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Pine-Richland School District looks forward to a new school year



BRIAN C. RITTMAYER | Wednesday, August 10, 2022 7:23 p.m.



COURTESY OF PINE-RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Pine-Richland students and staff meet as part of a sustainability effort in June. Reducing paper use and endorsing the use of reusable water bottles are among the first steps schools will take to reduce their environmental footprint.

Students in the Pine-Richland School District will be returning to classrooms next week.

The first day of school for students is Thursday, Aug. 25. The district's enrollment is expected to be about 4,550 students.

Safety will be an area of focus across all six district schools, district spokeswoman Erin Hasinger said.

“The district has been collaborating with local first responders over the summer to update our emergency response protocols,” she said. “Information that is appropriate for public knowledge will be shared with our students and staff as they return to school.”

The district finished the 2021-22 school year with full in-person instruction and face masks were optional. The new school year will start the same way, Hasinger said.

She said the district is in a solid position with staffing for most positions, as is Student Transportation of America. There are some vacancies for paraprofessionals and custodians, and Sodexo has multiple food service vacancies with flexible hours and opportunities for interested candidates.

Pine-Richland High School has a new administrative team. Frank Hernandez was promoted to principal in June after serving as assistant principal during the 2021-22 school year. Michael Barlak was hired as assistant principal in February; Lisa Harding and Tracy Kuchnicki were hired as assistant principals in July.

Art, world language and special education were reviewed during the 2021-22 school year. Recommendations from that review will be implemented in the new school year, which Hasinger said “will result in positive classroom experiences and opportunities for students K-12.”

Libraries at Richland, Wexford and Eden Hall elementary schools have been renovated.

The district started a “Sustainability Leadership Council” in May, from which a six-school sustainability club has been established. Pairs of student leaders have been selected from each school to represent students.

“Paper reduction and the endorsement of reusable water bottle filler stations are the initial steps to be pursued whereby the actions of each individual in our schools will help to reduce our environmental footprint,” Hasinger said.

Staff will be working to establish relationships with students inside and outside of classrooms, Hasinger said.

“It is our goal to have all students connected to school in some way through after-school activities, clubs or athletics,” she said.

This school year is the final year of the district’s current strategic plan. Students, staff and the community will be engaged in developing goals for the next for years this fall and winter, Hasinger said.

“Opportunities for community members to share their perspectives will be made available through town hall meetings and electronically,” she said.

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