

News from Putnam County CUSD #535

PC Community:


The school year is officially under way, and we are excited to have students back in the classrooms! The new year brings new opportunities and goals for both our students and staff.

Just prior to our first day this year, teams from each building came together to set improvement goals in key areas, such as Math, English language arts, graduation rates, and attendance. These goals give us a shared focus on the skills and knowledge most critical to student success.

This same dedication from our teachers and staff in previous years has led to remarkable achievements across many areas. In case you missed them, we have included some highlights below – and we thank our outstanding teachers and staff for these achievements and continued commitment to students in the year ahead.

District Facilities Info Session

The District has completed the facilities analysis in partnership with Larson & Darby Group, the District's architect. This analysis is the first step in a new process to develop a long-range facilities plan for our four schools and includes a review of each building's architectural, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems.

As part of our commitment to transparency and community engagement, the Board of Education is hosting an informational session to share the findings on  *Wednesday, October 1st, 2025, at 6:00 PM in the PCHS Auditorium.*

At this stage, no formal planning has begun. The Board of Education's priority right now is to inform the community about the identified needs, so the presentation will focus solely on the initial findings.

Upcoming Events

- PCJH Softball Field Naming Ceremony – August 23rd, 2025 – 11:30 AM
- PCHS Homecoming Parade – September 17th, 2025 (more details to come)
- District Facilities Info Session – October 1st, 2025
- PCJH and PCHS Fall Concert – October 8th, 2025 – 6:30 PM – PCHS Auditorium

Points of Pride

- *Expanded Career- and College-Based Learning Opportunities for PCHS Students*

- Among the 58 PCHS graduates last year, they earned 349 college credits before graduation, 26% completed a work experience or internship, and 40% enrolled in a trades course during their senior year.
 - Added a Career Exploration and Work-Based Learning Experience courses at PCHS
- *Narrowing the Achievement Gap on Standardized Assessments*
 - Over the past few years, students have consistently increased achievement on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness, especially in English-Language Arts.
- *Outstanding 9th Grade On-Track Rate*
 - For the past few years, more than 90% of 9th-grade students remainder on track for graduation at the end of their first year of high school, regularly outperforming the State average.
- *Top 10% Ranking for PCPS and PCES*
 - In 2022, both PCPS and PCES ranked in the top 10% of all schools in Illinois.
- *Increased Teacher and Staff Retention*
 - Boosted retention rates from 81% in 2017 to 89% in 2024
- *Expanded Athletics*
 - Added new sports programs at both PCJH (cross country, golf) and PCHS (football, bowling)
- *Safety and Security Improvements*
 - Contracted a dedicated School Resource Officer for increased safety and support
 - Implemented new common response protocol across all schools for emergencies
- *Instructional Updates*
 - Updated instructional resources across the District, including new textbooks in some areas for the first time in over 30 years
 - Kindergarten provides a play-based learning program blending natural play with learning goals
 - PCPS implemented a research-based phonics program to support early literacy
- *Technology Upgrades*
 - Completed fiber installation across the district to enhance connectivity and support learning
 - Developed rotation for regular implementation of new devices each year
 - Upgraded PCHS network equipment

If you have any questions regarding these topics or other matters, please contact the District Office at (815)882-2800 ext. 5.

Sincerely,

PC #535 Board of Education & Dr. Clayton J. Theisinger, *Superintendent*