

RIDGEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 234 NEWSLETTER



WELCOME BACK

As we open the doors to another exciting school year, we are filled with energy, hope, and a deep commitment to each of our students. Whether you are returning or joining us for the first time, we are thrilled to begin this journey together. The start of a new year brings fresh opportunities to learn, grow, and connect and our staff is ready to make this year one of purpose, passion, and progress for every student in our district. We believe that every student will learn and achieve at high levels.

Our continued focus on safety and well-being remains at the heart of all we do. From updated safety procedures to expanded support services, we are committed to ensuring that every student feels safe, valued, and supported. We believe that a healthy learning environment is essential to academic success, and we will continue working closely with families to meet the needs of every learner.

When Ridgewood was established, the district and school community challenged the conventional model of education. From day one, our district has been rooted in the belief that students deserve more than a one-size-fits-all approach and when alumni visit, the memories they share are of the uniqueness of their learning experiences. Because of their commitment to challenging the status quo, the Rebel name was adopted.

We still design individualized learning paths, embrace innovation, and meet students where they are in their personal educational journey. Our ability to be innovative is to prepare students for their future. Ridgewood offers opportunities and experiences that truly prepare students for their future, whether that be the armed services, technical school, two-year, or four year universities. We ensure that students have had exposure and experiences in careers of interest so that they are fully equipped to make decisions about their career pathway. We look forward to another successful year of building bright futures together.

COMMUNITY INSPIRATION

“At Ridgewood, we believe that every student, every family, and every community member plays a role in building something greater than ourselves. This year, we celebrate not only our academic and athletic achievements, but also the spirit of unity that defines what it means to be a Rebel. Together, we lift each other up, celebrate our victories, and face our challenges with resilience. As we move forward, let’s continue to show the power of pride, dedication, and community because when Ridgewood stands together, there’s nothing we can’t achieve.”

CPR TRAINING IN HEALTH CLASS SAVES A PERSONS LIFE



This spring, the Ridgewood High School community witnessed the life-saving power of CPR, and the lasting impact of classroom lessons that go far beyond the walls of a school. On what began as a routine afternoon run along Lawrence Avenue near the new bridge, a runner collapsed after feeling dizzy. He lost consciousness and fell, striking his head. What could have ended in tragedy instead became a story of heroism and preparation.

Running alongside this person were students Frank Horak, RJ De Guzman, and their friend Jerome Adaya. In a moment that demanded courage and composure, Frank and RJ immediately recognized the severity of the situation and began performing CPR, skills they had learned in their freshman Health class, taught by Mrs. Kate Connelly.

They continued CPR until emergency responders arrived. Paramedics delivered one shock with a defibrillator and successfully revived this person. Doctors later confirmed that if CPR had not been administered immediately, this student likely would not have survived. Their quick action, fueled by knowledge learned in the classroom, saved a life.

Ridgewood High School proudly incorporates CPR certification as part of its freshman Health curriculum under the direction of Mrs. Kate Connelly, who has made it a mission to ensure that every student leaves her classroom equipped with the tools to help others in a time of crisis. "This is exactly why we teach CPR," said Mrs. Connelly. "We hope our students never have to use it, but if they do, they'll be ready. Frank and RJ proved that in the most incredible way."

RHS STUDENT EARNS PRESTIGIOUS CONGRESSIONAL AWARD GOLD MEDAL

Ridgewood High School proudly congratulates Laura Krowiak, who achieved an incredible milestone by earning the Congressional Award Gold Medal, the highest honor bestowed by the United States Congress for youth achievement. The Congressional Award, established by Public Law in 1979, is Congress's only non-partisan, non-profit initiative that recognizes initiative, service, and personal growth in young Americans. It challenges students across the nation, ages 13 ½ to 23, to set and achieve individually meaningful goals in four key program areas: Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development, Physical Fitness, and Expedition/Exploration.

Laura's commitment and effort were exceptional. She devoted over two years to community service, personal and physical growth, and exploration. In reflecting on her journey, Laura shared:

"I have gained many life lessons by participating in The Congressional Award including empathy, time management, and independence. I learned how to effectively help my community, improve my personal and physical well-being, and explored new places. My participation in The Congressional Award is reflected amongst my community and shows the true purpose of the award."



RIDGEWOOD SEES STRONG GROWTH IN AP PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE

Ridgewood High School is proud to share a continued upward trend in both participation and achievement in Advanced Placement (AP) coursework. In 2024, Ridgewood students took a total of 430 AP exams, marking a notable increase from 355 exams administered the previous year. This growth shows our commitment to expanding challenging academic opportunities for all students.

In addition to increased participation, the average AP score rose from 2.5 to 2.9, demonstrating meaningful progress in student performance. This success reflects the dedication of our students and the exceptional support provided by our staff. A special thank you goes out to our AP teaching team, whose passion, expertise, and ongoing commitment to student success make these outcomes possible.

RIDGEWOOD WELCOMES STUDENTS BACK FOR THE 2025–2026 SCHOOL YEAR

The energy was electric as Ridgewood High School kicked off the first day of the 2025–2026 school year! Students were greeted at the front entrance by the cheer and dance teams, lined up alongside administrators, creating a vibrant and spirited welcome as they entered the building to begin a new chapter. Their presence set the tone for a year grounded in pride, purpose, and community.

To start the day on a high note, students and staff gathered in the auditorium for a high energy assembly featuring the legendary Bucket Boys, whose performance lit up the room with rhythm, excitement, and school spirit. Their show brought the entire student body together in celebration, reinforcing Ridgewood's strong sense of connection and shared enthusiasm. We are excited to continue building on that energy throughout the year!



RIDGEWOOD FOUNDATION HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

Ridgewood High School is proud to announce the 20th Annual Alumni Hall of Fame Induction Class. This year, we honor Nanette Radtke Cassettari '68, Christina Hessler '11, and Gregory Raimondi '08 for their remarkable achievements and lasting impact on our community. We are also thrilled to recognize our Community Hero Award recipients, Caroline Sanchez Crozier and Lionel Rodriguez, whose dedication and service exemplify the values of Ridgewood. Congratulations to this year's inductees on earning a place in the Ridgewood High School Hall of Fame. Their accomplishments inspire our current students and remind us all of the power of education, leadership, and community pride.



NANETTE RADTKE CASSETTARI



CHRISTINA HESSLAU



GREGORY RAIMONDI

BOYS & GIRLS STATE SPOTLIGHT

Girls State and Boys State are prestigious week-long summer leadership programs for high school juniors, sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary and the American Legion. These highly respected programs provide students with an immersive experience in government, leadership, and civic engagement. Throughout the week, participants create and manage a mock state government, campaigning for office, drafting and passing legislation, and learning how democracy works in action. More importantly, they gain valuable leadership skills, deepen their understanding of civic responsibility, and return as more confident and empowered young leaders ready to make a difference in their communities.

Girls State Participants – Summer 2025

- Isabella Garcia
- Brianna Junc
- Julianne Panlilio
- Vivian Rusak
- Abigail Stogowska

Boys State Participants – Summer 2025

- Frankie Camillo
- Will George
- Gianni Gimay
- Robert Lis
- Matthew Potepa
- Omar Yaghmour