PITMAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Dear Pitman Families,

October has a way of settling over Pitman. The leaves are turning, the Friday night lights are on, and the first-week jitters of September are long gone. Students know where they're going now, and teachers know their students. It's a good time of year to be in our schools, and I'm grateful to our staff for the care they bring to their work and to all of you for the support you give our kids. What follows is an update on Wednesday night's Board of Education meeting, along with a few dates worth marking on your calendar.

Pitman to Host the NJDOE on October 26th

On Monday, October 26, Pitman will host the New Jersey Department of Education for a community roundtable on our state's school funding system. The event will run from 6:00 to 7:30 pm in the Pitman Jr./Sr. High School cafeteria. The NJDOE will open with a short presentation, and then participants will sit at small tables with residents from across Gloucester County to share their experiences, questions, and ideas about how New Jersey funds its schools. Everything shared that evening will be gathered with feedback collected from across the state.

This is an important conversation for every district in New Jersey, and the roundtable is open to the entire Gloucester County community, so please pass this along to friends and neighbors in other school districts as well.

Registration is available here: https://homeroom6.doe.nj.gov/eventsreg/describeevent/57271. If you can't make it, written comments can be sent to FundingOutreach@doe.nj.gov.

State of the District: October 28th at 6:30 pm in the PES Auditorium

Thank you to all of the parents who took part in our focus groups at the Jr./Sr. High, Pitman Elementary, and Memorial. I know that for some families, the words "focus group" bring back memories of the conversations our community had in 2022, and I understand why. *These conversations were different*. They weren't about where we've been; they were about where we are now and where we're headed. Today, Pitman has steady and increasing enrollment, new academies, expanded course pathways, and a record number of non-resident tuition students choosing our schools. That's a very different starting point, and it made for honest, forward-looking discussions.

Our groups talked through a range of topics, including artificial intelligence, student technology use, curriculum, and how the district communicates with families. One thing came up in every session, at every school: our teachers and staff. Parents consistently praised the effort, patience, and care our teachers and support staff show their children, and I want our staff to hear that. What we heard across all three groups will help inform the administrative team and the Board of Education as we plan for the future and make decisions in the years ahead.

At the State of the District on October 28th, I'll report back on what we heard in those sessions and share the curriculum, program, and facilities enhancements we've made over the past two years. We'll leave time for questions, and then invite everyone to tour the building and see some of those improvements firsthand. I hope you'll join us.

Athletics Department Update

At Wednesday's meeting, the Board took two important steps for our athletics program. First, the Board approved Mr. Dan Antonelli as our Interim Athletic Director. Mr. Antonelli recently retired from Clayton Public Schools and brings more than 25 years of experience as an athletic director; he is already on the job and serving as the primary contact for our coaches.

The Board also approved Mr. Jim Gooding as our permanent Athletic Director, beginning January 1, 2027. Jim has been completing his administrative internship with us this fall, and he brings 15 years of experience as a Health and Physical Education teacher, along with a strong athletics background that includes eight years as a varsity boys basketball coach and current work coaching soccer and baseball. He'll finish his internship here and work closely with Mr. Antonelli to ensure a smooth transition.

I also want to thank Mr. Ryan Caltabiano, our Assistant Superintendent, who stepped in as Acting Athletic Director on top of his full-time responsibilities. His willingness to take that on kept our programs running smoothly through the start of the season, and we're very grateful.

Grading Scale Discussion

Lastly, the Board discussed our desire to adjust the district's numeric grading scale. Pitman currently uses a seven-point scale (93-100 is an A, 85-92 is a B), while virtually every other high school in our area uses a ten-point scale (90-100 is an A, 80-89 is a B). The discussion centered on the fact that this difference puts our students at a disadvantage when compared with their peers in neighboring districts, and that's something we want to correct.

Mr. Caltabiano explained at the meeting that this change will not affect students' GPAs or Class Rank in Pitman; however, it will have other implications. For example, a Pitman student who earns a 92 in a dual credit course has that grade transferred to Rowan College of South Jersey (RCSJ) as a B, or a 3.0. A student earning the same score in a district using a 10-point grading scale receives an A, or a 4.0, on their RCSJ transcript. Additionally, the 7-point scale can place our students at a disadvantage when competing for scholarships against students from districts using a 10-point scale. Because these changes need to be in place before first marking period grades are finalized, we want to move quickly rather than wait until next year.

To that end, the Board approved a walk-on motion for a first reading of the policy and regulation change. The Board will hold another meeting in the coming weeks to formally adopt the new policy and regulation so it can be implemented this year.

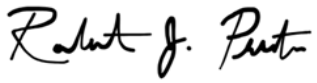
PEF Panther Prowl: Tomorrow, October 17th

Tomorrow morning, the Pitman Education Foundation hosts its 16th annual Panther Prowl, with a 5K run and one-mile walk starting at 8:30 am at the Pitman Jr./Sr. High School. Right after the 5K, kids of all ages can run a free lap around the track in the Kids Fun Run. Every dollar raised goes directly to grants for Pitman teachers, which pay for things like books, art supplies, musical instruments, online learning resources, and special events for our students.

The PEF has been remarkably good to our district. Year after year, they've put resources into our classrooms that our budget alone couldn't reach. Whether you're running, walking, or just standing along the route with a cup of coffee, please be sure to show them your support!

I hope everyone has a great weekend!

Sincerely,



Robert J. Preston

Superintendent