PLEASANT HILL SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

HOME OF THE BILLIES

NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2026

OUR MISSION

To graduate all students with high levels of academic and personal achievement, who are ready for post-secondary excellence, and who are prepared for productive, compassionate citizenship, through research-based instruction and a collaborative system of support.

From the Desk of Superintendent Jim Crist

ROOTED IN LEGACY, BUILT FOR TOMORROW

As we move through winter and into the second half of the school year, I want to take a moment to both reflect with gratitude and look ahead with optimism. Pleasant Hill School District is a place defined by strong relationships, high expectations, and a deep commitment to doing what is right for students. That legacy continues to guide every decision we make as we work to ensure every student is prepared for their future.

HONORING SERVICE

I want to begin by extending my sincere thanks to Principal Chris Reiersgaard for his dedicated service to Pleasant Hill. Chris joined our district in January 2024 and has played an important leadership role in guiding our school community through three graduating classes—the Class of 2024, the Class of 2025, and the Class of 2026, which will be his final class before returning to retirement at the end of this school year.

In a short time, Chris has made a meaningful impact through his steady leadership, his focus on student success, and his care for staff and families. We are grateful for the commitment and professionalism he has brought to Pleasant Hill, and we wish him all the best as he enters this next chapter of retirement.

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SUPERINTENDENT, CONTINUED

The District is actively planning for the next phase of leadership at the Middle/High School and will provide updates on transition planning and future steps as additional information is confirmed.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP & INVESTMENT

I would also like to extend a sincere thank you to our PHSD Booster Club and community for adding a turf infield for our softball field. This project is a direct reflection of the pride, generosity, and commitment our community has for student programs and athletics. The new infield is a significant upgrade that will benefit student-athletes for years to come and enhances both safety and playability. In addition, I want to recognize and thank Tim Meinzen and the Pleasant Hill Education Foundation for their leadership and hard work in raising funds to update and replace the Middle/High School signage. This project represents a much-needed improvement and a true facelift to the front of the school. The new signage is expected to be completed by the end of March and will strengthen our school's visibility, reflect community pride, and create a more welcoming entrance for students, families, and visitors. These projects show what is possible when a community rallies around its schools. We are deeply grateful for the investment in our students.

PROGRESS TOWARD ACADEMIC GOALS

These leadership transitions and facility improvements come at a time when the district is making steady progress while remaining focused on areas that need continued attention. Our most recent review of state and local data shows:

- Ninth Grade On-Track: 91.4% of students are currently on track, continuing to be a strength for PHSD.
- Four-Year Graduation Rate: 89.8% for the Class of 2024, exceeding our Year 1 baseline target.
- K–2 Attendance: 79.3%, supporting our early literacy focus and foundational learning goals.

We are also clear about where improvement is needed. Overall attendance, 3rd grade literacy and 8th grade math readiness remain key areas of focus. Instructional teams are strengthening Tier 1 instruction, expanding targeted interventions and improving alignment across grade levels, particularly in middle school math and early literacy.

STUDENT VOICE & BELONGING MATTER

In addition to academic measures, we continue to listen closely to student voice. Our SEED (Student Educational Equity Development) Survey shows encouraging strengths in sense of belonging and self-efficacy at the elementary level, while also highlighting opportunities to expand career-connected learning, middle school enrichment, and supports for students with disabilities, particularly in belonging and math confidence.

This feedback directly informs our work. Belonging, access, and opportunity are not side initiatives—they are central to who we are and how we serve students.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we move forward, our focus remains clear:

- Strengthening literacy and math instruction across all grades
- Expanding academic and behavioral supports through MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports)
- Improving attendance and engagement
- Ensuring every student feels known, supported, and challenged

Whether through leadership transitions, instructional improvement, facility upgrades, or community partnerships, everything we do is grounded in the same purpose: preparing every Pleasant Hill student for a future of opportunity, contribution, and success.

Thank you for your continued trust, partnership, and support. Together, we remain rooted in legacy and built for tomorrow.

Standardized Testing

OREGON STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Did you know the Every Student Succeeds Act is a federal law that governs general education in public schools across the country? This law was passed in 2015 and requires statewide testing in certain grades and subjects every year. All students take the test and the results can provide feedback to families, teachers and schools about student progress in those subjects that are skills needed for career and college. OSAS assessments are standardized, computer-based assessments required by the state of Oregon for all students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11 for both Language Arts and Mathematics. Science testing occurs in grades 5, 8, and 11. This year will also include a survey for students in grades 3-11.

TEST WINDOWS*

- **Elementary - Grades 3-5**
  - Language Arts (ELA) and Math: March 31, 2026 - May 29, 2026
  - Science: March 10, 2026 - May 29, 2026 (Grade 5 only)
- **Middle School - Grades 6-8**
  - Language Arts (ELA) and Math: March 31, 2026 - May 29, 2026
  - Science: March 10, 2026 - May 29, 2026 (Grade 8 only)
- **High School - Grade 11 Only**
  - Language Arts (ELA), Math and Science: February 9, 2026 - May 29, 2026

*Please contact your school for specific test dates.

For more info, please see the PHSD Website Resources under OSAS, Oregon State Assessment Information for Families/Opt Out Information.

SAVE THE DATE: PHEF GALA

Pleasant Hill Education Foundation is excited to invite you to our Love Boat Gala! This is our largest fundraising event of the year. This year's event is on Saturday, February 14 at 6:00 p.m. at the UO Ford Alumni Center. Tickets are available for purchase now at $75 for singles or $125 for a couple. Come enjoy an evening of love and giving on the high seas with dinner and dancing! We can't wait to see you there! Buy tickets at **www.phillfoundation.org**.

Want to help? Support our mission via sponsorships, volunteering at events, serving on a committee or board membership! Contact Amber McKee at **amckee@phillfoundation.org**.

HEALTH SCIENCES CAREER EXPLORATION

This fall, students in the Pleasant Hill High School CTE Health Sciences program had expanded opportunities to explore healthcare careers, develop leadership skills and engage in meaningful community service. This included monthly visits from healthcare professionals who shared their career pathways, day-to-day experiences, and answered student questions.

The Pleasant Hill Medical Club successfully launched this year. One of the club's initiatives is Billies Helping the Herd, community service and fundraising to support Pleasant Hill and surrounding communities. Through ongoing fundraising, students plan to purchase essential items such as non-perishable food, diapers, hygiene products, and other needed supplies for local families, the Dexter Food Pantry and local churches. The club's first project in December included assembling and distributing 54 Christmas gift bags to local children, helping spread holiday cheer while reinforcing the importance of service and civic responsibility.

The CTE Health Sciences program has also been awarded several grants, allowing the district to invest in specialized instructional supplies and equipment that significantly enhance hands-on learning. Grant funds have been used to purchase medical training equipment such as CPR manikins, AED trainers, an ECG trainer, venipuncture arms and hands and other medical materials. These resources expose students to a wide range of medical skills, increase engagement, and provide authentic, hands-on learning experiences that better prepare students for postsecondary education, certifications and future careers in healthcare.

A Letter from the PHES Principal

ELEMENTARY HAPPENINGS: MID-YEAR REFLECTIONS & CELEBRATING GROWTH!

As we cross the halfway point of our school year, it is the perfect time to pause and reflect. In our elementary classrooms, growth doesn't just happen in inches—it happens in the "aha!" moments during math, the kindness shown on the playground, and the dedication to showing up every day ready to learn.
This season of reflection allows us to celebrate how far our learners have come since September and to continue our focus for the exciting months ahead.

CELEBRATING OUR GROWTH

We are incredibly proud of the progress our students have made across three vital areas:

- **Academic Achievement:** From our youngest learners mastering letter sounds to our older students tackling complex fractions, the intellectual stamina in our classrooms is inspiring. We are seeing significant gains in mid-year reading and math assessments, proving that hard work pays off. Our adoption of the STAR Assessment System through Renaissance has allowed us to have more options for testing and to measure progress in more areas.
- **Positive Behavior:** Our focus on social-emotional learning is shining through. Students demonstrate the characteristics of Billie Spirit by being Kind, Safe, Respectful & Responsible every day.
- **Consistent Attendance:** Success starts with showing up! We are celebrating all our students who have made a commitment to "be here to get there." Every day in the classroom is an opportunity for a connection that can't be replaced.

THE POWER OF REFLECTION

Growth is rarely a straight line. This time of year is a great opportunity to sit down with your child and ask a few reflective questions:

- "What is something you can do now that you couldn't do in September?"
- "What are you most proud of regarding how you treat your classmates?"
- "What was your favorite moment of learning so far this year?"

Taking a moment to recognize these wins—no matter how small—builds the confidence necessary for challenges in the second semester. We look forward to seeing growth in the months ahead and continuing to celebrate success until the very last day of school.

Thank you for your support and collaboration. We could not do this without you, our partners at home!

Gratefully,
Brenna Fairchild

Principal

Updates from the PTO

Thank you to everyone who helped complete the Gaga Ball Pit! It has been a huge hit, and the kids absolutely adore this exciting new addition to our playground. Your hard work and support made this project possible, and it's already bringing so much joy to our students.

We also want to celebrate a successful Billie Winter Gift Shop. A heartfelt thank-you to all of the volunteers who gave their time and energy to make the magic happen. These events wouldn't be possible without our amazing community.

COMING UP NEXT

Spring Book Fair & Community Dinner – Mark your calendars for March 12! More details will be coming soon, so be sure to watch for updates.

SPECIAL THANKS & OPPORTUNITIES

A huge shout-out to our Book Vending Machine sponsors! Your support helps get books directly into kids' hands. If you're interested in sponsoring a month, we currently have an opening —this is a wonderful way to support student literacy.
We are also looking for businesses interested in becoming corporate sponsors for our spring events. Sponsorships help us keep events affordable and accessible for our entire community.

STAY CONNECTED

Spirit wear can be purchased at:

https://phillpto.square.site

Be sure to follow us on Facebook for the latest news, updates, and event information:

facebook.com/PTOPHES

Thank you for continuing to support our students, staff, and school community—we couldn't do it without you!

Sincerely,
PHES PTO

MUSIC PROGRAM

Pleasant Hill Elementary had a very successful winter concert season. First, Billie's Got Talent was a blast for everyone involved! Then the 5th graders presented the story of Buddy the Elf through song and xylophone performance. We used our brand-new stage for these concerts. Thank you to the PTO and the Pleasant Hill Education Association for providing the funds for this new stage, which will be used by all K-5 students for decades to come.

Looking ahead to 2026, our 1st graders will present Mortimer's Valentine's Day Concert at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 12th. Next, 3rd grade will take the stage with There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Ukulele! at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 19. Both concerts will be held in the Blue Gym on the PHES side of campus.

4th and 2nd grade will perform in May, and we will finish the year with kindergarten in June. I am looking forward to a 2026 filled with singing, playing instruments, and learning why and how we create music! Hope to see you at a concert soon.

With a Song,
Ryan Strong
Music Teacher

Pleasant Hill Middle & High School

LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

It has been a smooth and positive start to the second semester at Pleasant Hill, and it's hard to believe we are already halfway through the school year. Time always seems to move quickly when our students and staff are fully engaged in learning, activities, and school events.

Winter sports are in full swing, and it has been great to see our student-athletes working hard, supporting one another, and representing Pleasant Hill with pride. Across all programs, our teams are competing well and demonstrating strong effort, teamwork, and sportsmanship. We appreciate the commitment of our coaches, athletes, and families who support our students throughout the season.

Before we know it, spring will be here and preparation for graduation will be underway. The Class of 2026 is truly on the homestretch of their K–12 journey and is a pleasure to be around each day. While it is always bittersweet to watch our seniors prepare to step into the world as young adults, the staff at Pleasant Hill High School is incredibly proud of the people they have become during their time here. It is because of the love and support they receive from our community, families, and staff that students develop the skills, confidence, and resilience needed to thrive in whatever path they choose to pursue.

We would also like to thank families for their continued support as we implemented the updated Personal Electronic Devices Policy (JFCEB), which went into effect on January 6th in alignment with Oregon Executive Order 25-09 and guidance from the Oregon Department of Education. Students have been very respectful and compliant with these expectations, helping create a focused and positive learning environment during the school day.

Key points of the policy include:

- No cell phone use during instructional hours. Phones and similar devices must be off and stored during the school day—not in pockets or on the student's person.
- Personal electronic devices are not allowed in classrooms, hallways, or the student center during school hours.
- Smartwatches may be worn only in airplane mode and used strictly as basic timepieces.
- Headphones or earbuds connected to personal devices are restricted during class time.
- Students may use personal devices only if permitted through a medical plan, IEP/504, or an approved exemption.

If families need to reach their child during the school day, please contact the school office at 541-747-4541. We truly appreciate the partnership with families in reinforcing these expectations and supporting student learning.

Thank you for your continued support as we move through the second half of the school year. We look forward to all that the coming months will bring for our students and the Pleasant Hill community.

Go Billies!

Chris Reiersgaard

Principal

CTE, FFA and Agriculture News and Updates

During the fall and winter, Pleasant Hill High School's Agriculture, Food, Natural Resources (AFNR) CTE and FFA programs produced strong results in student learning, leadership development, career readiness and community engagement. Students in grades 7–12 participated in hands-on, career-connected experiences that emphasized technical skill, professionalism and real-world application.

The year began with Ag Olympics, an introductory FFA event for grades 7–9. Thirty-three students competed across agriculture-focused challenges and earned 1st- and 2nd-place team finishes in every event entered, including Meat and Poultry Evaluation, Floriculture, Soils, Forestry, Agricultural Mechanics, Food Science, Dairy, Horse, Sheep and Veterinary Science. For many students, this was their first competitive FFA experience and a strong foundation for continued involvement.

Leadership development remained a priority throughout the year. More than 200 students participated in FFA leadership activities, including Fall Leadership Camp and a full-day leadership workshop hosted at PHHS with the Oregon State FFA Officers. These experiences strengthened communication skills, teamwork, confidence and student voice across grade levels.

Students demonstrated academic and technical growth through applied instruction in soil science, plant science, food science, animal science and agricultural mechanics. Ten students extended their learning by competing in the Soils Career Development Event, completing field evaluations and lab-based analysis using industry tools.

Career readiness outcomes were strong across all AG CTE courses. Students completed resumes, cover letters and professional interviews with industry partners. At the regional Job Interview Career Development Event, Peyton White earned 2nd place, Stella Carlton earned 4th place and Reagan Dockery earned 5th place, reflecting strong preparation and professionalism.

Competitive teams also found success in technical and science-based events. The Ag Sales team—Harper Quinones, Reese Dockery, Emma Stewart and Wyatt Williams—earned 2nd place and qualified for the state competition. In Food Science, Archer Ferguson earned 2nd place in both the Beginning and Advanced divisions, demonstrating strong content knowledge and practical application.

Industry and postsecondary exploration played a key role in student learning. Forty-six students toured Oregon State University, connecting AG CTE coursework to college and career pathways. Forty-two students attended the Northwest Ag Expo, engaging with more than 250 industry vendors and exploring careers, technology and workforce opportunities. At the Ag Expo Welding Competition, Jack Quinones earned 1st place in Stick Welding, while additional PHHS students competed in MIG and Stick welding events, representing the program with skill and professionalism.

Students also applied their skills through meaningful community projects, including the design and fabrication of custom metal flags for a local nonprofit auction. Greenhouse and floriculture students applied plant science and business skills through floral production and sales for school and community events.

A major focus this year has been the launch of a student-run mobile concessions trailer, a cross-CTE enterprise integrating agriculture, food science, business, marketing and skilled trades. Students are leading menu development, food safety planning, marketing, financial management and trailer construction with support from industry partners. The goal is to launch operations at school events by the beginning of the 2026-27 school year.

Looking ahead, students are preparing for additional Career Development Events, forestry and mechanics competitions, the PHHS Plant Sale on May 3rd and spring leadership and animal production activities. Continued equipment upgrades and strong community partnerships support safe, high-quality instruction aligned with current industry standards. Thank you to our families, industry partners, and community members for supporting meaningful, hands-on learning opportunities for PHHS students.

Sincerely,

Angela White

AG & CTE Director and FFA Advisor

Pleasant Hill School District

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PHHS AND PHMS BAND UPDATES

It's been a great year so far in band. I hope you were able to make it to our concert in December which featured all the middle and high school bands grades 6th-12th. We are now looking at new music in preparation for our next concert on March 18. This concert will feature all bands grades 6th-12th except the jazz bands.

The festival season is officially upon us. Wind Ensemble will be competing at two state qualifying festivals this spring. The Willamette Valley Band Festival on March 19 and the Northwest Band Festival on April 3. We are looking to qualify for the OSAA Band State Championships for the third year in a row and build on our 4th place finish last year.

Solar Jazz will be competing at multiple jazz festivals this year, including the West Salem Jazz Festival, the Pleasant Hill Jazz Festival and the Mt. Hood Jazz Festival. We are hoping to continue a strong tradition of success in recent years, qualify for the OMEA Jazz Band State Championships in May and bring home another state title. Speaking of the Pleasant Hill Jazz Festival, please mark your calendars for April 11. Our guest artist this year is JUNO award winning Canadian singer Caity Gyorgy. It's going to be a wonderful day of music on the hill!

Thank you for your support and we hope to see you at a performance soon.

Sincerely,
Zac Tendick
Band Director