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Superintendent's Message by Sandra Gessner-Crabtree

Welcome Back! This phrase never felt so good to say to students than it did these last nine days. We have missed seeing our students over the past six months and have been waiting a long time to be able to greet them in person. We are grateful and honored they are back. I want to thank our community for wearing masks, social distancing, and limiting gatherings over the summer months. This sacrifice paid off and due to our low rate of infection, community spread, and positivity rates, we were able to open our schools up to those families who chose to come back with the blended model. I personally want to thank Dr. Locke who spent time with our School Board and staff in August and September reviewing our reopening plan, answering questions, and providing guidance. Our County Health Department has been an important and valued partner in this work.

We have learned a lot from our sudden transition to distance learning last spring. Families and students have been forthcoming with what worked for them and what did not. We have put a lot of thought and work into how to make Blended and Distance learning better for our families and students. We've worked hard to overcome the primary issue of student devices and connectivity. Each student has been issued a device for the school year. We know that having to search for passwords and having multiple websites to log into was very stressful. We learned that there was not a sense of consistency across the board with teachers and expectations and workloads. We know that having students on too many ZOOM meetings per day was exhausting. And we learned more than anything, how important relationships are in the learning process. Each and every relationship needs to be foremost in our work. This year I am challenging the staff to know each of their students by name, strengths, interests, and needs. Please continue to let us know how we are doing because we value and need your input. And there is much more to learn as we move forward, we do not have this mastered, yet.

And a big thank you to all of our district staff. Preparing to reopen schools has been hard work and a lot of effort. And together, the impossible became possible. I am grateful to all of our staff members who put in the extra effort to prepare for reopening and who continue to do what is needed each and every day to keep things running smoothly during the unprecedented time.



Salish Coast Elementary News by Principal Lisa Condran

Salish Coast Elementary had very successful student and family conferences on September 8th, 9th, and 10th. Families were able to come to the school with their students to meet teachers and get information about safety procedures and learning protocols. Students were also able to begin the process of taking their screening tests in reading and mathematics.

Another exciting part of the conference time was the community mask challenge. We had some amazing volunteers provide cloth masks for our students and families. The group is a Facebook group - Face Mask Challenge Port Townsend. Over 60 volunteer "masketeers", cut, sewed and sorted masks for our families. They provided enough masks for each of our students and we are so grateful. They are always grateful for donations to keep their program running.



Salish Coast Elementary was very lucky to have Coach Tara Clanton and her cheerleaders, Peyton Clanton, Brooke Hageman, Sara Heaton, Kaylee Krajewski, Cyan Adams, and Lily Morrison help make a video on the new procedures at school for health and safety. Also starring in this movie were Nurse Jennie Watkins, Librarian Denise Aedan, Secretary LaTrecia Arthur, and Secretary Chiarra Klontz. Here's a link to the movie: [Back to school at Salish Coast](#)

Salish Coast is happy for two of our long time staff members who are retiring. We appreciate their many years of service to our school and wish them happiness in their future endeavors. Bonnie Stenehjem, pictured on the left, worked for many years at both Grant Street and Salish Coast Elementaries. She taught preschool, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and most recently third grade. Carol Flickinger, pictured on the right, a paraeducator in the Eagle Reading Room, has also worked many years both at Grant Street and Salish Coast Elementaries. Carol also helped supervise many recesses and lunches. Both of these fine Salish Coast Eagles will be missed.



Blue Heron Middle School



Blue Heron began welcoming students back on the first day of school and the students and staff did a remarkable job making all of the protocols look easy. Please see their video on what to expect at school which was made by their office staff: [Blue Heron Safety Guidelines for Students](#)

Blue Heron was cutting edge in creating a plan for keeping students in cohorts in the middle school setting. This level of planning allowed students at the middle school level to have the option of attending a blended learning model.

OCEAN



The district's alternative learning experience program (ALE), OCEAN, experienced the greatest change in enrollment going into the school year. Their staff grew from two and a half teachers to four and a half. Serving alongside Daniel Molotsky and Robert Kirk this year are Molly O'Brian and MB Armstrong. The district is in the process of hiring an additional staff member to join the team.

OCEAN is a parent partnership program. The program will be providing mostly distance learning this school year with small group opportunities to be on site working with Bob Kirk.



Port Townsend High School by Carrie Ehrhardt, Principal and CTE Director

While the start of the school year has been different than in the past, teachers were excited to meet their students and get them engaged in new learning! Our first week was fully virtual for all PTHS students. Under our (optional) cohort opportunities we have had a total of 121 students sign up to come onto campus for additional support. While we prioritized our most vulnerable students (those with IEP's or at-risk) first, we



were able to find space for almost all who indicated that they wanted to come onto campus. Our second week of school, we brought in 45 students who needed some extra support to get off to a strong start for the year. By the third week of school we were fully engaged in our cohort model, which included participation from all 121 students, roughly a third of our school population. Depending on their need, students are able to attend one to four days per week.

As we work to get the school year going, we are still mindful of wanting to continue to provide an opportunity for our valued community partners to support our students and their learning. Starting in October, our Skillmation mentors will transition into Skillmation tutors! Our tutors will be coming onto campus each Wednesday for supervised tutor zooms in the PTHS library. The program is being led by teachers Jen Kruse and Logan Stegner. We are looking forward to this being a valuable opportunity for our students who need a bit of extra help on their schoolwork!

While there are many things still uncertain about the year, we are confident in the great team we have here at the high school, and throughout our district, to make this a great year of learning for our students. Here we go!

Communications

The [eLearning websites](#) are the central communication one-stop shop for families and students. Teachers are posting weekly playlists by 5pm each Friday so that families and students can access playlists over the weekend and plan out their week. From the eLearning pages families can find information for Tech Support which is available as self-help videos, as well as a support email.

Regular updates are sent out to staff and families through School Messenger Communicate. Families can receive emails, texts, and phone calls. To update your contact information contact the school office directly. To update your preferences on receiving email, text, or calls visit our [communication page for more info](#).

Updates on School Reopening and specific news regarding COVID-19 response in our schools can be found at https://ptschools.org/for_families/coronavirus.

Our website experienced some technical challenges on Wednesday, September 19, but with a great team we resolved the issue and got it back up and running. The website is an important hub of communication at this time, and we apologize for any inconvenience this caused to families and staff who were working hard at distance online learning.



Professional Development

Teachers participated in two full days of back to school professional development before the start of school. We focused on preparing for distance and blended learning, racial equity and justice, supporting LGBTQI+ students, social-emotional learning, and teacher self-care. Thanks to Mellisa O'Neil, the Mandala Center for Change, Beau Ohlgren, and Heather MacRae-Wolf, and the Benji Project for joining our training and supporting teacher professional learning.

Highly Capable Services

The highly capable services team will soon be meeting to plan for completing any assessments needed for students who were referred in the spring of 2020.

Currently identified students will begin to have meetings to review Advanced Learning Plans. Meetings will take place over Zoom and allow for a discussion of the student's needs during distance or blended learning.

All current 3rd graders will have a screening process put in place this school year, since they did not participate in the typical screening process last spring.



Maritime Discovery Schools by Director Sarah Rubenstein

On October 16, during the professional learning day, teachers will begin designing modified maritime and place-based projects to implement through blended and distance learning. In the spring a number of teachers worked with students to complete distance learning place-based projects through creating web and radio content. Teachers will have a chance to work with community partners, as well as thinking through the priority standards that are a part of a project.

Though this year is different from a typical school year, place based learning will continue to be a core part of Port Townsend Schools curriculum.



Transportation

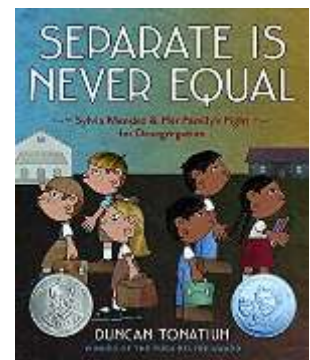
Our buses are running their regularly scheduled routes and we want you to know there is plenty of room on the buses for more students. Our bus ridership is down and that was to be expected, but there is an opportunity

for more families to use transportation at this time. Just a note: transportation is funded from the state based on ridership.



From Our District Librarian by Joy Wentzel **Hispanic Heritage Month**

Hispanic Heritage Month is an official U.S. observance. The month (September 15-October 15) is a time to learn about and recognize the "histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America," (Library of Congress). [The Library of Congress](#) has a helpful site with a tab for teachers. A month is not the only time to recognize influential people in our community and world, but it is a chance to highlight important figures in our history and remind our students that our world and country has been improved by many people who have not always made our history books. It is essential that their stories, struggles and successes are known. Introduce your students to Dolores Huerta, Cesar Chavez, Sonia Sotomayer, Roberto Clemente, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Silvia Mendez, to name a few. Your public and school libraries aim to reflect the communities we serve. Books need to be mirrors, doors and windows. Are you looking for resources to share with your students? Come visit us at the school library. We are here to help! We have oodles of wonderful things to show you, like engaging books, primary sources, and [films and documentaries to view](#).



Library Services starting Monday September 21

Speaking of visiting your school library...starting Monday September 21st, students and staff will have access to contact-less, classroom delivery of books and resources! Denise, Derec, Shannon and Joy are available to answer questions and guide students and staff on how to browse online and place holds. This video: ["How to Get Books from Our Libraries"](#) can get everyone on the same page



(haha). Please share it with your families via Google Classroom and Seesaw. Teachers will receive account details for each student and guidance on how to get support for families at home. If you would like a guest speaker (via zoom) in your classroom, let us know. Also look for the “Ask A Librarian” button for videos on how to access resources. Students that do not physically come to school are encouraged to browse online (as in the video) but choose the closest public library as their “curbside pick” location.

EdTech Assistance and Support

How do you get support these days? We are here for you in a



variety of modalities. First, visit the 24/7 Google Classroom Library for Staff. Many of your questions can be answered here through well-curated videos and material. If that does not answer your query, check out our Tech Support page on the PT Schools E-learning website.



Still have questions or issues? Drop by Joy’s daily Office Hours from 12-1 (I call it “Lunch @ UR Library 2.0”). A zoom link was shared with you during the first week of school (please share that link with your families though Google Classroom and Seesaw).

20/20/20

The New York Times had a [great article](#) this past Sunday on how we can help our students with screen time and the fallout effects of eye strain. I write about it because I believe that we can all benefit from taking regular breaks from our screens. Dr Millicent Knight, an optometrist and





spokesperson for the Global Myopia Awareness Coalition, advises us to follow the 20/20/20 Rule: “Every 20 minutes you need to look up at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.” Your peepers will thank you because they will get a break and “return to their natural position”.

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 Coordinator

Shelby MacMeekin, 504 Coordinator & ADA Compliance

Amy Khile, Civil Rights Compliance