

November 4, 2020

Greetings Pinehurst Community!

As board chair, I (Dianna Crary) would like to give a Pinehurst School update on behalf of all the board members: vice chair, Mary Anne Crandall; secretary, Alison Kling; members Jackeé Randall, and Rachel Pellow.

Amidst this crazy pandemic world that we find ourselves living in, our little Pinehurst School is emerging like a butterfly from its cocoon. We, like every other school in the state, were forced to end our 2019-20 year with distance learning. Going into the summer we had no idea what the 2020-21 school year would look like. Throughout the summer Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Health Authority issued ever-evolving versions of guidelines and protocols. Many, many thanks are due to Holly Amann, our district administrator, who put in long hours attending meetings and working with numerous people to make sure Pinehurst was following the state and county mandates. And thankfully, in September, we were able to open our doors to 17 students (now 18) -- no small feat, as we are the only school in our county delivering in-person learning, due to our small size and remote location. But we are not out of the woods, as there are very strict metrics in place to keep our doors open.

The success of making it work falls on the shoulders of our wonderful staff: Holly Amann; teachers, Marla Dentino (K-3) and Hannah Kolni (4-6); instructional assistant, Desireé Elder; physical education adjunct and instructional assistant, John Elder; office assistant and instructional assistant, Shira Ramsey; custodian, Pattie Walters; and maintenance & groundskeeper, Sam Alvord. The school could not be open as it is without the hard work and team effort of each and every one of our staff members.

To keep the students and staff safe, there are strict protocols for who is allowed into the building. I was very lucky indeed, to get invited in to see how the school is running under the mandated Covid-19 guidelines. Instead of feeling impersonal and regimented, it felt very inviting. Arriving up the driveway each morning, the students are warmly greeted by Desireé who does a quick Covid assessment, checks in with the parents, then sends them on up the sidewalk. Holly greets each student at the door with a quick squirt of hand sanitizer and a smile, and into the building they go with masks on. Inside, each classroom is set up with two students per table, and between them is a plexiglass shield. The shield on the desk has created an intimate learning space for each child, corralling all of the school supplies each student needs, so that there is no sharing. In the K-3 room the individual learning spaces feel very cozy, with many types of tables and chairs so that all the students feel comfortable. In addition, the library has been turned into an extra learning space where Marla can teach the kindergarteners alone for a portion of their day. In the 4-6 classroom Hannah invited her students to individualize their plexiglass dividers with pictures and artwork. It reminded me of decorated school lockers of days gone by. The students appear happy and resilient with the new protocols and seem to have adapted to these changes with very little effort. So, kudos to all of the people who are making Pinehurst a thriving learning environment for all 18 students.

We are also very fortunate to be on the receiving end of free school lunches provided by the Ashland School District. Any child, any age, is eligible to receive a free lunch. They are available in the school parking lot between 11:30-12:00 each school day.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the Pinehurst School Foundation. Whenever there is a need, they step up to fill it for us. The Foundation has committed to raising \$28,000 to support the school's programs this year where state and federal funding fell short. Running our school effectively would not be done without their ongoing support. The fall fundraiser of Box R Beef was very successful, and the Foundation is now gearing up for a "virtual Winterfest", so keep your eyes and ears open for news about how to support our virtual fundraiser. Also, by naming the school as the charity that you would like to support for your online AmazonSmile shopping, you generate a small donation for the school with each purchase.

Thanks to a wide range of community support, our school is off to a great year. You can keep updated on all Pinehurst events throughout the year by checking out our website, www.pinehurst.k12.or.us, or by following the Pinehurst School Foundation Facebook page.

Sincerely,

Dianna Crary, Board Chair