



PORT TOWNSEND

School District

LEARNING THROUGH A SENSE OF PLACE

Maritime Discovery Schools

Annual Report to the School Board

December 6, 2018

In the Port Townsend School District, the Maritime Discovery Schools Initiative has become a central part of the curriculum at all grade levels. Since 2013 teachers across the district have participated in ongoing professional development and place-based learning project development. At full implementation of the MDS initiative over 80 projects and community partnerships are being maintained across all grade levels and in all subject areas. The school board has adopted a mission statement, vision, and strategic plan that puts maritime and place-based learning at the core of the district's goals and identity. Each year the district has set goals to support reaching full implementation of the MDS vision, and in the fifth year of the initiative we are successfully meeting those goals. As we continue the full adoption of MDS we will reflect on our progress and maintain commitment to our vision of a school system that connects student learning to the heart of the community.

Full Implementation Overview

Students

Participating: Multiple experiences in inquiry and hands-on learning through place-based projects

Learning: Specific maritime skills and important 21st century skills

Contributing: Making a positive impact on their community

Connecting: Building relationships with each other and adults in the community

Teachers

Implementing: Three maritime focused or place-based projects

Sustaining: Strong community partnerships

Ongoing learning: Supported professional learning and reflection

Reflective practice: Participate in annual Teaching Labs

District

Supporting: Provides professional learning and funding for projects combining levy funds and grants

Improving: Seeks new opportunities through grants and partnerships

Reflective: Set goals in strategic plan with ongoing monitoring and data collection

Community

Supporting: Grant writing and fundraising to support programming

Partnership: Work with teachers to provide place-based learning

Benefits to the community

“The benefits of place-based learning show up in ways that cannot be reduced to percentiles alone, and they show up in others besides students”- The Place-Based Learning Portfolio

In addition to serving as a means for students to learn core content, projects also serve to provide a direct benefit to the community. One of the most important aspects of a fully developed project is the impact that student learning and work through the project has on the community. Some of our most refined projects fully meet this criteria.

Examples of how the community at-large benefits:

- North Olympic Salmon Coalition (NOSC) has developed their “Real Learning, Real Work” program for middle school students which they piloted in Port Townsend and now implement in five school districts in two counties.
- NOSC and Jefferson Land Trust have both partnered with Pacific Education Institute to develop robust field STEM experience that will be implemented across multiple school districts
- Port Townsend High School Maritime courses offered in the summer through West Sound Technical Skills Center, opens up access to students beyond Port Townsend

Examples of how students create direct benefits to the community:

- Create informational books for the visitors center
- Plant native trees and remove invasives to restore salmon habitat
- Grow vegetables in the garden for school meals and the food bank
- Teach the community about reducing carbon emissions to help decrease ocean acidification
- Plant rain gardens to reduce toxins from entering the ocean and sound
- Senior projects community service component

Strengths Weakness Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

The MDS Community Advisory group made up of community members, teachers, and administrators participated in a SWOT analysis to help determine next steps for the initiative as we move out of the five year initiative into full adoption of maritime and place-based learning.

Objective: Sustain the focus of maritime and place-based learning in Port Townsend School District for years to come.

	Helpful to achieving the objective	Harmful to achieving the objective
Internal origin	<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gets kids out of the classroom ● Projects developed with partners co-owned by teachers and partners ● Open space classrooms lead to increased collaboration ● One of the few Vessel Operations CTE programs in the state. ● Swimming program for all students ● Our district is “on the map” for maritime education ● Strong maritime programs ● Strong garden program ● Strong teacher commitment to maintaining projects and partnerships ● Students are exposed to many parts of the community ● Visionary school board with effective administrative team ● Middle and high schools have walkable access to water ● Students learn leadership, learn about careers, participate in stewardship ● Attracting high quality teaching candidates, with new ideas, because of MDS ● Many MDS projects were built on existing programs and have been strengthened and continued 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Other priorities can take energy, time, or money away from place-based learning ● Teachers may not have all the support they need for MDS projects ● Not all students are career ready. ● Class periods don’t always leave enough time for project based learning ● Making time for community and maritime engagement while maintaining state standards ● Some project funding is very grant dependent and uncertain from year to year ● Funding and arranging transportation can be challenging and time consuming ● Limited time for creating new projects ● Social/emotional needs of students are not always addressed in projects as student needs shift from year to year ● Not a lot of designated outdoor learning spaces ● Not using all the district outside resources as much as we could ● Field Trip paperwork time consuming and difficult ● For some teachers too many projects at a grade level for them to focus on all of them ● Lack of a plan for long term coordination of MDS

External origin	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MDS is an attraction for potential families ● Chimacum school district could be a future partner ● MDS could be a Jefferson County wide initiative ● Blue Heron wetlands is a possible learning location underutilized ● An increase in community engagement and support ● Skillmation as a resource ● Lots of community partners ● District enrollment has stabilized this school year ● Expanded Satellite Skills Center 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community partner relationships can be difficult to maintain when teachers turn over ● OSPI and legislature will continue to change laws and rules that govern schools, can take resources, time, and energy from place-based and maritime focus. ● Community partner funding and ability to partner fluctuates with grants, fundraising, and staffing
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Possible next step ideas from the Advisory Board:

- What is the career pathway through the MDS program?
- How can the community support partners through a .001% tax model like Tacoma?
- How will the complete Salish Coast campus support program goals?
- Could there be a career day or project sharing day?
- How can the MDS language be integrated so that all program fit under this banner?
- How can PT Schools be a leader regionally for teaching and learning?

As the first five years of piloting and implementing the Maritime Discovery Schools Initiative is coming to an end, we move together into the next five years, and beyond, as a regional leader of maritime and place-based learning with our full adoption of the Maritime Discovery Schools vision into the heart of our schools and curriculum.

Continued Grant Writing

Maritime and place-based learning means getting students off campus and interacting with many non-profits, and all of these type of projects require some sort of resources. Our levy funds and building budgets prioritize the maritime and place-based learning projects as they are able, but many projects receive additional funding from a variety of sources. District staff, including teachers, continue to write grants. We currently use grant funding from PT Education Foundation, NOAA, ESRI (GIS Mapping), McCarthy Dressman Foundation, and other sources to directly fund professional learning, field trips, and supplies for place-based learning. Our partner organizations receive funding from a variety

of grants and donations to fund their staffing, equipment, and resources that support our place-based learning projects. Continued dedication to grant writing and working with community partners to secure funding will likely continue to be a need for MDS projects. As much as the district and the partners can secure funding before the start of each school year will help support sustained project implementation.

Ongoing Evaluation

As a system we continue to seek opportunities to evaluate our program and understand how we might improve our methods for place-based learning. Each year the district conducts a survey of the MDS initiative and reviews the data. This has been helpful in providing a baseline and observing growth and changes. In 2017, Dr. Jeffrey Youde provided a program evaluation of the Maritime Discovery Schools Initiative, which helped provide next steps and suggestions for continuing the work. In collaboration with the Port Townsend Marine Science Center through the Institute for Museum and Library Sciences, an outside evaluation will be completed with a focus on our partnerships.

Susan Paulsen, a science teacher at Blue Heron, is also a PhD Candidate at Texas Tech University College of Education, in Global Pragmatic Research in STEM Curriculum and Instruction. As part of her doctorate program requirements Ms. Paulsen is offering to work in collaboration with the school district to provide a two part evaluation. First, using the five years of data on place-based education in Port Townsend analyze the following: As a District are we meeting the district goals from a teacher and student perspective? Complete analysis and board presentation by the end of Summer 2019. Second, she will provide a complete place-based program analysis based on standards set by the Place-Based Education Evaluation Collaborative (PEEC). The analysis will use observations, survey data, interviews, and archival information such as board minutes to answer the following: How does Port Townsend's Place Based Program align and meet the national standards set forth by the Place-Based Education Evaluation Collaborative (PEEC) and to what extent does this impact the Port Townsend overall educational system? A complete in-depth report and board presentation by June 2020.

Where do we go next?

The Maritime Discovery Schools Advisory groups, with input from teachers and administrators has created a vision for how the MDS initiative will be sustained and at the core to our district identity over the next two decades. This type of long-term district identity and focus is one of the unique characteristics of the ambitious goals and vision we have created for our district.

	2019-2025 (5 years)	2025-2030 (10 years)	2030-2040 (20 years)
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Each teacher is implementing three or more maritime or place-based projects annually. They are interdisciplinary and incorporated into the curriculum throughout the school year. ❖ Sustaining community partnerships, and forming new ones as appropriate. ❖ Ongoing and continuous improvement of projects. ❖ Integrate MDS projects into all curriculum maps, course maps, and course syllabi ❖ Mentor, coach and support fellow teachers ❖ Participating in ongoing reflection of teaching practice, including district supported teaching labs ❖ Taking on leadership roles in the district and region connected to place-based learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Deeply developed projects incorporated into the curriculum throughout the year as part of a well designed K-12 project progression. ❖ Strong systems in place for new project design and implementation ❖ Implementing K-12 career development plan including mentorship and shadowing ❖ New teachers are mentored by an experienced teacher as an introduction to PBL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sustaining long term community projects that make a positive impact on our community ❖ Place-based learning is the core of the curriculum ❖ Technology is used seamlessly to transform learning in projects ❖ Teachers are seen as regional and national experts on place-based learning
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Take increasing responsibility for creating, designing, and making decisions in the implementation of the project. ❖ Learning key academic standards through completion of project work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Students are identifying community issues to be solved through school projects ❖ All students have a strong connection with adults in the community including mentoring and job shadowing. ❖ All students have a clear career pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Students see themselves as important members of the community that make important contributions. ❖ Students making meaningful accomplishments through their school work.

Where do we go next? (continued)

	2019-2025 (5 years)	2025-2030 (10 years)	2030-2040 (20 years)
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ New hire teacher induction focused on place-based learning ❖ Focused professional learning for all teachers on continuous improvement of place-based learning projects and building expert knowledge ❖ Recruit and hire administrators, teachers, and staff with a focus on place-based learning ❖ Draft a K-12 career development plan ❖ Support ongoing reflection of teaching practice, including district supported teaching labs ❖ Leader of professional learning across the region on place-based learning ❖ Maritime academy and CTE courses fully developed ❖ Funding field based and hands on learning through a combination of levy funds and grant writing ❖ Develop and maintain a network of formal partnerships in support of PBL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Maritime and technical education center sustained in Port Townsend ❖ Teachers and Admin from the PNW are coming to us to train them in place-based learning ❖ Leading innovative professional development that introduces any new community partnerships or strengthens working relationships ❖ Decisions about curriculum adoption, policy and procedures, and other working logistics are made in support of place-based learning ❖ District strategic plan centered around achieving goals connected to maritime and place-based learning ❖ Hosts summer place-based learning professional development institute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Maintains focus on place-based learning with a maritime focus, while adapting to changing state priorities, funding levels and global concerns ❖ Leading other districts through creating a place-based learning model that is adaptive to community needs and resources ❖ School district seen as a community resource that contributes greatly to the vitality of the community
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Resources are shared between school and community, each benefiting from the connections built through the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Community partnerships are transforming the way the community and schools work and do business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Community partners see themselves as learners alongside students, working collaboratively to solve real community problems. ❖ Families move to PT because of our thriving school system