

Pullman Public Schools Face Unprecedented Financial Challenges

Nathan Roberts, Board Director District 4

Pullman Public Schools—like many districts across the country—is facing an unprecedented period of financial uncertainty over the next several years. A mix of federal policy changes, state budget pressures, and long-term economic and demographic trends have created serious challenges for our school district.

At the federal level, efforts to reduce the role of the U.S. Department of Education and cut back on key initiatives are impacting public schools nationwide. While federal funding represents only about 5%—or \$2.1 million—of Pullman School district’s overall budget, it supports critical programs for disadvantaged students, special education, and school nutrition. Ongoing political developments federally—including pushes for school choice, charter school expansion, and changes to curriculum standards and programs—have increased the risk of sudden funding reductions or loss of these vital resources that support our students.

These federal fiscal challenges are aggravated locally by rising operational costs and persistent deficiencies in legislated state funding. Across Washington, school districts are contending with a projected \$1 billion annual shortfall in public education funding. This shortfall affects essential areas in our school district such as special education, student transportation, and basic operational costs.

Inflation has only worsened the situation: between the 2019-2020 and 2022-2023 school years, statewide food costs rose by 36%, insurance by 48%, and natural gas by a staggering 76%. Meanwhile, the share of Washington’s state budget allocated to education has dropped from nearly 50% in 2017–2019 to just 44% in the current 2023–2025 cycle. These all cause a direct increase in pressure on our school district budget.

Demographic trends are also contributing to the financial strain. Nationwide trends of declining birth rates and decreasing student enrollment has put further strain on school funding locally. Between 2019-2020 and 2024 -2025 school years, Pullman School District enrollment headcount fell from 2,917 to 2,745. While Pullman is preparing to graduate its largest district cohort of seniors in 2025, the incoming Freshman class is projected to be 60 students smaller, so overall a net loss of students as classes become smaller.

This demographic shift brings additional challenges, particularly as student needs-reflected in various programs-continue to grow. In some cases, this growth has led to increased demand for resources without a matching increase in funding.

In response to these pressures, the Pullman School Board and Superintendent have been actively engaging with the community for input on how to approach necessary budget reductions. Through public listening sessions, presentations to parent groups and community organizations, and conversations with staff across all our district buildings, we are working to ensure that future decisions reflect our community’s values and priorities—including a strong commitment to sustainability. We are also taking proactive steps to optimize staffing structures by exploring multi-role positions, reducing administrative overhead where feasible, and implementing cost cutting measures. These efforts are part of our commitment to responsible fiscal governance and long-term sustainability during this challenging time.

Looking ahead, our district remains deeply committed to the Pullman Promise and the core cultural beliefs that define our schools. Though challenges will continue, Pullman Public Schools are determined to face them with transparency, a commitment to our values and a focus on educational excellence.

The opinions expressed in Board Reports are those of individual school board members and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the board as a whole or of Pullman Public Schools.



National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT)

??? Did you know? ???

We have 18 National Board Certified Teachers in our District!

 <p>Kate Agnew Health & Fitness</p>	 <p>Kevin Agnew Career Choices/ Worksite Learning</p>	 <p>Aubrey Anderson Gateway to Technology Teacher</p>	 <p>Jill Bickelhaupt Family & Consumer Sciences/CTE Director</p>	 <p>Amy Caessens Fitness, Movement, Sport & Health</p>	 <p>Jacqueline Carlson Math Teacher</p>	 <p>Katharine Covill Orchestra</p>	 <p>Raeiah Currier English</p>	 <p>Willma Fields Kindergarten</p>
 <p>Declan Keogh History and Psychology</p>	 <p>Heather Lohrmeyer Elementary Art/STEM</p>	 <p>NEW Stephanie Newman 1st Grade</p>	 <p>NEW Shelley Ogenorth Third Grade</p>	 <p>Sandra Casanova Second Grade</p>	 <p>Elizabeth Powell Math</p>	 <p>Holly Steele Third Grade</p>	 <p>Joni Stevens Curriculum/Assessment & HiCap Teacher Snocialist</p>	 <p>Doug Winchell Multimedia, Photography, and Broadcasting</p>

National Board Certification is a voluntary and rigorous process that recognizes outstanding teaching practices. Educators who earn this certification—National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs)—have demonstrated that they meet the high standards set by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. In Washington State, it is regarded as the highest level of professional certification for teachers, reflecting a deep commitment to student success and lifelong learning. Pullman School District is proud to have **18 National Board Certified Teachers**, exemplifying educational excellence and dedication to our students and community.

To the Children of Lincoln Middle School and the Adults Who Love Them

Tammy Sewell, Lincoln Middle School Assistant Principal

So many faces. When I think about my 38 years in education, I see faces. Of kids whose names I remember and those that I don't. Faces of their family members. Kid faces in adult bodies I don't recognize. One day a 20 something man came up to me, dressed in a black duster, red curly hair and beard well grown, adorned with chains and tats and piercings. "Remember me, Mrs. Sewell? It's Adam." I couldn't see Adam in the man in front of me, but I knew him. The funny and somewhat chaotic fourth grader he had been. I still put the ornament that he gave me on my tree every year. His face had changed but the story of him and who he was lived on. I wonder if kids know that. That they become part of who educators are, part of our collective memory, embedded in the life we've lived.

Ten years ago I switched from elementary to middle school. I don't know if you realize this, but middle school is notorious. When you say you work at a middle school, the most common response is, "You are brave." (head shaken slowly) "I could never work in a middle school!" There are reasons for that of course. Their raging hormones (the students, not the adults), the half adult/half child conundrum, and the self esteem struggles are all very real. This week when I was in the library at lunch, an 8th grader who is at least 6'1" was running after a student who had stolen his shoe. The kid he was chasing was maybe 4'10". They were snickering and laughing and having a great time until I put a stop to their game. Both boys were acting like elementary kids at this moment but one of them looked 17! That's par for the course at the middle level.

What people don't know is that middle school is also amazing. If you want to feel needed, this is the place to be. Kids come in every day in a spectrum of excited, exhausted, grumpy and focused, depending on the kid and the day. They lose their Chromebooks and forget their locker combinations and always seem to be in need of a pencil. They are either perpetually tired from staying up late, or

so excited that they can't quit talking. The feelings are big and the reactions all over the place. There is never a dull moment.

One day this week, a student who has been having a hard time totally ignored me and the directions I gave him at lunch. Underneath his budding mustache was a tightly clenched jaw. He gave me a glare as he walked by. I radioed Mr. Grow since the student was headed his way. Five minutes later this young man was back. He looked down at the ground, then looked me in the eyes and said he was sorry. The eye glare was gone and in its place was vulnerability. We had an honest conversation at that moment that was very meaningful, all because Cameron Grow decided to teach that student how to deal with a mistake.

That's the beauty of this place, the way adults in our building care about the mass of young humanity that we deal with daily. When you walk in the door in the morning, you find teachers all over the building talking to kids. While they are in the hall monitoring or setting up their classrooms, children are gathering to talk to teachers who are their "safe space." We adults all make jokes about middle school, like, "I have to be crazy, I teach at a middle school!" But really, that's a badge of honor. Do kids know that we talk about them constantly? We laugh at their funny moments, worry about their struggles, celebrate their victories. I think kids would be surprised if they knew that we reminisce about them, "Do you remember when Emily accidentally shut herself into her PE locker?" We miss them, "Did you see that Bryson is graduating this year? I can't believe it." We hope for good for them. And someday, if they come up to us and say, "Hey, do you remember me?" We may not recognize them but we do remember.

In the midst of all the crazy that is America in 2025, this is a comforting constant, the fact that the 625 kids who walk in our door everyday are precious, and the 60+ staff members who work with them are committed to their growth.



KINDERGARTEN OPEN HOUSE

Come tour your school and meet your teacher!

Each PSD elementary school will be hosting an open house for children who will be 5 years old by August 31, 2025, and will be entering kindergarten in one of our schools for the 2025-2026 school year.

MAY 29 2025 4:30 pm-6:00 pm

ENROLL ONLINE!
www.pullmanschools.org/enrollment

Enrollment may be completed during the Open House Event. Paper enrollment packets, including translated, are available at each school.



ADMIT ONE

TICKET NUMBER

PHS DRAMA

Spring Productions



THE LIGHTNING THIEF
THE PERCY JACKSON MUSICAL

A Midsummer Night's Dream
-Classic Shakespeare-

May 1-3, 2025
07:00 pm Shows & Saturday 2 pm matinee
PHS Auditorium

May 15-17, 2025
07:00 pm Shows & Saturday 2 pm matinee
PHS Auditorium

ADMISSION: \$5 - STUDENTS / \$10 - ADULTS



Child Find 2024-2025

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

This screening is an opportunity to identify, locate, and evaluate children who might have a disability and to address potential concerns. This is available to children (birth through 5 years of age) residing, or living in a temporary situation, within Pullman School District's boundaries.

UPCOMING SCREENING DATES:

✓ **Friday, May 2**



All children ages 5-21 who are suspected of possibly having a disability who reside in, or are living in a temporary situation, within PSD's boundaries are entitled to child find activities. This includes all children enrolled in PSD schools, children who are being home schooled, and children enrolled in a private school located in the district (even if they reside in another district).

For more information or to **schedule an appointment**, please contact Pullman School District's Instructional Programs Office at (509) 332-3144.

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 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, compliancecoord@psd267.org, and Section 504/ADA Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent (509) 332-3144, compliancecoord@psd267.org. 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. Title IX inquiries may also be directed toward the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR): <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>. Information about the nondiscrimination and sex- based discrimination policies and grievance procedures, and how to report a concern or complaint: https://www.pullmanschools.org/families/hib-and-discrimination/discrimination_sexual_harassment.

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