more critical-minded citizenry that is willing to embrace questioning and uncertainty, to see disagreements as opportunities for open-minded exploration of ideas,” said Bryan. “We are inundated with information that comes from many different sources with different biases and agendas. The technologies I develop help learners get better at critically considering the various possible takes on a situation.” Braincandy is one example of the technologies he developed and makes freely available for educators at [www.braincandy.org](http://www.braincandy.org).

## *Do you have a favorite K-12 moment, class or teacher that prepared you for your current occupation?*

“Winning the state title in football. When our Spudder football team put together an undefeated season in 1995, it marked the first time a school from Clark County had ever won a state football championship and the first time in my life that I got a real taste of what it is like to reach a super difficult and long-term goal. The sheer elation I felt when we won opened my eyes to how sweet life can be if you commit yourself to achieving something great, consistently put in all the work that is required, and stay the course when facing adversity. Many of the emotions that swept over me after defending my doctorate degree at Stanford were similar to what I first felt when winning the state championship as a Spudder.”

## *What advice would you give to Ridgefield students today?*

“Youth is precious. Embrace your youth because it will be gone before you know it. However, while you definitely want to look back on high school as an influential and exciting time in your life, know that high school is just the beginning for you. Myriad amazing experiences are out there waiting for you after high school, but to make them possible, you need to start thinking now about what you want out of life and what efforts/sacrifices might be necessary to obtain these goals. Furthermore, since there is so much about the world you don’t know yet, your plans and circumstances will likely change over time. Because change is inevitable, don’t stress too much about setting crystal clear goals right now. At the same time, resist the temptation to use being unsure of what you want as an excuse for not trying things out. The more you are willing to explore what you want, the better the chance that you will make a living doing something you enjoy ... and there’s hardly a better recipe for happiness in life than having a career that allows you to spend much of your waking hours with matters that you truly care about.”



510 Pioneer Street  
Ridgefield, WA 98642  
(360) 619-1300  
www.ridgefieldsd.org

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