

THE RIDGE SCHOOL
RIDGEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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August 28, 2015

Dear Ridge Students,

I am so excited to welcome you on your first day of school next Wednesday! I have missed having all of our Ridge students at school this summer, but I enjoyed my summer vacation and I hope you did, too! Your teachers and I are ready for everyone to come back and have a wonderful year of learning ahead.

Recently I read a special letter that a mother had written to her son the night before his first day of school. It was about her hopes for him during the upcoming school year. It touched my heart so much that I decided to write a letter to all of my Ridge students with the same message. You see, this mom wasn't asking her son to be the best, the smartest, the fastest, the first, or anything like that. She was asking her son to be kind. That was it.

Kindness is something I think about a lot in my life and at Ridge School. I always tell Ridge students how important it is to treat each other respectfully and follow the Golden Rule. We talk about what that looks like and sounds like at our ROC assemblies during the school year. We will continue to do that this year, but that mom's letter got me thinking about what it would be like if every one of our Ridge students walked in the door on the first day of school with a personal promise to be kind this year. What might that look like?

- If you see a student on the first day who looks scared or alone, walk up to him or her and say, "Hi!"
- During the school year, if you hear someone else say something to a student that you think is kind of mean, speak up!
- If you get angry at someone, take some deep breaths and try to get control of your emotions before you yell or say something unkind.
- Try breaking away from the kids you always sit with at lunch and sit with someone who you think could use some company.

Having been a teacher and principal for so long now, I know for sure that every single child has kindness in his/her heart. The challenge is to use it! Act on it! I already know that Ridge School is a special place, but think about how much more special it would be if no one's feelings were hurt, if no one was afraid of another student, if everyone felt accepted. That's what I want for you and all of your classmates this year! I hope you'll make a personal promise to look in your heart and do your best to act with kindness all year long. See you next Wednesday!

With kindness,

Ms. Schoendank ☺

Principal