

The VP Press

September 6, 2024



What's in this edition of the VP Press?

1. Principal's Message
2. VP Two Weeks in Review!
3. Spotlight on VP's Front Office Staff
4. Upcoming Events
5. Important Information

1. *Principal's Message*

Dear VP families,

We have had an amazing start to the school year! Thank you for all your support for the smooth transition. Throughout the halls of VP, we see so many smiling faces of staff and students who are excited to learn. As we our new school year, I want to express my gratitude for your continued support and commitment to our school community. Your partnership is essential in providing our students with a safe, nurturing, and enriching learning environment.

We want to thank the PTA for their efforts to organize a fun back to school gathering at our annual PTA sponsored Ice Cream Social. It was a great way to re-connect and celebrate back the back to school season. We also want to remind everyone that next Thursday, September 12th, we will be hosting our Open House to meet your child(ren)'s teachers.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Allison Liberti, 5th Grader at Veterans Park. She was a finalist from the Veterans Park Invention Convention last year and competed at the state level over the summer. Allie was invited to the first annual Innovation for Accessibility: ADAPTING to Change Showcase, hosted by RTX at the Pratt & Whitney Hangar in East Hartford. Her Therm-brella earned the "Most Marketable" award. Congratulations, Allie!

Kind regards,
Sheri Prendergast, Ed.D.



2. VP Two Weeks in Review!

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First Day of School!













Learning is Fun!









Ice Cream Social - Sponsored by the VP PTA

Thank you to everyone who came to our enjoy your back to school VP Ice cream Social. We appreciate all of the efforts of the PTA and staff volunteers to make this night a success!









Welcome Back All School Meeting









3. Spotlight on VP's Front Office

Ms. Ryan McGinn, School Secretary

Ms. Ryan McGinn is the administrative secretary in our office and wears many hats. Ryan handles administrative meetings, parent communications, ordering our school supplies and materials, assigning substitutes, managing events and just about anything else that comes her way during the day-to-day operations of a busy school.

Ryan honed her communications and organizational skills in her early career in the fast-paced and demanding worlds of Capitol Hill, NYC publishing and higher ed before taking 10 years "off" to raise her young children in Ridgefield. She has been working for RPS for four years and loves her new role at VP. Her advice for parents is to *"take a deep breath and know that each and every member of our staff is doing their absolute best to keep your child safe and help them learn and grow. Oh! And please update School Dismissal Manager!"*



Ryan and her husband, Eric Allen, are parents to Sam, a junior at RHS and Willa, a 7th grader at ERMS. They also share two tenacious terriers, Kurt Russell and Carrie, and 9 backyard chickens. Together they enjoy running, basketball, snacks and travel (including family outings to Costco).

Please reach out to Ryan with questions and concerns big or small and she will gladly help or point you in the right direction.

Photo captions:

Above: Kurt and Carrie's Holiday photo 2023

Below: Ryan and her family at Joshua Tree National Park



Ms. Clara Pavan, VP's New Clerical Secretary

Clara Pavan joined VP this year as the clerical para in our main office. Clara is in charge of all things dismissal and our building use requests. She assists our school nurse with attendance and provides support for various office duties throughout the day. Clara has worked in education since 2001. In her native Brazil she was a middle school math teacher and also served as an instructional para at Barlow Mountain Elementary School.

Clara and her family moved to the United States in 2013 and in that time, she has become fluent in English and Spanish and conversational in Italian. She also speaks Portuguese, her first language. Clara and her husband have three sons ages 18, 15 and 12 and one dog, Luna.

Clara loves working with children and prides herself on her organizational skills. She is also very creative and enjoys writing poetry and drawing in her free time. She is thrilled to be a part of the VP family and looks forward to meeting all our families as the school year progresses.



Mrs. Carolyn Canavan, RN, VP's New School Nurse

I started my career in Pediatric Intensive Care, working at Westchester Medical Center. As many nurses do, I went on to work in several other areas; including pediatric case management, physical rehabilitation (pediatric and adult) and hospice. I was the School Nurse at St. Mary for one year prior to moving to VP.

I am grateful to be able to be able to return to Veterans Park, where my twin boys completed elementary school. It is definitely a special place to work and it has been an easy transition for me. There is such a cohesive feeling among the staff and a feeling of comradery. I feel welcome already and I am truly looking forward to being a part of the VP team.

On a more personal note...I have lived in Ridgefield for just under 25 years. My husband was a Ridgefield coach for many years, coaching football and lacrosse.

Jerry and I both love to travel and we also garden together... Fun fact: I spent a few years as a beekeeper. (I have put that hobby on the back burner for now).



4. Upcoming Events!

Mon. 9/9	Tues. 9/10	Wed. 9/11	Thurs. 9/12	Fri. 9/13
			Open House 5:30-7:00 p.m. - Parents Only	Picture Day!
Mon. 9/16	Tues. 9/17	Wed. 9/18	Thurs. 9/19	Fri. 9/20
Kaleidoscope Garden (3-5)	Kaleidoscope Garden (3-5)		Early Release 12:15 pm Dismissal	

Veterans Park Open House - Preschool to 5th Grade

**VETERANS
PARK
OPEN HOUSE**

Thursday, September 12th
5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Veterans Park
Elementary School

We look forward to seeing you!

We will start in the Auditorium at 5:30 p.m.
and then there will be 2 sessions to meet
with teachers from 6:00-6:25 p.m and
6:30-6:55 p.m.

5. Important Information

★ ★ ★
**2024 INAUGURAL
RIDGEFIELD CIVICS BOWL**
A FREE REGIONAL STUDENT and COMMUNITY
EVENT TO SUPPORT BUILDING CIVIC
KNOWLEDGE!

The Civics Bowl provides an opportunity for students and families to learn about civic life in order to become informed and engaged citizens within their communities.

Where: East Ridge Middle School

- **When: Sunday, Sep 15, 2024**
2:00-4:00 pm (Doors open at 1:30pm)
- **Cost: Free Admission (Donations welcome)**
- **Register as a family, volunteer, and competitor all in one place!**



This event is a...

- ★ Tech Free Family/Community Event
- ★ High school volunteer/judge opportunity
- ★ Fun afternoon with civic based arts & crafts and activities available for ages K-8
- ★ Civic Competition open to ALL students in grades 4-5 and 6-8 with prizes in each grade band

REGISTER to attend, compete, donate, or volunteer [here!](#)



This event is being organized by Ms President US, a non-profit Civic Leadership program. Proceeds and donations go to support Ms President US Scholarship fund.

K-3 Arts & Crafts, Games, Puzzles, and Quilt Making Station will be available
4-5 students will have the opportunity to showcase their knowledge of civics and geography
Registration is highly encouraged and at no cost.

Website: [2024 Civics Bowl](#)

Please see the link to the flyer that is pictured above: [2024 Inaugural Ridgefield Civics Bowl Flyer.pdf](#)

Updates from Mrs. Canavan, School Nurse

The Nurse's Office

Hearing and Vision Screenings

The health office will be doing CT State mandated hearing and vision screenings for grades 1,3,4 and 5 students over the next several months. If there are any concerns observed during the screenings, parents/guardians will be notified via a referral letter. Please reach out if you have questions.

Head Lice Information

Head lice: They're the words no parent wants to hear. Head lice can be acquired by anyone, but it is most common in kids ages 5-12. According to the CDC every year as many as 6-12 million children are affected by head lice. The good news is that head lice are not harmful and can be treated. Please check your children's hair frequently throughout the year. To detect, treat and prevent head lice, it helps to know more about them.

The first case of head lice has already been reported in our community this year. Please ensure you check your child's head and let the nurse's office know of positive cases.

Below I have included a link below to an article titled Head Lice: What Parents Needs to Know. Please take a few minutes to read the article. It provides parents with a good source of information about head lice detection, management, and treatment.

[Lice information](#)

24-25 RPS Student Handbook



https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zjhwShPh-LvU2FS3RY_iVvRSNn0s2b0dPtGp2bhJ1ZI/edit#heading=h.t407x_xhvh3jg

K-5 Student-Parent Handbook

2024-2025



Important Back to School Information and Dates

Please keep this information handy to refer to throughout the school year.

K - 5 School start date: August 27, 2024*
School hours are from 9:10 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

Start	2-Hour Delay	3- Hour Delay	Early Dismissal	Extended Early Dismissal	Regular Dismissal
9:10am	11:10am	12:10pm	12:15pm	1:15pm	4:00pm

Please note: Occasionally weather conditions may worsen rapidly over the course of the morning hours, In such instances, the administrative team may decide on closing schools according to the extended early dismissal times. Please remember that children should not be dropped off at school before **8:55am** as there is no supervision prior to that time.

**Preschool families, please follow the arrival/dismissal times and procedures provided by Christina Salvestrini.*

Meet the
SPECIAL
EDUCATION TEAM
VETERANS PARK ELEMENTARY



2024-25

Dorothy Miller, Special Education Teacher
Christine Kilkenny, Special Education Teacher
Kelly Rigney (Feeney), Pathways Special Education Teacher
Alicia Wimmer, Occupational Therapist
Colleen Howarth, Speech-Language Pathologist
Jeff Lovelace, School Psychologist
Sara Myjak, Part Time School Psychologist
Frans Van Vliet, Physical Therapist
Allison Romeo, Special Education Clerical Para
Samantha Colmanetti, Preschool
Janice Kovach, Speech-Language Pathologist, Preschool

Any students who receive special education services will be contacted by their child's case manager during the first week of school to share important information.

Grades 3 - 5 World Language



World Language

Grades 3-5
Spanish language instruction
30 minute lessons
In the classroom
Once every six days



Jill Quattrocchi



Please Join the VP PTA! (Click link below)

BECOME A
MEMBER

2024-2025 Membership is Now Open

Our Membership sign-up form is now Live. Please join the Veterans Park PTA to become a member and support your school community. PTA Membership is annual - even if you were a member last year, you will need to renew.

🔗 vppta.membershiptoolkit.com



Visiting Veterans Park

VISITS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

- If you are coming to VP for a meeting or a classroom visit, the staff member organizing the visit/meeting will have you added to our VP Visitor's Log.
- If you wish to enter the school building for other reasons, you need to complete the Google Form via the [VP Visitor Google Form](#) in advance or scan a QR code when you arrive at the building.
- Please be sure to have your driver's license to be scanned once you are admitted to the building.
- All visitors should enter through the main doors - never enter in from another aspect of the school.
- We will have a table available at the main entrance for you to drop off any items for your child. We will provide post it notes and markers so that you can label the item with your child's

name and teacher so that they will receive the item.



Essentials



- Each K to 5 class will have a 45 minute essential per day (Art, Library, Music, or P.E.)
- Preschool will participate in a modified essential period
- We will continue to follow the six day A-F day schedule
- Please find the essentials rotation below

		Essentials Rotation by Grade-Level Teacher (First Half)					
		A Day	B Day	C Day	D Day	E Day	F Day
PK	Pre K	PE	ART	MUS	PE	LIB	MUS
	Bender	LIB	PE	LIB	MUS	PE	ART
Kinder	Dunphy	MUS	LIB	PE	LIB	ART	PE
	Guernsey	ART	PE	MUS	LIB	PE	MUS
Grade 1	Tibbits	MUS	ART	PE	MUS	LIB	PE
	Cummins	PE	MUS	LIB	PE	MUS	ART
Grade 2	Gero	MUS	LIB	PE	MUS	ART	PE
	Craig	ART	PE	LIB	MUS	PE	MUS
Grade 3	Flynn	PE	ART	MUS	PE	MUS	LIB
	Faloon	LIB	PE	LIB	MUS	PE	ART
Grade 4	Funk	MUS	LIB	PE	LIB	ART	PE
	Hoey	ART	PE	MUS	LIB	PE	LIB
Grade 5	Pasquarella	PE	ART	LIB	PE	LIB	MUS

Cell Phones/Smartwatches/Personal Devices

Students with cell phones at the elementary level are not permitted to use them during the school day. If a parent makes the decision to permit their child to have a cell phone, smartwatch, or similar device at school, it is expected that the cell phone or smartwatch be turned off and in the child's backpack at all times. **This includes the duration of the bus ride.**

Please note, we treat smartwatches (e.g. the Apple Watch, the Gizmo Watch, the Android Smart Watch) or other similar devices that provide a student with the ability to text, take photos, or make calls in the same way we treat a cell phone and they are subject to the same practice.

If a staff member sees a student with any of the above mentioned devices, the student will be asked to remove the device and store it in their backpack and their teacher will likely contact you about the concern.

VP Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

K - 5 Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival

8:55 AM - 9:10 AM

- **Bus Riders** will be dropped off at the bus loop at 9:10 AM (No Car Drop-off allowed)
- **Walkers** will enter through the main entrance between 8:55 AM - 9:10 AM
- **Car Drop-off** students will enter through the Market St. entrance (doors will open at 8:55 AM)

Dismissal

3:50 PM - 4:00 PM

- **Bus Riders** will board the buses and exit through the bus loop.
- **Pedestrian Pickup (Walking)** will wait at the doors of the cafeteria by the Lounsbury House. Parents must park across Governor Street in the public lot. **NO PARKING AT LOUNSBURY HOUSE.**
- **Car Line Pickup** will be dismissed from the gymnasium through the Market St. entrance

Preschool Arrival and Dismissal

VPES Parent Drop-off and Pick-up

For parent drop-off and pick-up at VPES, please park your vehicle at the public lot off Governors Street (see the map below). You may then walk your child across the street to meet our Preschool staff at the PK/K exterior doors. They will be waiting to escort students to their classroom.

Arrival

9:10 AM

- **Bus Riders:** Students will board/unboard the buses and enter/exit through the bus loop.
- **Parent Drop Off/Pick Up (Walking):** Parents must park across from VP on Governor Street in the public lot and walk to the PK drop off/pick up location.

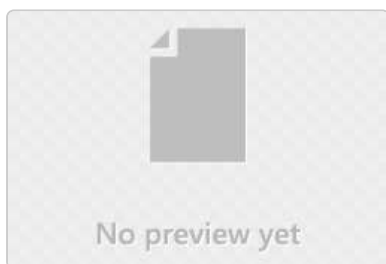
Dismissal

4:00 PM

School Dismissal Manager

We will continue to use School Dismissal Manager this year at Veterans Park. Please click below for information regarding this system. This system will be available to families in late August. If

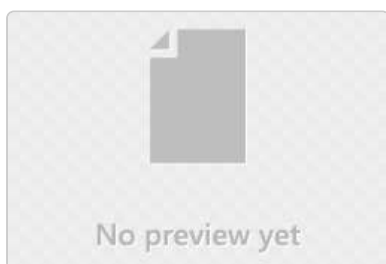
you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us!



SDM Parent Presentation 24-25

School Dismissal Manager Parent Information Veterans Park Elementary School 2024-2025 School Year

[docs.google.com](#)



Veterans Park SDM Letter to Families 2024-2025

Veterans Park Elementary School Dr. Sheri Prendergast, Principal Ms. Erica Ippoliti, Assistant Principal August 2024 Dear Veterans Park Parents and Guardians, Welcome to School Dismissal Manager for the 2024-2025 year! School Dismissal Manager (SDM) is an organized and efficient tracking...

[docs.google.com](#)

School Lunch 🥪

School lunch will be available from the first day of school. Aramark is the District-wide food service provider. The school lunch menu is available online on the RPS website; click Departments and click on [Food Service](#). For all students, utilize MySchoolBucks for families to fund student lunches.

MySchoolBucks is available via the PowerSchool Parent Portal, and communication was sent to families in early August regarding adding funds for lunch. Any balances have been rolled over from LunchTime to MySchoolBucks. Additionally, the district sent a communication in early August regarding Reduced Lunch for eligible students.

Snacks for Purchase in the Cafeteria:

Students in grades 2-5 are permitted to purchase snacks during lunch (last 10 minutes). Please be sure you have set up MySchoolBucks if you would like your student to be able to purchase a snack.

- In short, students eligible for reduced lunch will be provided free lunches in grades K-8 for the 2024-25 school year.
- Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the Free School Meals for Children grant, please do not hesitate to contact us or the District Business Office.
- Questions in regard to school MySchoolBucks can be directed to Andrea McCurry, RPS Food Service Director at 203-894-5550 x2143 or amccurry@ridgefieldps.net

Website to set up an account.

[MySchoolBucks](#)

Some Support Links for Troubleshooting:

[Updating Your Payment Method | MySchoolBucks](#)

[Setting up Automatic Payments | MySchoolBucks](#)

[Adding a New Student | MySchoolBucks](#)

[Setting Up Low Balance Alerts | MySchoolBucks](#)

[Reset Your Password Using Your Mobile Phone Number](#)

[Reset Your Password Using Your Email Address/Username](#)

Reminders

Playdates and Riding the Bus:

We know how fun it is for our students to get together after school and enjoy time together! Due to safety and limited space on the buses, we are asking that students have no more than 2 guest riders with them at a time. Anytime there is a need for more than 2 additional students to ride, families will need to make arrangements for parent pick up that day. Thank you for understanding!

Hats & Hoodies:

Over the last several years there was no standard hat/hood procedure in the elementary schools, likely related to Covid, when classroom windows were kept open for air circulation and there was the potential for it to be cold in classrooms.

As we have started the 24-25 school year with a typical school opening, we will return to only permitting hats to be worn outside the school building. Students may choose to wear a hat, but will be reminded to remove it upon entering the school building. Students will be permitted to wear hats for outdoor recess. Teachers have discussed this with students and I will remind our school community during the morning announcements on Tuesday.

On special occasions/spirit days, hats may be permitted and this will be communicated to students and families.

Ridgefield Public Schools Digital Backpack

RPS distribution flyers for outside groups via a [Digital Backpack](#).

Organizations that meet the RPS policy may submit their request for inclusion in the digital backpack. Please help us in our effort to go green by checking students' [Digital Backpacks](#)

Organizations that meet the RPS policy may submit their request for inclusion to cmelagrano@ridgefieldps.net. Thank you!



About Us

For more information, please use the following information.

Email: sprendergast@ridgefieldps.net

Website: <https://vpes.ridgefield.org/Home>

Location: Veterans Park Elementary School

Phone: [203-894-5525](tel:203-894-5525)

Facebook: [facebook.com/TBD](https://www.facebook.com/TBD)



Sheri Prendergast

Sheri is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters