



Dear Ringgold Families,

I am writing to introduce our new quarterly e-newsletter called *The Ringgold Review*, which we will be sending to all Ringgold families. Our goal is to ensure that the community is kept informed of the happenings in our schools and classrooms.

Through our strategic planning work, we have identified communication as an area that we want to improve and enhance. *The Ringgold Review* is one of the ways we are working to meet that goal.

In each issue of *The Ringgold Review*, you will find updates on District news and events, as well as information about exciting happenings in our classrooms. We will also highlight student achievements, showcase our teachers and staff, and provide resources for families to support their children's education.

We believe that open communication between the school district and our families is essential to the success of our students. *The Ringgold Review* is just one way that we are working to build strong partnerships with our community.

Thank you for your support, and we look forward to sharing news and updates with you each quarter.

Sincerely,

*Randy Skrinjorich*

**Mr. Randy Skrinjorich**

Superintendent of Ringgold School District

## Ringgold School District Makes Progress on Strategic Improvement Plan

Some exciting work is taking place as Ringgold School District continues to form its Strategic Improvement Plan that will serve as a roadmap for the future of the District.

"We want to create a culture where everyone feels valued and our students excel in all areas of life, while feeling proud to be a Ringgold Ram," said Superintendent Mr. Randy Skrinjorich. "We welcome all stakeholders to be a part of this process towards creating a better future."

The District has formed a Steering Committee consisting of parents, community members, students, administrators, and business members, which met for the first time on Feb. 2.

"The Steering Committee is working to determine our priorities, required actions, and indicators of success," said Mr. Skrinjorich. "This way, if the desired change is not seen, we can make adjustments."

The Steering Committee will meet a total of four times before a draft of the Strategic Improvement Plan is available. A Student Experiences Survey will be distributed to students via their District emails in April. The District anticipates providing the Board of School Directors a draft of the Strategic Improvement Plan for approval in May.

Over the past year, the District has conducted employee, parent, and student surveys — in addition to several focus groups — to gather data that was analyzed by Studer Education. Gathering this information helped the District identify its strengths and weaknesses, which was used to create actions and guide important decisions within the strategic planning process.

"To begin, our first step was to assess our current position," said Mr. Skrinjorich. "Based on the insights gained from survey and focus group data, we can develop a plan to reach our desired destination."

Over 200 students, staff, administration, board members, and community members took part in the focus groups that helped identify what the District does well, what the District can do better, and the District's vision for the future. Several themes emerged from these focus groups, including safety and support, consistency and communication, professionalism and respect, and curriculum and technology. The employee, parent, and student surveys also helped the District identify its strengths and opportunities for growth.



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# High School Teachers & Administration Collaborate to Upgrade Program of Studies

Ringgold School District is committed to supporting the educational needs of all students. To meet this goal, the Ringgold High School administration team conducted its annual review of the high school's "Program of Studies" for the 2023- 2024 school year with representatives from the Math, Science, Social Studies, English Language Arts, and Itinerate departments. "This kind of review takes place every year," said Thomas W. Grierson, Assistant Superintendent of Schools. "The departments are asked to review the active Program of Studies with an eye toward the next year's schedule in order to facilitate open conversations about what we can agree needs to stay, change, or go in order to best serve our students."

Questions arose this year around the possible elimination of the honors courses as they were looked at more intensely than in years past with the district looking for ways to provide more opportunities for Advanced Placement (AP) and College in High School (CIHS) courses for students in key subject areas. The faculty and administration see honors courses as an excellent way for students early in their high school careers to challenge themselves and to prepare for AP and CIHS offerings - if that is what they choose. Mr. Grierson assured students, parents/guardians, and community stakeholders that they will still be offered at the high school. "We were very pleased with the collaborative spirit both faculty and administration brought to the review process this year. In the end, we decided that most of the changes that affected honors classes will take place at the 9th and 10th grade levels for the 2023-2024 school year," said Mr. Grierson, "and the agreed upon changes mostly resulted in increases in the rigor and writing intensity expectations for those classes rather than their elimination."

## Dual Enrollment: A Great Way to Secure College Credits

A recent state law (Act 55) requires all school districts to provide at least one opportunity for students to participate in a dual-enrollment college course. This program allows students to earn both college and high school credit simultaneously.

Ringgold School District is ahead of the curve in this area, and the District has been working in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh and Carlow University for several years now. Students have had the opportunity to participate in college in high school classes with Carlow University, earning credit for courses such as Anatomy & Physiology and Psychology. Additionally, students can enroll in courses such as Chemistry, U.S. History, and Website Design & Development at the University of Pittsburgh to earn college credits. Starting next year, students will also be able to take French through the University of Pittsburgh.

These courses give students a chance to experience the rigor of college-level work while receiving a greater level of support and assistance from their high school teachers than may be available at the university level. Ringgold is excited about the opportunities that students have to learn and grow through these programs and is thrilled to continue expanding its offerings.



## Ringgold to partner with Moodle US to Enhance Student Learning

Ringgold School District utilizes Moodle as its learning management system. Moodle creates the flexibility to provide remote learning when necessary and allows teachers to share lessons and resources with students in an organized, meaningful way. Moodle is an open-source platform, which allows the District to customize it for the distinct needs of our students and school community. In February, the school board approved a contract with Moodle US, a technology company that will assist the District, in close collaboration with our teachers, to tailor our district Moodle pages in a way that makes the platform more user friendly, efficient, and engaging, all of which will enhance student learning.

## Ringgold Cyber Academy to Offer Curriculum through Waterfront Learning

Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, the Ringgold Cyber Academy will offer its curriculum through Waterfront Learning/Allegheny Intermediate Unit. The District is transitioning from the Fusion program to provide a greater variety of courses that are in alignment with the Pennsylvania Standards. Families will continue to enjoy the flexibility of asynchronous learning opportunities, with expanded offerings for students K-12. Ringgold Cyber Academy students will work with school counselors to schedule their classes prior to the end of the school year.

## Select Staff Provided Safety Care Training & First Aid, CPR

Select faculty and staff have been chosen to receive Safety Care Training and First Aid and CPR lessons. District staff members are certified trainers working to ready personnel in response and emergency procedures of de-escalation strategies and crisis response. Over the next several months, plans will continue to evolve to have continuous training opportunities for our response teams at each building.

# Kindergarten Registration is Now Open



It's an exciting time at Ringgold School District with kindergarten registration now open!

To be eligible for kindergarten in the Ringgold School District, a child must be five years old on or before July 31, 2023.

Ringgold School District has also adopted a policy regarding the early admission of children to first grade. Parents of children who do not attend kindergarten and want to be considered for early admission to first grade (age 5 on or before July 31) must request early admission and submit required documentation no later than May 31, 2023. This request must be sent to the building principal for review. Parents are advised that only exceptional children will be granted early admission to the first grade. Early admission is not available for kindergarten.

Please visit [www.ringgold.org](http://www.ringgold.org) to register a child.

*To prepare for kindergarten, Ringgold's Director of Pupil Services Sherry Black shares some tips:*

## Teach your child self-help skills.

Encourage your child to learn to put on their shoes, zip their jackets, and take care of their own belongings. Adults are available to help, but the pride your child will have in taking care of their own needs will build confidence.

## Teach appropriate social responses.

Children will be interacting daily with a variety of people throughout the school day. Helping your child know how to speak to others and to also listen to others is a big win for everyone and most importantly your child.

## Help establish routines for the day.

School days are long and full of transitions and demands that may not be preferred. Establishing routines at home that require both preferred tasks and non-preferred tasks help to create a level of tolerance that is vital for success in school. School days are long and helping children know that they can get through things that they enjoy and things that they do not is a readiness skill that is vital.

## Acknowledge children's feelings.

Children are people and have a wealth of emotion. All emotions are good. What we do with that emotion is key. Self-regulation and identifying our individual needs is a way to appropriately deal with the stress of the school day. We all need to work to help children self-regulate on a daily basis.

## Above all - Read to your child.

Reading is not only a fantastic bonding activity, it is truly a key to educational success. Exposure to language, sounds, rhythms, diction, and vocabulary creates children who are ready to learn to read. Readers are learners.

## Meet Our New Administrators!



### RHS Principal Greg Saraceni

Dr. Greg Saraceni brings over two decades of experience with him to Ringgold. He served as a middle and high school English teacher, an English department chair, a dean of students, an assistant to the superintendent, an adjunct professor, and most recently as an assistant/grade level high school principal. Dr. Saraceni also consults with school districts both locally and nationally to deliver professional development focused on infusing literacy into daily classroom instruction. He has worked with teachers from some of the country's largest and smallest school systems and continues to support their efforts in ensuring all students have an equitable opportunity to access learning. The

idea of supporting all students and all staff is a practice he will be bringing with him to Ringgold.

Dr. Saraceni attended the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg where he earned his B.A. in English Writing. He then went on to earn his teaching credentials, administrative credentials, and his master's degree from Saint Vincent College. Finally, Dr. Saraceni earned his doctorate in Administration and Leadership Studies from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

He is excited to join the team at Ringgold and is looking forward to meeting everyone and becoming part of the Ringgold family.



### RMS Assistant Principal Wesley Yeater

Mr. Wesley Yeater is very excited to be part of the Ringgold Middle School Community. Mr. Yeater began his teaching career in Cincinnati, OH, teaching there and in Cleveland for five years. Upon moving back to the Pittsburgh area in 2004, he accepted a position at City Charter High School where he has been for the past 18 years teaching Social Studies as part of the Cultural Literacy team. Mr. Yeater also participated in City High's Leadership Team and helped to create and sponsor the school Student Council. In addition to his teaching role, he served as a student advisor and was part of various activities clubs during his time there.

Mr. Yeater obtained his bachelor's degree in Secondary Education (Social Studies) at West Liberty University in 1999 and a master's degree in Educational Leadership and Principal Certification at California University in 2009. He lives with his wife, daughter, son, and two cats. He enjoys being outdoors, watching sports, coaching youth sports, and is an avid WV Mountaineer fan.



### RSD Athletic Director Korie Rozier

Ms. Korie Rozier joins Ringgold School District enthusiastic about helping student athletes achieve their goals and looks forward to seeing them compete. A Pittsburgh native, Ms. Rozier served as Assistant Athletic Director at Woodland Hills High School where she was the head girls basketball coach for 10 years. She also served as Director of Athletics at Penn State Greater Allegheny for nine years.

Ms. Rozier graduated from Edinboro University and later received a master's in Athletic Administration from Ohio University. In her free time, she enjoys watching her twins play basketball and volleyball.

# Steelers Donation Helps to Upgrade Wellness Center



Thanks to a \$15,000 donation from the Pittsburgh Steelers, Ringgold School District was able to upgrade its wellness center with new state-of-the-art equipment!

“This grant provides a tremendous opportunity for everyone in our school community, including gym classes, athletic teams, students, and staff, to utilize top-of-the-line equipment,” said Mr. Wesley Siko, former RSD Athletic Director. “We are grateful to the Steelers for their contribution and excited about the positive impact it will have on our school district. This is an amazing opportunity for us all.”

The District wishes farewell to Mr. Siko and welcomes Ms. Rozier to our athletic department. For more building and grounds updates, see below.

## The Ringgold Rams Score the 2023 Division 2 Championship!

Congratulations to the Ringgold Rams Hockey Team on winning the PIHL D2 title. During the March 21 championship game, Ringgold defeated Bishop Canevin High School by 4-3 in overtime at UPMC Lemieux Sports Complex.

The Hockey Team would like to thank the Ringgold Ram-Pound for the outpouring of support which let to its victory!



## Building and Grounds Upgrades

For those who haven't had the opportunity to visit Ringgold buildings recently, we have made some exciting and impressive updates. Here are just a few of the highlights:

### Natorium Renovation: Making a Splash!

The District is excited to announce the completion of the upgrades to the Ringgold High School natatorium, which includes a brand-new pool, bleachers, pool deck equipment, flooring, ceiling tiles, and more. The boys and girls locker rooms have undergone a total renovation, and the project also included the construction of a ticket window, concession stand, and new event restroom.



### Gymnasium Upgrades Boast Improved Acoustics

The Ringgold High School gymnasium received several upgrades, including refinished wooden floors and brand-new windows. To improve the acoustics in the gym, the District has added acoustic wall panels, ensuring that everyone can hear clearly during athletic events and assemblies.



### Former RMS Demolition

The Summer of 2022 also began the demolition of the former Ringgold Middle School and site restoration. The former school was closed in 2017 when Ringgold opened the new middle school on the high school campus.

