

Pine-Richland School District

2015 Retiree Recognition

Wexford Elementary School



Karen Elliott, Wexford Elementary Second Grade Teacher

Mrs. Karen Elliott has enjoyed 12 years at Pine-Richland School District. She began her career as a substitute teacher and eventually began teaching first, second, third, and fourth grades at Pine-Richland School District. She taught fourth grade at Richland Elementary School and first grade through third grade at Wexford Elementary School. Mrs. Elliott, who holds an elementary and special education certification, said she decided at the age of 45 to begin a new path in life and earn her teaching degree. She does not regret a second of it and says her teaching years have been a wonderful privilege. The students inspire her and make her smile each day that she walks into the classroom. She holds a special place in her heart for each student and considers each a precious gift. Mrs. Elliott says she most enjoys watching the growth and confidence each student gains throughout the school year. Rather than rest in retirement, she hopes to

travel, visit friends and spend more time with her husband William and her two grown daughters. She is going to whittle down her bucket list, and of course, her reading list.

Amy Kleissas, Wexford Elementary Guidance Counselor

Mrs. Amy Kleissas began working as an elementary counselor in 1994 and originally split her time between Hance and Wexford elementary schools. Later, her time was dedicated to Wexford Elementary School, where she has been for the last 16 years. In all, she has served Pine-Richland for 21 years. She holds a Master of Science in Education and is a National Certified Counselor and Licensed Professional Counselor. A little known fact about Mrs. Kleissas is that she worked at the Radio Corporation of America & TV Transmitter plant in Washington, PA scheduling engineering programs. Like many of our retirees, she will greatly miss working with the children, the families and her colleagues. Although, she says she may not have had the neatest desk, she has had a wonderful career. She has many retirement plans, which include spending more time with her husband Nick, her grandsons, son, daughter, and their spouses.



Kathy Smith, Wexford & Hance Elementary Personal Care Assistant

Mrs. Kathy Smith began her career at Pine-Richland as a short-term and long term substitute in many positions from 1993-2013. She had the opportunity to work in various areas and worked in every school building, after she was hired in 2007. She first began serving as a personal care assistant and nurse at Richland Elementary School. She served as a paraprofessional in the Life Skills program at Pine-Richland Middle School, and later she had the opportunity to work as a personal care assistant and nurse at Pine-Richland High School and Eden Hall Upper Elementary School. She rounds out her career as the health office assistant at Hance and Wexford elementary schools. Colleagues say they will miss the personalized care and concern she gives to the children. Her two adult sons are both Pine-Richland High School graduates. She plans to spend more time with

them and her grandson Isaac, who is 15 months old.

2015 Pine-Richland School District Retiree Recognition

Eden Hall Upper Elementary School



M. Marlene Morrow, Eden Hall Upper Elementary Fourth Grade Teacher

Dr. M. Marlene Morrow has been around the world and back as a teacher with teaching experience in Western Pennsylvania, Illinois and Iran. In 1989, she was hired by Pine-Richland School District as a reading specialist. She has taught at Hance, Wexford and Eden Hall Upper Elementary School. In 1993, she had the opportunity to accompany a reading delegation to China through People-to-People International. In 1997, she began teaching third grade at Wexford Elementary School, and in 2010 she moved to Eden Hall Upper Elementary School. She earned her Doctorate of Education and Master's in Education and certification as a reading specialist from the University of Pittsburgh.

During retirement, she hopes to travel back to Switzerland with her husband and spend more time with her two grown daughters, who both attended Pine-Richland. She says she will miss the crazy things kids say and do each day and the excitement of meeting a brand new class of students each fall. After her 26-year career at PR, she is still Pine-Richland proud.

M. Colleen Todd, Eden Hall Upper Elementary School Fourth Grade Teacher

Mrs. M. Colleen Todd began her career in 1989 in the Pine-Richland School District, where she has served in many roles. She worked as an instructional support teacher at Washington Elementary and Hance Elementary schools and was a special education teacher at Pine-Richland High School. In addition, she taught fifth grade at Washington and Hance elementary schools and at Wexford Elementary, where she also taught third grade. When Eden Hall Upper Elementary School opened, she began teaching sixth grade and rounds out her career there as a fourth grade teacher. She has been nominated for many awards including the PA Teacher of the Year Award. She earned runner-up in the Wolf in Excellence in Teaching Awards program and was honored with the Family First Award. She says she has so many fond memories at Pine-Richland and is fortunate to have had a job that she loved, which provides daily memories that will last a lifetime. She will enjoy her retirement years with her husband Richard, who is also a retired teacher from Pine-Richland, and adult sons and daughter.



Pine-Richland Middle School



Margaret Peterson, Pine-Richland Middle School Paraprofessional

Mrs. Margaret Peterson joined Pine-Richland School District in 2005. She first served as a paraprofessional for the sixth-grade learning support program. For the past seven years, she has served as a paraprofessional in the seventh and eighth grade autistic support program. She has enjoyed her entire career serving the middle school. Not many people know that she spent 15 years as a paraprofessional at the high school and middle school level in Grand Rapids, Michigan, before she moved to Pennsylvania. She says she has made many friendships with staff members and has worked with some very special students along the way. She speaks highly of her colleagues, saying it has been a pleasure to witness many dynamic teaching styles and hopes everyone has the opportunity to witness all of the excellent teachers she has come to know in the past 10 years. She has many stories, from her work in the

classroom, which have kept her chuckling through the years. Mrs. Peterson's colleagues say she is one of the kindest and most caring individuals Pine-Richland Middle School has ever had the honor of calling one of their own. During her retirement years, she hopes to spend more time with her husband, adult children and two grandchildren who live out of state. She has a strong interest in volunteering and writing about her family history.

Pine-Richland High School



Betty Jo Cole, Pine-Richland High School Math Teacher

Mrs. Betty Jo Cole joined Pine-Richland School District 19 years ago. Through the years, she taught Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry courses at Pine-Richland High School in grades nine through 12. During her time at Pine-Richland, Mrs. Cole assisted with the PRHS Track & Field program. In all, she has dedicated 38 years to education. Prior to teaching in Pennsylvania, she taught in North Carolina and Florida. Her experience in education has brought with it many good memories. Her colleagues say they in turn have good memories of her strong determination to spark student interest in math. From time to time, she could be heard singing the quadratic formula in hopes to get her students to learn the formula. Mrs. Cole plans to move to Virginia to be closer to her son and grandson.

Pine-Richland School District

Diane McGuire, Human Resources Database Administrator

Mrs. Diane McGuire is retiring after 19 years of service at Pine-Richland School District. She started in 1996 as a special programs secretary. She held that role for seven years. Later, she added the role of student activities secretary and became the district's benefits specialist in 2003. Most recently, she has served as a database administrator for the human resources office. She hopes to spend more time with her husband and grown children during her retirement years. In addition, she will enjoy a new addition to her family. Those who know her best will miss her witty sense of humor and her calm, steady demeanor even during stressful times.



“Each student leaves with a special place in my memory. Each day I walked into the classroom, the students inspired me and made me smile. They are a precious gift that I felt privileged to teach.”

- Wexford Elementary School Teacher Karen Elliott