



# PORT TOWNSEND

## School District

LEARNING THROUGH A SENSE OF PLACE

**Superintendent**  
Dr. John A. Polm, Jr.

**Board of Directors**  
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### **Maritime Discovery Schools Initiative Project Evaluation 2018-2019**

At the conclusion of the fifth 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. Maintaining our collective focus on maritime and place-based learning will be the sustaining work at all levels of the district. Through ongoing annual evaluation of maritime and place-based learning, and through alignment of our goals with the strategic plan, we can sustain this focus, while undertaking other important initiatives in the district.

#### **5 year of progress**

- 71 Maritime and Place-Based Projects across preschool to grade 12
- 29 Interdisciplinary projects
- 82 Community Partners engaged in maritime and place-based learning
- Ninth grade mentoring program in place
- Port Townsend Maritime Academy Skills Center in place
- Ongoing annual professional learning and new hire orientation focused on maritime and place-based learning

#### **Grant Support**

- NOAA B-WET Ocean Acidification, continues through July 2020
- McCarthy Dressman Foundation, through July 2019

#### **Annual Student Survey**

474 students, grades 4-12

Q: Thinking about all your classes, describe your best learning experience in the 2018-19 school year. (selected responses)

- My best learning experience was learning how we affected our oceans and did many projects on ocean acidification, and got to go to many places and field trips and learn how to determine if our oceans are dangerous for our ocean creatures that help us survive and keep track on our world and keeping it safe.
- My favorite trip was when we went down to the Dungeness River. We got to look at the river as well as measure trees.
- The best learning experience was building a museum. this museum will teach us lots about african american history.
- I had learned through Cannery Row, a book read in my English 11 class, about who Steinbeck was and his boat that is being repaired here.
- My favorite learning experience is going to sunfield farm. we got to learn about wetlands sheep etc. That was the best learning experience.

- When the high schoolers came here and we did a project with them and my teacher Mr. T. And When Jesse Watson came to do art with us.
- The entirety of my robotics class. We got to make and program robots, use laser cutters, make shelves and boats and boxes and all kinds of thing. We got to mess around with sensors and 3D modeling, making designs and logos.
- My best learning experience was going to the Youth Environmental Summit in Yakima with Students For Sustainability. I was able to practice public speaking as well as learn more about what other people are doing to protect the environment.
- This year we had the opportunity to learn about career paths and it opened my eyes to future jobs that I'd be interested in doing and what kind of education I want to obtain.
- My best learning experience during this school year was the navigation and boat safety units we studied extensively within Vessel Operations. I believe this was the most influential/best learning experience within my 10th grade year because after learning and retaining this valuable information I was able to apply this to a real world setting when sailing and operating boats through the class.
- My best learning experience so far would have to be when I read Fast Food Nation and learned about the conditions in slaughterhouses and the effect of Fast Food on the general populous.
- When we went to our Quilcene field trip to the fish hatchery. I learned a lot about fish and the process of their life cycle, along with ocean acidification and how pH levels affect our environment and community.
- going to garden is fun because you get to learn more about the food we eat
- My best learning experience was kilisut harbor. we learned about taking surveys for clam and just learned a ton about the island the military and fish.
- steam with building robots. it was hands on and had many design choices.
- We chose topics to research on Port Townsend. I think it's been very interesting so far and I can't wait to finish my brochure on the Manresa Castle.
- My best learning experience was the PNW field trip because I got to learn about the habitat of the salmon in our area and how we affect it in a negative and positive way.
- The best learning experience for me was going to the maritime center and having school down there for one and a half weeks. I really enjoyed learning to row a longboat efficiently, charting on maps, longboat commands, racing longboats, the lunchtime presentations, and everything else about maritime.

### **Annual Teacher Survey**

70 Responses, teachers of PreK-12

Q: In a few sentences, please describe the best learning experience that took place in your classroom or role this year. (selected responses)

- A very limited English learner successfully presented during culture night and was extremely proud of his project. I have never seen him so excited and proud.
- Student with special needs writing about ocean acidification in science. Student able to tell the impact on coral.
- On water vessel operations classes. Sailing, docking, motor vessels.
- In my role, I've worked with Skillmation Mentors and other community partners to bring career-based knowledge to students as they explore their post-high school options.
- Student debriefs after place-based learning experiences - the trips are almost always meaningful and motivating for students. The hands on piece for students with learning differences is huge.

- Working on our town project, specifically the talking about how adding a marina would affect the marine life of living in the water surrounding town.
- integration of land trust volunteer to work with my students on integrating geology with my students
- On the water education in maritime skills and environmental science. Field experiences that support the work we are doing in the classroom. Overnight camping trip as a culminating project to put skills into action.
- Robotics- partnership with First Robotics Community partners and participation in 1st Lego League Robotics competition
- I believe that the swimming program is a critical resource for our students who may not have the opportunity to visit the pool and develop swimming skills.
- Planting trees for salmon habitat, students literally getting their hands dirty to solve a very local and impactful issue.
- The collaboration with Sabrina Hill for our PNW Native American studies and our collaboration with the Salish Coast Preschool program.
- Some of the richest discussions in my class came from students being concerned about pollution in the ocean. They brainstormed on both a macro and micro level what they could do to make sure that there was less pollution in the ocean and also designed robots (pretend ones) to clean up the ocean.
- Learning about the physics of the PT ferry. A lot of real life examples of physics concepts affecting the ship.
- Visiting the Illahee Preserve in the fall to observe salmon returning and in the spring to release salmon were the best learning experiences that took place this year. The learning that took place in the classroom before/after field trips was very rich and meaningful for students.
- Art with Jesse created an activity in which most students were really excited and applied to concepts taught in the classroom. Students then took a lot of ownership knowing their art would be displayed at the Maritime Center.
- I think students enjoyed the bike riding in my class where they learned how to ride safely while going to different places in town. Some did not know how to ride until they learned in my class.
- I worked with local musicians on folk dancing for my square dancing unit.

Q: How can the district support teachers continuing to integrate maritime and place-based learning into the curriculum, with the ongoing goal of three or more maritime or place-based projects next school year for each teacher.

- Money, time. Good projects require funding and time to plan/coordinate.
- Connect multi level intervention teachers with grade levels that can support their initiative.
- Would like to see school schedule flip to always have 5 and 6 after lunch to support students who would like to attend WST.
- Ideas on how to incorporate multiple content areas into the same project (e.g., science, social studies, writing, maybe even art and music)
- I feel well supported.
- Provide more support for students to be apprentices and interns at various businesses in our community as either Senior Project or for credit.
- More teacher directed collaboration time.

- I think a goal of 3 or more maritime or place-based projects takes away from the time Salish Coast staff need to grow the PBIS program and to begin the RTI process. These two programs should be the sole focus of extra time, effort and energy for the staff for the next 2 years.

Percent of teachers who:

- Include maritime topics into the curriculum 85%
- Are comfortable working with community partners 98%
- Are comfortable facilitating project based learning in their classroom 98%

Percent of teachers who say:

- Students do community volunteering or service learning through their school work 70%
- Through their schoolwork, students regularly take action to protect and improve the environment. 76%
- The content of classroom assignments and homework is directly connected to the local natural, maritime, and/or town environment. 65%
- Students build, design or repair things through their school work. 79%
- Students use a variety of forms of creative expression as a part of their school work. 92%

### **Annual Partner Survey**

In person interview of four community partners: Skillmation, Jefferson Land Trust, North Olympic Salmon Coalition, Port Townsend Marine Science Center.

Takeaways:

- Partners are often serving multiple grade levels of students, PTMSC serves more than 500 PT students annually.
- Most partners are contributing significant financial resources, staff and volunteer time to the programming they provide schools.
- All partners surveyed indicate the partnership with the school is vital to the organization meeting their mission.
- An end of year partner debrief was important to each of the partners.
- All the partners were open to expanding the number of students and grade levels they serve in the schools.
- The biggest challenge the organizations faced was communication with the schools around shifting programs, expectations, or staffing.

### **Summary**

Through the five years of the initiative phase of the project teachers and schools have developed strong community partners, and have many strong ongoing projects. The maritime and place-based learning happening across the district is making a significant impact on student learning. The work moving forward will be about ongoing support to maintain the focus on the district mission. Teachers will continue to need professional development and planning time focused on place-based learning.

### **Where do we go from here:**

All teachers maintain commitment through:

- Core classroom teachers implementing 3 projects annually, SPED and intervention teachers either supporting students accessing core curriculum projects or standalone projects within the intervention
- All projects integrated in the core curriculum of courses
- All projects including the seven essential elements of place-based learning (from the MDS curriculum Matrix Committee)
- All teachers participating in teaching labs to reflect on teaching practice
- Representatives from each building serving on committees

The District maintains commitment to maritime and placed based learning through:

- Development of teacher leadership on Professional Learning, MDS Advisory, and MDS Curriculum Matrix committees
- School board participation in MDS Advisory Committee
- Building budgets and district grant support for field experiences, garden program, and place-based learning
- School and district administrators cultivating partnerships through participation in community organization meetings, and inviting partners into the schools
- Sustaining partnerships through MOUs, annual review, and evaluation
- Ongoing evaluation of both the scale of implementation, and the quality of the projects implemented

### **Essential Elements of Place-Based Learning in Port Townsend**

*Developed by the MDS Matrix Committee*

1. Community Partner
2. Essential Question
3. Academic Assessment
4. Assessed Student Disposition
5. Place-Based Learning Theme
6. Positive Community Impact
7. Public Presentation