



# COMPASS



INSPIRING AND EMPOWERING  
EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY.

SPRING 2026

# A Message from Superintendent Krestin Bahr

Our community's unwavering commitment to our students continues to make Peninsula School District a place where children thrive and families belong. I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our voters for approving our recent Replacement Educational Programs and Operations Levy.

State funding alone does not cover the full cost of running our schools, but because of you, we can bridge that gap. We are continuing to provide essential funding for programs and staff. We will be able to invest in critical maintenance and facility improvements, including upgrades to our athletic fields. Our Transition to Kindergarten Program (TK) will expand in the fall of 2026 to every elementary school, increasing student capacity from 108 to 180 spots. Levy funds also allow us to add more activity buses for our secondary students and launch an orchestra.

As we celebrate these investments in our students, we are also looking ahead to the future. Our school board and district leadership are currently drafting our new Strategic Plan for 2026 to 2030. Thank you to everyone who shared their voice with us. The valuable feedback we received is actively guiding our work to ensure we focus on meeting the evolving needs of our students.

As you flip through these pages, I hope you feel a sense of pride. The stories you will read are a direct reflection of what we can achieve when a community stands behind its schools. Thank you for believing in our students and for your dedication to their future.

Sincerely,  
Superintendent Krestin Bahr





2026 STATE SUPERINTENDENT'S AWARD FOR  
**EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE** for **ACHIEVEMENT**



Awarded by State Superintendent Chris Reykdal



## Celebrating Excellence: PSD Named a Top 25 District in the State

Peninsula School District (PSD) has been recognized as one of the top-performing school districts in the state, earning the prestigious State Superintendent's Award for Educational Excellence in Student Achievement. Out of 295 districts statewide, PSD was selected as one of only 25 to receive the honor for its academic performance during the previous school year.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) evaluates school districts for the award based on educational opportunities and academic success. PSD's outstanding achievements in improving student attendance and expanding access to advanced coursework were key factors in the award selection.

"Our entire PSD community, including dedicated teachers, supportive families, and committed staff, work together to ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed," said Superintendent Krestin Bahr. "The community's recent approval of the Replacement Educational Programs and Operations Levy directly enables the resources and programs that drive results for excellent student achievement. We are proud to be recognized, and this honor motivates us to continue raising the bar for educational excellence in our district."

This is the inaugural year of OSPI's state award. For more information, please visit the OSPI website at <https://ospi.k12.wa.us>.



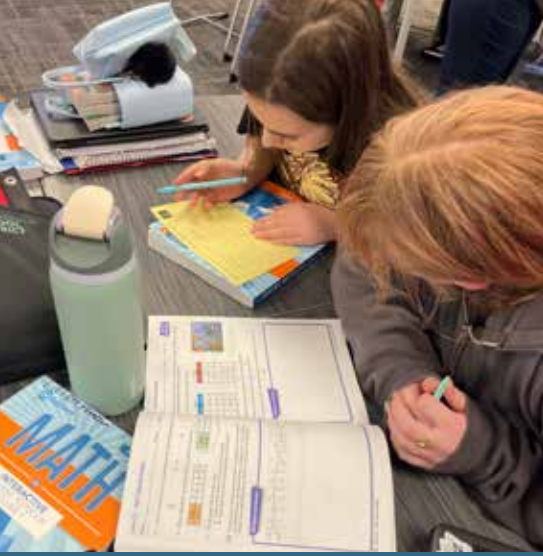
# Charting the Future of Peninsula School District

Peninsula School District is charting the course for the next four years. To ensure we continue focusing on what matters most to our community and effectively meeting the needs of our students, the district is actively working to revisit and refresh our Strategic Plan for 2026 to 2030.

Community voice is a cornerstone of this process. We received more than 500 responses to our initial community survey. Coupled with valuable insights gathered during in-person sessions with stakeholders, including the Superintendent's Student Advisory panel, parent groups and community groups, this robust feedback has provided us with a clear picture of our district's shared priorities. District leadership and the school board are now using this data to draft and create the revised Strategic Plan.

"We appreciate the community's thoughtful feedback and insight into maintaining and refining our district's direction to ensure exceptional learning for every child, every day," said Board President Natalie Wimberley.

Stay tuned for more updates as we finalize this work in the coming weeks. We cannot wait to share the completed Strategic Plan with our community and embark on this next chapter together.



# Equipping Students for Success: PSD Updates Math Curriculum

During the 2025-26 school year, Peninsula School District is working through a math curriculum review which includes piloting new math curriculum options across all elementary, middle, and high schools. This work will result in a new curriculum adoption and district-wide implementation of new curricula in the fall of 2026. The primary objective of the curriculum review was to provide students with a rigorous math curriculum that aligns with standards and utilizes evidence-based methodologies.

## PSD Curriculum Update Timeline

**Fall 2024**  
Implementation of 9-12 English Language Arts Curriculum

**Fall 2025**  
Implementation of K-8 English Language Arts Curriculum

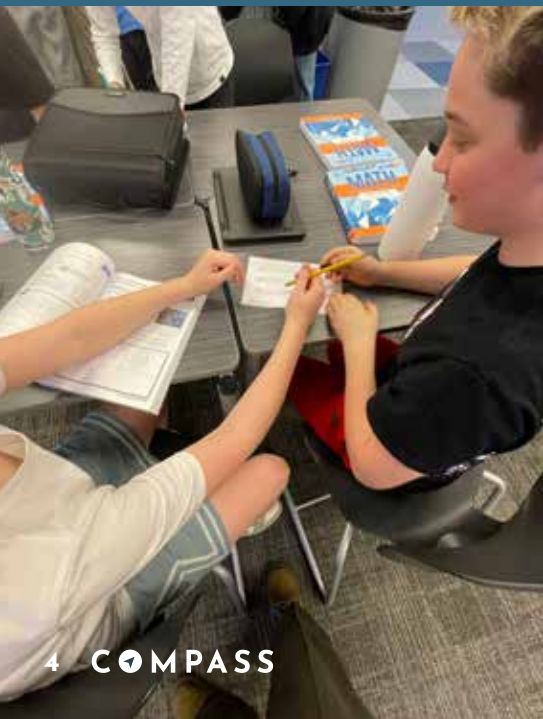
**Fall 2026**  
Implementation of K-12 Math Curriculum

**Fall 2026**  
Implementation of Spanish 1 and 2 Curriculum

A total of 56 pilot teachers representing all schools and courses (up to Precalculus) are piloting two different curriculum options in their classrooms to see what works best for our students. At the elementary level, teachers are piloting Eureka Math<sup>2</sup> and enVision+ Mathematics. Middle school educators are piloting EdGems and enVision+ Mathematics, and high school teachers are piloting enVision Math and Amplify Desmos. All three adoption committees will make their final recommendations to the School Board by early June 2026.

“Student and family feedback is a vital part of the inclusive selection process, as a wide range of perspectives are considered,” said Natalie Boyle, Director of Elementary Teaching and Learning. “The new curricula will ensure equitable access to high-quality learning for all students.”

For an up-to-date time of the process and additional information, please visit [psd401.net/mathreview](http://psd401.net/mathreview).



# College Board Honors PSD Students With National Awards

A total of 95 Peninsula School District Students were recognized by the national College Board for their exceptional academic performance on the PSAT exam, which is the preliminary SAT. At Gig Harbor High School, 69 sophomores and juniors were eligible to receive awards, along with 26 10th and 11th graders at Peninsula High School. This recognition helps students get noticed by top colleges across the country and celebrates them as outstanding students.

# A Day in the Life of a Kindergarten Student



Kindergarten today is a vibrant mix of high-level academics, structured routine, and social-emotional development. From the moment the morning bell rings, five and six-year-olds step into a welcoming environment that challenges them to grow and learn. Kelli Willson has been teaching kindergarten for 12 years across the Peninsula School District and 33 years in total. She currently teaches a class of 19 students at Swift Water Elementary.

In the morning, students enter the classroom and are greeted “with all the love and warmth we can muster,” Willson said. They put away their backpacks and lunches into their cubbies and then launch into morning work.



“Students are so responsible, especially now that we are more than halfway through the year,” said Willson. “They love routine; and routine is what we give them.”

Stepping into Willson’s classroom reveals an impressive level of learning. With the district’s new English Language Arts curriculum, the academic rigor is higher than in years past. Teachers are diving deep into foundational skills and students are responding well.

“The kids are absolutely rocking the new curriculum, and educators are already seeing exciting leaps in progress,” Willson said. “To balance the heavy brain work, quick movement breaks are woven into the morning to keep little minds focused.”

After lunch, the afternoon shifts to WIN (What I Need) time, a 30-minute block of targeted, small-group instruction that meets kids exactly where they are. From there, the day flows right into math and knowledge lessons.

After recess, students practice independence through purposeful play during Choice Time.

“Children are learning to read social cues, navigate problems, and discover who they are outside of their families,” Willson said. The day wraps up with a closing meeting, where students reflect on their emotions and encourage their classmates.

“We really teach to the whole child, to the many layers of learning, academically, socially, and emotionally,” Willson said. “It is amazing what 5 year olds are capable of.”



## What I Love About Kindergarten

*“I like that my teacher helps me learn math because I really like math. I also love playing with my friends at recess and learning to read the Kit and Seth books.”*

– Brynlee M.

*“We can learn different things that we haven’t before, and we get to do fun things. If somebody doesn’t have a friend, we cheer them up and play with them.”* – Rose Y.

*“My class and my teacher. My favorite part of kindergarten is math and choice time.”*

– Nial C.

*“I like learning, I like choice time jobs, and I love Mrs. Willson. I really love PE!”*

– Hendrik H.

# A Jumpstart on Fitness: Sports Medicine Programs Set Students Up for Success



High school students are getting a head start in the fast-growing fitness and healthcare industries. Through robust Sports Medicine programs at Gig Harbor High School (GHHS) and Peninsula High School (PHS), students are bypassing standard electives to dive straight into college-level exercise science.

The district partnered with the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) to bring top-tier fitness education to the classroom. Students learn NASM's evidence-based Optimum Performance Training model, develop hands-on skills, and can earn their Certified Personal Trainer (CPT) credential.

Teacher Jeff Milbourn has run the GHHS program for 14 years, partnering with NASM for the last two. Sixty-eight students earned certifications in the last two years, and 84 are currently enrolled.

"Having worked 15 years in healthcare, I have seen firsthand how these opportunities pave the way for students," said Milbourn. "Students have a huge advantage when applying for schools in an already competitive field."

PHS launched its program this year and already has 54 students enrolled. The curriculum splits the week between hands-on application and academic study, featuring three days in the gym and two days in the classroom working on NASM coursework.

"Students have full access to the online course and two opportunities to sit for the exam to become CPT certified," said Dylan Hall, PHS Sports Medicine teacher. "This is a phenomenal opportunity, as I expose students to learning that they typically would not get access to until their sophomore year of college."

Graduating with an industry-recognized certification allows students to enter the workforce immediately, often commanding higher salaries. Whether entering the job market right after graduation or building a foundation for degrees in kinesiology, exercise science, or physical therapy, the district's programs set students up for immediate success.

## ASL Students from GHHS and PHS Support the Local Deaf Community

American Sign Language (ASL) students from Gig Harbor High School (GHHS) and Peninsula High School (PHS) are taking their skills beyond the classroom to uplift their community. For teachers Brittney Thomas and Rose Clifford, their partnership is built on a shared commitment to collaboration, service and connection with the Deaf community.

At PHS, Clifford started a new ASL Club, associated with the ASL Honor Society, focusing heavily on community service and work based learning. Working with the existing chapter of the ASL Honor Society club at GHHS, students at both schools are partnering to support a local Deaf owned business by volunteering at the Paddler's Cup and creating ASL marketing videos. This form of community service directly benefits the Deaf community and allows students to become eligible for ASL Honor Society medals and national recognition.



# District Musicians Earn Top Honors Across the Region

Our district's student musicians participated in more than a dozen band and choir festivals this season, and they brought home an incredible collection of awards. From instrumental soloists to our secondary choirs, students are making their presence known across the region.

At the Commencement Bay Music Educators Association (COMBMEA) Solo/Ensemble Festival, Peninsula High School and Key Peninsula Middle School (KPMS) made history with the largest turnouts in their divisions. PHS earned 34 Superior and 18 Excellent ratings, while KPMS grabbed 11 Superiors and 5 Excellents.

"KPMS had 18 entries, the most in our history," said Sarah Kaal, KPMS Director of Bands. "I am so proud of how our students performed. Music is strong on the Key Peninsula."

Goodman Middle School also impressed by earning multiple Superior and Excellent ratings across COMBMEA events, and Kopachuck Middle School added an Excellent Regional Jazz rating to the district's haul.

The jazz scene is equally thriving. At the Quincy Square Jazz Festival, Gig Harbor High School's Jazz Band 1 secured a third-place finish out of 20 large high schools, earning a prestigious evening gala performance. Goodman Middle School claimed first place in the middle school division alongside five Outstanding Soloist awards.

"It felt great to be recognized," said Jackson L., an 8th grade trumpet player at Goodman. "All of our hard work has paid off."

Our vocalists are hitting high notes of their own. District middle and high school choirs recently showcased their talents at the COMBMEA Regional Choir Festival. Even our youngest singers drew crowds, with all 10 elementary choirs performing to packed audiences at GHHS. Congratulations to PSD student musicians on an incredible year so far.



"Our clubs have been working together like never before through direct partnership in order to achieve the best outcome for this project," said Polina Melanchenko, GHHS ASL Club President.

Thomas teaches her GHHS students that learning ASL means showing gratitude and service to the Deaf community. GHHS students signed with attendees at Tide Fest, the annual school fundraiser, where they raised funds and donated to the American Society for Deaf Children. Across town, PHS students showed service by volunteering at Signing Santa and performed songs at Purdy Elementary's choir concert.

"This year has been full of passion from our community and I couldn't be happier to have this community," said Natali Kohl, PHS Club President. Kohl credits Clifford for preparing students for career readiness, discussing interpreting ethics, and networking with guest speakers.

Networking also builds partnerships with younger learners. "At an elementary school with a Deaf student, my high schoolers translate preschool books into ASL to plant seeds for future learning," Clifford said.

Looking ahead, Clifford is working with the state Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to address a critical interpreter shortage by creating a high school to career pipeline. The ultimate vision is to expand ASL courses and hire more Deaf educators, providing authentic language models and cultural connections.

### ARTONDALE ELEMENTARY

6219 40th Street NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335  
Built in 2023  
413 students



### DISCOVERY ELEMENTARY

4905 Rosedale Street NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335  
Built in 1980  
353 students



### EVERGREEN ELEMENTARY

1632 Key Peninsula Hwy SW  
Lakebay, WA 98349  
Built in 2024  
355 students



### GIG HARBOR HIGH SCHOOL

5101 Rosedale Street NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335  
Originally built in 1978  
with an add-on in 1991  
1433 students



### GOODMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

3701 38th Avenue NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335  
Built in 1991  
524 students



### HARBOR HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY

4002 36th Street NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335  
Built in 1991  
430 students



### HARBOR RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL

9010 Prentice Avenue NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98332  
Built in 2002  
615 students



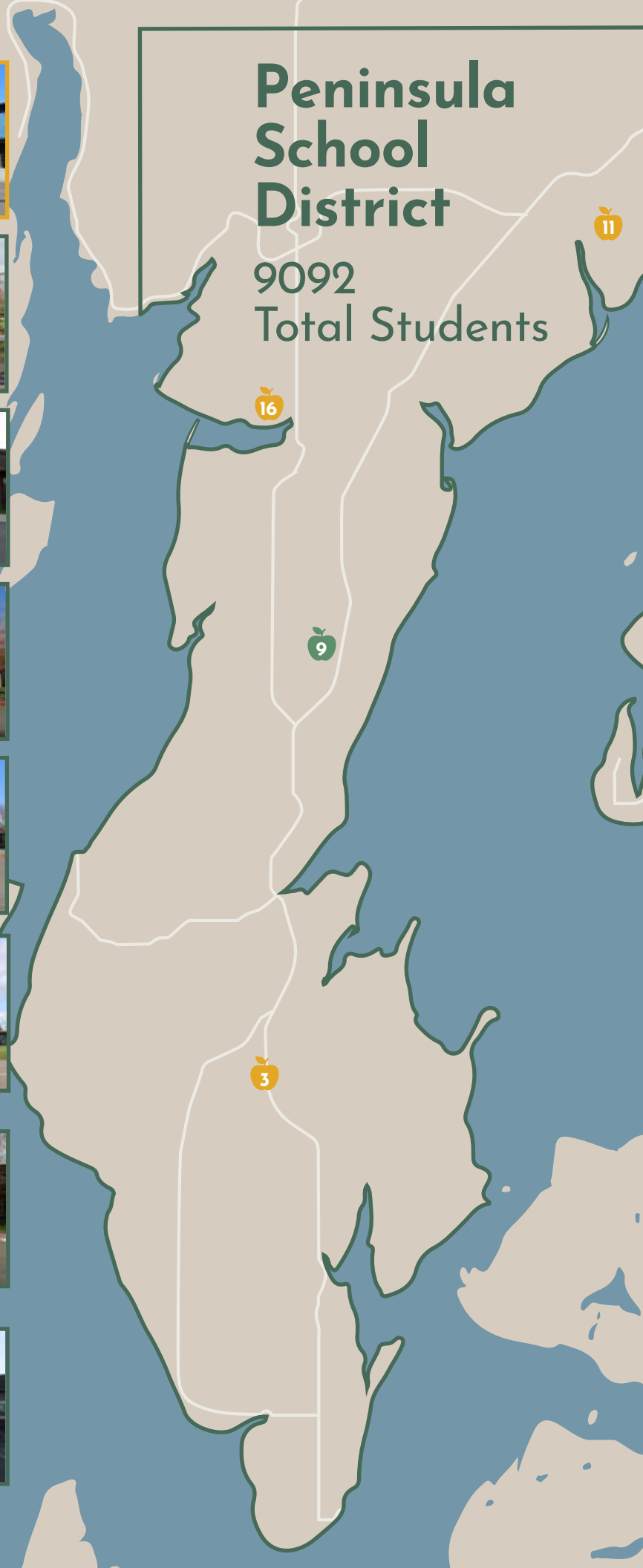
### HENDERSON BAY HIGH SCHOOL

8402 Skansie Avenue  
Gig Harbor, WA 98332  
Built in 2002  
125 students



# Peninsula School District

9092  
Total Students





### KEY PENINSULA MIDDLE SCHOOL

5510 Key Peninsula Hwy NW  
Lakebay, WA 98349  
Built in 1978, major modernization in 2024  
458 students



### KOPACHUCK MIDDLE SCHOOL

10414 56th Street NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335  
Built in 1980, major modernization in 2023  
529 students



### MINTER CREEK ELEMENTARY

12617 118th Avenue NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98329  
Built in 1981  
270 students



### PENINSULA HIGH SCHOOL

14105 Purdy Drive NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98332  
Originally built in 1946 with add-ons throughout the decades  
1332 students



### PIONEER ELEMENTARY

8502 Skansie Avenue  
Gig Harbor, WA 98332  
Built in 2009, remodel and addition in 2021  
469 students



### PURDY ELEMENTARY

13815 62nd Avenue NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98332  
Built in 1971  
493 students



### SWIFT WATER ELEMENTARY

10811 Harbor Hill Drive  
Gig Harbor, WA 98332  
Built in 2022  
531 students



### VAUGHN ELEMENTARY

17521 Hall Road NW  
Vaughn, WA 98394  
Built in 1992  
329 students



### VOYAGER ELEMENTARY

10615 Kopachuck Drive NW  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335  
Built in 1988  
403 students



# Champion for Early Learners: Meet Paraeducator Jill Knowles

For 26 years, Jill Knowles has been a dedicated advocate for some of Peninsula School District's youngest and most vulnerable students. Knowles is currently a Behavior Intervention Specialist Assistant serving all our early learning programs. She helps school teams implement visual supports, strategies, and accommodations that set students up for success.

"Jill exemplifies what it means to lead with both heart and purpose in service of our youngest learners," said Lisa Reaugh, Executive Director of Student Services. "Her tireless commitment to their success is matched by deep knowledge and a relentless drive to ensure that every student's needs are met. She is a fierce and thoughtful advocate, approaching her work with compassion, integrity, and a steadfast belief in what is possible for each child."

The driving force behind her long career is the profound connection Knowles said she builds with students and their families. Earning a child's trust and ensuring they feel safe is her top priority. She spent 13 years as a special education paraeducator and two decades co-running the Extended Day Program at Purdy and Vaughn, helping early learners navigate their vital first years of school.

"Helping a child who has no communication understand that they can communicate and be heard to get their needs met is truly indescribable," Knowles said.

Whether she is helping a preschooler find their voice or providing critical support strategies to classroom teachers, Jill Knowles approaches every day with immense compassion and patience. Her daily work leaves a lasting mark on the



district, but she insists the students give her just as much in return.

"Being a part of all of these children's lives has brought so much joy into my life, and I have learned something from every child that I have worked with," she said. "My hope is that I have done the same for them."



# The Heart of Key Peninsula Middle School: Meet Office Manager Kari Trivette



"I have had the amazing opportunity to fill many roles," Trivette said. "I think it goes without saying that I love middle school, and I love being an office manager."

That passion for middle school is what drives her daily dedication to staff and students. For Trivette, the best part of the job is supporting her school community, especially the teachers, whom she says are "absolute heroes." Inspired by their daily dedication and selflessness, she works behind the scenes to keep the school running smoothly.

"An outstanding school is built on care, connection, and commitment, and Kari brings all three to life every single day," said Luke Grunberg, KPMS Principal. "With grace, patience, and an unwavering dedication to students, staff, and families, she is the steady heartbeat of KPMS. Her kindness, problem-solving, and willingness to help anyone who walks

through the door make our school a better place."

Trivette is most proud watching KPMS students work hard and grow. "Our students come in as unsure sixth graders, and leave as confident eighth graders heading off to high school," Trivette said. "The last day of school always makes me a little teary as we wave goodbye to the buses."

Her connection to the district runs deep. Trivette is the proud mother of two adult daughters who attended PSD from preschool through graduation at Peninsula High School. She credits the education they received for preparing them for success in college and beyond.

When she isn't making KPMS a welcoming place, Trivette enjoys spending time with her family, reading, and growing food.

As the Office Manager at Key Peninsula Middle School (KPMS), Kari Trivette is the welcoming face who keeps the building running smoothly. She has worn many hats during her time in Peninsula School District, previously serving as a paraeducator, front office assistant, and secretary.

# More Than a Ride: PSD Bus Driver Delivers Smiles and Support

Joe Cuaresma's day begins at 5:30 a.m., safely transporting students from across the Key Peninsula to Peninsula High School, Key Peninsula Middle School, and Evergreen Elementary on bus route 164. Then he does it all again in the afternoon, bringing students home. Cuaresma says the true reward of his job lies in the connections he makes, and his students agree.

"He is kind and respectful, and he makes everybody smile," said Evergreen 4th grader Landon S. "He is kind even if somebody gets in trouble."

For the past eight years, Cuaresma has built such a strong rapport with his passengers that parents frequently tell him how much their children love riding his bus.

"He talks to us, and on the bus to school we play Simon Says," said Evergreen 2nd grader Kayetana Z. "He lets us take different seats so I can sit with my little sister."

For Cuaresma, navigating the roads safely is only part of the job. He views his bus as a safe haven where students can feel heard and supported before and after the school bell rings.

"Seeing them grow is really rewarding," he said. "Sometimes kids just open up to you because they need somebody to listen to what they are going through. We build that trust, and just being there to listen really helps."

That trust has lasting impacts. He still remembers his first year on the job, when he helped teach the days of the week to a kindergarten learning English – a student who is now in middle school.

"It's incredible to watch these kids grow up, see the changes they go through, and know they still remember me," Cuaresma said. "The best part is when kids from an old route spot me and come running over just to say hi."

When he isn't behind the wheel offering a smile and a listening ear, Cuaresma loves spending time with his wife, hiking local trails and traveling. He has passed on his dedication to the district to the next generation: his own daughter now works as a substitute bus driver for PSD.



## We're Hiring Bus Drivers!

**Peninsula School District is hiring full and part-time bus drivers! No experience is required, paid training and benefits are provided.**

**Apply now at [psd401.net/jobs](https://psd401.net/jobs).**

# Exploring Heritage: Native American Education Program Connects Students to Their Roots

Native American students across Peninsula School District are connecting with their heritage, history, and traditions through the district's growing Native American Education Program. With engaging lessons and hands-on activities, the program provides a dedicated space for students to explore their cultural identity and share their lineage.

At Minter Creek Elementary, students learned how Plains Nations traditionally painted horses and completed a weaving project. Across town at Swift Water Elementary, young learners created salmon headbands while discovering the critical role salmon play in the ecosystem.

Older students are diving deeper into Indigenous history and art. At Key Peninsula Middle School, a mask-making

unit introduced students to Suquamish carvers, while a lesson on the Iroquois Nation taught them the history of lacrosse and the significance of wampum belts. Harbor Ridge Middle School students explored ledger art, creating their own pieces using historic railroad certificate bonds.

At Peninsula High School, students have been introduced to a variety of Native American tribes through artifacts that open up conversations about tribal enrollment status, lineage, and how to research their Native family history.

"We are working on family trees, exploring colleges that provide support for Native American students, and discussing career opportunities for Native students,"

said Program Coordinator Shana Yellow Calf, who is an enrolled member of the Northern Arapaho tribe.

Families are a central part of the program's success. The district hosted its second Native Family Night featuring buffalo stew, a documentary, and Plains-themed activity kits. The program is planning a Native Family Night Gala and a district-wide Native Education Day to bring together Native students from across the district.

✓ LEVY FUNDED



# Expanding Play: PSD and PenMet Parks Partnership Keeps Kids Active

A thriving collaboration between Peninsula School District (PSD) and Peninsula Metropolitan Park District (PenMet Parks) is paying off for local families, resulting in a significant increase in youth recreational opportunities. By sharing public spaces and coordinating resources, our two local government entities are ensuring taxpayer dollars stretch further so more kids have the chance to get out, play, and connect.

The summer Mobile Rec program is a perfect example. Organized by PenMet Parks and hosted at PSD and PenMet Parks facilities, this free drop-in program offers kids a safe place to participate in activities and receive free lunch. Thanks to the partnership, Mobile Rec expanded from three days a week in 2024 to five days a week in 2025. Participation more than doubled, jumping from 781 to 1,637 kids.

Basketball also saw a similar boom. As the largest local provider of recreational basketball, PenMet Parks utilized guaranteed gym space from the district to expand its league. Because of this partnership, the program grew from 647 youth in 2024 to 883 on 91 teams in 2025, including the addition of high school teams.

"We served more children than ever before this basketball season, and we are excited to see our public parks and facilities being used by the school district to further enhance educational and recreational opportunities for students," said Ally Bujacich, PenMet Parks Executive Director.

With the opening of its new PenMet Parks Recreation Center, PenMet Parks was able to reduce its use of PSD courts by 50% this year.

✓ LEVY FUNDED

Relocating these games to the new facility frees up district gyms for other community youth sports organizations.

Expanding opportunities for youth to be active tackles real challenges in our community. The Tacoma-Pierce County 2023 State of Play report said only 26% of youth in our district met the CDC's recommendation of 60 minutes of daily activity. We formalized our relationship two years ago with a clear goal to change that reality. By sharing public resources, we are creating more avenues for our youth to stay healthy, active, and engaged.





## Deployment Bears Bring Comfort to Elementary Students

Fifteen students whose parents are currently deployed received a special delivery to remind them they are loved and supported: their very own Deployment Bear, along with a book and a CD. Deployment bears were distributed at Harbor Heights Elementary, Discovery Elementary, and Swift Water Elementary, and more bears are being distributed at other schools as families face the deployment of a parent.

The Deployment Bears were donated to the district through our Purple Star partnership with Joint Base Lewis-McChord. The bear's tag reads, "I'm your Battalion Buddy and I'm here to keep you company while Mom or Dad is away. I'm so excited to join your family."

"Sweet little first grader Emmy was jumping up and down excited," said Liz Genshow, Harbor Heights counselor. "She said, 'I love my bear.'"

These heartwarming moments are a hallmark of military-friendly Peninsula School District, home to about 500 military-connected students. Specially trained staff are dedicated to understanding and supporting students' unique needs.

Through the Purple Star program, the district provides clear guidelines to help military families seamlessly transition into new districts, including policies that allow equivalent courses to waive credits so students stay on track.

Learn more about resources and military family events at [psd401.net/purplestar](http://psd401.net/purplestar).

## NJROTC Academic Team Headed to National Championship

Four cadets from Peninsula School District's NJROTC Tidehawk Company have risen to the top of a global competition, earning a coveted spot at the national JROTC Leadership and Academic Bowl Championship.

After surviving two fast-paced online rounds testing math, science, language arts, and financial literacy, the Peninsula NJROTC Academic Team secured their place among the nation's elite. Out of more than 5,100 competing teams worldwide, the Tidehawk cadets are one of just 108 teams to advance to the national stage.

"Qualifying for nationals is an incredible honor," said Cadet Sydney Gardner. "I'm proud of our team's hard work and excited for the opportunity to compete and represent our school on a national stage."

This incredible achievement reflects months of disciplined preparation, intellectual rigor, and true teamwork. The cadets will travel to Washington, D.C., in June, proudly representing their school and community.





✓ LEVY FUNDED

# Future Readiness Center Helps Students Prepare for Postsecondary Plans

The Future Readiness Center is successfully guiding students toward their postsecondary dreams. Recently, the center brought industry partners to all three high schools to give students valuable real-world insights into diverse career pathways, from masonry and real estate to nursing and acting.

The Future Readiness Center also just wrapped up visits at middle schools, where career specialists and high school interns helped students explore different careers in an immersive, hands-on way through Transfr VR Headsets. Staff helped connect students' unique interests and career exploration experiences to high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways, showing how skilled trades classes align with contracting or how food science fits perfectly into the culinary pathway.

"My driving passion is to make sure all students have equal access to post high school opportunities, whether that is with college, trades, military, or the workforce," said Heather Hays, Post Secondary and Career Counselor. "Students can do whatever they put their minds to with the right exposure to opportunities."

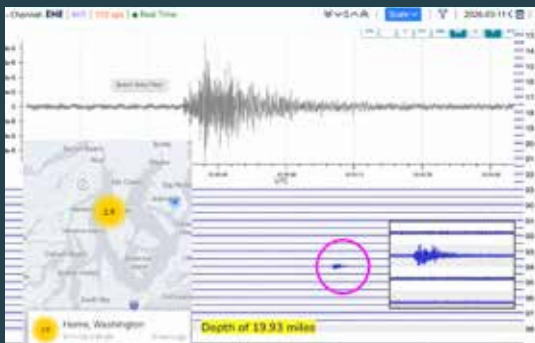
Beyond career exploration, our seniors are setting records. We have broken last year's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion record, becoming the top district in the Puget Sound League and leading the state among larger districts. This crucial application unlocks financial aid and scholarships for four-year universities, two-year colleges, and even apprenticeships.

# New Seismographs Bring Earth Science to Life

Middle school students across Peninsula School District are getting a front-row seat to real-time geological activity, thanks to newly installed seismograph sensors at every middle school campus.

This technology perfectly complements the sixth-grade Plate Motion science unit. As part of their curriculum, students learn how earthquakes serve as evidence of shifting tectonic plates. They also map fault boundaries near Gig Harbor and the Key Peninsula and discuss local earthquake and tsunami risks.

Students recently saw this science in action when a 2.9 magnitude earthquake centered on the Key Peninsula triggered the district's new sensors. At Goodman Middle School, the timing was perfect. A newly installed hallway monitor allowed students in Kristin Coovert's class—and the rest of the school—to observe the recorded seismic activity throughout the day, turning a local natural phenomenon into a highly engaging, tangible learning experience.



✓ LEVY FUNDED

# Leveling Up: Middle School Athletics Adds New Tournaments and Skills Squads

Middle school sports in our district expanded this school year, offering students even more ways to get in the game. We introduced Skills Squads for high-demand sports like volleyball and basketball. When turnout is high, instead of cutting players, these squads ensure more students can participate by focusing on fundamental skill development and learning the game.

The district also added exciting middle school tournaments for girls and boys basketball, and girls soccer. These new competitions bring all four of our schools together to compete and complement our long-standing wrestling tournament and spring district track meet. We are proud to create more athletic opportunities for all our students.



✓ LEVY FUNDED

## Historic Season as Girls Flag Football Hits the Playoffs in Inaugural WIAA Campaign

✓ LEVY FUNDED

Girls Flag Football has officially arrived on our local high school gridiron. With the sport newly sanctioned by the Washington State Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA), Peninsula School District is already seeing historic success on the field.

In only the second year the district has offered Girls Flag Football, teams from both Gig Harbor High School (GHHS) and Peninsula High School (PHS) secured district playoff berths.

At PHS, head coach Brent Campbell oversaw a program that took massive strides forward. Fielding both junior varsity and varsity squads with about 15 athletes each, the Seahawks focused heavily on fundamentals and strategy.

"We had a successful season, improved immensely from last year, and made the playoffs for another first," said Campbell. "It was a great season with lots of football IQ growth."

"I am so happy girls are now offered this sport. Having it be WIAA-sanctioned was a big deal that brought a lot of excitement to the team," said PHS senior Grace Tucker. "We had a wonderful season with amazing sportsmanship, made even better by our spectacular coaches."

Across town, GHHS saw a surge in participation. The Tides' roster showcased 21 athletes on both varsity and JV. The heavy turnout translated to a competitive squad that fought its way to the district playoffs for the first time.

"Sports are amazing because they bring people together from different backgrounds and groups," said Kale Wong, GHHS head coach. "Especially with girls flag football being a new sport, it's giving these girls an opportunity to connect and learn valuable lessons. My goal is to teach lessons and experiences I had through sports, and pass it on to these players."

That team-first mentality is already resonating with the athletes. GHHS junior quarterback Maddie Harding noted the rapid evolution of the program.

"Having played both seasons, it has been so amazing to see our skills and relationships grow in just two short years," Harding said. "We have such a cool team dynamic, and we always have fun with each other."

With both programs boasting playoff experience and the WIAA officially backing the sport, girls flag football has firmly established itself as a permanent fixture under Friday night lights.





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