

*note from the desk of
Dan Grabowska*

A COUPLE KEY DATES FOR
THE WINTER:

Thanksgiving Break Nov 21-
25

Dec 21 1:10 dismissal, last
day of 1st Sem.

Jan 7 First day of 2nd Sem.

Jan 21 No School

Newsletter info:

- District Info
- High School & JH News
- Elementary Notes
- New Teacher intros

Information on the school
website:

Adult Education Info

New Parent and Student

Portal Info

Spirit Wear Info

Hunter Safety coming up in
February. More info coming
soon.

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

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THE PANTHER LINK

News of the Park City Schools



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DISTRICT NEWS

Every year we tend to have a fairly large turnover in our teaching staff; usually we replace approximately one-fifth of our teaching staff. There are various reasons for this. Sometimes staff leave to follow a spouse to a new job, sometimes it is retirement, sometimes people are wanting to change their location, sometimes it is for a better job offer, and sometimes people are just non-renewed or encouraged to find another job. A big part of that decision process for a teacher to leave is money. Our salary structure for teachers is in the middle of the pack for class C schools. For our area, if a teacher moves to Columbus or Laurel, they can realize a \$5-\$10 thousand increase in salary. If a teacher moves to Billings, they can realize \$15 thousand or more in salary increase.

As a school, we work hard to create a positive and progressive climate in order to try to develop a strong bond between the teachers and the school. Climate can often overcome some of the draw of bigger districts. We set up a mentor type of relationship between new teachers and established teachers so that new teachers have that go-to person when needed. We also provide the opportunities for different trainings throughout the year to help build professional abilities, build professional networks, and build a sense of comfort in the classroom.

Regardless, though, we still lose teachers yearly. Although it is sometimes refreshing to have a different face in the teaching staff, there are ramifications to continuously losing staff. In the five years I have been here, we have had 4 science teachers, 7 language arts teachers, 6 kindergarten teachers, 7 special education teachers, and 3 music teachers. That means we have lost continuity in the curriculum and in the classroom. Every time a new teacher comes in we have to get that teacher up to speed on local curriculum and local expectations. That in turn affects class, district, state, and federal testing scores. That in turn can affect college entrance exams.

DISTRICT NEWS cont.

So what can be done to help change that? At the school we continue to strive to create a positive working environment. We try to find the best professional development we can for our staff. We work to provide the materials they need to provide the best opportunity to teach that we can. And we do believe that those are key points in keeping teachers in Park City. But it isn't everything.

A new teacher salary starts at just under \$30,000 a year. One of the most difficult tasks for a first year teacher in Park City is finding a place to live. Most end up having to go to Billings to find affordable housing. The average rent in Billings is \$851 a month. As they will need to drive, they need a car; the average car payment on a used car is \$400 a month. Most college students leave college with a \$25,000 student loan debt, which is about \$280 a month for 10 years. After taxes, the average take home for the teacher is about \$2000. After the above payments, it leaves a teacher with \$470 a month for gas, food, child care, and other essentials.

As noted last year, we have topped out our budget. We ran the general fund budget levy last spring in an attempt to relieve some of that budget pressure, but it was not passed by the voters. We absolutely need to address teacher salaries. We also still need to address the shortage of two teachers in the system-an art teacher and a business/computers teacher. We are required to have an art teacher and we are required to have a foreign language teacher. When we lost our art teacher last summer, it was too late to find another and we were fortunate to find our Spanish teacher. And it is a disservice to our students to not provide business, accounting, and computer classes.

Throughout the year I will continue to provide you with key information as to why we need a levy to increase our general fund budget. As we get closer the amount needed will be discussed and specific reasons provided to justify the request.

MEET THE NEW NEW TEACHERS IN OUR DISTRICT THIS YEAR

Hillary Frank is thrilled to be teaching here in Park City this year! This will be Hillary's third year teaching, her past two were spent in the town of Velva, North Dakota. She is originally from the small town of Baker, Montana, where she graduated in 2010. After high school, she attended Montana State University-Billings and obtained her degrees in both Spanish and History Education in 2015. Hillary and her husband Jeff decided to make the move back home to Montana this past year, as her husband is originally from Laurel, Montana. They currently live in Laurel, with their two furry children Max and Lola. (dog & cat) Hillary strives to make her students more globally aware and to truly value differences of other cultures. She is very passionate about her subject areas and has enjoyed getting to know everyone in the school and community thus far!

My name is **Justine Taylor** and I am the new English teacher for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. I graduated from Belgrade High School in 2012. In college, I studied Elementary Education and had the opportunity to play both basketball and softball at the collegiate level. I am eager to continue my passion for sports as the head coach for the high school girl's basketball program. I look forward to an outstanding school year as a Park City Panther.

Danielle Murray grew up in Corvallis, MT, and moved to the area about a year ago. She studied Psychology at MSU and Elementary Education at UM. When she isn't teaching 1st grade, she enjoys hunting, hiking, fishing, sewing, and reading in her free time! She lives in Billings with her fiancé Michael, and their dog Lazer.

Shelly Mendenhall says it is so good to be back. "I have missed being a panther! For those that don't know me, I was a paraprofessional here at Park City Schools for years. I left for three years to finish my teaching degree. I am so excited about my first year as a teacher teaching Kindergarten. I have lived in Park City with my husband and two children for almost 10 years. Our daughter is now a freshman in college and our son is a junior at Park City - Go Panthers. I enjoy family, family gatherings, crafting, and crafting. I have one dog, two cats and lots of family around most of the time."

FACILITIES UPDATE

Our district is continuing to deal with a shortage of space for our students. Our special education and Title I teachers share the same space for our secondary students. We still don't have a dedicated art classroom. We still only have one science lab for our secondary students and no science lab for our elementary students. We have five teachers sharing three trailers for classrooms. Our kitchen is still outdated and too small to serve the students who eat each day. Our specialists-speech therapist and school psychologist work out of closets transitioned to offices. PT and OT is often conducted in hallways. Our one gym handles over 200 students a day for PE and after school activities. There are no real safe handicap areas in the gym for fans. Our locker rooms are in the basement and not handicap accessible.

We continue to do the best we can in providing a safe environment for our students. We appreciate greatly the public vote that allowed us to put a new roof on the building. We know this facility is going to be used to house our students for a long time. But we do need to look at what we can do to add to what we have at the fairest cost possible.

7-12 NOTES

Over the past two years the Physical Education classes have seen some big changes in what they are doing. A key goal has been to emphasize lifetime activities that students can carry into life after high school and continue to be active. Mrs. Cristaldi has students participating in traditional indoor and outdoor activities, as well as special activities like archery, hiking, and special trips for bowling, paddle boarding and kayaking, skiing, fishing/fly fishing, and other activities. These activities do have a cost involved and we would like to continue so any donations made to the PE department can help defray these costs in the future so students don't have to pay.

One of our most popular classes in the high school over the past couple years has been our STEM class, taught by Ms. Harpster. Students see traditional assignments, like balloon powered cars and building bridges out of balsa wood. They also work with recycled materials, create video games, code and drive Sphero robots, create 3-D projects on the 3-D printers, and other projects based on personal interests

Positively Elementary
Janet Southworth
Fall 2018

Our school year is well under-way as we have just wrapped up our first parent teacher conferences. This is an important time of year for parents and teachers to share ways that together they can help our students continue to reach their potential both socially and academically during this school year.

Park City School uses a variety of assessments in order to track student progress. The information from the assessments is intended to assist teachers in making informed instructional decisions. Then, through collaboration with parents, parents can support the learning of their children in conjunction with the teachers. I am always so grateful that parents and teachers have an opportunity to come together to collaborate throughout the school year.

I read a quote the other day that I felt fitting to share. "Behind every successful student is an exhausted teacher," author unknown. I do want to take a moment in our very busy lives to thank the teachers, paraprofessionals and support staff that work very hard to help support the children of Park City. I do see exhausted teachers on our team. Therefore, during this Thanksgiving season, you might encourage your child drop their teacher a note letting them know how much they are appreciated. A kind word goes a long way.