



Dear Ringgold Families,

Welcome to the first 2024-2025 edition of “The Ringgold Review.” The school year is already off to a great start as we introduce new administrative appointments, innovative curricular offerings and a prevailing commitment to enhancing academic performance.

Within this issue, we are particularly proud to shed light on the remarkable work of our faculty and the significant strides made to improve K-12 literacy and close learning gaps caused by COVID-19. Additionally, the District continues to cultivate opportunities for students in the arts and athletics to pursue their passions.

The District continues to stay true to its promise of improving areas of weakness and creating a culture that fosters excellence. As you may recall, we have been administering annual stakeholder surveys since 2022 to gauge perceptions and growth year to year, and data from the 2023 surveys showed the District made significant strides in communication, culture and discipline. We look forward to receiving future feedback and continuing to provide greater opportunities for all members of the Ringgold community.

Thank you for your continuous support, and we look forward to sharing news and updates with you as the school year progresses. Let’s make great things happen this year!

Sincerely,

Randall Skrinjorich

Mr. Randall Skrinjorich

Superintendent of Ringgold School District



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Meet Our New Administrators!



Mr. Marc Berry, Ringgold Elementary School South Principal

Mr. Marc Berry brings over 12 years of experience as a principal at Carmichaels Area Elementary Center, assistant principal at McGuffey Middle School and educator at California Area Middle School to his new role. Residing in Monongahela for the last 12 years, he is thrilled to join the Ringgold family.

"I'm looking forward to leaving a positive legacy at Ringgold Elementary School South, centered on truly doing what is best for students, teachers and the school community," said Mr. Berry.

He received his Superintendent Letter of Eligibility certification from California University of Pennsylvania, master's of education administration from Duquesne University and bachelor's of arts in education with an English concentration from Thiel College.

Mr. Erik Meredith, Ringgold Elementary School South Assistant Principal

With nearly two decades of experience as an educator, Mr. Erik Meredith is eager to continue his passion for helping students and faculty reach their full potential as Ringgold Elementary School South's new assistant principal.

"I am looking forward to watching the students grow and progress throughout the school year and continuing the greatness that Ringgold is pursuing," said Mr. Meredith.

Prior to beginning this role, Mr. Meredith was an elementary teacher and online academy administrator for Woodland Hills School District. He earned his master's of education in educational leadership from California University of Pennsylvania, bachelor's of science in elementary education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and associate's degree in teacher education from Community College of Allegheny County.



Mrs. Heather Roman, Ringgold High School Assistant Principal

Former Ringgold High School science teacher and department head, Mrs. Heather Roman is enthusiastic about bolstering both students and teachers in her new role as assistant principal.

"I enjoy being able to support more teachers because normally as a science teacher and as science department head, I am focused on the science department. But in this position, I get to support more teachers and see the great things that they are doing in their classrooms," said Mrs. Roman.

She is currently pursuing a doctorate in curriculum and instruction from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Mrs. Roman graduated from the University of Wyoming with a master's of art in educational leadership and Kent State University with a bachelor's of science in secondary science education. ■

District Coordinator of Special Education and Psychological Services to Enhance Student Outcomes



With roughly 20 percent of the student body qualifying under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and receiving an Individualized Educational Program (IEP), Ringgold is taking proactive steps to address the increasing demand for finite, specialized education and services post-pandemic.

The District created a new role, Coordinator of Special Education and Psychological Services and School Psychologist, intended to support special education personnel and direct instruction personnel to plan the proper instruction and placement of students. The position is filled by a familiar face within the District, Mr. Ephraim Yoder, who has been working with Ringgold since 2021 as a contracted school psychologist.

“On any given day, I am either testing and synthesizing information to develop comprehensive evaluations, or I am working as a team member at either the pre-referral stage or the IEP stage,” said Mr. Yoder. “In addition, I may be training to support ongoing staff development and District initiatives in terms of developing processes and procedures within the IEPs.”

As the Coordinator of Special Education and Psychological Services and School Psychologist, Mr. Yoder reports and provides administrative support to the Director of Pupil Services, Mrs. Sherry Black, with an emphasis on implementing procedural safeguards and providing assistance to all facets of special education and psychological services across the District.

“In this new role, Mr. Yoder is providing instruction to staff on IEP development and day-to-day instructional practices to really hone in on creating the best possible scenario not just for our students and families, but also for our teachers,” said Mrs. Black.

Mr. Yoder’s familiarity with the District, coupled with his experience working in specialized populations throughout his career as an administrator, psychologist and educator, provides a unique advantage to the teachers who he will work with.

“Although this is a new position, Mr. Yoder has been helping lead the development of special education programming since he began working with the District,” added Mrs. Black.

Mr. Yoder holds a school psychology post-master’s certification, master’s of science in school psychology, master’s of science in English as a second language, and a bachelor’s of arts in elementary K-6, special education N-12 and English/math 6-9 from California University of Pennsylvania.

“I’m most looking forward to establishing procedures and practices that will support our staff and improve student outcomes,” added Mr. Yoder. ■

District Furthers Commitment to Elementary Reading and Writing Proficiency

The District has been on a steadfast mission of alleviating pandemic-related learning gaps. By bolstering reading and writing skills at the elementary level, students are more likely to hit vital benchmark goals. Furthering its commitment to enhance gains in foundational literacy and writing, the District is incorporating *Kid Writing*, a supplemental teaching philosophy, into daily instruction at the K-2 levels.

“*Kid Writing* is designed to accelerate reading and writing skills of young learners through both structured and unstructured activities that help teachers individualize instruction and develop students’ phonics, spelling and writing skills,” said Mr. Timothy McKay, Administrative Instructional Coach.

The guidelines of *Kid Writing* include daily writing assignments, both teacher-guided and free-writing, honing in on the best practices. Furthermore, the framework helps develop writing stamina needed for more complex writing assignments in the upper-grade levels, such as Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA). TDA is a three-part prompt that makes up approximately 25 percent of the English Language Arts assessment of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), requiring students to demonstrate reading, writing and language skills.

“When students enter third and fourth grade and are required to write deeper and more complex assignments, they oftentimes will struggle. By giving them this daily exposure to writing, they will be prepared to write correctly and cohesively when creating original writing pieces,” said Mr. McKay.

TDAs will continue to be a focal point in third and fourth grade instruction, developing a strong understanding of the author’s intent and utilizing evidence from the text to write their analysis. There will also be an emphasis on expanding students’ vocabulary to promote success on deeper writing assignments across various content areas.

“We are creating more engaged authors that can express themselves in writing, as well as gain the skills to critically read and think about what they’ve read,” added Mr. McKay. ■

Ringgold High School Football Ends Three-Year Losing Streak, Bringing Pride Back to Program



The tides are turning for the high school's football team, earning its first win since 2021, and it took a familiar face to bring a resurgence of pride back to the program. Ringgold High School alumnus Mr. Robert Heller took over the reins in January 2024. After starting off the season with two narrow losses, his team's three-year winless drought finally came to an end with a

21-19 victory against Yough High School on September 6.

"There were so many emotions, but the biggest, of course, was being happy for the players. They earned it," said Mr. Heller.

Heller, who graduated from Ringgold High School in 2006, still holds the school's record for most rushing yards and touchdowns by a running back. Heller attended Waynesburg University where he set the freshman all-time rushing yards record.

"What helps me is that I still have that player inside me. I still have that energy and the players feed off that," he said.

His first stint with the program dates back to 2018 as an assistant under former head coach Mr. Mike Zmijanec. Shortly thereafter, he relocated to Wilmington, N.C., and remained involved in the sport, recruiting and training athletes, but continued keeping tabs on his alma mater's program and recent struggles. Shortly after becoming head coach, Mr. Heller utilized his recruitment skills to canvas the school community and convince students to join the team.

"When you don't have a winning program, a lot of kids will shy away. The biggest challenge for me was getting kids to come out and play, and show them that it would be different," said Mr. Heller. "My message to them was to just trust me, to give me a shot, and it worked."

With a newfound sense of confidence within the team, Mr. Heller is eager to see what his players can accomplish in the weeks to come.

"We are bringing that Ringgold pride back to the program," Mr. Heller added. ■

Reading Apprenticeship Approach to Bolster Literacy and Social-Emotional Learning at High School



A crucial component of preparing students for the next phase of their post-high school endeavors is the development of strong literacy and social-emotional learning skills. That's why the high school is adopting a new framework for the 2024-2025 school year, Reading Apprenticeship, which models discipline-specific literacy skills and establishes routines for discussion and collaboration that tap into students' experiences.

Reading Apprenticeship is a professional development program that aims to help teachers improve their students' literacy skills, as well as improve student social-emotional learning outcomes such as belonging, social awareness, growth mindset and self-efficacy.

The approach is based on a unique framework of four interacting dimensions of learning that support both academic and social-emotional learning: social, personal, cognitive and knowledge-building. These four dimensions are then implemented into subject-area teaching and developed through exploring students' thinking process. Students will analyze and discuss how they learn, as well as what they learn, in a collaborative environment, increasing in-class opportunities for students to practice reading in more skillful ways.

"Teaching students to understand their own thinking processes enables them to take control of their learning and build academic identities as problem solvers who persevere," said Dr. Greg Saraceni, Ringgold High School Principal.

Teachers participated in training on the newly implemented framework over the summer. Working in tandem with the existing curriculum, Reading Apprenticeship will help teachers improve their instructional practices so that they can better develop student literacy skills and improve social-emotional learning outcomes. ■

Feature a Teacher

Mr. Jonathon Boscan, Technology Teacher at Ringgold Elementary School North



Mr. Jonathan Boscan has been a driving force in broadening hands-on technology and engineering skills since 2022. He cultivates students' interest in technology and innovation by incorporating programs such as coding, 3D printing and Sphero into lesson plans. In collaboration with the PTA, he recently secured a grant to launch an after-school Robotics club, allowing first through fourth grade students to further apply their classroom learning in a practical setting. ■

“Mr. Boscan has been an outstanding technology teacher. He encourages his students to be creative in their designs and ensures that classes are always fun and engaging,” said Mr. Ross Ference, Principal at Ringgold Elementary School North.

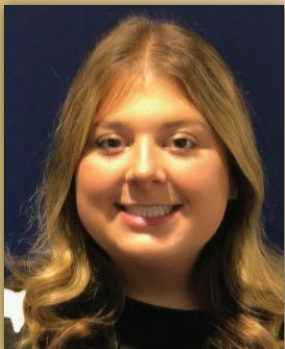
Mrs. Dawn McPherson, Teacher at Ringgold Elementary School South



Mrs. Dawn McPherson continues to make a tremendous impact with her unwavering positivity and student-centered approach. Mrs. McPherson helps students form lasting relationships and creates a safe, positive learning environment that supports her students' future academic endeavors. ■

“Mrs. McPherson’s selfless, positive attitude has become a cornerstone within her classroom and our school. We are extremely lucky that she is a member of our team for the last 15 years,” said Mr. Marc Berry, Ringgold Elementary School South Principal.

Ms. Kendal Allsopp, Special Education Teacher at Ringgold Middle School



A new addition to Ringgold Middle School, Ms. Kendal Allsopp fosters meaningful relationships with her students and collaborates with staff members to promote academic success. Teaching fifth through eighth grade students, she is committed to meeting the individual needs of her students and supporting them as they navigate their academic journeys. ■

“Ms. Allsopp has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and a commitment to making decisions in the best interests of the students. We are very excited to see how she can continue to make a positive impact throughout the 2024-2025 school year and beyond,” said Mr. Kenneth Patterson, Ringgold Middle School Principal.

Mr. Dan Shipman, Social Studies Teacher at Ringgold High School



Building positive, respectful relationships with his students is a key component of Mr. Dan Shipman's mission of helping them pave their futures. An integral member of Ringgold's family since 2014, Mr. Shipman credits his former basketball coach at Waynesburg University for instilling the valuable lessons that he now leverages in his teachings, including being accountable, always having a plan, earning respect through hard work and learning from one's mistakes. ■

“He genuinely cares about people, and witnessing the maturation of students as they develop into young adults truly brings him joy,” said Dr. Greg Saraceni, Ringgold High School Principal.

Welcome Back, Students!

Ringgold Elementary School North

The Ringgold Elementary School North community celebrated the new school year with an Open House, including meet and greets with teachers, a visit from staff at Monongahela Local Library, sign-ups for sports leagues, food trucks, an ice-cream vendor, and raffle prizes.



Ringgold Elementary School South

Ringgold Elementary School South hosted an Open House to kick off the 2024-2025 school year, allowing families to tour the school, and sign up for numerous community-based organizations and activities.



Ringgold Middle School

Ringgold Middle School welcomed all students back with an Open House and offered a presentation to incoming fifth-grade families to prepare them for the transition to their new school.



Welcome Back, Students! (cont'd)

Ringgold High School

Students and families enjoyed a presentation, self-guided tour of the school, meeting teachers and learning about the different student clubs at Ringgold High School's back-to-school night.



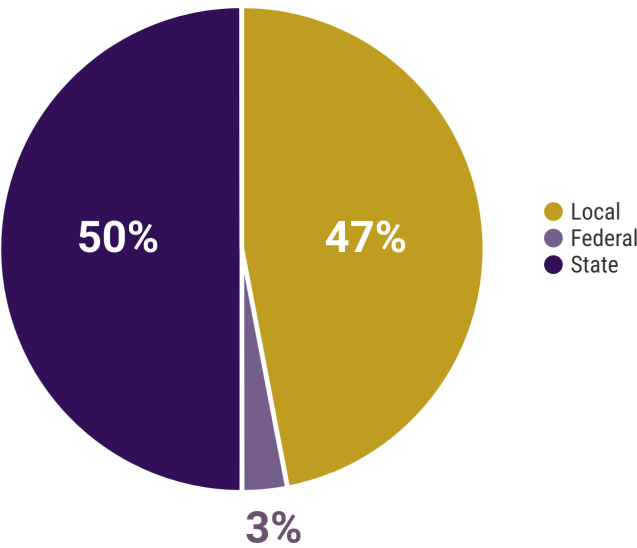
Understanding the 2024-2025 Budget

The Ringgold School District continues to maintain financial stability. The Act 1 index for the 2024-2025 school year was 7.1%, allowing for a maximum 1.1126 mill increase. The 2024-2025 final budget included a 1 mill increase used to balance the budget, with the major financial impacts being special education, cyber/charter school tuition costs and transportation. In a time when other districts are raising taxes to the index or above, Ringgold has been successful in always remaining below the Act 1 index. Ringgold continues to practice conservative spending and as a result, has not made any cuts to staffing or programs.

Where does the money go?

A large portion of the District's budgeted expenditures can be traced to three main areas: salaries, benefits and debt service. These areas are considered "fixed" costs, as they are contractual obligations and predetermined payments. For the 2024-2025 school year, these "fixed" costs represent 76% of the budget. The smaller portion of the budget, other objects comprising 24%, are costs that fluctuate with use and/or the economy. One of the larger expenditures in "other objects" that has a major impact on the budget is cyber/charter tuition.

Budget Revenues
\$56,003,354



Budget Expenditures
\$56,003,354

