

NOTES
Peninsula School District Parent Council
Wednesday, April 2, 2025
10:00am-12:00pm

I. Attendees

Beth LaTendresse (Facilitator), James Cantonwine (Director of Research and Assessment), Kayla Ferguson (Gig Harbor Region Librarian), Katie Russell (Pioneer), Kate Cunha (Goodman), Jennifer Beachler (Discovery), Erica Walsh (Harbor Heights), Adam Markel (Swiftwater), Karmen Furer (Harbor Ridge / HOA), Angie Costa (Kopachuck & GHHS), Marcy Trott (GHHS), Krissy Desnoyers (Artondale)

II. District Update

- Jake Voss, Director of Strategic Communications, discussed the topic of parent organization communication avenues via a phone call with Beth LaTendresse because he could not attend the meeting. This topic was brought up by school representatives at previous meetings and Jake has been looking into it.
- Jake Voss would like to form a committee from school representatives or PTA/VPO board members to provide data and feedback in the creation of a communications guideline that would standardize how parent organizations communicate via school platforms like parent square.
- Several PDC representatives are interested in participating in this. An email list will be provided to Jake Voss.

III. Katie Russell, Pioneer VPO: Creation of District Wide Elementary STEAM Nights

- Several elementary schools hold STEAM nights for families and students, but not all of our elementary schools are able to do this.
- Multiple schools hosting STEAM nights puts strain on community resources for these events. The organizations that donate time or materials or set up tables at STEAM events are being requested for multiple events each school year and cannot attend them all. Additionally, some activities are costly for PTA/VPO to provide and not all schools have the same level of PTA/VPO funds.
- STEAM nights require significant manpower from STEAM Teachers and parent volunteers.
- Pioneer has prepared a proposal to shift the structure of STEAM nights to a district wide event rather than an individual school event. Elementary schools that feed into Peninsula High School would have a joint STEAM event at PHS. Elementary schools that feed into Gig Harbor High School would have a joint STEAM event at GHS. These STEAM events would take place during the day (10 AM to 5 PM) on a Saturday. They would not take place on the same Saturday.
- STEAM teachers would plan and participate jointly.
- This model would provide more experiences for all elementary students. PTA/VPOs would be able to reach out to vendors early and anticipate having more success with vendors and community groups in asking them to attend two events versus several schools trying to schedule their time. PTA/VPOs from each school would contribute by funding experiences and/or providing volunteers. Pioneer is willing to put their current entire STEAM night budget towards the joint event.

- Ideally high school clubs such as the STEAM, Robotics, Astronomy, NHS groups would hopefully be involved to help with setting up and showcase some of the work that they are doing at the high school.
- Katie is looking for feedback on the proposal from PDC school reps and PTA/VPO boards. The proposal will be shared with representatives via a google doc allowing comments.
- Feedback during the meeting from all school representatives in attendance is positive. Representatives like the idea of working together to provide a higher level of experience for everyone rather than each school putting in the same amount of effort for their own programs.
- **ACTION ITEM: PDC representatives share proposal with your PTA/VPO and review and provide comments to the proposal.**

IV. James Cantonwine, Director of Research and Assessment: Peninsula Parent Partner

- Peninsula Parent Partner is an AI homework tool developed with the goal of providing support to parents wanting to help their children with homework. It is run through ChaptGPT. It differentiates from simply using ChaptGPT because it is optimized to provide answers or give prompts from a tutor perspective. It is directed to parents or tutors rather than students.
- Currently Peninsula Parent Partner is a demo model. The plan is to evaluate if there is parent interest in the application through some targeted use of the demo version.
- The demo is drawing from general information at this point. A fully developed program would have the specific curriculum for PSD courses in its knowledge base and would draw from district specific curriculum for answers.
- The demo is not recording any information.
- [Peninsula Parent Partner](#) This link will take you to the demo version. You will need to utilize ChatGPT to access it, but it can be fully used on the free version.
- If development of this program moved forward, the district would likely set it to collect data on subjects being searched so that the district could analyze and use that information in regards to courses and instruction.
- The cost of the program would be minimal.
- Parents are encouraged to utilize the demo model of [Peninsula Parent Partner](#) and provide feedback to James Cantonwine cantonwinej@psd401.net. Please share this with your parent organizations.

V. PDC Representative Sharing

Gig Harbor Library - Kayla Ferguson

- Elementary programs start this month at the Gig Harbor library.
- Lego explorers is the 1st Monday of the month. There will be a story and associated Lego challenge each month. In April it will be a pirate theme with a pirate boat Lego challenge.
- Graphic novel book club is starting this month with the graphic novel Allergic. Eight copies are at the library front desk available to check out. An additional twelve copies are in the system for people to reserve/request themselves. Each month a number of copies will be set aside at the front desk on the first of the month. The book club will meet at the end of each month. The focus age for the graphic novel book club is 3rd to 5th graders.
- The library's summer reading program begins on June 1st. Librarians will be visiting schools to promote the summer reading program.

Hands on Art - Karmen Furer

- Training for the last project of the year “Perspectives of Mt Tahoma” is the week of April 7th.
- Excited to bring back this beautiful project to end the year.

Artondale

- Artondale supports local restaurants that provide dine out fundraisers by utilizing them for conference meals.
- Book fair yielded \$8500 in sales. It was a successful volunteer opportunity.
- Recess Runners started March 24th and runs until May 16th. This program gives kids a purpose at recess and is great for kids who might be struggling to find a place they belong at recess. Shoe tokens are handed out for every 10 laps. This program is run completely by parent volunteers. It is a popular volunteer event and sign up fills quickly.
- Health room is in need of boys pants sizes 6-12.
- April 8th carpool to school day! STEAM teachers encourage carpooling or riding the bus.
- April 23rd is plastic free lunch day.
- May 8th Milleville Pizza takeover all day.
- June 9th career day.

Discovery

- Read & Lead - Explorers far surpassed their 300,000 school-wide goal and reached 407,306 minutes. We're doing a popcorn party for the school on Friday. There has been great feedback from parents that students built new reading habits.
- Spring Family Night on March 18 with performer Alex Zerbe was a success. I highly recommend this performer! We also had Makers Market, Spring Book Fair, book bus, Pierce County Library, and a free book swap table (thank you Karmen for your generous donations!). Book Fair total for the week: \$3400.
- Update on Gaga Ball Pit. We are waiting to hear if the PSD Board has approved our \$5,000 donation to the school for recess equipment that we donated back in Fall 2023. Part of the \$5,000 we gave the school is intended to be used for a Gaga Ball Pit and storage sheds for recess equipment. We have told the community this is coming just need final approval.
- VPO has received district approval for our funding to install a water refill station (\$2300). And the first water refill station that Discovery received from a grant from Pierce County is arriving on April 3rd. We expect installation for both fountains will happen this spring.
- Girls on the Run is underway. Let me Run - we have 8 boys registered so far. We will be asking GHHS service organizations and track/field to be junior coaches too.
- Staff Conference Meal - VPO funded a Chick-fil-A lunch on March 20. The staff LOVED it.
- Color Run Fundraiser will kick off April 24. This year, we are leaning toward giving all students a free t-shirt, with students who set up their 99 Pledges site being able to request a t-shirt size. This year, I am leading Color Run, next year we are excited about having an outside firm help us.

- The same 3-4 (and I mean 3-4) parents are doing all of the above and more. Our VPO Board at Discovery will have 3 vacant positions for next year, only 2 members are staying on. We will be actively recruiting while also cutting a lot of the extras our VPO has traditionally done for next year.

Evergreen

Harbor Heights

Minter Creek

Pioneer

Purdy

Swiftwater

- Provided conference meals - picnic theme.
- Book Fair March 17-21 yielded \$13,000 profit. This was split between library and VPO. The school library opted for \$2000 scholastic dollars and the VPO received \$2000.
- Tacoma Little Theater production of 101 Dalmatians was March 28th. Question was asked about Tacoma Little Theater vs French Toast experience. PDC Representatives shared that there has been a lot of negative feedback about Missoula Children's Theater this year. There was a lot of positive feedback about French Toast except for the cost of that program.
- March 29th Rainiers Night VPO sold 441 tickets!
- Girls on the Run started April 1st. Let Me Run program was canceled because male coaches could not be found.
- STREAM night April 3rd.
- April 11th is Purple Up Day
- First ever restaurant takeover for Swiftwater will be MOD Pizza on April 25th.
- Hosting 1st color run on May 23rd. Set a goal of \$10,000. Starting to see a little burnout for fundraising. Considering stocking the staffroom from VPO budget next year rather than asking for donations to avoid too much asking.
- Staff appreciation May 5th

Vaughn

Voyager

Goodman

- March 11 held and arts night with Drama, Band, and Choir performances
- March 21st and 22nd were very successful Peter Pan Junior performances.
- GHHS Debate Club is coming to Goodman to do a showcase.
- April 8th handing out donuts to students.

Harbor Ridge

- Regular stocking of the staff room.
- March 20th takeover at Millville Pizza yielded \$1400!

- Food drive for Food Backpacks 4 Kids March 3rd to March 7th.
- Spirit Wear sales ongoing.

Key Peninsula Middle School

Kopachuck

- Finished a food drive for Food Backpacks 4 Kids.
- April 11th parents will hand out a treat to mark the end of the quarter.
- April 28-May 2 will be a book fair.
- All board members are leaving at the end of this year. Need to fill all positions.
- School reps suggested Kopachuck current board attend Artondale and Voyager PTA/VPO meetings to look for interested volunteers for next year.

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Gig Harbor High School

- Party parents handing out popcorn on April 10th.
- Scholarship foundation scholarship selections will be on April 22 and the awards day is May 20th.
- STEM Club competed at state with all competing members of the club qualifying for nationals.
- Deca Club competed at state and qualified two members for nationals.

Band/Choir / Drama

- Band is attending a festival in Anaheim, CA April 3-6.
- Choir will be performing at the Harbor History Museum for the dedication of the Shenandoah.
- Drama spring production of Les Mes will be May 2, 3, 4 and 8, 9, 10. All performances will be at 6 PM except for one matinee on May 4th at 1:00 PM.

Athletics

- As of April 2nd:
- Girl's Varsity Softball: 5-1 overall, 4-1 conference
- Girl's Golf: They won their first event 378 - 214 against Mount Tahoma
- Boy's Varsity Soccer: 4-2 overall, 2-1 conference
- Girl's Varsity Tennis: 1-0
- Girl's Varsity water Polo: 0-1
- Boy's Varsity Baseball: 6-0 overall, 3-0 conference
- Concerns about GHHS baseball field: After it rains it takes days for the inches of mud and muck to dry enough to make the field safely playable. Varsity always plays their home games at Sehmel. JV has already had to cancel/reschedule 4 home games at the high school field due to the field conditions not being playable. April 1 was a perfect example- beautiful weather to host a home game, but it had to be canceled because it had rained a day or two prior (which also means they can't practice on that field either). There's nowhere for all 3 teams (Varsity, JV, and C) to practice after school. It's a scramble to get reservations at Sehmel because the whole community uses it, plus there are a lot of kids who don't drive.

Henderson Bay High School

Peninsula High School

NEXT MEETING Wednesday, May 7, 10:00am