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The Official Newsletter of the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association (BPHSAA), August 2015 Edition

Update on PPS Board decision on Benson Tech's enrollment cap

The Benson Tech community — including students, teachers school leadership, parents and friends, and alumni — has rallied over the last few years to press Portland Public Schools (PPS) to lift the enrollment limitations at Benson Tech adopted in 2010. More than 500 students have been turned away from the school since then.

The Oregonian Editorial Board published its position in favor of lifting the “cap”. There were two July school board meetings where this issue was voted upon.

Led by new school board member (and Benson parent) Paul Anthony, there was almost majority of the board in favor of “lifting the cap” at the July 28 board meeting. However, a compromise was created to allow PPS Superintendent Carole Smith to come back to the board before the end of the year with her plan on the future of Benson Tech.

While the Benson Tech community and the BPHSAA were disappointed that the cap was not lifted, public opinion and the press seems to be on our side.

More to come in this effort!



Benson Tech is one of three high schools being considered for redesign/rebuilding in the upcoming round of school modernization projects under the Portland Public Schools District's School Improvement Bond program.

Benson Tech building redesign

by Rob Johns, Chair, BPHSAA Board of Directors (Class of 1977)

In November of 2016, Portland voters will decide whether to rebuild Benson Tech High School, as well as Madison and Lincoln. Planning is underway with the Portland Public Schools (PPS) District on a design planning committee, and an architectural firm has been chosen for the design.

Interestingly, PPS see the rebuild of Benson Tech as an opportunity to combine eight other and possibly a ninth alternative high school program on the same campus. This is a unique development that is the product of PPS moving eight alternative programs on to the school campus in the past several years while limiting the enrollment of Benson Tech students.

Currently, there is no space to expand Benson Tech enrollment without moving out the alternative programs now also housed on campus. We are unsure of the true intent of those who first voted to put Benson Tech on the rebuild list, but this is surely a very different design to consider as this combined enrollment could exceed 3,000 students for the campus.

PPS has already begun construction on modernization projects at Franklin and Roosevelt high schools, with construction anticipated to begin at Grant High School in 2017.

For more information on the PPS School Building Improvement Bond, projects under consideration and updates on projects in construction, visit <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/bond/index.htm>.

Update for Benson Tech's five-year plan

An updated version of Benson Polytechnic High School's Five-year Plan will be available in early September 2015. The update lays out a number of important high-priority action items to improve Benson Tech over the next three school years. The update reflects the progress made since the Plan's adoption two years ago, as well as a reasoned assessment as to what is needed and/or is possible in near future.

Benson Tech is one of the few high schools in the country that has developed a multi-year plan to guide its growth and improvement — implicitly setting priorities for the school and its supporters.

The idea of a Five-year Plan originated in Benson's Site Council (a school advisory group made up of

Benson's teachers and staff, parents, students and the alumni).

Significant action items for the 2015-16 school year include introducing AVID for sophomores (an academic support program), expanding the recently developed Tech Algebra-Enterprise and Geo-Tech classes, laying the foundation for a computer engineering/science major, opening a new health and wellness center, strengthening parent-school connections, starting an Entrepreneur Club, establishing a Benson Centennial planning committee, rebuilding Benson's football program and contributing to PPS's master planning effort to rebuild Benson in the 2017-2020 period

These and other action items take into account a continued

gradual increase in Benson Tech's enrollment to exceed 1,000 students by 2016-17.

The original Plan and its implementation in the past two school years led to actions creating a Tech Algebra-Enterprise course, bringing back architecture, creating an architecture/design advisory committee, starting a Freshman Welcome Picnic, allocating resources to computer science and robotics, updating video and other materials provided to eighth graders interested in attending Benson Tech and increasing the school's enrollment.

Look for the updated plan on the BPHSAA webpage as well as Benson Tech High Schools' webpage around Sept. 1, 2015.

Many thanks to the following contributors to the 2015 Benson Tech Community Picnic:

- Franz Bakery for bread, buns and cookies
- Pointe West Credit Union for tents
- KBPS AM 1480 for music
- Benson Tech janitors for their Saturday overtime work
- Benson Tech freshmen and parents
- Roger Edwards and alumni for obits/archives and tents

Youth entrepreneur club beginning this fall

The Youth Entrepreneur (TYE) is a youth entrepreneurship education and training program designed and implemented by TiE, the world's largest Entrepreneur Club. Through connections with the Oregon Entrepreneur in Residence Kanth Golpapur and President of TiE Oregon Nitin Rae, Benson Tech has been targeted as a focused eastside high school to sponsor the location of a TYE club.

Working with the GeoTech and AlgebraTech instructors at Benson Tech, the program will start this fall, providing hands-on teaching on teamwork, ideation, marketing and the "pitch" of a start-up business by the teams. This should work well for the junior class at Benson Tech and allow TYE to access other eastside high school participants at Benson Tech as sort of an eastside incubator for youth entrepreneurs.

More information about TYE can be found at the TiE Oregon website at <http://oregon.tie.org/tye-oregon/>.



Football at Benson Tech for 2015-2016

by Sanjay Bedi, athletic director, Benson Tech, Sbedi@pps.net

I am very excited on the rebuilding of the Benson Tech Football program. We spent a lot of time re-evaluating the program after last season and made a very tough decision to cut the varsity program for the 2015-16 season. Our focus here was to take the necessary steps to not only help rebuild the program and also ensure the future of the program. At the forefront of this decision was a lack of numbers and in turn the safety of players, especially competing at the varsity level.

A lot has happened since we made this decision. Towards the end of the school year we put out a search for a Head Coach and were happy to hire Coach Devarieous Sly-Clay. He was a former Benson Tech student and football player. Most recently he has been an assistant coach at Sherwood High School. Coach D is very excited about taking over the Tech football program and is also positive about the opportunity to build the program from the Freshman and JV level up. He has hired a quality coaching staff and they have been working hard through the summer.

I am very pleased with the work they have done over the summer, especially with the job they have done recruiting players. The team currently has 45 players on the roster and hopes to get more players at the start of the school year.

We have a full season ahead kicking off the season with a jamboree at Oregon City on August 28th followed by 2 non-league games against Lebanon on September 3rd and Barlow on September 10th. We then get into a 6 game league schedule in the PIL. Homecoming will be played on Monday, Oct. 5, 2015 at 4:00 pm against Cleveland High School.

Thank you in advance for your support of our programs.

GO TECH!

Benson Tech Foundation update

Since March 2014, the foundation has been an approved 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation.

One of the Foundation's first major contributors was Ziba Design, which made a contribution as part of its participation in the Architecture Program at Benson Tech, which was brought back into the curriculum in Fall 2014 through an Oregon State CTE Grant.

Since then, the Foundation has supported the Benson Tech SkillsUSA competition with a contribution of \$600 to the team of Allison Plager, Andy Lai and Brian Moreno, led by teacher Cathy Skachs.

The Foundation has also been recognized by United Way, so contributors can direct their United Way donations to the Benson Tech Foundation.

For further information on the Foundation, please email Foundation President Rob Johns at robjohns@comcast.net or call 503-314-0041.

Alumni scholarship awards surpass \$5,000 for 2015

The Oregon Community Foundation paid out \$5,889 in scholarships to graduating seniors this past year. The balance in the account is \$86,448.01 and we encourage direct contributions to the Oregon Community Foundation, designating your donation to the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund. Last year, there were \$1,275 in contributions.

To make an online contribution, go to the BPHSAA website's scholarship page - <http://www.bensontechalumni.org/scholarship/>. To send a check, make it payable to: "The Oregon Community Foundation" with the memo: "Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund. Checks can be mailed to: The Oregon Community Foundation; 1221 SW Yamhill Street, Suite 100; Portland, OR 97205.

Student health center coming to Benson Tech

Through the continuous efforts of a few indefatigable supporters — namely Benson Tech Counselor Amy Henry and Planning Coordinator Doreen Roozee, whose testimony last week before the Budget Committee of the PPS Board capped off an 18-month effort — an approval of up to \$300,000 was passed to be spent for the renovation of the old Tool Crib space at Benson Tech into a health center for the students. As this newsletter went to press, another \$70,000 was funded for interior furnishings for exam rooms and workstations. The health center will be sponsored and operated by Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU) and Kaiser Permanente.

Thanks go to the Oregonian (whose articles prompted support from OHSU) and to the support from Benson Tech Principal Curtis Wilson and others at PPS and the PPS Board. The invitation to bid on this construction will be let soon!



Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association

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