

February 2022



Dear Prospective OPEPO Family,

Thank you for considering OPEPO as an educational option for your child. OPEPO is a multi-age, inquiry-based and parent-supported alternative within the public school system.

Here is the OPEPO Enrollment Packet for the 2022-23 school year. This packet includes:

- \* This Cover Letter
- \* OPEPO Overview
- \* Application
- \* New Family Welcome brochure that includes details on committees, activities throughout the year, and volunteer opportunities

This year's OPEPO open enrollment period runs from **March 2, 2022 through April 1, 2022.**

Please follow these three steps to apply for enrollment:

**Step 1:** Complete and return the Application Form to the Salish Coast Elementary front desk or email it to [enrollment@opepo.org](mailto:enrollment@opepo.org).

**Step 2:** Choose an orientation/observation date from those listed at <http://opepo.org/enrollment> and email to confirm ([enrollment@opepo.org](mailto:enrollment@opepo.org)).

**Please RSVP to [enrollment@opepo.org](mailto:enrollment@opepo.org) to hold your spot.**

In-person orientation/observation dates are yet to be determined. Two morning in-person classroom orientation/observations will be held in March. (***Children are not permitted at the inperson orientation/observations.***) There will also be one evening zoom orientation/observation. This meeting is a good option for parents/guardians who are unable to attend one of the in-person orientation/observations. **However, it is also open to parents/guardians who do attend an inperson orientation/observation because it offers a chance to meet the teachers!**

Both steps must be completed during open enrollment to be eligible for the lottery that determines placement in the class or on the waiting list. Open enrollment is March 2, 2022 through April 1, 2022. Those completing the application after the enrollment period will be added to the waiting list, in the order received.

If you have any questions about the application process or general questions about OPEPO, please check out our website: <https://www.opepo.org>. Also, feel free to contact the enrollment team at [enrollment@opepo.org](mailto:enrollment@opepo.org). Thank you for your interest in OPEPO!



## (Optional Education Program)



### What is OPEPO?

OPEPO is a 1st-4th grade alternative multi-age program within the Port Townsend School District, where students work cooperatively with each other and two teachers/facilitators. OPEPO is located on the Salish Coast Elementary School campus in a double classroom. The continued success of OPEPO relies on a lot of parent/guardian/family involvement both inside and outside of the classroom.

### Mission Statement

OPEPO is devoted to cultivating the whole child in an engaging, respectful, inquiry-based environment with an emphasis on community and parent/family involvement.

### Educational Philosophy

Our approach to learning is supported by time-honored educational principles and current research on child-centered learning environments. Several important features distinguish the OPEPO program from the conventional classroom:

- Multi-age classroom structure
- Focus on classroom community and connection among students' families
- Inquiry-based, hands-on approach to learning
- Emphasis on self-reliance and mutual support
- Emphasis on active parent/family participation



### ~~~*Learning in a Multiage classroom*

Staying in the same program for up to four years has advantages for families, teachers, and students.

For families, year by year they connect to a community of parents, siblings, and grandparents through shared goals and visions, through working together in the classroom and going on field trips, by completing special projects, and by building connections and friendships.

Students experience being the younger, then the middle, then the older members of the group. As they progress through the years, they gain confidence in themselves and discover the benefits of being mentored and mentoring. In every subsequent year, teachers gain knowledge about individual students and can therefore most effectively advance their learning.

### ~~~*Inquirybased approach to learning*

OPEPO teachers are facilitators of learning, asking open-ended questions such as:

*“What do you wonder about?”*

*“What problems do you wish you could solve?”*

*“What resources do you need to help you find out what you want to know?”*

Over time, children who are engaged in this way become independent learners who approach learning with confidence and joy while exploring their own interests, skills, and learning styles. The critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills developed through the process of inquiry will serve them through all of their lives.

### ***~~~Selfreliance balanced with classmate support***

Among OPEPO students, a strong classroom culture emerges as values like friendship, kindness, sharing, positive communications, and mentoring are strengthened every day through classroom routines. Students each get to contribute to the daily activities, with rotating responsibilities, and there is a strong sense of cooperation and pride in self-management. The overall feeling in the classroom is one of caring, sharing, and supporting each other.

### ***~~~Active parent/guardian/family participation***

The students, teachers, and families are all essential parts of what makes OPEPO work so well. Each family is expected to contribute six hours of volunteer time per month.

## **Responsibilities**

### ***Parent/Guardian Responsibilities***

By enrolling in OPEPO, each family commits to volunteering time for the program, with a goal of six hours a month, including meetings. There are many ways to do this, including regular in-classroom work, field trips, enrichment activities, home projects, food prep, book orders, etc.

Parent responsibilities also include:

*Attending monthly parent meetings:* These are held one evening a month and last roughly 2 hours. Parent meetings are a forum for community dialogue and sharing of information; decisions are made by consensus. The parent meetings currently take place via Zoom. If/when the parent meetings go back to being in-person, child-care will usually be available.

*Regularly attending meetings of at least one committee or special project task force:* Standing committees include: Enrollment, Vision, Fundraising, and Enrichment. Committees typically meet monthly for roughly an hour.

*Being aware of and involved with your child's program:* This happens through frequent contact with OPEPO staff, by attending parent conferences, and by talking with your child about school.

Every home situation is different, and we understand that meeting the requested 6 hours of volunteer time per month can be a challenge for some families. It's true that the enrichment and family-connection activities available in the OPEPO program are planned by parents, and so sometimes require a great deal of volunteer time and effort. However, we understand that there will be times when parents need to prioritize work and homelife in order to support their students. We ask that families fit OPEPO activities in where it makes sense and allows a healthy balance.

### ***Student Responsibilities***

Each OPEPO student becomes responsible for setting appropriate goals, self-evaluating to track progress, sharing knowledge with other students, and taking responsibility for their own learning.

### ***Teacher/Facilitator Responsibilities***

In addition to the district-wide curriculum goals, OPEPO teachers aim to provide students with a wide variety of resources and opportunities, facilitating the students in constructing their own knowledge. They work with students individually and collectively to create and work toward academic and social/emotional goals. They help children develop the social skills needed to express their feelings in appropriate ways, to be sensitive towards others' feelings, and to negotiate and reach consensus. Our OPEPO teachers are also kind, friendly and fun!



# Application for Enrollment

## 2022-23

Date received : \_\_\_\_\_

**Due: Friday, April 1**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Relationship \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work/cell) \_\_\_\_\_ OK to text? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work/cell) \_\_\_\_\_ OK to text? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Current School \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade \_\_\_\_\_

### A note from the OPEPO Enrollment Committee:

*Thank you for your interest in OPEPO! The information on this application is used to help get to know your family and student. This application is viewable only by the Enrollment Chair, Enrollment Records admin , the OPEPO teachers, and Salish Coast Administration. The information on this application has no influence on your child's entering the lottery for enrollment in the OPEPO program.*

### 1. Are other siblings applying or currently enrolled in OPEPO? Please list:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Current Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Current Grade \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. What would you like us to know about your child (strengths, needs, challenges, etc.)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
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 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why are you choosing OPEPO for your child?

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4. How would you like to meet the parental participation component of OPEPO?  
*(Parents are requested to devote 6 hours per month to the program. Examples of parent participation are flexible and varied, and include parent meeting attendance, committee participation, working on projects from home, in-class volunteering, field trip chaperoning, etc. )*

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5. The OPEPO program would like to know how to best serve the needs of your student. Has your child participated in any special needs programming in the district? Please Indicate below, all that apply.

Special Education \_\_\_\_\_ Title I/Chapter \_\_\_\_\_  
TAG/REACH/HiCap \_\_\_\_\_

Elementary Alternative Program \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. Is there anything else you would like the teachers to know about your student?

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By signing below, I acknowledge that participation in OPEPO requires both fees and time commitments. Fees for the 20222023 school year are approximately \$125 and include supplies and program enrichment. *Full/partial scholarships and payment plans are easily available as needed.*

Parent/Guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The following application procedures must ALL be completed BEFORE your child is eligible for the enrollment lottery. Please make sure you have completed all the following on or by the dates below.

- Return application to Salish Coast office by end of school day **Friday, April 1**

- Attend one of our scheduled orientations/observations. During the month of March, there will be two oncampus orientations/observations, and one evening orientation/observation via Zoom. Dates TBD

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**LOTTERY**

The lottery will take place in April after Spring Break. Applicants will be notified by email if they have been placed on the waiting list and will be called if they are being offered a spot in the class. Please note: In past years, more students have applied for OPEPO than there are spaces available. Because OPEPO is a family program, siblings of continuing OPEPO students have first priority when filling vacancies. Once siblings have been accommodated, names of applicants who have completed the enrollment requirements are drawn by lottery to fill the remaining spaces.