

# PIPER USD 203

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

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Dear Pirate Nation,

Happy Tuesday to you! Yesterday and today I attended a two-day meeting for Superintendents in Amoret, Missouri. We had the option to stay overnight, but with our regularly scheduled Board of Education Meeting taking place Monday evening, I elected to drive back and forth each day. Over the weekend as I was preparing for the upcoming week, I was a little reluctant about the drive as it was about an hour each way for the commute. However, this turned out to be a blessing in disguise! The leaves on the trees were some of the most beautiful I have ever seen barring the one time I had the opportunity to be in Connecticut in the month of October. It honestly seemed there were hundreds of hues of red, burgundy, merlot, orange, rust, and robust browns. The driving turned out to be an amazing gift of slowing things down and just enjoying nature's gifts that I embarrassingly admit I often take for granted. I had time to enjoy a leisurely phone conversation with my parents and another with my best friend—people who I embarrassingly admit I often take for granted. My reminder for you tonight—give yourself the gift of an hour to get outside, breath some fresh air, and enjoy the view. I promise you will feel renewed; a little self-care goes a long way.

As we move through the month marked by gratitude and thanksgiving, I am asking you to help me show our thankfulness to our Piper School District employees and celebrate their hard work. Next week, November 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> is National Educator Week. **A simple thank you in the car line or a written note or email of appreciation** can go a long way in providing our staff the encouragement and energy they need to continue providing positive experiences for our students. Our staff have been working so hard to meet the needs of our students, and while not every day is perfect, I know that every staff member here is committed to doing what is best for students. Now, more than ever, we need to slow down, stand together, and support one another. Thank you for your continued support and encouragement of our Piper educators and staff for all they do to support your children.

## November Board of Education Meeting

### Optional Masking for Students and Staff at Piper High School and the CTE Center

Last night, the Board of Education voted 7 to 0 that effective Wednesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, **masking will be optional** for students and staff at Piper High School and the CTE Building. Please find below the guidelines and procedures we will be following:

### Piper School District Guidelines for Optional Masking and Quarantining

1. **If there would be a positive COVID-19 exposure, all students and staff who were exposed (regardless of vaccination status) would have the following options:**

- Option 1: 5-Day Masking & Testing

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Students will be allowed to stay in school if they wear a mask and test daily for COVID for five school days.

- Option 2: One Test on Day 5  
Student would quarantine at home and test with a PCR test on day 5 following exposure. If the test returns a negative result, the student may return to school day 7, assuming student has not presented with any COVID symptoms.
- Option 3: No Testing  
Students who do not wish to follow Option 1 & 2 would be quarantined from school for 10 calendar days.

## 2. Additional Information:

- All students must wear a mask riding the school bus whether to-and-from school or for extra-curricular events
- Masking will be optional for all school and district sanctioned events taking place at PHS and the CTE Building
- A close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period with a person who has COVID-19

### Additional Board of Education Approvals

- Fees for the 2022.2023 School Year
- Decision to move forward utilizing a Construction Manager at-Risk role in which they would like to pursue for the projects approved by the Board of Education at the September 13, 2021 Board Meeting to be included in the January 2022 Bond Issue.
- Approve the architectural & engineering firm incite Design Studio (iDS) for the projects approved by the Board of Education at the September 13, 2021 Board Meeting to be included in the January 2022 Bond Issue.
- Renewal of property casualty and liability insurance with Lockton

### Community Recognitions

#### Redtail Academy

We are incredibly proud to announce our new community partnership with Red Tail Academy. As our district continues to find opportunities to provide our students with real world experiences, this organization couldn't be a better match for our students interested in aviation.

The Red Tail Academy is a newly founded non-profit organization that is made of local pilots and aviation enthusiasts that are passionate about helping youth overcome barriers into the world of aviation. Their vision is

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“to see a vibrant aviation industry with a well-educated and trained workforce composed of individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds and cultures”.

Please help us recognize those that have helped us to make this experience possible. In addition, we would like to celebrate the Piper students making a commitment to participate in the very first private grounds pilot program for the Piper School District.

**Commissioner Mike Kane:** With Commissioner Mike Kane’s generous donation to this initiative, two Piper students will be able to participate in the ground school course and simulator sessions at no cost to the students. Commissioner, we thank you for supporting our future-ready initiative and the individual needs of all our students. From the bottom of our hearts, THANK YOU.

**Red Tail Academy Board of Directors:** Jeffery Bolden, Henry Gooch, David Toliver, Sam White, and Patrick Nelson: We are looking forward to working together in what will be a long-standing partnership towards aviation excellence.

**Evan Toms and Konnor McDaniel.** Congratulations on being the first Piper students to being you journey into aviation with the support and expertise of Red Tail Academy. We are excited to see your future success!

## **State Qualifiers for Cross County**

Last night we welcomed two members of the high school cross country team that recently competed at the 5A State Championships in Augusta. They were senior Grant Lockwood and junior Grace Hanson along with their coaches Ashley Kowalewski and Cory Cole.

This was Grant’s 3rd trip to the State Meet which is more than any other boy in Piper’s cross country history. He was 87th with a time of 18:24. He will be missed next year but his leadership and dedication will continue to inspire the team in the future.

This was also Grace’s third trip to the State Meet. She capped off a very impressive season as the **5A State Runner-Up**. This was Grace’s 3rd State Cross Country medal which is the most in program history. She was 2nd in 4A as a Freshman and 6th in 5A as Sophomore.

Not only should both of these athletes be recognized as tremendous runners but they also are tremendous students. They both currently have a 4.3 GPA. They are great examples of what it means to be exemplary student-athletes in which our community can be Piper Proud!

## **State Qualifiers for Girls Golf**

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And last but not least, we celebrated members of our 2021 PHS Girls Golf team who qualified for 5A State. This was the second year being in 5A golf and to have 4 girls qualify in a tougher division is a great accomplishment. Please join me in congratulating Coaches Steve Pope and Jenny Ahlers, as well as the following student athletes

- Senior - Ashlyn Rhodes- qualified her Sophomore year as well as her Senior season
- Juniors - Kendall Vest and Tatum Vallejo- 1st time qualifying for State
- Sophomore – Caitie Kirwan- 1st time

## COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies and Optional Masking Discussion

The Board of Education is dedicated to monitoring our COVID-19 data and discussing district protocols on a monthly basis. As we consider COVID protocols, please know that circumstances may change and, in turn, influence our decision-making and actions.

As I shared earlier, last night the Board of Education voted 7 to 0 to making masking optional for the students in grades 9-12 and the staff working with those students at both PHS and the CTE Center. Additionally, they discussed continued monitoring of the district data to discuss the next steps and timeline of making masking optional for the rest of the district in the very near future. The next discussion of masking will take place at the **December 13<sup>th</sup> Board of Education Meeting**. If you are interested in addressing the Board at their December, please notify the Board Clerk, Mitch Nutterfield at [mutterfield@piperschools.us](mailto:mutterfield@piperschools.us) by the end of the day on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

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 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.

At the current time, we have created a spot on our district website with [Frequently Asked Questions](#) regarding the specific COVID protocols we are following at this time.

**Please find below our weekly update on District COVID data:**

	<b>Students (Aug. 19- Nov. 5) *Running Total</b>	<b>New Student Cases (Week of Nov. 1-5)</b>	<b>Staff (Aug 13-Nov. 5) *Running Total</b>	<b>New Staff Cases (Week of Nov. 1-5)</b>
<b>Piper Early Childhood</b>	3	1	2	0

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Piper Prairie Elementary	30	1	5	0
Piper Creek Elementary	21	1	2	0
Piper Middle School	15	1	0	0
Piper High School	22	2	3	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>91 (Running Total)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12 (Running Total)</b>	<b>0</b>

## Community Conversation

This serves as the last reminder that you are invited to a community conversation this Thursday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at Piper Middle School in which we will take a deep dive into our students' Panorama and Communities that Care data. We are looking forward to a conversation as it relates to the data asking the community: ***What stands out? Where are we strong? How can we improve? How do we move forward to ensure that we are doing all we can to help our children?*** Please reach out to Jolene Jackson at [JJackson@PiperSchools.us](mailto:JJackson@PiperSchools.us) with any questions or concerns.

Proud to be a Pirate,

Dr. Jessica Dain  
Superintendent of Schools