



Port Townsend School District No. 50
Superintendent Polm's Newsletter
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Photo: High School Campus: Credit Jan Boutilier

Introduction ~ from Dr. Polm



There were many legislative changes that impact public schools. One big one is High School Assessment Graduation Requirements and another is regarding certification.

WSSDA offers the following summary: **Engrossed Substitute House Bill (ESHB) 2224** addresses state graduation requirements associated with current high school English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science (Biology End of Course) tests; and high school pathway options delineated through students' High School and Beyond Plans. The bill eliminates the science test requirement for graduation (Biology End-of-Course) for the classes of 2017-2020 and reinstates a 10th grade comprehensive science test required for graduation for the class of 2021; eliminates the Collection of Evidence option; creates new local course and pathway alternatives in these subjects starting with the class of 2018; and beginning with the class of 2020, ELA and math tests will be administered in 10th grade. In addition, the bill creates an appeals process for students in the classes of 2014–2018 who have not passed the ELA and/or mathematics tests required to graduate. On behalf of their students, school districts may appeal to OSPI for a waiver if the student has demonstrated the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the high school graduation standard, that they have the skills necessary to successfully achieve the college or career goals established in his/her high school and beyond plan, and have met all other graduation requirements. For us, this means we need to review/revise our policy again. We hope our students and families are not too confused by the constant shifting sands of high school diploma requirements.

Another change impacting certificated folks is **E2SHB 1341**, which addresses the challenges educators across the state have faced with the professional certification process. The newest option adopted in the bill is that the requirement for teachers to obtain a professional certificate has been removed and is now an option. In addition, teachers and principals may now renew their residency certificates in five-year intervals by completing 100 clock hours or 10 quarter credits. Teachers with residency certificates may still pursue professional certification through the ProTeach process or National Boards if they choose. The PESB has issued a Frequently Asked Questions document that provides more details as districts and educators sort through the requirements of the bill. The professional collaborative that was to issue recommendations for a broader review of certification and evaluation systems was vetoed by the governor, however the PESB has indicated their intent to convene a similar group of stakeholders to explore the challenges. Stay tuned!

September is Attendance Awareness Month

The Port Townsend supports September as Attendance Awareness Month. This means each school in the district will be paying special attention to recognizing excellent attendance as well as identifying students who have barriers to regular attendance. For more information on building activities, please see your building principal.

Maritime Discovery Schools ~ Director, Sarah Rubenstein

Professional Development

This summer many teachers participated in a variety of district professional development offerings to grow their teaching practice and support district initiatives and goals. Creating Challenging Learning Opportunities for Highly Capable Students, with presenters Nancy Smith and Linda Varner, helped teachers better understand strategies for working with highly capable students, as well as better understand the legal requirements of the services we offer in our district. G-Suite trainings offered teachers and secretaries a chance to learn and test out the google services as part of our google transition. Thanks to the support of WA Sea Grant teachers took part in a two day training on ArcGIS mapping software. Thanks to ESRI education the online and desktop software is freely available to our district this year, and a number of teachers are undertaking projects with students and the support of community partners such as the PUD, the County, and the Historical Society.

Our district is a recipient of a Bay Watershed Education and Training NOAA grant, Brandi Hageman is the lead teachers helping write and coordinate this grant to design and implement Ocean Acidification projects across five grade levels in our school district. This project is supported by the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee and the Port Townsend Marine Science Center.

In addition to these district offerings, many teachers and administrators, took part in additional opportunities for professional learning over the summer. Thank you to everyone who took part in a successful back to school staff learning day with a focus on health and wellness. Our community partners who attended are excited to be engaged with this important work with the district to support all of our students.

In the first month of school teachers will be selecting opportunities for project planning, project coaching, teaching labs, MDS Community Advisory Committee, Professional Learning Teacher Leadership Group, and the Curriculum Matrix Committee.

Maritime Discovery Schools Projects in Action

The first week of school ended with a successful day of experiences for students at the Wooden Boat Festival. First and second grade students built model boats, explored the festival, and toured ships. High School Juniors attended a talk by Matt Ready about his circumnavigation of the Americas, explored the festival and the ships, attended a career fair and built and paddled cardboard boats. A big thank you to Dorothy Stengel and Kelley Watson who took the lead in coordinating these activities, as well as all of the teachers, and Wooden Boat Festival staff and volunteers who helped make the day a success.

While there are too many things happening to capture them all, here are a few other highlights for the first few weeks. Skillmation worked with high school Seniors to connect them with project mentors. Fifth grade students have begun learning about Ocean Acidification with some hands on science activities understanding where carbon dioxide is produced. Ninth grade students spent a day with their Redhawk peer mentors building a strong foundation of support to launch them into high school. An impressive amount of planning and coordination from teachers and community partners went into planning so many successful activities in the first week of school

Blue Heron and High School Schedule Committee

A team of teachers and administrators from both schools met for the first time this month. The group will work collaboratively over the first semester to develop a proposal for each buildings schedule for the coming years. With Blue Heron moving to a 6-8 school next year we have an opportunity to explore new options, as well as the high school needing to evaluate how best support all students to meet the Core 24

state graduation requirements. The proposal will also align with the school district mission and strategic plan to support project based learning, encourage interdisciplinary learning, allow for enrichment, credit recovery and academic support, and provide for shared staffing. The schedule committee will continue to evaluate the needs at each level, and analyze different options to best meet those needs.

From PTHS ~ Principal, Carrie Ehrhardt

New Mentoring Experiences for PTHS Freshmen

Starting this year, thanks to our friends at Skillmation 'Mentoring Connections' of Jefferson County, freshmen students in Jennifer Kruse's Health and Careers class will have the opportunity to work with a team of 12 to 15 adult mentors from the Port Townsend community, throughout the school year. Each of our three mentor groups are made up of a variety of adults, representative of entrepreneurs, skilled professionals and retired residents. The mentors have received training from both the Skillmation program, and the high school, prior to working with our students. The mentor sessions all take place in the classroom setting on a monthly basis, with oversight provided by Mrs. Kruse. Throughout the school year, students will be working in their mentor groups to explore a variety of life-skill and work related topics, such as perseverance, effective communication, being diligent and determined in your work, recovering after a failure, etc. Research shows us that students who connect with mentors during their high school career are more likely to stay in school and graduate on time, have higher self esteem, can comfortably relate to and communicate with a wider variety of people, and can envision a positive path for their future after high school. This exciting new program begins at the end of September!

Parenting Resources

There may be a lot of different resources available for parents. One such resource that may be worth investigating is Parenting Wisely <https://www.parentingwisely.com/>. This program is published by Family Works Inc. This resource was recommended at a recent meeting of the Jefferson County Truancy Reform Committee. However, it has a lot of information and suggestions for parents.

Food Services ~ Director, Stacey Larsen

Food service is off to a great start this year. It has been a very busy September and the staff in the kitchen have been great. Working really hard to make healthy tasty food for our kids. Look for some new salads and entree items on the menu.

We have a new staff member at Grant Street this year, Tyese Woodley-please join me in welcoming her. She is a great addition to our food service team. Joanne Mackey has moved from Grant Street to cooking wonderful meals at the High School. Dan moved on from cooking food to growing food. We are also transitioning to a new Garden Coordinator at Grant Street-Farmer Molly is on to new adventures in October-she will be missed. Look for a new farmer soon.

We continue to increase our local food purchasing with Red Dog Farm, Dharma Ridge Farm, Pane D'Amore and West Brook Angus. This year we are increasing how much beef we are buying from West Brook Angus.

We will be having a fundraiser to support local food on October 3rd and Finnriver Orchard-please contact me if you would like to come and I will give you the details.

The Heron Highlights ~ Principal, Patrick Gaffney



Athletics - Football, Volleyball, and Cross Country are underway at Blue Heron. We have an improved turnout from the past few years and are excited to provide these opportunities to our students. Our first Cross Country meet is Wednesday, September 20. Football and Volleyball begin league competition on Thursday, September 21.

Grant Street Elementary had a great start to the new school year. Parking, transportation, and playground are quite different during the construction of Salish Coast Elementary on the Grant Street Elementary site. Careful planning with staff, parents, police and fire departments, Integrus Architecture, and Absher Construction facilitated the successful implementation of these changes.

http://grantstreet.ptschools.org/salish_coast_ele/construction_timeline_presentation Ann

Healy-Raymond also highlighted the importance of school attendance and the impact absences can have on academic achievement.



Art teacher Wanda LeClerc took advantage of the good September weather and worked with students in the garden to make botanical sketches. Farmer Molly Fallon also began her garden instruction classes with all Grant Street Elementary students, including preschool.

Also, Salish Coast Construction...FAQ is found at:

http://grantstreet.ptschools.org/salish_coast_ele/frequently_asked_questions

Facilities/Maintenance Services ~ Director, Brad Taylor

Over all it has been a good start to a new school year and a busy one at that. On the Maintenance front, we have completed the security camera project and we are working on adjustments to the High school parking lot lights. The door locks have been programmed and seem to be working well. Justin Gray has supervised this project while balancing with his other duties. Please welcome our new Maintenance technician, Andy Kithcart, who is a well rounded trades person who will add to the success of our department. Also, keep an eye on Shane Trammell as he continues to do a great job of sprucing up our grounds at all schools.

Operations spent their summer completing deep cleaning of each of the schools. What a huge difference there is of how the schools look the last day of school and how the schools look on the first day of school. Our custodians did a great job this year and deserve some applause.

The new elementary school is moving along nicely. So far the contractors have excavated around 15,000 yards of dirt from the site, all being relocated at a site off Cook street. The contractors have also poured 633 yards of concrete. You can now see the foundation and retaining walls of both the new commons and the gym areas.

Special Services and Assessment ~ Director, Patch Kane

Special Education –

As it is with every start of the school year things are busy for staff and students. We have new faces for the special education department as well as some staff taking on new assignments for the year. New

teaching staff for the district is Corey Smith, resource teacher at Grant Street and Kelsey Sisco, school psychologist at Blue Heron. Both have gotten off to a great start and they are getting settled in as they are into their third week of the school year. Pat Range is the Birth to 2 teacher after Kirsten Behrenfeld took the pre-school teaching role for this year. Both have had previous experience in their respective assignments and they are enjoying the opportunity to know new students and families. The department has also hired new paraeducators for this school year. New to Grant Street this year is Mandy O'Keefe, Laurie Wells, Cerise Allen-Williamson and Jessica Fredricks. Mary McKenna is supporting students at Blue Heron.

The monthly enrollment for special education was reported for September and the number of students being served in the district from birth to age 21 is 178 students. We have seven students in the birth to two program, nine students ages three to five and one hundred sixty-two students from kindergarten to age twenty-one.

Assessment Information

Testing for students who have been identified as English Language Learners (ELL) has gotten off to a tumultuous start due to software not speaking to one another. After a lot of phone conversations with OSPI and other school districts we have started to test students. OSPI sent out a survey to gain feedback from directors and examiners to get an understanding of how the snafus affected the district. It is hoped that OSPI will sort through this information and make needed corrections when implementing new changes to test taking.