

PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Compass

Capital Projects Updates
Athletics and Theater Programs
School Counselors

Winter 2020

From the Superintendent

Dr. Art Jarvis

Levy - Didn't we just do this?

As Superintendent of the Peninsula School District, I may treasure forever a moment from last February: The votes were in and the bond issue was approved! The elation seen in staff, parents, students and the community was extraordinary. Years of disheartening loss slipped away to be replaced by tears of joy. Needed facilities could now be added and improved.



In the aftermath, months have been spent preparing specifications and plans. Bids are now in for school #10 (Pioneer) and construction will begin. All four schools will be under construction by summer. What a sense of accomplishment!

But wait. A levy? In February? Didn't we do that part? Please forgive me but, 'once a teacher, always a teacher.' I need to provide a little background to answer this question.

The short answer is no. The bond effort that stretched over multiple decades was never about operating costs. It was always the need to build and rebuild facilities and, unfortunately, was not approved until this last February.

Meanwhile, our kids and staff came and went, and they used the existing facilities day after day, year after year. The money to operate the schools, pay the bills, and hire the staff was separate. Operating money came from the state but was never enough. Every year since the 1950s, state funds were supplemented with a local levy. In the early days, levies were taken to voters for approval every year. Fast forward to today, and the last PSD levy was approved in 2016 and lasted through 2020. Thus, the February 11, 2020 election is asking voters to approve renewal of the expiring levy.

The 2019 bond was indeed a wonder that offered a fantastic solution to one of our major needs, but those were not funds that could pay the bills to operate. This PSD community has been wonderful in its support of everyday funds to operate our great programs. The February 11 election is the mechanism by which it happens, and the bond and levy will still combine to generate the lowest school tax rates in Pierce County.

COMPASS

PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Art Jarvis

SCHOOL BOARD

President

Deborah Krishnadasan

Vice President

David Olson

Directors

Lori Glover

Chuck West

Natalie Wimberley

Student Board Members

Kira Rosenlind

Lena Janson

Ashley Phillips

The Compass is produced by the Peninsula School District's Communications Department

Director of Communications

Aimee Gordon

Communications Specialist

Laurel Hale

Executive Assistant

Superintendent and Board Support

Brooke Finnigan

Contract Writer

Shana Nash

Student Editors

Ryann Rollins

Maddy Hale

Student Photographer

Quin Grogan

Pictured on Cover

MaKenna Wedel

Hannah Pierce

Grace Bernadelli

Allison Townsend

Katharine Wallace

Maddi Fouquette

Thank You to Our Dedicated School Board

January is National School Board Recognition Month

Each January, school districts throughout the nation and state recognize citizens who serve on their school boards during School Board Recognition Month. Our Peninsula School District Board of Directors consists of five directors, elected by residents to govern the school district.

The board works with the superintendent and district administrators to make decisions regarding bond and levy elections, budget adoptions, facilities, curriculum adoptions, fiscal planning and oversight, employee relations, transportation and more. They establish district policies according to federal, state, and local laws; the State Board of Education; and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

We'd like to thank our school board members for their leadership, service, and outstanding dedication to Peninsula School District students, staff, and community members.



Top Left: Lori Glover, Chuck West, Deb Krishnadasan
Bottom Left: David Olson, Natalie Wimberley

Meet Our Newest School Board Directors



Chuck West Director District 1

Chuck West was elected by voters in November to Director District 1, which covers most of the Key Peninsula.

Chuck is a Battalion Chief with the Key Peninsula Fire Department and a licensed general contractor.

He has served on the Peninsula Schools Education Foundation Board, Peninsula School District Capital Facilities Planning Committee, Key Peninsula Community Council Board, Key Peninsula Land Use Advisory Council and the Key Peninsula Business Association, among others groups.

Because of his unique perspective of working in construction and then becoming a firefighter, Chuck is passionate about the district providing more apprenticeship opportunities and trade school programs for students.

"This is where I grew up, graduated and raised my family. I love our community and want to give back," said Chuck. "With the population growth we are experiencing, now is the time to set a course for the future and lay down a solid foundation for the next generation."



Natalie Wimberley Director District 4

Natalie Wimberley was elected by voters in November to represent District 4, which covers much of Artondale, Raft Island and Fox Island.

Natalie is a proud military spouse and community-focused mother of three children currently attending Peninsula Schools. She has served as the Peninsula Schools JROTC Program Consultant, Gig Harbor Tides Scholarship Foundation Secretary, WA State Military Compact Commission Advisor, as well as many other groups. She is also an active classroom volunteer.

"As a prior military family, our goal was always to leave a community better than we found it through volunteering," said Natalie. "Most of my time during those years was spent supporting families and building partnerships. I'm excited to join the board to continue serving this community by focusing my efforts on supporting all students, engaging families and providing an exceptional environment for staff."

School Counselors Give Guidance and Help Students Navigate Emotions

Discovery's Tricia Mills Supports Students and Cheers Them On



Tricia Mills talks with students Christian Tilley and Izzy Ullevig.

Tricia Mills is one of two Discovery Elementary counselors, and she sees up to 300 students a week at one of the district's biggest elementary schools. She supports students with individual meetings, small groups, class lessons and peer conflict resolution.

"Students are just beginning their academic career in elementary school," Tricia said. "They need a lot of guidance on how to get along with others and manage big feelings just as much as they need help organizing their binders or completing a test."

This is Tricia's second year at Discovery, but she has been a school counselor for over 12 years and loves working with kids. Her kindergartner and first grader also attend Discovery.

Tricia and her co-counselor recently worked with school administration and the Discovery Volunteer Parent Organization (VPO) to create Camp Calm. It's a room students can visit if they need to take a break and reset. "We've given students a healthy tool when they are trying to manage feelings and emotions," said Tricia. "They've learned that choosing to take a break helps them get back on track faster."

Principal Delonna Halliday values Tricia and counselor Kara Greco's important contributions to her school. "Counselors are amazing people and vital members of our school community," Delonna said. "Students know they are there for them when they need help. Our counselors never give up on a student."

A New Face for Security in PSD

Get to Know Our Newest SRO

Carl Shanks, Deputy Sheriff, joined the Peninsula School District as the School Resource Officer (SRO) in November. Deputy Shanks is responsible for all of our district schools, elementary through high school. He has been with the Pierce County Sheriff's Department for 19 years and worked all across the county.

"Like much of law enforcement, no two days are exactly the same," Shanks said. "My primary duties revolve around safety and security at the schools, criminal investigations at the schools, and liaison between the Sheriff's Department and the School District. I'm also a resource for the district and schools, and I build relationships with students and staff."

Deputy Shanks also serves as a Search and Rescue Coordinator with the Swiftwater Search and Rescue Team and is a Firearms Instructor. When you see Deputy Shanks, say hello!



Health Technician Has Deep Roots

Robyn Miller Cares for Students and Helps Them Feel Safe

On a typical day, Health Technician Robyn Miller sees 20-30 students at Vaughn Elementary, for everything from bumps and bruises to vomiting and administering medications. She also gives hearing and vision checks and runs flu shot clinics. "I love working one-on-one with kids," Robyn said. "It's one of those jobs you can be mom-like; you're caring for the kids."

Fifth grader Lexi Linacre has diabetes, so she visits Robyn three times a day to check her blood sugar and administer insulin. At Lexi's last school in a different district, there wasn't a health technician at school daily to help her. Robyn said Lexi's mom was thrilled to find out Vaughn had a full-time health technician. Lexi used to come home after a birthday celebration in her class, and her blood sugar would be through the roof. Lexi feels safe and supported managing her diabetes at Vaughn.

This is Robyn's sixth year at Vaughn and third year as Health Technician. She has deep roots at Vaughn, as both her children attended school there and are now at Peninsula High School and Washington State University.

Two other students with diabetes also stop in for frequent insulin checks. Fourth grader Jonathan Fendel said, "She makes me feel really safe." And fourth grader Noah Carroll said, "I like her. She's nice, and she helps me with my diabetes." Robyn calls their parents daily to let them know their student's blood sugar levels.

"Robyn can manage the demanding pressures of supporting all our students' health needs and she has excellent crisis management skills," Principal Lillian Page said. "Robyn is an amazing asset to Vaughn."



Robyn Miller monitors Jonathan Fendel's insulin levels so he can stay focused on learning.



Lexi Linacre, Robyn Miller, Noah Carroll and Jonathan Fendel



Photo Credit: Bob Werner

Athletics and Activities Keep Students Engaged in School

More Than 1,600 Athletes Compete at GHHS and PHS

Student athletes are held to high academic and behavior standards, which helps keep them engaged in school and creates important bonds with teammates. With a combined 1,600 high school athletes and 24 sports at both Peninsula and Gig Harbor High Schools, high school sports have a real impact on our community.

Senior Ben Goins plays basketball, football and golf at PHS and said sports has been the best part of his high school experience. "There were a lot of times where I probably wouldn't have gone to school on a certain day if I didn't have football practice after," Ben said. "Being on a team keeps me accountable for my grades and attendance which gives me a higher grade average."

"To participate in high school sports, you need to have a 2.0 GPA and be passing 5 of your 6 classes," GHHS athletic director Bob Werner said. "You also need to be in attendance all day at school in order to participate."



Photo Credit: Tate Turnbull



Photo Credit: Veronica Foley



Photo Credit: Ross Filkins

Research shows educational based athletics have significant benefits for students. At GHHS, the average GPA of athletes was 3.57 while non-participants averaged a 2.36. Together, PHS and GHHS boast dozens of state championships over the years. Werner partially attributes their sports programs' success to community support for athletic programs.

"Being on a team can create buy-in for a student who otherwise might quit school," Werner said. "The bonds created through sports and teammates are strong enough that it can be the reason they come to school."



Photo Credit: Saltvick Photography

GHHS senior Alyssa Gray is the captain of her soccer team and has been awarded a scholarship to play at Washington State University next year. Werner said, "She has been a member of the most dominant sports team in our region over the last four years. Our team has routinely ranked in the nation's top 10."

Maeve Griffin has been volleyball team captain for three years at PHS. She led her team to state this year and was league MVP last year, all while maintaining a 3.9 GPA.

"Athletics are so rewarding in so many ways," Maeve said. "Being a student athlete has led me to many new friendships and has taught me countless lessons, including working through challenges and finding the best way to balance academics and athletics."



Photo Credit: Maeve Griffin

Top Left: PHS Seahawks football. **Middle Left:** Lady Tides waterpolo team. **Bottom Left:** Tide Tate Turnbull chases after the ball. **Bottom Center:** Soccer player Alyssa Gray heads a ball. **Top Right:** PHS Seahawks football team poses for a group photo. **Middle Right:** GHHS band cheers on the football team. **Bottom Right:** PHS girls volleyball players block a set from the opposing team.

Educational Programs & Operations Replacement Levy

This Replacement Levy Will Provide Funding to Continue Important Programs, Operations and Support

Peninsula School District will ask voters to approve a three-year Educational Programs and Operations Replacement Levy on February 11, 2020, to replace an expiring levy approved by voters in 2016.

Like most school districts in Washington State, Peninsula School District relies on local residents to regularly renew levies to fund critical areas, such as teachers and support staff, athletics and extracurricular activities, safety and security, professional development for staff, and preventative routine maintenance projects.

The current levy will expire in 2020, so a new levy must be passed by voters to continue current programs.

The levy is 18 percent of the district's General Fund. State and federal dollars do not fully fund the day-to-day operations of the district.

"If I had one wish about the school levy, it would be that everyone understands how important it is to fund these valuable programs for our kids," said Superintendent Dr. Art Jarvis.

The Levy Funds



Teachers & Support Staff

Examples are staff to keep class sizes low per state mandates, teachers, para-educators, custodians, nurses and counselors.



Music, Athletics & Art

Examples are music, performing arts, athletics, clubs and extra-curricular transportation.



Educational Programs

Examples are highly capable program, advanced placement and special education for students who need extra help.



Preventative Maintenance

Examples are exterior and interior painting, HVAC support and routine repairs.



Safety & Security

Examples are security cameras, secure entrances at schools, security officers, and emergency preparedness.

Annual Levy Tax Rates

Peninsula School District Will Continue to Have the Lowest Overall Tax Rate in Pierce County

Approval of the replacement levy would assess an estimated \$1.50 or less per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Shown below are the historical and estimated school tax rates.

This is not a new tax.



**Levies are for
LEARNING
Bonds are for
BUILDING**



Audit and Finance Committee Supports District Mission and Priorities

This Community Committee Advises on Financial Matters

The Audit and Finance Committee supports and advises the Peninsula School District Board of Directors, superintendent, and other district staff in the development, review and revision of both short and long-term financial management plans that support the mission and priorities of the district.

“This fall, the committee was tasked by the school board to review estimates, assumptions and spending plans for the upcoming replacement levy,” Committee Chair Elina Brown said. “District leaders used this work as a basis for the final levy proposal that was submitted to the board for approval.”

“The replacement levy represents about 18 percent of the district’s total annual operating budget and is critical to meeting the needs of our district. Levy funds are largely used to cover PSD staffing requirements that are beyond what the state funds.”

In addition to working on the levy, the committee meets monthly to discuss other financial issues, including state audit results, budgets, and, as construction gets underway on new schools, bond spending. “Our committee of community members is an important part of the financial stability of our school district,” Elina said.



Top: Gary Glein, Jay Johnson, Gary Glenn
 Bottom: Elaine Harper, Stacy Konquist, Elina Brown, Deb Krishnadasan. Not pictured: Don Swensen

PSD Consistently Earns **A+** Ratings From Auditors.

Capital Projects Update

Creative Solutions for Real Needs

Community Partnerships in Action

The Peninsula School District and PenMet Parks are exchanging land parcels in a trade that will benefit both parties. A large section of the Rotary Bark Park area will become the property of PenMet Parks, and the Gig Harbor High School running track and grass field will now belong to the school district.

PSD previously leased the track and field from PenMet, and PenMet leased the dog park and trails, off Bujacich Road NW, from PSD. "It makes the track ours," said Patrick Gillespie, PSD Director of Facilities. The track and field are connected to GHHS and the future Pioneer Elementary School.



"PenMet Parks values our great partnership with the Peninsula School District, and the land exchange will positively benefit both agencies and continue to provide wonderful opportunities for our community," said Doug Nelson, Executive Director of Peninsula Metropolitan Park District.

PSD is transferring the Rotary Bark Park, but will retain approximately 20 acres for potential district use, which PenMet will lease from PSD.

"It won't affect the trails in the park, and it's really for the betterment of our community," Patrick said.

Elementary School Construction

Updates on Artondale, Evergreen and Elementary School #9

The Capital Projects team is excited to share that building designs have been finalized for Artondale Elementary, Evergreen Elementary and Elementary School #9. The district expects to advertise and open bids in early spring of 2020, and construction will begin later in the spring of 2020. Artondale, Evergreen and School #9 are all scheduled to open in the fall of 2021.

At Evergreen, the district purchased an adjacent land parcel that is almost 3 acres, which will allow the new school to be built to the north of the existing school, minimizing disruption to students during construction.

Artondale's Parent Teacher Association purchased and installed a new play structure in 2016, which will be disassembled and moved to a different location at Artondale to accommodate the new school construction and save the play structure.

The district purchased the land parcel for Elementary School #9 in 2013. Utility infrastructure was already in place, which will allow for a quick start to the project.

Funding for these capital projects and the future Pioneer Elementary came from the community's approval of the 2019 bond.



Dream for STEAM

Q & A with Pioneer Elementary Principal Stephanie Strader

Pioneer Elementary is slated to open in fall 2020 as a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) magnet school, drawing students from all across the district.

What are the latest developments in the planning and design of Pioneer?

I first want to say how excited I am to talk with our community about the planning of Pioneer. I've hosted two community meetings with prospective parents and heard great feedback to use as we move forward. I recently hired a core team of teachers to assist me in designing the vision for our school. Also, construction was awarded to Forma Construction and we will break ground to begin construction in early 2020.

How will Pioneer be different from other elementary schools?

Because it's a STEAM magnet school, Pioneer students will receive an elementary education with an emphasis placed on STEAM concepts. We have standards we have to teach, but there are different ways at getting at those standards.

As a core team, we are rethinking the way we structure our day to support the individual needs and aspirations of our students. We get the opportunity to fully start from the ground up and be very intentional and strategic about our decisions and the voices that need to be involved throughout the process.

Who decides which students will attend Pioneer?

Enrollment will be open to all students in the district. If there are more students interested than places available, PSD will conduct a lottery to determine enrollment. Details of the lottery process are still being worked out, and we'll share more information as soon as we have it.

All PSD families are invited!
Pioneer Elementary STEAM Night
January 29, 5:30 to 7:30 pm
Save the date! Location coming soon.

What can you say about the vision for Pioneer Elementary?

Through a highly reflective and collaborative process, the Pioneer Core Team has begun to shape our vision. The Core Team includes Betsy Roberson, Cheryl Mikkelsen, Rachel Paxton, Jen Wisner, and Shea Sullivan. We are focusing on principles such as authentic learning, equity, expanding view of success, and collaboration as learners with community partners.

Can you share a little about your background and family?

I was previously the principal at Harbor Heights Elementary School, and I grew up on the Key Peninsula and went to Vaughn, Key Peninsula and Peninsula. I have two daughters, a 3rd grader and kindergartner, who attend PSD schools. The district and students have a special place in my heart. It's an honor to work here because of how I feel this community contributed to who I am as a person.



Principal Stephanie Strader shares a story with students Ryleigh Cox, Jayden Mayer, Hadi Salim and Amelia Bohocky.

Students Innovate for Tomorrow

Meet Goodman Middle School's Award Winning Tech Club



Goodman Tech Club members Mia Bragg, Samantha Brook, Ashley Brook and Jessica Vaillancourt.

Goodman Middle School's Technology Club recently developed an award winning idea for an app. It would allow families in need to submit a grocery wish list for fresh food, and local farmers or grocery stores could help fulfill their needs. The club submitted the idea to Samsung's Solve for Tomorrow contest, and out of over 2,000 entries, they placed in the top 300 nationwide.

The Samsung contest goal is to show how STEM can help improve local communities.

"I had the kids brainstorm needs in our community, and food became the top idea," said teacher and club co-advisor Jennifer DeGroot.

The club won a Samsung tablet for being a finalist, and they hope to move on to the next round of competition. The top five national winners will receive a \$100,000 Samsung prize package for their school.

"It's good that we can help people by using STEM," 8th grader Mickey Colombo said. Fellow 8th grader Andrew Reyder agreed, "It's important that we create something that helps everybody."

The Technology Club has 32 members that go to state competitions for categories like flight, robotics, children's storytelling, coding, digital photography and problem-solving. Funding from the levy helps after school programs like the Tech Club support kids in finding a place at school where they feel connected.

Goodman was the first middle school in the District to start a Technology Club seven years ago and they have since helped the other three PSD middle schools start their own STEAM and Technology clubs.

Keeping Up With Our Custodians

Custodians Clean Over One Million Square Feet of School Buildings

Our school district custodians are busy cleaning, both during and after school, to keep our 16 school campuses tidy and as spotless as possible for our approximately 9,000 students.

"We have 53 full-time custodians (and six substitutes) and 1,073,866 square feet of area in our buildings, which means each custodian is responsible for an average of 21,409 square feet each and every day," according to Candy Lawson, PSD's Supervisor of Facility Services. Those numbers do not even include the 60,032 square feet of portables and additional district buildings.



Custodian Cholla Grigsby connects with a student during a break.

Cholla Grigsby has been a custodian for three years, first at Artondale, then Purdy and now the future Pioneer Elementary. Though her job can be physically demanding and she sometimes works long hours in challenging conditions, Cholla said "I love what I do very much. I love the people I work with now and at all the schools I've worked. I can choose whatever profession I want, and I want this one."

Drama Delights and Inspires

Theater Programs Thrive in PSD

The Peninsula School District is fortunate to have many talented students perform in theater programs. "Drama is so important for middle school students, to find their friend group and a place where they belong," said Kopachuck Middle School (KMS) advisor Shannon Wood.

The KMS Drama Club will present *The Mysterious Case of the Missing Ring* in February. Over 40 students participate in the club, and Shannon is happy it keeps growing.

Genevieve Cooper, a KMS 8th grader said, "I like drama club because it's a place to make new friends. Drama is a great club to join if you like to be on stage or even if you want to be backstage."

Peninsula High School (PHS) just wrapped up *A Christmas Carol*, and they have a spring musical in May. Last year's musical was nominated by 5th Avenue Theatre for Best Overall Performance and won for Best Direction and Best Choreography.

"Theater helps kids find themselves," advisor Kara Beloate said. "Every single person and every single job is valuable."

PHS has 140 students in their program. Senior Maya Sheek said, "I can connect with people that I wouldn't usually, and it gives me the chance to express myself in different ways."

PHS student Alex Wiklund added, "There is a family here where you can't get anywhere else. Real magic happens here, and being a part of that is one of the best feelings you can get."

Gig Harbor High School (GHHS) just wrapped their play, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. Over 150 students were involved in the production.

GHHS Drama teacher Kristin Zetterstrom said, "Our program is modeled after the real theater industry and students receive CTE and/or art credit for their classwork. The connections they build and leadership opportunities go with them throughout life."



Kopachuck Drama Club students ready for rehearsal.
Photo Credit Shannon Woods



Peninsula High School students in their production of *A Christmas Carol*. Photo Credit : Hawk Scene PHS Theater

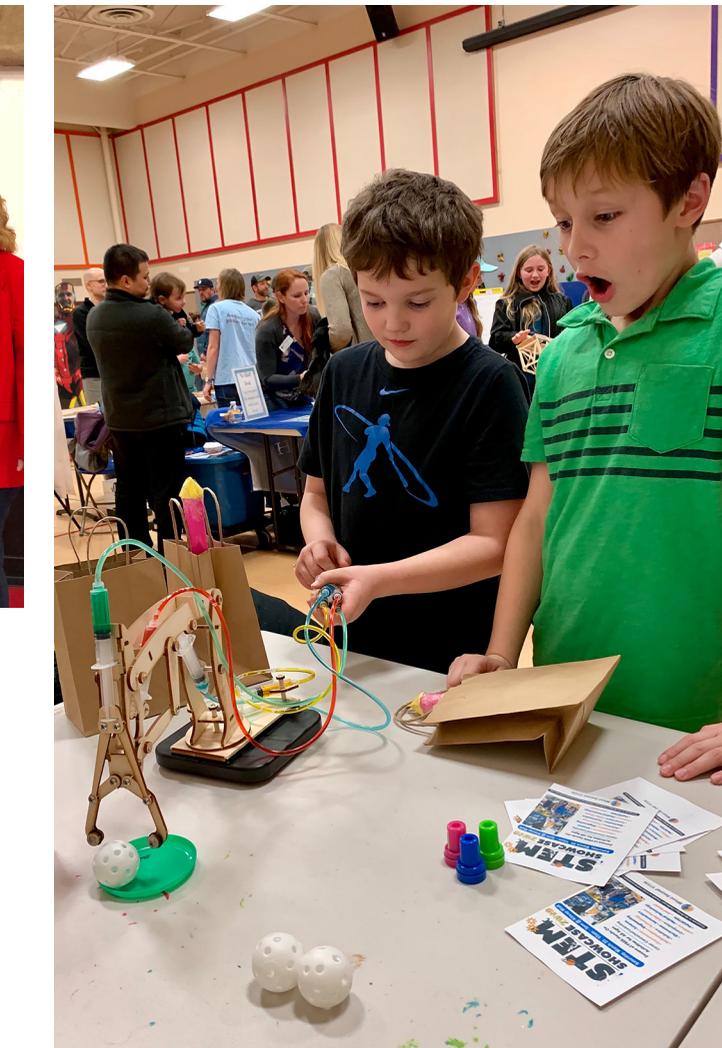
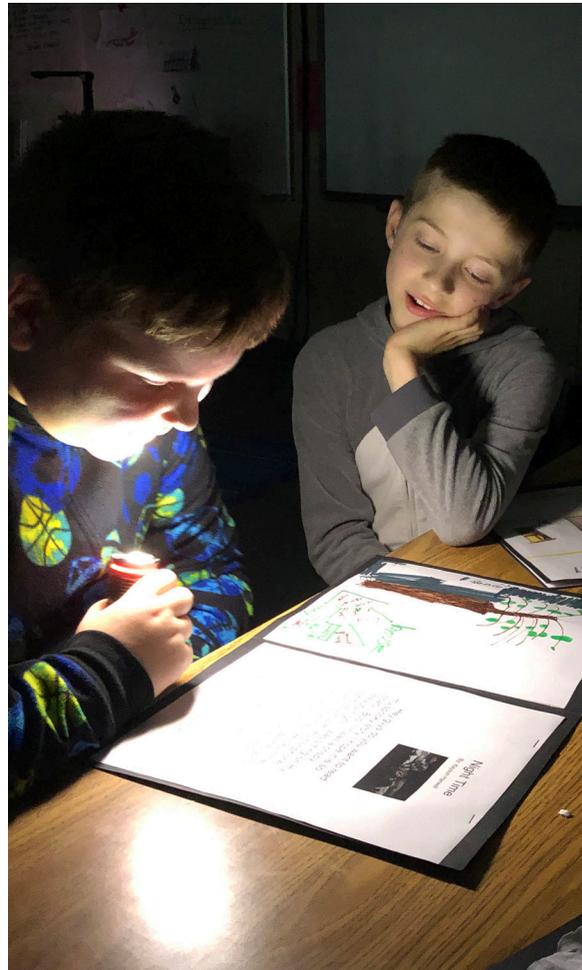
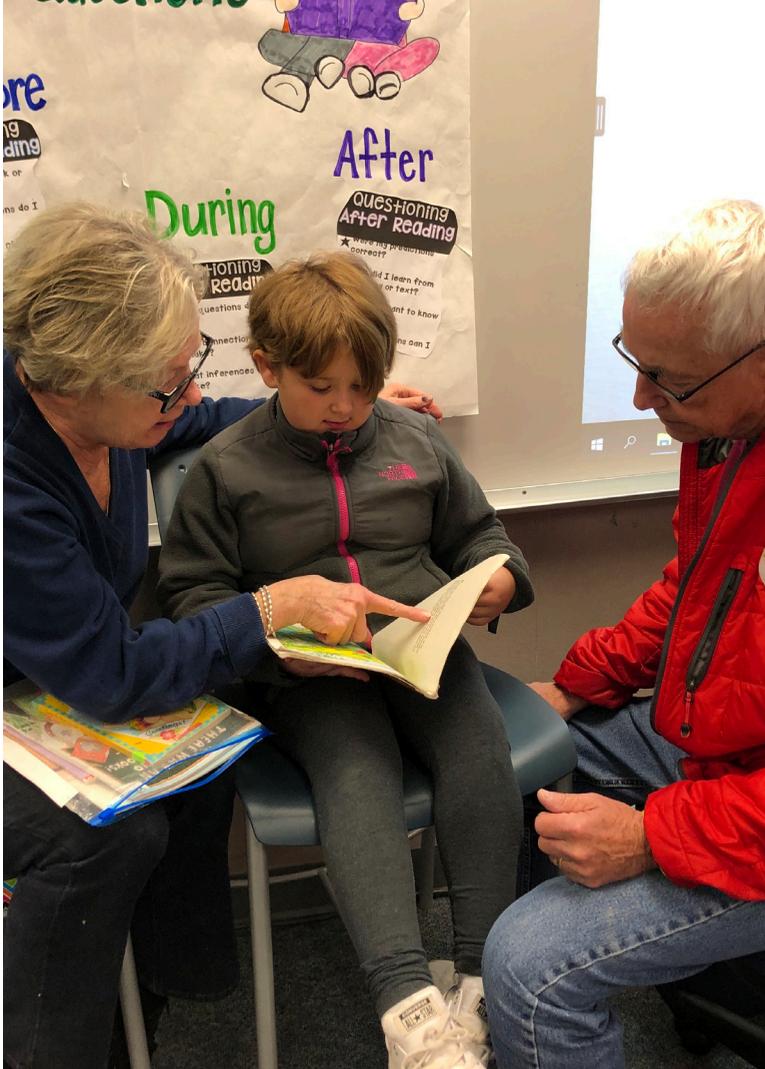


Gig Harbor High School's latest production of *The Man Who Came To Dinner* teamed up with STEAM Club students to build mechanical penguins.



PG 14 **Top Left:** Native American Education Program students on a field trip. **Top Right:** Lions Club hands out dictionaries at Purdy Elementary. **Center Left:** Ian Deaton and Gaelan Steele, National Merit Scholars at Gig Harbor High. **Center Middle:** Voyager students dress up for Halloween. **Bottom Left:** Serve Our Schools at Harbor Ridge Middle School. **Bottom Right:** Veterans Day Celebration at Key Peninsula Middle School.

PG 15 **Top Left:** Grandparent's Day at Harbor Heights. **Top Right:** Evergreen Elementary Students read suspenseful stories they wrote by flashlight. **Bottom Left:** STEM Night at Minter Creek Elementary. **Bottom Center:** James McCourt, Key Peninsula Middle School All State band member. **Bottom Right:** Henderson Bay High Adopt-a-Road crew cleaning up.





Peninsula School District
14015 62nd Ave. NW
Gig Harbor, WA 98332

psd401.net
253-530-1000

#WeArePSD

Non-profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Tacoma, WA
Permit No. 1501

ECRWSS
POSTAL CUSTOMER



@psd401



@psd401



facebook.com/psd401



Top Left: Gig Harbor High School and Peninsula High School Cheerleaders. **Top Right:** PSD Nutrition Services Staff at Peninsula High School. **Center Left:** Jodi Milo, inventory specialist. **Center Middle:** Jerry Guardanapo, substitute bus driver. **Bottom Left:** Kate Chaffin, Vaughn kindergarten teacher. **Bottom Center Middle:** Kristi Johnson, Student Services secretary and Erin Dumas, Harbor Heights 5th grade teacher. **Bottom Right:** Artondale Elementary 2nd grade students perform at the school's winter program.

The Peninsula School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, 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 in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding compliance and/or grievance procedures may be directed to the District's Title IX and Compliance Officer, Dan Gregory, at (253) 530-1009, email gregoryd@psd401.net, or the Section 504 and ADA Coordinator, John Yellowlees, at (253) 530-1081, email yellowleesj@psd401.net. Mailing address: 14015 62nd Ave. NW, Gig Harbor, WA 98332.