

# PIRATE POST



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## Congratulations, Class of 2025!

Potential Development proudly celebrates the Class of 2025! We wish the very best of luck to our amazing graduates: Samuel, Isabella, Victor, Ian, Aiden, Cameran, Isaac, Noah, Marion, Lia, and Gage! We can't wait to watch where your journeys take you — and we look forward to sharing updates on all the incredible things you'll accomplish as PD Alumni!

## Message from the CEO



Paul Garchar, Jr.

Welcome back! As we begin a new school year, I want to extend a special welcome to our new students, families, and staff members joining our Potential Development community for the first time. We're glad to have you with us.

This year promises to be filled with exciting opportunities for growth, learning, and connection. Our enrollment continues to grow, which is a wonderful sign of trust in our schools and the quality of education we provide. With that growth, we have added new classrooms, welcomed additional staff, and made adjustments to ensure every student has the space and resources they need to succeed. I deeply appreciate the flexibility and collaboration of our staff as we navigate these changes together. We continue to actively seek long-term solutions to address our need for additional space.

We're also eager to build on the successes of last year. From academic achievements to thriving extracurricular programs—including our Esports team's playoff appearance and our first-ever track meet. Our students continue to shine in so many ways! This year, we look forward to even more opportunities for engagement and accomplishment.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support. Together, we will make this school year one of the best yet. Let's work hand in hand to create an environment where every student feels valued, inspired, and ready to reach their fullest potential. Here's to another amazing school year. Go Pirates!

## Preschool **Kim MacDonald** Preschool Program Coordinator



Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year. We're thrilled to greet our new preschool families and students and delighted to see so many familiar faces returning from last year.

This year we launch our new curriculum, Frog Street, which we believe is thoughtfully designed to meet our students' unique needs. This program will empower our staff to deliver meaningful, engaging learning experiences. We will also be introducing a new multi-purpose therapy space! Our occupational therapist and speech-language pathologist are planning a variety of activities that support sensory development, social communication, and language skills. We have so many opportunities planned for the year, all with one goal in mind: providing your children with the best possible learning experience.



## Elementary & Middle School

**Holly Hahn**  
Elementary & Middle School Program Coordinator



The staff at the Elementary/Middle school would like to offer a warm welcome to both our new and returning students! Our dedicated teachers have been thoughtfully preparing engaging learning experiences designed to foster academic growth and nurture social-emotional development.

We're happy to share updates to our facilities, including an enhanced sensory room and new equipment in the activity room featuring a rock climbing wall! We look forward to a year full of learning, growth, and memorable moments together.

## High School **Katie Petridis** High School Program Coordinator



Welcome back to PDHS for the start of the 2025-2026 school year! We look forward to reconnecting with our returning families and to welcoming new members to the Potential Development family. Get ready for a year full of discovery, development and unforgettable experiences!

Get ready to cheer on our sports teams, watch our clubs grow, and enjoy a variety of activities and opportunities throughout the year. This school year, we are proud to celebrate our largest graduating class yet—20 seniors! Our dedicated staff has been working hard to create a supportive and engaging environment for all students. Welcome to PDHS, and here's to a fantastic year ahead!





# Athletic Update

**Debbra Goshorn**

Athletic Program Coordinator



Our Potential Development athletic programs are designed to help students grow, learn, and succeed both individually and as part of a team. Each program focuses on building skills, fostering teamwork, and promoting personal pride, while encouraging participation from students of all ability levels. Sports sign-up forms will be sent home throughout the school year, and we look forward to an exciting season filled with achievements and memorable events.

- **Bowling** – Fall (5<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade) provides a fun and social atmosphere where students enjoy friendly competition while building connections with peers. Participants develop personal skills and confidence as they cheer one another on.
- **Basketball** - Winter (7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade) offers a structured and supportive environment for athletes to learn and strengthen their fundamentals, improve conditioning, and develop teamwork. Students gain valuable lessons in sportsmanship while competing with pride.
- **Pep Club** – Fall/winter (7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade) Introduces students to cheer and dance while promoting school spirit and pride. Members energize basketball games, pep rallies, and community events while gaining performance experience, teamwork, and leadership skills.
- **Track and Field** – Spring (7<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade) focuses on training athletes for success across a variety of events, with opportunities for all skill levels. Athletes learn perseverance, determination, and pride of their personal achievement.
- **Esports** – Fall/winter (9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade) The official season begins on November 10th, with practices starting in early October. Players will compete in organized team-based video gaming, both online and potentially in front of live audiences.



## Interact Club

The Interact Club at Potential Development High School is dedicated to making a positive impact through community service. Members participate in a variety of initiatives and partner with organizations such as Angels for Animals, the Community Kitchen, and the Youngstown Community Food Center. Students in grades 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> are eligible to join. Additional details about membership and upcoming activities will be shared with families in October.



## Curriculum Update

**Laura Geilhard**  
Curriculum Director



Hello! My name is Laura Geilhard, and I serve as the Curriculum Director for preschool through 12th grade. I bring 23 years of experience teaching students with special needs in a variety of settings. I'm so happy to be part of the Potential Development team and truly enjoy collaborating with our dedicated staff and working with students across our Preschool, Elementary/Middle, and High School programs.

For the 2025–2026 school year, Potential Development is excited to introduce new curricula for students in Pre-K through 12th grade. Our preschool students will be using the Frog Street Curriculum, which features themed units filled with engaging activities in reading and math, along with a strong focus on social-emotional development.

Students in grades 1–12 will be working with the HMH Curriculum this year. Grades 1–5 will use the Into Reading program, while grades 6–12 will utilize the Into series for literature, math, science, and social studies. The Into programs integrate seamlessly with NWEA MAP Growth testing and IXL, which students began using last year. IXL is an online platform that provides targeted support in reading, math, science, and social studies. Additionally, students in grades 2–12 will use ReadTheory to strengthen their reading comprehension skills. We are looking forward to a productive year ahead!

## Communication Update

**Jodi Harmon**  
Director of Marketing & Special Events



Don't Get Lost at Sea — Stay Connected with PD! At Potential Development, we know smooth sailing comes from good communication. That's why each week, I send out our Sunday Calls and emails through the OneCall system — your treasure map to everything happening at PD! If your phone number or email changes, don't leave us adrift! Please notify the front desk right away so we can keep you on course.

And remember, PotentialDevelopment.org is your ship's compass for all things PD:

- **Parent Tab** – Resources, the academic yearly calendar, and PD Apparel
- **Calendar Tab** – A monthly chart of school activities, important dates, and extracurriculars
- **Newsletter Tab** – Access to current and past newsletters (no need to dig for buried treasure)
- **Events Tab** – Updates on our fundraising voyages and special gatherings

Plus, keep an eye on the “Latest News” ticker at the top of our website — it's like a captain's log of “what's happening now.” If you ever run into rough waters with communication, just reach out to me — I'll help you get back on course. Here's to a year full of smooth sailing, exciting adventures, and Pirate spirit! Go Pirates!

## Introducing the Pirate Parents Association (PPA)!

### Parents + Pirates = Stronger Together

As Potential Development continues to grow in academics, athletics, and extracurriculars, we're excited to launch the Pirate Parents Association (PPA). This new group combines the traditions of our PTO with the spirit of Athletic Boosters — bringing everyone together under one name. Updates about PPA meetings and volunteer opportunities will be shared through our Sunday Calls and emails, so please watch for those. If you're interested in joining or serving as an officer of the Pirate Parents Association, contact Jodi Harmon at Jodi@PotentialDevelopment.org.