



practice integrity. engage the community. act with courage.

 **puget sound community school**

## • MISSION •

To turn passion into achievement.

## • VISION STATEMENT •

PSCS envisions a community of global ambassadors for a philosophy that values kindness, wholeness, and social justice.

## • PHILOSOPHY •

PSCS was founded on the belief that people are intrinsically compelled by their own curiosity and desire to learn, and when provided positive and appropriate amounts of adult support, along with a variety of opportunities offered by interesting and engaging people, will enthusiastically pursue meaningful and challenging tasks. The approach used at PSCS fosters creativity, flexibility, and a genuine diversity that stems from the uniqueness of all human beings. PSCS maintains a flexible structure, free to adhere to valid traditional forms of education and also free to create new ones.

## • COMMUNITY REQUIREMENTS •

The requirements we place on our students provide the structure for them to be immersed in our positive and supportive environment, which is the root of our philosophy. Students are expected to spend 1,000 hours in community (being present and on-campus) and are expected to attend some mandatory group activities and some off-campus events. We require that students attend PSCS for at least three years to be eligible to graduate. We also have Community Service requirements, which are updated each year.

## • COLLABORATION •

At PSCS, students and staff collaborate throughout the year to create each term's schedule, which has the flexibility to change regularly. This cooperative process provides an arena in which students learn to advocate for activities they want, to structure their schedules around their interests, goals, and priorities, and to be sensitive to the scheduling needs of others. Students are assigned an Advisor, a member of the teaching staff with whom they meet regularly. Advisors challenge students to identify short- and long-term goals and help them learn how to align what they do at school with these goals.

## • CORE COMMITMENTS •

Students who fully embrace the program offered at PSCS show consistent progress in self-expression, leadership, and skill-building in almost any endeavor, and start to recognize they are part of something bigger than themselves. We ask students to dedicate themselves to the school's Core Commitments: **Practice Integrity. Engage the Community. Act with Courage.**

## • PROGRESS •

PSCS requires parents/guardians to participate in at least one conference with their child and their child's Advisor. These conferences take place Thanksgiving Week when no other school activities are scheduled. Parents are welcome to request an additional conference, and Advisors and/or the Head of School may recommend or require it. Student progress is also detailed in staff reports, offered at the end of each term (three/year). These reports, compiled by your student's Advisor, identify student milestones along their journeys at PSCS, many of which fall under the headings of the school's Core Commitments.

## • TRANSCRIPTS •

PSCS documents most courses and activities our students take part in to create a transcript. Some Independent Study projects are also recorded, as are activities students complete on their own with outside resources (that can be appropriately documented, ie: Khan Academy, Duolingo, etc.). Also included are the Advisor reports from the end of each term and high school students' self-reflections (middle school students will practice writing these in 6-8th grades).

## • VOLUNTEERS •

PSCS involves a number of volunteers from the community (parents, grandparents, local educators, etc.) who bring their unique expertise and energy into the school. Students receive the benefit of the volunteer's life experiences, exposure to a diverse range of teaching methods, and an additional lens through which to learn about and explore the world. Volunteers participate in a mandatory orientation, complete a background check, and are supervised by the Head of School and Community Coordinator Specialist.

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-vision statement

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### ADVISING/ADVISORY

Each student is assigned an Advisor (a member of the Teaching Staff) at the start of each school year. Students meet one-on-one with their Advisors weekly or bi-weekly. This time is woven into the schedule each term and is an integral part of the PSCS experience. Advising is designed to help students learn how best to utilize the school as they identify and work toward their short- and long-term goals. *Advisory* is the group of 10-12 students who share the same Advisor.

### INDEPENDENT STUDY

Unfacilitated activity that has been pre-approved by an Advisor and parents, which furthers a student's goals/interests.

### SEMINAR

Staff-facilitated, weekly meetings designed for students at similar stages of development to learn how to best benefit from their experiences at PSCS.

### CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT

Student facilitated, all-school meetings at the start and end of each school day.

### INTENSIVES

A week of school in which the regular schedule is suspended to support students investigating a theme or topic all day for that week (past Intensives have included Ceramics, Urban Exploration, and Snowshoeing).

### SCHEDULING CIRCUS

The collaborative process by which the class schedule is created each term. Circus begins with an online "course catalogue" that includes information about each class being offered (who will facilitate, how often a class will meet, how much outside work can be expected, etc.). Students decide what interests them, what they may need, and what they might like to try, then work together with staff and volunteers to design a schedule.

### BLOCK CLASS

A course that meets multiple times a week, for the whole term.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

PSCS middle school students work with each other and their Advisor to form a deeper understanding of themselves and their responsibilities. Advisors act as guides in this process, working to build relationship and connection, while assisting students to identify individual and community goals. 8th grade students must successfully complete and present a Capstone Project based on their personal interests. This process creates a natural bridge to high school at PSCS, scaffolding the 10th Grade Project and the Senior Project.

### HIGH SCHOOL

PSCS high school students focus on leadership, self-direction, and goal-setting, while also helping to contribute to a healthy school community. Advisors engage high school students in a process of deeper self-reflection, help to identify their longer term goals and map out strategies to achieve them, and provide support in understanding Washington State and PSCS Graduation Requirements. Students can expect to be challenged by their Advisors to participate, step out of their comfort zone, and practice our Core Commitments. 10th graders will work on a term-long group Capstone Project and 12th graders must complete a large-scale Senior Project.

### SENIOR PROCESS

In addition to classes, PSCS seniors participate in a rigorous Senior Process. This includes: completion of a year-long Senior Project that challenges their capabilities and furthers a personal passion; development of their *Credo*—a statement of personal belief—over the course of the school year (and presentation of that statement at their graduation ceremony); successful completion of, and the work associated with, Senior Seminar (writing and editing their *Credo*, practicums, interviews, conversations, and text studies); demonstration of their final Senior Project.

## • SAMPLE COURSE OFFERINGS & ACTIVITIES •

Food Bank Service  
Music Theory  
Rock Climbing  
Marine Ecosystems  
Understanding Film  
Gym Soccer  
Geometry

College Explorations  
World History  
Algebra  
Digital Music  
*A Young People's History*  
Environmental Justice  
Diverse Voices

Summarize This!  
Jazz Immersion  
*Malcolm X*  
Soul Writing  
Volleyball  
Trans History  
Science Lab

Geography of the World  
Physics  
Beginning Baking  
Biology  
Adulting  
Science of Flight  
Art & Aesthetics

## • ANTI-BIAS POLICY & DIVERSITY AT PSCS •

We believe that functioning in a truly diverse community is a vital 21st-century skill. At PSCS, we define diversity to include race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation, different physical and cognitive abilities, and religion. We recognize that there may be other areas in need of attention that we have not identified here, or that will emerge with time. PSCS has an open admissions policy that reflects our aim to respect individual differences and learn from diversity. We admit students of any racial, national, religious, or ethnic origin, from all backgrounds, belief systems, family dynamics, and orientations. In short, we invite the participation of all people, not discriminating on any basis in the administration of our programs.



## TUITION AID

PSCS believes that lack of funds should not prevent any student from applying to our school. We prioritize assistance and program aid for activities and materials to families that qualify. Our online grant assessment system is FACTS: [online.factsmgt.com/signin/4DNCR](http://online.factsmgt.com/signin/4DNCR)



## STEPS TO APPLY

PSCS is a Washington State approved middle & high school. We accept applications for students entering grades 6-10. For more info on relationship-driven education, please visit [pscs.org](http://pscs.org). To sign up for a tour or view our application process, log in to our online enrollment management system: [www.ravenna-hub.com](http://www.ravenna-hub.com)

## PSCS PROFILE YEAR

2019-2020

## COLLEGE CODE

481177

## ENROLLMENT

55 students

## GRADE LEVELS

6-12

## HEAD OF SCHOOL

Amy Hollinger

## DIR. OF DEVELOPMENT

Sieglinde Levery-Nicholas

## DIR. OF SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Samuel Mitchell

## COMMUNITY COORDINATOR SPECIALIST

Tim Ichien

## STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO

11:1

## AFFILIATIONS

NAIS Member School  
NWAIS Subscriber School

## GOVERNANCE

PSCS is governed by an active Board of Trustees, comprised of volunteers from the greater community.

## • HEAD OF SCHOOL •

Amy Hollinger is a lifelong educator. Prior to PSCS, she was the Assistant Head at Westside School in West Seattle for two years and led the professional development program for Global Online Academy from 2013-2016. Before moving to Washington State in 2013, Amy spent the bulk of her career working for the University of Florida K-12 Lab School.



## • TEACHING STAFF •

When hiring staff, our first priority is identifying passionate people who demonstrate outstanding character and deep commitment to lifelong learning.

**Liana Green** (*B.A. Music, WWU—Fairhaven College; M.M. Performance & Orchestral Studies, New England Conservatory of Music*) is a freelance professional musician who has also worked as a librarian and music engraver. This is Liana's 13th year as a Teaching Staff member at PSCS. She is an Advisor and facilitates many classes, including: College Explorations, Music Theory, student bands, and Diverse Voices (co-taught with Elizabeth).



**Scobie Puchtler** (*B.A. Art & Design, Yale University*) is a graphic designer, pilot, saxophone player, and entrepreneur (he co-founded Prism Kite Technology). This is Scobie's 13th year as a Teaching Staff member at PSCS. He is an Advisor and facilitates many courses and activities, including: Geometry, Summarize This!, A Reverence for Wood, and Science of Flight.



**Chrissy Wakeling** (*B.A. Anthropology & Sociology, Principia College*) spent three years on an archaeological dig in Illinois and has traveled extensively. She is in her sixth year as at PSCS. She is an Advisor and facilitates classes for all levels. Chrissy's recent class offerings represent her passions: *A Young People's History of the U.S.*, Advanced Cooking, Food Bank Service, and World History.



**Elizabeth Ortega** (*B.A. Sociology & Anthropology, University of Arizona; M.Ed. Transformative Learning Processes, Antioch*) is in their third year with PSCS and is also our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Lead, which supports their deep investment in social justice. Along with their DEI work, Elizabeth is an Advisor and facilitates many courses, including Soul Writing, Malcolm X, Environmental Justice, Trans-gender Studies, and Diverse Voices (co-taught with Liana).



**Sam Williams** (*B.A. Youth Studies, Southern University*) grew up in Seattle and has an extensive background in education. This is his second year at PSCS and his primary focus is on our middle school students, with courses in art, science, and math—using social justice as a foundation for that work. Sam is an Advisor and has most recently offered classes such as Biology, Digital Music, and Art & Aesthetics.



**Jenn Shaffer** (*B.A. Community Studies, UC—Santa Cruz*) is serving this year as an Adjunct Teacher. Originally from California, Jenn learned to fly an airplane at 15, taught by an original Tuskegee Airman. She obtained her private pilot's license before graduating high school. Jenn enjoys rugby, math, and rock-climbing. She is offering Physics, Science Lab, Math Lab, and Algebra this fall.



## • LIFE AFTER GRADUATION •

PSCS graduates demonstrate a powerful knowledge of self, the ability to self-direct, and the passion to set ambitious goals. Our alum move on to do many things including traveling, working, volunteering, creating, performing, and pursuing higher education. PSCS adheres to the belief that college is one of *many* paths a young person can take after high school, but we've found that youth who have had ownership over their education do often wish to pursue college or university (PSCS has graduated 54 seniors since 2010. 80% of those graduates applied to—and 77% attended—college or university). If a high school student chooses this path, PSCS staff work closely with them and their families to develop strategies for getting into programs that interest them and fit their needs. This involves identifying entrance requirements and doing the work to meet them (which might include preparing for the SAT or the Common Application Process). PSCS alum have been accepted to a wide variety of undergrad and graduate schools, including: Sarah Lawrence, Parsons School of Design, St. John's College, Boston Conservatory, University of Washington, Western Washington University, The New School, Cal Arts, Cornish College, Whittier College, Ohio-Wesleyan, Quest University, DigiPen, The Evergreen State College, Reed College, Seattle University, University of Puget Sound, St. Martins, and many more. **The paths of our alumni are varied and compelling.**



**GREG MORRIS, '99 (HE/HIM)** completed PSCS before we even gave high school diplomas. He went on to study computer science at the University of Illinois and then worked for the Justice Department in D.C. Recently married, he now lives in Palo Alto and has worked for Google since 2007. *"People ask if I regret not going to a more traditional high school. The answer is always NO. I am certain I would have been bored out of my mind."*



**LAUREN HEAD, '10 (SHE/HER)** graduated from Quest University in 2014, where she majored in Peace & Conflict Studies and International Development. In her sophomore year, Lauren wrote what's called a Question Proposal, which served as her major for her final years of undergrad. Lauren's question was, *"What is the role of empathy in community?"* She now works for Partners Global in Washington D.C.



**MARGAUX BOUCHEGNIES, '17 (SHE/HER)** graduated from PSCS and left for The New School in New York, with plans to study both jazz and science. Her PSCS culminating Senior Project focused on *"conscious water usage,"* and her final product was created to present technology that numerically displays how much water one is using while they are using it.



**SOFIA MARTIN, '18 (THEY/THEM)** is currently studying at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland. Their PSCS culminating Project was to complete a full length, full color, digital comic book, which they conceived, drew, and wrote themselves. Sofia presented their processes, highlights, and challenges at Showcase where guests could also peruse the final product.

## • RECENT GRADS •

This past June, PSCS graduated the Class of 2019. Each senior completed a yearlong Senior Project, as well as several text studies and practicums—all part of their in-depth self-reflection (a statement of belief we call a *Credo*). Graduates presented their projects at Senior Showcase, and were honored at a Commencement Ceremony. During the ceremony, each senior was introduced by an important person in their life, read their *Credo* to the community, and received their Washington State Diploma.



**ANGUS BREON (HE/HIM)** made a video game for his Senior Project, combining his passions for puzzles, gaming, and coding. Angus learned how to use a program called Unreal Engine, as well as other tools he would need later on in the project. He shared his process, trials and tribulations, along with the final game, at Senior Showcase. Angus currently attends St. Martin's University.



**SHANE O'TOOLE (HE/HIM)** recorded an EP for his Project. Featuring five full-length, original, electronic music compositions, each of which celebrated a different genre, Shane shared his work and process at Showcase. Shane is a dedicated pianist and composer. He is busy to working on music production and learning more about audio engineering.



**OLIVIA AARON (SHE/HER)** trained for and ran in an Olympic Sprint Triathlon for her Senior Project. She said that she chose a triathlon because she was an active athlete, but really wanted to push herself to a new level. Her project presentation at Showcase included a video and an exhibit designed to share her training process, progress during the year, and ultimately, the final event. Olivia is working locally.



**BRYCE PIELAGE (HE/HIM)** produced four full-length music videos for his Senior Project. Each video incorporated his passion for dance, aesthetics, choreography, and highlighted songs by artists with themes and lyrics of meaning to him. At Senior Showcase, Bryce shared his progress as a director and cinematographer (and animator). He is studying interior design at Cornish College of the Arts.