

NOTES
Peninsula School District Parent Council
Wednesday, October 1, 2025
10:00am-12:00pm

I. Attendees

Beth LaTendresse (Facilitator), Krestin Bahr (Superintendent), Michael Farmer (Chief of Schools), Julie Shultz-Bartlett (Deputy Chief of Schools), Natalie Wimberly (President, PSD Board of Directors), John Hellwich (Director of Secondary Learning and Teaching), Kelly Pruitt (ELA Elementary Facilitator), Arielle Hoesche (YMCA Childcare), Kayla Ferguson (Gig Harbor Library), Maureen Brunetti (Artondale), Kate Kelley (Discovery), Danielle Polliard (Evergreen), Erica Walsh (Harbor Heights), Kelly Carpenter (Pioneer), Julie Hoffman (Purdy), Adam Markel (Swiftwater), Kate Cunha (Goodman), Karmen Furer (Harbor Ridge & Hands On Art), Krissy Desnoyer (Kopachuck), Angie Costa (GHHS), Marcy Trott (GHHS)

II. District Update

Julie Shultz-Bartlett

- October is Bullying Prevention month. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) representatives will be putting things together for the buildings this month including a Book Study. Focus on bullying prevention is on discriminatory language and harassment.
- The movie Upstanders will be shown in secondary classrooms. This movie was previewed with the producer on September 18th. It would be a good movie to preview with your children - geared towards middle grades and above.
- October is also principal appreciation month.
- At the end of October, elementary schools will have conferences and a ½ day schedule.
- Last spring, PDC raised concerns regarding how PTA/VPOs were able to communicate with parents noting vast differences in policies among the schools.
- Over the summer work was done to create continuity and policy for all of the schools to follow. This school year the principal newsletters will be the primary conduit for all information. There should not be “one-off” emails announcing events. PTA/VPO and other parent organizations should be sending their messages to their school’s front office to be put into the principal’s newsletter.
- Principals have been asked to write a newsletter a minimum of twice a month.
- The district has plans to start using Class Intercom as a tool for parent organizations to be able to share messages on the schools’ official social media pages. This tool will allow PTA/VPOs to create a post and submit it through the app for the school principal to approve and post.
- PDC school reps shared that last spring Swiftwater’s model of communication was the ideal scenario for elementary PTA/VPOs. That process had allowed the VPO to send one email per week on a set day that was just a VPO email. School representatives shared that including PTA/VPO information in the principal newsletter buries that information with many other things and does not necessarily allow for timely distribution of information on events.

Michael Farmer

- The PSAT will still be offered during the school day for 10th and 11th graders at both high schools, but it will be an opt in test. Students who wish to take the test must register and pay a fee of \$18.

- Several questions and concerns about this were raised by school representatives including limiting access to the test because parents may not want to pay the fee or students may not follow through with the registration process. Additionally, there were concerns that students opting into the test are now missing class to take the test.
- The district is not funding PSAT tests any longer due in part to WA state universities being test optional which has resulted in fewer PSD students taking the SAT.
- PSD is working to have an SAT testing site within our schools for this school year. Ideally we would be able to provide a test site for the February/March time frame.

Krestin Bahr

- The Drone Show was on September 18th and was a great success. This event was timed with a Superintendent's conference that was hosted on the same day and the movie Upstanders was also viewed that evening with the producer on site for discussion.
- The drone program officially kicked off this fall. The St Vrain Valley School District in Colorado is mentoring PSD on this program. They have a strong business model for innovation.
- Math curriculum and curriculum adoptions are being looked at this year. The district is looking at math models in other states. Minnesota has legislation around math curriculum - Washington does not have any similar legislation.
- The district is looking at math scores in other districts to see who is succeeding in math education.
- Additionally the district continues to focus on The Science of Reading with the goal of all 3rd graders reading at level. This has been proven to be a significant benchmark for success in school.
- One data point that parents are directly involved in is attendance. There is a direct correlation between attendance and scores on state testing. Attendance correlates with graduation as well.
- Only 77% of PSD students have a 90% attendance rate or higher.
- School representatives asked for additional breakdown and details on that data such as military families and running start students. This data would be helpful for being able to share this data with parents through PTAs to encourage a focus on attendance.
- Julie Shultz-Bartlett shared that "nudge" letters for attendance began on September 29th.
- PSD was accepted into the League of Innovative Schools which is a national network supporting forward thinking leaders in education.
- Holding a collective Science Fair in the spring is something the district would like to discuss with PDC representatives. Parent Series education, which was discussed last spring, is another topic that the district would like to further discuss with PDC.
- A significant grant was received with labor partners surrounding wellness for staff. There are wellness representatives at each school. The University of Washington has a grant surrounding community collective meals that PSD has applied for and is awaiting announcement on who the grantees will be.
- Starting this year Aramark is the new food service company for PSD. PSD is the first district, K-12, to use them. They are on college campuses and other venues. They are providing great quality choices for our students. If there are parents interested, a tour during lunch could be set up.
- It was identified that National Honors Society membership requirements differ greatly between Peninsula High School and Gig Harbor High School. There are national minimum requirements set by the organization. Schools must meet those minimum requirements, but they can add stricter guidelines for acceptance. Principals and staff will be working to create one standard to be used by both high schools.

Natalie Wimberly

- The PSD School Board is part of the Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) which is composed of almost 1500 school board members across the state.
- WSSDA adopts positions as a group that they advocate for and that may become the focus for legislative initiatives.
- The school board would like to see literacy as a focus this year. WSSDA has a position on literacy that was adopted in 2024, and the board would like to see that as a legislative focus.

Kelly Pruitt

- Young Authors Conference will be held on October 18th at Goodman Middle School starting at 8:30 AM.
- Registration for students ended on October 1st and 68 middle school students were signed up as of the morning of Oct 1st. 14 authors are participating in the event including some teachers.
- Requesting middle school VPO/PTAs provide coffee and snacks for the authors during this event.
- Goodman is willing to take the lead on this as they are the hosting site for the event.

John Hellwich

- The Professional Development day on October 13th will have a strong focus on ELA curriculum implementation. All teachers will be working on instructional essentials on this day, and there is no school for students.
- Last year Math Guiding Principles for K-12 were developed. Materials are being reviewed this year and hopefully new materials will be selected to pilot. Once pilot materials start being used, parents are encouraged to connect with teachers on materials and give feedback.
- Teachers are eager for a new curriculum in math.
- The Thriving Generation launch party is October 10th from 4:00-6:00 PM at Gateway Park on the Key Peninsula. The event is geared towards upper elementary and middle school students, but families and students of all ages are welcome.
- Thriving Generation is also sponsoring a phone free weekend November 7th - 9th. There will be an online sign up for this and completing the challenge will earn a raffle ticket for prizes.
- Schools could participate by having a school or grade level contest for the phone free weekend.
- There is new branding and the website has also been updated. The campaign is focused on the impact within our community and is taking a step back from the book The Anxious Generation which was the original inspiration behind the group. Focus at this point is local and community driven.

III. Michael Farmer (Peninsula School District Chief of Schools)

- PDC school representatives requested the district to provide information regarding the operation of the group LifeWise within Peninsula School District. School representatives shared concerns that LiveWise is advertising on school property via their bus, Discovery reporting that the bus was circling the parking lot. Some of the additional concerns voiced were that school resources may be used for checking in and out of the building and that this program takes away from time in the classroom. Concerns about participants being asked to recruit other students were also voiced.

- PSD does not have a partnership with LifeWise. There were some statements made online by LifeWise that made it appear that they were partnering with the district and that language has been removed.
- LifeWise is an organization based out of Ohio that is focused on providing religious instruction to students during the school day. It is specific to the organization's plan that students be pulled out of school during the school day. The district wants students to be in school for the duration of the school day and does not want them pulled out for any reason.
- Attendance is already an issue and priority for the district.
- LifeWise is not allowed to distribute any materials or advertise on school property.
- Parents must give full authorization to the specific individual (Bus driver) from LifeWise in order for their student to be checked out of school by them. This is not a special case form - the person picking up must be listed as authorized to pick the student up from school in the appropriate forms in power school.
- Currently this is an extremely limited situation within the district.
- The faith leaders group that works with the school district is not supporting this program.
- Superintendent Bahr issued a statement highlighting PSD board policies affecting religious instruction. This statement will be attached to the distribution of these minutes. Concerns about LifeWise were also raised during the August 26th School Board meeting and the recording of that meeting can be found at this [link](#).

IV. PDC Representative Sharing

Pierce County Library - Kayla Ferguson

- At the elementary level the core programming for fall will be a STEAM program and Ready Readers.
- The STEAM program will be offered Mondays after school from 4:00-5:00 PM. The library is partnering with Code Ninjas for some of these events.
- Sundays there is a Dungeons and Dragons group from tweens are the target group (8-12).
- A four week Drawing 101 session will start in October. This is for students 1st grade and up.

YMCA - Arielle Hoesche

- The YMCA can provide childcare at any school event free of charge. This includes schools that do not have a YMCA before or after program at their site. Childcare could be provided for PTA meetings or other school events.

Hands on Art - Karmen Furer

- The first project for the year is copper jewelry. The training had the largest turnout of ever for a training with 100 parents in attendance!

Artondale

- Two week theater club production of Winnie the Pooh Kids - 20 kids signed up! Oct 9th and 10th the play will be at 6:30 PM at Artondale
- Fundraisers: Minion movie and Moctezuma's dine out
- Read-a-thon starts Oct 6-19th
- October 14-17 Scholastic Book Fair
- October 24th trunk or treat and fall events expanding to blacktop and field

Discovery

- Gaga Ball was finally installed! This was a 2023 VPO funded special project.
- We had a great first VPO meeting on Sept 17 - We partnered with YMCA/NHS for childcare and had a great turnout. We formally approved our budget, including a lot of funding for Discovery Special Projects!
 - Gardening program - \$4,000 Paige S Grant/\$1,000 VPO
 - Art @ Recess- STEAM art projects during recess
 - Recess Equipment - replacing balls, play items
 - 3D Printers for STEAM
 - First Lego League- additional funds to make competition tables, purchase supplies for another team
- 10/2 - We are holding our first Community Gather event at Locust Cider. This is not a takeover or fundraiser, but just a family get together / meetup event.
- 10/7 - Discovery fondi pizzeria takeover
- 10/24 - Fall Festival: We are excited to host our first trunk or treat, luminary walk to the kids gig, popcorn, food trucks, an outdoor movie and carnival style games including gaga ball.
- 11/6 - Piñata Family Night - during our book fair, a parent who owns a piñata company will be hosting an event for families to learn how to make piñatas.

Evergreen

- Read-a-Thon is kicking off. The goal is to raise \$31 per student which is \$1 a day! \$1700 has been raised so far. The goal is to see every student get a book at the bookfair.
- Funds are being raised using an online platform called zefffy.com. The website provides 100% profit back to PTA.
- Students who complete 100% of their reading goal will be entered to win "Principal for the Day".

Harbor Heights

- Hosted an afternoon at the Mariners on Sept 14th with about 150 staff, students and their family members where they got to witness Cal Raleigh hit a record setting homerun. With this event we were able to fundraise \$950.00
- We will be hosting Missoula Children's Theater for a production of Hansel and Gretel October 6-11th. With performances on October 10 6pm and 11th 1pm. Tickets can be purchased at the door in the Harbor Heights Commons Cash Only. \$10 Adults/ \$7 Students & Seniors
- Moctezuma's Restaurant Takeover October 14th. 20% of proceeds will be sent back to us.
- Our largest fundraiser, Spell-a-thon, will start October 20-November 21, with a \$20,000 fundraising goal. We count on this fundraiser to fund a majority of our programming.
- Boo Bash, October 24, 5-7:30pm, games, trick-or-treating halls, cake walk, family dance party.
- Holiday Wreath Fundraiser will open for orders later in October with orders closing November 8th for delivery around Thanksgiving.

Minter Creek

Pioneer

Purdy

- We've started planning for the PTA spring auction (our bi-annual fundraiser). It will be on Saturday 03/28 at Canterwood and the theme is Under the Sea.
- Watch DOGS (Dads of Great Students) is starting and holding a kick off event on Thurs 10/09.
- Monster Mash will be on Thursday 10/23.

Swiftwater

- In August parents took on an outdoor clean up project. There was an overgrown area behind the fence and parents with community support have cleaned it up to make trails and a flexible outdoor usage space.
- Kinder Jump Start - Hosted with treats and getting kinder parents involved/welcome.
- Meet the Teacher - provided back drop for pictures and decorated for meet the teacher
- Dads on Duty - In our 2nd year. The program has been widely supported by our school administration and is helping them a lot with a current shortage of paras and recess supervisors.
- Replaced recess sports equipment - Sports equipment and sport balls were in terrible shape and we replaced the majority of them
- Reviewed and updated by laws.
 - Added 2 member at large positions
 - Added role description for the Volunteer Coordinator
 - Added role description for the Member at Large
 - Updated Board transition to occur in July moving forward
 - Clarified there will be two general meetings per year, with the schedule to be set by the board
 - Removed need to use a specific bank, board to decide
 - Add requirement to maintain a minimum balance of \$5,000 in the bank account at the end of the school year
 - Incorporated Scholarship details
- Paid out \$7200 in teacher support funds.
- Pop Corn Fridays – 1st one this Friday
- Fall Carnival – Saturday the 4th 4-7 PM At Swiftwater Elem
- 8 Oct Staff treats – Monthly event (5th Grade families this month)
- 5th Grade camp fundraisers
- Largest fundraiser of the year kicks off next week. Reading for Success

Vaughn

Voyager

Goodman

- General VPO Meeting October 7th.

Harbor Ridge

- Walk the Ridge Fundraiser - Friday, September 26

- The VPO raised \$10,000 to fund it's annual programming including clubs, staff appreciation, the student store
- VPO Meeting: Our first VPO meeting is Wednesday, October 8 at 6pm in the Library at Harbor Ridge.
- Water Bottle Filling Station: The VPO is working with the district to install a second water bottle filling station at HRMS. It will replace a water fountain near the aux gym. We are working to get two more plumbing and electrical bids before working with Patrick on selecting the fixture and choosing the contractor. Once those pieces are in place the VPO will start the paperwork to make a donation to the school/district for the project. The goal is to have the project completed by the end of the school year.
- Student Store: The student store is open twice a week and will likely open to 3-4 days per week in October going forward.
- Stock the Staff Room: We will run a stock the staff room drive asking par
- Conference Week Meals: The VPO will provide lunch and dinner for staff and teachers during conference week.
- PBIS: The staff and teachers will be passing out points (online system) starting October 1 and redemption begins Wednesday, October 8 from the student store.

Key Peninsula Middle School

Kopachuck

Gig Harbor High School

- GHHS Communities in Schools, Shannon Olsen has an amazon wishlist for items that are needed to support students at GHHS. [CISP GHHS Amazon Wishlist](#)
- GHHS National Honors Society Students started partnering with Discovery on some events last year and have already scheduled several events with them this year. If other GHHS feeder elementary schools are interested in partnering they can contact Discovery or GHHS PDC reps for contact information.
- GHHS Rep shared that there is a company that makes coloring books for fundraisers and 50% is donated back. The company is [A Brighter Year](#)
- Party parents handed out bracelets and candy in September. For October they will be handing out candy on Halloween.
- Scholarship notebooks for Seniors are on sale now and can be purchased [here](#). They will also be sold at school on October 29th. Notebooks need to be picked up by students on November 6th. There will be a notebook tutorial on November 20th at 7:00 PM in the GHHS library as well as three workshops during lunch in December and January. Notebooks are due January 22nd.

Athletics

- GPAs for Varsity athletes
 - Distinguished Team (3.145) Football
 - Outstanding Teams (3.5-4.0) Girls Soccer, Volleyball, Boys & Girls Cross Country, Boys Tennis, Girls Swim and Dive, Boys Water Polo
- September Sports Wrap Up will be attached to the distribution of these notes.

Band / Choir / Drama

- Band
 - October 13 Hub takeover 11-8, October 17
 - October 17 Senior night football game

- October 27 booster meeting
- Wind Symphony performing at the District Band Festival November 4th 6:30 PM at GHHS gym.
- First Full Band Concert will be November 20th at 6:00 PM at GHHS
- Drama will be performing The Play That Goes Wrong November 14-22

Henderson Bay High School

Peninsula High School

NEXT MEETING Wednesday, November 5, 10:00am