



NEWS

Volume 14 Issue #1, Fall 2012

MISD Board of Directors seeks community feedback on overcrowding solutions

Several community town hall meetings are scheduled this fall to gather more information from citizens about short-term solutions to the overcrowding in our schools. The Board is using Triangle Associates, a public engagement firm, to assist in this effort. Key findings from the community survey conducted in May 2012 by EMC Research identified the need for wide, community engagement to occur prior to the board submitting a bond before the community.

According to polling data, a successful future bond measure will need several key components: (1) Focus on immediate overcrowding issue; (2) Smaller bond amount than previous version; (3) Siting a new school on the north end of the Island; (4) Straight-forward investment plan, easy to communicate.

Over the past five months, the Board studied a number of options, beyond those submitted to the voters in April of 2012, to consider building School Six on land the district owns or on private land they might acquire, which is adjacent to City Hall. Following weeks of study in July and August, the School Board agreed to present three new options to the community for School Six on land the district owns: the North Mercer Campus.

Each option includes several *ripple effects* and other needs that must be considered as the district moves forward. *Ripple effects* refer to the impact of choosing one option over another. For example, if School Six is a new elementary school, it alone will not solve the need for more space at the middle school and high school—hence the need to expand at those schools, too.

Other needs also refer to district-owned properties that require funds to maintain them for the future. For example, Mary Wayte Pool requires at the minimum, \$2.5 million to extend the life of the pool for 10-15 years. The high school stadium requires a similar amount to upgrade the facility. Town Hall meetings provide an opportunity for citizens to examine the options, gather further information, and advise the board on the option(s) they can support.

Mind Mixer

[www.engagemercerislandschools.com](http://www.engagemerцерislandschools.com)

A “Mind Mixer” website has been launched for citizens to learn more about possible options to address overcrowding in our schools and to provide input. Please take a few moments to visit the page, share your thoughts, and encourage your friends, neighbors and community members to do so also.

You can also visit www.facebook.com/engagemercerislandschools to learn about and comment on the options. We hope you will “Like” this page and share it with your friends to receive notifications from and give feedback to the district.

Town Hall Meetings

Wednesday, November 7

1:00-3:00 p.m. at PEAK

Wednesday, November 7

7:00-9:00 p.m. at Islander Middle School

Thursday, November 15

7:00-9:00 p.m. at Crest Learning Center

These meetings are to gather more information from citizens about short-term solutions to the overcrowding in our schools.

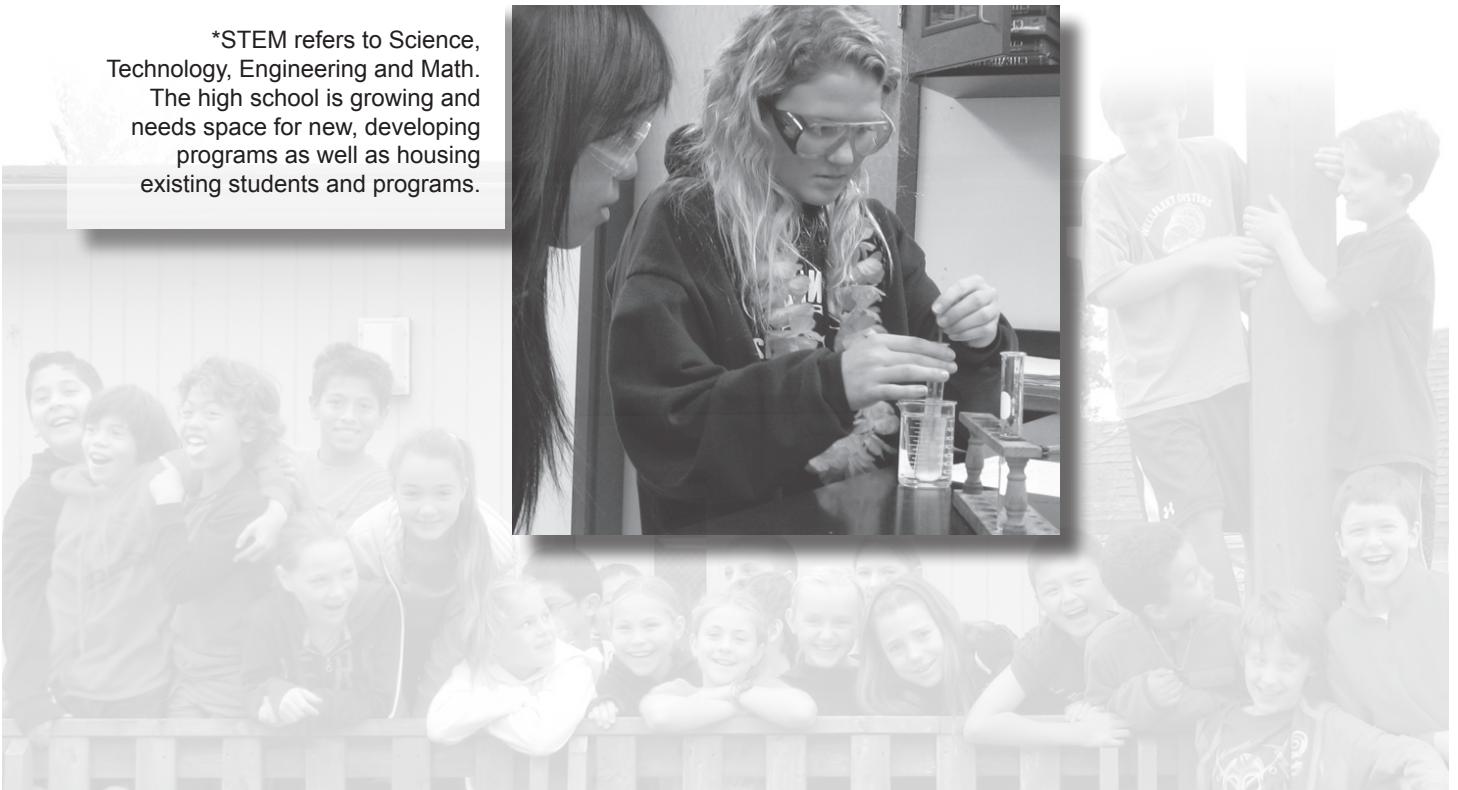
Three options

for a sixth school on the North Mercer Campus

School Six is a new K-5 Elementary School

Description	Approximate Cost
Build a new elementary school of 65,000 square feet to house 500 K-5 students; Redevelopment of 6 acres on Mega Block.	\$30.4M
Add a STEM* addition to MIHS for up to 4 science labs and 8-10 new classrooms in a two-story addition.	\$6.7M
IMS Renovation options: (1) build a new stand-alone one story addition of 14 new classrooms; (2) substantially renovated school of 14 new classrooms plus enlarged commons to seat 400, a new gym to seat 1200, and new admin/entry and expanded Student Center; (3) a completely rebuilt school for 1200 students.	\$7.1M - \$70.5M
Mary Wayte Pool maintenance improvements to extend the life of the pool for +/-10-15 years—reline pipes, replace exterior siding, replace roofing and windows, or fully rebuild the entire facility and extend life to 40-50 years.	\$2.5M - \$7.9M
Stadium Improvements, minor: Add roof at 2-3 sections of seating, new press box/concessions/bathrooms.	\$2.5M
Stadium Improvements, major: relocate a portion of the bus fleet and portable MOT building, refurbish grandstands, add roof over all existing seating, add 1,000 seats for visitors, build a new pressbox/concessions/bathrooms/field house.	\$5.9M - \$6.6M
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST RANGE	\$55.1M - \$124.6M

*STEM refers to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The high school is growing and needs space for new, developing programs as well as housing existing students and programs.



School Six is a new 5-8 Intermediate School¹

Description	Approximate Cost
Build a new Middle School North of 120,500 square feet to house 775 students in grades 5-8; redevelopment of 8 acres on Mega Block.	\$50.9M
Add a STEM* addition to MIHS for up to 4 science labs and 8-10 new classrooms in a two-story addition.	\$6.7M
Build playground facilities for 5-8: new covered play structure, hardscape and equipment.	\$600K
Mary Wayte Pool maintenance improvements to extend the life of the pool for +/- 10-15 years—reline pipes, replace exterior siding, replace roofing and windows, or fully rebuild the entire facility and extend life to 40-50 years.	\$2.5M - \$7.9M
Stadium Improvements, minor: relocate a portion of the bus fleet, add roof at 2-3 sections of seating, new press box/concessions/bathrooms.	\$2.5M - \$3.2M
Stadium Improvements, major: relocate a portion of the bus fleet and portable MOT building, refurbish grandstands, add roof over all existing seating, add 1,000 seats for visitors, build a new pressbox/concessions/bathrooms/field house.	\$5.9M - \$6.6M
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST RANGE	\$69.1M - \$75.9M

¹ Existing IMS becomes Middle School South in grades 5-8 and downsizes to approximately 775 students. Existing elementary schools become K-4 elementaries of approximately 475 students. Since IMS presently does not have 5th grade; play facilities will need to be built.

School Six is a new 9-12 High School²

Description	Approximate Cost
Build a new MIHS of 267,000 square feet to house to up 1,600 students in grades 9-12; Redevelopment of 10 acres on Mega Block.	\$111.6M
Convert existing high school into middle school for 1,200 students.	\$3.1M
Mary Wayte Pool maintenance improvements to extend the life of the pool for +/- 10-15 years—reline pipes, replace exterior siding, replace roofing and windows, or fully rebuild the entire facility and extend life to 40-50 years.	\$2.5M - \$7.9M
Stadium Improvements, minor: relocate a portion of the bus fleet, add roof at 2-3 sections of seating, new press box/concessions/bathrooms.	\$2.5M - \$3.2M
Stadium Improvements, major: relocate a portion of the bus fleet and portable MOT building, refurbish grandstands, add roof over all existing seating, add 1,000 seats for visitors, build a new pressbox/concessions/bathrooms/field house.	\$5.9M - \$6.6M
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST RANGE	\$125.6M - \$132.4M

² Present high school becomes Islander Middle School (grades 6-8). Present IMS is repurposed to become Elementary School #4. All four (4) elementary schools are K-5 with approximately 475 students.



Mercer Island School District's **2020 VISION Fundamentals**

The following programs and new courses are examples of the district's 2020 Vision Fundamentals for teaching and learning in our schools.

Delivering Best Instructional Practices

Helping good teachers become great

Islander Middle School Language Arts and Social Studies teacher Danae Burger is known for her considerable skills in using technology to facilitate student-led learning; high school teachers Ed Puchalla and Creighton Laughary are masters of the art of classroom discussions; and Lynn Adsit has an arsenal of project-based lessons to help her students grasp abstract math concepts. This year, thanks to a designated grant to the Mercer Island Schools Foundation, these National Board certified teachers have been given release time to share ideas and to help good teachers become great through sustained reflective practice.

According to Mary Jo Budzius, IMS Co-Principal, "Danae's focus this year is on helping teachers incorporate Total Engagement Strategies into their classrooms, thereby providing every student the opportunity to thoughtfully respond and actively participate in all classroom activities. She is accomplishing this goal through partner teaching, modeling, and by providing staff professional development on specific strategies."

MIHS Principal Vicki Puckett is already impressed with the structure established by her coaches. "They are not evaluators; they don't tell teachers what to do; they don't claim a monopoly on expertise. Their goal is to connect teachers sharing a focus and cultivate a professional community that reflects together on effective learning strategies through each other's practices that benefits students. It's very exciting and a true win-win for students."



Danae Burger's seventh graders get a workout in Grammar School Boot Camp

Mercer Island School District's

2020 VISION Fundamentals

Maintaining the Highest Standards

Learning through the arts

Tracy Davis, former 5th grade teacher at West Mercer Elementary, is now the district's elementary art specialist who spends her days teaching the elements of art to K-5 students in all three elementary schools. This new position is like a "dream come true" for Davis who has an Art Endorsement from the University of Puget Sound and a Masters from Lesley University in the Creative Arts in Learning/Integrating the Arts into the Curriculum. "I have wanted to do this ever since I started teaching," she said. "Art is a language of its own that promotes higher-level thinking in every academic area. It is so exciting to watch the students respond to the lessons!"

Kathy Morrison, Director of Elementary Learning Support, once served in the capacity of Fine Arts Curriculum lead for the district. "As far as I know this is the first time we have ever had a dedicated elementary art teacher in our district," said Morrison. "We are so grateful to the dedicated volunteers on the Fine Arts Advisory Committee and our teachers and principals for making this dream come true for students."



Tracy Davis is the district's first full time elementary art specialist

Focusing on world language and global studies

A growing interest and demand for world language instruction has prompted the addition of new courses at Islander Middle School: French 1 starting in 7th grade, with French 2 planned next year, and Chinese for second year students of Mandarin Chinese. Also at IMS, an elective course called "Our World, Our Rights: Global Citizenship" is being offered where students have the opportunity to learn about human rights issues in the real world and what they can do about them. Watch for more stories during the months ahead about these programs on Dr. Gary Plano's *E-Connections* page on the district website.



Alice Chang teaches Mandarin Chinese at Islander Middle School



Jeff D'Ambrosio



David Hoffman



Jamie Prescott



Vicki Puckett



Tara Stone



Welcome to our new administrators

Several new and familiar faces can be seen among the MISD administrative staff this year: Vicki Puckett, MIHS Principal; Jamie Prescott, MIHS Associate Principal; Jeff D'Ambrosio, MIHS Associate Principal; Tara Stone, Interim Associate Principal at IMS and David Hoffman, Principal at Island Park Elementary. Craig Olson is also Associate Principal at MIHS, but in a different role this year. He is in charge of Special Education, Crest Learning Center and Instructional Leadership. Two months into the school year, our new administrators have positive reports about life in the Mercer Island School District.

Jeff D'Ambrosio

Jeff D'Ambrosio taught history for seven years at Mt. Si High School where he also coached basketball and completed his secondary principal credentials. He is impressed with the number of high school parents he meets who grew up on Mercer Island, then came back to raise their kids here. "People are really committed to this community," he said. Jeff particularly enjoys the "nice blend of personalities" he finds in working with his fellow administrators and getting to know the students and teachers. "This is a fast-paced environment, but it's very exciting and a lot of fun."

David Hoffman

David Hoffman knew he should re-evaluate his plan to become a lawyer when everyone around him was applying for corporate internships and all he could think about was returning to summer camp. "I have always loved working with kids," said Hoffman. "Those summers at camp were really the beginning of my career as an educator." Having most recently come from central administration in the Northshore School District (where he worked with Vicki Puckett), David is thrilled to be back in school "where the action is." He was drawn to the diverse community of Island Park learners, particularly the English Language Learners and Education Resource Room. "Island Park is a great community that has welcomed me with open arms." Also an instructional leader, Hoffman is excited to be working with his staff on the "gradual release of responsibility model" where teachers become facilitators of student learning.

Jamie Prescott

Jamie first came to MIHS to teach English. She has also served as assistant girls basketball coach, newspaper advisor, head girls basketball coach, and activities advisor. While doing all of this she earned her principal credentials and was a principal intern last year. This year she was appointed associate principal in charge of athletics, building use, instruction/evaluation and technology. Congratulations Jamie!

Vicki Puckett

Vicki rode a motorcycle into the fall sports assembly at the high school, has been known to wear a tutu with the band during half-time shows, and hosted the ASB class at her cabin in Leavenworth. Her theme for the year, "Fearless – Embrace the Future, Honor the Past," is fitting for this highly-energetic leader who is already well-respected for her work ethic and "incredible" knowledge of 21st century teaching and learning. "I have received a very warm welcome from students, staff and parents," said Puckett. "This is an extraordinary student body and a wonderful staff of professionals who are 100% dedicated to helping students learn. Our goal is to try new ways of teaching and learning and take risks as we learn and grow together."

Tara Stone

Tara Stone is a familiar face at Islander Middle School. Formerly a special education teacher and program coordinator at IMS, she took two years off to be at home with her children. Having received her elementary principal credentials in 2002, Tara jumped at the chance to return to IMS as Interim Associate Principal. "I have always wanted to be a principal," she says. "I know the IMS community very well and could not ask for better mentors in Mary Jo and Aaron (Budzius and Miller, Co-Principals at IMS). "They are wonderfully supportive and have an amazing depth of knowledge." Among her other responsibilities, Tara really enjoys working closely with the special education program and staff, who are extremely dedicated and passionate about what they do.

MISD Maintenance and Custodial staff supports major improvements in district facilities

This fall Mercer Island students and staff are enjoying new improvements in district facilities thanks in large part to the community's consistent support of capital projects and maintenance and operations levies, and the hard work and dedication of the MISD maintenance and custodial staff.



Left: Tony Kuhn supervises progress of the new music wing addition



Right: Maintenance engineer Steve Baird prepares the high school kitchen for new floors

According to Tony Kuhn, MISD Maintenance Director, the crew worked on several projects this summer. Highlights include:

- High School Music Addition and Renovation: The crew helped coordinate the project with the contractors, using their considerable knowledge of district utilities, electrical and HVAC systems to facilitate the on time and on budget project.
- Special Education classroom wall: The team worked with teachers at MIHS to create more space for a growing student enrollment in Special Education.
- Nearly 300 wireless points were installed throughout the district. Every building enjoys seamless wireless connection 24 hours a day.
- The grounds crew (one full time and four seasonal workers) spent the summer weeding, trimming, applying bark and generally beautifying district landscapes.
- Installation of three portables (six classrooms): these temporary buildings require phones, data, security, projectors, plumbing and electrical, as well as landscaping.
- MIHS gymnasium floor: Every summer MISD custodians take great pride in the gym floor, refinishing, polishing, waxing and painting new lines.



Students in Parker Bixby's class enjoy the new music space

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Welcome to our new staff

Along with new administrators, MISD is pleased to welcome 45 teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, custodians and counselors to the staff. These professionals come from all over the state and country and bring a wealth of experience, energy and enthusiasm to our district. Thank you for joining us!

Staff Snapshot

Adrienne Bylsma, Health and Fitness teacher at Islander Middle School

Adrienne is a 2003 Washington State University graduate in Kinesiology with a Masters in Education who taught in the Bay Area for five years before returning to the Northwest. Most recently, she taught middle school Health and Fitness at Eastside Catholic School.



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