Pullman School District Building and Grounds Maintenance

Joe Thornton, Executive Director of Operations

The Pullman School District Maintenance Department is the group that does all the building maintenance and grounds work for the school district. This department is responsible for maintaining approximately 650,00 sq. ft. of building space (spread out over 10 sites) and approximately 60 acres of outdoor grounds. The team is responsible for all building maintenance needs from plumbing to HVAC, electrical, painting and all general building repair needs. The grounds responsibilities include parking lot snow removal, athletic field prep, landscaping and turf management. Additionally, this team is responsible for getting supplies delivered to the school for the Nutrition Services Department that feeds students breakfast and lunch. For the most part, the work the team does is accomplished in-house, but a few situations where building codes or specialized equipment requires an outside contractor be hired to do the work. Some examples of this are some electrical work, fire sprinkler systems, elevator repairs and some specialized HVAC repair. A separate team of employees are the building custodians that are responsible for the daily cleaning of all the schools, sidewalk snow removal and the huge task of summer deep cleaning of schools and floor refinishing.

Athletic Field Prep and Turf Management: Athletic fields need to be prepped at PHS and LMS for athletic contests such as football, soccer, baseball and softball. In addition, facilities for tennis and track and field are maintained. Depending on the season and weather conditions, the time and effort needed to prepare a field for an athletic event can be substantial. Especially for spring sports such as baseball and softball, the time necessary for field prep is challenging. Spring on the Palouse can bring problems. It is not uncommon for a playfield to be mud one week and then hard as a rock the next--and then maybe even snow falls in April as we are trying to host a game. Maintaining turf areas, both athletic fields and playground is very time consuming. Recent water restriction prevents the district from irrigating fields in the summer as much as we used to be able to irrigate. This is a good thing, from both a cost saving perspective and from a conserving the aquafer perspective. As a result, in July, August and September some fields may give the appearance that the grass is "dead." The turf is not dead, but just dormant and will begin to grow again as soon as fall moisture arrives. However, it is necessary for player safety to begin to irrigate football and soccer fields in August to prepare a softer playing surface for those sports.

The only real downside to the lack of summer irrigation is the appearance of the fields, but this regime also increases invasive weeds that will take advantage of the dry turf. Another particular challenge for the maintenance and grounds crew is staying on top of weeding invasive plants that get established in landscape beds. The school district is very restricted as to what, when and where weed control chemicals can be applied on school district property. As a result, the use of herbicides is pretty limited. Weeds in landscaping beds can become a problem and need to be mechanically (hand) weeded. Rarely does staff have the time to stay on top of all the weeding that needs to get done and sometimes this gets bumped to the summer when some extra summer help is hired. These summer crews will often spend the first couple of weeks on the job pulling weeds.

Summer Maintenance Projects: Every spring, building principals compile a list of summer projects that they would like to have done in the schools. These are projects that, because of the complexity of the project, cannot get done while school is in session. It may be some remodeling that needs to be done in a classroom or office, repair/rebuilding of a play structure or extensive repair to HVAC components. These projects are the focus of the summer for the maintenance crew, along with the continual work that needs to be done with landscaping and turf. Summer is also the time of year that each individual building custodial crew can get into classrooms and deep clean carpet, clean furniture, refinish hallway floors and refinish hardwood gym floors. The 10 weeks of summer is a critical period for the maintenance and custodial crews to accomplish the jobs that cannot get done while school is in session.

Summer Life and Safety Inspections: Each summer, life and safety systems are tested by a contractor, as required by law, to make certain these systems are in good operating condition and will operate properly when needed. These systems include fire alarm systems, smoke detectors and fire suppression systems (fire sprinklers).

The Pullman community has been extremely supportive of the funding needed to build quality spaces for teaching and learning. We are lucky that the average age of our schools is relatively young compared to many other districts. Even with that fact, we still have some aging spaces in the district. The old part of Pioneer Center was built in the 1930s. The original section of Sunnyside School was built in the 1960s. Jefferson and Franklin Schools are approaching 30 years old. The Pullman School District continues to make maintaining quality schools a priority by providing the staff and funding necessary for building upkeep. Both the maintenance and the custodial crews do a wonderful job of maintaining and cleaning the quality school buildings in the Pullman School District.



The Behavior Battle: Solutions in Schools

Evan Hecker, Kamiak Elementary Principal

Effective behavior management is essential for creating a positive learning environment that promotes the academic and social-emotional growth of students. By employing a combination of solutions, schools can address behavior issues more effectively and support the success of all students. Behavior issues in the classroom can have a detrimental effect on the learning environment. It is crucial to address these issues effectively to create a conducive learning community for all students.

To effectively manage behavior in schools, it is essential to use clear and consistent strategies throughout the day. The National Association of School Psychologists emphasizes the need for ongoing evaluation and revision of these strategies. Effective behavior management involves communication and collaboration between teachers, counselors, and other support staff to ensure a coordinated approach.

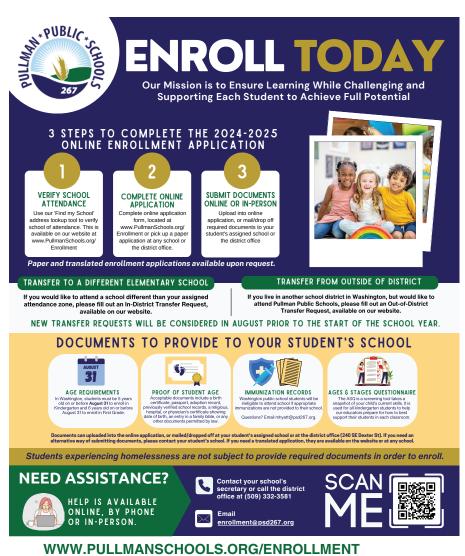
Our district schools all track and share various aspects of student behavior, academics, and personal development using tracking tools. This allows collaborative teams to progress monitor student behavior through various tiers of responses for different problem areas. Collecting valuable data and insights helps to inform our behavior management strategies.

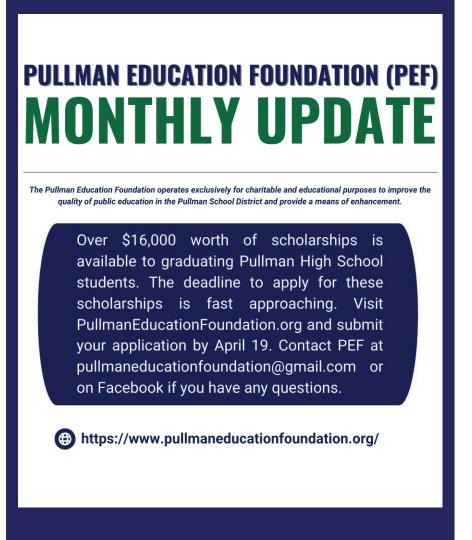
Rather than attempting to address behavior issues for all students simultaneously, we find it beneficial to identify a small percentage of students as a focus group. By concentrating efforts on a select group, our educators can provide targeted support and interventions more effectively. For example, at Kamiak Elementary, we have implemented a Safe Recess Academy to improve our student behavior on the playground. We found that our discipline referral data shows that some of our students have the most room to grow when it comes to physical contact on the playground. The program's goals are to help students form new habits, learn interpersonal skills, practice problem-solving, role-play interactions, and teach them how to play fair.

Understanding the underlying reasons for student behavior is crucial in addressing behavior issues. Instead of solely focusing on the behavior itself, we engage in logical and unemotional discussions to identify the root causes. By determining the function of behavior, we can design appropriate interventions.

While there are numerous resources available for behavioral intervention, we find it important to keep the list of strategies manageable and accessible. We identify a reasonable number of effective strategies and ensure they are readily available when needed. Streamlining strategies can enhance consistency in their implementation.

Behavior management in schools requires a multi-faceted approach. It is important to implement practices such as focusing on a select group of students, identifying the function of behavior, streamlining strategies, and conducting efficient meetings. By combining these approaches, our educators can create an environment conducive to positive behavior and enhanced learning outcomes.





The Pullman School District Board of Directors and the Pullman School District shall provide equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities programs without regard to race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation (including gender expression or identity), marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, participation in the Boy Scouts of America or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The district will provide equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. District programs will be free from sexual harassment.

The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Civil Rights Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent, (509) 332-3144, and Section 504 Coordinator, Director of Special Services, (509) 332-3144. 240 SE Dexter Street, Pullman, WA 99163. Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations in the application process by contacting the Personnel Coordinator at (509) 332-3584.

Arron Carter
Director, District 1
acarter@psd267.org

Lisa Waananen Jones Director, District 2 lwaananenjones@psd267.org

Craig Nelson
Director, District 3
cnelson@psd267.org

Nathan Roberts Director, District 4 nroberts@psd267.org

Amanda Tanner Director, District 5 atanner@psd267.org