

# Port Townsend School District No. 50

## Learning Through a Sense of Place



Superintendent Polm's Newsletter – Vol. 19-20, No. 15, April 17, 2020

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### Spring!

Spring is in the air! I just wanted to share a picture of a pear tree in my yard. Flowers, and pollen, abound.

What a beautiful time of the year here in Port Townsend. I do encourage you to get out and enjoy the weather as much as possible within the guidelines of physical distancing and park closures, of course.



### Information Regarding Access to Schools

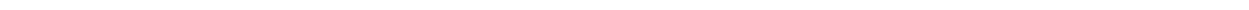
To keep students and staff healthy and safe, we will not be allowing staff or students in the buildings to retrieve *non-essential* items at this time. We will wait for the stay home order to end, or we will create another option as we get closer to the end of the school year. However, some teachers or staff may need *essential* items from the school now.

Our direction remains the same, staff members, who are not working in childcare or food service, need principal permission and a specific time frame, to enter the building. The district must maintain health checks at Salish, and sign-in and out sheets at each school. We have directed non-essential staff to stay home. However, teachers and some classified staff may need to retrieve teaching materials or tools to deliver instructional resources to students. In that event, please work with the building principal. There are ways to maintain the Governor's orders and still maintain needed safety guidelines.

Please remember physical distancing of at least six feet is required and a face covering is needed when in proximity to others within the buildings. Wash hands before and after entering, and also avoid touching surfaces where possible. The principal will work with staff and ensure custodial staff is aware of any additional areas that may need sanitizing. Of course, no one should be in the buildings if ill.

### Continuous Learning

We have officially kicked off the new continuous learning plan for Port Townsend. Some of us may feel like we are starting up a mountain, or maybe sitting on a precipice like the bear in the picture below. Sort of scared we are going to fall....



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But fear not! As with any new endeavor, there will be a steep learning curve for many of us as we implement the digital learning platform and try to determine what paper and pencil activities are most important.

One of the big ideas I would like to emphasize this coming week is to focus more on building a community with students than ramping up academic content. There is a great deal of research available regarding remote learning. One of the keys to success is to establish and nurture relationships and implement as much student choice or agency as possible. I would encourage the use of ZOOM for the former. Take advantage of ZOOM time to reestablish or create a virtual classroom culture. Allow students to reconnect with one another and with their teacher. Certainly, this time can be for questions or review, but unless all students are on the ZOOM meeting, new learning will be missed by some. A focus on this ZOOM time to build a sense of community and belongingness should help connect students, and many students will follow with the motivation to engage.

As we further develop and refine our district expectations, some teachers may need to make adjustments to what they have already been doing. I would ask everyone to be open and supportive of the district's choices for digital platforms and tools. We want a systematic approach to this challenge. I expect grade level communication and collaboration. I also expect alignment to ensure students are experiencing as common a curriculum as possible, even if the instructional delivery varies some among teachers. Sandy has been taking the lead in terms of investigating the most highly recommended professional development tools and services. Very soon we will be rolling out specific professional development support to help teachers and staff build proficiencies to meet the needs of students and families.

As of 4-16-20, a total of 125 devices have been distributed to students who need them to access digital continuous learning resources. We are still working to equip some of the students who have been difficult to reach. This single issue lends my thinking to the value of asynchronous learning. Having taught asynchronous courses and taken them. The value of having a video to refer to (and replay as needed) is a key part of this remote learning experience. I think it is safe to say we will be encouraging thinking around this idea.

As I look forward to the fall, I can imagine schools needing to be nimble. We do not know how this virus will impact schools in the fall and beyond. One way for us to be prepared is to transform the instructional pedagogy and learning expectations throughout this spring. If we end up needing to provide remote education for a while, we can be in a position to be fluid.

I continue to be impressed with the efforts of our staff. Thank you for what you do, and please take things one step at a time. The stress and anxiety people are feeling is normal. And, it will get better with time.

## Child Nutrition



The kitchen staff continue to work to make breakfast and lunch for the children in our community. Total meals served as of 4-16-20 was 9,388 total. Pictured on the right are the HS Site workers. Our bus drivers continue to deliver meals to families who cannot leave their homes as well as the pickup sites (PTHS, Cape George Fire Hall, and the Jefferson County International Airport).

As a reminder it is for youth 1-18 and if your child is sick the adult can pick it up. See the new signage at left. Thanks to the Department of Emergency Management and Dave Codier for the happy food



signage!

## Childcare Program



Pictured at left are Wendy and Debbie, two of our wonderful staff members who are providing childcare at Salish Coast. As you can see, they do have their face coverings. Thanks ladies, and thanks to all of the other staff serving our community in this program!

At this time we have 16 students registered. On 4-16-20 there were nine in attendance. If there are more families of first responders, health care workers, pharmacy workers or grocery workers, please contact the school. The time for childcare is 6:45 am until 7:15 pm, and requires registration. Please complete the [Emergency Childcare Needs Identification form](#) if you need care.

The childcare program is following guidance from the CDC, WA Department of Health, WA Department of Children, Youth, and Families, and OSPI to provide a safe care environment. Health assessments are done daily on each staff and child as they enter the program to further assure safety. The health assessment includes questions about symptoms

and a temperature check. No child or staff member will enter the program, or the school site, without a health assessment.

## Board Meeting.....Zoom

The Board of Directors met on Thursday, April 16 for a regular business meeting, and for the first time it was a virtual Zoom meeting. Thanks to Katy Gaffney for all her work setting the meeting up and ensuring we meet all the Open Meeting Act rules during the emergency. The board received the following reports accepted in the consent agenda: Financial reports, ReCyclery Partner report, bell schedules for 20-21, and personnel actions.

The board did approve a policy to allow electronic signatures as well as Resolution 20-05 Reduction in Force and 20-06 WIAA Delegation. The Reduction in Force (RIF) is needed in order to make some reductions in certificated staffing for 20-21. The reductions are not significant in terms of FTE. We are reducing staffing in each school and OCEAN by an overall total of 2.0. This is needed due to reduced levy funding and increased overall operational costs. Principals have received their allocations, and they are (or will be) working on their master schedule and assignments for 20-21 in the coming weeks.

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](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>.

**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