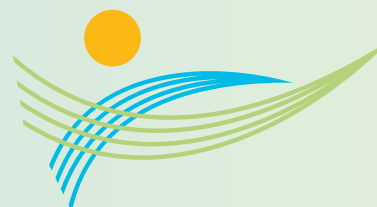


February 2020

PT SCHOOLS

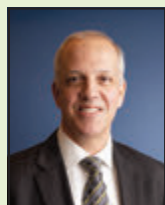


Superintendent
Dr. John Polm, 360-379-4501

1610 Blaine Street,
Port Townsend, WA 98368
www.ptschools.org

Letter of Invitation Census 2020

by Dr. John Polm



Over the next couple of months we are all likely to see advertisements about the 2020 Census. The U.S. Census Bureau starts their count in earnest in the spring of 2020. Some of us may wonder why it is so important to be counted. I would like to share some information that may help.

The goal of the 2020 Census is to count everyone. It is required to be conducted every 10 years by Article 1, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. Our congressional representation is determined by the census. We can gain or lose representatives in the U. S. House of Representatives based on the count. In addition, the census informs how federal dollars flow to states and local communities. All told, the census helps determine approximately \$675 billion in funding for local communities. Examples included Medicaid, which is a federally funded program providing medical insurance for people who cannot afford insurance.

From a public school perspective, the number of residents in a community and the relative wealth or income of those residents, impacts the schools significantly. This count impacts federal funding for special education, classroom technology, teacher training, after school programs, school lunch assistance, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and others. In just this last year the Port Townsend School District received \$57,431 in e-rate dollars for technology, based on the rate of students who qualify for free and reduced meals.

One of the big concerns is the undercounting of children. According to the Census Bureau, undercounting happens when kids live with grandparents or temporarily with a relative, those in foster care, and children whose first language is something other than English or whose parents are undocumented residents. This undercounting of children costs states significant federal dollars that could be supporting programs like those listed above. Undercounting can happen due to confusion around which residence a child may live. The rule is to count everyone who lives or is staying at the residence. Also, people should know that the Census Bureau does not share information, and is legally required to keep information confidential.

The U.S. Census Bureau provides curriculum materials for schools, and some of our teachers are using these materials. If you would like to learn more, check out: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis.html>.

The school district is working on a plan to provide access to computers on Census Day, April 1, 2020 for families to complete the census. We will have more information on this plan in the coming months. To read more, the following link helps explain why the census matters. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/2020census/why-2020-matters.html>.

Maritime Discovery Schools: Six Years of Place Based Learning in Port Townsend



Third grade students study birds at Fort Worden. Photo by PTHS Senior, Donna Mead

In the sixth year of the Maritime Discovery Schools initiative, the program has become embedded in the mission of the school district. Maritime and place-based learning is part of the core curriculum offered at all grade levels, to all students. Students work with community partners to make a positive impact on the community. Learning is focused around an essential question and addresses important state standards. In addition to the standards, students develop other important skills through completing the project, such as teamwork or communication. Many projects conclude with students sharing their learning publicly.

Where can I see examples of student learning in the community?

The work of kindergartners is on display in the Visitor's Center. Each year the class writes a book about their favorite places in Port Townsend. The books are shared with visiting families looking for activities for kids.

Eighth graders attend a trip to the State Capitol and meet with our state representatives. They come prepared with questions about important issues impacting our community.

Elementary and high school students will be

sharing their research about important issues of climate change with community members at a Climate Summit in June.

How are our students making a positive impact on the community?

Students in Port Townsend contribute to our community in all sorts of ways. Seventh graders have worked diligently each year to plan a riparian habitat restoration project. Collectively they have removed acres of blackberries, planted 100s of trees, and restored sites at many different locations. Kindergartners complete a beach clean up each year. OCEAN students have created bird habitat, cleaned up beaches, and planted trees. Student artwork enhances the beauty of our town in the month of May for ArtWave, when their work is on display in local businesses.

How can I support place-based learning?

Share your opinion with a school board member and let them know what you value. If you have a particular skill, or just an interest in mentoring, Skillmation provides a strong network of volunteers to the schools. You can create a profile on their website and will be contacted as opportunities arise. Skillmation.org
To learn more about the place-based projects visit ptschools.org/curriculum.

cont. to Maritime, pg. 3 > > > >

Writers in the Schools

By Melinda Schroder and Sarah Rubenstein

Seattle Arts and Lectures' Writers in the Schools (WITS) program connects professional writers with public school classrooms throughout the Puget Sound region to elevate the expressions of all students as they discover and develop their authentic writing and performance voices. WITS professional artists have been working with Port Townsend Schools for many years. This year students in grades 4-8 and Mr. Pierson's high school English class welcomed professional writers into the classroom for two weeks. During that time, students learned about a variety of poetry and fiction writing styles. Each student completes finished writing pieces that are shared in a class published anthology. Students share their writing with classmates and families at a cocoa house celebration at the end of the WITS program.

One student from each grade will be selected by the WITS writer, and will be invited to read at the end-of-year Seattle Arts and Lectures WITS reading, and their piece will be published in the WITS annual anthology of student writing.

Eighth grade students study fiction with author Peter Mountford, who has been the visiting author for WITS for the past 8 years at Blue Heron. Peter works closely with 8th grade students, modeling writing, providing constructive feedback and advice, and offering his expertise on writing to our students. By the end of the program 8th grade students write a 3-5 page story, completely generated from their imaginations. WITS aligns with the Common Core State Standards, specifically with narrative writing, as it gives students the practice to generate, create, and produce strong pieces of



Students work with professional writers in their classrooms.

fiction. At the end of the two weeks, students share their writing during an in-class Cocoa House reading. It is the highlight of the two weeks and a way to applaud their achievement of producing a short fiction piece. WITS is made possible by community and district support. Thanks to PTEF for being a long time supporter of this program.

Selections of 8th grade student writing:

"It was very dark, she could feel the large empty space's presence as she walked further in. Until she turned the little lamp on, the place looked like the messiest library ever. Pages and books were everywhere. Pictures of fairies and mushrooms. They were drawn very delicately and every part of the leaves and the wings were done by care. In the middle of the room, there was a big round table that had something on it. She couldn't tell what it was because there was a huge sheet that was covering it, however, just like any seven-year-old, Cora was driven by curiosity. Whatever was

underneath the sheet was compelling her to move forward, to unravel it, to free it, to touch it." -The Trapped Faeries by Tadu Dollarhide

"People stayed out of the Rambling woods for a reason. The incredibly large expanse of forest was a biosphere reserve because of its wolf and fox population, but not its history or popularity. Hardly anyone visited the forest nowadays. It had a reputation as dark, creepy, dense, impenetrable, and cold. When the National Park Service cut a few trees down to build a station, the entire crew had gotten very, very sick the next day, or become insanely paranoid. Hawthorn loved the forest. To him it was a refuge and a constant adventure, brimming with strange stories, mushrooms, and towering conifers. He had come to know the 5 major forest trails like the back of his hand, which is why, on this day, Hawthorn determined to make a new path through the dense undergrowth of the Rambling Wood."

~Rambling Tea by Fiona Skidmore



Building Resilience in Our Teens

Less worry.

More self-compassion.

Greater self-awareness and peace in the face of difficulties and shortcomings.

These are among the benefits PTHS students reported from an in-school program by The Benji Project, a local non-profit organization that teaches teens tools to navigate the emotional ups and downs of adolescence.

The initiative is especially urgent in light of a state survey that found Jefferson County teenagers suffer depressive emotions, and consider and attempt suicide at rates significantly above state average.

Last fall, The Benji Project offered its program to all 9th and 10th graders during the school day at no cost to PTHS or families. Students who finished the program shared in anonymous surveys the valuable skills they acquired.

"I am learning to appreciate my flaws, and how they make us beautiful, and to take life one step at a time."

"The most helpful skill I learned was how to take a moment to relax and not panic over small things."

"I learned how to use a self-compassionate voice when situations get hard."

The "Making Friends with Yourself"

cont. to Resilience, pg. 3 >>>>

» » » » *Resilience, cont. from pg. 2*

curriculum, led by trained facilitators Teresa Shiraishi and Heather McRae-Woolf of The Benji Project, is designed to help build mindfulness and self-compassion in our teenagers. The 12 weekly hour-long sessions at PTHS taught students positive coping mechanisms and how to treat themselves with kindness rather than self-criticism.

This February, similar sessions began with all 6th graders at Blue Heron Middle School, aiming to start strengthening their inner resources from an earlier, very impressionable age. Going forward, The Benji Project's vision is to work with students each year at grades 6, 9 and 12 to instill and reinforce resiliency skills and alternatives to risky coping behaviors.

This spring, The Benji Project is working on offering a workshop for graduates on caring for their wellbeing during the post high school transition. There will also be an 8-week class and camp offered this summer for teens in our area. A middle school boys-only program offered in conjunction with CedarRoot, an area non-profit focused on wilderness skills and experiential education, is also being explored. For more information, visit: www.thebenjiproject.org

O.C.E.A.N. Program: the Excitement of Experiential Education!

Port Townsend School District's K-12 O.C.E.A.N. Program (Opportunity, Community, Experience, Academics, and Navigation) is feeling the wind in its sails this year with an active parent body and classrooms full of eager minds and dedicated teachers. From outdoor adventures to creative endeavors and academic pursuits, students are developing the knowledge, skills and self-confidence to become creative, successful and engaged citizens.

OCEAN has an ongoing commitment to hands-on learning and experiential opportunities. Natural science expedition highlights include: an in depth look at the salmon cycle at Tarboo Creek; river restoration and historical significance of the Elwha River; and field ecology on Marrowstone Island to name a few.

The program's alternative learning environment embraces educational excellence and sets high academic standards. This fall it successfully launched a pilot Robotics Program spearheaded by teacher Bob Kirk with support from Gabriel Ashford and other volunteers. Teacher Carol Light accompanied high school students to the Seattle Art Museum to take



OCEAN K-5 students and parents walk part of the new Chetzemoka interpretive trail.

their classroom studies to the next level with a first-hand experience of Renaissance Art and World History. And longtime OCEAN teacher Daniel Molotsky has been diving into environmental sciences and maritime skills with the Bravo team, a partnership with the Northwest Maritime Center and Port Townsend School District, as students prepare for a 4-night boat trip.

Unique opportunities exist for families and teachers to form partnerships to educate students. OCEAN parent, professional theatre director and youth educator, Marc Weinblatt, has stepped back into the classroom to lead a pilot drama class. The class, which offers a playful approach to literacy and public speaking skills, is also gauging interest for a possible larger theatre project next school year. OCEAN has been known for its

spectacular theatre productions led by Rowen DeLuna and Marc Weinblatt in previous years.

OCEAN honored a piece of Port Townsend's rich cultural heritage by taking a guided walking tour on part of the new Chetzemoka (Čičmęhan) Trail. This interpretive trail travels throughout the City of Port Townsend and chronicles the history of the S'Klallam people and the European settlers as they worked to co-exist. From historical landmarks and artifacts to stories and artwork, students developed a deeper understanding and respect for the Original Peoples of this land through place-based learning.

» » » » *Maritime, cont. from pg. 1*

Successes of Maritime Discovery Schools

- ♦ All students are engaged with learning connected to the community
- ♦ 71 Maritime and Place-Based Projects across the district from preschool to grade 12
- ♦ 82 Community Partners engaged in maritime and place-based learning
- ♦ Ninth grade mentoring program in partnership with Skillmation
- ♦ Port Townsend Maritime Academy Skills Center program housed at the Northwest Maritime Center
- ♦ Ongoing teacher training to support place-based learning



Port Townsend Education Foundation Grants

Port Townsend Education Foundation (PTEF) exists to fill the gap in resources, supplies and academic opportunities by annually awarding grants for materials and memorable educational events. While some of the programs PTEF helps fund are well-known annual programs, such as the Writers In the Schools program and the Maritime Discovery Program, they also look for new, innovative opportunities each year. Here's a look at two of the twenty-five grants that PTEF awarded for the 2019-2020 school year.

FIRST ANNUAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL AT SALISH COAST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Film Festival, to be held Thursday, June 4th from 5:30 - 7:00 pm, is part of a Family Literacy/STEM Night that will feature both traditional and digital storytelling. Students at Salish Coast are very excited about sharing their voices with their community. Currently, Kindergarteners are decorating the letters that their "tech buddies" in 5th grade will animate to create the opening credits to the Film Festival. As a part of their Library/STEM classes, 4th and 5th-grade students have been working collaboratively to make storyboards and then bring them to life to create public service announcements about their love of books. Back in their 4th- and 5th-grade classrooms, they'll use these skills to make their own stop motion animation films about their Project Based Learning experiences in English/ Language Arts and Science. 1st-3rd graders will start their projects soon.



PTHS Sophomore Grace Taracka said, "I really enjoyed the process and how fun it was to experience tortillas making."

TEACHING ACADEMICS THROUGH CULINARY OPPORTUNITIES (T.A.C.O.) AT PTHS

In November, students in "Profe" Reed Aubin's Spanish classes worked with local nonprofit Organic Seed Alliance (OSA) to taste-test ten different varieties of locally-grown heirloom maize (corn) in order to determine which would make the best tortillas. OSA will use this data in their ongoing growing trials of different varieties. In turn, this spring and summer students will plant at least one variety in the PTHS garden, which they will process, harvest, and taste-test in the fall. The goal is to adapt and/or breed a variety of flour corn that grows well on the Olympic Peninsula and makes delicious tortillas, while increasing awareness of rich traditions of Latin American cultures among students, families, and the public.

This coming semester, Spanish students will continue hands-on exploration of culinary traditions of Peru, Mexico, and other parts of the Spanish-speaking world with cooking and gardening



projects.

Funding for these and other PTEF grants comes from generous donations from community members and corporate sponsorships, such as the recent \$2500 sponsorship, dedicated to funding culinary related projects such as the T.A.C.O. program, from the Port Townsend Food Co-op. For more information about PTEF and how you can help them award grants that inspire students and support teachers, consider attending the annual fundraiser on February 29, 2020, or visit pteducationfoundation.org.

NON-DISCRIMINATION DISCLOSURE

Port Townsend School District No. 50 does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of race, creed, religion, 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 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:

Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator for State Law (RCW 28A.640/28A.642): Amy Khile, 1610 Blaine Street, (360) 379-4603, akhile@ptschools.org
Title IX Officer: Laurie McGinnis, 1610 Blaine Street, (360) 379-4602, lmcginnis@ptschools.org
Section 504/ADA Coordinator: Shelby MacMeekin, 1610 Blaine Street, (360) 379-4535, smacmeekin@ptschools.org



PT SCHOOLS 2020