

May 23, 2023

Dear Highland Parent, Student, and Ram Supporter,

As we begin closing out the 2022-2023 school year, we know that many of you are already eager to hear updates about plans for next year. Highland's administration has been meeting regularly with district administration and investigation/insurance/restoration/city officials to receive progress reports and determine a timeline for next steps. We appreciate everyone working tirelessly at getting the school back up and running. While there continue to be many unknowns and hurdles to overcome, we wanted to provide an update on some tentative plans moving forward. Please contact Principal Wallace or the PCSD 25 administration with any questions.

Where will school be held for Highland during the 2023-2024 school year? Our goal for next school year is to be back home at Highland holding school on a traditional schedule. At this time, we are cautiously optimistic and on track to meet this target; however, we will continue to communicate through the summer if any delays arise that may require an alternate schedule.

What are the plans to accommodate the classes and extracurricular activities displaced by the fire? We are working hard to identify alternate facilities and confirm space availability large enough to accommodate band, choir, orchestra, welding, P.E., weights, food service, and extracurricular activities including dance, cheer, volleyball, basketball, and wrestling. Staff, learners, and parents should anticipate that these plans will most likely become the norm for at least the next 2-3 years. Any offsite locations for classes will include transportation considerations. There are several potential spaces being explored/confirmed either through community donations or rental agreements.

What is the status of the lower gym? Work has begun to restore the lower gym with floor replacement and other facility cleaning and repairs. Having a functional gym space is key to our ability to accommodate P.E. classes and extracurricular activities throughout this years-long process of restoration and rebuild. The timing for completion of the project is dependent on multiple factors; however, we anticipate that the lower gym will be functional by the fall.

What is the status of the cleaning/restoration process at Highland?

Classroom/Facilities Cleaning: Up to 40 people have been actively cleaning classrooms and other school facilities. Cleaning should be completed this week. All ducts and HVAC systems must be cleaned prior to occupation of the school.

Content Inventory: Content cleaning and inventory for the insurance adjustment process is ongoing. All rooms must go through the cleaning inventory process, even those not physically burned.

Personal Belongings: Staff has been able to retrieve personal items from their classrooms. Lockers have been cleared and contents will be marked and returned to learners during their in-person schedule this week at Century. Lost & Found items will be available at PV-TEC on Wednesday, May 24.

Utilities Restoration: Restoration of power services is complete. Restoration of water services is pending capping all plumbing to the D-Wing.

Demolition: Demolition will begin once the insurance adjustment process is complete, which we have been told will be ongoing for another 2-3 weeks.

Requirements for Reoccupation: The City of Pocatello officials have requested the district to update fire suppression and alarm systems to meet current code regulations. PCSD 25 is in the process of proactively reviewing all systems in place at school buildings districtwide.

Program/Extracurricular Equipment & Supplies: The district is in the process of replacing uniforms, wrestling and cheer mats, equipment, and other supplies for any programs and extracurricular activities impacted by the fire. The timeline for having these items in hand is dependent on availability.

What is the status of PCSD 25's plans for rebuilding Highland? Please note: any plans moving forward are dependent on the outcome of the replacement value as determined by the insurance adjustment process. As the district seeks to repair the damage at Highland, the Pocatello/Chubbuck School District 25 Board of Trustees will invite community stakeholders to participate in sharing ideas and, ultimately, make a decision on where we go from here. We recognize that the challenges and opportunities associated with this task warrants exploring more than one option for consideration. The district's first priority is to fulfill its obligation to provide a safe learning environment for learners and staff throughout each stage of the restoration and rebuilding process.

For a more in-depth review of these options, we encourage you to read Superintendent Howell's [editorial published in the Idaho State Journal on May 21](#).