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Superintendent's Message by Sandra Gessner-Crabtree

The Nature of Learning and Today's Learners

Last week at the Board meeting, I listened and watched thirteen members of the Salish Coast Elementary Learning Community brief our School Board on their School Improvement Plan. It was a very well choreographed presentation with multiple voices participating. And what they really wanted to do was share all they had learned about using MTSS as a framework for meeting the needs of all learners in their school. You see, for the last two years they have been engaging in professional learning about the equity mindset and the beliefs about learners a staff must embrace in order to create and sustain tiered support in reading, math, and social emotional learning. They asked the Board to engage with them in digging deeper into those mindsets and beliefs that are needed to drive the work and improve outcomes for all learners. They also shared the universal screening and progress monitoring system they are using along with their problem solving team process that allows them to adjust their practices when students are not responding to instruction. And finally they shared what their priorities would be for this academic year as they continue to refine their practice.

For those listening in, it may have seemed like a happy group of educators presenting to the Board, but for me it was a transformational moment. It was a profound learning moment because teaching others solidifies your own learning. And they taught the Board a lesson on the key elements of a multi-tiered system of support. If I had been their teacher, I could have used their lesson as evidence of mastery of content. That is the nature of learning. And it is not new. For centuries it has been called by other names such as apprenticing or interning. And deep learning occurs when the learner masters a set of skills and competencies and the teacher steps aside.

We are learning a lot about learning right now because most of the traditional conditions for traditional schooling have been taken away: seat time, face to face instruction, and a command audience. And instead we have limited in-person learning or no in-person learning, ZOOM classes, and students who may or may not show up and even if they do, they may not turn on their screen to be seen. And suddenly parents are playing a whole new role or parents are struggling themselves and cannot play a role at all.



Even prior to COVID-19, the paradigm of teaching this media first generation was changing. Because this is my thirty-third year in public education, I contend that the idea of the teacher as “Sage on the Stage” is over (except at the university level.) I’m not even sure that the notion of the teacher as “Guide on the Side” is as relevant today except for some content areas. But I am sure that now more than ever teachers are “Facilitators of Meaning Making” as they work with students. The reasons for this progression over time is twofold: first, the teacher is no longer the keeper of the content. Content knowledge is available at the touch of a computer keyboard button. So, students aren’t going to arrive at the schoolhouse anticipating that teachers will impart their knowledge to them. They have access to a lot of information and misinformation whenever they want it. The other contributing factor is that the focus of our culture is very individualistic and we in public schools are charged with meeting the needs of all learners, not just the ones that come ready or the ones that are easy to teach. And even though they are the media first generation, it does not mean that they have the skills to navigate their own learning. Therefore, what they are in need of is someone to help them unpack the meaning of the content and connect to the content in relevant ways. How to manage the barrage of information and misinformation that they are exposed to daily. Along with learning to read, write and gain mathematical understanding, they need us to help them acquire the skills to be organized, to be digitally competent and literate with complex text, to be able to reason and think critically and to solve complex problems and be able to communicate and collaborate with others as they work.

As a reminder, here are the four learning goals provide the foundation for the development of all academic learning standards in Washington state:

- Read with comprehension, write effectively, and communicate successfully in a variety of ways and settings and with a variety of audiences;
- Know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics; social, physical, and life sciences; civics and history, including different cultures and participation in representative government; geography; arts; and health and fitness;
- Think analytically, logically, and creatively, and to integrate technology literacy and fluency as well as different experiences and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems; and
- Understand the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.



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And here are the Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs for Port Townsend School District:



Motto
Learning through a sense of place.

Our Vision-
The future we seek to create

We create and enable the culture, competence and conditions to ensure each student is prepared for meaningful work and engaged citizenship in our diverse and rapidly changing world.

Our Mission-
Our Purpose

Through community focused maritime place-based projects, students develop effective thinking, effective action, and effective relationships. As a result, our students demonstrate meaningful accomplishments as engaged citizens.

Core Beliefs:

- *Learning is embedded in authentic activities and projects*
- *Learning is connected day-to-day and year-to-year*
- *Our maritime community, in all its facets, provides rich resources for place-based learning*
- *Empowered learners own their learning*
- *Meaningful relationships develop while learning*
- *Innovation impacts real community needs*

So, when you are thinking about priority standards and how you are going to help the learner access the most important enduring learning for your grade level and content, think also about the skills that support that learning and how the learner can master those skills in order to gain capacity as a manager of their own learning. What are the essential skills the learner needs to master and what evidence do you need to observe that they have mastered those skills? How can we let this drive the learning process this year?

Salish Coast Elementary News by Principal Lisa Condran



Congratulations to Carol!

Carol Flickinger has been a paraeducator in Port Townsend Schools for 31 years.

She has worked for many years in the Eagle Reading Room and also supervised many lunches and recesses.

She retired on September 30th, 2020 and enjoyed a cake with our staff members right after our first fire drill on our new playfield.



Salish Coast Elementary will have an expansion of the bike line that is on Discovery Road. To read more about this City of Port Townsend project:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fe9fe9024a2249119ebef011b536e84a>



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Salish Coast Elementary recently won the people's choice award at the Polished Apple Ceremony for its design. To read more about the polished apple award program, visit:

https://www.a4le.org/A4LE/Regions/Pacific_Northwest/Pacific_Northwest/Awards_Scholarships/Pacific_Northwest/Awards_Scholarships/Awards_Scholarships.aspx?hkey=c4effc8a-896c-4960-a01f-efb105ad9f56

Blue Heron Middle School News



Principal Theresa Campbell will be back in the building on Monday, October 19th! Welcome back, Theresa!

A BIG Thank You to Patrick Gaffney for being the primary administrator while Theresa was gone. Thank you also to Shelby MacMeekin, Director of Special Services, and Sarah Rubenstein, Director of Maritime Discovery Schools, for also supporting the building. And to Carrie Ehrhardt who was responsible for schedule building support.

OCEAN News

OCEAN
academic



welcomes the addition of one more staff member for this year Eric Ode. Welcome, Eric! We are glad you are here!





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

Empire Mock Trial

Nine members of the Port Townsend High School Mock Trial Team are arguing an online case at the national Empire Chicago @Home tournament versus schools from all over the US, South Korea, UK, and Canada. The team will be scrimmaging against four other schools including American Heritage Prep School, Ft. Lauderdale, and The Math, Civics, Science High School (MCSHS), Philadelphia. "Mock Trial remains a valuable and important part of student activities at PTHS, as students learn to structure arguments, present those oral arguments to professionals, think on their feet, and work as a team," said team Coach Chris Pierson. The case, State v Wilder, is a criminal robbery trial with confessions and reversals on confessions; students are struggling with evidentiary issues and the ethics of United States "Three Strikes" laws leading to lifetime sentences. The Washington State case is about whether a person can be held criminally liable for a speech act that creates a "clear and present danger" of "imminent lawless action" and is coming out in October.

Skillmation Tutor Training

The high school will be offering tutoring to interested students on Wednesday mornings from 9:00 am - noon, each week. About 10 of our dedicated Skillmation volunteers attended a Zoom training with program supervising teachers Jennifer Kruse and Logan Stegner, along with an assist from our district librarian, Joy Wentzel. Our Skillmation tutors have a diverse academic background and will be supporting students in every content area and skill level!



Communications

Survey Season is here!



There will be three surveys we will be asking our families to respond to this month:

1. Request to Change Learning Model
2. Feedback on Current Learning Models: Strengths and Needs
3. Superintendent Search Survey

Professional Development

Friday, October 16th was a non-student day and a professional learning day for certificated staff. All staff engaged in professional development on racial equity and place-based learning during the morning and then staff participated in differentiated content per school program. OCEAN trained on Student Learning Plans, Blue Heron worked on playlist refinement, Salish Coast Elementary trained with English Language Arts curriculum trainers, and Port Townsend High School engaged in understanding the student user experience.



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.



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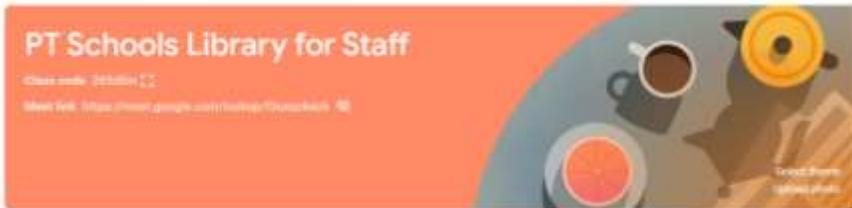
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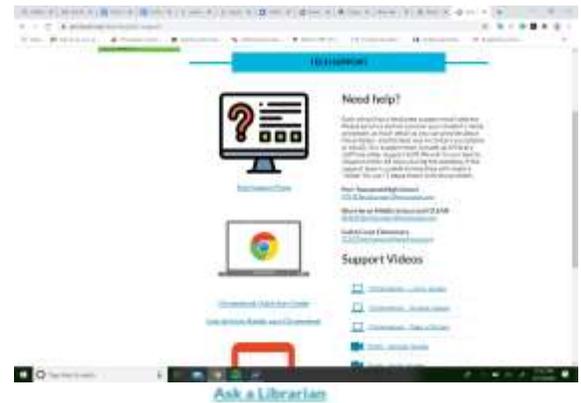


How do you get support these days? We are here for you in a variety of modalities.

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).



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



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