

# THE PANTHER LINK

News of the Park City Schools



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PARK CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT #5  
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**PARK CITY SCHOOL  
DISTRICT #5  
HOME OF THE PANTHERS  
P.O. Box 278**

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POSTAL PATRON

## A COUPLE KEY DATES FOR THE WINTER:

Christmas break Dec 20  
normal dismissal time, last  
day of 1st Semester.  
Return January 6. First day  
of 2nd semester  
January 29 is a noon early  
out.  
February 20 & 21 No school

## Newsletter info:

- Facilities Info
- Budget Info
- CSCT Info
- Pre-School Info
- Adult Ed
- School meal info
- School notes

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## DISTRICT NEWS

### BUDGET PROJECTION FOR NEXT YEAR

For the past two years the Park City School District has tried to pass a general fund levy to increase our budget authority. Our elementary district has been existing on approximately 83% of its maximum budget and the high school has been existing on 81% of its maximum budget. The state sets what a school's base budget is-that is the combined amount the state will directly fund along with the amount the state has passed on to the local tax payer. The maximum budget takes the base budget and the maximum amount the school can ask the local tax payers to contribute. Over the past several years we have had to cut items like teacher supplies, text books, and positions in order to operate within our budget. We are currently projecting out a budget shortfall of approximately \$150,000. As usual we can tighten our belts some, but those cuts are directly impacting students. We have science, math, and history textbooks that were published in the 1990's. We are pushing 30+ students into classrooms meant to handle 20. The school board will be discussing the possibility of running an operational levy in their next couple meetings. They are tasked with maintaining a budget that meets the needs of the students and providing them with an excellent education, while being fiscally responsible to the public that ultimately helps to pay for the budget.

This is also a negotiation year with our teachers. The Board is tasked with working with teachers to offer a salary that is fair and somehow enticing to both attract new teachers and retain much of the staff we have. This is an area we have struggled with. In the past 5 years we have retained 12 of 30 teachers. Of the 17 that have transitioned, we have refilled their roles 33 different times. Salary, student loads, working environment, and financial support are all reasons we have seen this transition. Those that have stayed have generally found a place to live in or directly around Park City.

## DISTRICT NEWS cont.

### FACILITIES UPDATE

Our school has continued to look at the immediate facility needs of the district and to develop a plan that takes that into account as well as how it would affect the district long term. The biggest areas of need include our agricultural classroom and shop, our science classrooms/labs, and some dedicated computer/math classrooms. We need to move our modular classrooms into regular building classrooms that are larger, more educationally friendly and more energy efficient. We need to expand our kitchen and rebuild our walk-in cooler and freezer. And we need a gym with new locker rooms and a weight room.

One idea that has been developing again is to build on the school's 20 acres. That building would have six classrooms for science, math, and ag. It would have a shop that would include a wood shop, metals shop, and a green house. And it would include a gym with two to three locker rooms and a weight room. It would also have a concessions area and foyer. The current kitchen would be expanded and the walk-ins would be rebuilt. The classes in the modular would be moved into the high school wing and the district office would move to the current weight room. The removal of the current modular buildings and their utilities costs would more than make up for the maintenance cost of a new facility. If there is an influx of students over the next ten years, expansion would be pushed to the new site for more high school and junior high classes while the elementary classes would fill in classes in the current facility.

Over the next few months we will have some meetings to more formally present ideas and seek input. Once we have specifics and a reasonable price tag, the board will decide whether or not to move forward on this project.

## **CSCT FOR STUDENTS**

One of the big influences in educating students that folks don't always think about is trauma. We have found that trauma can be one of the biggest barriers to a student's education, whether it be a death in the family, abuse, a major change in living conditions, or other types of trauma. Often times schools don't have the resources or training to work with students on the socio/emotional level that is needed to try to overcome these educational barriers. One thing we are doing at Park City Schools is to partner with the Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch to bring in a behavioral therapist and specialist to provide this type of therapy for students who need it. This service, Comprehensive School and Community Treatment Services, or CSCT, will be provided at our school. The school will make a referral with the parents consent. The therapist will then contact the parents to discuss the program and whether or not they qualify for it. The program is paid for through either Medicaid or private insurance. Our goal is to help find ways for students to cope with their trauma so that we can decrease the time students are removed from class for behavioral issues related to their trauma.

## **ADULT ED**

We try twice a year to offer Adult Education classes to our community. We have had some years with a good variety of classes and some years without any at all. We are looking to try to offer some classes again starting in February. If you have a great idea for a class you want to teach, please fill out the proposal form on the school website at [www.parkcityschools.org](http://www.parkcityschools.org) or stop by the school to pick up a form. Once we have some classes to offer, they will be posted on the website and in the local paper with times, location, and cost. Classes can be anything from knitting, to photography, to dance, to computer literacy.

## **PRE-SCHOOL OPPORTUNITY**

Pre-school is also typically a big influence in preparing a child for kindergarten and all the way up through 3rd grade. Montana has partnered with the Waterford UPSTART program to try to provide pre-school opportunities to rural students. Students who are age 4 and are not part of a pre-school program may participate in this pre-school program. The program provides the family with a Chromebook computer that is pre-loaded with the Waterford UPSTART program. Parents will then agree to work with their pre-schooler for 15-20 minutes a day in reading, math and science. If the family does not have wireless connectivity, the Waterford program will provide that also. The program also requires site visits by a Waterford representative-those can be either in person or virtual. This program has been used in Utah for the past couple years and since 2009 has had over 60,000 enrollees. It is now being expanded to include Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and North and South Dakota. If you are interested in this or know of a pre-schooler in our community that might benefit, please call Mr. Grabowska at the school.

## **FREE AND REDUCED SCHOOL MEALS**

Please remember that it is important to fill out the Free and Reduced Meal application that is on the school website or you can stop at the school and request one. Many families neglect to fill this form out or forget to reapply each year, which results in an unneeded burden on their family finances. It takes just a few minutes to fill out this form. Sometimes a family doesn't quite qualify and struggles. If that is the case we have some financial help available. We currently have families in debt for school meals in excess of \$5400. Please remember we do accept credit cards now for payment options. And if you are interested in donating to our Angel Fund or specifically to lunch accounts, please contact Lisa in the District Office.

## SCHOOL NOTES

Once students return on January 6, they will be starting 2nd semester. Students through grade 10 will be taking their reading, language usage, and math MAP assessments through the first couple weeks of the semester. It is important that students work hard on these assessments as they are good indicators for other assessments they will be taking. Through grade 8 the MAP assessments are a good indicator on how students will do on their Smarter Balanced state assessment. For students in grades 9 & 10 it will be a good indicator on how they might do on the ACT test they take in their junior year of high school. If students do not do well on the MAP tests, we have several different tools to use with them to help bring up those scores by filling in gaps they may have in their learning when it comes to math or reading.

On February 10 and 11, we will be having our second set of parent/teacher conferences. Elementary students are scheduled for their conferences as they are generally with just one main teacher. Parents of junior high and high school students, however, are welcome to stop in any time during the conferences. You are encouraged to stop in so that you can learn about the great things your student is doing at school. I am positive they are doing much more than the "Nothing" or "I don't know" response you usually get when you ask what they did at school. You can also find out how your student did on their MAP tests and what skills you can help them with at home to better prepare them for the spring Smarter Balanced test.

One of the easiest ways for students to improve grades and test scores is through good attendance at school. Our elementary and our high school have been having some poor attendance lately.

Attendance is important for students to get needed instruction, new concepts, group work, social skills, and one on one help when needed. Students are less likely to fall behind, less likely to get frustrated with school work, and less likely to fail in their classes.

We recently transitioned to a new head cook. Chantille Dobitz has been with us for quite a while, so while she is not a new face she will be bringing some new ideas to the meal program. Our breakfast and lunch menus are created a month in advance, so you have time to take a look and know what is coming. Remember that breakfast is a super important meal for learning, so take advantage of what is being offered.

Basketball, wrestling, winter cheer, FFA, FCCLA, and pep band are all happening now. Junior high boys basketball will start up in February and we will see a number of academic bowls in March. Students are very busy with school work also. Remember to check on your student's grades with the parent portal to keep track of their work in case they slip a little.

Students who want to take classes through Montana Digital Academy or dual credit courses through one of the colleges need to get signed up with Mr. Martin ASAP. Students who wish to transfer classes at semester must do so within the first 3 days. After that they must stay in the class for the remainder of the semester.

We are also welcoming Catherine Wetmore, who will be our new 6th and 7th grade language arts teacher. We look forward to her starting with us next semester. Special thanks go to Shona Verke for serving as the long term substitute for those students.