

# ACTION ITEM MEMO

Port of Tacoma Commission



Item No: 6B  
Meeting Date: 5/7/26

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**DATE:** April 30, 2026  
**TO:** Port of Tacoma Commission  
**FROM:** Eric Johnson, Executive Director  
Alisa Praskovich, Chief External Strategy officer  
**SUBJECT:** Interlocal Agreement #4 – Supporting Maritime Education and Training at Maritime 253

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**A. ACTION REQUESTED**

Request authorization for the Executive Director to enter into a fourth Interlocal Agreement (ILA) between the Tacoma School District and the Port of Tacoma to provide guidelines and a governing framework for how the Port may provide resources, support activities, instruction and training to Maritime 253 staff and students to enhance learning and support certification in maritime industry-related fields.

**Strategic Plan Initiatives:**

WD-1: Identify opportunities to utilize Port-owned properties in partnership with local and regional organizations to facilitate maritime industry career development  
WD-2: Partner with government and local and regional organizations to facilitate career development through financial investments  
WD-4: Promote awareness of career pathways in the maritime trades

**B. BACKGROUND**

Tacoma School District (TSD) is expected to take delivery of the Maritime Skills Center May 21, 2026, and the school will open September 8, 2026. As of April 2026, TSD has State approval to launch four technical pathways: Sustainability, Technology, Port Operations and Logistics and Advanced Maritime Manufacturing. Curriculums for all four pathways have been approved by the State, and TSD has installed a full-time Director – Kristie Wolford. The Port of Tacoma will take occupancy of the Business Center on December 15, 2026, and full move-in is expected to be completed by the end of March 2026.

Over the last year, TSD and Port of Tacoma have already established a close working relationship to support the promotion of Maritime 253 to not only boost student enrollment but improve public awareness of this first ever maritime skills center for Pierce County. The Port Maritime Center, as a shared campus, will serve to create synergies and shared education and training opportunities. TSD has amassed an incredible number of industry and community partners over the last two years that will further enrich the student's experience at Maritime 253. As the Port Maritime Center construction phase will conclude by late 2027, the focus between TSD and Port of Tacoma will concentrate on workforce development.

ILA #4 will provide guidelines and a governing framework for how the Port may provide resources, support activities, instruction and training to Maritime 253 staff and students to enhance learning and support certification in maritime industry-related fields. The types of shared resources envisioned in ILA #4 include: Guest speakers/lectures, demonstrations, site visits, curriculum development and alignment, career fairs, and A/V Production. Both TSD and the Port will formally designate a liaison for formal coordination to ensure activities carried out pursuant to the ILA are effective while also identifying areas for improvement. This will be the eleventh new or amended ILA with TSD for the Maritime Skills Center since the initial planning and development ILA in August 2023.

**E. FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

Each Party will bear its own costs and control its own manner of financing. Each Party will establish and maintain a budget for the activities contemplated in the ILA.

**F. ECONOMIC INVESTMENT / JOB CREATION**

Maritime 253 will employ approximately twenty full-time staff and serve up to 300 students per session (two per weekday) on site. As of April 2026, there are 260 students enrolled, and nine member school districts. Students are to receive industry recognized credentials preparing them for employment in the maritime and logistics industries.

**G. NEXT STEPS**

- Continue supporting Maritime 253 enrollment – “This is Maritime” campaign
- Designate a Port of Tacoma Liaison for formal coordination
- Support all efforts to ensure Maritime 253 opens as planned 9/8/26