



BENSON TECH

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The Official Newsletter of the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association (BPHSAA), November 2022 Edition



Above: Overall view NE. Building C is in the background. In the foreground to the right is the roof truss system over the Main Gym. The Main Gym roof replacement is ongoing.

Benson Tech Modernization Status Update for November 2022

By Gerry Ochs (Class of 1977)

Construction of the new school buildings is proceeding and much progress has been made since my last site visit in July 2022. The structural metal framing for new Building H (south shop wing) and Building C is going well and assembly of the structural steel for Building C is now approximately 98% complete on both floors. Building C will have classrooms located along the north section of the building, with shop classrooms on both the first and second floors of the south half. The Building C roof will include skylights over the second floor shops. Installation of a noise dampening floor or “kinetic floor system” between the two levels is underway and incorporates a concrete base, 2 inches of noise insulation material, plastic spacers and a layer of plywood topped with another 3.5 inches of concrete to complete the system.

The Foundry Building is now designated as Building D and the environmental abatement process is complete

there. Crews are working on the foundation improvements and installation of new shear walls inside the building, which will support the existing Brick structure from within. Building D will be seismically upgraded with shear wall supports tied into the seismic roof upgrades in a similar manner as the improvements to the main school building, Building E. The original Foundry Building windows have been removed and are in the process of restoration.

A new Building B is located between the auditorium and new Building C and will house the band room in the lower level with the new library located on the second floor of the structure.

The school will be heated and cooled using a hydronic piping system throughout the campus. This hydronic system will also be used to heat and cool the chilled beams in the buildings.

Find more news and information at www.bensontechalumni.org

(story continues on Page 4)

ALUMNI TEXT CREDITS

Co-Editors: Dale Bajema and Roger Edwards

The editors would like to thank Mat Clark, Rachael Lizio Katzen Kuryunny, Gerry Ochs, and Jacob Patterson for their articles, background facts, and/or photos for this edition of the BPHSAA newsletter. And thank you to Connie Mar, our newsletter designer.

WATCH THE BPHSAA AT WORK



The BPHSAA will elect officers for next year at its annual meeting to be held on Monday, November 14, at 5:30 p.m. in the automotive shop at the former Marshall High School campus. All BPHSAA members are invited to attend this meeting.

Accommodations for virtual attendance will be announced prior to the meeting through the [BPHSAA website](#), but in-person attendees will have the opportunity to inspect the building PPS constructed to house the Benson Tech automotive and building construction programs. The building is opposite the school's main entrance at 3905 SE 91st Avenue, just southwest of 92nd and Powell and two blocks west of the Powell Boulevard stop on the MAX Green line. For details, visit bensontechalumni.org,

BPHSAA TRIVIA QUIZ

Among countless theories of education is the notion that answering questions wrong solidifies a student's knowledge of the correct response. In an attempt to make our alumni smarter, the BPHSAA offers this exercise to let you show off or improve your memory. If our answers surprise you, see the [BPHSAA newsletters](#) posted on our website under the "About Us" option.

- **Question 1:** How long did it take for the Benson Tech boys to dream up a school time capsule to make their high school days better?
- **Question 2:** Match these 2014 donations to Benson Tech with their donors:

Tuff Stuff	Trim boards for soffits
Paar Lumber	Insulation
Kelly Dobbs/Neil Kelly	Plumbing
ABC Supply	Diesel engines
Southgate Wallboard	Radiant heating
J.B. Insulation	Interior design
Lakeside Lumber	Roofing
Pat's Pound and Pour	Sheetrock
Daimler/Caterpillar	Electrical
Raybourn's Plumbing	Concrete floor polishing
W.E. Givens	Misc. materials
The Heat Exchange	Siding
Malarkey Roofing	Painting
West Side Electric	Concrete

- **Question 3:** How does Benson Polytechnic High School rank among other Oregon high schools?
- **Question 4:** Is Benson Tech the only magnet school in the Portland Public Schools (PPS) District?

Answers for the Trivia Quiz can be found on Page 7.

Hundreds turn out for community picnic and campus tour



After a three-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the BPHSAA was thrilled to once again be able to host the Benson All-Community Picnic. This year's event took place on August 6 in the open-air courtyard at Benson Tech's interim home on the former Marshall Campus. More than 300 people attended the picnic, including alumni and their families, current and retired teachers and staff, incoming students and their parents, and representatives of the Benson Tech Boosters.

Principal Curtis Wilson and BPHSAA Chair Rob Johns were on hand to welcome the crowd, and Athletic Director Mat Clark gave a brief presentation on his five-year vision for Benson Tech's sports programs (including the return of football in fall of 2024). Particularly popular this year were the campus tours lead by Vice Principal of Modernization Dan Malone. These tours provided incoming students a chance to familiarize themselves with the school's layout, and gave alumni an opportunity to see how Benson Tech will be using the facilities at Marshall until the move back to Tech's 12th Ave home in August, 2024. Adding to the lively conversations, reminiscing, and discussions of the rapidly-progressing modernization of Benson Tech's home campus were the two scrumptious ice cream flavors produced by retired physics teacher Matt Pellico's antique gas-engine-powered dual-freezer ice cream maker as well.

Update from the Benson Tech Boosters

Greetings Benson Polytechnic Alumni and Sports Fans,

Tech Boosters has been busy the first couple of months of school! We teamed up with Dean Colleen to support a Teacher Appreciation Ice Cream Social on October 20. We plan to continue to support these team-building activities with Teacher Appreciation funds we raised last year. Upcoming activities may include tai chi/yoga and/or ping pong.

The Boosters will continue to build community through volunteer opportunity development, including tabling for 8th Grade Information Night on November 2 and Teacher Conferences on November 21-22. We will also provide snacks for teachers on conference nights.

Our Ready Set Go Tech Fund Drive, extended from last spring, raised \$4,159. These funds will be distributed to the teams proportional to athlete participation.

Alumni Jeff Strahan is doing a great job with concessions this fall! Efforts have netted \$1,252 so far with rescheduled fall games coming. As soon as the winter schedule is posted, Boosters will create a sign up for concessions volunteer slots.

Senior banners were printed and hung in time for senior night. We've had \$100 in donations to defray some of the \$200 cost to produce them.

We welcome any and all opportunities to collaborate with the Alumni — it takes a (volunteer) village! Please reach out to us with any questions, through our website at Bensontechboosters.org.

-Benson Tech Boosters

MODERNIZATION CONSTRUCTION SPOTLIGHT



Above: View NW of the progress on Building C. Approximately 98% of the steel framing components are now in place. Solar panel brackets are visible along the roof edge. Solar panels will also be installed on portions of this south-facing exterior wall.

Installation of the necessary piping for the system is well underway and is presently mounted throughout the Building E. Additional hydronic piping is on site and is to be installed in a trench across the courtyard area to service the additional buildings.

The boiler component will be located in Building H and a cooling tower will be installed as part of this system and located on the roof of the future Building F, which will be located east or behind the Building E. Construction of the Building F foundation has just started.

Restoration of the original school windows in Building E is now complete, The windows have been reinstalled and are undergoing performance testing.

Seismic upgrades and refurbishing of the original Building E roof is complete. The roof of the Old Gym and the roof of the Building D will receive similar upgrades. Work on the Old Gym Roof is now underway.

The exterior bricks and terra cotta trim on the front of the school and the beautiful column pillars at the main entrance have been sandblasted clean and bright.

Upgrades to all electrical; plumbing; fire protection; and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are in progress in Building E and the auditorium and have started in Building C.

My thanks to Mark Kline/PPS-CBRE for my recent site tour on October, 14, 2022.



Left photo, top: View SW as construction crew works on seismic upgrades for the new roof system over the Old Gym. The upgrades are similar in scope to the roof replacement on the school's main building, Building E. **Left photo, bottom:** View from outside the auditorium, looking south down the hallway of Building E at ground level. The concrete floor is now in place and wall framing is in progress. **Right photo, top:** Progress on assembly of steel framing components for Building H. The view is SW and Buckman Field is off to the left. **Right photo, second:** The construction tent has been removed and the new roof is complete on the Building E. **Right photo, third:** View east from back side of the auditorium showing progress on Building B, located along Irving Street between the auditorium and new Building C. The lower level of Building B will house the New Band Room. **Right photo, bottom:** All new electrical, duct work and fire protection systems are underway in Building E.



BENSON TECH REUNIONS



Photo 1: The Class of 1997 hosted an informal gathering at Benson State Recreation Area on July 23 to celebrate 25 years since they graduated. Fun fact: The Class of 1997 is one of the few cohorts from that era to have its graduation ceremony in the Benson Tech auditorium. (Photo: David Lim) **Photo 2:** The Class of 2000 held its 20+2 reunion at Punch Bowl Social the night of August 6, which allowed members of the class to attend the Benson All-Community Picnic, which was held earlier that day. The reunion was well attended despite having been twice-delayed due to COVID-19. (Photo: RLK Kuryanny) **Photo 3:** The Class of 1992 hosted a multi-day 30th reunion celebration the weekend of August 5, 2022. The Friday night adults-only event was held at Kenton Station (a venue owned by a proud Benson Tech alumnus), with a family-friendly picnic the following day at Blue Lake Park. (Photo Credit: Brandie Sims) **Photos 4:** After a three year-pestilence pause, some classmates from the Class of 1963 resumed their irregular lunches on August 29 at the Level Brewery. (Photo: R. Edwards) **Photos 5 and 6:** The Class of 1982 celebrated its 40th reunion with a multi-day celebration the weekend of July 15th and 16th, 2022. They kicked off the festivities with a Friday night dinner at McMenamin's Kennedy School, and continued the revelry the next day with a picnic at Argay Park. (Photos: Janice Choy-Weber)

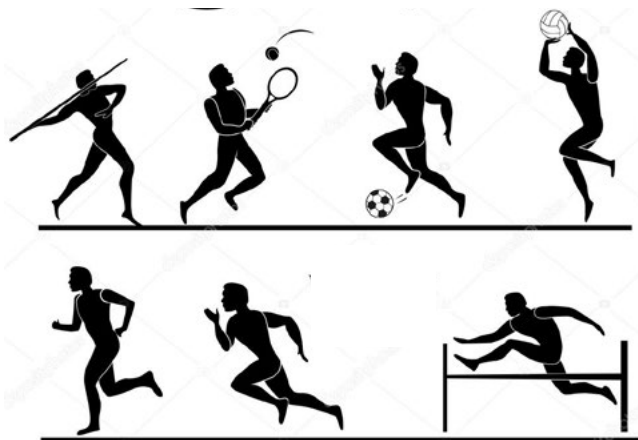
News from www.bensonathletics.net

By Mat Clark, Benson Tech Athletic Director

The Portland Interscholastic League (PIL) fall sports season gets underway on November 14, 2022, and extends to March 11, 2023. Benson Tech anticipates having boys and girls teams in basketball, wrestling, and swimming. Consult the game schedule at OSAA-Benson Tech for dates and places.

On Saturday, October 15, Benson Tech's Fall Youth Project attracted 70 grade school students to our soccer camp, a two-hour session to introduce youths to the sport and to demonstrate how the Benson coaches can hone the skills of participants. The instruction was free but did require advance registration. There are similar projects planned later for winter and spring sports.

Here's a call to alumni and parents of our athletes ... we need your help! The Benson Tech Booster Club is a group that works hard behind the scenes to support our athletic programs in a variety of ways. We are very lucky to have this group as a lot of high schools do not have this



resource. Check out its website at bensontechboosters.org to see how you can help.

And it helps too to show off your Benson Tech gear. The online mercantile linked to the Benson Athletics website has all sorts of ways you can display your appreciation of the school.

ANSWERS to the BPHSAA TRIVIA QUIZ

- **Answer 1:** If the guys first entered the school in September 1916, then it was 53 years before the Class of 1969 built, filled, and left a time capsule as their class gift to the school. Sadly, the original contents of the capsule have never been discovered. At the official opening 50 years later, it had become a handy place for yardsticks and a roll of plastic sheeting. This anticipated event is recalled in the August 2019 Alumni Text newsletter.
- **Answer 2:** Donations to the school's shops and classrooms are greatly appreciated and so it is always a pleasure to recognize this thoughtful largess. The particular group of donors and donations in this Mix/Match are heralded in the August 2014 issue of the newsletter.
- **Answer 3:** Statewide consideration of this question is not always in the news but the August 2016 Alumni Text recounts the findings of the 2016 survey of the U.S. and World Report's high school rankings. Benson Tech placed 34th out of 326 schools in Oregon and first among the 13 Portland high schools. The judging criteria is not listed, but the article calls out Benson Tech's 29% participation in Advanced Placement classes, proficiency scores of 72% for math and 85% for English, and a male/female student body split of 56/44% with a total minority enrollment of 71%.
- **Answer 4:** The term "magnet school" appears to have been replaced by "focus option schools," and PPS currently lists both Benson and Jefferson high schools in this category. Other schools have benefited from this distinction in the past. The evolution of Girls Polytechnic to Monroe High School to Monroe/Washington was done in parallel to Benson.

During the late-1970s to mid-1980s period, students were allowed to transfer to focus option schools beyond their neighborhood boundaries. In addition to the shops at Benson, Jefferson offered classes in performing arts, television program production, computer science, and secretarial specialties; in keeping with its commerce traditions, business management and marketing was taught at Cleveland; and Lincoln attracted students interested in international studies and foreign languages. The adoption of these programs was based in the hope they would aid in desegregating the Portland schools.

While this experiment with focused curriculum did not achieve its primary purpose, the laurels that were produced were noted and the idea reemerged during the 2008 discussion of what should become of Benson Tech. After overwhelming testimony to the value of a Benson Tech diploma, PPS announced in June 2009 that Benson programs would continue much as they were, and discussions would continue about open enrollment at magnet programs to be set up at other district schools. To this end, PPS has adopted a policy for administrative transfers between schools that is administrated by their Enrollment and Transfer Center. Under these rules, students may petition for a transfer at any time but are subject to the decision of the ETC.

Summaries of the PPS proposal to alter the programs at Benson Tech can be found in the August 2008, and April and August 2009 newsletters.

Longtime U.S. Senator Ron Wyden visits KBPS

Benson Tech high school students had an amazing educational opportunity this month when U.S. Senator for Oregon Ron Wyden paid a visit to the AM 1450 KBPS radio station. Senator Wyden's visit was organized by new KBPS radio instructor, Jacob Patterson. Last school year, Senator Wyden's office had reached out to Jacob directly about the opportunity to visit the school and do an interview on KBPS with students. Jacob has interviewed Senator Wyden several times as a news reporter for KXL. The visit had to be postponed several times due to a COVID outbreak across Portland last year and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. A lot of work, time, and dedication across KBPS and Senator Wyden's staff made the visit happen.

Senator Wyden and his support staff came to Benson at the former Marshall campus on October 4 and spent an hour interviewing and talking with students. Two KBPS majors were selected to interview Senator Wyden on air on KBPS after dedicating several hours outside of class researching Senator Wyden and his stance on policies. All KBPS juniors and seniors worked together to come up with a list of 10 questions to ask on-air. The list they came up with was impressive and covered a wide variety of topics, ranging from homelessness, climate change, and public transportation, to support of local Native American tribes and reservations, education, gun violence and excessive use of police force. The students also had questions regarding policies introduced and supported by Senator Wyden, his voting against the Bush tax cuts in 2003, and his Billionaire Tax Act.

KBPS students also worked to promote the visit, creating promotional memes published on KBPS social media accounts and shared by other accounts from Benson Tech classes. After the 15-minute live interview on KBPS, Senator Wyden hosted a "Classroom Townhall" discussion in the KBPS classroom. It was a packed house, standing room only! The townhall was recorded, but not broadcast on KBPS.



Above: Townhall with U.S. Senator Ron Wyden and KBPS students held in October.

Many students walked away from the experience feeling happy and excited. At the end of the visit, Jacob

briefly told the story about how he was part of the first KBPS team to win the National SkillsUSA Radio (Audio) Production competition in 2006 as a KBPS student, and received a hand-signed congratulations letter from Senator Wyden. Jacob pulled out the letter and told students, "See? You can do great things like this too!"

The final part of the experience included teaching KBPS broadcasting students about professionalism, ethics, and fairness. KBPS reached out to all of Senator Wyden's opponents in this upcoming election and offered the same amount of time and opportunity on KBPS. Only one other candidate responded, so KBPS students also interviewed Dan Pulju, the Green Party candidate for U.S. Senator in Oregon and aired that interview as well. KBPS has published all of this content on its website. Go to www.kbps.am and click on "Audio" or "Photos & Videos" to find the related content.

Benson Tech and KBPS thank Senator Ron Wyden and his staff very much for their gracious time and dedication to serving the PPS community.



BPHSAA Scholarship Fund year-end donation request

This past spring, four deserving graduates from the Class of 2022 were awarded a Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship. The recipients—Concepcion Andres Andres, Carlos Cortez, Esme Martinez, and Luka Tsiorka—each received approximately \$1,500 to apply toward their post-secondary education and pre-professional training. (The four students were profiled in the August 2022 issue of the Alumni Text.) These grants were funded by earnings from the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund, an endowment created more than 35 years ago by members of Benson Tech's classes of 1939, 1940, and 1941.

Please consider including the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund in your end-of-year giving. The scholarship fund, managed by the Oregon Community Foundation, has 501(c)3 status which allows individuals to make tax-exempt contributions in amounts as little as \$25. Your tax-deductible donation is truly a gift that will keep on giving—to members of the Class of 2023, and to Benson Tech graduates for years to come. For more information, or to make a contribution, visit the scholarship page (bensontechalumni.org/sections/scholarship) on the BPHSAA website.