



PITMAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Robert J. Preston, Ed.D., Superintendent

Robert O. Miles, III, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Central Office: 320 Grant Avenue, Pitman, NJ 08071

Main: 856-589-2145

pitman.k12.nj.us

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Dear Community:

First, I have to say I'm glad my approach to the Eagles worked out. I'm not superstitious, but I'd be disingenuous if I said I didn't worry that announcing a delayed opening too soon might jinx them. Jokes aside, it was fantastic to see students proudly sporting their gear to celebrate the big win! Please see below for some important updates.

State Aid Update and Fair Funding Initiatives

Yesterday, we received the state aid figures for the 2025-26 school year, and we are pleased to share that for the first time in eight years, Pitman saw an increase of \$186,337 (or 3.9%) due to a one-time adjustment to the pre-existing School Funding Reform Act. While this increase is certainly a positive step, it's important to note that it does not include last year's Stabilization Aid of \$343,973. Despite this good news, this represents an overall *decrease* of \$157,636. Combined with the ongoing rise in expenses—such as healthcare, salaries, and energy costs—Pitman continues to face funding challenges. We remain committed to advocating for additional support to ensure our students receive the best education possible while minimizing the financial burden on our community.

The district remains steadfast in its commitment to student-centered decision-making, and in the coming weeks, the Board of Education and administration will focus on:

- Prioritizing essential student services and programs to maintain a high-quality educational experience
- Exploring cost-saving measures and alternative funding sources to mitigate the impact
- Maintaining transparency through regular updates to staff and the community
- Advocating for fair and sustainable school funding at the state level

To this end, today we hosted a meeting with Gloucester County Superintendents and Business Administrators, where we worked with our neighbors in the county to strengthen our advocacy efforts. April Miller, our Board President, visited as a leading voice on the funding formula, and she discussed ways we can jointly advocate for better funding for schools in Gloucester County.

As the saying goes, *it takes a village*. Now, more than ever, we encourage our school community to join us in this fight by reaching out to legislators and making our voices heard. Advocacy is critical, and we remain committed—both locally and in Trenton—to pushing for the funding our

students deserve. Together, we will continue working toward a more stable and equitable future for our district.

Boys' Basketball Achievement

Congratulations to the Boys' Basketball team for securing the #1 seed in the NJSIAA Playoffs and for their impressive first-round victory against Wildwood. It was wonderful to see the community support our athletes on the court.

Winter Athletics Achievements

Congratulations to the following winter athletes:

- Elijah Crispin scored his 2000th career point in boys' basketball.
- Michael Fisicaro scored his 1000th career point in boys' basketball.
- Aiden Milward won the District 32 Championship in the 215-pound weight class, and Jake Lawrence placed third in the 138-pound weight class. Both wrestlers will compete at the Regional Championships starting today.
- Nate Newcomb finished 9th overall at the State Diving Championships.
- Rhys Blackman qualified for the State Winter Track Championships in the 3200-meter run.

Well done to all these athletes on their impressive achievements!

Teaching and Learning Progress

Our top priority as a District is, and always will be, teaching, learning, and ensuring every student has access to strong educational opportunities in a safe environment. This year, we invested in high-quality professional development for our teachers to support student success. These training sessions covered key topics such as the role of Artificial Intelligence in education, evidence-based reading practices in ELA, effective formative assessment strategies, Envisions 2.0 curriculum training, best practices in school safety, and behavior management techniques.

We also want to take a moment to thank our parents for their continued support. We know that in-service days—whether they mean early dismissals or days off—can require adjustments at home. Your support and understanding of this is invaluable, and we truly appreciate all you do to help us provide the best possible education for our students.

Masquers

Please mark your calendars for the Pitman Elementary School Masquers' production of *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure Jr.*, taking place on March 13th and 14th at 7:00 PM in the PES Auditorium. Tickets will be available at the door for \$10. The Masquers play a vital role in our Drama Program, providing young students with the foundation to develop their passion for theater and continue their involvement for years to come.

PSHS Music Grant

Shout out to Mrs. Mickle and the Music Department for securing funding for PSHS to receive the Perkins Center for the Arts' World Music in Schools grant! The application process was highly competitive, and I'm thrilled we were chosen, bringing artists-in-residence to work with our students this spring, culminating in a performance on Night 1 of Arts Fest (5/28). We've been assigned local folk artists Cranston Dean and Joe Makoviecki of Jackson Pines, who will introduce students to Pine Barrens folk music, its history, and music theory. Our students will not only perform an authentic South Jersey folk song, but also have the chance to write their own originals. Huge thanks again to everyone who made this possible!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert J. Preston". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "P".

Robert J. Preston

Superintendent