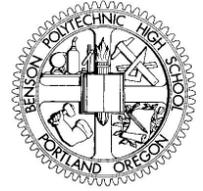


# BENSON TECH ALUMNI TEXT

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The Official Newsletter of the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association  
December 2009 Edition

## Almost a Magnet School

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Benson was identified to be one of Portland's future "magnet high schools" in the Portland Public School (PPS) announcement of the preliminary results of its comprehensive High School Design study in June on the steps of Benson. At that time, PPS said additional details about Benson, the other focus or magnet schools and the city's "comprehensive" (aka neighborhood) high schools would be announced in October. That date has slipped with the District's planning staff acknowledging some difficulties working out the details of the Design especially concerning the "comprehensive" (aka neighborhood) schools.

In a nutshell, PPS's Superintendent and planning staff has proposed that the District would have 2 or 3 focus or magnet schools like Benson open to any student in the District. These would provide an in-depth program in different technical or art fields as well as the required core classes for a high school diploma. The other portion of the proposal involves the community or neighborhood high schools. In the proposal each of the community schools would offer essentially the same courses including electives, the boundaries between community schools would be redrawn to achieve approximately the same number of students, and students would be required to attend the community high school in their neighborhood unless they were admitted to one of the focus/magnet schools. To reduce District costs and to better achieve equity and a reasonable number of course options in the community schools the planning staff believes that it will be necessary to close 1-3 of the existing neighborhood high schools.

Portions of the proposal have been discussed with the School Board in open meetings. The "sticky" portions of the proposal seem to be the size, number and character of the Community high Schools plus the students' "freedom" to attend a high school other than in their neighborhood. To obtain more public input the District's planning staff conducted community work shops on October 9<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Another round of public meetings have been or are being held in the existing neighborhood high schools in November and

early December. These are to obtain more public input on questions relating to the future community high schools such as school size and electives to be offered. Benson continues to be mentioned as the District's future cornerstone technical/CTE magnet school. However, some questions do remain concerning the exact focus of the technical offerings, the array of electives, and how many, if any, athletic and other after-school activities will be available at Benson.

As this Newsletter "goes to press", it is not known specifically when the Superintendent and School Board will next discuss the issues surrounding the community or neighborhood high schools. Additional informational information about the High School Design project, its status and pertinent meetings can be found on the quite good Portland Public School's webpage.

The Alumni Association's Long Term Development Planning (LTDP) people are tracking these School District activities and participating as possible and appropriate. The Association's LTDP Committee believes that it is only a matter of time for the final plan for Portland's public high schools to designate Benson as a magnet school for CTE. Accordingly it is continuing to work with PPS staff, local colleges, the State Department of Education, and local business leaders on curriculum, partnerships and physical facilities supporting a Green Economy. (Also see the article titled "Alumni Long Term Planning Continues.")

*As PPS works its way through final decisions regarding the Community High Schools and the details of the focus/Magnet schools, it is very important to remember that there is nothing in the discussions about closing Benson. Compared to some sentiment in the past, the Superintendent and the School Board are recognizing Benson's continuing contribution to a quality high school program in the city. The Alumni Association is committed to building on that recognition and interest.*

## **Alumni's Long Term Planning Continues**

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Even though the School District has not formally declared Benson to be the Portland's magnet CTE high school for sustainability/environmental studies/ green economy technology, the Alumni Association's Long Term Development Planning (LTDP) effort has not slowed down.

There is clear evidence that the Association had a positive influence in having Benson identified as a magnet school. The Association is now working on multiple fronts in coordination with District personnel to shape the school's future curriculum, program offerings, physical facilities, and technical partnerships. The Association's planning staff is involved in many study groups and in discussions with civic officials, business leaders, and representatives of various local colleges and schools.

Alumni with an interest in this endeavor and/or have contacts with potential industrial and scholastic partners are urged to join in this planning effort by contacting Dick Spies via the Association email address.

## **Helping Benson Now**

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The Alumni Association is exploring a new effort to support Benson current students and staff. The staff has identified a preliminary set of needed things and assistance that alumni might offer to the school. These range from calculators, Spanish books, and shop equipment to occasional in-classroom (shop) assistance, guest speakers, mentoring and arranging field trips to observe real life industrial and health care activities.

The Association believes that there may be some exciting and rewarding opportunities for Benson's alumni to give back to the school in terms of time and resources. A list of specific material needs will be published on the Benson Tech Alumni web page in the coming months. In addition, means will be examined for linking the school's need for speakers, mentors, and a "speakers' bureau". As they say, "Stay tuned in".



## **Membership Renewal Time**

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For the Benson Alumni Association to continue to impact School District's decisions about Benson's future, to support the school's current staff and students, and to offer an annual picnic and other social events, the Association needs your membership.

This past year membership dues (plus the work of many volunteers) provided quarterly newsletters, an Alumni/All-class Picnic, an Alumni room at Tech Show, several open alumni meetings at the school, participation in numerous public meetings as well as discussions with School District staff that led to a preliminary designation of Benson as being a continuing magnet school in the District's new plan for the city's public schools, etc. Your annual dues of \$12 has gone a long ways.

The next membership year begins in January 2010. Dues are still \$12. Dues can now be securely paid via the Association's webpage, or if you prefer by check and regular mail to BPHSAA, Benson High School, 546 NE 12<sup>th</sup> Ave., Portland, OR 97232.

If you are not a member of the Benson's Alumni Association, you are invited to join. Membership is open to anyone whom ever attended Benson, current or former teachers, and anyone wishing to support Benson High School.

## **New Board Members Elected**

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In August, during the annual Alumni/All Class Picnic, the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association (BPHSAA) elected 6 members to fill vacant seats on its Board of Directors. Newly elected were Don LaBarre, Joanne Stainbrook, Maj Britt Baker, Bruce Miller, Andrew Scorgie, and Shannon Scorgie. Don and Joanne were re-elected after finishing their first one-year terms on the Board.

The newly elected will join Kyle Anderson, Dale Bajema (Chairperson), Ken Bakke (Treasurer), Neal Galash, Chuck Heil, Tammy Hite (Secretary), Josh Piper (Vice Chairperson), and Dick Spies.

Paul Benninghoff and Bob Hyland officially completed their one-year terms on the Board in August. The Board was well served by their involvement and support during the Association's critical first year. Bob is continuing to serve on several of the Association's committees.

## **Campaign for Scholarship Funds**

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The annual campaign is underway to add money to the Benson Reunion Scholarship Fund. This fund started in 1991 has awarded over the years 45 scholarships to Benson's graduates. This past June three scholarships totaling \$4216 were awarded from interest earned on the previous invested funds. Each year the new donations are transferred to The Oregon Community Fund that manages the Alumni's Scholarship Fund.

Your tax-exempt contribution of any amount can help in this continuing worthwhile support of Benson and its students. If you have not received at email or letter about the campaign, you can still donate on line with a credit card through a secure link on the Alumni's webpage. Or, if you prefer, by check and regular mail to:

Benson Scholarship Fund, Benson High School  
546 NE 12<sup>th</sup> Ave., Portland, OR 97232.

## **New Committee Chairs Named**

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Most of the Association's work is led and conducted through its committees, their chairpersons and members. The following chairpersons and committee members were identified during the September and October Board of Directors meetings (that incidentally occur on the second Wednesday of each month):

- Long Term Development Planning: Dick Spies (chair), Kyle Anderson, Tammy Hite, Joanne Stainbrook, Chuck Heil, Dale Bajema, and Ron Curry
- Events: Tammy Hite (chair), Neal Galash and Andrew Scorgie
- Membership: Shannon Scorgie (chair), Ken Bakke and Bob Hyland
- Finance: Ken Bakke (chair) and Joanne Stainbrook
- Communications: Josh Piper (chair), Majbritt Baker and Dale Bajema
- Scholarship: Don LeBarre (chair) and Bob Hyland, Dale Bajema and others
- Executive Committee: Bajema, Piper, Hite, and Bakke

As always, additional members are needed on all of the committees to further advance the Association's activities and support for Benson High School. A description of the Committees and their purpose was included in the August 2009 (Picnic Reunion) edition of the Association's Newsletter. To volunteer please email your interest to [info@bensontechalumni.org](mailto:info@bensontechalumni.org).

### **Calendar of Events**

Thru End of Feb.	Benson Basketball
Sat. 04/24	Campus Clean-Up
04/29 & 04/30	Tech Show
08/28 & 08/29	Class of 1960 Reunion
August 2010	Class of 2000 Reunion

For the latest information about upcoming events, visit our website.

## Students Chosen for Apprenticeships

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Three Benson students from Mr. Hryciw and Mr. Clinton's classes have been selected by three major Portland industrial employers to participate in the Metro Youth Apprenticeship Training Program. The employers are Gunderson Industries, Columbia Wire and Iron and PCC Structural.

The program allows students under age 18 to work in facilities alongside skilled craftsmen to learn a trade, gain experience and earn a salary. The students will obtain real hands-on experience working after school, weekends, holiday breaks and during summer vacation.

The program and participating companies selected Benson because of the quality and rigor of its classes that prepare students for positions as electricians, welders and millwrights.

*This apprentice program with its hands-on learning experience is an important commitment by Portland's industry to city's youth as well as a recognition that Benson's students are acquiring solid job-ready abilities and skills "half way" through their high school years. It is these kinds of programs and opportunities that the Alumni's Long Term Development Planners are hoping to build upon and expand in their vision of a re-invigorated Benson focusing increasingly on the green economy and sustainability.*

## Alumni Picnic is a Success

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The Benson Alumni Association sponsored the third annual Benson All-Class Reunion this past August. The picnic held on August 16th at Portland's Columbia Park. Virtually everyone attending deemed the event a success citing the opportunity to meet old classmates, mingle with other alumni, and have a chance to discuss the New Benson Vision with the Alumni's planners.

Several suggestions surfaced for the 2010 picnic including a Benson Alumni car show, softball games, and a voluntary and open potluck. The date for the next picnic will be firmed up in February or March when it is possible to reserve space and dates in local parks. In the meantime any and all suggestions for the 2010 picnic are welcome.

## Plans for Tech Show Underway

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The Alumni Association is planning even more "exhibits" and activities at the 2010 Tech Show as the Show celebrates its 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This past year's move of the Alumni's space to the old gym allowed more space for a display of the "New Benson Vision" and meet with former classmates.

For 2010 the Association is exploring possibilities to display "old" pictures, movies, and videos, a "cruise-in" of alumni members' cars, and a "variety show" featuring talented alumni and current students.

*Volunteers are eagerly sought to help with planning and on the days of the show!!! contact us via the d email address. Details will be posted on the webpage as the date approaches.*

Last year, the BPHSAA also sponsored a *Campus Clean-up Day* where alumni, teachers, current students and their parents did some light yard work to prepare the school's front entry for the show. We plan to do the same this year and would love to see you there.

**Free Admission**

**90TH ANNUAL  
TECH SHOW**

**Thursday, April 29 &  
Friday, April 30  
6 to 9pm**

## Contacting the BPHSAA

BPHSAA c/o Benson High School  
546 NE 12th Ave. Portland, OR 97232

Website: [www.BensonTechAlumni.org](http://www.BensonTechAlumni.org)  
Email: [Info@BensonTechAlumni.org](mailto:Info@BensonTechAlumni.org)