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## Education chief visits KHS maritime program

Press Release  
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From left, Captain Dave Johansen, Public School System Career & Technical Education Program Director Dr. Jessica Ta Aguon-Presot, Jace, Yanai, Tudela, Borden, Tomokane, L Reyes, Salta, M Reyes, Kapileo and Education Commissioner D Contributed photo

**(WPMA)** — Western Pacific Maritime Academy is pleased to announce that Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada made a surprise visit to Kagman High School to observe its maritime studies program.

WPMA is offering its U.S. Coast Guard-approved Basic Training Personal Survival Techniques or BT-PST course to KHS students in a pilot program.

BT-PST is one of five basic training courses that qualify candidates to work as professional mariners on large merchant marine ships similar to those anchored off the pristine beaches of Saipan. Captain Dave Johansen is teaching the BT-PST course.

The PT- PST is a 14-hour course that teaches students the foundational knowledge and skills on how to survive disaster at sea through both written exam and practical exercises.

Knowledge includes shipboard emergency response, types of shipboard emergencies, principles of survival at sea, understanding survival craft and equipment and techniques for abandoning ship.

Practical exercises are conducted to prove skills in donning a life jacket, cold weather immersion suites, treading water, turning their clothing into flotation devises and boarding a life raft.

To date, seven maritime students who are known as “midshipmen” have received their Merchant Marine Credential or MMC.

During Commissioner Ada’s visit, Midshipman Kenshiro Yanai presented his MMC with much pride.

WPMA is running pilot programs to a total of 24 midshipmen both at KHS and Da’ok Academy.

By the 2023-2024 school year, WPMA expects to be expanding to all high schools in the CNMI including Tinian and Rota.

WPMA’s Public School System maritime workforce development program steers candidates into high paying jobs in the maritime sector as entry-level credentialed professional mariners such as deck seamen, engineers or members of the catering department.

An entry level seaman in the U.S. Merchant Marine can earn upwards of \$5,000 to \$7,000 per month through the maritime unions or the Military Sealift Command. In the wake of Covid-19, the maritime sector is experiencing a huge demand for credentialed mariners.

WPMA is a non-profit corporation located on Saipan with its maritime offices and classrooms at the Northern Marianas Technical Institute in Lower Base.

The academy will offer a full suite of USCG-approved maritime courses and services to the seafaring public.

For further information about the PSS programs, contact your school principal or the PTSA. You may also email Selina Taitano at [staitano@wpma.net/](mailto:staitano@wpma.net/).