
[Leer en español. Haga clic aquí.](#)



Superintendent's Message by Sandra Gessner-Crabtree

Have you seen the movie Groundhog Day with Bill Murray? I've heard many people refer to each day during COVID-19 feeling like a repeat of the day before. In the movie, the main character does experience the same day over and over and over again. But what changes is his reaction to what happens to him during that day. He learns that when he reacts differently or changes his behavior, then the outcomes are different. Ultimately, he changes quite a bit and good things begin to happen until...wait, I won't give it away for you.

It is hard to imagine that it has almost been a year since schools across our state were asked to close due to COVID-19. And in many ways, many school days feel very repetitive for our students and staff during this time, but just like Bill Murray's character, we have learned a lot and changed our behavior in order to get different outcomes. We certainly changed our collective behavior to reopen schools last September. It is no small thing that when we learned we could open up if we followed the Health and Safety Guidelines, we all committed to following them so we could reopen. And then we learned that they worked and that schools were actually very safe places for students and staff to be. And as the epidemiologists learned more about the virus and how it spreads, they were able to provide better guidance regarding the levels of case activity. It wasn't a small thing to be told that the high mark for cases could be changed from 75 per 100,000 to 350 per 100,000. At first, we modified our plan and pulled back on the amount of students attending in-person, but this week we began to expand the amount of students attending for in-person instruction at the elementary level. We will do the same for middle and high school students at the beginning of the second semester on February first. We also learned during this pull-back phase that even with the number of community cases rising, we still did not have outbreaks at our schools because we continued to follow the guidelines.

However, even though each day sometimes feels like a repeat of the prior one, nothing feels normal and we do not feel as connected as we want to feel. At times, all of this seems difficult to take in and each one of us wants answers to help us along the way: When will I get the shot? When will I get to be with friends? When will school get back to normal? When will I get to stop wearing a mask? When will all of this be over? All of this uncertainty weighs on us and takes a toll on our emotions and our resistance to stress. If you haven't noticed, people are pretty



heightened emotionally right now and some are having difficulty coping. And when we get into this space, it is hard to trust others. And yet, as a school community, we have to rely on and trust each other in order for all of this to work the way we want it to work with no or a few isolated cases of COVID-19 in our schools.

If you want to help our school community, show up for each other each day by wearing the right level of PPE, minding the six-foot gap, practicing good hand hygiene. Be a model for all of our students and be aware that others are relying on you to do the right thing. This is one thing we know to be true right now, the health and safety guidelines work and they will continue to work as long as we all stay committed to them. We can keep each other safe. Doing so is a sign of respect, kindness, and care for each other. And we can all use more of those things right now.

In addition, understand that there are going to be slip-ups and mistakes made because none of us are perfect 100% of the time. I believe that all of our staff come to school each day with the best of intentions to do the best they can for our students and each other. Help each other out and do not assume ill intent when someone else messes up. They probably just need some feedback on how their actions may be impacting others. They may not know or be aware. And remember, if the entire PBIS movement has taught us nothing, it has taught us that positive reinforcement works and that shame and blame does not and is not research based. If you see someone else who is rocking it out of the park with the guidelines, let them know and tell them how much you appreciate their actions! You will be affirming their positive actions. We can all use some good news and signs of appreciation as well right now.

“So, while once we asked: “How could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?” Now we assert, “How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?””

From “The Hill We Climb” by 22-year-old Amanda Gorman, the youngest inaugural poet ever and the first person to be named national youth poet laureate



Salish Coast Elementary News from Principal Lisa Condran

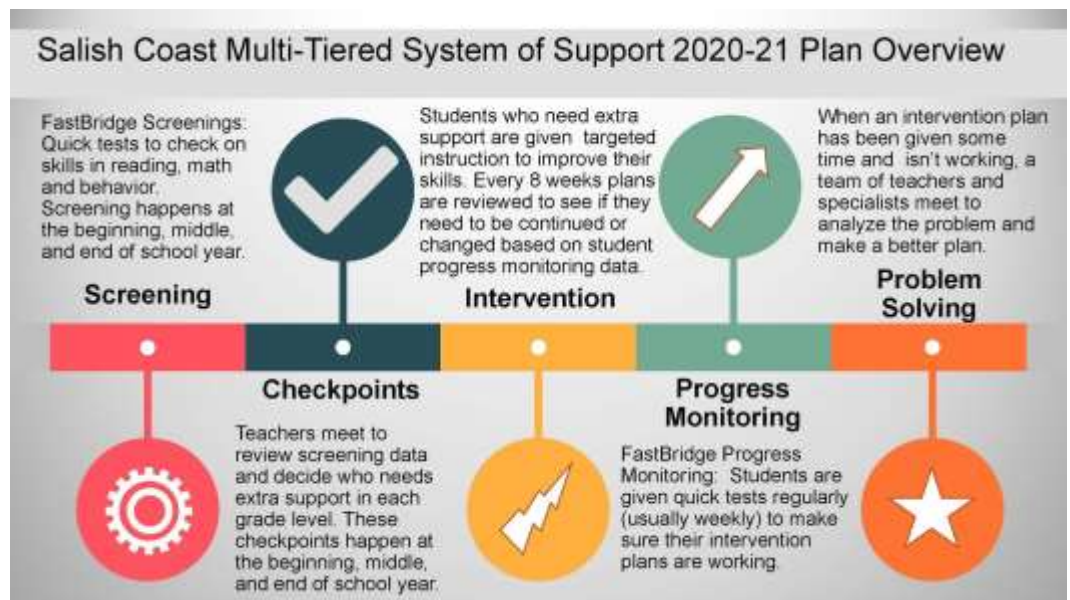


Blended Learning Resumes!

The big news for Salish Coast is that we are able to resume our Blended Learning cohorts on January 19th, 2021. We are all excited to have more students back in person every day. Several families have chosen to join blended learning cohorts where there is space.

**Salish Coast
MTSS**

Midyear Reading, Math and Social Academic Emotional Behavioral Rating (SAEBRS) started right after we returned from winter break. The first week Janet McKee, [Tracy Gallegos](#), Lori Witheridge, and Lisa Condran worked on



completing screenings with students who have been attending in person. The following week



students were invited to come to school by appointment in kindergarten and first grade and on a drop in basis for 2nd through 5th grade students to complete the in person portions of these screening tests. This week we are finishing up with students who have not completed the tests. The screening results give us information about student progress and help us plan for instruction for the remainder of the school year.

Love and Logic Parenting Classes at Salish Coast



Peter Braden and [Ellen Thomas](#) are leading Love and Logic Parenting Classes via Zoom with 34 families participating, which will last for six weeks. Love and Logic focuses on helping children develop personal responsibility, self-control and good decision making skills.

Blue Heron and OCEAN Highlights by Theresa Campbell, Principal



Blue Heron students and staff returned to school after the holiday break ready to share a wave and thank you to the Port Townsend School Board members. We greatly appreciate your service to our district and community.

We are really looking forward to having our Blended Learning cohorts back to full capacity with students arriving on campus the week of February 1st.



PORT TOWNSEND School District

LEARNING THROUGH A SENSE OF PLACE

5

Superintendent's Newsletter

January 22, 2021





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

Place Based Learning During Forensic Science Class

Brandi Hageman has partnered with local law enforcement agencies to provide the Forensic Science students an opportunity to participate in a unique alcohol impairment simulation. Students tried some simple tasks with and without the Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Goggles. Then each student underwent a Standardized Field Sobriety Test which was administered by one of the law enforcement volunteers. Finally, the ultimate test... students drove the Port Townsend Police Department's gator through an obstacle course with cones, arrows, and portable street signs.

Special thanks to retired teacher Lois Sherwood for her assistance with DUI Goggle sanitation monitoring and the following Law Enforcement Volunteers:

Port Townsend Police Department School Resource Officer Jeremy Vergin and Community Services Officer Wendy Davis

Jefferson County Sheriff's Department Sergeant Brandon Przygocki

Washington State Patrol Trooper Chelsea Hodgson

View the video provided by Trooper Hodgson

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SDvi0JOjb9BGxHtPTtlhqBKTIMuDSIOY/view?usp=sharing>

Mock Trial News

In preparing for upcoming District competitions, both our Varsity and JV Mock Trial teams argued this year's "conspiracy, assault, and malicious mischief" case versus Wenatchee High School this past Sunday. PTHS students have squared off against teams for LA, Ft. Lauderdale, Richmond, Philadelphia, Wenatchee, and Seattle these past few months. The teams will face the International Community (ICS) High School in Kirkland this weekend, in final preparation for the District Competition on February 4, 5, 6. One or both of our teams are eligible for the State Tournament in March. Mr. Pierson says, "Seniors Emillia Nunn, Finn O'Donnell, Willow Hoins, Max Stewart, Sorina Johnston, and River Kisler make this year's team super strong with an excellent team work ethic they've developed over Zoom".



Athletics Update

With the release of the new Healthy Washington Roadmap to Recovery plan released by the Governor's office we have new hope for high school athletics. Some sports will be allowed to start practice as early as February 1st. The current plan is to begin with traditional Fall sports, move to Spring Sports, then finish the year with Winter Sports. The rationale behind moving Winter sports is that Basketball and Wrestling are both considered high risk indoor sports and cannot compete until Phase Three, which does not even exist yet.

The regional format has also led our school to join a cooperative of local schools to reduce travel time for contests. We will compete against schools in our region instead of competing in the Nisqually League where most teams are located in Pierce and King Counties. Some of these teams are Kingston, Port Angeles, Sequim, Klahowya, and North Mason. All of these schools have significantly larger enrollments than PTHS. To counter the enrollment differences and help us maintain safety and a competitive balance, we will join forces with Chimacum to field many of our teams. This will enable us to provide junior varsity teams for our younger players and have more experienced athletes compete against the larger schools. It is also a great opportunity for us to set an example of coming together as a community to provide opportunities for our young people.

Communications

Superintendent Search Process - The school board is conducting semi-finalist interviews and will be selecting finalists for interviews the week of February 1. Finalists will be announced starting January 31. Each candidate will be interviewed by a stakeholder interview committee and the school board. Applications to join the stakeholder interview committee are open until January 26 at 8am. There will also be an open Community Q & A Forum for each candidate. For more details visit:

https://ptschools.org/about_us/superintendent/superintendent_search

Inclusive OCEAN Survey - The Port Townsend School District Board of Directors is committed to engaging the community as we create conditions district-wide that promote student and staff success. This inclusive household survey is one part of a study of OCEAN, our long-standing parent partnership program. We want to gather information which will: Identify OCEAN strengths and areas for improvement; Improve alternative learning experiences for secondary students;



Learn about how the community feels about OCEAN and how this feeling has evolved over time; Strengthen community partnerships for alternative learning. Survey open until January 29: https://ptschools.org/about_us/news/what_s_new/survey

Professional Development

Upcoming District Directed Wednesday Sessions:

- January 27, Blended and Distance Learning
- February 17, Racial Equity
- March 17, Place Based Learning
- April 14, MTSS
- May 19, MDS Project Evaluation

We are offering a variety of optional PD sessions over the next few months. Take a look and register for those sessions of interest. [Upcoming Optional Professional Development Workshops](#)

Highly Capable

The referral window for services to begin in the 2021-22 school year is now open. The [referral packet can be found online](#) and completed by a parent, teacher, community member, or student.

News from Your PT Schools Libraries



January 6th was a dark day. It is a day, I imagine, we will all remember. As the news of the insurrection at our nation's capital came out and details were unfolding, I was logging into a webinar with one of my new educator heroes, [Mike Caulfield](#). Quite honestly, at that moment, I did not want to sit through a webinar. I wanted to go home, hug my children and glue myself to my phone so I could be apprised of what was happening in Washington, D.C. But I logged in. There, the bespectacled and usually smiley, Caulfield looked distressed and unfocused. As we all quietly sat staring at him (it was very quiet) I could see him glancing to his right to look at his phone and what I can assume was



real time footage of the news. He then spoke. He apologized for his lack of focus, took a big breath and said (I will paraphrase) that today's class would be different than it normally was. Normally he would show us silly examples of news fakes bits to share with our students. It would be fun. Today, he said, was different because he felt such an urgency to share tools to help save democracy. Education saves democracy. As Ken Burn recently said, "We're beset by **three** viruses, are we not? There's a year-old COVID-19 virus, but also a 402-year-old virus of white supremacy, of racial injustice... And we've got an age-old human virus of misinformation, of paranoia, of conspiracies." Caulfield pleaded with us to make time to teach our students how to decipher fact from fiction. There is no time to wait. No subject that it cannot be folded into. We are assaulted by news every day. If we engage with the material and try our hand at the practices he shares, we will feel empowered to practice with our students. The more we practice, the more comfortable we will feel delivering bite-sized chunks of lessons. We will embrace those teachable moments. Teaching digital literacies can seem overwhelming and confusing, but if you think of how far we have come since March 2020 I see that we have the capacity for it! The digital landscape is constantly shifting and the old tools we used (CRAAP test, picking a .org vs. a .com, looking at the "About Page") no longer work. The web is a tricky, ever-changing, sophisticated environment and there is minimal gatekeeping. WE are the filters. But do know that you are not alone. While I do not claim to be an expert, I am here to work with you and your students. I am passionate about this topic as an educator, librarian and parent. We, as educators, have a role and a responsibility to help our students. The remedy for misinformation is education. Let's start by celebrating News Literacy Week.

[News Literacy Week: January 25-29](#)

So what is news literacy? It is having critical-thinking skills for analyzing the reliability of news (information). It is the ability to decipher fact from fiction (and opinion) as we consume content online and in our world. The News Literacy Project, a non profit, non partisan educational organization describes news literacy as the "ability to determine the credibility of news and other content, to identify different types of information, and to use the standards of authoritative, fact-based journalism to determine what to trust, share and act on. Being news-literate also means recognizing the critical role of the First Amendment and a free press in a democracy and interacting with news and other information in ways that promote engaged participation in civic life."newslit.org



How is news literacy different from digital citizenship? I see digital citizenship as the "big tent" under which news literacy (and many literacies) exists. Digital citizenship is the set of norms of



being responsible, kind and safe when using technology. News Literacy Week is a challenge to us educators to teach some everyday skills to our students. I encourage you to visit the following sites to see the interactive tools and resources for us. I encourage you to take the tests and share your journey with your students. I would also add that news can be scary for our



students and [NPR](#) and [Common Sense Media](#) have some great resources to help us navigate these topics with our students. Much of this information is meant for older children but we do know that all of our students hear the news and it is important for us to give them a space to process it and ask questions.

Ready to test your skills? Try [Fakeout](#) by Civix.ca.

Interested in more resources? [Civix](#) is a huge treasure trove of interactives and information. So is [CTRL-F](#) and [Common Sense Media](#). Also know that I am here for you and am happy to take this journey with you and your students.



Port Townsend School District Annual Report

Here is a link to our district's annual report [PTSD Annual Report](#)
Each district in Washington State is required to publish an annual report providing an overview of how financial resources such as levy funds are used.



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