

PUESD NEWSLETTER

from the Desk of John Raven



A Great Start to the Year!

The new school year is off to a wonderful start! Our students have settled into their classrooms, our teachers are engaging them with creative lessons, and our schools are buzzing with energy. I've been impressed with the positive spirit across the district, from the students eager to learn, to staff going above and beyond, to parents showing their ongoing support. Together, we are creating a safe, welcoming, and thriving environment for all children.



Welcome Back!!

I want to take a moment to introduce myself as your new Superintendent. My name is John Raven, and I am honored to serve the students, families, and staff of the Pioneer Union Elementary School District. I previously spent 18 years in Pioneer as a parent, teacher, and administrator before stepping away for a time.

Now, returning as Superintendent truly feels like coming home, and I am excited to continue serving the community that means so much to me. If you see me on campus, please don't hesitate to say hello. I look forward to reconnecting and meeting many of you.

Good News for Taxpayers!

On August 12, Pioneer UESD refinanced one of its older school bonds, which will save local taxpayers more than \$455,000 over time.

Local voters approved general obligations bond measures for the District in November 2005 and November 2016, providing funds for the acquisition, construction, renovation, and modernization of school buildings and grounds throughout the District.

Following careful review and analysis, the District determined that one series of bonds issued in 2015 could be refunded to generate taxpayer savings, similar to how families refinance a home loan to save money. The District Board authorized the refinancing at their July 23rd meeting.

The average interest rate on the prior bonds was 5.03%, and the District successfully locked in a true interest cost of 4.00%. This reduction in borrowing costs will save property owners \$459,763 over time, about \$40,000 more than we first expected.

"We rely greatly on our local community to support and fund our schools, so it was wonderful to be able to give back in the form of savings to our taxpayers," said Superintendent John Raven.

LOOKING AHEAD



As we move forward, I look forward to meeting more families, and hearing your thoughts on how we can continue to grow together as a district. I believe our strength lies in our partnership with you, and I am committed to open communication and collaboration.

Thank you for your continued support of Pioneer UESD. Together, we will ensure this is a successful year for every student!

Empowering Educators & Families to Support Every Student

We're excited to share some recent accomplishments from the Special Education & Intervention Department, highlighting our dedication to the safety and well-being of all our students.

Training Teachers to Respond with Calm & Care

We have recently completed de-escalation training for all teachers at our three school sites. This training provides our teachers with effective, evidence-based strategies to calmly and safely address challenging situations with students. By focusing on identifying and responding to early signs of distress, our staff can help prevent situations from escalating. This training not only equips our educators with practical tools, but also reinforces our District's commitment to creating a more secure and supportive classroom environment where every child feels safe and understood.

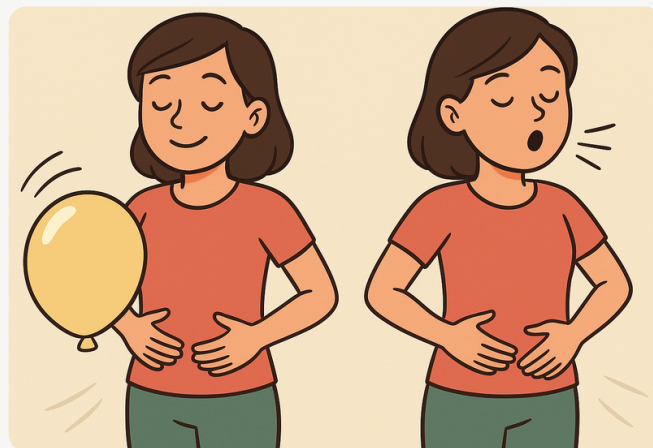
The core principles of de-escalation are just as useful at home. One simple strategy, mindful breathing, is the process of focusing your attention on your breathing and nothing else. You concentrate on the process of your breath moving in and out of your body. The results of mindfulness are stress relief, decreased blood pressure, and improved sleep.

Partnering for Safety: Keeping Students Safe at the Bus Stop

Student safety is a top priority at Pioneer. Last week, the Transportation Department teamed up with the Hanford Police Department to promote safe driving near bus stops. On Tuesday & Thursday, two School Resource Officers rode along on bus routes while police monitored several bus stops.



During these days, eight citations were issued to drivers who failed to stop properly for school buses, an important reminder to stay alert and follow traffic laws around school zones. We appreciate this collaboration and the ongoing efforts to keep our students safe every day.



Try This at Home: Balloon Breathing for Calm & Focus

Inhale fully. Place your hands on your belly and breathe in slowly through your nose. Feel your belly fill up as if it's filled with a giant balloon. Exhale fully. Open your mouth and blow all of the air out of your body. Let your belly get flat like an empty balloon.

Repeat five times.

Bringing the Science of Reading to Life at Pioneer

Pioneer School District has been leading the way in Kings County in bringing the science of reading to its elementary teachers. The term "the science of reading" is commonly used these days as if it were a new teaching method. In reality, the science of reading is a large body of scientific research that has been compiled over many, many years. It analyzes the methods that best help children learn to read, from the earliest steps in spoken language to being able to successfully decode unfamiliar words. The National Reading Panel breaks it down into five essential elements of reading: comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, phonics, and phonemic awareness. For the past three years, Pioneer District has been providing professional learning and targeted resources to the elementary teachers to support students in the best way to learn the skills needed to be excellent readers.

This Month in Pictures!



Pioneer Elementary Student Council elections have begun! Giving our students an opportunity to develop leadership skills & engage in school decision-making.



Frontier Elementary PTC held its annual "Treats with your Tribe" event. The staff enjoyed serving the Frontier families donuts and coffee/milk!



Pioneer Middle students step into the past through immersive experiences like artifact digs at Burris Park, where they uncover history firsthand rather than just reading about it.



Preschool got a great lesson about the school bus from the transportation department. They even got to sit on the inside and learn about how to get off the bus through the side door.

Pioneer Elementary Kicks Off the Year with Energy and Unity

The school year at Pioneer Elementary is off to a fantastic start! Back-to-School Night was a great success, bringing families together to connect with teachers & staff as the year launched. Student Council elections soon followed, allowing students to develop leadership skills and engage in school decision-making. The school also launched its Panther Pals and Kindness Crew programs, which foster peer connections, develop leadership skills, promote a positive school culture, & create student ambassadors on campus. The 4th & 5th-grade intramural sports program has also kicked off, with soccer leading the way as the first sport of the season. Looking ahead, the school community is eager to welcome everyone to the annual Fall Festival on November 8th from 1:00–4:00 p.m. This event is always a highlight of the year & is highly anticipated. Finally, the students have spoken! This year's school theme is sports, & the motto, chosen by the student body, is "Together We Win." The spirit of teamwork & unity will be carried throughout the year in all activities at Pioneer Elementary.

Frontier Elementary: Building Community and Kindness

Frontier is off to a great start with students, families, and staff coming together to build a caring community. Ms. Cecily, our school counselor, led the Kindness Club in a heartfelt tribute honoring the victims and survivors of 9/11. The Frontier PTC kicked off the year with its annual "Treats with Your Tribe" event on September 6th, where staff served donuts & coffee to families. The school recently completed a successful cookie dough fundraiser & is gearing up for a Chipotle fundraiser on October 15th. Thanks to everyone for supporting these efforts & helping make this a year so positive & full of spirit!

Momentum Building at Pioneer Middle School

Pioneer Middle students are engaging enthusiastically in their academics, while our athletic teams are excelling, our flag football team remains undefeated, and volleyball and cross country are showing great teamwork and determination. Beyond academics and sports, CJSF is in full swing. The first Rewards Day was celebrated on September 12th, and student leadership is thriving with ASB elections and our new ASB President, Jordan Ordonez. We recently enjoyed a fun Family Night at Raising Cane's on October 2nd and are looking forward to the first dance on October 24th. Thanks to our students, families, and staff for making this a strong start as we build momentum for an amazing year!

Latchkey: A Fun-Filled Summer & Strong Start to Fall

Latchkey had a fantastic summer full of fun activities & field trips like movies, bowling, & John's Incredible Pizza, all guided by weekly themes that kept things exciting. The summer wrapped up with a pizza party and a slideshow celebrating great memories. Before the school year started, staff completed important annual training during a two-day closure, a new schedule that was well received. Fall enrollment is up with a growing waitlist, showing strong community interest. Staff have been creative with indoor activities during hot or rainy days & look forward to cooler weather for outdoor play. On the first full day of school, August 19th, Latchkey welcomed 43 students, many new to full-day care, & everyone had a great time. The team is excited for the holiday season and upcoming special activities!

