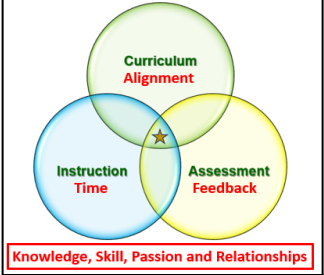


**Pine-Richland School District**  
**Key Initiatives Quarterly Update (October 2025)**

Topic	Progress/Next Steps
<p><b>Academic Focus:</b></p> <p><b>Instructional Strategies (Alignment, Time and Feedback)</b></p>	<p>As we kicked off the 2025-2026 school year, we have continued to focus on the concepts of <b>Alignment (Curriculum), Time (Instruction), and Feedback (Assessment)</b>. These key elements comprise the Model for Teaching and Learning. When placing these three elements on a Venn diagram, the center “<b>star</b>” intersection is where effective learning occurs if all elements are aligned and informing one another. We focus on this intersecting area through the development of lesson planning.</p>  <p>Podcasts were refined and embedded as a part of our annual Code of Ethics and knowledge management process to highlight these foundational philosophical concepts. All staff members review these podcasts over the first few weeks of school and attest to this with their signature. These podcasts are housed on the Continuity of Learning Professional Development website, and the content reflected in them was also embedded throughout our in-person professional development experience at the district and building level.</p> <p>The use of “data for action” links <b>feedback with alignment</b>. Throughout the first few weeks of school, teachers are gathering initial data on students using diagnostic, benchmark, and common assessments. The results are being analyzed by grade-level and course-specific teams to determine how to effectively support students. Once data-driven action plans are developed, <b>instruction (time)</b> is used to provide the students with individualized and group-based direct instruction.</p>
<p><b>Academic Focus:</b></p> <p><b>In-Depth Program Mini-Review (Math) and All Department IDPR Implementation</b></p>	<p>Over the course of the 2025-2026 school year, the K-12 Mathematics Department will have representatives engaged in the In-Depth Program Review (IDPR) Lite. Representatives include grade level teachers from across the elementary school buildings, as well as all members of the mathematics department at the secondary level.</p> <p>The team will implement the process developed two years ago with the science department and then implemented again in 2024-2025 with the Health &amp; Physical Education department. In order to further improve the common language and understanding of key concepts within mathematics, a small committee of the overarching team came together to hold a day of professional development on the 8 Standards of Mathematical Practice. This small committee also helped to create the agenda and learning experiences for the full IDPR team, which will be implemented at the October 24, 2025, in-service session. This year’s process will also be further augmented by the targeted use of artificial intelligence.</p> <p>The goal of the October and January in-service sessions will be to have the IDPR team fully review the recommendations from the prior IDPR to determine the depth of implementation through our action plans and to identify any strengths or opportunities for improvement within our programming. All of this work in internal data analysis, including academic achievement and growth results, will guide the research study and conversations with exemplar programs and community connections. Following each IDPR meeting, a summary of progress and next steps will be shared with the school board and community as a part of the public meeting discussion and agenda. By June of 2026, the IDPR Lite team plans to share the final report and recommendations with the community. A specific Academic Achievement Joint Governance meeting will be scheduled and publicized to encourage attendance and engagement around improvements to our K-12 Mathematics Program.</p>

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<p><b>School Culture:</b></p> <p><b>Safety, Security, and Culture</b></p>	<p>A safe, positive, and welcoming environment is critical for learning. This focus on learning is our mission. To help build positive connections to people and activities, we offer a wide range of programs and services both inside and outside the classroom. These connections and the relationships formed through these activities are critical for strengthening a positive and welcoming environment since each action we take that enhances a positive school culture also enhances our physical safety and security.</p> <p>The district continues to focus on being proactive with safety communications, sharing several safety-related messages with the school community. At the start of the 2025-2026 school year, these efforts have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Back-to-school safety reminders on August 6th</li> <li>● Spectator safety guidelines on September 3th</li> <li>● Resources for talking to children about violence on September 11th</li> <li>● Suicide prevention resources on September 15th</li> <li>● OpenGate metal detector system introduction on September 24th</li> </ul> <p>Members of our safety &amp; security team and administrators received on-site training in order to pilot the OpenGate metal detector system with high school students on September 26. This system, while not planned for daily use, can be used to screen individuals for prohibited items in a quick and non-intrusive manner, minimizing disruption to the school day (or after-school/evening event) while improving our ability to maintain a safe environment. Additional training and piloting of the system with middle school students has also been scheduled. While the portable metal detector system is not planned for daily use at any of our six schools, its portability will allow us to use the system as needed for small or large group settings. The units will ultimately be deployed, consistent with our <a href="#">board policy</a>, as another enhancement to our existing safety and security measures.</p> <p>We continue to build a positive school culture K-12 with a growing focus on implementing advanced tiers of our positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) plan. Our RAMS Way teams are implementing Tier 1 with fidelity across all six schools, reinforcing consistent expectations and support for all students. This school year, each school will have dedicated RAMS Way Coordinators providing leadership and coordination of RAMS Way implementation within their building in alignment with district-level PBIS initiatives.</p>
<p><b>Finance and Operations:</b></p> <p><b>Future-Focused Financial Health and Decision-making</b></p>	<p><b>Fiscal health and management are both strategic advantages and challenges at Pine-Richland.</b> Starting on September 15, 2025, the Pine-Richland School District began hosting a series of Joint Governance meetings that would combine the following subject matters relating to finance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● September 15th - Finance and Staff Services</li> <li>● October 6th - Finance and Student Services</li> <li>● October 20th - Finance and Building and Grounds</li> <li>● November 10th - Finance and Operational Services</li> </ul> <p>The district administration team is taking this approach due to the budgetary challenges the District faces with a beginning operational deficit of \$4.9 million for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. The administration team is providing a review of how all departments relate to the budget. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, a budget with a \$1.225 million deficit was approved with structural actions such as reducing 10.5 positions and adjusting fees to increase revenue.</p> <p><b>Common Level Ratio (“CLR”) will continue to affect our real estate tax revenue negatively.</b> NOTE: All Allegheny County public school districts are impacted. At PRSD, approximately 80% of our revenue is local revenue primarily driven by commercial and residential real estate. As a result, CLR poses a continued threat to education excellence. For taxpayers, it is important to note that PRSD has the third lowest millage in Allegheny County. In fact, a \$250,000 homeowner pays less in school tax in 2025 than they did in 2013 due to</p>

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	<p>the low tax rate and impact of the Homestead Exclusion. PRSD also offers a Senior Citizen Tax Rebate program.</p> <p>The district administration’s goal in the 2025-2026 budgeting process was to provide structural actions that push past our 2025 - 2026 fiscal year into 2026 - 2027 and future years in line with our future-focused mission, which is also strategically reinforced in our <b>ten-year capital plan. The district administration will continue to provide future-focused projections.</b> The focus has now moved to the 2026 - 2027 budget and beyond, with continued focus on structural actions that will impact the future of the District. The goal of the District in the past and future has been to operate efficiently and will continue that strategy in the future.</p> <p>The District continues to build and reshape our <b>ten-year capital plan.</b> PRSD has completed over \$31 million in capital projects from 2016 - 2017 through 2023-2024. In the 2024 - 2025 and 2025 - 2026 school years, the District has \$15.3 million of capital projects planned with the focus on HVAC upgrades to Wexford and Richland. The two HVAC projects are currently underway, with completion scheduled in the Summer of 2026. \$8.7 million is the total of the HVAC projects. Currently, the 2026-2027 capital project plan is projecting \$5.8 million in projects, with \$3.6 million allocated to HVAC and roofing. The District team maintains flexibility in scheduling capital projects with the ability to move the most necessary projects to more immediate years within the plan, while also having the ability to move less immediate projects back on the timeline. This is done by constant reviews and assessments of our facilities by our facilities’ team and outside consultants when necessary. The ten-year capital plan is a proactive strategy that allows appropriate attention to all maintenance and necessary upgrades of the District facilities and infrastructure.</p>
<p><b>Communication:</b></p> <p><b>Effective Communication (Two-Way and In-Person)</b></p>	<p>The district continually focuses on streamlining and balancing communications to the community (i.e., frequency, depth, and breadth). An annual yearlong analysis of communication metrics for the website, eblasts, social media, and YouTube was completed with a focus on assessing the effect of the redesigned website on engagement. Overall, website, email, and social media engagement were up from the prior year. The analytics review provides an opportunity to identify action items to help continue to streamline while increasing engagement.</p> <p>Stakeholder survey results were tabulated and shared with the community. Results for this year indicated continued high satisfaction among parents, students, and staff for the district and its academic and extra-curricular programming.</p> <p>In an effort to increase two-way communication with the broader Pine-Richland community, all community members were invited to attend the four-part Joint Governance Finance series this fall, during which community members are invited to submit budget and finance questions anonymously via a form that will be used to develop an FAQ page on the district website.</p> <p>The district continues to focus on being proactive with safety communications, sharing several safety-related messages with the community, including back-to-school safety reminders on August 6, spectator safety reminders on September 3, resources for talking to children about violence on September 11, suicide prevention resources for Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month on September 15, and an introduction to the OpenGate metal detector system on September 24.</p>

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<p><b>Staff Services:</b></p> <p><b>Expand Targeted and Active Recruitment Efforts for Support Positions</b></p>	<p>While our district continues to be regarded as an employer of choice that attracts deep applicant pools for most of our employment opportunities, we continue to face challenges filling certain positions among our support staff. Hard-to-staff support positions in our district include custodians, paraprofessionals, and cafeteria/recess monitors.</p> <p>Custodians have been persistently difficult for us to effectively recruit and hire. We ended the 2024-2025 school year with 9.5 FTE (full-time equivalent) vacancies across our custodial workforce. We have taken steps to promote part-time custodial opportunities and encourage employee referrals through direct outreach to our workforce. In addition to the development and distribution of flyers and lawn signs, we have utilized the district website, social media, and announcements at athletic events to increase awareness of these opportunities to our broader community. We continue to engage with the Pine-Richland Education Support Professionals Association (PRESPA) to expand these efforts in order to increase our capacity to maintain cleanliness across our schools. At the time of this update, we have 4.5 FTE custodial vacancies remaining.</p> <p>Paraprofessionals represent our largest group of support staff. They work individually and in small groups to support students with disabilities. During the spring and summer, we leveraged some of the same mechanisms (e.g., district website, social media) to advertise vacant paraprofessional positions. We also made direct referrals to candidates who were interviewed but not selected for certain teaching positions. We began the school year fully-staffed in paraprofessional roles, and continue to take steps to attract a pool of candidates to have available as additional needs arise.</p> <p>Cafeteria and recess monitors are part-time positions that support our K-6 schools. On July 21, 2025, our board of directors approved a memorandum of understanding between the district and PRESPA that established these roles as union-represented positions and enhanced elements of their total compensation package. On August 6, we conducted direct outreach to over four hundred board-approved independent volunteers to make them aware of these paid opportunities to supervise students during meals and recess. We were successful in hiring two monitors to become fully-staffed among our K-3 primary buildings, and continue to search for a cafeteria monitor to round out our staff for Eden Hall Upper Elementary School.</p> <p>Our district's online <a href="#">recruitment center</a> includes additional information and the opportunity to apply for these and other positions.</p>
<p><b>Health, Wellness and Sustainability (Operations, Programs and Curriculum)</b></p>	<p>Our Sustainability Leadership Council and 6-School Sustainability Leadership Club have continued to meet and invest in the district's strategic goals of <b><i>promoting sustainability</i></b> and <b><i>reducing our environmental footprint</i></b>.</p> <p>At the start of each school year, the student leaders engaged in the 6-School Sustainability Leadership Club come together to renew our commitment to these strategic goals. Three pillars of sustainability, as reflected in the Green Ribbon Schools Framework, form the basis of our actions throughout the year, including: <b>(1) Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs</b>; <b>(2) Improved Health and Wellness of Schools, Students, and Staff</b>; and <b>(3) Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education</b>.</p> <p>Within each pillar, the students identify prioritized, actionable areas of need. Progress towards these goals is then reported out during the Full Sustainability Leadership Council Meetings by the students. Our first 6-School Club meeting was held on Wednesday, September 24th, followed by the first Full Council meeting on Thursday, October 2nd.</p> <p>Examples of the leadership club's targeted improvements currently underway include: <b>(1) expanding the composting and gardening work</b> to include most schools; <b>(2) expanding recycling and reusing containers</b> (e.g., classrooms, food service, managed print services, etc.); <b>(3) reducing waste</b> (e.g. green transportation; schools' use of paper, water, electric,</p>

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etc.); and **(4) expanding environmental and sustainability learning opportunities and real world application.**

Embodying a few of those goals, students at Eden Hall Upper Elementary School worked with parent volunteers and administrators to bring additional native, flowering plants to the main entrance walkway at the school (pictures attached). Students were assigned shifts to support the landscaping efforts, including repurposing rock fill, planting flowers, and mulching the area. Students will be designing an irrigation system using rainwater in conjunction with 6th Grade science classes, in order to water the new plants. We are grateful to the many community members and parents at Eden Hall, who donated mature, rooted, perennial plants from their home gardens as they pruned their own plants to ensure optimal conditions in their own landscaping. A section of the new plants is milkweed in order to attract additional butterflies as pollinators and to provide them a habitat.

Additionally, the district expanded its fleet by 3 more EV buses, taking the grand total up to 6 electric vehicles. The club celebrated this expansion (picture attached), given the goal of reducing our environmental footprint. During the 2024-2025 school year, the total approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education amounted to 42,791.77 green miles.

The [sustainability portion of the district website](#) houses the slide decks from our Sustainability Leadership Council meetings for those interested in reviewing or gathering more information.