

# THE *PIPER PRESS*

WINTER 2024



Piper USD 203

INCLUSIVITY | INNOVATION | COMMUNITY | INTEGRITY | PASSION



# FROM *the* HELM

A Message from the Superintendent, Dr. Jessica Dain



Dear Piper Nation,

I hope this message finds you in good spirits and filled with the vibrant energy that defines the start of spring. As we reflect on the incredible milestones achieved during Women's History Month and Black History Month, and celebrate the impactful endeavors of individuals like Evan Scruggs with Pirates Pantry, it's clear that our community is rich with #GAMECHANGERS.

The term #GAMECHANGERS is not just a hashtag; it's a testament to the power of collective action and individual dedication. It's about recognizing that each one of us, regardless of our role within Piper Nation, has the capacity to make a significant difference. Whether through service and inclusion efforts, academic achievements, or participation in sports and activities, every effort contributes to our shared success.

Our winter sports and activities have showcased what it means to drive a winning culture, reflecting the hard work, perseverance, and team spirit of our students. As we celebrate these achievements, let's also rally behind the upcoming initiatives and spring activities supported by the Piper Educational Foundation. Your engagement and support are crucial in sustaining our vibrant community spirit and fostering further successes.

Let us embrace our roles as #GAMECHANGERS, committed to making positive impacts, big or small, within our community. Together, we can continue to build on our tradition of excellence, inclusivity, and service, ensuring that Piper Nation remains a place where every student can thrive and contribute to our collective legacy.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our community. Your involvement is what makes Piper Nation truly exceptional. Here's to embracing our roles as #GAMECHANGERS and to a spring filled with new opportunities, achievements, and growth.

Proud to be a Pirate,

*Jessica*

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!



"In recognition of Women's History Month, USA | Kansas featured one female difference-maker whose world class district leadership is working to promote the success of each student, Dr. Jessica Dain, Superintendent of Piper USD 203."

- USA | Kansas Under the Umbrella  
March 2024 Edition



District Administration, a magazine that analyzes the biggest issues in education and solutions on school district management, featured Dr. Dain's innovative leadership and nationally recognized communication strategies, and the impact it has had in elevating Piper as a growing district.

- District Administration  
March 2024



## PIPER EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION RAISES NEARLY \$15,000 AT TRIVIA NIGHT

The Piper community showed up and showed out at the Annual Piper Educational Foundation Trivia Night, raising nearly \$15,000 to support Piper schools! A special thank you to the Piper Educational Foundation Board Members and to our community volunteers who donated countless hours to ensure everyone had a fabulous and fun evening!

## UPCOMING PEF EVENTS:



PIPER EDUCATIONAL  
FOUNDATION PRESENTS

*Sixth Annual  
Celebration Breakfast*

**FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2024**  
PIPER HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM  
4400 N. 107TH STREET  
7:30 A.M. DOORS OPEN & BREAKFAST BUFFET  
8:00 A.M. PROGRAM

THIS BREAKFAST IS A FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY,  
WITH PROCEEDS SUPPORTING THE DISTRICT'S  
FUTURE READY INITIATIVE AND THE  
FOUNDATION'S TEACHER GRANT PROGRAM.

SEE THE REVERSE SIDE FOR SPONSORSHIP  
AND TICKET INFORMATION

#CONNECTINGTHEDOTTES



PIPER EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

# GOLF CLASSIC

**TUESDAY  
MAY 14, 2024**

**DUB'S DREAD GOLF  
CLUB**

Check-in: 8 a.m.  
Shotgun start 9 a.m.

All proceeds will go to support the  
Piper Educational Foundation

**REGISTER:**

<https://square.link/u/wkqAxzl>



### Sponsorships:

Presenting - \$1,500  
Purple - \$1,000  
Team & Hole - \$700  
Beverage Cart - \$350  
Hole - \$250  
Team (Foursome) - \$500  
Individual Golfer - \$125

Registration includes  
lunch, drink tickets, &  
raffle tickets

Presented by:



Raffle item donations? Please email  
[piperedfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:piperedfoundation@gmail.com)





# STUDENT *Spotlight*

ARTICLE BY SENIOR ANNABELLE KUMP



## JUNIOR EVAN SCRUGGS STARTS PIRATE PANTRY FOR PIPER FAMILIES IN NEED

A year ago in February of 2022 Evan Scruggs, a junior now, realized a problem within the Piper community. He noticed the nurse asking the community for food donations to help students in need. That is when he decided to make a change and create a food pantry for Piper families.

Even though the process started only a year ago it didn't get pushed off the ground until August. Evan had worked diligently with Ms. Bartlow and the administration team to get this started.

"The hardest part of getting started was planning everything and getting it approved by the administration. I worked a lot to plan where we would store stuff, how we would reach out to the community, and all of those logistics," shared Evan.

The Pirate Pantry is a place where families can get food free of charge without any worries. Ms. Bartlow reaches out to those families that need the support and then schedules a time for them to come and pick up items.

The Pantry has been able to reduce the financial burden of many families within our community especially around

the holidays. For instance during Thanksgiving is when the pantry did its largest project.

"My proudest moment of what we've accomplished so far was our Thanksgiving meals," Evan explained. "We helped over 30 families and provided a nice Thanksgiving meal by collaborating with Vineyard Church and got all of them taken care of for the holiday."

Not only has the pantry as a whole been a lot of work but Evan Scruggs and Ms. Bartlow have devoted countless hours to this operation to help provide families with the support they need.

Evan said, "I spent probably 30 plus hours working with Ms. Bartlow setting up everything for our Thanksgiving event. Throughout the week it kind of varies depending on where we're at with things, and what we're planning on. Though I would say I devote about two to three hours, maybe minimum a week to the pantry."

The Pirate Pantry has truly helped strengthen our community and support one another even further. Evan Scruggs plans to continue the pantry and hopes to make it a lasting place in Piper even after his graduation. He wants to help as many people in whichever way he can.

"I wish people knew that we're open to donations all the time throughout the year. We're working on a list to send out soon. I also wish people knew that if you want to help just email me and let us know what you can do. Right now we're working with limited space, so there's not really a lot anybody can do but help is always appreciated."

If you would like to donate or volunteer your time to the Pantry, please email Evan at [evanscruggs@piperschools.us](mailto:evanscruggs@piperschools.us).





## PIPER STUDENTS ORGANIZE BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY

PHOTOS BY STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER DYANI PORTER

Piper High School's Black Leaders of America (BLA) organized a Black History Month program on Friday, February 16. The event featured Black-owned businesses, a step show by the historically Black Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, a keynote by Piper School Board vice-president Julian Wells, and the talents of BLA students and their families.



## PIPER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CREATE WOMEN'S CLUB

ARTICLE BY SENIOR MORGAN PARKER

Women's Club is a brand new club that was created at the start of this school year. Founders Addison Walker and Alison Asbury and sponsor Dr. Adam felt that there was no existing community to uplift women's voices within our school. That is where they found the inspiration of the club. The club covers many different topics in their meetings by either a speaker, lesson, or activity revolving around women. For instance around Thanksgiving they shared how hard the holidays can sometimes be for women and then asked the members to all make a card to a woman in their life they are thankful for. For the students who made ones for teachers they were then delivered throughout the school. At the most recent meeting they had Allison Armstrong, a previous teacher and newly elected Piper school board member, share her story on how she got to where she is today. She spoke to the club on the challenges she faced and overcame as a woman but also just as an individual. The club meets once a month and hopes to continue sharing thoughts, stories, and information about women for many more years to come.





# STATE FRENZY WITH PIPER ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES!

Photo by KSHAAcovered.com

The Pirates have undeniably made their mark across the state of the Kansas in 2024, qualifying in nearly every sport and activity. Most recently, the Piper Boys Basketball team swept through the 5A Kansas State High School Athletics Association tournament, leaving fans on the edge of their seats with nail biting excitement all the way to the State Finals. Although the team did not clench the title, the Pirates resilience throughout the tournament left spectators and fans in awe. Along with their amazing run in the state championship tournament, the Pirates earned the title of Champion for the United Kansas Conference with head coach Steve Wallace being named UKC Coach of the Year and five players making the All-Conference Team.

The excitement of winter sports and activities did not end with the basketball team as Piper had state qualifiers in cheerleading, dance, swimming, bowling, wrestling, powerlifting, choir and band in 2024.

Some of the Piper highlights from the state competitions included:

- Piper High School Cheerleading placed 2nd Place overall in the KSHSAA Game Day Competition
- Piper Girls Wrestling Sophomore Maia Dolinar pinned her way to the state finals and clenched 2nd Place in her weight division
- Piper Women's Powerlifting tied for 3rd Place overall in the 5A KSHSAA Tournament (for the complete list of rankings, visit [piratenation.org](http://piratenation.org))
- Piper Men's Powerlifting won 3rd Place overall in the 5A KSHSAA Tournament (for the complete list of rankings, visit [piratenation.org](http://piratenation.org))
- Denise Braithwaite earned the distinction as All-State Treble Choir Alto 2
- Annabelle Palm (Trumpet), Olivia Zimmermann (Clarinet), and Faith Paulakovich (Flute) made State Honor Band

<b>STATE WRESTLING</b> COACHES: JAMES THOMPSON, BRETT JOHNSTON, MADELYN TURNER, & SALVADOR ALEMAN ABRIANNA EVERSON TEONNA MILLER MAIA DOLINAR MAJIA MARTIN DAWSON DUNN MAKAO GRONEMAN RUBEN ESCALANTE NICHOLAS BEHRMAN JACOB PATRYKONT	<b>STATE DANCE</b> MANAGER: JORDAN JOHNSON LAYLA BLANKENSHIP RILEY HAWORTH MORGAN MILLER ALLISON BUCKNER RYLEIGH HANSCHU CALLIE MARKHAM MADDIE RICHARDSON RUBY AYALA AVA BRUNS LAYLA DUPREE TAJIA GRIFFIN BRISTOL SMITH	<b>STATE POWERLIFTING</b> COACHES: STEPHEN ANDERSON, KEVIN COKER, & JUSTIN RICHMOND KAYLYN SEWEL MAYA CRUZ CAMDYN BARNES HYNNA MATTHEWS MEADOW CORDILL REAGAN WIEHE AVERY BEJAN MAIA DOLINAR NORA TURNERY ADDE SAMBOL BRYLEE LITTLE ALLYSON MCKINNEY MALIA MARTIN	<b>STATE BOWLING</b> COACHES: JACK SAMPEL & JOHN BLACK CAMBRIA ANDERSON DARRON SPAK COLTYN BARD MAJOR MACIAS BRODY MERRICK HAYDEN RAYNOR JACKSON DISSMEYER	<b>STATE CHEERLEADING</b> COACHES: MORGAN KOLENDA & ALY ACEVEDO ADDIE WALKER AVA WARD AVERY ROELLCHEN BAYLEE PEGHEE CALLIE MARKHAM CHLOE WRIGHT CORA WHITE DANICA JONES EMERY CAMPBELL EMILY BRIGGS EMMA BROWN EMMA WILLIAMS EVALYNN WILLIAMS JASMINE LEONARD JOLEE ZWART KAELYN COFFMAN KATIE PATTERSON MAYA MORALES NORA TURNERY RYLEE HAFNER TATIANA PATE	<b>STATE BOYS BASKETBALL</b> COACHES: STEVE WALLACE, DERRICK JACKSON, & MATT STORRER LANTZ WALTON PHILLIP MOORE JR. JOHN VOGEL ALAMAR BROOKS DEVIN KERR SAWYER KRAMER DERRICK JACKSON BERNARD LABAT ERIC SEIGEL DAVE THOMAS GANNON ROTH MADDIX DAVIS
<b>STATE SWIMMING</b> COACHES: KOLTEN COOK & AMY BARTLOW MALACHI DINKEL THOMAS HAPKE LUKAS HEIN LONDON JEFFRIES JUSTUS LOCKAMY JACK SEAL EVAN SCRUGGS	<b>STATE HONOR BAND</b> DIRECTOR: JOSH KELLEY ANNABELLE PALM OLIVIA ZIMMERMAN FAITH PAULAKOVICH  <b>ALL-STATE CHOIR</b> DIRECTOR: SHELLY COLE DENISE BRAITHWAITE				



## HOMECOMING ROYALTY



Congratulations to the 2023 Homecoming Court, including the King and Queen, Gannon Roth and Grace Rome. Pictured left to right: King Gannon Roth and Queen Grace Rome; Austin Burlingame and Addison Walker; Evan Damron and Camdyn Barnes; Zane Pudenz and Alyssa Wood; Colin Ketter and Grace Rome; Gannon Roth and Delaney Cahill.

## COURTWARMING ROYALTY



Congratulations to the 2024 Courtwarming Royalty, including the King and Queen, Alison Asbury and Cody Layton. Pictured left to right: Queen Alison Asbury and King Cody Layton; Adelle Eikenbary and Cody Layton; Annabelle Kump and Maddox Joy; Gabby Salazar and Devin Kerr; Alison Asbury and Jack Wells; Ella Buff and Jamar Re'air Jarret.

## PIPER MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS DIVE INTO CLIENT-CONNECTED PROJECTS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Piper Middle School 6th grade Academy Prep students participated in their first Client-Connected Project (CCP) aligned with their investigation of the Piper High School Public Services Academy. Client-Connected projects provide learners the opportunity to analyze and solve authentic problems with professionals from the industry. Our students used the Design Thinking framework to solve the challenges provided to them by the following industries; the Kansas City Kansas Police Department - KCKPD, Kansas City Kansas Fire Department - KCKFD, the Wyandotte County Health Department, the Wyandotte County Election Office, and the

Wyandotte County District Attorney. On Thursday, February 29, the students pitched their solutions to the industry partners in a shark-tank-style presentation. This collaboration provided our business partners with tangible solutions and our students with a resume-worthy Real World Learning experience.



# STUDENT *Spotlight*



Piper USD 203 students had a tremendous showing at this year's Wyandotte County Spelling Bee Competition. Congratulations to Evan Nguyen of Piper Middle School for placing third overall, and to Adnan Abughanimah of Piper Creek Elementary School for placing fifth overall. We are #PiperProud of you! Pictured left to right: Jenny Golden, Piper Creek Elementary Principal; Adnan Abughanimah; Evan Nguyen; Tim Leffert, Piper Middle School Principal.



In support of the District's Real World Learning and equity initiatives, professional women read books and talked about their careers at Piper Creek Elementary School to celebrate Women's History Month. A special thank you to our community partners at Sporting Kansas City, KC Current, Wyandot Behavioral Health Network, and A Clean Slate, LLC for reading and inspiring our students this month!



Piper Middle School students participated in the Black History Month trivia contest where they were required to correctly match the names of influential Black Americans to their descriptions and accomplishments. Each student won a free copy of the book, "The Fierce 44: Black Americans Who Shook up the World."



In celebration of Women's History Month, woman leaders from across the district visited the students at Piper's Early Childhood Center and read books about influential women in history. Pictured is Amber Buck, Piper USD 203 Community Outreach & Inclusion Coordinator reading aloud to students in Pre-K about Women's History Month.



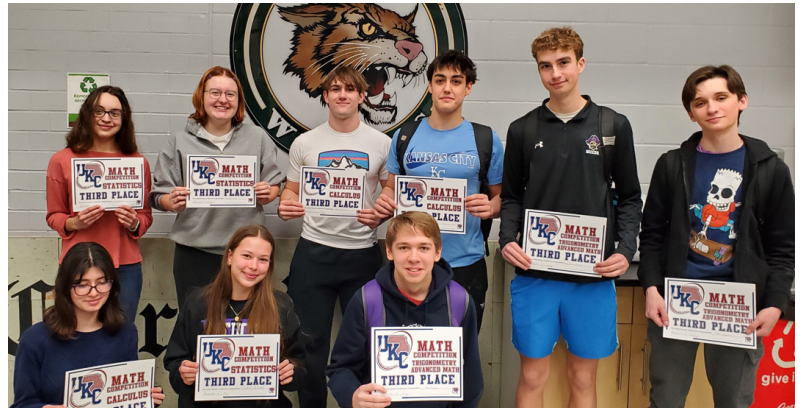
A mentoring program, Pirate PALS matches Piper High School students to a younger mentee at Piper Prairie Elementary School or Piper Creek Elementary School. Elementary students are paired with a high school mentor who has similar interests and can provide positive connections and act as a role model. We have over 60 Piper High students that go to Piper Prairie or Piper Creek on Thursdays during their advisory time. We are thankful for our high school students and the time commitment they have made to make a positive impact on our elementary school students.



Piper High School and Piper Middle School Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) are headed to state. Congratulations to our Piper students who are advancing from last month's District FCCLA STAR competition. Piper High School: Kamryn Monroe; Samantha McKee; Emily Franz. Piper Middle School: Ellie Geist; Violet Bass; Emmy Jeffries; Mckinley Lofton; Teghan June; Inali Meyer.



Piper High School students participated in the United Kansas Conference Math Competition at DeSoto High School and placed 3rd place overall, performing exceptionally well in Pre-Calculus, Calculus and Statistics.



Junior Emilio Holden spoke at the Kansas Music Educator's Convention in Wichita, Kansas, in February, in a session entitled, "Creating a Place of Belonging, A Student Perspective on Transgender Voicing in the Choir." Piper's Choir Director Shelly Cole said, "the session was well attended and incredibly powerful. We are so proud of Emilio!"





# DISTRICT *News*



**Tim Leffert**

Principal, Piper Middle School

**named KPA Area 1  
Middle School  
Principal of the Year**



Piper USD 203 is delighted to announce Tim Leffert, Piper Middle School Principal, as Kansas Principals Association Area 1 Middle School Principal of the Year. Leffert will advance to the next level of competition for the State honor of KPA's 2024 Secondary Principal of the Year.

"We are thrilled to celebrate Mr. Tim Leffert for being honored as Area 1 Middle School Principal of the Year, recognizing his exceptional leadership and dedication to the students and staff at Piper Middle School," said Piper USD 203 Superintendent Dr. Jessica Dain.

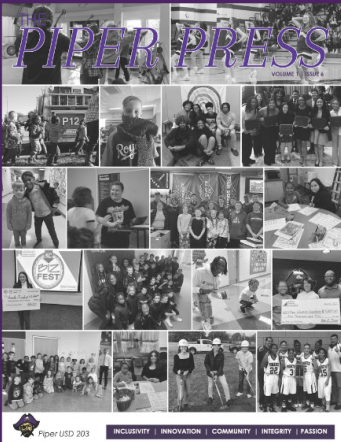
"His innovative approaches and unwavering commitment have profoundly impacted the school community, setting a standard of excellence for all to follow."



Piper USD 203 is beyond proud to announce Polly Vader as one of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation Real World Learning Coordinators of the Year! Polly's leadership and ability to connect students to real world learning opportunities, has garnered the district recognition across the Kansas City Metropolitan, including recently being named the only school in Kansas to earn a GOLD distinction for Individual Plan of Study by the Kansas State Department of Education. Pictured left to right is Dr. Jessica Dain, Polly Vader and Dr. John Nguyen.



Piper USD 203 partnered with the Build Up Kansas program to implement the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) curriculum and certifications in our Design and Construction CTE Pathway in the Design, Production, and Aviation Academy. This year, Randy Robertson has been implementing this curriculum and teaching students real skills that can be used now and in the future. In March, at the NCCER and AGCKS Conference, Robertson was awarded the NCCER New Instructor of the Year. In addition to this award, he was given a \$750 financial award to use towards this program.



# INTERESTED?

Advertise to more than 5,800  
residents in the Piper community!

Contact Katelyn Kaminski at [katelyn.kaminski@piperschools.us](mailto:katelyn.kaminski@piperschools.us) for  
information and pricing options.





The Kansas Department of Education was pleased to share that the Kansas State Board of Education approved Kansas Preschool Pilot grant funding for the 2024-25 school year, and of that funding, Piper Early Childhood Center was awarded \$45,000. The funding enables the district to add an additional 3-year old, full day pre-school class, which means expanded capacity for our growing community. "Based on survey results from the community, we understood that we needed to increase our capacity in our highly sought out pre-school program," said ECC Principal Stasi Willmon. "You asked and we listened. Along with greater capacity and ability to serve our community, we understand the importance of early intervention. Adding another 3-year old classroom enables us to meet the needs of our rapidly growing community."

Piper is proud to have educators throughout our district currently working through LETRS training. LETRS is a two-year long, professional development course focused on helping educators learn the essentials of research-based literacy instruction grounded in the Science of Reading. It is an extremely rigorous course of study that involves course readings, engagement with online content, assessments, classroom application, and eight full days of professional development spread out over the course of two years. We also have teachers completing LETRS Early Childhood, which is a rigorous one-year program, specifically focused on preschool aged students.



As a part of Goal 4 in the district's Strategic Plan – recruiting a diverse and premier workforce – Community Outreach & Inclusion Coordinator Amber Buck traveled to Langston University's career fair in Oklahoma. Langston University is a historically Black college / university (HBCU).

In partnership with Piper's Early Childhood Center, Piper's Parents as Teachers hosted its first ever BlockFest in February. BlockFest is a one-hour interactive building extravaganza, focusing on how block play helps children develop early math, science and literacy skills. Thirty families and 54 children from across the community attended the event. One parent said, "I plan to encourage more open play with blocks to help with creativity and problem solving."





RETURN ADDRESS LOCATION

POSTAL  
INDICIA  
LOCATION