

Pelican Rapids Public Schools Information Letter

Pelican Rapids Public Schools are located in west central Minnesota's lake region. Pelican Rapids community is the center of over 1050 county lakes. The community benefits from excellent tourism, industry and agriculture.

The city of Pelican Rapids is home to several large employers including West Central Turkeys, Lake Region Electric Cooperative, Pelican Valley Health Center, Good Samaritan Nursing Home, Evenson's Trucking, Attachments International, and Glendale Machining. The community also has a strong and growing retail district. The 2002 reported population of Pelican Rapids was 2,431 residents. Otter Tail County ranks 8th in the state in size with 2232 square miles and 14th in population with 57,159 residents.

The Pelican Rapids Public School system is a consolidated school district serving 1,000 students from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The district employs 75 teachers, many of whom have advanced degrees. The total staff of the school district numbers 130 with 4 administrators. The staff is continually upgrading skills with active involvement in the Federal Government's "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) Program and new Minnesota academic standards. Additionally, the schools continually assess teaching competencies and participate in appropriate staff development and educational effectiveness programs.

The school facilities have been continually upgraded since 1952 when the junior high wing was completed. Seven building projects, including handicap accessibility, and a district-wide technology program which networked all rooms and buildings for audio-visual, computer, and telephone services have been completed since 1952. The community and school board continually assess the facilities to ensure student needs are met and additional needed programs can be implemented, demonstrating the communities commitment to educational excellence.

The elementary school was built in 1962 on a 34 acre site on the southern end of the town approximately one block south of the high school on the east side of Highway 59. Two building projects (the most recent in 1994) have been added to the original building since that time. Viking Elementary School is a three-section facility. Included in the building, in addition to the classrooms, are two computer labs, special education rooms, a library/media center, two music rooms, a gymnasium and a multi-purpose room. All rooms are wired for technology utilizing audio-visual, computer, and telephone services.

Viking Elementary School's curriculum emphasizes reading and mathematics. There are also excellent programs in science, social studies and language arts. Students are assigned homerooms at each grade level and move from room to room within their grade for specific subjects. Various combinations of teaching exist including cooperative learning, departmentalization, team teaching, and cross-curricular teaching.

Supplementing the classroom teachers are a special education staff consisting of: Adaptive P.E., Title I (additional help for reading and mathematics), EBD, MMMI, ESL, Hearing Impaired, Low Incident, SLD, and Speech services. The elementary school also employs physical education instructors, art and music instructors, a media center director and a gifted/talented instructor.

The junior high and senior high school facilities serve student needs with regular classrooms, science labs, computer labs, writing labs, a media center, instrumental and vocal music areas, physical education areas, vocational labs, and a fine arts performing center. The gymnasium (with its seating capacity of 1,300) and the community fitness & weight room adequately serve the largest school and community functions. A Fine Arts Auditorium with a seating capacity of 500 is available for the many school district and community fine arts performances. The most recent junior/senior high addition (weight room, music areas, and fine arts remodeling) was completed in 1985.

The high school curriculum includes a range of regular education, special education and extra-curricular offerings to meet Minnesota state requirements, the needs of the Pelican Rapids community, and to prepare students for post-secondary pursuits. Regular education offerings include courses in English, mathematics, science, and social studies, as well as agriculture, art, business, computer science, family consumer science, health, industrial technology, music (band and choir), physical education, and world languages (German and Spanish).

Extra-curricular offerings for both boys and girls include band, basketball, choir, cross-country, golf, soccer, speech, and track. In addition, girls are offered programs in cheerleading, dance team, softball, and volleyball while boys also participate in baseball, football and wrestling. Activities offered include FFA, FLA, Geography Bee, Knowledge Bowl, Math Teams, Mileage Car Competition, National Honor Society, Robotics Competition, School Musical and Dramatic Plays and Student Council.

Pelican Rapids Schools are members of the Heart O'Lakes Conference and sub-section 23A of section 6A for most Minnesota State High School League activities. The programs in academics, fine arts and athletics demonstrate their competitiveness by winning local, regional and state awards.

Although Pelican Rapids has no post-secondary facilities of its own, two technical colleges, two 2-year colleges, one private four-year college and two universities are located within 45 miles.

The community and school population includes a population of which 37% is eligible for reduced or free lunch, 25% are students of color, and 12 % are served with special education services. Students and community members are served through full-time ESL instructors and aides, chemical outreach counseling, EBD, EMH, ESL, guidance and counseling, hearing impaired, school psychologist, SLD, and speech clinicians during the regular school day and with community citizenship, language, and G.E.D. classes after school. The school and community have active diversity groups that work with the ethnic differences of the community.

To obtain a list of specific classes and graduation requirements, please contact a building principal or counselor (218.863.5910).