

## BENSON TECH ALUMNI TEXT

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The Official Newsletter of the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association (BPHSAA), August 2019 Edition

### **Be part of the BPHSAA!**

The Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association (BPHSAA) was formed in 2008 and has two major purposes: to provide social activities for friends, faculty and alumni of Benson Tech, and to promote and support the school.

The BPHSAA has hosted alumni events; facilitated reunions of specific classes; funded a variety of student activities; and repeatedly petitioned the Portland Public Schools District (PPS) on Benson Tech's behalf.

The BPHSAA publicizes activities on its website, [www.bensontechalumni.org](http://www.bensontechalumni.org) and in newsletters each year. There are many opportunities to participate in the BPHSAA and help support the school. Come join us! Upcoming BPHSAA events include:

- **Regular monthly meetings** – The second Monday of each month (9/9, 10/14, 11/18\*, 12/9) at 5:30 p.m. in the Benson Library classroom
- **Annual meeting** – Monday, November 18 at 5:30 p.m. in the Benson Library classroom. Elections for Board of Directors (BOD) positions #11-#15.  
*\*Note: Due to the Veteran's Day holiday, the 2019 annual meeting is scheduled for the third Monday of November.*
- **Final 2019 BOD meeting** – Monday, December 9 at 5:30 p.m. in Benson Library classroom. Elections of select officer positions (Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary)
- **Tech Show turns 100!** – Thursday and Friday, April 16 and 17, 2020, from 6:00-9:00 p.m. Stop by the BPHSAA-sponsored "alumni room" in the Old Gym. Stay tuned for more information about this Centennial milestone!



**Above:** The Portland Public Schools' Board of Education unanimously approved the latest revised draft of the Benson Tech Campus Master Plan on June 25, 2019. The Option 1 plan lays out an ambitious vision for modernization that supports the future success of the multiple educational communities located on the Benson Tech campus.

## **Option 1 aims to optimize future Benson Tech campus complex**

*By Kevin B. Clark, Ph.D. (Class of 1984)*

For most Portland Public Schools (PPS) students, families, employees, and other stakeholders, the summer months provide respite from the busy routine of scholastic life and forthcoming anticipation and preparation for another academic year. But, those of us who share interest in the future of Benson Tech continued our dedication to a sometimes seemingly unreliable promise by the district's Board of Education to rebuild our school into a community-endorsed safe modern facility of unrivaled national educational quality and equity. Our efforts, involving the participation of students, parents/guardians, district and school staff, alumni, and contracted partners and advisors, culminated on Tuesday, June 25, 2019, into unanimous Board approval of the latest revised Benson Tech Campus Master Plan draft, with complete plan details to be finalized no later than December 2019 as authorized by Board directive.

In compliance with Board Resolutions 5780 (see Benson Tech Alumni Text, March 2019 Edition, Page 1), 5828, and 5859, as well as the temporarily unnumbered June draft resolution, the Master Plan now represents the combined, albeit largely independent, visions of two longtime connected communities – the co-located Benson Tech and Multiple Pathways to Grad-

*(continued on Page 4)*

## ***Benson Tech Foundation update***

The Benson Tech's Foundation's mission is to support the Career Technical Education (CTE) and the Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) programs for Benson Polytechnic High School. We are a qualified 501(c)(3), registered as a public charity. We can accept contributions at [www.bensontech.org](http://www.bensontech.org) online or you can feel free to mail your contribution to: Benson Tech Foundation, 546 NE 12th Ave., Portland, OR 97232.

In spring 2019, the Foundation bought a table at the Portland Workforce Alliance (PWA) Breakfast and its NW Youth Careers Expo. If you do not know about the ACE (Architecture, Construction, Engineering) Mentor program and PWA, we recommend you look them up. Susan Neilsen is the executive director of the PWA, and a friend of Benson Tech, going back to her time on the Oregonian's editorial board while campaigning to "Lift the Cap" on the school's enrollment was happening. Benson Tech is one of the largest participating high schools in these programs. We would like to recognize the foundational work of Kevin Jeans-Gail, former executive director, in his work to create and support these programs. For a number of years, Kevin worked out of an office at Benson Tech and he made sure that Benson kids were active in these career enlightening programs.

This summer, the Foundation helped support a presence for the second year, at the Central Eastside Industrial Council's Annual Golf Tournament, where our Benson Tech custom-made tent was staffed with Boosters, alumni, and athletic coaches providing public awareness to our Central Eastside Business Community.

For the future, as we see Portland Public Schools making good on its promises to rebuild Benson, and we see the Foundation providing a financial means to provide for many aspects of the upcoming changes students will face with the relocation of programs to the former Marshall High School campus during the rebuilding. This is a key period where we will need to think "outside the box" to help fund a wide range of needs to provide practical solutions to problems or challenges only faced due to the temporary relocation of students. We want to provide support to maintaining Benson Tech during its forecast three-year rebuild as robust and attractive a high school experience for all of Portland's high school kids and for middle schoolers to aspire to.

Please keep the Foundation in mind for donations, giving, or estate planning. Please contact Rob Johns, President (Class of 1977) if you have any questions or interests. Rob can be reached at [robjohns@comcast.net](mailto:robjohns@comcast.net) or 503-314-0041.

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## ***Alumni take advantage of matching donation challenge and more***

This past winter, we announced that an anonymous donor had pledged to match up to \$500 in fund donations made through March 2019. We're pleased to announce that a number of you answered the call, almost doubling the anonymous donor's pledge.

With great humility and gratitude, we would like to acknowledge the estate of Lionel Kroner for its generous donation to the Benson Alumni Scholarship Fund. It was a moving surprise that will greatly impact the lives of Benson Tech graduates for years to come.

As for graduates, we would like to congratulate the Class of 2019's **Jamie Nguyen, Alisha Prasad and Jade Canales-Crosier**, for their selection as the 2019 Benson Alumni Scholarship Awards winners. The three will split

nearly \$5,000 as they pursue studies in dental assisting and digital media production.

Please join us in supporting Benson Tech's graduating seniors. You can contribute to the Benson Alumni Scholarship Fund online at <http://www.bensontechalumni.org/scholarship>. If you prefer to donate via check, make payable to "The Oregon Community Foundation," with the memo "Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association." Send checks to:

*The Oregon Community Foundation*  
1221 SW Yamhill St., Suite 100  
Portland, OR 97205

(Please note that there is a \$25 minimum for donations made online or by check.)

## ***Non-discrimination preamble added to BPHSAA bylaws***

During its July meeting, the BPHSAA Board of Directors approved adding a new non-discrimination and inclusion preamble to the Association bylaws. Inclusion and equality have been implicit policy and practice since the Association's inception. However, given the diversity of the Benson Tech Community, the Board of Directors determined that the Association needed to better clarify and state its position.

The new preamble reads as follows: "The Association discourages speech, actions, and other forms of expression during Association engagements that discriminate or harass on the basis of perceived or actual race; national, cultural, and/

or ethnic origin; physical appearance, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender expression or identification, employment, economic status, military service, political identification; health, wellness, and/or disability; pregnancy; and parental, marital, and/or familial status."

The BPHSAA welcomes **ALL** Benson Tech alumni, current students and staff, and other stakeholders at our meetings and activities. We look forward to meeting and working with you in a convivial, respectful social environment dedicated to advancing the worthy mission of our alma mater and community.

***Paul Anthony recognized for service to Benson Tech***

This summer, the Benson Tech Foundation came together with the alumni to support recognition of Portland Public Schools Board Director Paul Anthony. Paul has been a strong supporter of Benson Tech in his service on the School Board. He has been foundational in supporting the 2017 Bond that was “supposed to fund a rebuild of Benson Tech.” Paul maintained continuous vigilance in support of Benson Tech’s CTE programs and athletics. Paul has a Benson Tech graduate and two more Benson Tech Juniors.

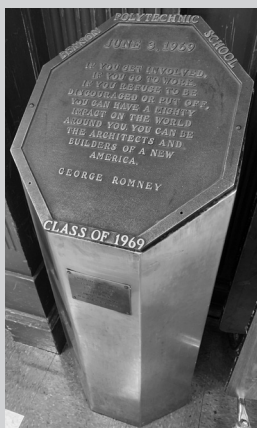
The Foundation leadership, BPHSAA, and the Benson Tech community will recognize Paul's work on August 10, 2019, in front of the school during the BPHSAA Community Picnic.

***Last call: submissions and suggestions for time capsule due by October 11***

Do you have ideas for, or donations of, items you'd like to be considered for inclusion in the official Benson Tech High School time capsule? Don't forgo this once-per-decade opportunity to contribute to Benson Tech's historical archives!

The time capsule was a collaborative project designed and created 50 years ago by four Benson Tech graduates from the class of 1969 (photo below). Only recently rediscovered, the capsule had at some point been emptied, and the original contents lost to history.

The BPHSAA is committed to reestablishing the tradition of selecting items for, then sealing, the time capsule once every 10 years. We are currently seeking suggestions for, and submissions of, items to include in the capsule before we close it up in late 2019. Note that all items must be able to comfortably fit in the time capsule which is approximately 1'x1' at the base and stands over 3.5' tall.



**Above:** The 20th reunion for the Benson Tech Class of 1999, held this past June at the historic Ford Building, was an event to remember. Photo courtesy of Antonio Harris.

### ***Class reunions: recent and upcoming***

The BPHSAA is always happy to hear about successful class reunions, and we are also aware of the time and energy required to organize an affordable, enjoyable, and well-attended gathering. This past June, a group of class of 1999 graduates, led by Janita Jones and Sharisha Hicks-Mouton, worked hard to organize a memorable event at the historic Ford Building for their 20th reunion. Their efforts paid off and the event sold out, though they were kind enough to allow Rachael LK Kuryanny (Class of 1997) to drop in and speak briefly about the BPHSAA's mission, and current outreach and advocacy initiatives.

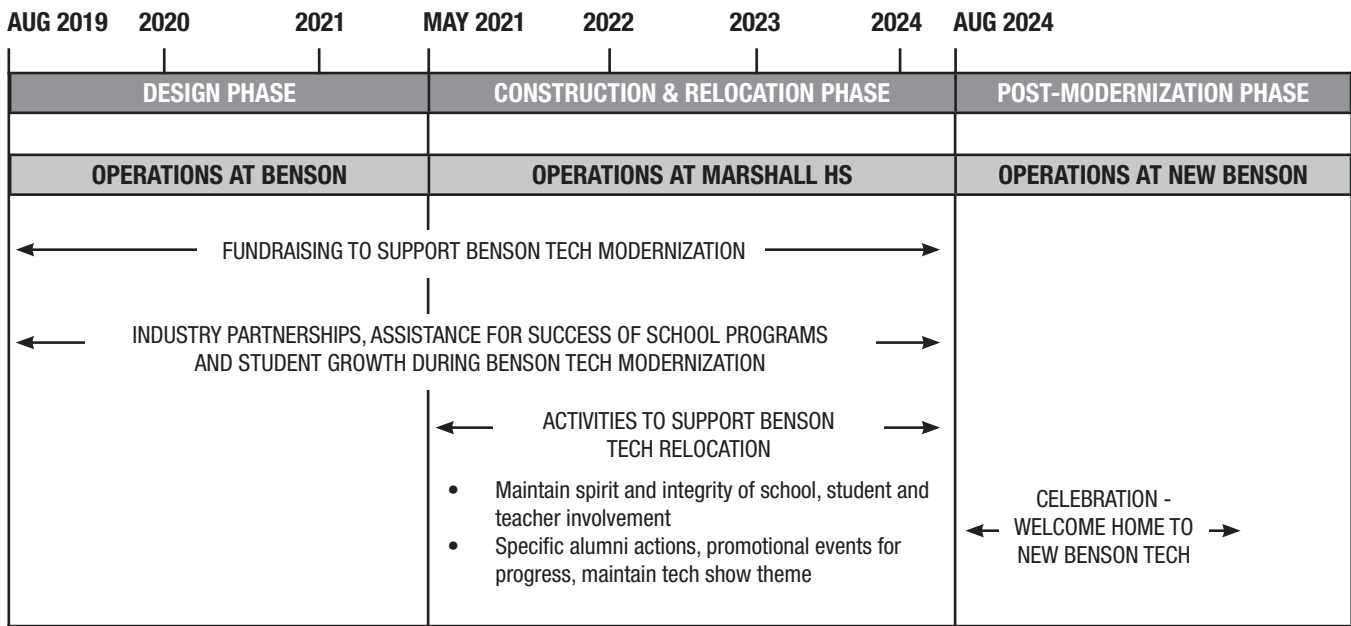
We understand that not every class has the time or resources required to plan an independent reunion, and encourage any/all alumni groups to keep the BPHSAA Community Picnic in mind when planning a gathering. This annual event, held in August each year, can be integrated into a weekend of class-specific activities, and can also serve as an easy, ready-made, stand-alone reunion. The family-friendly Community Picnic provides attendees the opportunity to connect with alumni from across the years, enjoy a BBQ lunch (available for purchase), and perhaps even take a tour of the hallowed halls and classrooms of Benson Tech.

Regardless of whether or not you opt to incorporate the Community Picnic into your plans, please make sure to contact the BPHSAA to let us know that you are organizing an upcoming class reunion. At very least, we can help spread the word on our website and via our various social media accounts!

For additional info about the August 8, 2020 picnic, or to alert the BPHSAA to an upcoming class reunion, contact Rachael LK Kuryanny (Class of 1997) at **[rachaellkk@gmail.com](mailto:rachaellkk@gmail.com)**.



**DRAFT TIMELINE: BENSON TECH MODERNIZATION NEEDS**



***Option 1 aims to optimize campus, continued from front cover***

uation (MPG) communities. This most ambitious and expensive plan to date gained favor from Superintendent Guerrero and his staff months before the Board decision and concentrates on integrating the special needs and wants of the MPG community with that of the Benson Tech community under the designated Option 1 scenario, costing a projected estimate of almost \$358 M USD. Option 1, recommended and chosen from five total alternative options, maintains most design elements crafted from earlier versions of the Master Plan for Benson Tech proper and its comprehensive Career Technical Education (CTE) focus option model. Option 1, however, also aims to optimize the wider positive impact of Benson Tech campus educational resources, services, and experiences by housing four MPG programs prioritized for Benson Tech student use within the school’s historic second-floor B Wing on the west side of campus. Those programs, Portland International Scholars Academy, Pioneer School, Virtual Scholars, and Evening and Summer Scholars, will unlikely jeopardize assignment of modernized Benson Tech instructional space and curricular/extracurricular programming intended to educate a capacity school enrollment of 1,700 students.

Another significant feature of Option 1 is the nearly \$27 M USD three-story building to be erected on a portion of the campus’ existing co-opted southeast parking lot. Referred to as the MPG building, in contrast to the campus’ Benson Tech buildings, this facility is being designed autonomously from Benson Tech stakehold-

ers in an attempt to best customize preferences of the Alliance High School, Reconnection Center and Services, Teen Parent Program and Childcare, and DART/Clinton School. The new building permits merging of the Benson Tech Alliance and Meek Alliance campuses and enables improved personalized CTE infrastructure, curricula, instruction, and project-based learning; physical education, student and family support services, a TriMet-serviced centralized city location, and other advantages. Although some budget-escalating redundancies may remain between the Benson Tech and MPG plans, which minimize inconvenient mutual resource usage to the Benson Tech gyms, media center, and theater, the overall Option 1-based Benson Tech Campus Master Plan gives unique life-shaping opportunities to often underserved Portland-area students and families through more equitable, accessible, innovative, appealing, relevant, and rigorous educational offerings.

The construction phase of Benson Tech proper is slated to begin during the summer of 2021, with the school reopening expected for the start of Academic Year 2024-2025. Construction of the new MPG building will occur during a still undetermined period over the same schedule window in much less time than required to finish modernizing Benson Tech. The significant scope, logistics, timeline, and costs of the Benson Tech Campus Master Plan necessitate that Benson Tech and MPG student bodies be relocated to other district facilities to continue their education until the completed capital improvement

*(continued on next page)*

project sites may be safely again opened for scholastic purposes. Benson Tech students, staff, and administrators must move to the former Marshall High School, now an upgraded off-site space for district high schools to inhabit during their massive taxpayer-funded modernization processes. In addition to possible plan-compromising project cost overruns, budget-reconciling value engineering, trending state and district fiscal cuts to educational operations, and district 2020 Capital Projects Bond referral, 2020 Local Option Levy referral, and Full Faith and Credit Loan dilemmas, the Benson Tech community faces and might need to overcome important challenges in relocating to the former Marshall High School. Those challenges include, but are not limited to, ensuring satisfactory instructional and wrap-around resources and services to sustain Benson Tech CTE programming, current student enrollment size, and school climate, student health and wellness, and family transportation demands. Furthermore, a prolonged stay at the former Marshall High School campus threatens to diminish exposure and perpetuation of Benson Tech history and culture for entering classes that may spend two or more years away

from Benson Tech. Despite such alarming issues, clear benefits may also come from re-locating to the former Marshall High School, including enhanced occasion to exploit remodeled, extensive infrastructure for academic and athletic programming growth and excellence. The future of Benson Tech remains complex and uncertain. But with steady skilled community vigilance, strategizing, and action, that same future may well embrace a transformed Benson Tech capable of stewarding our honorable traditions for innovating the highest instructional standards and student outcomes for secondary CTE/STEAM education in the United States and elsewhere around the globe.

To learn about and join community engagement opportunities, email BPHSAA leadership at [info@bensontechalumni.org](mailto:info@bensontechalumni.org) or visit [www.bensontechalumni.org](http://www.bensontechalumni.org). Please follow given link, <https://www.pps.net/Page/1838>, to find more Benson Tech campus modernization details, such as Master Plans, Educational Specifications, PPS Resolutions, Design Advisory Group activities and documents, and additional information.



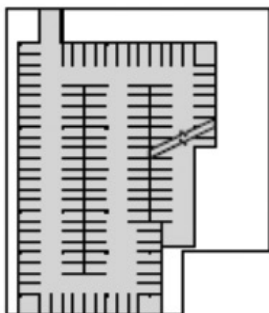
**Lower Level**



**Main Level**



**Upper Level**



**Ground Floor**



**First Floor**



**Second Floor**

**Above:** Major Building Floor Plans for the Benson Tech Campus Master Plan. The upper row shows detailed multilevel floor plans from schematic design conceptualization of the modern Benson Tech supporting a 1,700-student comprehensive focus option educational space. The lower row shows multilevel floor plans from master planning conceptualization for new MPG building supporting undisturbed ground-floor parking and unification of the Benson Tech and Meek Alliance High School campuses on upper floors. Please note shown plans do not depict appropriate relative scale between rows. Courtesy of Portland Public Schools and Bassetti Architects.

## 2019 Rose Festival milk carton boat race results

Thanks in large part to the duo of bright orange and blue branded tents, Benson Tech was a visible presence at this year's Milk Carton Boat Race at Westmoreland Park Casting Pond. Representatives from both the BPHSAA and the newly formed Benson Tech Boosters (see article on Page 7) were on hand for the June 23 event, and were excited to connect with Benson Tech grads as well as current and prospective Benson families. Kids of all ages had a chance to spin the Boosters' prize wheel and win some Benson Tech swag, and everyone enjoyed the free popsicles and lemonade courtesy of the BPHSAA.

A Rose Festival-affiliated tradition since 1973, the Milk Carton Boat Race is organized by the Royal Rosarians, the official "ambassadors of goodwill for the city of Portland." Though the turnout was comparable to recent races and the crowd was enthusiastic and vocal, there were notably fewer boats in the competition than in previous years. It was not clear what precipitated the decrease in entrants, and the Rosarians — aware that the skills required to construct a pond-worthy vessel parallel those cultivated in Benson Tech's classrooms and shops — explicitly requested that we spread the word and encourage the extended Benson Tech community to consider competing in next year's race.

For details about next year's (June 21, 2020) event, including requirements for the handmade, human-powered vessels, visit: <http://www.rosefestival.org/event/milk-carton-boat-race>

To discuss partnering with the BPHSAA on this or related activities, please contact Rachael LK Kuryrny (Class of 1997) at [RachaelLKK@gmail.com](mailto:RachaelLKK@gmail.com).



## Benson Tech draws the attention of Royal Rosarians



**Above:** Benson Tech Principal Curtis Wilson is knighted by Rose Festival Queen Kiara Johnson of Parkrose during the 2019 Rose Festival. The Royal Rosarians honored approximately 40 individuals as knights of Rosaria this year.

*By Roger Edwards (Class of 1963)*

Each year as part of the Rose Festival, Portland's Royal Rosarians nominate and honor about 40 individuals as knights of their mythical realm. This recognition is typically extended to visiting dignitaries, ship captains of the Rose Festival fleet, local business people, media personalities, artists and entertainers, and people who have made a positive contribution to the community. Included among this year's honorees were a Japanese mayor, fleet captains, the reigning Miss Oregon, Darcelle, KGW news associates, Dillon the Portland Pickle, and Benson Tech's principal, Curtis Wilson Jr. All in all, it is a good thing to be named a Rosarian knight and being Oregon's high school principal of the year is a good credential as well.

The knighting ceremony took place on June 7, but was forced inside from Peninsula Park by threatening rain clouds. It was the final official function of Queen Kiara Johnson of Parkrose before her successor was chosen. The pageantry was well-documented and the BPHSAA was pleased to find the photo of Principal Wilson kneeling before Queen Kiara.

The photo was made part of the BPHSAA's display at the Rose Festival Milk Carton Boat Races, held on June 23 (see article above). The boat races are also an event sponsored by the Rosarians, and they were quick to notice the photo. Ensuing conversations led to the idea of a Benson Tech entry or two in the races next year, and expressed interest in the school's front lawn rose bushes. This planting has been adopted by the BPHSAA and has responded with a pleasing spectacle during late May and early June in the last few years. Whatever the season, do take notice of these flower beds when you have the chance. Expanding the notice of Benson is a goal of the BPHSAA.

## Support Benson Tech athletics with the Boosters

*By Benson Tech Boosters*

Hello, Benson Tech sports fans! The Benson Tech Boosters (BTB), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 2018, is dedicated to promoting spirit for Benson Tech athletics, and fundraising to support our athletes and enhance athletic programs. We're looking to increase our ranks to better support our athletes.

Benson Tech has 415 athletes competing on 35 teams in 21 sports through the Oregon School Athletics Association. According to Portland Public Schools, 40% of our athletes receive some level of scholarship to participate. Our goal is to fundraise to support the scholarships, specialized training equipment, travel to tournaments, etc.

High school sports are important. The Centers for Disease Control studies have shown that participation in school sports reduces the risk of substance use, suicidal behaviors and carrying a weapon. National Athletic Trainers Association reports that student athletes manifest stronger peer, adult and family relationships, higher self-esteem, more volunteerism, and a greater sense of initiative, persistence and personal responsibility.

If you have fundraising, marketing, or computer skills, a Costco membership, are willing to sell concessions, take

tickets, organize a team banquet, or are just a sports fan, WE NEED YOU! Go Tech!

### How to get involved?

- Join Benson Tech Boosters (\$20 individual, \$30 family)
- Help plan, attend and/or sponsor our fall kickoff or spring auction
- Donate goods or services to our spring auction
- Provide a team dinner
- Cheer on our athletes at a sporting event!

Find dates, times and locations at [www.osaa.org](http://www.osaa.org)

### Upcoming BTB events:

July 31, 6:00 p.m - Kickoff Planning meeting, The Lucky Lab, 915 SE Hawthorne

September 21, 5:00 p.m. - Fall Kickoff: Bar/Buffer, meet the coaches and more! TaborSpace, 5441 SE Belmont Street. \$20 Pre-register, \$25 at the door

Contact [bensontechboosters@gmail.com](mailto:bensontechboosters@gmail.com) for information about sponsorship opportunities, Kickoff registration, or to become a Tech Booster!

## 2018-2019 Benson Tech Athletics round-up

*By Scott Archer, Benson Tech Athletics Director*

Benson Tech's athletic teams made great showings in the 2018-2019 school year. This past year, the school restored softball to varsity status after a two-year hiatus, elevated girls' soccer to varsity status, and reintroduced golf to the program. At this point, Benson Tech offers every sport at the top level as any other 6A school, except for swimming. (But we are working on that!) Other significant accomplishments for the year included:

- Benson Girls' Basketball completes the PIL season 16-0 and PIL League Champions, and 2018-19 OSAA 6A Girls' Basketball State Champions (first PIL women's team to do so in over 37 years).
- Head Girls' Basketball Coach **Eric Knox** named 6A Oregon Coach of the Year for the second consecutive year.
- **Ciera Ellington** named WBB Player PIL Player of the Year, OSAA State Tournament Player of the Tournament, and runner-up for Oregon Prep Sports Basketball Player of the Year.
- WBB Head Coach **Eric Knox** named PIL Coach of the Year.
- **Makenzy Porter**, WBB and softball player, named PIL Female Athlete of The Year for the entire league.
- Benson Tech's softball team won its first PIL league match since moving to 6A.
- Benson Softball Head Coach **Katie Meyer** named PIL Softball Coach of The Year.
- Benson Tech has the nation's fastest high school sprinter! **Micah Williams** set the national record for this year by

running a 10.21 100m sprint to set the fastest time in the nation this year, 16th fastest time overall in high school history. He also is national champion in the indoor 60m run. Williams just finished his junior year with a 4.0+ GPA. He also earned the Oregon Sports Awards Male Track Athlete of the Year, and the 2018-19 Oregon Sports Award overall Male Athlete of the Year.

- **Jaylen Russell** wins 300m HH at OSAA State Track meet to finish with an individual state title.
- The boys' basketball team makes its first play-off appearance in five years, taking state champion Jesuit down to the wire, and losing by three at Jesuit in the opening round of OSAA playoffs.
- Benson Tech's boys' soccer celebrated its first win in two seasons under new program leadership.
- Multiple Benson Tech teams earned Academic All-State for team GPAs higher than 3.0.

Benson Tech finished the school year with 945 OSAA points, which measures each school's academics, athletics and activities accomplishments. This is the highest number that Benson Tech has received in more than a decade. Even though the school did not earn points in some categories because it doesn't offer the programs (e.g., Band, Choir, Ensemble, Speech and Debate, Swimming, etc.), Benson Tech still finished ahead of similar schools, such as Madison, Roosevelt and Jefferson.



## Centennial Tech Show coming next April



**Above:** Benson Tech Show, circa 1953.

The dates have been set for the 100th Benson Tech Show: April 16 and 17, 2020. This centennial event has both the school's staff and the BPHSAA looking for ideas to mark this special occasion.

The first of these signature events was held in 1919, just a few years after the school was opened. Benson Tech was one of America's first technical high schools, and was unique in that it offered a comprehensive high school curriculum in conjunction with technical training. In the early years, these events (which had not yet been anointed

Tech Show) provided an opportunity for students and staff to showcase their technical proficiencies, and to show off Benson's state of the art shops, labs, and classrooms.

Tech Show was a great success from the beginning and quickly grew to become an anticipated annual celebration for Benson Tech. Only in World War II did a year go by without a Tech Show; in 1945, the U.S. Army commandeered the school for soldier training, as had occurred during World War I. For most of its history, Tech Show had an admission fee and students were all expected to sell tickets. Despite the cost to attend, a record 13,000 current and former students, potential applicants, family, friends, neighbors, and others in the extended Benson community attended the 1961 Tech Show.

Though the shop and lab demonstrations have changed over time, and the once-popular band performances and talent shows are no longer featured, Tech Show remains an event for which Benson students eagerly prepare. The 2020 Tech Show will be no exception, and we hope that you will join us next April at Benson Tech to mark this centennial celebration!



### **Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association**

546 NE 12th Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97232