

Superintendent's Advisory Council Talking Points

June 4, 2015

Recognition of Five State Titles in Spring Sports

Mercer Island High School earned five state titles in one weekend, including: boys' baseball; girls' golf; boys' lacrosse; girls' tennis; and boys' tennis.

2014 Bond Projects & \$48.8M bond sale on June 3, 2015

Mercer Island taxpayers will [save nearly \\$9 million](#) thanks to premiums from the sale of bonds for Mercer Island School District facilities projects. The school district has taken advantage of its sterling 'Aaa' credit rating and low interest rates to get more bang for the taxpayer buck. This translates into lower property taxes for homeowners. The bonds will be retired earlier than they would have.

Each facilities project is on schedule and within budget. Additional updates and estimated completion dates can be [found online](#). The MIHS project will be turned over to the district in June. The IMS parking lot will be reconfigured, so there will not be parking or drop-off access during the summer. The district is in the process of identifying the Elementary No. 4 core team right now. One-third of the staff, coming from existing elementary staff, will be named soon. The funds for the core team and Aimee Batliner-Gillette's salary as Planning Principal come from bond sales, not from Mercer Island Schools Foundation funding or the general fund. The PTA for Elementary No. 4 has also already been organizing.

Elementary Boundaries and BP 3131

[Boundary Committee](#) information and a map of the new boundaries can be found on the district website. Each elementary student in the district is expected to attend the elementary school designated for the geographic attendance area in which he or she resides. Board Policy 3131, an intra-district transfer policy, goes into effect for the 2016-17 school year. Having students attend their neighborhood school will save significant time for students and transportation costs. That saving is estimated at about \$100,000 per year in operational costs. The carbon footprint will also be significantly reduced.

Technology Advisory Group and Capital Projects Levy

In Feb. 2016, there will be a Capital Projects Levy that includes technology. The [Technology Advisory Group](#) has been focused on the Technology portion of the levy, providing feedback on the district's proposals. The Capital Projects Levy will also include many maintenance projects such as paving parking lots and roofing, and replacement of major equipment such as boilers. The projects portion of the levy is based on the maintenance plans developed during the remodel of the schools in the late '90's. On the same ballot will be a Transportation Levy, a one-year levy to have ongoing funds to replace aging buses.

Learning Services Advisory Committee (LSAC)

The [Learning Services Advisory Committee](#) met four times this year. Its purpose is to both receive information and provide input into the work of the Learning Services Department. At its most recent meeting, the committee received information about Elementary No. 4's programs, provided input to the possible major projects for Learning Services in 2015-2016, and had a short tutorial on topic of Executive Functioning. The LSAC membership will be rotational, much like the Superintendent's Advisory Council.

Diversity Advisory Committee Update

As a school system, we are much like the rest of the world – race-based issues exist. Last year, the Superintendent formed the [Diversity Advisory Committee](#) to help address issues stemming from diversity, including implicit bias. Reporting of incidents of harassment and intimidation has increased over the past year. It was noted by one member that the increase could be due in part to the stronger outreach the district has done regarding Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying. There is a place in education for discussion of these topics, but it must be a community-wide effort. ***SAC members, at the next meeting, please bring ideas about how your community groups can impact this discussion.***

Foreign Language in Elementary School Feasibility Study

The district is studying the feasibility of bringing Spanish to elementary schools in the 2016-17 school year. Reviews of literature and studies have demonstrated that there are many benefits of early bilingual education. More information can be found on the district website regarding the possibility of an [Elementary World Language Program](#). A [survey](#) of Mercer Island parents and staff demonstrated that there is a great deal of support from for a world language program.

High School Start-Time Study/Recommendation

Research demonstrates that high school students perform better with later start times. Information on meetings of the [High School Start-Time Committee](#) is available online. Results of the survey can be found [online here](#). One of the challenges is that 83 percent of Mercer Island High School students are scheduled after school. The committee is making a recommendation to the Superintendent. Based on the data, it is unlikely the committee will recommend a change to high school start times.

Bridge 2015

David D'Souza said the Mercer Island Schools Foundation has raised \$820,000 of the \$1.2 million goal. That means there is still a nearly \$400,000 gap that the MISF is trying to close by June 20.

Education Legislation in Olympia

The Superintendent is not aware of any budget deals. The Washington State Supreme Court is holding a contempt order over state legislators if they do not fully fund basic education by the session's end.

Technology in Standardized Testing and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) Opt-Outs

The technology operations around implementing the state standardized testing went well. There were isolated, small incidents of glitches experienced at our sites and state wide. There was a significant amount of staff technical support to ensure a smooth operation of the tests. About 75 percent of 11th grade MIHS students opted out of SBAC testing. Due to those opt-outs, MIHS will likely be considered to be in the "needs improvement" category. As a result, the district will have to do things for the federal government it wouldn't otherwise have to. Letters will be sent in the fall to all parents notifying them that the school is considered to be in the "needs improvement" category.

Future meetings of the SAC: [The next SAC meeting will be scheduled for Oct. 2015.](#)