

The Ringgold



REVIEW

Timely Information & Updates

Winter 2024 - Vol. 3

From Ringgold School District



Dear Ringgold Families,

Welcome to the first 2024 edition of The Ringgold Review. At the beginning of the school year, the District instituted new positions, innovative curricular offerings and a proactive commitment to achieving academic excellence. As we recognize the progress that has been made thus far in the District's Improvement Plan, we are also eager to share new administrative appointments to further our commitment towards reaching the District's goals.

As you may recall, the District began administering annual surveys to stakeholders to ensure that we are meeting our goals. The District recently conducted the parent and employee experience survey, showing improvements from 2022.

For parents preparing to send their children off to kindergarten next year, you will find important information about registration and the kindergarten readiness summer camp, the key to getting your child acclimated ahead of the 2024-2025 school year.

This issue also highlights engaging, interactive educational activities taking place within the District and recognizes students and teachers for their remarkable accomplishments and contributions.

Thank you for your continuous support, and we look forward to sharing news and updates with you as the year progresses.

Sincerely,

Randall Skrinjorich

Mr. Randall Skrinjorich

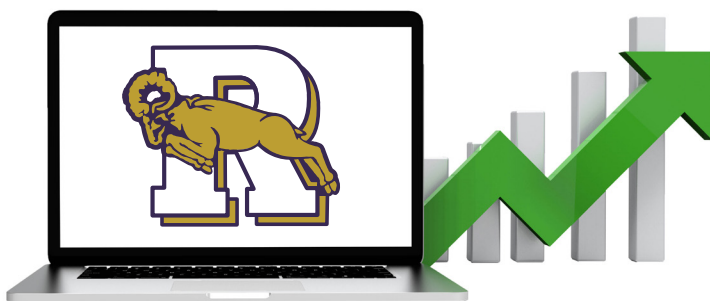
Superintendent of Ringgold School District



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Stakeholder Survey Data Shows District Improvement and Growth



The District has been on a steadfast mission to alleviate areas in need of improvement, and recent data shows that members of the Ringgold community are taking note. At the beginning of the new year, the District administered the parent and employee experience survey to receive feedback on 2023, and the data shows that the District has achieved its goal.

Since 2022, the District has conducted employee, parent and student surveys to gauge perceptions and compare growth of identified areas year to year. The surveys, administered via Studer Education, are a crucial component of the District's Strategic Improvement Plan.

Each survey question has a five point Likert scale response rating of either strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2) or strongly disagree (1). In the review of the data, the overall mean score for each question and the distribution of the responses across a five-point scale is analyzed and compared to the mean score of previous years. Afterwards, the District will pinpoint areas in need of improvement, identify tailored strategies from the District Strategic Improvement Plan and implement the identified strategy.

Parent and Employee Experience Survey Results

For the parent experience survey, 338 people participated with an average score of 3.28 out of 5. The highest scored items from this survey expressed that the District's schools are clean and maintained, that parents are treated with respect and believe that

their child has the necessary classroom supplies and equipment for effective learning. The average in all 15 of the surveyed categories increased from 2022, and the target mean was reached in 10 categories.

The employee experience survey had 212 participants and an overall score of 3.36 out of 5.

The highest rated items from this survey stated that they believe their work positively impacts those that they serve, they have a clear understanding of their expectations as an employee and they work in an organization where employees regularly exchange ideas. The score in 19 of the 20 surveyed categories increased from 2022, while one category remained the same, and the target mean was reached in 16 out of the 20 categories.

Continuing to Enhance the District's Culture and Looking Ahead

Based on overall survey data from parents and employees, a majority of those who participated believe that communication and discipline are improving. More students are being recognized and feel supported by their building's principal.

"We want to create a culture within the District that is positive and fosters excellence. We are pleased to see that we are achieving our goals with the results of the employee and parent experience surveys. In the coming months, the District looks to make improvements in communication, curriculum resources, and student discipline," said Mr. Randall Skrinjorich.

The student experience survey for 2023 will be administered from March 18 to March 22. ■

SkyDome Planetarium at Ringgold Elementary School South

Ringgold Elementary School South students were taken on a journey through the solar system inside the portable, inflatable Sky Dome Planetarium, provided by Mobile Ed Productions. Set up in the gymnasium, students witnessed the night sky in different seasons from different global perspectives, and were taught how to identify different constellations and planets.

"The students really enjoyed it. They thought it was the coolest thing to be able to see the constellations and the Milky Way. It was a really interactive and engaging event," said Ringgold Elementary School South Principal, Mrs. Ashli Gilbert. ■



The portable SkyDome Planetarium at Ringgold Elementary School South.



View of the constellations within the SkyDome.

Kindergarten Registration Set for March 13



Kindergarten registration for the 2024-2025 school year will be held from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 13. Registration will take place at both Ringgold Elementary School North and Ringgold Elementary School South, and parents will be able to reserve a time slot in advance.

To be eligible for kindergarten registration, the child must be 5 years old on or prior to July 31, 2024. [Please click here to view Policy 201.](#) Parents must have the following documents in order to complete the registration process:

- Birth Certificate
- Current Immunization records
- Two forms of Proof of Residency, such as mortgage statements, lease/rental agreement or utility bills (must include the name, address and current date, which must be within the last three months)

During the registration visit, parents and children will meet with a school counselor who will provide assistance throughout the registration process and answer any questions regarding the kindergarten experience. This year's registration, coined "Little Rams Signing Day," will also include arts, crafts and a chance to meet "Rammy" the Ringgold Ram for the future kindergarteners.

[Reserve a timeslot for Ringgold Elementary School South's registration using this link](#) and [Ringgold Elementary School North's registration using this link](#).

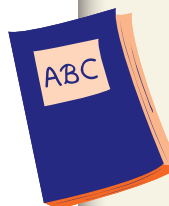
Kindergarten Readiness Checklist

Ringgold Elementary School South's Kindergarten teacher Rosalyn Malarby provides a readiness checklist for parents to ensure that their child is prepared for kindergarten:

Before a child starts kindergarten, parents should make sure that their children can...



- Zip and unzip their lunchbox, backpack, jeans/pants and jacket on their own
- Open drinks, snacks and lunches
- Independently use the bathroom and wash their hands
- Sit and listen for 10 minutes
- Follow one to two step directions
- Quietly wait and take turns
- Count to 10 out loud
- Write their full name and recognize it in print
- Say their ABCs and identify most letters of the alphabet
- Recognize most colors and numbers
- Use scissors to cut a line



Little Rams Pre-K Summer Camp



Families can sign up their child for Little Rams Pre-K Summer Camp at the same time they register for kindergarten on March 13. The camp will take place at Ringgold Elementary School South during June 10 to June 27 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

Although the camp is held at Ringgold Elementary School South, soon-to-be kindergarteners enrolled at Ringgold Elementary School North are still able to attend. For those taking the bus, pickup will begin at 8:30 a.m. and bus passes will be sent to the residence prior to the camp's start date. Students will receive breakfast and lunch and will rotate through early literacy, math, arts, music and physical education classes.

"It's a kindergarten readiness camp, and the students get to experience what kindergarten is going to be like. They get ready for school, they ride the bus and they kind of get acclimated to being in a classroom setting. It's a little taste of all the things they are going to experience when they start school," said Ringgold Elementary School South Principal, Mrs. Ashli Gilbert.

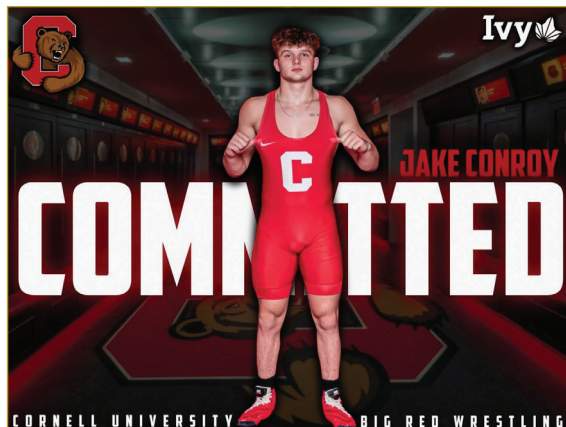
There are limited spots available and students must be completely registered for the 2024-2025 school year to participate. A parent and student orientation day will be held on June 7 at 11 a.m. in the Ringgold Elementary School South Cafeteria. ■

Student Athletes Excel, Commit to Colleges

Ringgold High School is proud to announce that student athletes, Jake Conroy and Ryan Pajak, have made commitments to continue their academic and athletic careers in college. In September, decorated wrestler, Conroy, committed to Cornell University, and esteemed cross country athlete, Pajak, committed to the University of Notre Dame.

“We are excited to see what the future holds for Ryan and Jake, where we know they will continue to excel both academically and athletically,” said Ringgold High School Principal, Dr. Greg Saraceni.

Jake Conroy



Conroy has been wrestling since he was 5 years old, and continuing his wrestling career at the collegiate level has been a lifelong dream of his. Committing to Cornell solidified to Conroy that his dedication and hard work has paid off.

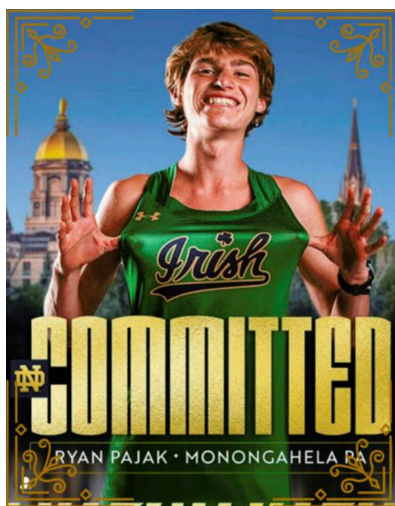
“It was a surreal experience and it was a huge confidence boost, knowing that I am good enough to wrestle at the Division I level,” said Conroy.

Conroy earned his 100th victory this season, a feat accomplished by very few. However, Conroy’s pursuit as a Ringgold Ram is far from over. His eyes are set on winning a Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League (WPIAL) and Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) championship prior to beginning his collegiate career at Cornell University.

“These victories showcase Jake’s hard work, dedication and endless desire to be the best he can be, both on and off the mat,” said Dr. Saraceni. ■



Ryan Pajak



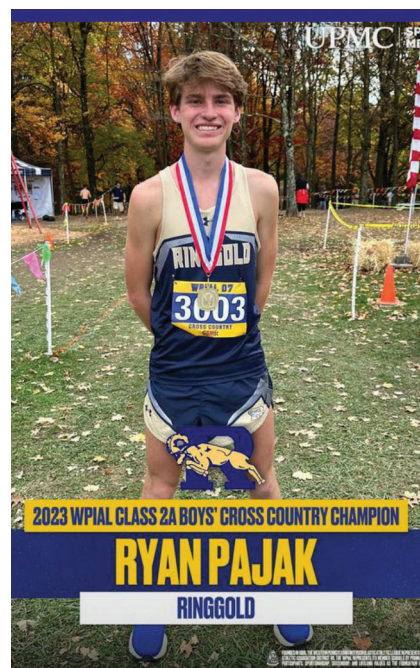
Pajak began his cross country career in fifth grade, after his mother encouraged him to give it a try and it stuck. Seven years later, Pajak is preparing to begin his collegiate career at the University of Notre Dame.

“It’s a great feeling. I think the school is the best for me athletically and academically, and the team culture is outstanding,” said Pajak.

Pajak’s athletic career is full of record-breaking moments. He is a three-time WPIAL Boys AA Champion in cross country, an accomplishment that has only been duplicated once in WPIAL history since 1935. Ryan also took home the PIAA state championship in AA with a course record-breaking time of 15:21.

In November, Pajak competed at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional Championship in Boston, MA, where he finished the 5-kilometer race with a record-setting time of 14:51. Pajak went on to compete at the Foot Locker Nationals in San Diego, CA, where he finished in second place.

“We are so incredibly proud of him for being an excellent athlete and are fortunate to have him represent the Ringgold School District,” said Dr. Saraceni. ■



Pep Rallies Bring Pride to Each School

Ringgold Elementary School North

Students celebrated their classmates on the District's feeder team, the Union Finley Bears, ahead of the Division Three Western Pennsylvania Youth Football League championship game, which the team went on to win. The players were recognized in front of their peers and cheered on by the team's cheer squad.



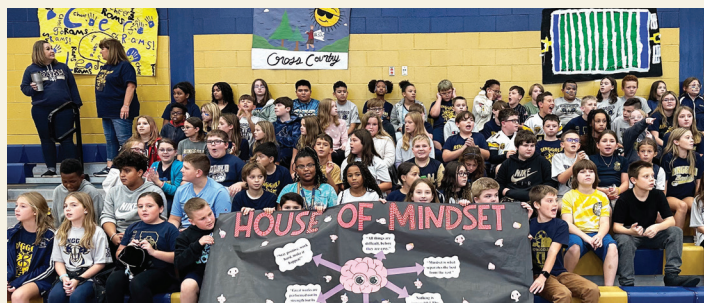
Ringgold Elementary School South

Ringgold Elementary School South recognized another one of the District's youth football feeder teams, the Ringgold Rams. At the time of the rally, the Ringgold Rams football team was preparing for their Division Three championship game, which the team went on to win as well. Students and cheerleaders celebrated the players and recognized each of them by name. At the end of the rally, football players ran around the gym and high fived their classmates.



Ringgold Middle School

Middle school students celebrated the House Cup Competition and Fall Athletic Programs. Ringgold Middle School has three Houses per grade level. Throughout the week, students in each house competed in various academic, spirit participation, and athletic challenges. The points of this competition were tallied, and the winner was crowned. Congratulations to the House of Courage in seventh grade.



Ringgold High School

The Pride Pep Rally was organized by newly appointed Athletic Director, Mrs. Korie Morton-Rozier. Mrs. Rozier created an event that was inclusive to all sports, where every student athlete had the opportunity to be recognized for their positive impact on the Ringgold athletic program.



Eddie Eagle Program Promotes Safety at the District's Elementary Schools

The Eddie Eagle Gunsafe Program came to Ringgold Elementary School North and South to teach children what they should do if they encountered a weapon. The gun accident prevention program seeks to help educators navigate a paramount topic, gun safety.

The presentation included a video of cartoon Eddie Eagle and his Wing Team playing basketball when they come across a weapon in a place that they did not expect. The video included the four essential steps that need to be taken when a gun is encountered: stop, don't touch, run away and tell a grown up. The engaging video captivated students with catchy songs, dance moves and entertaining dialogue, but most importantly, it taught students what to do if they find themselves in the same shoes.



Eddie Eagle teaching students the four essential gun safety steps.



The speaker engaging students in a dialogue about gun safety.

To learn more about the Eddie Eagle Gunsafe Program, access free resources or watch the educational video, visit www.EddieEagle.NRA.org.

Lighthouse Team to Support District's Positive Behavior and Social-Emotional Learning Programs

The District is following through on its commitment to cultivate a culture of belongingness and provide opportunities for all students to be valued with the addition of the Lighthouse Team Leaders. The team members are tasked with finding exciting, creative ways to coordinate events within the District's schools to showcase student growth and achievement. A tangible example currently underway in each school is the Student Leadership Portfolio. Within the Portfolio, students follow their growth throughout the year, academically and personally, and have the opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments.

The positions also aid the sustainability and expansion of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) and Leader in Me programs to ensure that positive social, emotional and academic outcomes are reached in all of the District's schools.

"These positions help oversee, manage and coordinate the multifaceted behavior and social-emotional learning initiatives implemented in all of the District's buildings," said Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Grierson.

The team consists of four positions, three Lighthouse Team Leaders at the building level and one Lighthouse Teams District Coordinator who works at the building and District level.

The Lighthouse Team Leader roles have been filled by Donna Vaccari at Ringgold Elementary School North, Sarah Lesko at Ringgold Elementary School South, and Zach Smith at Ringgold Middle School. The team leaders will help provide professional development and training, coordinate all PBIS and Leader in Me initiatives in the respective schools, monitor Ringgold's databases to track student behavioral data and more.

John Laukitis, a Ringgold High School teacher, serves as the Lighthouse Team Leader for his building and District Coordinator. As such, he is in charge of creating a District-wide "Day of Leadership" celebration, helping staff and students recognize that everyone is capable of leadership growth, and overseeing the Ringgold High School senior exit interviews.

"These team members will be in regular communication with each other, guiding the positive behavior, social-emotional learning and character building education of our students," said Mr. Grierson.

Through the addition of these new positions, the District will continue to advance and make way on its promise to cultivate a culture of belongingness and provide opportunities for all students to be valued, a crucial component of the District's Strategic Improvement Plan. ■

Students Celebrate with Veterans Day Assemblies

Ringgold Elementary School North

Each grade level performed a special presentation for the veterans attending the Veterans Day assembly. The event began with a speech welcoming veterans and thanking them for their courageous and heroic acts, followed by students singing patriotic songs, reading poems, folding flags and performing all of the armed forces medley songs for attendees. At the conclusion of the event, veterans were invited to the cafeteria for lunch with students and other guests.



Ringgold Elementary School South

The Veterans Day assembly, organized by Assistant Principal, Dr. Lisa Mumua, celebrated and honored the veterans through patriotic demonstrations performed by each grade level. The performances incorporated speeches, sign language and patriotic songs. Following the program, veterans were able to spend time with family, students and others in attendance.



Ringgold Middle School

More than 60 local veterans and active-duty members attended Ringgold Middle School's Veterans Day assembly. The assembly included a keynote speaker, and this year, the middle school was honored to host retired U.S. Marine, Eric McElvenny. As a veteran and Paralympian, he provides encouragement and motivation to build individual resiliency. RMS students were active participants in this event, and served as flag bearers and provided the music.



Ringgold High School

The Veterans Day program was organized by AP United States History teacher, Mr. Callaway, and his current and former students. The event began with donuts, coffee and juice for the veterans, who were then escorted to the auditorium for a presentation. The presentation, led by students, consisted of reading patriotic poems, singing the national anthem, sharing patriotic videos created by students and playing the military song for each branch. After the program, the veterans were invited to the cafe for breakfast, where they mingled with students and other guests. ■



Collaboration and Guidance of Administrative Instructional Coach Enhances Student Performance



Through the support of Administrative Instructional Support Coach, Mr. Timothy McKay, at Ringgold Elementary School North and South, evident progress has been made among both students and staff. Students are thriving in the classroom, taking on more complex tasks, such as Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA). TDA is a three-part prompt requiring students to demonstrate their reading, writing and language skills by producing a comprehensive response to a question based on the passage they read.

“TDAs are a highly important and complicated area of focus. They make up approximately 25% of the English Language Arts assessment of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), and the critical thinking inherent in TDAs influence nearly the entire remainder of the exam,” said Mr. Grierson.

In his role, Mr. McKay collaborates and plans instructional units and lessons with educators, visits classrooms and works with

teachers to strengthen instructional practices, assists instructors with interventions on struggling learners and more. To further support staff and bolster academic excellence, Mr. McKay offers professional development to enhance teaching methods and improve student outcomes.

“The Administrative Instructional Coach position allows us to have someone in the classrooms whose sole focus is to provide one-on-one coaching support for teachers who are tackling the challenges of accelerating students’ post-COVID academic growth,” said Mr. Grierson. “With the professional development offered by Mr. McKay, we have seen observable progress across the board in improving and managing teacher consistency in instruction, as well as deepening our students’ depth of knowledge and retention.”

The District instituted the position at the beginning of the school year to proactively promote learning realignment following the pandemic. The position focuses on enhancing academic performance in all subject areas, with an emphasis on reading skills. The District added two instructional support staff members, Faith Martin and Brigit Oder. Both staff members work under Mr. McKay, supporting the needs of students in reading intervention groups.

“We have all worked really well together this year at both schools, and I have really enjoyed my time in this role. Not only do I feel that we have made a lot of progress, but I am also seeing the teachers have more confidence, and that’s part of my job as well, being a cheerleader for them,” said Mr. McKay. ■

Ringgold Staff Spotlight – Mrs. Donna Vaccari



Mrs. Donna Vaccari is a vital part of developing an educational environment at Ringgold Elementary School North that empowers students and staff to flourish. Mrs. Vaccari serves as the school’s Behavioral Specialist and Lighthouse Leader, working alongside the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) team to guide positive behavior, social-emotional learning and character-building education of the students.

“What sets Mrs. Vaccari apart is her leadership with students, our Lighthouse team and PBIS team. She makes sure that students are recognized for their accomplishments and creates incentives for them to continue to excel,” said Ringgold Elementary School North Principal, Mr. Ross Ference.

One of the incentives Mrs. Vaccari enacted was the RAMS Way Hall of Fame Walkway tag system. There are four tenants that signify what it means to be one of the Ringgold R.A.M.S. – Respectful, Accountable, Motivated and Safe. When students exhibit positive behavior from one of the four tenants, they receive a tag. If a student receives a tag for all four tenants, their accomplishment will be prominently displayed on the RAMS Way Hall of Fame.

Another motivator instituted by Mrs. Vaccari was the RAMS Way Cart, a snack cart delivered to each classroom by both Mrs. Vaccari and other students. When the cart comes to their classroom, teachers are greeted by friendly and familiar faces, and given the opportunity to select a snack. Available only on certain days, the cart has been an excellent motivator for staff, and students love being able to participate.

“Mrs. Vaccari does it all, and she does an outstanding job incorporating our values in a way that is both exciting and rewarding,” said Mr. Ference. ■



Ringgold Staff Spotlight – Ms. Kelly McLaughlin



Through her unwavering positivity and collaborative nature, Ms. Kelly McLaughlin has been an instrumental part of student and faculty success at Ringgold Elementary School South. Ms. McLaughlin has 23 years of experience as an educator, and her efforts to achieve long-term success and academic excellence exist far beyond the walls of her classroom. She is constantly searching for areas in need of improvement and catapulting successes to the forefront.

“Her students love her. She is both a leader and a team player. She is always looking for ways to make improvements and to highlight the great things that are going on at our school in our weekly newsletters,” said Ringgold Elementary School South Principal, Mrs. Ashli Gilbert.

Ms. McLaughlin’s daily lesson plans keep her students on the edge of their seats. The most recent example was at the end of January, when inclement weather forced the school to revert to a Flexible Instruction Day (FID). Ms. McLaughlin had excellent attendance and her lesson plan kept students engaged and parents happy.

“It is sometimes challenging to engage when there’s a screen between yourself and your students, but Ms. McLaughlin was able

to do it and her students loved every minute of it. Parents were sending messages about how it was the best day ever,” said Mrs. Gilbert.

Ms. McLaughlin’s unfaltering positivity and commitment to both her students and colleagues has made her a vital asset to Ringgold Elementary School South’s success. ■



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Ringgold School District.