

WWW.MERCERISLANDSCHOOLS.ORG

MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT



2013-14 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR VISION

Our students will thrive in the cognitive, global and digital world while sustaining their passion and inspiration for learning.

OUR MISSION

Mercer Island schools will deliver a 21st century education that prepares students to convert information into knowledge and create innovation solutions demanded by tomorrow's world.

As a public school district, the Mercer Island School District is accountable to its students, parents, community members and local, state and federal taxpayers. This document, required by state law, is intended to highlight important work and achievements, financial details and district demographics during the 2013-14 school year.



On behalf of the Mercer Island School District Board of Directors, our teachers and staff, and our more than 4,300 students, I am pleased to present the Mercer Island community with the 2013-14 Annual Report. The 2013-14 school year was a year of building toward the future, both in the classroom and in our community.

The mission of the District is to prepare students to be successful in a world that is ever changing. Our educational programs are designed to ensure that our students will have the skills to thrive in a cognitive, global and digital world. Our talented School Board previously set a vision and mission along with six fundamentals, or planks, which are intended to drive the learning environments in all our classrooms. In addition they required the instructional leadership team through me to show annual progress as a system in achieving the six fundamentals of our vision.

Last year we achieved an important milestone. The Board monitored or evaluated two of the six fundamentals against evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, for the first time. Monitoring the fundamentals allows the Board and the community to see how our educational programs are “benchmarking” toward the six fundamentals that drive the 2020 Vision. While monitoring the fundamental about global awareness, the Board heard how our elementary students responded to global and local disasters including the tsunami in the Philippines and the landslide in Oso, Wash.

Later in the academic year the Board reviewed skills in critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. The Learning Services Department presented quantitative measures and classroom examples, including high school students at Crest Learning Center who created their own independent reading projects that challenged their critical thinking and reading skills. Please visit www.MercerIslandSchools.org/Monitoring for more information about monitoring District performance.

We are also seeing a change in our community. Recent changes in demographics show fewer students as being identified as Caucasian and growing groups of Latinos, Asians

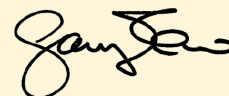
and a new category called multiracial. In late spring, I launched the Diversity Advisory Committee, comprised of parent and community representatives who will advise me on matters of diversity and equity. They began a review of our continued efforts to provide all students, irrespective of racial and ethnic differences, with access to the following: equity of educational opportunity; individual empowerment; and, equal and fair treatment. As I look forward, I want to ensure that our students' personal narratives tell stories that are emotionally connecting, and that our school environments are inclusive, celebratory and respectful of our racial differences.

Our mission begins when students enter our elementary schools and continues through middle and high school until students are prepared for college and their careers. The graduating class of 2014 posted the highest ACT scores for the District in five years. Mercer Island High School was named the 159th best high school in the country, and second best in the state, by *Newsweek*.

That kind of success does not happen without strong support from the community. The Mercer Island community rallied together to support our public schools with both donations and their election ballots. The Mercer Island Schools Foundation, our PTAs and boosters contributed nearly \$1.9 million. That financial support is critical to making sure our schools are the very best regionally and nationally.

Mercer Island voters also passed a \$98.8 million bond proposal last February to address overcrowding in our public schools. That bond passed overwhelmingly at 74 percent. You can track construction on the three targeted projects every week by visiting www.MercerIslandSchools.org/Construction.

Thank you to each and every one of you for another wonderful school year.



Dr. Gary Plano, Superintendent



Mercer Island School District Fundamentals of Vision 2020



Create a more personalized learning environment where student-centered education is responsive to students' strengths and learning styles, interests and passions.



Maintain the highest standards in the areas of fine arts; health/fitness; literacy - reading, writing and communications; mathematics; science; social studies; and, world languages.



Develop self-awareness, emotional/social intelligence, responsible decision-making and citizenship.



Encourage and enable students to be academic entrepreneurs and risk-takers who can choose to pursue academic passions and interests beyond traditional curriculum and beyond the traditional classroom environment.



Cultivate and foster thinking and process skills such as analytical and critical thinking, cross-discipline thinking, creativity, innovation, collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and information and technology literacy in curriculum design.



Cultivate Global Awareness and embrace diversity, with a focus on respect, acceptance, and understanding of real-world problems, issues, concerns, commonalities, differences and interdependence.

Preparing our youngest students for a digital world through an introduction to coding

Preparing students for a digital economy is a core piece of the District's Vision 2020 that drives the instructional program. That includes preparing students for potential careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

In December, the Mercer Island School District participated in the "Hour of Code." The event is sponsored by Seattle-based Code.org, which has created free tutorials with the help of engineers from companies like Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter and Google for teachers to use in class. Code.org projects that by 2020 there will be 1,000,000 more jobs in computer science than there are computer science students in the United States.

Speaking to first-grade students at Island Park Elementary, teacher Kara Millsap shared a popular misconception about

computer coding: “For years people thought that learning code was too hard. They thought only people who sat at their computers all day long could do it and nobody else should even try. Not true. Anybody can code. Boys. Girls. Anybody.”

At each of the District’s three elementary schools, age-appropriate lessons and activities about coding were presented to students.

Millsap, one of the District’s two elementary-level teachers on special assignment, explained that when the young students are grown up they might want a job that involves computer coding. They may invent new video games or new programs to help kids learn to read and write. With code they’ll be able to teach computers what to do.

“For years people thought that learning code was too hard. They thought only people who sat at their computers all day long could do it and nobody else should even try. Not true. Anybody can code. Boys. Girls. Anybody.”

“Basically, your computer is like a very obedient dog.” Millsap continued, “If you give that dog commands it will do exactly what you ask it to.” She pointed to a picture on the overhead screen behind her. It showed cartoon tiles and a cartoon robot—or Light-bot—standing on one of the tiles. “In this game, you will give the computer commands that will program the little Light-Bot to move around the tiles and light them up.”

She believes coding is an important skill to expose elementary



students to. “I realize reading, writing and arithmetic come first, but I was pleasantly surprised so many teachers allowed me to use precious computer lab time for programming games,” says Millsap. “It’s hard to give up time for an unknown like coding. But I’m sure when typewriters were new, keyboarding classes seemed like the same kind of deal.”

One concern for Millsap is the under-representation of women in computer programming. “It’s always been more of a guys’ realm, but it doesn’t have to be. The first time we did Light-Bot I could see a few boys trying to take over. The girls were polite and letting it happen until the teacher told them they had to take turns. In school, I was a girl who loved computer science and math, so it’s great to see the girls getting into this.”

Millsap said, “I don’t know if they truly do make the connection that this is coding because it’s a game, but my hope is later down the road when they’re thinking about picking a major, this will help them consider computer science as a possibility.”

Our community's investment in the future

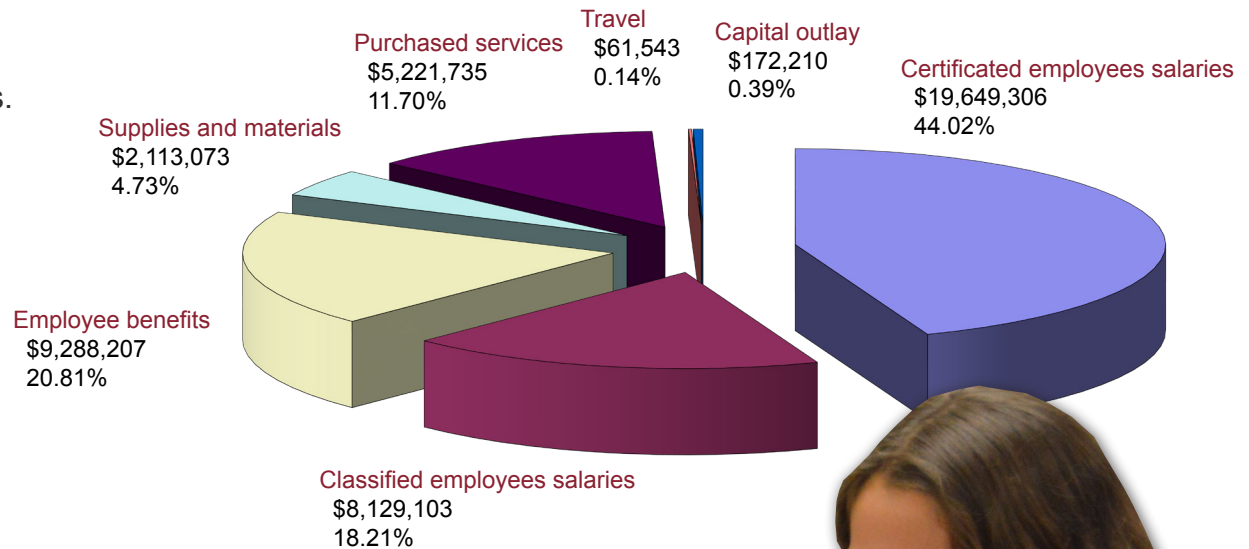
During the 2013-14 academic year, the Mercer Island School District had approximately \$44.64 million in expenditures, including salaries, benefits, supplies and materials, services, travel, and capital outlay.

The District spent a total of \$10,337 per student, including local, state and federal funding and grants.

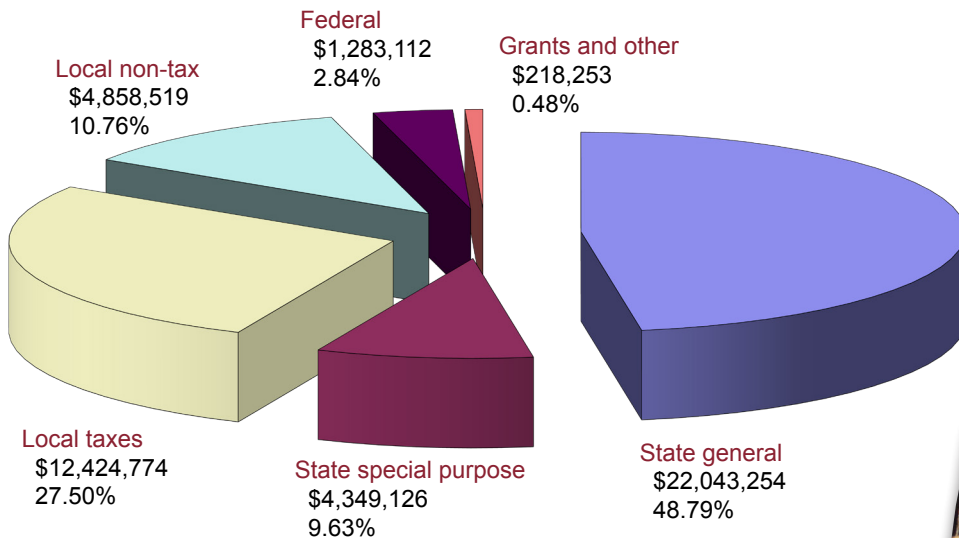
The state portion of that funding was about \$6,112.

Donations from the Mercer Island Schools Foundation, PTAs and boosters totaled nearly \$1.9 million.

Total expenditures



Total revenue



Middle school students explore independent science projects



Each year all eighth-grade science students become enthralled in their independent research projects in the spring. These are extensive projects where students develop a question that could be researched and tested using the scientific process.

For years students have had the same assignment, but with 1:1 iPads in the eighth grade, they embarked on this assignment with important technology tools in hand.

The assignment begins with developing a question. Students have the opportunity for choice and ownership, developing a question that is relevant and has a testable experiment to address a solution to a current problem. One of the eighth graders this year created a drone to measure gas leaks in order to prevent a person from having to do it. Another student created plastic out of milk.

The integration of the 1:1 iPads increased personalization and portability, to allow students to tackle real life issues. "Having the iPad made my project easy to access. I could work on it whenever I had time," said eighth-grade student Miti. "I didn't have to wait for class to start or a computer."

The project is independent and requires students to show their research and understanding of the scientific process. This year the iPads allowed students to capture each step of their experiments and easily compile their findings in one place.

Some students shared their work by walking their audience through their experiments and findings using screencasts, a digital recording of their computer screen that they narrate, while others relied on the apps *Educreations* and *iMovie*.

Tonya Van Orden, science teacher at Islander Middle School, encourages all of her students to make their projects as if they were going to submit them to the Google Science Fair. "Preparing for an authentic audience ramps up the quality," said Van Orden.

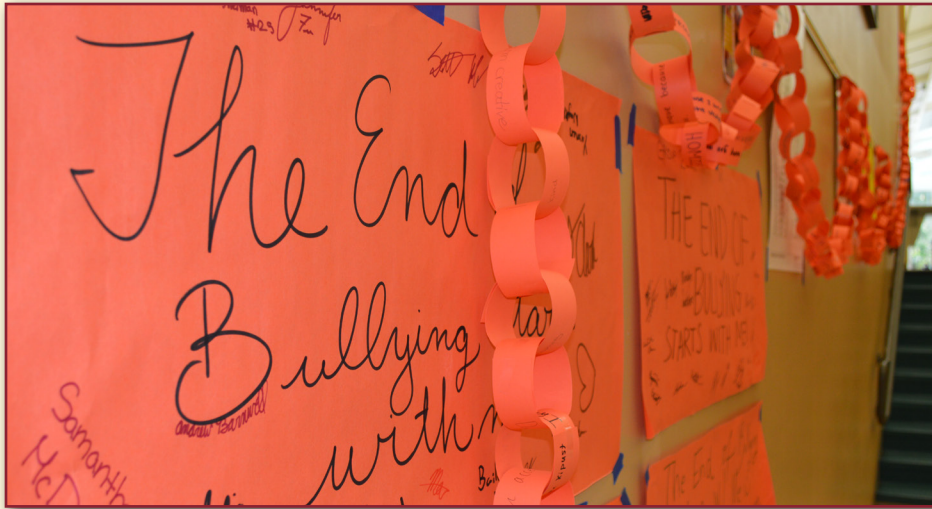
Although not all students submit their entries into the contest, the quality of

science experiments the eighth graders have been working on is exceptional. iPads have been instrumental in creating personalized learning. Students used them for research, documenting the experiments, typing up their reports, and creating movies to showcase their entire process.

The assignment may not have changed this year, but the use of iPads has made the documentation and presentation of the projects easier to manage and helped prepare our students to thrive in the digital world.



A commitment by our students to end bullying



National Bullying Prevention Center. Students wore orange clothes, signed commitment posters (as seen left) to prevent bullying and constructed an orange chain link of rings in the main hallway of MIHS with words of inspiration and those associated

with bullying and isolation – all with the goal of supporting an end to bullying.

“I heard a lot of comments from students and staff that the events of the month have sparked great discussions,” said MIHS teacher Charlie Hilen. “We had a great turnout of students wearing orange to stand up against bullying and support people who have been bullied.”

The bulk of the discussion around bullying happens through a program at the high school called Building Relationships in Diverse Groups to Empower Students and Staff (BRIDGES). BRIDGES brings together about five members from each of the four high school grade levels to provide support and resources for

each other, particularly younger high school students. These students meet once a week over the course of their time at MIHS. When one senior class graduates, each BRIDGES group adds five members of the next freshman class to the group.

“The goal is that each of these groups of students will be together and be able to build relationships with each other,” says Hilen, who is also the faculty advisor for the school-wide group. “Another critical part of it is that it’s a student-run program. The students work with faculty to prepare lessons, but in each classroom, every week they lead the discussions.”

By using this period once a week, students are better able to engage with each other in a safe environment on topics that would otherwise only be discussed in assemblies. “This is a far more individualized and engaging environment for discussion,” says Hilen.

“The key lesson about bullying this month is awareness that it happens, recognizing the behavior and having the conversation that we don’t want that to happen here,” Hilen said. “When a student sees bullying and stands up to stop it, there is a huge change in behavior for other students.”

While preventing bullying, harassment and intimidation is a year-round effort, Mercer Island High School (MIHS) students took advantage of National Bullying Month to engage in lessons, discussions and activities raising awareness of bullying and helping students to better identify it.

The vision of the Mercer Island School District is to prepare students to thrive in a cognitive, global and digital world. But before students can think critically about issues facing our world or innovate in a global economy, they need a safe and secure learning environment.

On Oct. 9, students participated in Unity Day, a national day of bullying awareness promoted by the Pacer

Enrollment

Enrollment is reported on a monthly basis, with the first official figures available each October.

June 2014 enrollment 4,318

Demographics

American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	18.7%
Black/African American	1.4%
Hispanic/Latino	3.9%
White	69.9%
Two or more races	5.8%

Special programs

Free or reduced-price meals	3.7%
Special education	10.9%
Transitional bilingual	1.9%

Attendance

The 2013-14 District unexcused absence rate was 0.74 percent.



Individual school enrollment

Island Park Elementary	567
Lakeridge Elementary	609
West Mercer Elementary	702
Islander Middle School	1,073
Mercer Island High School and Crest Learning Center	1,367

Preparing for success in new state standardized testing

Last year, the Mercer Island School District participated in the Smarter Balanced Field Test for students in grades three through eight. The Smarter Balanced test, implemented in the 2014-15 school year, will impact students in grades three through eight and 11. It is aligned to the Washington State Learning Standards in English language arts (ELA) and math.

The choice to participate in the Smarter Balanced Field Test was made to help best prepare students and teachers for the state-required full implementation in the 2014-15 school year. Because the field test was a trial-run of new items and the test-delivery system, there were no scores for individual students, schools or districts. Rather, performance on individual items by students in many states will help determine how the new tests will be put together and what scores will be needed to “meet standard” once the tests are used statewide in 2015.

As a result, there are only reported Measurements of Student Progress results for fifth and eighth grade science, End-of-Course math and biology, and the High School Proficiency Exam.



“ The Mercer Island community should be proud of students for doing so well on testing. Where students took the traditional tests, they continue to exceed their peers both locally and nationally in state standardized testing.

-Jennifer Wright, Executive Director of Learning and Technology Services

”

2013-14 High School Proficiency Exam

	Reading	Writing
Grade 10	<u>93.8%</u>	<u>94.1%</u>
WA State	82.8%	85.6%

2013-14 End-of-Course

	Math Year One
Mercer Island	<u>93.6%</u>
WA State	58.4%
Mercer Island	Biology <u>94.1%</u>
WA State	70.3%

2013-14 Measurements of Student Progress, Science

Mercer Island	
<u>Grade 5</u>	<u>89.2%</u>
WA State	66.8%
Mercer Island	
<u>Grade 8</u>	<u>89.5%</u>
WA State	67.2%

Graduation rate

The Mercer Island School District boasts a graduation rate of 95.4 percent. The remaining 4.6 percent includes students who have dropped out of school or moved away from Mercer Island schools and the District has been unable to verify enrollment at their next institution.

	<u>Graduation rate</u>
Washington state schools	78.8%
Bainbridge Island School District	96.0%
Mercer Island School District	95.4%
Issaquah School District	94.7%
Northshore School District	93.2%
Lake Washington School District	91.7%
Bellevue School District	89.9%



Mercer Island college placements

In the graduating class of 2014, 94 percent of graduates continued their education, 89.4 percent at a four-year institution and 10.6 percent at a two-year institution. Those institutions of higher education include:

American Univ., Arizona State Univ., Auburn Univ., Babson College, Bard College, Bellevue College, Benedictine College, Berkeley College of Music, Boston College, Bowdoin College, Brigham Young Univ. Idaho & Provo, Brown Univ., California Lutheran Univ., California Polytechnic State Univ. San Luis Obispo, Carleton College, Carnegie Mellon Univ., Case Western Reserve Univ., Central Washington Univ., Claremont McKenna College, Colby College, Colorado College, Colorado State Univ., Columbia College Chicago, Columbia Univ., Cornell Univ., Cornish College of the Arts, Creighton Univ., Dartmouth College, DigiPen Institute of Technology, Duke Univ., Edmonds Community College, Emory Univ., Florida State Univ., George Washington Univ., Georgia Institute of Technology, Gettysburg College, Gonzaga Univ., Harvard Univ., Highline Community College, Johns Hopkins Univ., Lawrence Univ., Linfield College, Lipscomb Univ., Loyola Marymount Univ., Loyola Univ. Maryland, Montana State Univ., Monterey Peninsula College, Mount Holyoke College, New York Univ., Northwestern Univ., Occidental College, Oklahoma City Univ., Oregon State Univ., Pace Univ., Pacific Lutheran Univ., Parsons New School of Design, Pennsylvania State Univ., Pomona College, Portland State Univ., Princeton Univ., Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Royal College of Music, San Diego State Univ., Santa Barbara City College, Santa Clara Univ., Seattle Pacific Univ., Seattle Univ., St. Johns College, Stanford Univ., Texas Christian Univ., Texas Tech Univ., Tufts Univ., United States Naval Academy, Univ. of St Andrews, Univ. of Alabama, Univ. of Arizona, Univ. of British Columbia, Univ. of California, Berkeley, Univ. of California, Irvine, Univ. of California, Los Angeles, Univ. of California, San Diego, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara, Univ. of Chicago, Univ. of Colorado, Univ. of Denver, Univ. of Georgia, Univ. of Idaho, Univ. of Maryland, Univ. of Michigan, Univ. of Montana, Univ. of Oregon, Univ. of the Pacific, Univ. of Portland, Univ. of Puget Sound, Univ. of Redlands, Univ. of San Diego, Univ. of Southern California, Univ. of Vermont, Univ. of Washington, Univ. of Washington Honors, Univ. of Washington, Bothell, Univ. of Wisconsin, Univ. of Wyoming, Vanderbilt Univ., Virginia Military Institute, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State Univ., Washington State Univ., Washington Univ. in St. Louis, Wellesley College, Western Washington Univ., Whitman College, Whitworth Univ., Willamette Univ., Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Yale Univ.

Integrating 1:1 iPad use at the fifth-grade level



During the 2013-14 school year, fifth-grade teachers Julie Langley, Marisa LeVeque and Mark Headlee at West Mercer took part in a 1:1 iPad pilot designed to assess the readiness of fifth-grade classrooms to incorporate iPads into the curriculum.

There were many questions at the beginning of the year. Would 1:1 iPads be at least as good as shared access to carts of laptops? Would fifth graders be able to handle the responsibility of a dedicated device? Would they be able to navigate the iPad tools and apps to produce writing, presentations and

projects efficiently? Would they stay on task? Would they be more engaged? Perhaps most importantly, would it make a difference to teaching and learning?

The answer to all of those questions is yes.

The constant access to technology was a huge and immediate improvement. No more coordinating across classrooms, checking out carts, or waiting for laptops to boot up before logging in. Early in the year one teacher recalled that a student had a question during class instruction about routes taken by explorers. Without interruption the student asked to look it up on his iPad, found the information and shared it with the class. As simple as that sounds, it is an important shift in student empowerment and participation in instruction.

This access allowed students to finish traditional projects at their own pace. They were no longer limited to computer-lab time or cart access to complete research and create projects. The 1:1 iPads have created a built-in flexibility for students to personalize their pace. It opened a whole new layer of meaningful “what to do when you are done” opportunities for early finishers

as well as inspiring those students to produce longer, richer, more thoughtful projects.

The goal of the teachers electing to try 1:1 iPad implementation, most importantly, was to use the iPads in powerful and transformative ways. Langley started with the Writers Workshop fantasy unit. Each student’s planning webs and drafts were done on iPads using the apps *Inspiration* and *Pages*. Prewriting and character work was done in *ToonTastic*. In her math lessons she saw an opportunity to extend and personalize the lesson using *Fraction Board*. Next she looked to Social Studies. Student teams were working on their United States geography interactive simulation, planning and “living” a cross-country trip using iPad apps, including *Safari* to research, several mapping apps to review mileage and plot routes, and an expenses spreadsheet in the *Numbers* app to track costs. Then they used *Pic Collage*, *Pages* and *Keynote* to create projects to demonstrate what they learned at each location. None of these tasks were easily recreated without the iPads.

Similar scenarios in teacher planning

“

One teacher recalled that a student had a question during class instruction about routes taken by explorers. Without interruption the student asked to look it up on his iPad, found the information and shared it with the class. As simple as that sounds, it is an important shift in student empowerment and participation.

”

took place in all three iPad classrooms as each teacher worked hard to meaningfully integrate and leverage iPads into their instruction.

The success of the 1:1 iPad pilot is worthy of celebration in itself, but the more exciting news is that the District is ready. The pilot team made iPads an integral part of everyday learning and instruction. We have a long list of projects and places where the iPads and apps enriched the content. With a solid base of management strategies, a good selection of well-aligned apps and a wide variety of projects and opportunities to move teaching and learning forward, the District is ready for 1:1 iPad implementation across fifth grade.



2013-14 Mercer Island School District Board of Directors

The five members of the Mercer Island School District Board of Directors are elected to four-year terms by Mercer Island voters. Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to: planning and goal setting; employing and evaluating the superintendent; setting district policy; adopting an annual operating budget; making decisions about placing levies and bonds before voters; approving the instructional program; and ratifying contracts negotiated with the local bargaining unit.

Janet Frohnmayer, President, 2011-15 term
janet.frohnmayer@mercerislandschools.org

Pat Braman, 2011-15 term
pat.braman@mercerislandschools.org

Dave Myerson, 2013-17 term
dave.myerson@mercerislandschools.org

Brian Emanuels, Vice President, 2011-15 term
brian.emanuels@mercerislandschools.org

Adair Dingle, 2013-17 term
adair.dingle@mercerislandschools.org

Dr. Gary Plano, Superintendent, appointed 2008
gary.plano@mercerislandschools.org

Stronger schools through community feedback

Every year during the spring, each Mercer Island school participates in the Education Effectiveness Survey to help measure how it performs relative to the nine characteristics that lead to effective schools. These characteristics, as measured using parent, student and teacher input are: a clear and shared focus; high standards and expectations for all students; effective school leadership; high levels of collaboration and communication; curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned with state standards; frequent monitoring of learning and teaching; focused professional development; a supportive learning environment; and high levels of parent and community involvement. In surveys over the past five years, the District has continually improved in almost every measured category. To learn more, please visit www.MercerIslandSchools.org and review Ends Monitoring under the School Board section.

Improving every school

Each District school completes annual school improvement plans. While each school has different specific targets, goals include increases in feedback scores in targeted areas on the Education Effectiveness Survey and higher scores in the state Measurements of Student Progress. To learn more, please visit www.MercerIslandSchools.org and review School Improvement Plans under the About Us section of the website.



Superintendent Dr. Gary Plano with first-grade students at West Mercer Elementary

Notice of nondiscrimination & prohibition of harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB)

The District shall provide equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities program without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, religion, age, veteran or military status, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability or non-program-related physical, sensory or mental disabilities. District programs and activities shall be free from sexual harassment and unlawful discrimination. In addition, the District provides equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. The District is committed to a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, parents/legal guardians, volunteers, and patrons that is free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The Mercer Island School District offers many classes in its College and Careers Readiness (CCR) programs. Lack of English language proficiency will not be a barrier to admission and participation in CCR programs.

HIB Coordinator:

Dr. Gary Plano
Superintendent
206-236-3300

Title IX Compliance Coordinator:

Dean Mack
Chief Finance/Operations Officer
206-236-4522

Section 504 and ADA Coordinator:

Lindsay Myatich
Director of Special Education
206-236-3326

Affirmative Action and Civil Rights Coordinator:

Mark Roschy
Director of Human Resources
206-236-3439

About the Mercer Island School District

The Mercer Island School District includes one high school, one middle school, three elementary schools and an alternative program. The District is located on Mercer Island, a 13-square mile suburban community of more than 24,000 residents in the middle of Lake Washington. It is within a 10-minute drive of both Seattle and Bellevue, accessed by Interstate 90.

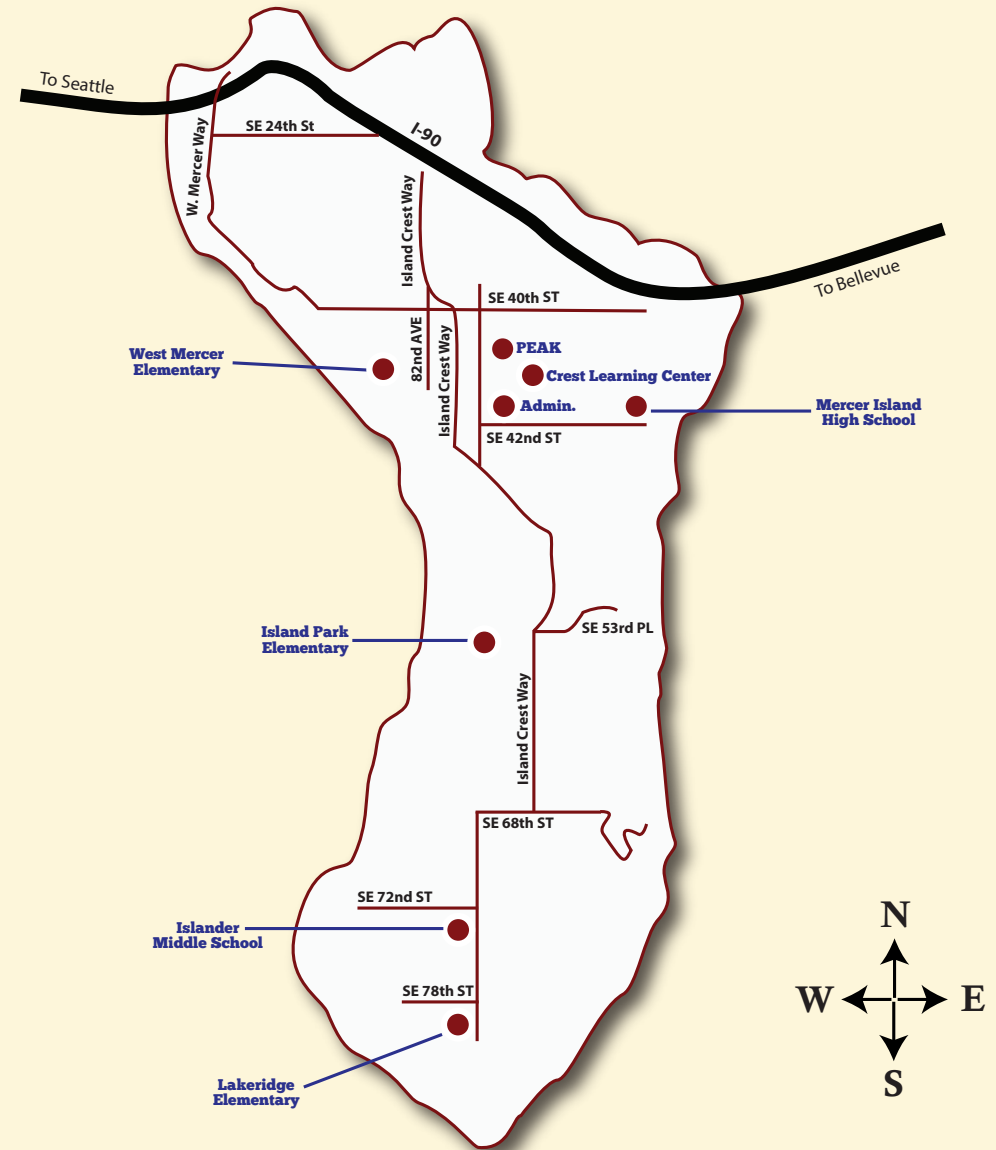
The District has a K-12 student population of more than 4,300 and enjoys a wide-spread reputation for quality and excellence, combining academics, cultural expression and athletic achievement. This tradition of excellence is the most significant factor for many families that make Mercer Island their home. Achievement test scores at the elementary, middle, and high school levels are consistently the highest in the state. The District has a graduation rate of more than 95 percent.

The District employs a regular teaching and support staff of about 500. The Mercer Island Schools Foundation, in partnership with the schools' PTAs and boosters, contributed nearly \$1.9 million to maintain teaching positions and instructional support and provide enrichment opportunities for students after consistent underfunding from the state.

The District has a "Aaa" bond rating from Moody's Investor Service based on the District's sizable tax base which benefits from a robust local economy, strong wealth levels and its history of maintaining structurally balanced financial operations. Mercer Island School District is one of only 65 school districts in the nation to be rated "Aaa" by Moody's.

Mercer Island High School was also named a recipient of the 2013 Washington Achievement Award for 'Overall Excellence' by Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn and the Washington State Board of Education.

The District invites all members of the community to participate in school activities and our continued academic excellence, and to help in measuring impact in the community.





2013-14 ANNUAL REPORT

Mercer Island School District

4160 86th Ave SE

Mercer Island, WA 98040-4121

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit # 19
Mercer Island, WA

Residential Customer

WE ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION!
STAY INFORMED AT WWW.MERCERISLANDSCHOOLS.ORG

