



Photo Credit, Jan Boutilier: Point Wilson Lighthouse and Mt. Baker

Port Townsend School District No. 50

**Superintendent Newsletter, Vol. 16-17, No. 12**

March 10, 2017

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### **Quote**

“If people knew how hard I had to work to gain my mastery, it would not seem so wonderful at all.” ~Michelangelo

### **Thoughts on Grit and Self-Efficacy ~ John Polm, Superintendent**

Many of us have heard a great deal about “grit” as a key ingredient for success. This idea has been recently researched and popularized by Angela Duckworth. The quote by Michelangelo sort of sums up this idea of grit. I think it was Malcolm Gladwell who wrote about the 10,000-hour theory. That is – it takes 10,000 hours to become an expert at something.

The interesting thing is that much of the time it takes to become great, is time not being great. This is a difficult thing for many of us to work through. I think this is why many students quickly quit when things get difficult. They cannot see how much some of the experts struggled to become experts. This brings me to some thoughts on scaffolding and differentiation. In order for a student to feel successful, they need to have success. Competence is a key to self-efficacy, and self-efficacy on key tasks leads to self-confidence about more generalized tasks (or problems). So, it is not enough to encourage students to embrace challenge and be persistent. It is also important to make sure the tasks are within reach – this may be with strategic differentiation that includes the support of a capable peer, modified materials, tutoring from the teacher, etc.

Sometimes grit can be unattractive. Good musicians know that the practice room is a private place. There are many, many hours struggling through a difficult fingering passage or making violin sounds that mom and dad can’t stand – so it must be done in private. The thing is - our students need to have the space to safely make mistakes. They need the support of their teachers. And they need the knowledge that “the natural” is just a myth. If they develop persistence, then they can develop expertise and conquer more and more challenging problems.

A recommended resource for teachers and families is “Top 20 Principles from Psychology for Pre-K-12 Teaching and Learning” by Joan Lucariello, Sandra Graham, Bonnie Nastasi, Carol Dwyer, Russ Skiba, Jonathan Plucker, Mary Pitoniak, Mary Brabeck, Darlene DeMarie, and Steven Pritzker for the American Psychological Association, 2015, <https://www.apa.org/ed/schools/cpse/top-twenty-principles.pdf>

## **From PTHS ~ Principal, Carrie Ehrhardt**

Our Students for Sustainability club has been working on various issues this year, one being an interest in pursuing legislation to require deposits on bottles, which could reduce the waste of non-recycled bottles on a large scale. After much research, last Thursday members of our Students for Sustainability club traveled to Olympia to meet with State Legislature Representatives, Mike Chapman, Steve Tharinger and Kevin Van de Wege, prepared with their lobbying skills, one page of ideas from their bottle bill, and a stack of research to support their idea. Representatives Chapman and Tharinger were so impressed with the club's preparation and proposal, that they offered to support them further, giving the students a 'to do' list, and invited them to come back in a month for assistance with fleshing out the bill. The students left with a sense of hope and optimism that they may be able to get some energy behind this idea in the near future.

The Port Townsend High School Orchestra left for Vancouver, BC on Wednesday. They first traveled to Port Angeles High School to attend the Washington State Music Educators' Orchestra Adjudication Festival. The orchestra then traveled on to Vancouver, where they will be attending a music clinic at the University of British Columbia School of Music. This clinic will be conducted by Dr. Jonathan Giarard, the conductor of the UBC Symphony Orchestra. He will rehearse the ensemble on the main stage of the Chan Center for Performing Arts, for a one-on-one experience for the students. Dr. Giarard received his degrees from Eastman and Boston, and has conducted prestigious ensembles across North America and Europe. At the conclusion of the trip, the students will tour the UBC campus and be the special guest at their Symphony Orchestra's performance of "The Planets" by Gustav Holst.

PTHS Juniors, Taylor Tracer and Sarah Smith, were both crowned as 2017 Rhododendron princesses at this year's coronation. These wonderful young women will represent our community and school at this year's festival, under the theme 'Enchanted Rhody'. Congratulations Taylor and Sarah!

## **Athletics ~ Scott Wilson**

With a couple weeks of practice under their belts, our spring sport athletes are about to open up their seasons with contests beginning this week. Both softball and baseball teams have games slated against South Whidbey, assuming the weather holds steady and keeps the rain away. The real exciting news for both programs is that there are more student-athletes participating this season than in any of the previous four seasons. The energy level is high and kids and coaches are excited and happy to be out on the field.

The boys' and girls' golf teams are gearing up for a good spring. We have some returning veterans on the team this year who did really well last year, so we are hoping to see some new hardware in the trophy case to represent Port Townsend Golf.

We have a small handful of girls playing tennis this spring. Those kids will be primarily practicing with Chimacum High School as we co-op with CHS yearly for our non-team sports.

Boys' soccer is holding steady at a healthy number to field both a varsity and a JV team. They too, will be opening their season this week and the boys are excited to be sporting new uniforms when they run out onto the soccer pitch.

Finally, boys' and girls' track is returning with a healthy number of student athletes who have been preparing all winter. Our number of athletes who make it to the state season seems to grow each year. This year, we expect to see a larger contingent of Redhawk athletes competing in the postseason.

**GO REDHAWKS!**

## **The Blue's News ~ Principal, Matt Holshouser**

6-12 Music – Band & Orchestra concerts & adjudication – Wonderful student music abounds.

- We have enjoyed some great student musical performances recently. Kudos to Kim Clarke and our 6-12 band students for a very nice performance Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at PTHS.
- We also enjoyed another great Festival Orchestra performance this past Tuesday evening and then sent Daniel Ferland and our strings students off to Port Angeles for a formal adjudication. Everyone performed well and received Superior 1 rating with the PTHS orchestra heading to British Columbia for more travel, learning, and performance opportunities.

### BH Sports

Our Girls' Basketball and Wrestling squad continue to perform well and enjoy some recent competitions and tournament action. Please join us to root on our student-athletes on Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup> vs. Stevens Middle School, home court at 3:30 and 4:30

### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Protecting Northwest Watersheds Project –

This past Friday our 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and teachers were out in the field planting trees and learning more about local watersheds. They planted nearly 400+ trees ensuring their stewardship legacy.. Thank you – Roger Mills, Jennifer Manning, Brett Navin, NOSC, and countless parents for helping us lead our kiddos well out into the hills and leaving a legacy of environmental stewardship.

### Jump Rope for Heart

As part of our Health & Wellness goals.....BH PE Teacher Mark Tallarico has been hosting a great Jump Rope for Heart program. We have some great 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade jumpers here on campus.

### Art with Susan Doyle

BH Art Teacher Susan Doyle has partnered up with local artist, Katrina Blair Stringham, for some great wood and painting art experiences. Please enjoy the photo and more to come with a beautiful gallery walk here on campus.



## **Grant Street News ~ Principal, Lisa Condran**

### Prime Time Family Literacy:

Every Thursday starting February 16<sup>th</sup> and ending March 23<sup>rd</sup> from 5:30 to 7:00 PM, Grant Street School families participate in a family literacy event that is held in the Grant Street School Library. This free event, for invited families, features a meal catered by the Port Townsend High School Culinary Arts Department, under the direction of Jennifer Kruse. Joy Wentzel, Grant Street Librarian, Jason Lynch, Port Townsend School District Title I Director, the City of Port Townsend Library Staff, including Jeanne Simmons, and others work hard to make this a wonderful event for Grant Street families.

### Parenting the Love and Logic Way:

Grant Street Teacher Peter Braden is offering a six-week parenting class beginning March 20<sup>th</sup>. The goals of the course are to:

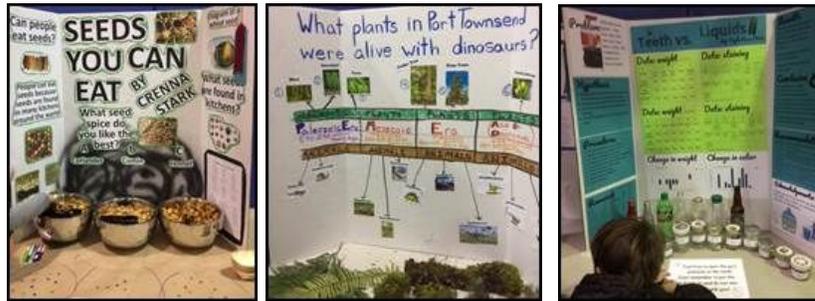
- Raise kids who are responsible, respectful, and fun to be around
- Avoid un-winnable power struggles and arguments
- Stay calm when your kids do incredibly upsetting things
- Set enforceable limits
- Avoid enabling and begin empowering

- Help your kids learn from mistakes rather than repeating them
- Raise kids who are family members rather than bossypants
- And much more!

For additional information, including registration, contact the Grant Street Elementary Office at 360.379.4535.

### Science Fair:

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, Grant Street held a wonderful science fair. Many thanks go to parent Sarah McNulty who coordinated this event. Featured below are three examples of the many projects that were presented.



## OCEAN ~ Liz Quayle, Coordinator-Teacher

### *A Wrinkle in Time* – opening Friday Night!

It was a dark and stormy night....

OCEAN's 8<sup>th</sup> annual play, "A Wrinkle in Time", is an adaptation of the science-fiction novel by Madeleine L'Engle. OCEAN students in grades 1-12, plus alumni and parents, are involved in the production, which will be performed over the next two weekends in Blue Heron Commons. Show times are Friday and Saturday, March 10-11, 7:00 pm; Sunday, March 12 at 2:00 pm; Thursday and Saturday, March 16 and 18, 7:00pm, and Sunday, March 19 at 2:00 pm. Suggested donations are \$10 adults, \$5 students. There will be a silent auction and concessions available.



### The African American Experience

Over the past month and a half, Elementary and Middle Level students have been reading about famous African Americans past and present as they gain an appreciation for arts, music, and history through their Language Arts/Social Studies class. Students are writing essays, stories, and are preparing presentations for their end-of-unit exhibition on March 28th. To complement this unit, elementary students in the language exploratory class studied a map of Africa to find the countries many African-Americans' ancestors came from, and followed that up with phrases in Swahili, the language some brought with them. "Jambo Tembo!" (Hello Elephant!) "Mashua juu ya maji" (boat in the water) were two of the favorites that they illustrated.

### OCEAN-Blue Heron Connections

As part of their MDS Shoreline Safety and Familiarity project, English-Marine Biology students in grades 9-11 conducted a "Meet & Greet" with middle school students in Blue Heron's Life Skills class. The activity was the first of a series of activities that will lead to a spring beach walk



where the high schoolers will take their younger friends around and share their knowledge of marine life on shore and in the water.

In groups, OCEAN high schoolers developed various questions and activities to get to know their next-door classroom neighbors and to help the younger students feel more comfortable with them as they learn about shoreline safety and familiarity with marine life. Activities included talking on a string-phone, drawing stick figures, and making up a story one word at a time. Smiles were contagious as all students had fun.

Debriefing with a guest teacher the next day who asked about the differences between them and the younger students, the high schoolers emphatically stated that the students in the Life Skills class were not different from them – they are human, and as such, they have challenges to overcome, just as anyone does in life. One high schooler even found that one of the younger students could do large multiplication products in her head!



## Special Education and Assessment ~ Patrick Kane

### Special Education –

Safety Net consumed many staff member work hours these past two weeks and the files are nearly completed to send to OSPI by next week. There were nine student files that were identified to be submitted and the total amount requested for added services is \$160,450. Information about distribution will be made available by the end of June.

### Assessment Information –

End of Course exams results will be released around April 19. These exams in biology, algebra and geometry are important for seniors graduating this year since it part of their graduation requirement. ELPA21 exams will finish up at the end of this month. OSPI and Google have corrected issues that were affecting the audio portion of the exam.

## Title/LAP ~ Director, Jason Lynch and K-5 Math Coach Lisa Cartwright

### District K-5 Math Professional Learning

On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, K-5 teachers participated in a second training around the *Bridges In Mathematics* curriculum adopted in 2016 by the PTSD. The training was led by Janie Overman, a Bellingham School District math coach and a trainer of the *Bridges* program. Now that students have been using the new resource for a few months, teachers looked forward to fine tuning instruction around the materials.

A part of the training centered on *Number Corner*, the portion of the curriculum that pre-teaches and re-teaches grade-level math concepts in a daily dose of 20 minutes or so. Teachers are learning to streamline their delivery of this instruction. *Number Corner* is an important element for all students, and particularly supports students who struggle by spiraling exposure to skills and procedures. *Number Corner* complements the conceptual work that K-5 students are taught through *Bridge* lessons.

Teachers also appreciated Janie's information and insight around the *Bridges In Mathematics* assessments. The K-5 Math Leadership Team is working this spring to review and make decisions around building and grade level assessments that are practical and efficient, to ensure that testing results in valid and useful information regarding students' math knowledge and levels of understanding.