My school, Pine Ridge High, resembles a stereotypical brick and mortar school reminiscient of the 1950s. In fact, it moved to its current location in 1954. The exterior architecture harkens back to the mid-20th century. Also, the school is centrally located within the town of Pine Ridge and by several different streets. It is comprised of a sprawling suburban campus that occupies a fair amount of space due to its large athletic complexes and annex building. In addition, the sports program has become more important over the past several years. The athletic complexes were expanded and refurbished as recently as five years ago. In addition, the way the school looks on the outside, how it looks on the inside, and who works and attends the school there makes it a unique and special place.

Fundamentally, the inside appearance of the school is a testament to a combination of many architectural designs. Upon entering the school the most striking feature of the design is the octagonal rotunda situated just east of the cafeteria. I love this rotunda! Featuring small portraits of prominent alumni (ranging from Google Executives to Governors), this main thoroughfare serves as a reminder of the tradition and pride displayed at the school. Another common feature are the white, black, and red walls. Though the walls have been refurbished several times over the past couple decades the color scheme has not. The most interesting and storied feature of the school’s inside appearance is the E-2 intersection located at the heart of the building. Throughout school history, E-2 has been the site of rousing student speeches, student traffic jams, and memories for all.

The outside appearance of the school is also notable to the wandering eye. The first thing a person would notice about the school’s main entrance is the iconic 1950s era Pine Ridge High sign. Not changed since 1954. Just below the sign, sitting proud on a pedestal is the Chesty Lion statue. It has a shiny bronze exterior. Mixing nostalgia for a bygone era and reverence for a bright future, this statue humbles students as they walk through the main entrance every day.

What is perhaps most remarkable about Pine Ridge High is its inhabitants. Considered to be one of the most racially and socioeconomically diverse schools in the state, the school caters to a broad swath of students from all walks of life. Diversity has fueled nothing but closer bonds amongst the student body and academic and athletic achievement. Compounding the diversity of the school, for the most part, the students are heavily involved in extra curricular activities that enrich young lives and make better people. Club activities, sports practices, and debate preparation will often keep dedicated students busy and on campus long after class ends for the day. Most importantly, however, Pine Ridge employs some of the most hardworking, intelligent, and committed teachers in the country. Dedicated and caring teachers translate into smarter, more caring, and successful students of which the school has no shortage.

All in all, Pine Ridge is a phenomenal academic establishment with a variety of features that make it great. First its inside appearance and architecture serves as a reminder of tradition and pride ever so present in the hallowed halls of the school. Students who attend never lose a sense of history and understand their place in carrying on the legacy of being a Chesty Lion. Second, its outside appearance suggests a synthesis of the past and present building toward a bright future for all students. Its external layout perfectly facilitates a safe and student-friendly environment. Third, due to extensive diversity, student involvement extracurriculars, a strong emphasis on academic and athletic excellence, the school is defined by its inhabitants. It is safe to say, this is one of the greatest schools in the country and will continue to churn out productive, innovative members of society. Without a question, the school is the place to be and it’s always a great day to be a Lion.