PITMAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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May 5, 2026

Dear Community,

As we move through the final stretch of the school year, we also take time to recognize the people who make that progress possible. This week and next we celebrate both Teacher Appreciation Week and National Nurses Week. We are grateful for the dedication, compassion, and professionalism of our educators and school nurses. Our teachers inspire curiosity, build resilience, and help students reach their full potential, while our nurses provide the care and support that keeps our students safe, healthy, and ready to learn. To all of our teachers and nurses, *thank you* for the difference you make each day.

Budget Update

At our most recent meeting, the Board of Education approved a tentative budget that reflects both the realities we are facing and a conscious effort to limit the burden on our taxpayers. The budget includes a 3.98% tax increase, which is below our maximum allowable cap of 6.1%, a decision made deliberately by the Board to balance fiscal responsibility with community impact. At the same time, we continue to navigate significant cost drivers, most notably an 18% increase in healthcare premiums. Led by Mrs. Miller, the Board has also remained actively engaged in legislative advocacy, participating in hearings and working groups related to school funding; the administration has joined in these efforts as well. For those interested, the full budget presentation can be accessed here: [2026-2027 Budget Presentation].

Expanded Behavioral Supports

One important addition in this year's budget is an increased investment in behavioral supports through a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). This is really about building our own capacity to support students with behavioral and social-emotional needs in a more proactive and consistent way, rather than relying on outside services. By strengthening our BCBA presence, we can better support our staff, develop the skills of our instructional aides, and expand our ability to serve students with higher levels of need in-district. Over time, that puts us in a stronger position to reduce out-of-district placements and keep more students learning here in our schools.

Referendum Update

The high school track project is nearly complete and has already reopened for use, with only the final addition of our school logo in the D-zone remaining. At Pitman Elementary School, work on the HVAC project is underway, including the demolition of the existing boiler, with more extensive renovations scheduled to take place over the summer months.

Walls School & Kindle Lease Agreement

The Board recently approved a lease agreement between Pitman Public Schools and Washington Township Public Schools. As part of this agreement, beginning in September 2026, Walls School will house Washington Township preschoolers. This partnership represents a thoughtful use of our facilities while supporting programming needs across districts.

Baccalaureate Service

This year's Baccalaureate service will be held at The Grove Auditorium on Thursday, May 28 at 7:00 PM**.** This is an optional event for graduating seniors and their families, traditionally organized in partnership with the local Council of Churches. The service provides an opportunity for reflection and recognition of the graduating class in a more personal, community-centered setting.

New K–3 ELA Program: Amplify CKLA

The Board was presented with a new elementary literacy program, Amplify CKLA, which we will be implementing in grades K–3. This program is grounded in a knowledge-rich approach to literacy, building students' background knowledge and vocabulary alongside foundational reading skills. Research continues to show that comprehension is deeply tied to what students know, not just how well they can decode text. This shift reflects our belief that strong readers are built through both skill and knowledge development, and we are confident this will strengthen outcomes for our students over time.

End-of-Year Ceremonies

This is one of the most meaningful times of the year in our schools, as we recognize the accomplishments and growth of our students. A number of important year-end events are coming up:

- **Board Recognition Ceremony** – June 3 at 6:30 PM (Jr./Sr. High School Auditorium)
- **All-Sports Banquet** – June 4 at 6:00 PM
- **6th Grade Moving-Up Ceremony** – June 9 at 6:00 PM (Jr./Sr. High School Auditorium)
- **8th Grade Moving-Up Ceremony** – June 11 at 6:00 PM (Jr./Sr. High School Auditorium)
- **Pitman Senior High School Commencement** – June 12 at 7:00 PM (Davis Field)

This year will also mark the final 8th Grade Moving-Up Ceremony held in this format. Moving forward, we are working to strengthen a clear and continuous PK–12 experience, with the Jr./Sr. High School journey culminating in a single, shared milestone: high school commencement. This shift is intended to reinforce the coherence of our secondary program and elevate graduation as the defining culminating celebration of student achievement.

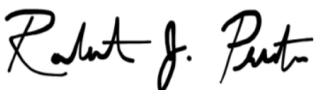
Student Voice: Environmental Advocacy Efforts

I recently had the opportunity to update the Board on the work of our high school Environmental Club in partnership with the Pitman Environmental Commission's "Pitman for Trees" campaign. Our students have taken an active role in advocating for tree preservation, emphasizing the environmental, health, and community benefits of maintaining and expanding our tree canopy. Their work reflects thoughtful engagement, civic awareness, and a genuine investment in the future of our community.

Calendar Reminder – May 15 Delayed Opening

As a reminder, Friday, May 15 will now be a delayed opening day for students. Staff will utilize the morning for professional development, and students will report on a two-hour delay as part of our snow day make-up plan.

Sincerely,



Rob Preston
Superintendent of Schools