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June 2025

From Students in the Classroom to Professionals on the Water



Dear Friends,

June is my favorite time of the year. There is so much to celebrate, from Pride to Juneteenth to school graduations. This month, I'm sharing about an inaugural graduation – the very first graduating class of [Maritime High School](#) (MHS).

Led by the advocacy of Port Commissioner Ryan Calkins, the Port of Seattle began conversations about creating Maritime High School over six years ago. Ultimately, the Port committed to investing \$1.125 million over the last five years to help stand up the school. MHS, which opened in September 2021, is now a collaborative project of Highline Public Schools, Northwest Maritime, the Duwamish River Community Coalition, and the Port of Seattle. MHS's educational approach combines traditional academics with hands-on maritime training, including off-campus learning experiences that provide industry exposure and, in some cases, certification. Students choose from three learning pathways — marine science, vessel operations, and marine construction. Additionally, juniors and seniors from all three pathways collaborate on real-world projects, ensuring a comprehensive blend of academic and practical marine education.

On June 18, 2025, MHS graduated its inaugural class of 31 students. Within the Class of 2025, 15 students are advancing to higher education (including two attending California Maritime Academy), 5 students are entering the maritime industry, and 11 students are entering the workforce.

A member of the graduating class, Henry Peters, reflected on his experience at MHS, saying, "I loved the hands-on approach to learning. I've always learned better by doing. For anyone who learns better outside of the classroom, or learns [with their hands], I highly recommend MHS."



Henry Peters working in the engine room of a vessel

During his time at MHS, Henry chose the vessel operations pathway. In this pathway, he obtained his Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC), which is essential for workers who need secure access to maritime facilities, ports, and vessels.

Additionally, Henry received an endorsement to become a Qualified Member of the Engineering Department (QMED), which is a crewmember in the engine room of a ship who is responsible for the maintenance and operation of various mechanical systems.

Henry's education and certifications helped him get an internship with a tugboat company located on Harbor Island. He'll begin the internship this summer, gain valuable professional experience on the water, and obtain his QMED. "I want a career of working on boats," said Henry. "I hope to work locally for a few years, save money, and then get a job doing deep-sea work. I know that this work pays well, and I'll be able to save [money]. So, if I ever want to go to college, I'll be able to pay for it."



Mara Mersai (back row, center) with her family at graduation

Another member of the MHS Class of 2025, Mara Mersai, also has a goal of a career in the maritime industry. In middle school, Mara wanted to be a marine biologist, so she applied to MHS, thinking it would be a good place to start down that path. After a couple of years at MHS, Mara realized how much she enjoyed working on boats.

"All of the hands-on experiences and learning taught me that I wanted to work on boats and support the [marine] science, instead of becoming a marine scientist," said Mara.

Mara's and Henry's stories illustrate the incredible benefits of the career-connected learning and hands-on approach of Maritime High School. As Mara said, "If you're at all interested in working in the maritime industry, then come to Maritime High School. You'll get a lot of valuable experience to start your career in maritime." Read about the school's [admission process and how to apply](#).

The Port is proud of our investments and partnerships that have helped to create and sustain Maritime High School. This is a critical part of our strategy to create pathways for community members to gain careers in this industry.

MHS's success comes at a crucial time for the maritime industry, which continues to face significant workforce shortages both ashore and afloat. Industry experts predicted a global shortage of more than 150,000 qualified mariners by 2025, and recent trends indicate this challenge persists.

Finally, congratulations to the Maritime High School's inaugural Class of 2025! You all are a shining example of what's possible at the intersection of education and industry.

In Unity,



Bookda Gheisar
Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Centering Equity and Taking Action

Port of Seattle Commissioners' Statement on the Travel Ban



On June 9, the Port of Seattle Commission [issued a statement](#) denouncing the Trump Administration's Travel Ban. The following day, the Port held a press conference, led by Commissioner Hamdi Mohamed, with Governor Bob Ferguson, Attorney General Nick Brown, local elected officials, and immigrant

rights groups to recommit to our values of inclusion and belonging, to reiterate the need to support immigrant communities, and to explore options to fight the Travel Ban. [Watch footage](#) of the press conference.

Made Possible by the Port



Seattle's story begins — and continues — with the sea. From its roots as a vital hub for Indigenous communities to a launching point during the gold rush, and through the excitement of world's fairs to today's thriving maritime economy, the Port of Seattle has shaped the city's identity, industries, and future.

To educate people about the impact of and careers in the maritime industry, the Port launched the Made Possible by the Port campaign. [Watch the one-minute video](#) about how the Port is driving innovation, creating good-paying jobs, and sustaining the city's momentum in ways many never see but everyone feels.

Meet Two Black Women Leading Port Teams with Purpose

Black History Month may be over, but the Port of Seattle celebrates the accomplishments of our amazing team members all year long. African Americans have played a crucial role in shaping labor history, particularly in transportation, logistics, and infrastructure. Today, the Port honors this legacy by working to advance equity in the workplace, ensuring that all employees have access to opportunities for growth, leadership, and success in the maritime and aviation industries. [Read about the journeys of two women](#) at the Port who lead with determination and skill, and who are committed to advancing equity in labor.



Virginia Fullwood

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Ryan Calkins
Sam Cho
Fred Felleman
Toshiko Hasegawa

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Hamdi Mohamed

Port of Seattle
Executive Director

Stephen P. Metruck



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