



TRANSFORMING PUBLIC EDUCATION IN PORT TOWNSEND

MARITIME DISCOVERY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE 2014 YEAR-END REPORT

Project Director & Curriculum Consultant/Teaching Coach

Sarah Rubenstein, a Blue Heron Middle School math and science teacher, was hired in April to lead the implementation of the initiative. Sarah hit the ground running, beginning with a survey to identify potential community partners who can lend their expertise, talent or programs to the initiative. Sarah works with Dr. Katy Karschney, MDS Curriculum Consultant and Teaching Coach. Katy serves as a systems and instructional coach for teachers and leaders in multiple districts. Her work centers on working side by side with educators to strengthen good teaching practices and create powerful learning experiences for students.

Summer Teacher Workshops

Sarah and Katy led a series of summer workshops to start work on designing a maritime- and place-based curriculum. Teachers learned strategies for designing place-based learning, used Google technology for planning and reflection, and spent time designing some of the first MDS projects taking place in classrooms for the 2014-2015 school year. One of the experiences teachers most enjoyed was an opportunity to get feedback and help with their project planning from teachers who work in different buildings and teach different grade levels.

MDS Advisory Committee & Local Competencies

The MDS Advisory Committee was formed to help provide a strong community voice in the goals and objectives of the initiative, as well as help connect our schools with the community by identifying what competencies are unique to a Port Townsend graduate. Members of the committee includes representatives from the Port Townsend Marine



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Science Center, the Economic Development Council, the maritime trades, YMCA, a local technology business, Jefferson Land Trust, the Port Townsend School Board, and WSU Extension.

The committee developed a set of skills and abilities our community values and wants to see developed in our students:

1. Self-Reliance
2. Mentorship and Apprenticeship
3. Maritime and Nautical Skills
4. Global Citizenship
5. Lifelong Learning
6. Self-Expression and Creativity
7. Environmental Stewardship

Maritime Academy & Maritime Experiential Education Coordinator

Kelley Watson was hired as the Port Townsend High School Maritime Experiential Education Coordinator. Kelley is excited to work with her fellow teachers to integrate experiential and place-based learning into the high school curriculum. Kelley will also help develop and lead the Maritime Academy, which aims to create an integrated educational experience for students interested in the Marine Trades and Vessel Operations. She is currently teaching the Maritime Studies, Career and Technology Education class in the shop (and on the water) at the high school.

Kelley brings with her a wealth of maritime experience and an extensive experiential education background. She has captained commercial fishing vessels in Alaska, worked on the back deck of research boats in Antarctica, and has paddled her kayak from here to Alaska. Over the past twenty years, she has enjoyed a well-travelled career as an



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experiential educator working with students up and down the coasts of both North and South America.

Maritime & Place-based Learning in Action

Port Townsend's vibrant culture naturally lends itself to many place-based learning opportunities. This past summer alone saw the following: Grant Street Elementary students explored the Wooden Boat Festival, sailed on the schooner *Adventuress*, toured the Jefferson Museum of Art & History and the Rothschild House, participated in a history-and community-based scavenger hunt inside the Hastings Building, and explored the Life of a Sailor and Navigation Sea Chest from the Jefferson County Historical Society.

In the spring, seventh graders from Blue Heron Middle School called the Northwest Maritime Center home for eight days of integrated curriculum that tied maritime experiences to their existing coursework. Students learned math by writing a graph of a system of linear equations as part of a hypothetical trip to the San Juan Islands; science by doing a beach walk, identifying animals that live on a shoreline bluff environment; art by creating hand-bound sailor's logs with collage, poetry and illustrations. In addition, they built a Skunk Island Skiff in the boatshop, under the tutelage of our boatshop manager and a volunteer, met maritime trades professionals like Carol Hasse, and learned teambuilding, leadership, and communication skills aboard the longboats. The 7th Grade Maritime Discovery Program has been serving middle school students for nearly a decade, connecting students to their community and maritime environment, and providing them with opportunities for discovering a sense of place and of self, while bringing abstract classroom lessons to life through real-world experiences. In addition to serving 79 Blue Heron students, the program also served 82 students from Chimacum Middle School and 31 students from Quilcene Middle School, for a total of over 7,700 contact hours.

Blue Heron School students participated in an apple orchard harvest, and hosted guest artist Jesse Watson in art class. Most recently, seventh graders visited Rinnriver Farms



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and the Illahee Preserve (both along Chimacum Creek) to see, taste, and learn about salmon and their life cycle as part of a year-long restoration project along Chimacum Creek at Finnriver Farms. Reed canarygrass has choked out native plants, leading to lowered oxygen levels in the water. Students will work in groups and design their own experiments to combat reed canarygrass. In addition to preparing them for the Next Generation Science Standards, students are developing practical solutions real-world problems that will be carried forward by community partners addressing the same issues in other areas.

High school students built model boats for the Race to Alaska, hosted Port Townsend Film Festival Special Guest John Sayles (a writer, director, and actor), had an in-class discussion with crew members Adventuress and Picton Castle to discuss education theory and experiential learning, and learned from guest speaker Brandon Davis of Turn Point Design about CAD. Students from the Maritime Studies Career & Technical Education course and participants from the Girls Boat Project also spent three days sailing on Adventuress as part of their training for future careers in the marine trades and vessel operations. The program recently received a \$25,000 OSPI (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction) CTE (Career & Technical Education) grant.