

Principal Newsletter

Pine Grove Elementary ~ September 2026

Thank You!

What a fabulous Panther Prowl this past week! Our annual Fun Run is our school's largest fundraiser of the year! Thanks to our generous community, we are making great progress towards our \$55,000 goal!

These funds help our school buy things such as supplemental curriculum, a new Kiln for the Art room, busses for our students to take field trips, our new PGE marquee at the front of the school, and so much more!



This week is also Chaparral High School's Homecoming! Each year, the feeder schools get to participate in the homecoming fun! On Friday, members of the Chap Cheer, Band, and Student Government, came to Pine Grove to help get us excited for Homecoming Week! We love being a part of the Chap Fam!

Kelly Coonts
PGE Principal



All PGE students earned a Foam Party at the Fun



Introducing our 26-27 Student Safety Patrol



Panther Pride Award!

Run!

Leaders!

Each month, students are selected from every classroom to receive the Panther Pride Award for consistently modeling Grover's 3 rules~Respect Yourself, Respect Others, Respect the Environment. Proud of these Panthers!

2026 Apple Award Nominations are Open!

We value and appreciate all of our outstanding teachers and staff here at Pine Grove and are thrilled that the Foundation for Douglas County Schools is gearing up to host the Annual Apple Awards in the Spring.

Nominations for Apple Awards are now open thru October 26.

Please consider nominating a teacher or other staff member who is inspiring a love of learning in students and working to make Pine Grove such a special place.



Scan on the picture to nominate a staff member!

DCSD Podcast Providing Information on the Mill Levy Override (MLO)

Did you know that the Douglas County School District has a podcast? We found this episode especially informative. Check it out!

Link to Podcast:

https://mcdn.podbean.com/mf/web/7ek8q7n5afeaqvti/033_Erin_Ka_ne_MLO.mp3

On Aug. 25, the @DCSDK12 Board of Education voted to place a Mill Levy Override (MLO) option for taxpayers on the November ballot.

In this episode of the DCSD Notebook Podcast, Superintendent Erin Kane explains why district staff recommended the MLO, how DCSD measures transparency and return on investment, and the areas where additional funding could support students and schools, including:

- Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers and staff
- Supporting the increasing costs of school security
- Reducing waitlists for Career and Technical Education programs, including the trades
- Restoring student programming, such as elementary instrumental music

Listen to the episode to learn more about the proposal and the district's perspective on its potential impact.

How Will My School Benefit? 2026 Mill Levy Override

The Douglas County School District Board of Education recently voted unanimously to place a **\$54 million Mill Levy Override (MLO)** on the November ballot. If passed by voters, this is how the additional funds would be invested in our school:

Mill Levy Override Dollars

- **Increase teacher and staff pay** by providing salaries that are more competitive with neighboring school districts
- **Increase and maintain school security support**, including school resource officers
- **Reduce student waitlists for Career and Technical Education programming**, including the trades
- **Restore student programming** such as instrumental music in elementary schools

COST TO TAXPAYERS

Additional funding via potential MLO would cost residential taxpayers approximately **\$33.70 per year** for every \$100,000 in home value.

\$236 per year for every **\$700,000 HOME**
funding.dcsdk12.org



Check out the Websites & Apps your student uses at PGE

Please read the attached letter to see the variety of instructional websites and/or apps used throughout the school year. These tools are not provided by the district, however, each resource has been vetted by our teachers and evaluated according to district guidelines.

To opt your child OUT of any of these resources please print this letter ([linked here](#)), circle the title(s) to be opted out of, sign, and return to your student's teacher. Please fill out one form for each student you wish to opt-out. By not returning this letter, you are agreeing to the use of these tools and/or account creation for your student(s).



Spotlight on Safety

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the first installment of our **Safety Spotlight!** Each newsletter, we'll focus on a specific safety topic to keep our school community informed and engaged. Our goal is to promote a safe environment both on campus and at home, and we believe that safety is a shared responsibility. Let's dive into this month's topics.

September Safety Spotlight: E-Bike & Scooter Safety

With more students riding electric bikes and motorized scooters to school, please review these key safety reminders with your child to keep our drop-off zones and sidewalks safe:

- **Protect the Brain:** A properly fitted helmet is essential. Because e-bikes reach higher speeds, helmets rated for higher speeds (or with chin protection) offer the best defense.
- **Dismount on Campus:** E-bikes and scooters should be walked once you reach school grounds, crosswalks, and crowded sidewalks.
- **Solo Rides Only:** Unless the device is explicitly designed for a second person, carry no extra passengers on seats or pegs.
- **Stay Alert:** Keep your eyes on the path, keep both hands on the handlebars, and leave phones and earbuds in your backpacks.
- **Charge Safely:** Always use the manufacturer-approved charger and avoid overcharging devices overnight.

Thank you for helping us keep all our students safe on their way to and from school!

We hope that by focusing on these important safety topics throughout the year, we can create a strong foundation of awareness and responsibility. Thank you for your continued support and collaboration in keeping our students safe!

Sincerely,

Jen O'Leary

Assistant Principal



PGE Mental Health Team News

Pather Pride: Respect Yourself, Respect Others, Respect the Environment

At the beginning of the school year and throughout the year, students are explicitly taught everyday expectations. Many of these expectations can be referred to as "academic behaviors". For example, students learn from kindergarten on about "Whole Body Listening". This helps students learn to be a student, and in turn, allows for learning. Whole Body Listening includes different ways our body listens. You can help teach your children to listen using these reminders, too.

Eyes = Looking at the speaker

Ears = Both ears ready to hear

Mouth = Quiet- waiting for your turn to talk

Hands = Quiet and kept to yourself

Feet = Quiet

Body = Facing toward the speaker

Brain = Thinking about what is being said

Heart = Consider the speaker and others listening

Whole Body Listening Larry



Has an e-bike rider ever rode out in front of you almost causing an accident (and heart attack)? Make sure your child is safe and always wears a helmet. Doctors can't fix brains like a broken arm. [Listen to this 17 minute podcast](#)

Pine Grove Elementary

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Kelly Coonts

Kelly is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters