

Puget Sound Community School
660 S. Dearborn St. Seattle, WA 98134
206.324.4350

Independent middle and high school, located in the heart of the International District, Chinatown, in Downtown, Seattle, WA.

College Code: 481177

Student/Teacher Ratio: 8:1

Enrollment: 36

Grades/Ages: 6th-12th, 11-18

Co-Directors: Valerie Diaz Leroy, Director of Program; Sieglinde Levery-Nicholas, Director of Community Engagement; Samuel Mitchell, Director of School Operations & Registrar.

Objectives: Community-centered education, student choice, collaborative leadership.

Accreditation/Approval: PSCS is an NWAIS subscriber school and a Washington state approved private middle and high school.

Admissions: Decisions are made based a full application process, family fit, and personal interactions with students—not on prior academic performance.

Tuition Aid: PSCS believes that lack of funds should not prevent any student from applying to our school. PSCS prioritizes assistance and program aid for activities and materials for families who qualify.

36% of PSCS Families receive tuition aid.

Governance: PSCS is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees (composed of volunteers from the greater community).

Advising: Every PSCS student is assigned an *Advisor* (usually a member of the Teaching Staff) at the start of each school year. Students meet one-on-one with their Advisors weekly.

Independent Study: Facilitated or unfacilitated courses/activities, which have been pre-planned, pre-approved, to further a student's specific goals and interests.

Intensives: Facilitated, in-depth investigation into a theme or topic that takes place all day over a period of several days.

Seminars: Staff-facilitated, weekly meetings for students who are at similar stages of development (traditionally, New Student Seminar, 8th Grade Seminar, 10th Grade Seminar, Junior Seminar, and Senior Seminar). In 8th, 10th, and 12th grade, *Cairn Project Presentations* are required before moving on into the next class.

Senior Process: Graduating students engage in a year-long process as a cohort, meeting regularly with each other, and dedicated staff, to reflect on their progress through self-initiated practicums, interviews, text study, and heightened community engagement. Seniors also support each other through their individual year-long Senior Projects, development of their *Credo*, a statement of personal belief, and as they set short- and long-term goals in planning for their next steps.



Puget Sound Community School (PSCS) staff serves students and families invested in collaborative leadership, social and global responsibility, kindness- and community-centered education. We believe that people are intrinsically compelled by our innate curiosity and desire to learn; when provided choice, positive support, scrutable accountability, and a responsive curriculum taught by engaged, multi-skilled teachers, we will all enthusiastically pursue meaningful goals and purpose. As far as this is true for adults, we see how these shared instincts also cultivate conscientious, community-minded, and self-motivated young people.

The approaches used at PSCS foster creativity, flexibility, and compassion, while encouraging students and staff to focus deeper on those activities and classes that bring them joy and purpose. To do this, PSCS offers one-on-one Advising relationships and responsive curricula built around student interest, growth, and need. Additional community expectations are designed to scaffold growth in understanding social and restorative justice, and personal, contextual, and responsible identity.

Collaboration: PSCS students and their Advisors meet weekly to set individual goals and check in on progress. Each term, we then come together as a community to co-create the course schedule. Once the schedule has been created, all students must meet each facilitator's engagement and attendance expectations in order to have them transcribed. This cooperative process provides the arena in which students learn to plan and advocate for classes they want or need, to structure their schedules around their interests, goals, and priorities, and to be sensitive to the scheduling needs of others.

In an effort to build upon the collaborative and equitable vision of the school, PSCS parents, staff, and the Board of Trustees recently agreed to invest in non-hierarchical administration and collaborative leadership, rather than in a traditional Head of School. This decision resulted in the formation of an Administrative Team that functions in close cooperation with the Teaching Staff.

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 three Core Commitments:

Practice Integrity. Engage the Community. Act with Courage.

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 present and on-campus, to attend classes, group programming, seminars, as well as off-campus events. We require students to fulfill our community service expectations and to attend PSCS for at least three years to be eligible to graduate.

Progress: PSCS parents/guardians participate in two conferences per school year with their student and their student's Advisor. Parents are welcome to request additional meetings, and Advisors and/or the Director of Program may recommend or require them. Student progress is also detailed in two-week Check-ins, staff reports and reflections, as well as student self-reflections each year.

Transcripts: Each term, all reports, reflections, and milestones are compiled by Advisors and the school Registrar into a narrative transcript, which reflect state graduation requirements as well as PSCS-specific community requirements, most of which fall under the headings of our Core Commitments (above). Approved Independent Study projects are also transcribed, as are courses students complete on their own with outside resources, as long as they can be appropriately documented.

Anti-Bias: PSCS has an open admissions policy that reflects our aim to respect individual differences and learn from diversity. We admit students, and welcome staff and volunteers, of any race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, age, physical and cognitive ability, ancestry, medical condition, family care status, belief system, and family dynamic.

High School: 9-12th grade is focused on self-awareness, self-direction, and goal-setting. PSCS High School students are challenged by their Advisors to participate in offerings because they find excitement and/or purpose in them. Advisors help students continue to identify short- and long-term goals and to map out strategies to achieve them, including understanding and prioritizing required Seminars and WA State Graduation Requirements. Advising also engages a process of authentic self-reflection that supports students in moving toward their next goals, whether that be further education, the workforce, the Peace Corps, or any number of life pursuits.

Recent Class Offerings: Marine Biology, Self Care, African American & Latinx History, American Lit. *Octavia's Brood*, Sex & Health, Beatcraft, Cinema, Intro to Philosophy, Writing Personal Narratives, Geometry, College Explorations, Natural Latin, World Geography, Indigenous History, African American Poetry, Soccer, Cephalopod Biology, Algebra, Summarize THIS!, Blog Writing, History of Pop Music, Queer History, Current Events, Student Leadership, Landscape Sketching, Drawing & Sculpture, Theater, Shop.

Matriculation: PSCS seniors often see the benefits of further and deeper learning and mindfully pursue higher education. PSCS alumni were accepted to, attend, or have attended the following colleges and universities for undergrad and graduate studies:

Boston Conservatory of Music at Berklee, Bellevue College, Bunka Fashion College-Tokyo, The School of Oregon Ballet Theater, Cal Arts, Cornish College of the Arts, DigiPen, LA School of Music, Make Up Forever Academy-NY, Marymount Manhattan College, Naropa University, Ohio-Wesleyan University, Oregon Culinary Institute, Pacific Lutheran University, Parsons School of Design, Quest University, Reed College, Sarah Lawrence, Saybrook University, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Seattle Central College, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle University, St John's College, The Evergreen State College, The London School of Economics and Political Science, The New School, University of Arizona, University of Illinois, University of Sarajevo Film School, University of Washington, UW-Bothell, UW- Engineering Program, Webster, Western Washington University, WWU-Fairhaven, Whitman College, Whittier College, and more.

