

## Case Study 3

### Whole Faculty Implementation: Ridgefield Academy

Ridgefield Academy is a leading PS-8 independent school in Ridgefield, CT with enrollment of 320 students. Ridgefield began certifying facilitators in 2023-24, and implemented Forum across its staff and faculty in 2024-25, seeking to build alignment and connection across its community.

#### 1. Participants:

- 1 Head of School in Leader Network Roundtable
- 10 Faculty certified as Forum facilitators
- 30 First Faculty & Staff Members (2024–25)
- 60 Total Faculty & Staff Members (2025–26)

#### 2. Meeting Cadence:

Ridgefield has integrated Faculty Forum into its annual calendar, using professional development time in August for launching its implementation, and then meeting regularly throughout the school year for ongoing peer coaching sessions in cohorts of 6–8 participants.

#### 3. Principal Objectives:

Led by Ridgefield's Associate Head of Academics, David Dobson-Smith, the school evaluated and selected Forum's peer coaching program from a range of professional development and culture change initiatives in order to cultivate educator well-being, inclusion, and engagement.

#### 4. Program Focus:

Ridgefield has applied Forum's peer coaching program to address the performance pressure on its staff and faculty from the growing anxiety of parents and current events. These have become complex issues for many schools to navigate as they seek to shore-up educator well-being, authentic connection, professional development, and cultural cohesion.

#### 5. Impact Measurement:

As of June 2025, the year-end measurement survey reports significant improvement in:

- Ability to listen fully and actively to more deeply understand others
- Empathize with others, acknowledging their words and emotions
- Act on what is important to me and in alignment with my values
- Develop authentic relationships with other adults

*"The impact of Forum on our school culture has been transformative. We now have a shared language, openness to learning from each other, and a level of trust we've never had before. You can feel the difference when you walk in the door. It really speaks to our commitment to our own wellbeing and social emotional development - we are truly putting the oxygen mask on ourselves so we can continue to be and give all that we need to for our learners"*

— David Dobson-Smith, Assoc, Head of School for Academics, Ridgefield Academy