

PORT ANGELES SCHOOL DISTRICT

Advocacy • Achievement • Accountability

WINTER 2025



Players from the Port Angeles Youth Soccer Club compete on opening day of Monroe Playfield



Knowledge Bowl at Port Angeles High School

The Port Angeles High School Knowledge Bowl team exemplifies academic excellence, showcasing our students' incredible talent and dedication. Knowledge Bowl is a rigorous academic competition where teams answer challenging, fast-paced questions covering science, history, literature, and math. Each year, the PAHS team competes in three regional competitions at Fort Worden in Port Townsend, culminating in the State Competition in Wenatchee. For the past two years, PAHS has proudly placed fifth at State – a testament to the team's hard work, intellectual curiosity, and collaborative spirit.

This March, 30 exceptional students are representing Port Angeles High School in the State competition, demonstrating the drive and determination that define our school community. With their passion for learning and commitment to teamwork, the PAHS Knowledge Bowl team inspires us as they continue their tradition of excellence by pursuing another outstanding season.

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

As we enter 2025, I want to share the legislative priorities that the Port Angeles School District (PASD) has identified as critical to ensuring equitable, high-quality education for all students. These priorities reflect our commitment to addressing funding challenges and advocating for legislative changes that will positively impact our schools, students, and staff.

1. Fully Fund Special Education

The 2025 Legislature must prioritize fully funding special education services. School districts are both legally and morally obligated to serve students with disabilities. Unfortunately, the gap between expenditures and funding continues to place an undue burden on local levies to cover costs. PASD supports legislation that eliminates this gap and provides adequate funding for all eligible students' services without imposing arbitrary caps.

2. Address Regionalization, Salary Enhancements, and Fully Fund Employee Benefits

Equitable compensation for educators and staff is essential for attracting and retaining quality professionals. PASD urges the Legislature to revamp the flawed methodology for regionalization and experience factors, which have created inequities between districts. Additionally, we support legislation that:

- Updates staffing ratios in the Prototypical School Funding Model (PSFM) to reflect realistic needs.
- Fairly funds salaries and benefits for staff, regardless of district location.
- Reduces out-of-pocket costs for School Employees Benefits Board (SEBB) participation or eliminates the mandate, ensuring districts are not penalized for employees who decline benefits.

3. Continue the Permanent Return of Timber Tax at the State and Federal Level

Timber revenues have historically supplemented basic education funding for districts like ours. PASD supports legislation that permanently restores these funds to school districts, bolstering basic education allocations and ensuring stability in funding.

4. Fully Fund Transition to Kindergarten Programs

Early learning is foundational to student success.

Transition to Kindergarten (TK) programs address developmental gaps, foster social-emotional growth, and build critical skills for our youngest learners. PASD advocates for fully funding TK programs, allowing districts to provide the necessary resources and staffing to meet the diverse needs of these students.

5. Revisit the Property Tax Structure

The current property tax structure disproportionately benefits districts in communities with higher property values, leaving property-poor districts like ours at a disadvantage. PASD supports legislation to address this inequity and ensure adequate funding for all students, regardless of community property values.

Our advocacy efforts reflect our unwavering commitment to ensuring every student in our district receives an equitable, high-quality education that meets their unique needs and prepares them for success. By collaborating with local and State leaders, we actively champion these priorities to address systemic challenges and secure the necessary resources to support our schools.

These budget challenges are not unique to our district as school districts across Washington State are facing significant funding issues that require fundamental changes. Community members are encouraged to stay informed and can connect with Port Angeles's local legislative representatives to share their views on these topics. More information about and reasons behind Washington's K-12 funding shortfall can be found at waschoolfunding.org.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support as we navigate these challenges together. Your involvement and advocacy are vital as we strive to secure the resources necessary to serve our students and staff effectively. Together, we strive to create lasting, meaningful change that will positively impact the lives of our students, staff, and the entire Port Angeles community.

Sincerely,
Martin Brewer
Superintendent



STRONG SCHOOLS. STRONG COMMUNITY.

A Message from Board President, Sarah Methner



As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for your continued support and involvement in our schools. This year has brought both exciting opportunities and bittersweet transitions, and we want to take a moment to thank you for your partnership and share important updates about the future of our district.

Thank You for Passing the Bond!

First and foremost, a heartfelt thank you to all of our community members who supported the recent bond measure. With your vote, we are now on the path to building new schools that will provide our students with state-of-the-art, safe, and inspiring learning environments. These new facilities will not only enhance the educational experience but will also reflect our community's commitment to the future of our children. We are thrilled to begin this transformative project and will

keep you informed of the progress as we move forward.

Saying Goodbye to Superintendent Brewer

As we look toward the future, we must also acknowledge a moment of change in our leadership. After 7 years of dedicated service to the Port Angeles School District, Superintendent Brewer has announced his decision to step down from his role. Superintendent Brewer's leadership has been instrumental in guiding the district through several significant initiatives, and his unwavering dedication to our students and staff will be deeply missed. We are grateful for his vision, his leadership, and the lasting impact he has made on our community.

While we will certainly feel his absence, we are also excited about the opportunities ahead as we search for a new leader who will continue the important work Superintendent Brewer has begun.

The Search for a New Superintendent

The Port Angeles School District School Board has initiated a nationwide search for our next superintendent. We are committed to selecting a leader who will carry forward our vision for educational excellence, foster positive relationships within the community, and ensure the continued success of our students.

Looking Ahead

Though change can be challenging, it is also an exciting opportunity for growth and progress. We are confident that, with your continued support, the Port Angeles School District will continue to thrive. Together, we will create a bright future for our students, one that is full of opportunity and success.

Thank you once again for your ongoing commitment to our schools and for being an essential part of the Port Angeles School District community. We look forward to the exciting work ahead and will keep you informed every step of the way.

Port Angeles High School Expands CTE Pathways with Maritime and Aerospace Programs

Port Angeles High School's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Core Plus curriculum offers hands-on pathways to graduation, internships, and careers. This year, the program introduced two new pathways: Maritime and Aerospace. These innovative pathways, available to 11th and 12th graders, each combine 3 periods of coursework where students can earn credits in English, science, and math. These courses provide an alternative route to earning graduation credits while focusing on real-world skills applicable to future careers. For example, students might study technical manuals or learn how welding aluminum differs from other metals. Approved at the state level, these pathways offer unique opportunities for students to succeed academically while preparing for their futures.

With Port Angeles's strong maritime industry, the Core Plus Maritime pathway is a natural fit for the community, providing ample growth opportunities for future workers looking to grow into their careers. Students are benefitting from field trips and guest speakers throughout the year, thanks to partnerships with local organizations like the Black Ball Ferry Line's Coho Ferry, which carries passengers between Victorica, B.C. and Port Angeles. This partnership has provided students with unforgettable learning experiences, like meeting the ferry's engineer, touring the ship, seeing the engine room, and even handling the fire hose.

In February, students will visit the Dakota Creek Shipyard in Anacortes to see the Coho Ferry dry dock for maintenance, learning firsthand about careers in dry dock operations. These experiences not only provide practical maritime skills, like reading a compass and navigating maps, but also inspire students to pursue meaningful goals and actively pursue graduation.

The Core Plus Aerospace pathway is also soaring to success, receiving two grants from SAFE Boats in Bremerton, which funded new welding equipment for the program. In April, aerospace students will showcase their skills at the SkillsUSA Washington Manufacturing Assembler State Competition, held at Boeing's Everett facility. Additionally, this Core Plus pathway awards stu-



dents a certification from Boeing upon completion, providing a significant advantage in the job market. Plans are underway for field trips to further enhance the hands-on learning experience for aerospace students.

With over 30 students enrolled in these pathways in their initial year, the school's CTE program is already making a profound impact. To meet the growing demand, Port Angeles High School plans to add a Construction Pathway next school year. This program will build on the popularity of the school's woodshop class, starting with one period and gradually expanding to three.

Local industries and community organizations have been enthusiastic supporters of these pathways, recognizing their



value in addressing workforce needs. By connecting students with local industries, these Core Plus programs equip them with the skills needed to succeed in high-demand fields while providing a clear pathway to graduation and beyond.

Thank You, Voters!



In November 2024, our community came together in a remarkable show of support, approving the Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) Levy by 60.78% and a Capital Bond by 63.41%. Thank you for your trust and dedication. These strong approval rates are a testament to our shared commitment to creating a brighter future for the youth of Port Angeles.

How Will These Funds Be Used?

The bond, which replaces the 2020 capital levy, will fund the construction of a new Franklin Elementary School and significant upgrades at Port Angeles High School. These improvements include a new instructional building with enhanced security features, such as a single point-of-entry, to better control and monitor access. Additionally, renovations to Port Angeles High School’s Performing Arts Center will ensure ADA accessibility, making the space more inclusive for our community.

The renewed EP&O levy will support essential education programs and operations not covered by state funding, such as our outstanding music and athletic programs, which contribute to the well-rounded education of our students.

Middle School Construction Update

Exciting progress for the new middle school is underway, with construction set to break ground in May – ahead of schedule! The 2020 Capital Levy funds this project and reflects the input from students, staff, and community members, ensuring the building meets our learners’ unique needs while celebrating the natural beauty of our region.

Key features include operable windows, thoughtful backpack storage options, and safety-focused enhancements for student bathrooms. The three-story building will feature dynamic learning spaces, a central library, and specialized areas for Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Special Education programs.

The exterior design takes inspiration from the Olympic Mountains, Hurricane Ridge, and the surrounding forests, creating a structure that blends seamlessly with our community’s natural landscape.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: REACHING FOR THE STARS WITH FAERIN TAIT



When Port Angeles High School senior Faerin Tait was a preschooler, her parents took her to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Wide-eyed and fascinated by rovers and robotic arms, she declared her dream of becoming an astronaut – an ambition she shared enthusiastically with everyone she met.

After moving to the Olympic Peninsula, Faerin discovered another passion: the natural world. Exploring the forest and biking to the Elwha River sparked her curiosity about the environment. Over time, the rich biodiversity of her surroundings captivated her. During her freshman year, she took AP Biology, a course she loved so much that she'd

take it again if she could.

Now, Faerin hopes to combine her love for space and biology by pursuing a career in botany and biomedical sciences. Her ultimate goal is to join NASA's Space Biology Team by becoming a medical doctor and applying for the NASA Astronaut Candidate Program.

"The thought of living and working in space while studying my passion is the most exciting thing I can think of," she said.

But Faerin's determination extends beyond academics. In addition to maintaining a 4.0 GPA, she serves as the captain of Port Angeles High School's Track & Field and Cross Country teams, is a Junior Olympian, participates in choir, and represents her peers as a Student Representative for the school district.

While this may sound overwhelming for some, Faerin takes everything in stride. She credits advice from her parents, teachers, and coaches for teaching her how to stay organized and prioritize.

"First things first, you have to remember your 'why,' she explained. "Why are you passionate about your activities? Your 'why' is what is going to fuel you to take on the next challenge – and get over the next hurdle."

Faerin's approach to organization is refreshingly simple. She uses a mini planner to track assignments and key dates, proving that effective organization doesn't require a mountain of color-coded sticky notes and highlighters.

Her positive mindset also helps her juggle a busy schedule.

"Flipping your mindset from 'I have to do this' to 'I get to do this' can work wonders," she said.

For Faerin, finding balance means pursuing activities she genuinely loves. She loves working hard, learning new skills, and competing, so she actively chooses activities that reflect those interests.

Outside of school, Faerin's love for animals and the outdoors led her to horseback riding at 13 years old. Her work ethic didn't go unnoticed – the farm owner offered her a job cleaning stalls caring for more than fifty horses.

Her passion for animals didn't stop there. Faerin began dog showing and, with just a few hundred hours of training, she and her dog Rook qualified for the American Kennel Club National Championship. To the surprise of seasoned competitors, they won Best Owner-Handled German Pinscher in America.

After achieving one of the highest honors in dog showing, Faerin embraced a new challenge: sports. Although she had no prior experience, she joined Port Angeles High School's Cross Country and Track & Field teams as a freshman. Her determination paid off – by her sophomore year, she was elected captain of both teams. The following year, she placed in the top 10 at the State Championships and was named MVP. By her senior year, Faerin had earned the title of USATF Pacific



Northwest Champion in the 400-meter hurdles and became a two-time USATF Junior Olympian – all this while maintaining her perfect GPA and earning the AP Scholar Award.

In addition to sports, Faerin channels her competitive spirit through Knowledge Bowl, an academic trivia competition. Last year, her team placed fifth at the Washington State Knowledge Bowl Championship. Now, as team captain, she continues to enjoy learning new things and tackling challenging questions.

Performing arts has also been a passion of Faerin's since she was six years old. Now a member of Port Angeles

High School's premier choir, Vocal Unlimited, she was selected for the WMEA All-State Symphonic Choir.

With over 30 awards spanning academics, athletics, and extracurriculars, Faerin remains humble about her accomplishments.

"Though I've only been alive for just short of two decades, I've gotten to experience so many things in my life," she reflected. "I've learned that I thrive being among individuals who are just as dedicated to their passions as I am and that when placed among the best of the best, I too will become one of the best."

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PORT ANGELES SCHOOL DISTRICT

Vision: All PASD students will graduate prepared for life-long learning.

Mission: PASD creates learning communities that prepare each student to live, work, and learn successfully in a changing world.

Port Angeles School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Title IX Coordinators, Civil Rights Compliance Coordinators: Scott Harker, 905 W. 9th St., Port Angeles, WA 98363, (360) 457-8575, sharker@portangelesschools.org, and for Section 504/ADA Coordinator, Rachel Summers, 905 W. 9th St., Port Angeles, WA 98363, (360) 457-8575, rsummers@portangelesschools.org.

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For school information, dates, events, forms and photos, check out our website at www.portangelesschools.org

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