

PIPER USD 203

3130 N. 122nd St. | Kansas City, KS 66109

p. 913.721.2088 | f. 913.721.3573 | www.piperschools.com



Dear Pirate Nation,

I am so incredibly proud of our community. Last night was our August Board of Education Meeting with the difficult and emotional topic of masking being the focus of the evening. We had 11 community members who signed up to speak at the meeting. Each speaker was respectful and articulate, sharing their personal feedback for the Board of Education. During the Board of Education discussion, Board Members were thoughtful and reflective with each other and there were no outcries or comments from the audience when the final decision was made. Unlike last year at this time, ALL of our students will be in school and learning and home athletic and activity events will be allowed. Thank you, Piper Nation, for being the GOLD STAR example of what civil discourse and local governmental decision-making should be. I am not sure in my 14 months as Superintendent I have ever been so proud!

August 14th District Community Service Day: Beautification of District Landscaping

While our small but mighty District Maintenance and Grounds Team has worked overtime this summer to stay on top of mowing, we would very much appreciate helping hands in some final landscaping projects prior to the beginning of the school year. We ask for our students to give us our best every day at school and we want to give the students our best as they begin school in August!

On August 14th from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM, we are asking for any parents, patrons, and/or students 12 years or older who are interested in helping us manicure our grounds to indicate your interest [here](#). Final details will be emailed prior to the event and we are happy to sign off on student community service hours. Thank you for your consideration!

COVID-19 Masking Requirement

At the August 9th Board of Education Meeting, the Board of Education voted to require masks for ALL students, staff, and visitors regardless of vaccination status, while inside district facilities AND when using district transportation. Additionally, masking will be a discussion point at all future Board of Education Meetings.

As such, we are closely monitoring the County data as it relates to both COVID-19 and the Delta variant. Based on what we experienced and learned this past year, we will continue to focus on, monitor, and emphasize the following safety and mitigation efforts and measures:

- Masking requirements inside all district facilities
- Encouraging students and staff to stay home if they are sick
- Offering free testing at school for students and staff members
- Using outdoor spaces and places as much as possible for instruction and recess
- Encouraging frequent hand-washing and using social distancing whenever possible
- Completing frequent cleaning procedures in classrooms and throughout the school
- Continuing our collaboration with local health officials
- Sharing information regarding free testing and vaccination sites in the county

**John Bakarich, III ~ Larry Beashore ~ Ashley Biondi ~ Kim Brown ~ Desiree' Fergus ~ Theresa Fisette ~ Jeb Vader
Dr. Jessica Dain, Superintendent of Schools**

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As we consider COVID protocols, please know that circumstances may change and, in turn, influence our decision-making and actions throughout the remainder of the summer, the start of school, and throughout the fall and winter. We will continue to keep our school families informed and updated. The safety of students, staff, and our community is, and will continue to be, our top priority. Please know that there may be instances during the upcoming school year where unpredicted or unexpected circumstances lead to us needing to make quick decisions. If this occurs, we will communicate with you as quickly as possible.

Additional Board of Education Updates

Community Recognitions

Last night we were able to introduce and/or highlight the following Pirate Nation Teammates:

Dr. Taylor Mapp, Piper High School Assistant Principal & Athletic Director

Dr. Taylor Mapp is joining Piper Nation as our new Piper High School Assistant Principal and Athletic Director. Dr. Mapp brings a wealth of coaching and KSHSAA knowledge as he has coaching experience at the middle school, high school, and collegiate level. Dr. Mapp also demonstrates a deep academic prowess as demonstrated by his teaching experience in Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Anatomy & Physiology along with his recent completion of his administrative degree and Ph.D. in the area of Health and Human Performance. Taylor hit the ground running this summer and has already made a positive impact in raising expectations, communication, and performance for our athletic and activity programs.

Carrie Gardner, Secondary Instructional Coach

Carrie is joining Pirate Nation as our new secondary instructional coach. Carrie joins Piper after serving as the K-12 Coordinator of Blended Learning for the Blue Valley School District. Prior to her coordinator experience, Carrie served as an instructional coach and art teacher in the Blue Valley School District. Last August, Carrie was instrumental to the Piper School District's adoption of our Learning Management System, Canvas, offering trainings to the Teaching & Learning Department who then trained our teaching staff. On the personal front, Carrie and her family are current Piper School District residents with two children in the district and she is very excited to be a part of the Piper School District at both a professional and personal level!

Rick DeVries, Supervisor of Facilities

Rick is joining Pirate Nation after a long and successful career with the City of Lenexa Fire Department in which he recently retired as a Logistics Battalion Chief. His responsibilities with that job such as the management of all physical resources, purchasing, long-range budgeting and overseeing all capital improvements are easily transferrable to his current position with the school District. Rick has jumped into the position with both feet; working evenings and weekends trying to get us caught up on our to-do list. On the personal front, Rick and his wife Lisa, are current Piper Residents and Rick is excited to be a part of the Piper School District and Piper Community.

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Stephanie Sorenson

After coming off of an unprecedented school year, to accept a summer job to work MORE was not on the minds of most educators. Stephanie's initiative to apply for the K-8 Summer Learning Principal is a testament to her Grit and Perseverance. Jolene Jackson said this about Stephanie, "She is one of the most hardworking AND flexible people I know, and that is exactly the kind of person we needed for summer school! Slam dunk hire!" This was our first-time running summer school at this large of scale, and we had to navigate a lot of unknowns. She always had a "we will figure it out" attitude. She worked closely with Jolene Jackson to coordinate all of the professional learning for our new Summer Learning curriculum resources, and she supported the teachers in their implementation. We are grateful for her leadership this summer and the leadership she provides as a teacher at Piper Prairie Elementary.

January Batcheler

January has an absolute pure and honest heart and wants to be of service wherever she can. She is the kind of person who, when she sees a need, she speaks up and offers her service to fill it! That is exactly how she ended up with her very unique position this summer. She called Jolene Jackson and pitched the idea, and it was an offer we couldn't refuse. This summer, she acted as both an aide AND a teacher. As a teacher, she taught the PHS course, Teaching Observation, to 2 PHS students and 2 2021 recent graduates. She went into classrooms to mentor our HS student aides on how to work with students. She also taught them various concepts as outlined in the course syllabus and adapted the traditional classroom instruction to meet the more hands-on approach for the summer learning setting. Additionally, she supported various K-8 students in various classrooms when we were down staff members or had students with more challenging needs. The drive and initiative she demonstrated this summer is a valuable asset for the district in forwarding our vision for real-world learning opportunities for all of our students.

Taylor Spangler

Taylor Spangler is a go-getter! When you give a creative and innovative task to Taylor, look out because he captures the idea, turns it into a big dream, and then goes to work in making it a reality! That is exactly what he did this summer with our summer learning for our culinary arts students. We had 10 students participate in a paid internship under the mentorship of Taylor. Additionally, Taylor taught the competencies of the PHS course, Career Connections. Two of Mr. Spangler's students said this about his teaching this summer:

"He's been an amazing teacher. He makes sure we have what we need as far as cooking and that we're good mentally. He's very patient with us and explains things to where everyone understands it."

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I love Mr. Spangler. He's one of my favorite teachers. Throughout the internship he was really understanding of our feelings and patient with us, making sure we were ok. Some people who are bosses are like, 'Get the work done!' and that's it."

These distinguished educators are leading the way in ensuring that the competencies of initiative and self-direction, creativity and innovation, and critical thinking and problem solving as defined by our Portrait of a Graduate, are actively being taught and learned by our students, preparing them for their future.

Board Approvals

Last night our supportive Board of Education approved the following items:

- Piper Middle School Library Furniture
- Security Cameras (44 new cameras to ensure ALL exterior doors have cameras)
- Piper High School Advisory Course Credit of .25
- Piper High School Activity Care Plan Modifications
- Piper Middle School Elective Courses
- Unified Government Interlocal Agreement Repayment

Tomorrow morning, we will be welcoming 26 new teachers to Pirate Nation! On Friday, all District staff reports! I want to publicly thank everyone whom have worked tirelessly over the summer to ensure we are ready for the 2021.2022 School Year! Let's get this party started!

Proud to a Pirate!

Dr. Jessica Dain
Superintendent of Schools