

Port Townsend School District No. 50

Learning Through a Sense of Place



Superintendent Polm's Newsletter - Vol. 19-20, No. 8, January 03, 2020



Welcome Back Staff Members!

It seems unreal that we are entering the third decade of the 2000's. The world of public education has certainly evolved over the years. Information is now so readily available that it seems like another lifetime that I was using microfiche in the library at EWU working on a Master's Degree thesis. As you come back to school in this new decade, I trust you are well rested and ready for the challenges our digital native students offer. They are bright, innovative, and have a lot to offer our community (and world). Thanks for all you do! Happy New Year and welcome to 2020!

Board Meeting Summary from January 2, 2020

The Board of Directors met on Thursday, January 2 for a study session meeting. The agenda included:

- Approval of Resolution 20-01, which authorizes the superintendent to continue working on a partnership agreement for the Mountain View Commons Campus. This includes the City, County, and YMCA.
- Discussion about the PTHS Start Time Adjustment Proposal to move the start time up five (5) minutes to 8:20 am and add five (5) minutes to lunch. This will come back to the board for action on January 16. The board indicated support for the proposal during discussion.
- Approval of a Memorandum of Agreement with the University St. Gallen to offer internships for University Students in Teacher Education Programs. Two student teachers are coming to Salish Coast.
- Approval of the annual Affirmative Action Report and approval of Human Resources Director Laurie McGinnis as the Affirmative Action Compliance Officer.
- Reorganization: This means the board elects new officers. For the ensuing year, the new Board Chair is Director Jennifer James-Wilson. Serving as Vice-Chair is Director Nathanael O'Hara. Special thanks to Director Connie Welch for serving as Chair during the past two years.
- Other Positions Appointed by the Chair:
 - Legislative Representative for the next two years is Jennifer James-Wilson.
 - WIAA Representative is Doug Ross.
 - Accounts Payable is Doug Ross and Jeff Taylor
 - Committees:
 - Technology: Doug Ross and Connie Welch
 - Instructional Materials: Nathanael O'Hara and Connie Welch
 - Wellness: Doug Ross and Jennifer James-Wilson
 - Finance: Nathanael O'Hara and Jeff Taylor

The Board normally meets on the first and third Thursday of each month for their regularly scheduled study sessions and business meetings. Further, the Board at times holds special meetings on particular topics. For more information, please see: http://ptschools.org/board_supt. Also, the Board uses BoardDocs for meeting management. The website is: <https://go.boarddocs.com/wa/ptsd/Board.nsf/Public>.

Thoughts on PISA and International Test Comparisons ~ John Polm

Periodically staff members and community members may have heard me minimize the importance of standardized testing and comment on why we should not fixate on US student test scores compared to students in other countries. My position is that standardized tests are merely a dipstick on a day for individual students and one measure the larger system can use to gauge progress toward literacy and numeracy standards. The article at the link below is a recent Washington Post article on the topic. If you are interested, please give it a read.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/12/04/china-is-no-pisa-heres-why-its-test-scores-are-hard-believe/>

Human Resources ~ Laurie McGinnis

News release from the Health Care Authority
For immediate release - Dec. 10, 2019

More than 145,000 school employees enroll in benefits program during first annual open enrollment

Coverage begins Jan. 1, 2020 - OLYMPIA – During the first-ever open enrollment held Oct. 1 through Nov. 15, approximately 145,000 Washington school employees enrolled themselves and their dependents in health care and other benefits through the School Employees Benefits Board (SEBB) Program.

“This has been decades in the making,” said Health Care Authority (HCA) Director Sue Birch. “After years of studies and policy conversations, our educators—from bus drivers to teachers, superintendents to librarians—will have more uniform access to high-quality, affordable health care coverage statewide.”

Prior to the SEBB Program, each district negotiated and managed their own benefits. As a result, eligibility, cost, and coverage varied widely by district. The 2017 Legislature created the SEBB Program in [House Bill 2242](#).

Eligible employees at school districts, educational service districts with union-represented members, and charter schools have access to medical, dental, vision, life, accidental death and dismemberment, and disability benefits. For medical plans, subscribers have plan options with premiums starting at \$13 a month, and they can cover themselves and their eligible dependents for \$39 to \$348 a month.

According to preliminary open enrollment data:

- More than 98 percent of school employees enrolled in health coverage. (The 2 percent of school employees who did not enroll are automatically enrolled in benefits, so they won't be uninsured even if they forgot to enroll.)
- School employees signed up more than 184,000 dependents (spouses, state-registered domestic partners, and children) on their new plans.
- An online benefits fair received more than 21,500 visits.
- More than 10,000 school employees attended in-person benefits fairs.
- More than 137,000 employees took advantage of an online benefits advisor, ALEX, to help them decide which health plans were best for them.

For more information: Learn about SEBB Program implementation and benefits at hca.wa.gov/sebb-employee.

Media contact - Amy Blondin, Chief Communications Officer

Census 2020 ~ John Polm

Over the next couple of months we are all likely to see advertisements about the 2020 Census. The U.S. Census Bureau starts their count in earnest in the spring of 2020. Why is it important to be counted? Why is it important that everyone possible is counted? What is the impact of census results to public schools? The following link helps explain why the census matters.

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/2020census/why-2020-matters.html>.

The goal of the 2020 Census is to count everyone. It is required by Article 1, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution indicating it is to be conducted every 10 years. Many of us realize that our congressional representation is informed by the census. We can gain or lose representatives in the U. S. House of Representatives based on the count. In addition, the census informs how federal dollars flow to states and local communities. Examples include Medicaid, which is a federally funded program providing medical insurance for people who cannot afford insurance.

From a public school perspective, the number of residents in a community and the relative wealth or income of those residents, impacts the schools significantly. This count impacts federal funding for special education, classroom technology, teacher training, after school programs, school lunch assistance, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and others. In just this last year the Port Townsend School District received \$57,431 in e-rate dollars (technology) that is based on the rate of students who qualify for free and reduced meals.

Some may not know that the U.S. Census Bureau provides curriculum materials for schools. Some of our teachers are using these materials. If you would like to learn more, check out:

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis.html>.

One of the big concerns is the undercounting of children. According to the Census Bureau, undercounting happens when kids live with grandparents or temporarily with a relative, those in foster care, and children whose first language is something other than English or whose parents in the country illegally. This undercounting of children costs states significant federal dollars that could be supporting programs noted above.

The school district is working on a plan to provide access to computers on Census Day, April 1, 2020 for families to complete the census. We will have more information on this plan in the coming months.

Port Townsend School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, immigration status, national origin, age, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The district provides equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination:

Laurie McGinnis, Title IX

Shelby MacMeekin, 504 Coordinator & ADA Compliance

Amy Khile, Civil Rights Compliance