June 2020

PT SCHOOLS

Superintendent
Dr. John Polm, 360-379-4501

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www.ptschools.org

Goodbye Dr. Polm, You will be missed

Dr. John Polm has served as the Superintendent of the Port Townsend Public School District for the last four years. He has skippered the continuation of the Maritime Discovery Schools into a robust network of partnerships and place-based curricula. This year, Dr. Polm's characteristic calm and steadfast leadership has seen us through one of the most challenging years for our district, our country, and the world. Every day Dr. Polm brought his life-long dedication to public schools with an abiding belief in equitable education for all children. This belief informed his work at every level - from the boardroom to the buses. He took the time to get to know everyone working in the schools and was regularly seen visiting classrooms and chatting with students. With a background as a music educator, Dr. Polm was a strong supporter of our arts and music programs. Around town he was a member of Rotary and the RainShadow Chorale.

We are grateful for his leadership in the school district, and wish Dr. Polm and his wife Julie all the best as they head off to be part of the Puyallup School District. Dr. Polm will be missed especially by our school board, administrative and leadership teams, but has left us with a stronger district as we move into this next year of new challenges.

Sandy Gessner-Crabtree, incoming Superintendent for 2020-21

Hello!

I am ready and very excited to lead the Port Townsend School District through the 2020-21 School Year. Here is a little bit about my educational background: A thirty-three year education veteran; Taught in the classroom for nineteen years and then moved into reading intervention and instructional coaching; Principal for five years at View Ridge Elementary in Bremerton and Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for OESD 114 for four years; Masters of Education and Administration from Pacific University and Superintendent Certification Program and Executive Instructional Leadership from Seattle Pacific University. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education for Port Townsend for the last two years. Raised in California, but have been a proud Washingtonian for the last thirteen years!

Lessons Learned During the School Closure

4th grader Ila Patric connects with her teacher and classmates over Zoom.

By Sandy Gessner-Crabtree

When the Governor ordered schools to close on March 18, our entire way of doing business was obsolete and a daunting challenge was set before us. In addition to facing a public health pandemic, the Port Townsend School District team had to figure out how to provide educational services remotely. We started down one path of stop-gap measures, had to make a U-turn and go back, and then work to create some sort of coherent system to support all learners. Now, almost three months after the school closure, we have the opportunity to reflect on what was learned in the process. Here are a few of those insights:

Lesson 1: Traditional Brick and Mortar Schools Can Change. It is often said that the field of education is very slow to embrace change. But when the governor said we were closing down, we closed down. And then we quickly tried to learn how to reach students outside of the traditional four walls. In the process, our team learned a lot about the best ways to use technology tools to promote distance learning. When we reached out to parents and students, they told us what wasn't working, and that we needed to provide a common platform with common expectations. We've come a long way since we started experimenting in March and we're going to keep learning together about how to provide easier remote access should we need it in the future. We've also learned how to make portable school lunches and deliver them en mass!

Lesson 2: Connectivity Matters. Computers and Chromebooks are not helpful for learning in virtual classrooms unless they can connect to the internet. We quickly learned of the great disparities in our community regarding broadband access and connectivity. Thankfully, with the help of PUD, Stronger Towns and WAVE Cable, our county and communities have come together to address this issue. While we cannot say we have 100% of our students connected, we are getting closer.

Lesson 3: Strong Communities Matter. The Port Townsend School District is proud of its role in providing public education for this community. This crisis has shown all of us how strong, connected, and caring the community of

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Congrats Class of 2020

By Carrie Ehrhardt,
Principal Port Townsend High School

A trusted mentor once told me that great opportunities are only impossible situations in disguise. That concept was put to the test as I watched high schools and colleges around the state and across the nation plan for little to no celebration, for honoring the graduating classes of 2020. And even though these students will celebrate other milestones in the future, I felt that we owed something more to the PTHS senior class, and I knew that we could do better than a drive-through diploma pick up. In talking with many of the seniors, in the last weeks of March about their graduation wishes, the same theme kept emerging. What they wanted more than anything, was to be together. Out of that wish emerged the "PTHS Class of 2020 Celebration - Graduation During A Pandemic!". The event included many activities in the days leading up to our graduation celebration on Friday, June 12. We held our senior awards ceremony via Zoom in the days preceding the cap and gown pick-up, so that students could receive their awards, medallions, and honor cords when getting their cap and gown. Two local photographers offered their services for two full days, to do individual photos of our seniors, in their cap and gown. This allowed the kids to have a photo in the school-owned graduation stoles, which would have otherwise not been given out, since we were not graduating in a traditional ceremony. The PTA gave each senior a yard sign announcing them as a PTHS graduate. Community presenters came together over Zoom to announce the local scholarships being given to our seniors. The day of graduation, we decorated the Wheel In Drive In Theatre and set up for the serpentine. Our School Resource Officer, Jeremy Vergin led the serpentine through Port Townsend, along with school faculty and police support, as the procession made its way to the Wheel In for a modified graduation ceremony. Our Valedictorian Kincaid Gould, and Salutatorian Louis Babik received their medallions from Superintendent John Polm before giving their speeches. Other selected students spoke as well, and the diploma covers were hand delivered to students by school board, administration, and faculty members, as senior names were read aloud. The seniors were allowed to step out of their vehicles to receive their diploma cover, and to participate in the certification of the class, at which time they moved their tassel. We sang the alma mater, following along with a version as it played on my iPhone that had been recorded earlier this school year during our homecoming assembly. Gazing out over the seniors in their caps and gowns, standing next to their cars, was very emotional. While this will go down in the memory books as the most unusual PTHS graduation ever, we had found a way to bring the seniors, now graduates, together. The final activity was a Senior Tribute Video posted for students to view once they returned home from the Wheel In.

There is a saying that it takes a village to raise a child. Well, it definitely took the village to help me pull off this graduation celebration! I would like to thank everyone who gave their time, support, and service to bring this graduation to reality. And especially to our district administration, as well as to the city, county, and health officials who assisted in guiding this process so that we could give our graduating seniors a special celebration, while being mindful of health and social distancing safe practices. It was not the graduation that our seniors deserved, but I think that it will be one that they will always remember. I know that I will. Congratulations to the PTHS Class of 2020!

The Class of 2020, photo by Jan Boutilier

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Port Townsend really is. The teaching staff have been flexible, creative and dogged in staying connected and keeping students engaged. Support staff have been Herculean in delivering Chromebooks and lunches, making phone calls, learning how to teach via ZOOM, creating community in the virtual classroom space, and making sure each student has been accounted for. And our community partners like Skillmation, the Kiwanis, and the Realtors Association came forward to provide immediate support for our students through donations and volunteering. We experienced an outpouring of concern, care, and action to make sure students were provided for in this unprecedented time.

Lesson 4: Human Connection is Vital for Learning. The thing we've heard most from our staff members is how much they miss their students. The thing we've heard most from families is that it is really hard to try and manage their children's learning and do anything else. And the thing we know is that our middle and secondary students are craving peer connection. Brain research backs these needs because learning is a social construct. Our hearts back this up because at the core of learning is caring relationships.

We will hold these lessons in mind as we move forward planning for the fall and reopening school. We are better for having learned these lessons and are anxious to see our students in person.

During the school closure staff distributed free breakfast and lunch daily at five meal sites. At the end of the school year seeds and plant starts were provided along with meals.

Planning for Next School Year

While we do not not yet know exactly what the 2020-21 school year will bring, we know that we will need to be prepared for a variety of models.

We have district-wide teams planning for a variety of potential models for school. The possibilities include, but are not limited to:

- In-person instruction, with increased health precautions.
- In-person instruction for all students, with some distance learning.
- In-person instruction for some students, with distance learning for most or all students.
- All distance learning, no in-person instruction.

The district planning teams include: Instruction, Technology, Wellness, Communication, Facilities, and Operations. Part of our planning process includes training all teachers in both distance learning and blended learning (in-person and distance learning in combination). Starting in April, teacher teams have participated in a statewide training, Reimage WA Ed, along with the weekly training offered by the district on best practices for distance and blended learning.

As we receive more guidance from the state and local health officials we will be prepared to transition between models as needed. As we receive information from the state over the next few months we will give continuous updates to families. Because thinking changes rapidly, our district is preparing for all of the above possibilities for next year, and will be ready to adapt as guidance changes. Should we need to transition back and forth between models as the science of the virus shifts, we will need consistent teaching and learning procedures that work both in person and distance learning.

The district has a three-part charge: Fostering strong teacher, parent, and student relationships. Focusing on equity of access to a high quality education for all to ensure academic progress and rebuilding academic foundations. And finally, making sure students and staff are healthy and safe.

To support a flexible school system, that may need to transition to distance learning for some period of time, or include blended in-person and distance learning Port Townsend Schools will have in place four key elements for all classes and students.

Weekly "playlists" for all classes. A resource that lists all the assignments for a class that week, with hyperlinks to resources, assignments, and tasks. Students work at their own pace through the lessons, with opportunities to get support from a teacher throughout the week either in person or remotely as needed.

Online classrooms, Google Classroom for grades 3-12, or SeeSaw for grades K-2. This is where students turn in assignments and connect with classmates and teachers.

A distance learning website. One place where all distance learning resources will be located for families and students, including tech support and learning support.

Access to technology at home for all students. Chromebooks or other devices for students to use at home, and support through a community grant for home internet access for low income families.

During School Closure

34,000 School meals provided

327 Chromebooks deployed to students

23 Low-income families connected to the internet *

For the 2019-2020 School Year

9,000 weekend meals provided by Port Townsend Kiwanis **

* Thanks to grant support from Jefferson Community Foundation and the Port Townsend Education Foundation, with the Connected Students Initiative.

To learn more about the Port Townsend Education Foundation visit pteducationfoundation.org

** Thanks to Kiwanis volunteers who run the Backpack For Kids program in Port Townsend. To get involved contact Bob Carter, conan812@hotmail.com.

• Example Playlist •

EXPLORERS' E-LEARNING PLAYLIST

Mr. Saksa, 4th Grade, Google Classroom

Week of 5/11-5/15

Weekly Assignments and Announcements

*This week we will continue to develop our informative **writing** skills, work on **spelling**, and continue our **learning** in Khan Academy. In **math**, we will work toward completing UNIT 5 (**Geometry**). In **science**, we're going to learn how the **brain processes senses**! We also have opportunities to practice **typing** and **coding**! Optional activities include our weekly **Flipgrid** and **read aloud** with Mr. Saksa!*

******NEW! All work is now due Friday!******

MONDAY 5/11 **ZOOM @ 1:00 PM**	MATH: ***HC 107, 108 "Clock Angles & Shape Sketches 1 and 2,"*** *Khan Academy math learning 'assignments,'* ***master math facts*** *(5-10 minutes).* ELA: *Informative Writing assignment, Writable: Topic Summary-Mars Exploration*. ***Reading:*** *30 minutes-No journal* **Skill-building:** *Typing.com (GOAL:* ***20*** *wpm,* ***95%*** *accuracy)*
TUESDAY 5/12	ELA: ***Spelling:*** *Work on this week's activities.* ***Reading****: Epic! Assigned books on "Awesome Americans" (pick ONE, different from last week)-Complete EPIC DRJ Awesome Americans.* SCIENCE: ***Brain Processing of Senses Activity*** **Skill-building:** ***Coding*** *(code.org)*
WEDNESDAY 5/13	MATH: ***SB 208 Mystery Angles****, Khan Academy math learning 'assignments,' master math facts (5-10 minutes).* ELA: ***Begin Informative Writing assignment, Writable****: Skill: Use Language and Vocabulary, "Growing Up in Tornado Alley"* ***Reading:*** *30 minutes-No journal* **Skill-building:** ***Typing****.com (GOAL:* ***20*** *wpm,* ***95%*** *accuracy)*
THURSDAY 5/14 **ZOOM @ 2:00 PM**	ELA: ***Spelling:*** *Complete this week's activity pack.* ***Reading****: Epic! Assigned books on "Awesome Americans" (pick a new person/book, different from last week), Complete EPIC DRJ.* SCIENCE: *Complete* ***Brain Processing of Senses*** *Activity* **Skill-building:** ***Coding*** *(code.org)*
FRIDAY 5/15	MATH: *Friday Spiral: PB 5* ***"Add, Subtract and Multiply,"*** *Khan Academy math learning 'assignments,'* ***master math facts*** *(5-10 minutes).* ELA: ***Complete Informative Writing assignment, Writable****:* ***"Growing Up in Tornado Alley"*** ***Reading:*** *30 minutes - No journal* **Skill-building:** ***Typing****.com or* ***Coding*** *(your choice)*

Place-Based Learning at Home

Our district mission, learning through a sense of place, was still in action over the last three months, even while students and teachers have been learning at home. Teachers came up with creative ways for students to use social media, websites, and video to engage in place-based learning.

Blue Heron Cooking Classes

Food Service Director Stacey Larsen taught a number of remote cooking classes over Zoom for Blue Heron students as part of their English Language Arts and Social Studies classes. Students learned recipes that went along with the themes they were exploring during their classes.

Garden Classes

The Salish Coast Garden program distributed seeds and plant starts to students through the free meals program in June. While families are staying at home, home gardening is a great way to keep kids busy outdoors over the summer. Farmer Emily from the Salish Coast Garden has also put together some garden lessons that are available for students all summer long who want to learn more about gardens and how they support a healthy watershed. The lessons can be found on the Salish Coast website salishcoast.ptschools.org.

Fifth Grade Climate Summit

The annual Climate Summit, where students from across the district share projects happened virtually this year in the 5th grade online classes. Earlier in the school year students researched alternative energy solutions, and while learning at home completed a project on how climate change impacts the oceans. Students created video, art projects, and presentations to share their learning. The projects are available to view from the Salish Coast website. salishcoast.ptschools.org.

The project is supported by the NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training Grant which provides support for teacher training and student projects in the Port Townsend School District. The school district has been awarded the grant again for the 2020-21 school year which will support ongoing student projects building awareness of the impacts of ocean acidification on the oceans and our watershed.

PE on Instagram

Physical Education at Port Townsend High School has been a fun and engaging program thanks to Logan Stegner, who joined the staff at PTHS this year. When school was in person you might have seen students running to Chetzemoka Park or leading PE activities for their peers in the gym. When school doors closed March 17, Mr. Stegner started pths.pe on Instagram to keep students connected to resources for health. Students in PE courses also received weekly lessons from Mr. Stegner to complete at home. Keeping students healthy and active is as important as ever. Follow pths.pe on Instagram. While you are there check out @redhawkartists and @porttownsendschooldistrict for more updates from our schools and programs.

Spanish and Media Classes Taco Project

The Taco project is the final project for PTHS Spanish language students, designed by teacher Reed Aubin. Under normal circumstances, Spanish classes would be celebrating the closing of the school year by making tacos in the culinary arts room, as part of Aubin's T. A. C. O. (Teaching Academics through Culinary Opportunities) program. This program, funded by the Port Townsend Education Foundation, involves students in the planting and cultivating of taco ingredients in the school garden, as well as learning to make tortillas from scratch.

Since creating tacos together was not possible this spring, Aubin created an assignment for his Spanish classes in which each student had the option to either make tacos

PTHS Student Sophie Kunka made linoleum taco prints for her project.

independently or to make something creative relating to tacos, such as a song or a story. Students documented their process with photos or videos, and included either Spanish speaking or writing. Taco projects were judged in a variety of categories, ranging from "Best Vegetarian Tacos" and "Best Homemade Tortillas" to "Best Interpretive Dance About Tacos" and "Best Reaction of a Family Member to Tacos." The grand prize winners and finalists were announced and streamed live on Facebook, Instagram and Youtube for students and families to watch.

The event included a specially curated show on KPTZ on June 7th. As the Media and Web Design teacher at PTHS, DJ David Bonobo (AKA Mr. Egeler) was able to use his weekly radio show, called "The Subversive Rhythm," to involve his students in the production of the program.

Highlighted student Taco projects are posted online for the community to view at ptschools.org/tacoproject.