



School Board Tours High School and Wexford Elementary

May 7, 2024

Dear Pine-Richland Community,

On Wednesday, April 17, school board members had the pleasure of attending the bi-annual school visitation and toured Pine-Richland High School and Wexford Elementary. We were given a snapshot of many of the district's finest teachers and students doing what they do best.

The tour started off at the high school in the newly implemented PAES Lab for learning support students.

The Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) is designed to help prepare students for future employment post-graduation by providing sample job tasks in a controlled environment with teachers offering support along the way.



To provide students with real-life experience, students clock in at the beginning of each class period and then check the board for that day's job assignment. Students are exposed to a wide variety of tasks to help them discover their interests and strengths as they are provided with feedback from teachers. This unique lab is one of very few in western Pennsylvania and was a new addition for this school year and has been very successful.

Next, we were treated to demonstrations by students and teachers in the planetarium followed by a trip to the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) classroom. Here, students from the Odyssey of the Mind team shared about their experience winning the state title in the Poconos and talked about traveling to compete in Iowa at the World competition later this month. They will no doubt continue to make us proud! Additionally, one of our sophomore GATE students shared her experiences through the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History's Hamilton Education Program. Her talents and creativity earned her an all-expense paid trip to New York City to see Hamilton, engage with the cast, and tour the Museum of Broadway—cool stuff!



The last stop in the high school was an open discussion with student members of the Principal's Advisory Committee. This diverse group represents students in all four grades who are involved in a variety of activities to offer a wide sampling of experiences and perspectives. These students have been individually recommended by teachers and invited to meet with the administrators a few times a year to have guided discussions and share candid thoughts giving invaluable insight.

After wrapping up the discussion, we headed over to Wexford Elementary where we

were enthusiastically greeted by Mrs. Kelly Gustafson, principal, who began the tour showing off many highlights.

First was a stop in a first grade followed by a second-grade classroom where students demonstrated the overwhelming success of the new phonics program, Heggerty for phonemic awareness, and the 95% Group phonics program. It was truly a treat to see these young learners so engaged and clearly absorbing the content with fun and innovative strategies.



Next, we visited a third-grade classroom where the school counselor guided students through discussions about learning strategies related to self-awareness.

As the day's tour was nearing the end, a visit to the ESL (English as a second language) classroom gave us great insight into how the district works to meet the needs of students with language barriers. In this unique space, students from over 15 countries receive support.



Before the final stop in the library, we visited with two third-grade teachers to discuss how RAM Time (reading and math time) is leveraged to help students continue to grow and are given the tools to help reach their highest potential through differentiation.

We offer our sincerest thanks to all the administrators, teachers, staff and students who helped make this visit such a great experience. Seeing the practice of “every student, every day” was something to be very proud of.

We look forward to the next visit!

Sincerely,

Pine-Richland School Board

Mr. Philip Morrissette, President, Mrs. Amy Terchick, Vice President, Mr. Marc Casciani, Treasurer, Mrs. Christina Brussalls, Mr. Joseph Cassidy, Mrs. Ashley Fortier, Mrs. Lisa Hillman, Mrs. Leslie Miller, and Mr. Michael Wiethorn

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