

THE PIPER PRESS

Fall 2023



Piper USD 203

INCLUSIVITY | INNOVATION | COMMUNITY | INTEGRITY | PASSION

FROM *the* HELM

A Message from the Superintendent, Dr. Jessica Dain



#GAMECHANGERS: Building The Future, One Child At A Time

Greetings to our dedicated students, staff, and valued community stakeholders. In this edition of our quarterly newsletter, The Piper Press, we embark on a journey to spotlight the exceptional individuals who are the true #GAMECHANGERS in our educational ecosystem. These are the unsung heroes who, through their unwavering commitment, innovation, and compassion, make a profound impact on the lives of our students.

Our educators are the heart and soul of our institution. Their influence reaches far beyond the classroom walls. Through innovative teaching methods, tireless mentorship, and a deep passion for fostering a love of learning, they inspire our students to dream big and reach for the stars. Our extraordinary teachers who are more than just educators; they are mentors, guides, and role models.

Behind every thriving educational institution is a dedicated support system that ensures smooth operations. Our support staff, including all classified and administrative staff members, work tirelessly to create a safe, clean, and nurturing environment for our students. Through their diligent efforts, they pave the way for success, allowing educators to focus on teaching and students to focus on learning.

Education is a collaborative effort, and our community stakeholders play an essential role in this partnership. Industry partners, parents, community organizations, and volunteers are instrumental in supporting our educational initiatives. From local businesses providing internship opportunities to parents and community advocates actively participating in the Piper Educational Foundation meetings and community organizations facilitating #FUTUREREADY opportunities for ALL students, these stakeholders are #GAMECHANGERS in the truest sense.

Our Piper students and alumni are not just passive recipients of knowledge; they, too, are #GAMECHANGERS. We are proud to walk alongside them and celebrate the achievements, extracurricular contributions, and inspiring journeys of our current students and alumni who are succeeding both within the classroom and beyond.

As we explore the stories of these #GAMECHANGERS, it is evident that we've built a collaborative culture in the Piper School District. From the classroom to the broader community, it is the dedicated individuals of Piper Nation who are instrumental in our students' success. They inspire us to continue pushing boundaries and striving for excellence in education.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who contribute to this noble cause, and we hope their stories inspire others to become #GAMECHANGERS as well. Thank you for being an essential part of this journey to provide the best possible education for our students. Together, we are "Building the Future One Child at a Time."

Check out the #203GAMECHANGER Wall of Fame!

Proud to be a Pirate,

Jessica

Scan here





PIPER EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION LAUNCHES WOMEN’S GIVING CIRCLE

Thank you to the wonderful women of Piper who came out to support the Piper Educational Foundation inaugural Women’s Giving Circle event this September! Their generous support raised nearly \$4,500 to support mental health services for families in need right here in Piper USD 203. A special thank you to Venue at Willow Creek and Olive Events for sponsoring this amazing event. The food, drinks and atmosphere were beautiful! Guests enjoyed live music by Pat Woolam of Lost Wax and a live painting by Anthony Oropeza, which was later auctioned off at PiperFest that weekend. The list to the right includes the founding members of Piper’s Women’s Giving Circle.

The Women’s Giving Circle will convene twice a year to raise funds for initiatives in the Piper School District. Stay tuned for information regarding the Spring event! Unable to attend, but would still like to donate to mental health initiatives here at the district? Scan the QR code below.



Scan here
↙



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| Marilyn | Alstrom |
| Jami | Applegate |
| Allison | Armstrong |
| Melanie | Bakarich |
| Ashley | Biondi |
| Amy | Bolend |
| Melissa | Breedlove |
| Kim | Brown |
| Sue | Brungardt |
| Jessica | Dain |
| Beth | Daze |
| Cyndy | Detlefson |
| Angela | Dunn |
| Deanna | Feedback |
| Mary | Gonzales |
| Kelsey | Hawes |
| Harmonie | Hawes |
| Sandy | Hennessey |
| Michelle | Hereford |
| Angela | Interiano |
| Sylvia | Jennings |
| Katelyn | Kaminski |
| Whitney | Kohler |
| Kelly | Lightfoot |
| Jessica | McCarty |
| Elizabeth | McGruder |
| Laura | Moore |
| Melissa | Nead |
| Angela | Renne |
| Brenda | Ryan |
| Stephanie | Sestrich |
| Jamey | Stonestreet |
| Jennifer | Surprise |
| Amber | Swarner |
| Fonda | Telthorst |
| Myla | Todd |
| Jennifer | Traffis |
| Heather | VonBevern |
| Tricia | Watkins |
| Amy | Wells |
| Rebecca | Wright |



ALUMNI *Spotlight*

Cooper Beebe, Piper High School Class of 2019

Cooper Beebe is likely a familiar name to people in the Piper community as a hometown kid turned standout All-American left guard and reigning Big 12 offensive lineman of the year at Kansas State University. Along with his impressive stats and charismatic personality, Cooper made headlines in 2023 when he decided to return to K-State for an extra year of school and college football, despite his projections as a sure pick in the NFL Draft.

Cooper faced many opponents in his decision to not enter the draft, but he did not let that deter his desire to finish his college football career and studies. One of his major deciding factors was to earn his master's degree in curriculum and instruction in order to fulfill his dream of becoming a teacher.

"I really got an interest in teaching my senior year of high school," said Cooper.

"One of my favorite teachers was Mr. Brumbaugh. Getting to be around him and seeing his love for teaching and helping kids inspired me to want to do the same."

When asked what excites him the most about becoming a teacher, he said "having a positive impact on students lives, and instilling the tools it takes in order for them to be successful."

Before his days as a Wildcat, Cooper was taking the field in another purple jersey and mentioned his gratitude for his Piper roots.



"Piper helped lay the foundation for my love of football and taught me the skills required to succeed at the next level academically and competitively," he said.

Cooper said his ultimate goal is to teach high school World and American History. He also said he'd love to coach.

"My advise for high school students is when things get tough, keep pushing through and don't give up. Adversity in your life is a matter of when, not if, and it occurs in different forms. The best thing to do is to push through and never give up."

Cooper's decision to stay an extra year at K-State has proven to be advantageous, as he is having an award-winning year. His accolades include being named a finalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy by the National Football Foundation and an NFF Scholar Athlete, one of the most prestigious honors in college football. Most recently, in addition to being named a finalist for the Campbell Trophy, Cooper was named one of 12 finalists for the 2023 Lombardi Award. Other awards this season include the K-State offensive line being named to the Joe Moore Award Mid-season Honor Roll, and he was named the Associated Press Mid-season All-American. He also earned the honor of Outland Trophy National Player of the Week following the 41-3 victory over TCU.

There is no doubt that Cooper Beebe is a leader on and off the football field, and Piper is proud to showcase his story as an advocate for education (and the education profession). Cooper's story inspires students to follow their dreams and passions, despite external influences. Perhaps one day, Mr. Beebe will return to Piper to continue his legacy as teacher and coach - we sure hope he does!



WHAT'S *New*?



Students from Piper Early Childhood Center and Piper Prairie Elementary participated in a Touch a Truck event with local businesses and organizations. Community partners including the Kansas City, Kansas Police and Fire Departments, the Unified Government of Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County, JE Dunn Construction, and the United States National Guard participated in the event.

KANSAS
STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
2023 Kansas Can Star



Social-Emotional Growth - Silver

Kindergarten Readiness - Bronze

Individual Plan of Study - Gold

Academically Prepared for Postsecondary - Copper

Graduation - Copper

Postsecondary Effectiveness - Silver

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) recognized Piper in the 2023 Kansans Can Star Recognition Program, which awards districts for exceptional work in reaching the state's vision for education.



The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) Kansas Teacher of the Year District Nominees for the 2023-24 school year go to Ms. Tori Deneault, Piper High School English teacher and Ms. Tricia Dwyre, Special Education teacher at Piper Prairie Elementary. The two teachers will go on to represent Piper USD 203 at the Regional level - we wish them congratulations and good luck!

Piper 5th Graders learned about weather preparedness careers with visitors from the Kansas City Kansas Fire Department, FEMA, the National Weather Service, Meteorologist Bill Hurrelbrink from KCTV-5 News, and the American Red Cross. This Real World Learning experience is invaluable to our students - we appreciate the community partners who participated.





Congratulations to Ms. Emma Golden, Piper High School English teacher and 2018 graduate of PHS, for being nominated as a 2023 Horizon Award recipient. The Horizon Awards go to exemplary first-year teachers who perform in a way that distinguishes them as outstanding.

The High School Debate Team hosted a Piper School Board Candidates Forum, on Tuesday, October 3. The students did a great job organizing and facilitating the event and gained valuable knowledge in civic engagement and event planning. Thank you to the candidates that participated in the Forum as well as the community members that attended.



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STUDENT *Life*

Homecoming Court



Congratulations to the 2023 Homecoming Court, including the King and Queen, Gannon Roth and Grace Rome. Pictured top left: Freshman Princess and Prince, Mariah Berry and Roman Byers; Pictured middle left: Sophomore Princess and Prince, Allison Ochs and Blake Taylor; Pictured bottom left: Junior Princess and Prince, Addisyn McCarty and Ace Johnson; Pictured top right: King and Queen candidates, Austin Burlingame and Addison Walker; Pictured middle right: King candidate and Queen, Colin Ketter and Grace Rome; Pictured bottom left: King and Queen candidate, Gannon Roth and Delaney Cahill.



Piper Robotics Team Stealth made its debut on the field this year during an off-season event, the Cowtown Throwdown, hosted by Lee Summit High School. In a series of seven heart-pounding matches, the team achieved a qualification record of four wins and three losses, securing a ranking position of 14 out of 42 participating teams. Following a midday break on Saturday, the team was selected to join the fifth-seeded alliance, along with the alliance partners: Team 1987, the Broncobots from Lee Summit North; Team 5013, The Trobots from Park Hill High; and Team 5126, The Electromagnetic Panthers from Park Hill South.

Team Stealth was ultimately victorious in the tournament! For the full story, visit <https://bit.ly/teamstealthwins>.



Piper was proud to send multiple athletes to state competition this Fall. In its inaugural year, the Piper Girl's Tennis team sent three athletes to state in 2023. Pictured in the top left photo are Allison Ochs, Avary Vallejo and Grace Rome. Pictured in the top right photo is Caitie Kirwan, who qualified for 5A Girls State Golf. Caitie had an impressive showing at the state tournament, shooting a 92, which qualified her for round 2. She later shot a 101, and placed 48th overall in the state competition. Piper's Cross Country team sent two athletes to state this year. Pictured in the bottom left photo is Elizabeth Arenas and pictured in the bottom right is Grayson Lamb. Both athletes had an amazing season, and Piper is eager to see their performances on the Track this Spring.



Interested in following the latest news and updates regarding Piper athletics and activities? Visit PIRATENATION.ORG.



The Piper Boys Soccer team finished the season 14-2 and were the Champions of the United Kansas Conference. In a hard fought physical game against Shawnee Heights, the team fell 5 to 4 in the second round of regionals.

Thank you to all Piper student-athletes and coaches for a job well done this season.





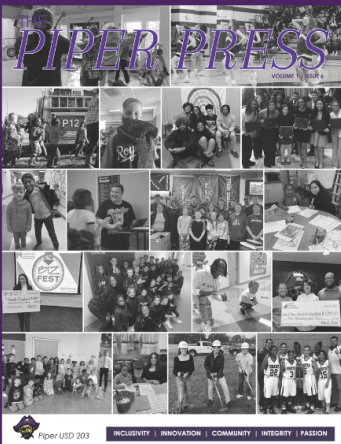
On Friday, October 27th, the Board of Education, PHS Building Administrators, and District Office Administrators had an opportunity to participate in a Topping Out ceremony with 100 construction workers and partners associated with JE Dunn.

A construction topping out ceremony is a traditional event in the construction industry that marks the placement of the final structural element, typically a beam or a piece of the building's framework, at the top of a new building or structure.

It's a significant milestone in the construction process, signifying that the highest point of the structure has been reached. The ceremony often involves placing a small evergreen tree or an American flag atop the structure and may include a gathering of construction workers, project stakeholders, and local dignitaries to celebrate the progress and success of the construction project.

As part of this celebration, all attendees, including Pete the Pirate, signed the last structural beam before placing it in its final location. Members of the Class of 2025, the first graduating class of the new Piper High School, also signed the beam.

View the QR code for a short video documenting this special occasion. As always, we are so very grateful to our community for valuing the learning spaces of our students!



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PIPER ESOL BY THE NUMBERS

Piper is growing and so is the district's number of students who qualify as English Speakers of Other Languages, otherwise known as ESOL students.

"Since beginning my career here in the Piper School District, I have witnessed the amazing growth of our student population, as well as the diversity that our district has seen," said Rachel Wellendorf, Piper USD 203 ESOL Coordinator and ESOL Interventionist at Piper Creek Elementary School.

Ms. Wellendorf is an advocate for ESOL students and families and mentioned the significance of adding personnel this year to include an ESOL interventionist at (almost) every building.

Meet the Piper ESOL Team:



My name is Rachel Wellendorf and I am the ESOL Coordinator for the Piper School District and the ESOL interventionist at Piper Creek Elementary School. I have worked in USD 203 for my entire 13 year teaching career and I have taught a multitude of subjects and grade levels, including art, 4th grade, 5th grade, and PreK-12th grade ESOL. I was drawn to work with our multilingual families because I have always had a love for languages and I felt compelled to support these students and their learning. I have enjoyed working with these students and have gotten to know many families throughout my time here at Piper. I am looking forward to meeting many more multilingual Pirates in the future!



Greetings! My name is Gunda Pretzel, and this is my 9th year in education and my first year as the ESOL interventionist at Piper Middle School. Before I began my master's degree in special education, I received my bachelor's degree in Speech-Language-Hearing. I am also certified in the following areas: ESOL, Reading Specialist, and German. I am passionate about teaching, and my students are the reason why I love to keep learning. As a special education teacher, I have taught K-2 Autism self-contained, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade, where I had the chance to work with many multilingual learners. I am drawn to teaching ESOL students because I was once an ESOL student when I moved to the United States. Now, I enjoy learning more about my students' backgrounds and using my skills and experience when working with them.



My name is Chace Penner, and I am the Spanish 1 teacher and ESOL Interventionist for 9th-12th grade. I have always enjoyed learning, practicing, and using Spanish, so when I was pursuing my education, it made sense to explore the world of language education. In order to become a better Spanish teacher, I wanted to put myself in the shoes of my future learners, which led me to earning an ESOL endorsement. For my first two years at Piper, I solely taught Spanish to a multitude of students, many of which were making Spanish their third or fourth language. This year, my third year at Piper, I am putting my endorsement to even more of a use as I have taken on the role of both Spanish 1 teacher and ESOL interventionist at the high school. For half my day, I am explaining the importance of learning another language to my many Spanish 1 students and the other half I am emphasizing the importance of maintaining a home language to my ESOL students. Either way, it's all languages all day.



My name is Jennifer Duncan and I am the ESOL Interventionist at Piper Early Childhood Center and Piper Prairie Elementary School. This is my second year in the district and my thirteenth year in education overall. Before moving to the role of ESOL Interventionist seven years ago, I was a classroom teacher in either First or Second grade. I enjoy working with young students and watching them develop their love for learning new things.

<u>Languages</u>	<u>Total</u>
Amaharic	1
Arabic	27
Chin/Burmese	60
Falam Chin	2
Farsi	3
French	2
German	1
Guajarti	2
Hakha Chin	3
Hmong	8
Karen	4
Laotian/Laos	2
Nepali	18
Portuguese	5
Russian	1
Serbian	1
Spanish	104
Swahili	2
Tasik	1
Urdu	2
Vietnamese	7
Zotung	5
TOTAL	261

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