

Dear Parents,

Congratulations on the end to another exciting school year at Pine Middle School. This year brought about many changes in our district and a newly adopted strategic plan.

Before I begin with next year I would like to express my sincere gratitude to this year's 8th grade class for all their leadership and hard work. Your commitment to creating a culture of respect and dignity has resulted in major reductions in physical aggression and incidents of bullying/harassment at Pine.

We have been recognized as a school for this effort and I appreciate your willingness to bring about change. This is a step in the right direction and we look forward to continued improvement in these important areas. We are committed to PBS at Pine Middle School and look forward to implementing year 2 improvements.

Our teachers have been recognized for their hard work and dedication this school year as well. Teachers, Shyle Irigoien and Sandra Christman were recognized for their outstanding commitment to students by receiving "Excellence in Education" awards from Channel 4 News. Diana Crites was selected as a "Teacher of the Year" by the Washoe Education Association and Bett Korinek became the 2nd Pine staff member and 2nd teacher within our science department to become Nationally Board Certified. We also had math teachers Laurie Line and Athena Klock selected to be included in the "Pathway Project". A program designed to provide teachers with training on how to integrate technology into classroom instruction. Pine teachers are working hard at improving their practice and we are proud of their accomplishments.

Our students continue to achieve at high levels with many students being recognized for individual honors in Science, English, Social Studies and Math. Our athletic programs continue to put forth quality teams and our encore programs provide students with the right mix of rigor and relevant learning. We are a good school working hard at becoming great and committed to working together to better understand how we can meet the needs of our diverse student population.

Beginning in January a team of teachers began meeting with administration to delve into research on middle schools, learning more about RTI (response to intervention) and how we were meeting the academic needs of our students. We looked at how schedules and different models of instruction that could be utilized to meet the academic needs of our students and how we were currently utilizing our time and focus within our school day. We debated and argued and agreed that we need to change in order to better meet the needs of all our students. This group met weekly for three months to recommend the following changes to be implemented beginning with the 2010-11 school year.

Driving these changes are the following foundational principles and goals.

- Close the achievement gaps between reportable cohorts
- Improve the rigor in every classroom
 - all work should be hard for all students

- RTI framework firmly entrenched in instructional model
 - Universal screening of all students three times a year
 - Progress monitoring of students below the 25th percentile
 - tiered academic interventions provided within the structure of the school week
- Strong Professional Learning Communities driving department content teams.
 - Content teams replace interdisciplinary teams
 - Teams of teachers looking at common data and acting upon the results
- Students taking an active role in their learning
 - How can we get our students to take more control of how they are performing in relationship to grade level expectations and what their next steps are to improve their performance in their respective classes.

With higher academic expectation it forces us to look at what we expecting all students to master and make sure that all students have access to a quality curriculum and teaching.

We also have to provide time for our teachers to review student progress on a regular basis to be able to intervene when students are not showing academic growth, or need additional rigor. Our new schedule will provide us with this built in intervention and enrichment time.

Learning Plan for 2010-11 School Year

- Moving from a 7 period schedule to a 6 period schedule with 4 core classes and 2 elective classes.
- Students will be placed in classes that will be grouped heterogeneously with the exception of ALM (gifted), ELL(English Language Learners) and Special Education classes.
- Advisory period every morning – 20 minutes –PBS system and provide for teaming structure for small learning communities – named after famous Patriots.
- Monday – 6 period – Introduce learning – 53 minute classes
- Tuesday – 6 period – teach/model lessons – 53 minute classes
- Wednesday – 3 period –apply learning – 80 minute classes + 40 minute enrichment/intervention tied to middle block
- Thursday – 3 period –apply learning/review – 95 minute classes + 40 minute intervention/enrichment tied to middle block

- Friday – 6 periods – assess student learning – 51 minute classes.
- Block Days – Intervention/Enrichment period built into middle block
 - Middle Block tied to lunches every day there will be a 40 minute period of time to provide opportunities for focused intervention and enrichment for students tied to their middle block period.
 - This time will be used to re-teach skills that have not been mastered as well as provide enrichment opportunities for students who have mastered unit outcomes.
 - Could also be used for school-wide focus as well such as SSR, writing workshop, SHARE, etc.
 - Response to Intervention is the core of our instructional practice
- Aligned curriculum that meets the readiness levels of our students.
- Differentiated units of study. One ending point, multiple routes.
- Focus on quality and every student gets assigned work that is a little too hard.
- Students are active participants in the learning process and take ownership of their learning.
- Opportunity for more in-depth study and focus on collaborative learning
- Chances for teacher to meet with groups of students for focus lessons and review of progress toward unit goals.
- Opportunities for extended practice with guided instruction.
- Every student is connected to a smaller team of students during advisory. Focus is on delivering the “Learning for Life” curriculum and building-wide PBS system.
- Advisory teams named after famous Patriots
- Early Release Wednesday - Common Planning /PLC's
 - PLC's meet at least 1.5 hours a month
 - Focus is looking at student work/data
 - Responding to the data by changing/continuing instruction

Uniform Policy for 2010-11

- Solid black or white polo shirts - Sweaters may be worn over the polo shirt but they must be black or white. School sweatshirts
- Black or khaki pants, must fit around the waist, no over-sized shirts or pants and no sagging or pegged legs.
- No all red or blue shoes, and only black and white shoelaces are allowed
- Shirts must be tucked in before entering all classrooms
- School sponsored shirts and sweatshirts may only be worn on Fridays
- Belts blacks or brown only