

Port Townsend School District No. 50

Learning Through a Sense of Place



Superintendent Polm's Newsletter - Vol. 19-20, No. 13, March 20, 2020

Quote for the Week

We can rationalize the failure of the past, or we can learn from them. We can complain about the troubling inadequacies of the present, or we can face them. ~Marilyn Ferguson

Announcement



I would like to announce that Shelby MacMeekin has accepted the position of Director of Special Services for the Port Townsend School District. On July 1, 2020 Shelby will begin her new role supervising Special Education and Assessment in addition to the categorical programs she has supervised. Her role will include: Special Education, Title 1, LAP, ELL, 504, Homeless, Foster Care, and Assessment.

Shelby has been a .5 Assistant Principal at Salish Coast Elementary. She has also been working as a .5 Special Program Director in charge of Title 1, ELL, Homeless, Foster Care, 504 Plans and LAP. She was instrumental in our recent successful Consolidated Program Review, and has been a strong advocate for our students who are served in special programs.

We are pleased Shelby accepted this new position. This assignment is part of a reorganization that the Board directed to take place for the 20-21 school year. She will take over the space Sandy has used this year and be working with Kate Santerre. Please congratulate Shelby!

Pulling Together ~ John Polm

As we work through the challenge of meeting the Governor's call for childcare and food service, we are experiencing first hand the concept of "Civic Capacity". This refers to the ability of community members to work together in support of a common goal. The various factors at play in Port Townsend have resulted in the school district emerging as the leader - with support from the YMCA, Hospital, Department of Emergency Management, Public Health, the City of PT, County and Port.

Thanks to the work of our wonderful staff, the school district has been able to make food accessible at schools and remote sites. We are also doing some delivery beyond those sites. Further, childcare has been launched for first responders and health care workers - and it is free to them by Governor Executive Order. *Childcare must be staffed by school employees.* At this time most of the workers are classified staff. This is our most challenging and critical area of service.

Keep in mind that Port Townsend is still not experiencing community-level transmission, and the four positive cases have presumptive out of county exposure. This means we are still in the prevention stage and the [CDC guidance](#) is clear. Handwashing, avoiding handshaking, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Even with the CDC guidance, we know there are some concerns by staff about serving in the childcare area. If you are one of those staff, please contact Laurie McGinnis for your options. I am asking, though, that we approach this as a civic responsibility and meet this increasing need in our health care community.

Board Meeting Summary from March 19, 2020

The Board of Directors met on Thursday, March 19 for a regular business meeting. This meeting included a short acknowledgement that March is Music in the Schools Month. We noted we are sad that the music students and staff could not be present for us to show our appreciation. However, please know that their musical contributions and achievements are significant. We also know that music on its own is central to the school (and human) experience. But, besides standing on its own, music education also contributes to student development of attributes or dispositions as well as academic achievement across other disciplines as noted by the National Association for Music in Education. To name a few:

- **Musical training helps develop language and reasoning:** Students who have early musical training will develop the areas of the brain related to language and reasoning. The left side of the brain is better developed with music, and songs can help imprint information on young minds.
- **A mastery of memorization:** Even when performing with sheet music, student musicians are constantly using their memory to perform. The skill of memorization can serve students well in education and beyond.
- **Students learn to improve their work:** Learning music promotes craftsmanship, and students learn to want to create good work instead of mediocre work. This desire can be applied to all subjects of study.
- **Increased coordination:** Students who practice with musical instruments can improve their hand-eye coordination. Just like playing sports, children can develop motor skills when playing music.
- **A sense of achievement:** Learning to play pieces of music on a new instrument can be a challenging, but achievable goal. Students who master even the smallest goal in music will be able to feel proud of their achievement.

The board received the following reports accepted in the consent agenda: Transportation of Students Who Live Within One Mile Per Policy 6600, Blue Heron Asset Preservation, High School ASB and Blue Heron ASB.

The board did approve policy 3432 Emergency Preparedness as well as Resolution 20-04 Suspension of Policy in Emergency. These policies enable the superintendent to take various actions to help manage district operations, employee assignments, purchases and other issues while in a state of emergency.

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>.

Education in America

In the current reality, I think it is important to stay positive. One tidbit of positivity is that we are part of the best educational system in the world. We are resilient, and will bounce back from this setback. The AASA Director, Dan Domenech, recently shared data with several infographics that I would like to share. <https://files.constantcontact.com/1c621825201/064709a9-392a-4385-b6c3-48a0ebdc1be2.pdf>. If you went through the slide deck from Dr. Domenech, you might also note that this incredible work is taking place when the US is falling in terms of child well being. According to the World Health Organization, “The U.S. came in at No. 39 on the child flourishing index, while Norway, South Korea and the Netherlands ranked in the top three respectively. Meanwhile, Somalia, Chad and the Central African Republic ranked last respectively.” (Source: [February 2020, The Hill](#)).

Salish Coast Elementary School ~ Lisa Condran

School Closure - Parents and Students Regarding Coronavirus

Dear Salish Coast School Community,

During these times, the best thing we can do is stay calm and continue to care for our students, families, ourselves, and each other. Here are some resources you might find helpful to use with your students or families.

Just for Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>

BrainPop on Coronavirus

<https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>

Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus): A Parent Resource

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

Little Free Library

During the school closure, the Little Free Libraries are helping students have books at home to read.



Billy B came back to Salish Coast on March 6th. He presented three different shows:



- Geology Rocks!
- Weather!
- Billy B Sings to Kindergarten!

There was singing, dancing, learning, and fun!

Blue Heron ~ Theresa Campbell

Blue Heron will be closed beginning March 23. We will be checking the phones, but the office will not be staffed until students and staff return from the school closure. Students and parents should contact teachers via school email for information on educational resources.

High School ~ Carrie Ehrhardt

The following national ACT and SAT dates have been postponed:

- **ACT:** April 4th has been postponed to June 13th
<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/covid-19.html>
- **SAT:** May 2nd has been postponed until further notice
<https://pages.collegeboard.org/natural-disasters>

OlyCap wants to announce that they have community resources available for struggling families including, rental assistance, energy bill assistance, nutritional needs/food delivery assistance, and services for youth. Please call 360-385-2571 for more information.

Port Townsend High School office will be closed beginning March 23. We will be checking the phones, but the office will not be staffed until students and staff return from the school closure. Students and parents should contact teachers via school email for information on educational resources.

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