Happy October!

To all our returning families, Welcome Back!

To all of our new families, Welcome to Pinewood!

My name is Alex, and my kids and I joined the Pinewood Family this past February. We had been homeschooling off and on since Covid. My oldest had been struggling any time we tried to go back to in-person school. She was behind in reading and didn’t feel supported so we kept on homeschooling.

**Then we came to Pinewood.**

From Day 1, both of my daughters felt *welcomed, wanted, and supported*. I get emotional even now when I think about that first week of school. My oldest, who loved school pre-COVID, the same kid who would break down in tears as soon as she got in the car from other schools post-COVID, now LOVED school again. My oldest is at AG Middle this year and is doing so great! *I know our transition to middle school would not be what it has been if it hadn’t been for the teachers, staff, and faculty at Pinewood Elementary.*

I think we can all agree that our world is a NUTTY place currently. And it can be stressful as a parent (or at least it is for me) to see the news coverage and reports that seem to come out on a weekly, sometimes daily basis. Amidst culture shifts and natural disasters, I want to encourage you.

**No one has more potential to influence your child than you!**

*Fun Fact #1: A parent has 936 weeks between a child’s birth and graduation.*

As a parent, we know that we are the primary influence in our child’s lives. For good or bad, you influence your children. This is a responsibility parents carry in a way that no other being on the planet will. Your influence as a parent will be permanent.

*Keep showing up. I know that is easier said than done some days, but know you have a support system here, who is cheering you on and also will sit with you on the hard days. Just don't stop showing up. Keeping being present and proactive.*

**You are not the only influence your child needs (This one was hard for me to learn)**

*Fun Fact #2: As our children grow, we have less hours in a day of influence. During the Elementary years, a parent has about 6 hours of influence in a day. Teachers during these same years have about 7-8 hours of influence in a day.*

Even the best parenting in the best family will never *alone* be enough to develop relationally and emotionally healthy children. I know that me being the only healthy adult in my children’s lives IS NOT ENOUGH. Research shows that children who have multiple *Safe & Healthy* adults in their lives are more likely to grow to be safe & healthy adults. So as a parent, it is imperative to partner with other safe and healthy adults, who can make a positive and supportive impact in our children’s lives.

I think back to my own childhood, where my great-grandmother was the primary safe adult in my life. I am so grateful that I had teachers and coaches along the way who stepped in and believed in me and showed me that other adults can be safe too.

**Two combined influences will make a greater impact than just two influences**

When two influences, *proactively* *combine efforts to influence a child*, the result is transformational.

We have the opportunity for two powerful influences to be present and active at Pinewood Elementary this school year.

1. Staff and Faculty
2. Parents and Families

My hope for this year is to bring those two influences together.

**How do we do that? PTA.**

The **Parent Teacher Association** (PTA) is a school-based organization that works to improve the educational experience for children. We are made up of parents, teachers, administrators, and community leaders who work to support the school and its students. Our goal is to raise funds, volunteer in classes, and support the school's efforts.

We have an *amazing staff and faculty team!* *And* we have *the most wonderful group of families* here at Pinewood! Both of these groups are made up of adults who care about the success and safety of our kids.

Now here is the caveat… **both of these groups are also human**.

One thing that I have learned about humans is that we all have things going on under the surface or behind the scenes that maybe no one else is aware of. We all have rough mornings even when we start off with the best of intentions. Days where we are exhausted and unsure of what to do next.

I also know that when you have nothing left to give, *a small bit of kindness and appreciation can be the fuel that gets you through the day.*

Personally, I have watched these teachers and staff “catch” my kids (and even me) on hard mornings. My hope is that we, together can have that same posture towards our teachers, staff, and each other.

**I want to invite you to link arms with our PTA and our school this year.** Not only to be a hands-on support but also to be someone who pours a little more love into our staff, so that they have a little more love to pour into our kids and families.

“Every child deserves a champion, an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be.” - Rita Pierson

With that said, we do have an immediate volunteer need.

**Book Fair is this NEXT WEEK!**

Happening *Monday, October 7th - Friday, October, 11th.*

Book Fair is not only fun and exciting for our kids and teachers, it’s also an amazing fundraiser for our school! We have some wonderful community partners who have volunteered to help us work the Book Fair register but we still need some additional hands. I have linked the sign-up genius below. If you have some free time this next week, we would greatly appreciate it if you could volunteer for a specific time slot.

[Book Fair Volunteer Sign Up HERE](https://m.signupgenius.com/#!/showSignUp/10C094FA8AE2DA6F5CE9-51452777-pinewood)

We also have a Parent Night happening on Thursday, October 10th starting at 5:30 pm. Since our Book Fair will be going on, we will be focused on literacy. The evening will be filled with fun games and even prizes! We want to invite you and your family to join us as we grow together in supporting our children’s reading endeavors!

Last but certainly not least, we are looking for parents and family members to help with various volunteering opportunities. The easiest way to get connected is to let us know how you would like to get involved. You can do that by filling out the form below! Also, if you are interested in leading any committees please plan to attend our Leadership Zoom meeting on Wednesday, October 9th at 7 pm. You can use the link below to join. We will have an ALL Team Meeting in the next few weeks so please be on the lookout for that.

[Join the 2024/25 Pinewood PTA Team](https://forms.gle/gCcLMwxHKy7WDLQ9A)

[Únase al equipo de la PTA de Pinewood 2024/25](https://forms.gle/ng26cMdc5StTz9Mt5)

[PTA Leadership Meeting Zoom Link | 10/09/24 @ 7:00 PM EST](https://us05web.zoom.us/j/81612813147?pwd=p1zbOyjaIb00ak5XUR04xqdfHdAvu8.1)

Thank you for reading our first newsletter and we are so excited to meet you and your family. This is sure to be a wonderful school and we are thankful that you are a part of our Pinewood Panther Family!

With Gratitude,

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