



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

Port Townsend School District No. 50

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Quote

***Learning is like rowing upstream; not to advance is to drop back
~Chinese saying***

The Place of Port Townsend ~ John Polm

A pedagogy of place-based education has a long history, having been discussed by the likes of John Dewey as far back as the early 1900's. As I have gotten to know the staff and observed the educational programming in place (and visioned) for our school and community, I am more excited than ever to be a part of it. The sort of change happening here has strong roots in ideas related to motivation, attachment, and developing a sense of stewardship. If we do this well, then our students will make connections to the culture, people, geography, economy, and have a sense of belongingness.

Dewey wrote and spoke about how experience needs to be an anchor in the education of students. The simple definition of place-based education is "using places, environments, and communities (mainly those nearby, but also those far away) as living contexts for experience and curriculum development and enrichment" (Greenwood, 2011). We can view this approach to public education as a reform. In my mind, a good reform. But, we can also view it as grabbing hold of the rural education models from the past. The standardized, sort of industrial-age institutionalization of public education has run its course. Our approach is more healthy for the student, and the community. We are building connections, which should be beneficial to students, supportive of teachers, and energizing for the community. In the best cases, our students will be engaged in authentic projects of high rigor that make a difference. (Seems pretty relevant to me.)

Our challenge has been "negotiating the borders between imposed mandates and place-based teaching" (Budge, 2006). Budge completed a study of a rural district in our state that was struggling. Her advice to that school was to develop ways to create place-consciousness and thus help students more fully appreciate their community and be part of solving its problems. She talked about "place may be a privilege for some to embrace, it is posed as a problem for others to overcome". But, what I liked most about her statements was that she agrees that "students who develop a critical sense of place wherever they live will know how to live better anywhere they live (Budge, 2006). I think this is a great aspiration for our students.

References:

Budge, K. (2006). Rural leaders, rural places. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 2006, 21(13).
Dewey, J. (1915). *The school and society*. New York, Teachers College Press.
Greenwood, D. A. (2011). Why place matters. *Handbook of Research in Social Foundations of Education*, ed. Tozer et al (642-640). Routledge.

Special Education and Assessment ~ Patrick Kane

Special Education: Enrollment of students needing special services from the April count is 202. The number of students in the Birth to 3 and preschool programs have increased some, but the number of students from kindergarten to upper grades had the most significant jump from the beginning of the year with fifteen new students needing services.

Assessment Information: The state assessment, Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA), has started this week in all of the buildings. Blue Heron, OCEAN and the high school had students take the assessment on Monday. Grant Street will start testing on Wednesday with the 5th grade assessment, MSP, and on Tuesday, next week, students will start with the English Language Arts (ELA) assessment. To date there haven't been any major issues with the test taking and it is hoped that trend is continued for the remainder of the assessment period.

Also, not assessment news, but some information on the survey taken by PTSD staff, students and parents will be coming to the district in a few weeks. The information has been sent to CEE for tabulating and to be broken down into various sub categories regarding responses made by those taking the survey. It is expected that the information will be made available to the district by the first week in May. More survey information will be updated as more is learned about the results and the completion of the survey.

From PTHS ~ Principal, Carrie Ehrhardt

Spring break is over and there is a new buzz in the air. We've started the Senior Countdown – just over 30 class days left for graduating seniors – and the office is busy working on a variety of projects including Smarter Balanced state exam testing, master scheduling for 17-18, upcoming registration for 17-18, and graduation preparations, just to name a few. It is an energetic and anxiety filled time, as we both look towards finishing up our current year, and already need to think about planning for the next school year. Here are a few things currently happening at PTHS....

Almost 60 PTHS students attended the screening of Tomorrow, an acclaimed documentary which premiered at the Paris Climate Talks last year. Students for Sustainability sponsored a bus to the event this past Saturday, and two of our SFS leaders, Akwe McDaniels and Ashley Rosser, assisted in introducing the film to the audience. Tomorrow was well attended by area community members. Following the film, SFS students helped lead discussion groups around topics such as local food, energy, transportation, waste, education, emergency preparedness, local economy and related government programs. PTHS students, and specifically our SFS members, definitely shined at this event!

A group of our ASB students have been working with our Food Service Director, Stacey Larsen, to make decisions about seating in the student commons/lunchroom. Our lunchroom currently uses many old elementary tables from Mountain View School. The ASB students proposed a funding model where some ASB dollars were matched by the PTHS building budget and then further matched with district dollars. This allowed a total of \$8000 for some new lunchroom furniture. Students have selected a variety of café style tables that will encourage smaller conversations, as well as some larger tables that will seat groups of eight students more comfortably.

Our Spring Play, *The Heart of Robin Hood*, opens this Friday, April 21 and runs for three weekends. Tickets are available at the door, \$10 for adults; \$5 for students and senior citizens; \$3 for youth 12 and under. The play is recommended for students aged 7 and above.

The Blue's News ~ Principal, Matt Holshouser

Parent Teacher Conferences and Spring Break:

We hosted our Spring Parent Teacher conferences just prior to our spring break and enjoyed a 95% + attendance rate for all teachers and classrooms. This rate speaks highly of our teachers and engaged parents. This strong home & school connection makes us all stronger within our learning community.

Missoula Children's Theatre:

Thank you again to Holley Carlson and the Blue Heron School PTA for sponsoring our Missoula Children's Theatre play this year. The Sci-fi twist of Gulliver's Travels was a great hit and well attended both Friday night and the Saturday matinee prior to spring break.

Smarter Balanced Assessment:

This week we kicked off our statewide Smarter Balanced assessment for our Middle School students. Our schedule is:

- Week of April 17th – Middle School English Language Arts testing.
- Week of April 24th – Elementary (4th & 5th) English Language Arts.
- Week of May 1st – Middle School Math assessment.
- Week of May 8th – Elementary (4th & 5th) Math assessment.

BH Sports:

The Blue Heron School tracksters are lining up in their starting blocks and ready for a great season ahead. Our first meet is a tri-school meet in Sequim and first home meet is Wednesday, May 3rd, with a tri-school meet against Coupeville and Stevens Middle School. Please come out and root on the Blue Heron School runners, throwers and jumpers.

Blue Heron School students in the field & PTEF:

As we begin to enjoy the warmer spring weather we will be sending students and teachers out into the field with many great outdoors learning experiences ahead. Our 7th grade students just culminated a great tree planting project with Roger Mills, Jennifer Manning and Brett Navin on Discovery Bay. Please stay tuned for more pictures and details regarding the many great project and field experiences for all students at Blue Heron School. Thank you as always to the Port Townsend Education Foundation for their continued support and collaboration in ensuring these great teacher and community designed projects inspire and train our students for current and future success. I am working with PTEF Outreach Director, Missy Nielsen, to plan and foster continued fruitful partnership and mutual support as well as further community outreach and connection in PT and Jefferson County. Stay tuned for more detail and information.

Grant Street News ~ Principal, Lisa Condran



Peter Braden is half way through teaching a six week series on Parenting the Love and Logic Way™. In this class parents have been learning to:

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

- Help kids learn from mistakes rather than repeating them
- Raise kids who are family members... and much more!

Prime Time Family Literacy

- Librarian Joy Wentzel and Jeanne Simmons of the City of Port Townsend Library have been continuing to host the very popular Prime Time Family Literacy Program. Jennifer Kruse and her talented Port Townsend High School culinary students have provided catered dinners for this program.



Grant Street Talent Show

- On March 30th and 31st, Grant Street held its annual talent show. There were many fabulous acts, including a teacher skit titled, "Are You Smarter Than a Grant Street Student?" in which one set of teachers performed on Thursday and another on Friday. Students were thrilled as Grant Street students were the winners.
- Thursday's acts included:
 - Prehistoric Plecostamus Class (Dorothy Stengel's Class) performed Kookaburra
 - Dorothy's class also featured individual student acts of comedy and magic.
 - Denise Aedan's and Kaleen Steinke's class had two brothers who performed guitar and drum solos.
 - Peter Braden's class had a vocal and a piano soloist.
 - Dawn Braden's class featured a whole class song and dance plus eight small group or individual song and dance performers.



Friday's acts included:

- Maggie Kelley's class performing Vowel Bat.
- Bonnie Stenehem's class featured a piano soloist and a trio of dancers.
- Lois Polley's class featured a vocal soloist
- Allen Fox's class featured a comedy routine, recorder performance, and a piano soloist.
- Molly O'Brien's whole class performed a song and dance, as well as seven students who performed individually in small groups as pianists, violinists, or dancers.
- OPEPO had a surprise act, dancing, and gymnastics.

Many thanks go to Kriszti Bunica, Molly O'Brien, and Sheri Shaw, who were instrumental in making this event so successful.

OCEAN ~ Liz Quayle, Coordinator-Teacher



Students and parents at the African American Experience Exhibition Night

Exhibition Night: the African American Experience

Stories abounded just before spring break as elementary and middle level students shared writings and presented projects to a filled room of parents at the end of their African American Experience unit. We heard biographical reports, viewed African-American-inspired art, studied maps, and read through each student's Book of Knowledge. Our K-8 students present their End of Unit projects three times a year: December, March and June. Each Exhibition Night is celebrated with presentation to parents and involved community members, and a potluck dinner!



Board game

Books of Knowledge

Mini-historic figures

Assessment Time!

It's April, and that means that students are busy with state and district assessments. Third through eighth graders complete the SBAC (Smarter Balanced) assessments in English/Language Arts (ELA) and in Math. Fifth and eighth graders also participate in the Measurement of Student Proficiency (MSP) in Science. At the high school level, students are required to pass certain assessments as part of their graduation requirements. The SBAC assessments are taken in 10th grade for ELA and 11th grade for math. In addition to the SBAC assessments, high schoolers must also pass the EOC in Biology. We appreciate how diligent and focused our students have been throughout this process!

Lewis and Clark on LinkedIn

Did you know that Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, Sacajawea, York, and Louis Charbonneau have LinkedIn profiles? Well, not on the official site, but students in the high school US History class created Linked In-style profiles for these members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. In addition, the students became these historic figures and were subjected to "interviews by committee" for a theoretical follow-up expedition to northern Alberta. Students needed to present themselves as quality candidates for this potential team leadership opportunity in the interviews, answering questions about their experience, skills, qualifications, and what they would bring to this new team.

Title/LAP ~ Director, Jason Lynch

Annual Title 1/LAP Informational Meetings: Two meetings are scheduled to present parents and guardians information regarding the Title 1 and Learning Assistance Program (LAP). The topics of these meetings will include information regarding Title 1/LAP and how these funds support students in our district. Input from parents and families will be gathered regarding parent involvement policies, the Title 1 Family Compact, and parent Right-To-Know information.

Parents and guardians are invited to attend any of the following Title 1/LAP informational meetings:

Blue Heron: Wednesday, May 3rd from 8:15-9:15 AM

Grant Street: Wednesday, May 10th from 4:00-5:00 PM

Informational packets can be received ahead of time by emailing jlynch@ptschools.org

Maritime Discovery Schools - Sarah Rubenstein, Project Director

As we roll through April, many projects are underway out of the classroom. Seventh grade students returned to Discovery Bay for the final stage of their salmon habitat restoration project. Through the hard work of many Blue Heron teachers and the North Olympic Salmon Coalition, and generous and ongoing support from PTEF and NOAA, this program is in its third year. Two classes of 1st grade students started a maritime math unit with a tour of Port Townsend Sail loft, the Schooner Martha, and the NW Maritime Center. Grant Street teacher's Kaleen and Heather envisioned this project with Lisa Cartwright and the generous support of two grants that provided extra planning and release time, WA Sea Grant and The McCarthy Dressman Foundation.

We are planning a Community Project Showcase for May 31, 5:30-7pm at the Northwest Maritime Center. This will be an opportunity to share student work, photos, or examples of maritime and place-based projects for the community to see what is happening in our schools. Planning for professional development for this summer and next year is underway. There will be at least one paid summer session offered for project planning and maritime industry connections funded through WA Sea Grant. Information will come out about this opportunity at the beginning of May.

Food Service ~ Stacey Larsen

Spring is here and the High School and Grant Street gardens are blooming. Lots of lettuce is coming up and will show up in the salad bar soon.

We are looking for a new Kitchen Assistant in the Blue Heron Kitchen. Please apply if you would like to be a part of our amazing food team.

The Food Service and Wellness Community Conversation is coming up in May. We are very excited to share with the community all the amazing things that are going on in the gardens and the kitchen. 4-5 p.m. on May 11th at Blue Heron.