



# Florham Park School District

**Ridgedale Middle School**  
71 Ridgedale Avenue  
Florham Park, NJ 07932

**Nicholas Steffner, Principal**  
973-822-3855 ~ phone  
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Dear Parents and Guardians,

As the final weeks of summer wind down, we are looking forward to opening our doors to welcome staff and students back into the building on 9/11/23. We have a number of new and exciting courses, co-curricular activities and staff that are going to enhance the learning experience for students at RMS. The purpose of this communication is to provide parents with some important updates and information that will be helpful to start the school year.

[6th Grade Parent Orientation Link](#)

## **6th Grade Chromebook Distribution**

We will begin to distribute Chromebooks to all 6th graders on Wednesday, 9/6 from 1:00pm-3:00pm and on Thursday, 9/7 from 10:00am-12:00pm. Pickup will be inside of Ridgedale Middle School, please ring the doorbell for entrance. If you're unable to make the pickup, we will distribute devices to your child on the first day of school.

## **RMS Olympiad - (9/11/23)**

We will open up the school year with our RMS Olympiad which will include a number of fun activities and opportunities to orient our students to the building. We will be the school year with an **F Day schedule** on the 11th so we can get students into their SEL group during period 1.

The following day, 9/12, will begin our A-F rotation.

## **Dropoff / Pickup**

Drop Off - Doors open for student entrance at 7:30am. All students will enter through the Art Door located in the front left corner of the building. Parents, please drop your child off near the sidewalk closest to the building.

Pick up - Students are dismissed at 2:25pm. Parents, please park along the sidewalk closest to the building for pick up.

You **may not park** in either parking lot on the sides of the building as they are used for bussing and deliveries.

## **[Time Schedule - \(Link in heading\)](#)**

Ridgedale Middle School moved to a schedule that included three lunch periods, one for each grade level, during the 22-23 school year. We did not have to adjust the amount of time in any of the academic periods or in the start and end times for the school day. Please click on the link in the heading to view the time schedule.

## **Introduction to New Staff**

Mr. David Ward - Mr. Ward is extremely excited to be joining the team at Ridgedale Middle School. In the past, he's taught everything including Technology and Social Studies, but by far his favorite subject to teach is ELA. Mr. Ward graduated from Ramapo College of New Jersey and is soon to be a graduate of Stockton University with a Master's Degree in Instructional Technology. Outside of school, Mr. Ward loves running, hiking, rooting on the New Jersey Devils and hanging out with his dog Ella. In addition to being a teacher, Mr. Ward has been an EMT for the past 13 years and does EMS work on the weekends.



### Ms. Kimberly Shelus

Ms. Shelus is excited to join our Florham Park community this year! Graduating from The College of New Jersey in Health and Exercise Science, this will be her tenth year teaching H/PE. With experience in Hillsborough and Hopewell, she is thrilled to be continuing her career, and being closer to family and two golden retrievers at home. With her passion for lifetime fitness and health, she is determined to help motivate students to find activities they enjoy and will continue. Outside of school, Ms. Shelus loves spending time with her dogs, relaxing in the outdoors, playing volleyball, or doing yoga. Ready to support her Chicago Bears & Philadelphia Eagles this upcoming season, and students for a great school year!

Mr. Meade Eggleston - Mr. Eggleston is a first year teacher at Ridgedale Middle School who graduated from Seton Hall University with a B.S. in biology where he co-wrote a paper on

Alzheimer's and helped plan, and maintain the wildflower garden at Seton Hall University. He worked in a lab testing soil and water for E. Coli and other dangerous bacteria before making a career switch over to teaching, where he restarted his education at Seton Hall University. Mr; Eggleston wants to bring an application based science experience into the classroom, and show the importance of scientific principles in our everyday lives. When he is away from the classroom, you might find him at a state park hiking and camping, gardening at his house, or watching soccer.

Mr. Joe Chiaravallo - The 2023-2024 school year will be his 17th year here at Florham Park. During that time, he has come to know many students and their families and truly feels part of the community. Mr. Chiaravallo has a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership from Caldwell University as well as Special Education certification from the same institution. He also possesses degrees in Elementary Education and Social Studies (K-12) from William Paterson University. While in the district he has taught various subjects in 3rd , 4th , and 5th grade, as well as Social Studies and Spanish. On many occasions, he has also acted as Administrator-in-Charge while at Brooklake. Mr. Chiaravallo likes to fish, hike and ride my bike in his spare time. He is looking forward to coming back to Ridgedale and reconnecting with the students he has taught in Brooklake.



Mr. Kevin Crosetto - Mr. Crosetto is entering his 9th year as a teacher and his 7th year in the Florham Park School District. Previously, Mr. Crosetto taught 2nd grade at Briarwood. He has his teaching degree from Montclair State University as well as a Masters as a Reading Specialist. Mr. Crosetto is the youngest of four. He enjoys spending time with his nieces and nephews, watching sports and spending time with his dog Maggie. Mr. Crosetto is excited to join the Ridgedale staff and teach Social Studies this year. He cannot wait to work with former students and to see how they have grown.

## **Intervention & Enrichment (Period 1)**

We have a number of new courses that we introduced this year during our Intervention and Enrichment Period. The details below will give you an introduction to the courses.

**ELA Enrichment** - (Leveled Literacy Intervention) - This course is provided to students who have a June 2023 running record that is below grade level for the start of September. This will be reevaluated at the beginning of the year based on the first benchmark assessment.

### **Criteria**

Grade 6 - Under U

Grade 7 - V and under

Grade 8 - X and under

**Reading and Writing Enrichment** - The reading and writing enrichment class is designed to enhance each student's reading and writing skills by building on the core skills students will need to succeed in the content area. The lessons will target building skills that will challenge and improve the students' reading and writing work in correlation with the NJ Learning Standards. The students are expected to meet on a cyclical basis targeting reading and writing skills reflected in the unit of study for each learning bend. The teacher will provide support based on the student data provided and collected during the course of teaching. The students will take the skills from the classroom and apply to various content courses throughout the year.

### **Criteria**

Grade 6 - U and V

Grade 7 - W & X

Grade 8 - Y

**Reading and Writing Acceleration** - The reading and writing acceleration course is designed to challenge students who demonstrate on or above level abilities in reading and writing. The lessons will serve to help enhance skills that will challenge and improve the students' reading and writing work in correlation with the NJ Learning Standards. The students are expected to meet on a cyclical basis targeting reading and writing skills reflected in the unit of study for each learning bend. The teacher will provide support based on the student data

provided and collected during the course of teaching. The students will take the skills from the classroom and apply to various content courses throughout the year.

Criteria - Grade 6, 7, 8 - Average on-demand writing score from previous school year below 70%.

**Journalism I (Grade 6), II (Grade 7) & III (Grade 8)** - Introduction to Journalism is an exciting, fast-paced orientation into the highly competitive field of journalism. This course will give students a chance to work in an environment where they will improve writing, interviewing and photography skills, work with programs like google docs, Canva news, and google apps that will help enhance their digital and writing skill. The students will learn to use equipment such as digital cameras, and be up to to date about the happenings in the school community. They will actively produce school reportings, opinions, polls and surveys to engage the school community and voice their opinions. Students will learn their civic responsibility through a close examination of the First Amendment with specific attention placed on the Freedom of Press and Freedom of Speech. They will understand the concepts of what is considered news, and what is necessary to produce good news writing. *Criteria* - Elective - Students opted to take class and it fits in schedule

**Creative Writing I (Grade 6), II (Grade 7) & III (Grade 8)** - This class is designed for those students who are already writing at or above grade level, and are looking for ways to improve their writing overall, or to express themselves in a more creative manner. This is meant to be taught as an extension of the ELA curriculum, challenging students to increase the level of sophistication of their writing by adding creative elements to it. Students will be introduced to objectives that are a grade level above where they are currently writing. This class will meet twice during the 6-day rotation of classes, and is meant to be an enrichment of their ELA instruction and practice. *Criteria* - Elective - Students opted to take class and it fits in schedule

### **Co-Curricular Clubs & Sports - (Link in heading)**

Please click on the link in the heading of a list of the co-curricular clubs and sports that are available for the 23-24 school year. Tryout times and dates for Fall Sports are listed below.

**Boys Soccer** - Coach - Brian McParland

Tryout date - 9/12 - 9/13

Time - 2:30pm-4:00pm

**Girls Soccer** - Coach - Kimberly Shelus

Tryout date - 9/12 - 9/13

Time - 2:30pm-4:00pm

**Cross Country** - Coach - Rebecca Fano, Vincent Putignano

Start date - 9/14 - 9/15 (time trials)

Time - 2:30pm-4:00pm

### **Sport Physicals (Link in Heading)**

Please submit your RMS Fall Sports Physical and accompanying paperwork ASAP for processing. Once you complete your visit with your physician, please make sure to upload the appropriate documentation in full to Genesis. Please use the link in the heading as a reference to complete this process.

### **Genesis Access / Schedules**

Schedules for the 23-24 school year are active in the Genesis Parent Portal effective 8/25/23. Students will receive a printed copy of their schedule on the first day of school since schedules are still subject to change if necessary.

### **Use of Electronic Devices**

Please view the [Student Handbook](#) and [Code of Conduct](#) for all matters related to behavioral expectations at RMS.

As it relates to the use of cell phones during school hours, students are required to keep their cell phones in their school locker at all times throughout the school day.

If your child's cell phone gets turned into the main office, we will require a parent to come pick it up on the first offense. If it occurs a second time, your child will have to turn the phone into the main office at the beginning of the day and pick it up upon dismissal.

Using cell phones to take pictures or videos of staff, students or the building, during the school day or on the bus, will incur disciplinary action. Posting of such pictures or videos to any social media outlets will result in further disciplinary action.

If you need to get in touch with your child throughout the school day, please contact the main office at (973)822-3855 x2000 and we will be sure to get your important communication to your child. Thank you for your cooperation and partnership.

We look forward to partnering with you to make this a rewarding school year as we embark on this journey together.

Be well!

*Nicholas Steffner*

Nicholas Steffner  
Principal  
Ridgedale Middle School  
“A Community of One”

## **Important Links** *\*Encouraged to bookmark for easy access and review\**

- [Time Schedules](#)
- [RMS Building Calendar of Events](#) (Updated regularly, yellow highlighted fields still have TBD dates.)
- [PTA Hot Lunch Program](#)
- [2023-2024 District Calendar](#)

## **Important Dates**

- 9/6 - Chromebook Distribution 1pm-3pm (Front Entrance RMS)
- 9/7 - Chromebook Distribution 10am-12pm (Front Entrance RMS)
- 9/11 - RMS Olympiad - (wear sneakers!)
- 9/25 - Yom Kippur - School Closed
- 9/28 - Back to School Night 5:00pm - 7:00pm
- 9/29 - PTA Fall Fest
- 10/6 - Half Day Early Dismissal
- 10/9 - Columbus Day - School Closed
- 10/12 - Student Picture Day
- 10/19- Hanover Park Regional High School Open House @ 6:30pm (All Grades)
- 11/6 - 11/8 - Parent Teacher Conferences - 12:40pm - 2:40pm
- 11/6 - RMS Nigh Parent Teacher Conferences - 5:00pm-7:00pm



*"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success."*

*– Henry Ford*