



BENSON TECH

ALUMNI TEXT

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

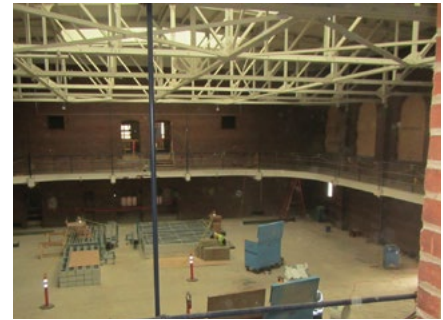


Photo at left: Mass plywood sheets installation on the roof with hurricane straps and metal beam framework for seismic restraint in progress. **Top photo right:** Progress on seismic upgrades of the old gym. Note the steel beams on the floor will be affixed on the inside face of the exterior brick walls. **Bottom photo right:** Main hallway looking north from just outside of the gym breezeway. Welded metal pan decking in place for casting a 6-inch-thick concrete floor.

Benson Tech Modernization Status Update for August 2022

By Gerry Ochs (Class of 1977)

The Demolition Phase is 100% completed for the building removed and 80% complete in the renovated buildings. Progress is well underway on the new construction elements. The foundation work and slabs on grade are ongoing and in some locations, the ironworkers are now installing vertical reinforcement up from the slabs to start on the walls in the new buildings.

The electrical conduit runs are in place in the courtyard and will continue to run throughout the site into the renovated and new buildings. Installation of the wiring will begin in the fall. The main electrical room conduits are stubbed up. The main electrical room is located in the northwest corner of the new H building just behind (east side) of the new existing gym in the courtyard area. The collection system and storm drain piping is being installed in the courtyard as well.

The original school windows are being restored, the process is well underway with many windows already back in place and looking fantastic.

The new shear wall construction was completed using shotcrete (concrete mix with fiber) applied using a high-pressure spray system. The shotcrete (high-strength concrete) is sprayed by a Qualified Nozzleman and allows placement of structural concrete in tight, limited work space locations that are not accessible for a concrete truck or a pump truck. It only requires one side of the wall to be formed.

The roof of the original Main Administration Building (E) is receiving seismic upgrades, which are well underway. The entire roof has now been resheathed with "mass plywood." Each sheet is a 2-inch-thick section of plywood that is 10 feet by 20 feet and weighs in at 1,300 lbs. The mass plywood system is secured together with

(story continues on Page 4)

Find more news and information at www.bensontechalumni.org

KBPS celebrates 99 years

On March 23, 2022, KBPS, Oregon's second-oldest continuously broadcasting radio station, celebrated its 99th birthday. First broadcasting as KFIF, the station became KBPS in 1930. The original radio license was purchased by several Benson Tech students and given to the school. The AM license is now owned by PPS and the station is operated as a part of one of Benson Tech's CTE programs.

Benson athletes advance to recent state tournament

Reba Booze placed second in the 100 meter hurdles and **LuLu Kennybrew** placed second in the 400 meter and third in the 200 meter in the Portland Interscholastic League's (PIL's) District girls track and field competition. Both were Oregon's State Track and Field qualifiers. Congratulations!

Benson Tech Graduation - June 8

On June 8, 225 Benson Tech seniors out of a class of 231 graduated at a ceremony held at Providence Park. More students are expected to finish state requirements this summer and counted as 2022 graduates. This will give Benson Tech, for another year, a very high graduation rate among Portland and Oregon schools. The BPHSAA congratulates all graduates and offers them four years of paid membership. Go to bensontechalumni.org to apply. .

Benson Tech teachers and staff retire

Brett Anderson (Automotive), **Peg Schoettle** (Counselor) and **Caroline Kornberg** (Speech Pathologist) all retired at the end of the 2021-22 school year. The Benson Tech alumni wish you the best! (See tribute to Brett on Page 8.)

Benson Tech's first Tech Youth Project (TYP) - Multi-Sports Youth Camp

This past June after school ended, Benson Tech sponsored a TYP for Portland's incoming fifth through ninth grade students. More than 100 Portland students were exposed to 12 different sports. The camp further provided a number of incoming student-athletes an opportunity to connect with their coaches before the 2022-23 school year begins. This year's success has **Athletic Director Mat Clark** and coaches planning an even better "camp" next year.

Slightly smaller fall enrollment expected

Benson Tech's less-central interim location during the modernization project and related transportation issues have made it harder to attract applicants. (Though the incoming class number is capped by PPS, in reality, every eligible applicant is admitted.) **Principal Curtis Wilson** is expecting a total enrollment of over 900, with 70+ teachers and staff. (However, an uptick in applications is projected for each of the next two years as eighth graders across the city may anticipate attending a more fully equipped Benson Tech on 12th NE Avenue.

Benson Tech alumni to assist in schoolyard clean-up

Alumni will be joining a August 27 clean-up (9:00 a.m. to noon) of Benson Tech's "schoolyard" at the Marshall campus (Tech's interim home). The effort will focus on landscaping outside the school and the large enclosed open courtyard. More volunteers are always needed and some tools will be available. The Marshall campus is located at 3905 SE 91st Avenue.

Fall Homecoming being planned

Though Benson Tech doesn't have a football team that one associates with Homecoming, a "Homecoming Week" is scheduled for October 19-21. It will include a special assembly, boys soccer and girls volleyball games on October 20, and a student dance. The BPHSAA and Benson Tech Boosters are considering activities to coincide with the games. (See bensontechalumni.org in October for details.)

Benson Tech Foundation helps HOSA competitors

The Benson Tech Foundation (BTF) helped three Benson Tech students and their advisor attend June 21-25 Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) International Leadership Conference in Nashville TN. **Jackelyn Mercado, Violet Meyers, and Clio Tzetos** were representing not only Benson Tech but Oregon in HOSA's annual competition. The students were having problems to fully finance the trip with soaring airfares. The Benson Tech Foundation made up the difference as one of its 2021-2022 effort to support and advance Benson Tech's CTE programs. More information about donating to the Foundation can be found at bensontech.org.

A shout-out for the BPHSAA's master webmaster plus



Every single one of you has "heard" from him. The BPHSAA depends on him. But do you know his name?

Josh Piper is one of the founding members of the BPHSAA and, in 2008, created the Association's website. Since then, Josh has been the one who has maintained the site, set up the BPHSAA's social media pages, maintained the membership rosters and other listings of Benson Tech alumni, and sent out email notices and electronic copies of the newsletter. In short, he is the "electronic voice" of the BPHSAA, as well as one of the most faithful members of the Board of Directors and participants providing alumni presence at Tech Shows and BPHSAA picnics.

We might not be here today without you, Josh. Thank you!!!!

2022 alumni scholarships awarded to four deserving grads

The Benson Polytechnic High School 50-year Reunion Award Fund was founded in 1991 with generous donations from the classes of 1939, 1940, and 1941. In its first year, it awarded \$250 apiece to two deserving graduates. In the years since, the endowment (renamed the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund in 2012) has grown considerably, and is now managed by the Oregon Community Foundation — its 501(c)3 status allows donors to make tax-exempt contributions. For more information, visit the [Scholarship Fund page](https://www.bensontechalumni.org/sections/scholarship) (bensontechalumni.org/sections/scholarship) on BPHSAA's site.

In 2021, the fund received more than \$13,000 in donations. This spring, its nearly \$6,000 in annual earnings provided scholarships for four Class of 2022 graduates. These recipients were selected based on their high school achievements, strength of character, and educational objectives, with preference given to individuals enrolling in two-year vocational training or pre-professional academic programs. More about the 2022 Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship awardees are below.

Carlos Cortez (photo top left) has lived in Portland with his mother, uncle, and grandmother since immigrating to the United States from El Salvador at age 6. An automotive major at Benson Tech, Carlos plans to enroll in Portland Community College this fall with the intention of earning his Emergency Medical Services (EMS) certificate. He is also considering continuing his automotive service technology studies, and is interested in taking business classes regardless of the professional path he selects. Fluent in both Spanish and English, Carlos has long served as the primary translator for his extended family, helping them to navigate medical, legal, and professional matters. Carlos is grateful for the technical skills he developed at Benson, and is particularly proud of his ability to repair any and all of his car's systems.

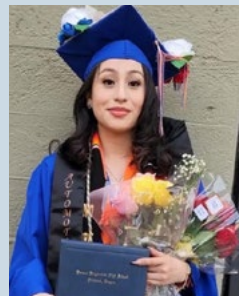


Concepcion Andres Andres (photo bottom left) moved from Guatemala to Portland with her family in 2016. She enrolled in Vestal School for her seventh grade year, at which point she began learning to read and speak English and Spanish simultaneously. Six years later, Concepcion is proudly trilingual, and frequently assists her community by translating between either Spanish or English and her native Akateko. She majored in Health Occupations at Benson Tech, and will attend Portland Community College in the fall, where she will prepare for a career as an educator with a focus on English language learners. Concepcion is grateful for the communication skills and close friendships she developed at Benson Tech, and is particularly proud of her academic growth and the strong grade point average she earned in high school.



Esme Martinez (photo top right) was born and raised in Portland by parents who immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico. She grew up in a Spanish-speaking household, and credits

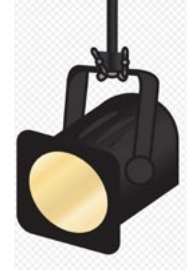
her elementary school's English Language Development (ELD) program, and high school Spanish classes for her ability to read, write, and fluently speak both languages. Esme was an automotive major at Benson Tech and will enroll in Portland Community College this fall, where she plans to work toward her EMS certification in pursuit of a career as an Emergency Medical Technician. Esme is grateful for the support and guidance she received as a participant in the Latino Network's Escalera program, and for the college grants she has been awarded by Oregon Promise, Oregon Opportunity, Future Connect, and The Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund. Esme is proud to have persevered to earn her diploma despite the numerous personal and pandemic-related challenges she faced while in high school.



Luka Tsiorba (photo bottom right) was born in Keene, New Hampshire, and has lived in Portland since he was a year old. His father is a Slavic immigrant who came to the United States from Uzbekistan at age 16, and his mother was raised just outside of Portland in Yamhill, Oregon. Luka is the eldest of five kids, one of whom will be a freshman at Benson Tech in the fall. A voracious

reader, Luka enjoys ancient and classical history, poetry, and a wide range of fiction, and counts writing and working with his hands among his many hobbies. He was an Electric major at Benson Tech, and intends to continue in the field; he has applied to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) No. 48 inside electrical apprenticeship program, a five-year commitment that combines classroom learning with professional training. Luka is grateful for the hands-on vocational experience he received in his time at Benson Tech, and is proud to have graduated with honors (a distinction reserved for students with a cumulative high school GPA of at least a 3.5).

MODERNIZATION CONSTRUCTION SPOTLIGHT



Modernization Status Update, continued from front cover

metal hurricane straps that transect across the roof and will be bolstered with a steel channel beam framework or rib cage that will span across the roof and hold it to the new shear walls and strong backframed walls to the new foundations at below-grade level, making the complete building seismically safe.

The exterior bricks and terra cotta trim have been sandblasted using soda powder to minimize damage and brighten the surface (see photo at right). The terra cotta also received new metal flashing and joint repair. The brick mortar is being repointed on a case-by-case basis throughout the site.

I was informed that we have 14 Benson Polytechnic High School alumni working on the project and they represent some of the skilled craft trades and PPS.

My thanks to Mark Kline/CBRE and Jamie Hurd/PPS for my site tour on June 28, 2022, with Dan Malone, Vice Principal of Construction for Benson Tech.



Photo at left: Example of an interior shear wall constructed using the shotcrete method. **Top photo right:** View from the roof looking east at progress on the foundations and slabs on grade for the new two-story Building "H." The radio station building is in the background and Buckman Field is on the right. **Bottom photo right:** The terra cotta trim and brickwork have been sandblasted using soda powder to restore the appearance. New jointing and flashing has been installed between the terra cotta sections. Note the detailed pine cone feature underneath the corner.

Benson Tech’s new approach as a CTE high school

Beginning this fall, Benson Tech students and most of the teachers will be grouped into one of three academies: Tech Skills, Health Occupations, and Communication Design. Each academy with its set of related technical fields is made up of career technical education (CTE) teachers and at least two partnered academic content teachers. Benson Tech students will thus spend more of their time within a small community of technical and academic teachers focused on their chosen CTE field. Working as a team, the teachers can also get to know the students better and plan projects across each academy’s curriculum.

In general, the **Tech Skills Academy** includes Electrical, Construction, Automotive, and Manufacturing; **Health Occupations** includes Emergency

Medicine, Pre-Nursing and Pre-Dental; and **Digital Communications** includes Digital Media Design, Radio Broadcasting, Design of Mass Media, and Computer Science.

This past spring, all of Benson Tech’s current students selected which academy they wanted to be part of for their last years at the school. All of the eighth graders accepted to attend Benson Tech this past spring were also asked to select an academy for their four years at Benson Tech. However, there will be some limited flexibility for freshmen (working with their counselor) to switch to a different academy during their first year.

Future issues of the Alumni Text will go into more detail about these new CTE academies.



Hybrid board of directors’ meetings planned starting this fall

With a significant number of COVID-19 cases still being reported in Portland and Multnomah County, the BPHSAA’s Board of Directors’ meetings are planned to be hybrid this fall. The meetings to be held at 5:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month can be attended in person or online. For details, time and place, visit bensontechalumni.org on the preceding Sunday.

KBPS is looking for memories of Benson Tech High School

The batches of Benson Tech high school “modernization” photos clearly show that not much of the old school is left to be updated. Memories of the buildings now gone are about the only way to recall that they were ever there. Like the mostly square, wooden band portable building, which, until the early 1990s, stood in a vacant area behind the auditorium and the west end of the C shop wing. That space was above the street level and provided parking for bikes, scooters, and motorcycles. There was a BMW there with a note on the speedometer that said, “Slow down, stupid.”

Email jacpatterson@pps.net with your Benson Tech memories.



ALUMNI TEXT CREDITS

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Update from the Benson Tech Boosters

Greetings Benson Polytechnic Alumni and Sports Fans,

The Benson Tech Boosters, founded in fall 2019, just before COVID changed the world, are back and building on our previous successes. We'd like to share what we are proud of this year:

- We resumed concessions sales, including for the first time, snacks, drinks, and gear at outdoor fall and spring seasons. That went well, especially at our first-ever Benson Tech home track meets. Unfortunately, Omicron shut our lucrative basketball season concessions down after December. Concessions funds are distributed proportionally to volunteer hours running the booth. Funds have been used for training gear (several teams) and to help pay for training camps and workshops. Despite the limitations, we were cleared over \$1,700 for our athletic teams! We have also found a new concessions coordinator. Thank you Jeff Strachan (Class of 1977)!
- We partnered with the BPHSAA and some parent donors to show some love with personalized banners to our graduating athletes (see them on our website listed below). These kids toughed out the pandemic and came back out to participate in their favorite sports, and loved seeing their names on the wall!
- We raised enough money during Teacher Appreciation Week to buy them an industrial cappuccino machine for the break room. We are shopping right now, so please let us know if you have a connection

to help us find a deal for either machine or coffee service contract.

- For the 2022-23 school year, we will expand to support all Benson Tech student organizations, not only our athletes.
- We established the Ready, Set, Go Tech! Fundraiser as an annual event. This money goes to teams proportional to the number of kids participating. We'll share that track did really well. This year, we'd hoped to beat our \$10,004 total from 2021, but fell short at \$4,120 for multiple reasons. With feedback from several sources, we will try a few changes to be more successful.
- So now we introduce Ready, Set, Go Tech! 2022, Take 2. This annual fundraiser will kick off at the annual Alumni Picnic in August, and close one week after Back to School Night. Funds are earmarked to outfit our JV teams that otherwise end up with mismatched varsity hand-me-downs. We'll look for some competition between current student and alumni graduating classes to see who gives the most, with the award of bragging rights. If you have already donated this year, thank you and don't feel obliged to donate again for Take 2.

Please reach out to us with any questions, through our website: Bensontechboosters.org.

-Benson Tech Boosters

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:** When did Benson Polytechnic High School celebrate its centennial year?
- **Question 2:** How many principals have served the school?
- **Question 3:** Who was Simon Benson?
- **Question 4:** Who was Charles Cleveland?

- **Question 5:** In what year did girls join the Benson Tech student body?
- **Question 6:** When was the first Tech Show?
- **Question 7:** When was the 100th Tech Show?
- **Question 8:** What was the school's sports logo before the "Engineers"?
- **Question 9:** Is the present relocation to the Marshall campus the first move of students from the Benson Tech buildings?
- **Question 10:** When was the present BPHSAA organized?

Answers for the Trivia Quiz can be found on Page 8.



Above: The creators of this entry into the 2021 Portland Rose Festival milk carton races incorporated milk cartons of various sizes capable of holding 63 gallons of milk into their boat's design. After the Festival's two-year hiatus due to COVID-19, it returned in full force this year. The milk carton boat race was held on June 26.

BPHSAA enjoys an afternoon at the races

Portlanders were pleased with the resumption of the Rose Festival's milk carton boat races. The event on the last Sunday of June drew a crowd of spectators, racers, and some novel boat designs. It also proved that a Benson Tech canopy erected almost anywhere will attract a few former students. And there were even more people who were pleased with the cool drinks and goodies dispensed there, thanks to the foresight of BPHSAA Director Dave Hutchins, Class of 1978.

The excursion also validated the impression we took away from the previous boat race in 2019: regardless of a boat's design, winners of the races know how to row. The races traverse the 350 foot width of the Westmoreland casting pond so there is ample time for novices to become befuddled or weary. Fortunately, the pond is just 26 inches deep so alternate means of propulsion are available and acceptable. But boat design and construction do add to the challenge of this regatta. Duct tape and hot glue are adequate methods of bonding milk cartons or jugs together, but structural members are needed to ensure a craft's rigidity. The top ridges of the cartons provide a surface to staple adjacent rows of cartons to a 2x4, and

cross pieces can join multiple 2x4's. Or a custom cut centerpiece of plywood could serve as a keel while helping the cartons stay in proper trim. Cartons joined upright or sideways both provide sufficient buoyancy. An upside-down orientation appears to be untested in spite of the flat surface it could produce. Or the tops of adjacent rows could be off-set to make a shallow hull. In this orientation the carton ridges should be aligned to serve as a simple keel. Waterwheels constructed from milk jugs did not seem effective.

There was one craft that used fabric netting to hold its milk jug outrigger together. Another sliced its cartons open to build the sides of the boat that were attached to a flat bottom of six rows of seven intact cartons joined sideways. It had good buoyancy but lost its rigidity while racing. The boat pictured above was greatly admired. Its straight lines and precise symmetry attested to the craftsmanship of its creators, who had gathered milk cartons of various sizes capable of holding 63 gallons of milk for their design. The boat also had a rudimentary keel and the crew were paddle masters as well.

Wishing Brett Anderson a happy retirement

By Margaret L. Ragan, Executive Director, Northwest Automotive Trades Association

For the past 28 years, Brett Anderson has taught automotive, diesel, small engines, and aviation to the inner-city students of Benson Polytechnic High School. This spring marks his final year as he moves toward retirement. His former teaching partner of 17 years, Ed Railey, retired two years ago and died unexpectedly this year. When asked if the loss of his work partner and dear friend was the reason for his decision, he answered, “No. I had made my decision prior to Ed’s death, but his passing solidified my decision. I want to leave while I still enjoy it and this is the perfect time for a transition in the program.” Benson is temporarily housed at the Marshall Campus while it undergoes a massive remodel. Freddie Aguilar has just begun teaching this year, replacing Ed Railey. Freddie and the next instructor will be able to build the program they envision.

Anderson felt showing his students multiple areas of mechanical repair helped them to determine what they wanted to do – but just as important – what they didn’t want to do. Field trips, guest speakers, hands on training, and great industry support strengthened his program.

While many automotive instructors strive to meet ASE standards, Anderson says he built his program as a “relational” program. He always pursues being a positive individual. He feels building an environment of safety and inclusion for his students has been the most important thing he has done – essentially a home away from home. Students exhibiting negative behavior in academics were often referred to Anderson for support. Students who didn’t feel safe in other programs found security and a sense of belonging in the auto shop. Brett led by example, offering the students respect and support.

His next chapter is working at a tree nursery near his home. His wife has worked there for many years. Brett said “They hired me to keep my wife from retiring.” He’ll be maintaining equipment at the nursery and performing tractor and grounds work, spending most of his time outdoors. The nursery offers a lot of flexibility for long vacations.

He hopes a Benson Tech graduate will apply and be hired to teach in the automotive program.

Brett – We wish you all the best. Thank you for helping families to raise their children and lead them to a career they will enjoy for a lifetime.

ANSWERS to the BPHSAA TRIVIA QUIZ

- **Answer 1:** 2017. The decision is explained in the August 2016 newsletter and the June 2017 newsletter contains a lot of information about the school’s first 100 years.
- **Answer 2:** 15- their pictures appear in the June 2017 issue of the newsletter.
- **Answer 3:** A self-made man who donated the seed money to establish the buildings and curriculum at Benson Tech within the PPS District. See a brief description of his donation in the June 2017 newsletter.
- **Answer 4:** He was the first principal at Benson Tech. His accomplishments are discussed in the June 2021 newsletter.
- **Answer 5:** A vote of the student body in 1973 slightly favored admitting girls and a few did enroll in in the following year for the Class of 1977. Kathleen Dunn completed her requirements early and graduated with the Class of 1976.
- **Answer 6:** May 16, 1919.
- **Answer 7:** Nobody knows. It has been scheduled for each year since 2020 but has yet to happen.
- **Answer 8:** Up until 1956, the teams were known as the “Mechanics.”
- **Answer 9:** No. Students were moved to temporary structures at Washington High School in 1918-1919 so the brand-new equipment at Benson Tech High School could be used by the US Army for troop training. Students were also barred from the buildings during the plague year of 2020.
- **Answer 10:** In 2008, the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association (BPHSAA) was formed to represent the thousands of proud alumni and the Benson Tech community at a time when the school’s future and unique technical education was being questioned. It has evolved into strong advocate for Benson Tech, as well promoting activities for the alumni.