

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, June 23, 2020.

Jefferson County added another COVID-19 case over the weekend, now reporting a total of 33. Still testing continues and with an overwhelming number of negative results we are down to a 1.2% positive ratio.

The latest posted data reports that 2,6,97 local residents have been tested with 2,518 testing negative. Forty six people are awaiting results.

We continue to report these numbers even though they don't really change, as it's important to maintain awareness of the numbers and vigilance to prevent them from going any higher. The advice is still the same: wear masks in proximity to other people, maintain a six-foot distance, and wash hands frequently. Our low numbers are directly attributable to the fact that most people in Jefferson County are following these guidelines.

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The Jefferson Community School, a 15-year-old alternative school operating out of the old Templar Hall in downtown, will close its physical space at the end of this school year and transition to a different online model, according the school's head teacher, Craig Frick.

While it once thrived with over 30 students, it has come to the brink of closure several times over the past few years due cash shortages. Two years ago, the school was poised to sell its building, then valued at 1.2 million dollars, in order to continue operations. A last-minute donor gift prevented that action, but that won't happen again.

At the end of this school year only 14 students were enrolled with 40% of these receiving financial aid. It has continually recruited international students, who were able to pay the \$9,000 yearly tuition.

The building will again go up for sale, subsidizing the school's future operations.

In addition to operating the Port Townsend facility, JCS has operated a successful online private school in Taiwan, according to Frick. He hopes to translate this model to public schools, partnering with local districts to supply an online component that would work in parallel with its regular physical instruction.

Frick said the school has already proven its ability to present online instruction. Aside from its Chinese branch, the local school only lost eight hours of instructional time after the mandated COVID-19 related school closure.

With this model, the school would also be able to continue its travel component, which includes a yearly field trip to exotic locations such as South America, Southeast Asia, and Utah.

After the closure announcement, former board members expressed appreciation for the school. According to Nat Jacob, the school provided a truly unique learning experience for local students; a model based on our locale, multicultural experience, and hands-on learning that is truly unmatched in this region. While the school may be leaving our community, its alumni continue to do good in their communities and all over the world.

Gerald Braude, a long-term board member and the parent of a JCS student, suggests that a drastically lowered the tuition could increase recruitment and save the school's physical component. As support for this position, Braude said that the private Sunfield Academy in Port Hadlock enrolls seventy to eighty students at half of the JCS tuition rate.

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The Jefferson County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously Monday prepare a Phase 3 reopening request, as recommended by the county board of health last week. Their motion instructed Board of Health Director Vicki Kirkpatrick to submit a transmittal letter to the State Board of Health, to be submitted for approval at a special Meeting on Monday.

The Commissioners also agreed to hold a special meeting Monday, June 29 at 9:45am to check in with Dr. Locke and Willie Bence before sending off the Phase 3 request.

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KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through news at [kptz.org](http://kptz.org).

This is Charlie Bermant with some of today's news. Thank you for listening.