

# PIEDMONT FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWS & UPDATES FROM PIEDMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS





# PIEDMONT

## Public Schools

### BOARD OF EDUCATION MARCH 2022 MEETING UPDATES

The PPS Board of Education approved the Student Transfer Policy capacity revision. The vote was unanimous.

Per [PPS Board of Education policy regarding student transfers](#), each school site's grade level capacity shall be approved by the board of education prior to the first day of January, April, July and October of each school year.

---

The bids for the Middle School of Piedmont construction project were tabled.

---

The PPS Board of Education convened to executive session to discuss employment items and a long-term suspension appeal.

After returning to open session, the board voted to approve the employment items on Attachment B of the board agenda. The vote was unanimous. The board also voted to uphold the suspension. This vote was unanimous, as well.

---

The PPS Board of Education approved the consent agenda, including the 2022 district lawn maintenance agreement with Busy Barrios, LLC. The vote was unanimous.





# PRINCIPAL REPORTS

FOCUS: 2021-2022 SITE TEACHER OF THE YEAR HONOREES



## TIFFANY DOWNING PIEDMONT EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

The ECC is proud to announce Mrs. Tiffany Downing as our 2021-2022 Teacher of the Year.

Mrs. Downing is a caring and compassionate educator who demonstrates empathy by creating a safe space for her students. She is genuinely excited about teaching, and her enthusiasm transfers to her students. Mrs. Downing is patient, understanding, and calm. She establishes a warm and engaging learning environment. Her students are comfortable taking risks, allowing them to develop academic and social skills while building self-confidence.

Mrs. Downing is making a difference in the lives of our youngest wildcats. We are honored to have her represent our school family.

“

I love being in Mrs. Downing's class because she plays puzzles with all of us and helps me learn.

- JUDGE PAYNE,  
ECC STUDENT

“

Mrs. Downing is so nice to us. She makes me feel good because she is so nice.

- EVELYN BROWN, ECC STUDENT

”

Mrs. Downing loves all the people in her class. She let us play with our partners and helps us learn new things.

- XEZAYA BRUNER ECC STUDENT



MARCH 2022

# PRINCIPAL REPORTS

FOCUS: 2021-2022 SITE TEACHER OF THE YEAR HONOREES



## JESSICA KEYSER NORTHWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

We are happy to announce Mrs. Jessica Keyser as our Northwood Teacher of the Year.

Mrs. Keyser teaches 2nd grade and is in her 11th year of teaching. From her first day at Northwood, her goal has always been to teach kids to love learning. She wants them to come to school excited to be a part of a classroom family that discovers new things together. She makes her students feel safe, loved, and free to ask questions. She always encourages them to challenge themselves.

Mrs. Keyser works hard to ensure that her students leave each day with something that sparked their interest or made them wonder. She hopes her students leave her classroom not with all the answers but with a passion to ask more questions.



“

I like her sense of humor and how she teaches. She always has a smile on her face! She is the best teacher EVER!

- AVA SLATER,  
NORTHWOOD STUDENT



MARCH 2022



# PRINCIPAL REPORTS

FOCUS: 2021-2022 SITE TEACHER OF THE YEAR HONOREES



## STEVE HAM PIEDMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Piedmont Elementary is happy to announce Mr. Steve Ham as our 2021-22 Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Ham has been in education for thirty-one years, and he still has the same love and passion for education as he did when he first started teaching. While this is only Mr. Ham's first year at PES, he has brought contagious positivity to our school. When students or staff walk the hallways, musical instruments or songs can always be heard.

Mr. Ham is an outstanding educator who not only teaches music, but also teaches the whole child. His overall goal each day is for students to develop a love for music, have a positive outlook on life, and be kind to everyone.

Mr. Ham has a special ability to connect with students who are struggling with behavior or the desire to attend school. He makes it his mission to learn the interests of that student to help them feel connected at school. We recently had a student return from virtual learning who didn't want to be back at school. When asked, the student said his favorite band was Fall Out Boy. Mr. Ham replied, "well, I don't know if I know that one, but as long as it's school appropriate, we'll start listening to some of their songs." This student wore a Fall Out Boy concert t-shirt to school the next day so he could teach Mr. Ham all about his favorite band.

We are proud to have Mr. Ham represent our staff as our site Teacher of the Year.

“

Mr. Ham is the best. Every morning when I walk into the school he says, 'Let me see that smile' and it always makes me smile.

- SHAYLEE ALLEN,  
PIEDMONT ELEMENTARY STUDENT



“

I like Mr. Ham because he listens to all different kinds of music. One of my favorite songs is "The Auctioneer" by Leroy Van Dyke and he knew that song. He even let us listen to the song in class one day. Mr. Ham knows songs that my parents and grandparents know. He is the best.

”

-ELI RIBBLE, PIEDMONT ELEMENTARY STUDENT

MARCH 2022

# PRINCIPAL REPORTS

FOCUS: 2021-2022 SITE TEACHER OF THE YEAR HONOREES



## TASHA DOUGHERTY STONE RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Stone Ridge Elementary is proud to have Mrs. Tasha Dougherty represent our school as our 2021-22 Teacher of the Year. This is her 9th year teaching special education. Mrs. Dougherty is an outstanding educator who establishes clearly focused routines centered on student learning. Students are eager to come to her room for support. Mrs. Dougherty's students truly enjoy seeing her because she acknowledges their unique abilities and purposefully addresses their needs each day.

Students know Mrs. Dougherty is there for them and during their time in her classroom they feel accomplished and successful.

Seeing student's excitement when they understand a concept they have been working on for a long time is why Mrs. Dougherty loves being a special education teacher. She expects the best because she knows her students are capable of anything they set their minds to.

“

Mrs. Dougherty is amazing. She helps me all the time and I really like that.

- KAMBER SMITH,  
STONE RIDGE ELEMENTARY STUDENT



“

I like going to Mrs. Dougherty because it gives me more time to finish my work and I'm able to concentrate better. She gives her time to us kids!”

- LUCY KINER, STONE RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT

MARCH 2022



# PRINCIPAL REPORTS

FOCUS: 2021-2022 SITE TEACHER OF THE YEAR HONOREES



## SARA RHOADES PIEDMONT INTERMEDIATE

Piedmont Intermediate is excited to announce our 2021-2022 Teacher of the Year, Sara Rhoades.

Mrs. Rhoades is a demonstrable leader within the Library Media Specialist role. She consistently goes above and beyond to find new titles and technology for students, making our library an incredible learning space for all students!

Mrs. Rhoades exemplifies the "See a Need, Fill a Need" philosophy in our school. You can always find her creating events that make students' time at PI memorable. Book Club, Craft Club, Kona Ice, PI Book Bistro, and even the annual yearbook would not be possible without her leadership and initiative. Her flexibility, availability, and reliability serve as a model for every Piedmont Intermediate teacher and student.

“

Mrs. Rhoades is always helpful when I go to the library. The bonus is she always laughs at the jokes we tell her.

**-COLEMAN HUGHES,  
PIEDMONT INTERMEDIATE STUDENT**



”  
Mrs. Rhoades is the best! She literally makes everything happen and she makes it super fun! She works very hard. I think my favorite thing is that she's so funny and that means I'm always smiling when I'm with her.

**- KENLI BIRD, PIEDMONT INTERMEDIATE STUDENT**



# PRINCIPAL REPORTS

FOCUS: 2021-2022 SITE TEACHER OF THE YEAR HONOREES



## AMY BREZINA MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PIEDMONT

Piedmont Middle School is honored to have Mrs. Amy Brezina represent us as our 2021-2022 Teacher of the Year.

Mrs. Brezina has been a teacher in Piedmont for nine years and teaching English Language Arts at MSP for the past two years. She has an open and inviting classroom that students love to enter. She works hard to create an environment where past and present students feel valued and supported every day.

Relationships are a huge part of Mrs. Brezina's impact, and the number of past students who stop by throughout the day to check in prove how effective she is at developing strong bonds in her classroom. Her classroom is always full of energy. She facilitates activities that encourage students to engage and explore literature and writing in different ways to challenge and grow their abilities.

**“Mrs. Brezina is so sweet! She made learning fun, and she is very kind to everyone.”**

**- ESTHER KARBER,  
MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PIEDMONT STUDENT**

We thank Mrs. Brezina for making a lasting impact on our Wildcats and for leading in the classroom and beyond.

“  
Mrs. Brezina is my favorite teacher ever! I had her for the 5th and 7th grades; everything about her class is the best!  
- ELI MARS, MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PIEDMONT STUDENT





# PRINCIPAL REPORTS

FOCUS: 2021-2022 SITE TEACHER OF THE YEAR HONOREES



**JON BAKEWELL**  
**PIEDMONT HIGH SCHOOL**

Piedmont High School is thrilled to announce the selection of Mr. Jon Bakewell as the 2021-2022 Site Teacher of the Year.

Also known as “Coach Bakewell,” Mr. Bakewell has made a profound impact as an educator in Piedmont. For more than 25 years, he has taught mathematics in the classroom, and he spends countless hours coaching multiple sports - currently serving as the Head Girls Track Coach and an assistant football coach.

Mr. Bakewell cares deeply for all students, and he intentionally builds strong relationships with every person he interacts with in our school.

We couldn't be more proud to have Mr. Bakewell represent PHS educators.

“

Coach Bakewell is someone you can always count on when you need something! He would do anything for his students just to make sure they are happy.

Coach Bakewell always brightens the room when he walks in! He is a great leader in the classroom but also during FCA. I am so happy to have him as a teacher!

**- GRACE ROBISON,  
PIEDMONT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT**



**MARCH 2022**

# DISTRICT UPDATES

## HUMAN RESOURCES

Piedmont teachers were recently awarded just under **\$37,000** for their classrooms through the Oklahoma Classroom Learning & School Supplies Grant (CLASS)-- a collaboration of DONORSCHOOSE & OSDE.

Early Childhood Center			Intermediate		
Amy King	Fun with Magnetics	585.99	Cari Morelock	Flexible Seating and Alternative Work Areas	1,060.00
Angie Dial	Motivating Students in Math & Science	985.79	Suzanne Young	Robots That Teach	937.00
Tiffany Downing			Middle School		
Tiffany Downing	Put the Pencil Down! Let's Use Something New!	665.95	Hannah Sawyers	Learning Can be Comfy	991.11
Kimberlee Morrison	Move It, Touch It, Learn It	1,060.00	Sydney Silva	Meaningful Math in the Middle	792.73
Jennifer Kreemeier	Write This Way!	924.07	Stephanie Kunnanz	Making Math Mean More	928.00
Morgan Parvin	The Reading Blocks of Our Reading Brain	1,036.00	Summer Cope	Updating our Ancient Science Lab	594.57
Debbie Bethel	A, B, C-- It's As Easy as 1, 2, 3!	775.00	Sarah Hatley	Piedmont Poppers	998.64
Cindy Lacefield	My Heart Is in PE	796.00	Amy Brezina	A Novel Idea: Motivating Students to Read	988.00
Melisa Woolf	Sit Back and Relax	981.00	Victoria Plunkett	Sewing with Success	990.00
Teri Clark	Future Engineers in Training	742.04	High School		
Northwood Elementary			Deanne Strothers	Making Math Accessible to All Students	876.00
Jenny Honeycutt	Raising Readers	517.00	Amber Ramsey	Mrs. Ramsey's Speech Room	1,083.00
Jami Karber	Future Actors and Actresses!	986.00	Stacy Johnstonbaugh	<u>Theatre</u> Arts Can Change Your Life	1,000.00
Laura Pope	Coming Soon: Outdoor Concert	986.00	Courtney Wright	Help Us Learn the Skills to be Business People	1,000.00
Piedmont Elementary			Andrea Carpenter	¡Olé! Enhancing Spanish Class by Cultivating Culture!	776.00
Jill Wickham	Creating a Fun Learning Environment	910.00			
Robert Stephen Ham	Tying Jigs For Motivation Ad Excellence	1,206.00			
Tiffany Allen	Flexible Seating for Cozy Center Based Learning	791.00			
Stone Ridge Elementary					
Sidney Stafford	Tech Us Out	560.00			
Amanda Baker	Building Creative Brains & Environments with STEM!	779.98			
Adrienne Morgan	Super Seating Spots!	786.40			
Toni Carney	Let Their Voices Be Heard!	750.00			
Lacey Bates	Classroom Conversation Corner	512.00			
Sue McLemore	Jump-Starting Post Covid Learners!	997.52			
Jessica Fones	Capture It All	700.80			
All Elementaries					
Jammie Kimmel	STEAMing Thru Distance Learning	996.46			
Kelleigh Dies	Light Up Our Brains With Circuits	991.19			



Mrs. Lisa Campbell wears a shirt made for her by Piedmont High School students, Chance and Nicholas. They created the t-shirt using materials from Mrs. Courtney Wright's DONORSCHOOSE grant!



# DISTRICT UPDATES

## PUBLIC RELATIONS/COMMUNICATIONS

We collaborated with Sodexo, our child nutrition provider, to develop a [PPS branded site](#) where menus, applications for free and reduced meals and more can be found. This site was then connected to our district website. The new site will be more efficient, but also will allow changes to be quickly made to menus when necessary. The site also provides information to the SoHappy app, an application when parents can see what's on the menu at school each day.

## DISTRICT COUNSELING SERVICES

### PIEDMONT ELEMENTARY

The D.R.E.A.M. team, a club for 4th-grade students, has started at PES. The Doing Reaching Encouraging And Mentoring team helped with the annual PES food drive February 28 - March 5. This group of students will also help welcome new students and plan future events for our school.

Calm Waters, which provides small group opportunities to help children cope with anxiety, anger, and family changes, is continuing at PES.

### NORTHWOOD ELEMENTARY

In February, our team focused on Kindness lessons for all students. Our next focus areas are career lessons for all students, then we will shift to state testing coping skills lessons for students in grades 3 and 4.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PIEDMONT

The Middle School has implemented a weekly social skills lesson every Wednesday during advisory. Discussion topics this semester include: Goal Setting, Believing in Yourself, Wellness and Meditation, and lessons about Black History Month. Students have reached out with other topics to discuss in the next couple of months.

The enrollment process for the 22-23 school year has started. The Middle School has added new elective classes, including agriculture education, career exploration, and nutrition and wellness.

## HEALTH & WELLNESS/SAFE SCHOOLS

District Nurse, Amy Siefke, is currently working on getting all PHS students CPR education. The goal is to provide all students with CPR education each year. Nurse Siefke is instructing a class each day during Advisory. A special CPR class will be held for all seniors to meet the graduation requirement.



## Save the Date

PPS Mammogram Screenings: March 21  
Covid Vaccine Clinics: April 7 & April 28.  
Annual Staff Wellness Event: April 18 & April 19



# DISTRICT UPDATES

## DISTRICT COUNSELING SERVICES

### PIEDMONT HIGH SCHOOL

Enrollment is underway for all current PHS students.

The counselors at Piedmont High School have been meeting with students to work through enrollment selections for the 2022-2023 school year. We have scheduled Enrollment Nights for PHS Parents on March 22 and March 24. Parents will meet with advisory teachers to sign off on student course selections and have the option of attending informational sessions on Advanced Placement Courses, Concurrent College Courses, Student Internships, Virtual Courses, and Canadian Valley Technology Center.



We had more than 130 students apply to CVTech this year!

Interviews were conducted in late February and students should know by spring break if they have been accepted. We are excited to learn CVTech has added a new Aviation Maintenance Program available to our students this coming fall.

After spring break, the PHS Counseling team will hit the ground running with the College & Career Readiness Assessment for our Juniors.

### IMPORTANT TESTING DATES FOR PHS JUNIORS:

**April 6th - ACT**

**April 12th - Science component of the CCRA**

**April 14th - History component of the CCRA**

Brandi Bird has joined the Great Plains Associate of College Admissions Counseling and will attend a conference in Kansas City in April. We hope to expand our ability to offer a wider variety of scholarships and college admissions advantages to our students through her membership. This organization gives us access to more colleges for future college fairs at PHS.



## READING SUPPORT & INTERVENTION

The Reading Specialists are busy teaching Take Flight lessons to our students who display characteristics of dyslexia or other reading difficulties. These students have not responded to traditional interventions. All three Reading Specialists agree their Take Flight training has been the most transformative initiative for reaching all developing readers. They express their sincere appreciation for the training the district has provided to best serve all students.

The Reading Specialists are taking part in the state-funded LETRS training alongside several of our classroom teachers. LETRS teaches the skills needed to master the fundamentals of reading instruction—phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and language. This excellent program will greatly benefit all who participate. This team of professionals is eager to share knowledge gained during future PLC meetings and Professional Development. Cohorts 3 and 4 are upcoming and the team will encourage classroom teachers to enroll.

ELA curriculum adoption is well underway. Reading Specialists attended the textbook caravan where we were given a broad overview of current programs. We are meeting with the companies of the programs we thought looked the most comprehensive for our Piedmont students. Those meetings will give us a more in-depth look into the curriculum and how it will align with the needs of our students.

In the 2022-2023 school year, Oklahoma legislation will require all K-3 students who are not performing on grade level, based on the universal screener, to be given an additional assessment, using an approved dyslexia screener. We are in the process of carefully reviewing all options to make sure that what we pick is aligned with our assessment goals.

**MARCH 2022**



# DISTRICT UPDATES

## LIBRARY-MEDIA PROGRAM



PHS Library-Media Specialist, Mrs. Nicci Francis, has assisted MSP ELA teachers to secure reading materials for their classrooms while their library is closed by utilizing Sora. Sora provides all district students access to ebooks and audiobooks from the PPS collection, the OK Virtual Library collection, and the Metropolitan Library System collection. **The high school is also piloting two GALE databases this semester to assist students with research.**

Mrs. Francis was also selected to the High School Sequoyah Reading Team, and has just started her three-year term. Her selection will allow us to secure thousands of dollars in new release books for our library collection, as well as effectively "book talk" the books in our collection to make appropriate recommendations for students. We are thrilled for this special selection and how it will benefit PHS students for years to come!

## ACADEMIC AWARDS FOR PIEDMONT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



### NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP FINALISTS

We are proud to announce Piedmont High School Seniors Gracie Meade and Noah Koehn have both been selected to advance as finalists for the National Merit Scholarship awards to be offered in 2022. Congratulations to Gracie and Noah on this incredible academic achievement.



### OKLAHOMA FOUNDATION FOR EXCELLENCE ACADEMIC ALL-STATE

Piedmont Public Schools is proud to announce the selection of Madison Lake & Gracie Meade to the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence Academic All-State class of 2022. These students were chosen to represent Piedmont with this prestigious academic recognition.

# DISTRICT UPDATES

## CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

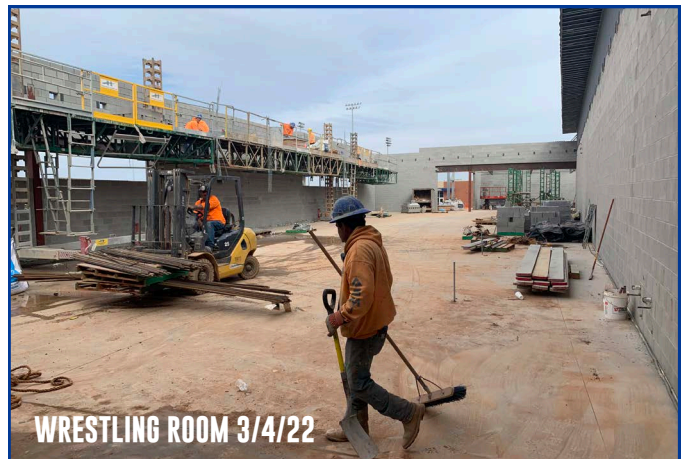
Site and district administrators met with the Yukon Public Schools Assistant Superintendent and Instructional Technology Coach to learn about Mastery Connect as we transition to a new digital assessment management system to replace Performance Matters. We will select several teachers to pilot this program for the 4th quarter. We are researching and plan to pilot several programs before making a decision moving forward to next year.



Through our curriculum meetings, it had become evident that an online research database was needed at our secondary levels for students to conduct research. PHS is currently piloting *Gale in Context* which offers cross-curricular content that supports national and state curriculum standards and reinforces the development of skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation. It supports exploring topics within business and economics, geography, government, history, literature, science and health, social issues, and more.

At our intermediate and middle school levels, we have purchased *Britannica School* which offers thousands of curated and curriculum-relevant articles, images, videos, audio clips, primary sources, maps, research tools, recommended websites, and three unique, but connected, databases to meet every reading level. Through these two programs, students can access thousands of different resources for research papers and essays in several different courses.

Our social studies Instructional Resource Specialists and social studies curriculum team have spent significant time evaluating our elementary school social studies curriculum to ensure student success. We are working with several vendors to make a selection on a new program to best serve our students moving forward.



WRESTLING ROOM 3/4/22

## CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

### Wildcat Athletic Center

- The structural masonry portion of the wrestling addition is complete
- Structural steel for the roof of wrestling addition will begin next week
- Installation of roof fascia is underway on the front lobby and concession area
- HVAC ductwork has been delivered and installation has begun
- Plumbers are installing roof drains
- Lower level is framed out and fur downs are complete

### Baseball Field

- The foul poles have been installed
- The scoreboard is scheduled to be raised over Spring Break



GYMNASIUM 3/4/22



# DISTRICT UPDATES



## INSTRUCTION & STUDENT SERVICES

The Professional Development and Technology Integration Committee met on February 25th to discuss and plan for the 2022-23 school year.

### Takeaways from the February 25th meeting:

- We discussed the importance of training for student trauma and derealization, specifically regarding classroom management strategies backed by research.
- The committee would like training on best supporting our growing population of English language learners.
- The committee discussed the need to provide training for teachers on instructional practices below their teaching level to address the cognitive needs of students. Example: Training for upper-elementary grade teachers on reading strategies typically taught in lower-elementary grades to help students who are behind or need additional support to obtain proficiency in those areas.
- We began to work through a strategy to establish a district technology implementation plan to ensure students are presented with the same resources and skills by grade level at each academic interval.

### Future items to be discussed at the March 21st meeting:

- Enhancing instruction by utilizing technology in the classroom, specifically regarding making the learning experience more student-produced vs. student-consumed.
- Types of specific training for utilizing classroom SMART boards as a productive instruction tool
- Discussion on types of training for back-to-school in-service days
- Implementation of district technology plan

## TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Piedmont Public Schools works to ensure that all students are responsible and productive digital citizens in today's technology-driven world. At the elementary level, teachers are introducing technology to students with apps and programs that bring standards alive for students. Our youngest Wildcats maintain a balance between hands-on learning and digital exploration. Applications are used to differentiate lessons for each student, as well as provide the teacher with a reliable quick assessment tool. Each student in grades Pre-K to 1st grade have access to an iPad at school to utilize these applications. The upper elementary students, grades 2 to 4, make the transition from being consumers of technology to producers. These students move from an iPad to a school Chromebook, where they learn how to appropriately create a variety of resources using digital tools. For example, students may research a topic on Britannica and use Google Slides to present their findings.

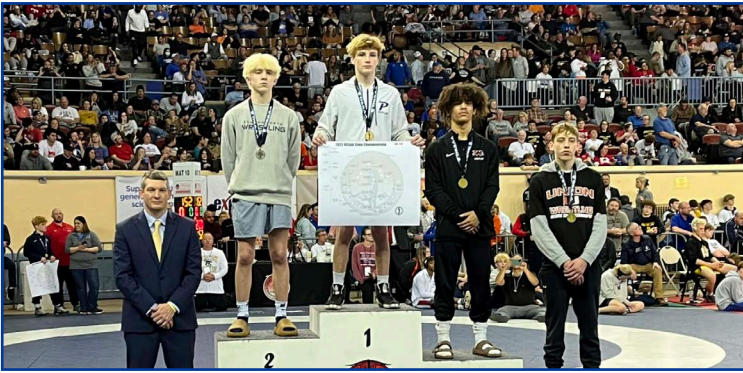
Our Learning Management System, Schoology, plays an important role at the secondary level. Students are able to access their assignments from various classes, message their teachers, as well as submit assignments from anywhere in the world that has internet access. Teachers enhance their lessons with interactive video lessons and hands-on digital labs that cannot be facilitated otherwise. Students use digital tools such as Google Suite and Screencastify to expand and showcase their understanding of lessons. Piedmont Public Schools are truly leading the way in Technology Integration.





# DISTRICT UPDATES

## ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES EVENTS & HAPPENINGS



- Letter jacket fitting and orders placed
- Held March Head Coaches meeting on March 2nd
- Processed winter game-day workers' pay sheets
- Moved concession operations from Collett and HS to F&M Stadium and new baseball facility
- Hosted men's varsity soccer festival
- Confirmed all officials for 2022-2023 varsity football games
- Voted as host of the 2022 MS and HS Suburban Conference Track Meet
- Finalized all Rank One spring compliance for MS and HS student-athletes
- Worked with secondary principals to discuss staffing, personnel moves, and potential hires
- Launched the Piedmont Wildcat Strength and Conditioning "Fuel Station" to provide post-workout nutritional needs

## HIGHLIGHTS FOR ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

- Piedmont men and women's swim teams qualified for the State meet in two relays
- **Cash Donnell - State Champion 113 lbs 6A Wrestling**
- Wildcat wrestling had six individuals make the State tournament. Qualifiers included Barrett Byers, Cash Donnell, Alan Flores, Jayden Fuston, Brogan Hardy, and Makaveli Ramirez
- Wildcat basketball honored the following seniors in their final home basketball game: Aubry Cleland, Jayce Daniels, and Audra Owen
- Subway Student-Athletes of the Week
  - Colton Sydnes
  - Makaveli Ramirez
- Piedmont Winter Guard competed at the Choctaw Winter Guard competition where the middle school received a good rating, JV earned seventh place and varsity earned third place
- The 8th-grade boys basketball team won the Suburban Conference Tournament Championship
- The 8th-grade girls basketball team finished runner-up at the Suburban Conference Tournament

