

# Port Townsend Maritime Academy

Things are ramping up as new programs come on board at the Port Townsend Maritime Academy. In just a short amount of time, the maritime academy first imagined by former Superintendent David Engle and Northwest Maritime Center Executive Director Jake Beattie has become home to an expanding array of courses and career opportunities at Port Townsend High School.

Four years after the Maritime Discovery Schools Initiative and its Maritime Academy were rolled out, the academy has steadily grown into a program that takes place both during and beyond the school day — and the school year — with opportunities for intensive studies of seamanship, navigation, deck skills, and marine trades.

Several high school career and technical education (CTE) classes have been developed and are taking place on the high school campus. Science teacher Tim Behrenfeld and community volunteers are teaching a computer-aided design class in which students work on underwater robots and designs. Kelley Watson and community member Mitch Poling are teaching boatbuilding basics in the form of traditional skin-on-frame kayaks. This year, students are also building stand-up paddleboards from form to finish. In addition, Watson teaches vessel operations and maritime manufacturing courses. The latter combines traditional hand-tool woodworking skills, in partnership with the Port Townsend School of Woodworking, and vessel maintenance, in conjunction with Sound Experience, the nonprofit that operates the schooner *Adventuress*.

Last summer, the academy expanded by adding new programs outside of the traditional school year. In partnership with



Students in the 2016-17 boatbuilding class display their kayaks. Photo by Elizabeth Becker

Sound Experience, the Northwest Maritime Center and West Sound Technical Skills Center in Bremerton, the academy offered a weeklong “Adventures at Sea” exploratory program to students interested in learning the beginning ropes of being a mariner.

Buoyed by the success of the summer pilot program, the Northwest Maritime Center and Port Townsend School District partnered with other organizations on a state Workforce Development grant, and in the fall of 2017, were awarded funding to implement a scaffolded approach for students interested in exploring maritime industry courses and entering the workforce. Called the “Talent and Prosperity for All” grant, this initiative aims to increase the dwindling maritime workforce by providing job opportunities for youths and adults in Jefferson and Pierce counties.

Schooner School is a result of that grant — a new after-school class in which students earn high school credit while gaining Coast Guard–approved vessel safety training through Alaska Marine Safety Education Association. They also receive basic safety training through Compass Courses with time aboard the schooner *Martha*, the ketch *Pacifica*, and *Adventuress*.

The second semester begins February 14, during which students will complete a 20-hour safety course that includes cold water survival, drills, flares, and more. Upon completion of safety training, students will launch into racing aboard *Martha* and *Pacifica*. The rest of the learning hours will be logged during a weekend aboard *Adventuress*.

This summer, a new Maritime 202

course launches in partnership with the Northwest Maritime Center. Students taking the course will receive their basic safety training and earn a U.S. Coast Guard–approved certificate for entry-level work in the maritime industry. The 40-hour safety training is followed by a three-day voyage aboard small boats in Puget Sound. By completing this course, a student earns .5 CTE credit, which can be applied toward graduation.

All of these programs are offered for free or a minimal cost and are open to students from East Jefferson and Kitsap counties. Find more information by visiting [ptschools.org/maritimeacademy](http://ptschools.org/maritimeacademy) or contacting Kelley Watson, program coordinator, at [kwatson@ptschools.org](mailto:kwatson@ptschools.org).



# PT SCHOOLS 2018

# Transition Program for PTHS Students Ages 18–21

As defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, transition is “a passage from one state, subject, or place to another.”

This school year, five students ranging in age from 18 to 21 are participating in a newly developed transition program that is offered through the district’s special services. Under the instruction of teacher Betsy Snyder-Johnson and paraeducator Teresa Coupe, adult students are developing skills needed to transition their lives from the public school setting to community life.

The transition program introduces students to a range of functions in community life: finding out what services are available to them in the community, visiting local businesses on a weekly basis, learning to shop for ingredients for home-cooked recipes, and developing job skills and habits that will benefit them when they have exited the high school program.

“Getting this training and instruction is a vital piece in becoming a productive citizen,” states Snyder-Johnson. “We want the students prepared when they have graduated from the high school program so they can become active in the community,” she adds. Students have had opportunities to work on the high school campus at various jobs, from clerical support to helping at the PTHS Java 101 beverage stand. Transition



Tristan and Bryce, students in the transition program, work with Kasandra Swindler at Fort Worden. Photo by Jan Boutillier

students have also been warmly welcomed into community workplaces by Goodwill, Fort Worden, and the Food Bank. These organizations have provided work experiences a few hours a week, with more opportunities being planned as the year progresses.

Although this program is in its infancy, it is expected to grow, expanding to reach more students in the future. The district plans to provide as much opportunity as possible in the transition program to prepare students for a lifestyle that is independent and productive.

Bryce, a student in the program says, “I like the transition program and I look forward to doing many things.”



First- and second-grade students estimate and then count the steps at Fort Worden beach.

## Fort Worden Partnership Keeps the Door Open

Thanks to the district’s ongoing partnership with the Fort Worden Public Development Authority (PDA), Port Townsend students are even better able to take advantage of the rich learning environments beyond their school classrooms. With a designated satellite classroom at the fort, teachers can plan field study time, with indoor space available to stage projects or bring students in from the elements.

Currently, first- and second-grade classes are taking advantage of the fort as a learning lab to connect their place-based studies and applied learning. One day last month, teachers Dawn Braden and Peter Braden took students from Grant Street Elementary to the fort to use what they had learned about measuring and calculating differences between two numbers and apply that knowledge to real-life objects. Students estimated the size of the fort’s big anchor, then measured it and calculated the difference. They did the same for the number of steps to the beach. In another lesson, and as a start to a place-based unit on the Salish Sea, kids found a secret sit spot in the woods and wrote observations in their science journals. Throughout the school year, students will return to those sit spots to make additional observations. With a designated classroom for schools, rain or shine, the fort is a home away from home.



# Young Composers Project Takes Off

The Young Composers Project started in 2015 with a grant from the Port Townsend Education Foundation (PTEF). With this grant, the music department purchased its first eight electronic piano keyboards as well as software for musical composition. After a successful pilot year, the program was expanded through a second PTEF grant. This increased the pieces of equipment to 15 keyboards as well as cable connectors and adapters that allow direct connections to iPads. The program, called “Music and Technology” class, is now a full-time elective at Blue Heron School and part of the school’s daily schedule.

The program gives students new and exciting musical opportunities not available at most schools. Students enrolled in the class are able to work with the music teacher to learn music creation from many different levels. In addition to studying music history ranging from Mozart to Beethoven to Copland, students also learn about modern artists who work in the digital realm. Students receive training in how to compose music using both traditional music notation as well as various digital techniques. This allows students to learn in many ways and to understand concepts on a deeper level.

To create their compositions, students use various software applications as well as hardware that includes Chromebooks, electronic keyboards and iPads. Students receive a rich education using technology on a daily basis and understanding how software programs work.

Using this technology, students have produced many compositions and projects. Some of the projects are original compositions or arrangements that have been publicly performed at school concerts by groups such as our orchestra program. Other projects have been developed specifically to be performed by computer

software. Students often work together in groups to develop themes and ideas for compositions.

Students are also learning to incorporate music into video projects, marrying sight and sound. Learning to create soundtracks for existing or original videos is an ongoing goal that we think will have lasting implications. It should allow students to showcase large-scale projects in our district like never before. Many of the video projects could be easily incorporated into current and future Maritime Discovery Schools (MDS) projects. Student works have already been tapped for use in district videos.

We are very excited for the future of this program and to see the creative projects our students develop next.

UW Saturday Enrichment Program for Grades 3–8 Coming to PT

The Robinson Center for Young Scholars at the University of Washington (UW) is partnering with the Port Townsend School District and other local partners to bring a pilot Saturday School Enrichment program to the Fort Worden campus on March 24, 2018. This is a unique opportunity for students and families to experience this highly regarded regional enrichment program. The UW Robinson Center is a national leader in developing programs that serve highly capable young precollege and college students. Port Townsend students in grades 3–8 and their families are invited to register for this Saturday program, which will include three enrichment classes for students, parent education for families, and a lunch at the Fort Worden Commons. For more information and a schedule, please visit [ptschools.org/SaturdayEnrichment](http://ptschools.org/SaturdayEnrichment).

## Seeking Thoughts on Redistricting

The Port Townsend School District is using Thoughtexchange, an online engagement tool, to seek community input on a proposal to reconfigure board director district representation by creating two at-large positions and three district director positions. All community members are invited to participate in this Thoughtexchange process.

To reconfigure the district, the school district would need two voter-approved ballot measures to: 1) Dissolve the existing five director districts; and 2) Approve a plan for three balanced director districts and two at-large positions. Concurrent with the second election would be the election of five board directors under the new districting plan.

All registered voters in Port Townsend School District #50 are eligible to vote on all school board positions.

### Advantages:

Allows more people to run for school board positions

Reduces the difficulty of finding candidates in outlying districts 4 and 5

May increase length of board member service and continuity

### Disadvantages:

Director districts would be larger in size, and some neighborhoods might be geographically distant from the residence of their school board member

The cost of running two ballot measures and developing redistricting plans

Community feedback is very important to the Board of Directors. To participate in the Thoughtexchange, visit: [my.thoughtexchange.com/#540248085](http://my.thoughtexchange.com/#540248085) or scan the QR code.



Use your smartphone camera app or download a QR reader to scan this QR code.

# PT SCHOOLS 2018



# Adventures at Sea

The Port Townsend School District is in its second year of cohosting Adventures at Sea with West Sound Technical Skills Center and Sound Experience, the nonprofit that runs the schooner *Adventuress*. Adventures at Sea is a weeklong summer school program aboard the 104-year-old, 133-foot historic sailing vessel. The summer school class is designed as an exploratory course for students interested in



**“I’ve learned amazing skills and made some amazing friendships that will probably last a lifetime.... I am so much stronger, smarter, and more capable than I ever imagined.”**

*Student from the Adventures at Sea summer school program aboard the schooner *Adventuress**



maritime careers, allowing them to gain hands-on sea experience in all aspects of running a ship: running the deck, setting and striking sails, holding watches, navigating, cooking, cleaning, docking, participating in safety drills, and working in the engine room. Students become crew

in training as part of this course; they own their own learning and lead their peers as they gain the foundational skills for entry into a maritime career.

One student from last year’s course said, “This is exactly how school should be, out in the real world, making connections, experiencing real life things.” As they left the boat last summer, more than one student was overheard saying that the course had been the best school experience of their life and even the best experience of their life.

Students who participate in the Adventures at Sea program earn .5 CTE credit for their efforts. They complete an independent study project in addition to their voyage on the boat. As student crew members, they intensely study and practice the necessary skills to safely operate a boat during their week aboard *Adventuress*.

Adventures at Sea is funded through state education funding, West Sound Technical Skills Center and a Workforce Development grant. For more information, please visit West Sound Technical Skills Center’s webpage, [bremertonschools.org/wstsc](http://bremertonschools.org/wstsc), or the Port Townsend Maritime Academy webpage, [ptschools.org/maritimeacademy](http://ptschools.org/maritimeacademy). Questions can also be directed to



Students meet on the bowsprit of the schooner *Adventuress* during the Summer 2017 Adventures at Sea program.

Kelley Watson, Port Townsend Maritime Academy coordinator, at [kwatson@ptschools.org](mailto:kwatson@ptschools.org).

The program dates for this year are June 16–21, 2018 and August 18–23, 2018. Registration opens March 12, 2018.



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