



# NEWS

Mercer Island School District

Volume 11 Issue #3, Summer 2010

This is the third issue of District NEWS for 2009-2010, designed to present information on the 2020 Vision, district and school improvement planning and other programs. Please continue to check the district web site for the most current information.

[www.misd.k12.wa.us](http://www.misd.k12.wa.us)

## Superintendent's Message



"To every single person who has given to this campaign, thank you for your wonderful support."

Dr. Gary Plano

## We 'Bridged the Gap!'

This year, 1,493 people gave to *Bridge the Gap*, and participation among families with children in the schools increased by over 139 percent. Including the challenge grant, the campaign raised a total of \$850,000, well over the \$500,000 budget gap!

[Continued inside!](#)

## Mercer Island School District Board of Directors

**Pat Braman**

[pat\\_braman@misd.wednet.edu](mailto:pat_braman@misd.wednet.edu)

**Adair Dingle, President**

[adair\\_dingle@misd.wednet.edu](mailto:adair_dingle@misd.wednet.edu)

**Lisa Strauch Eggers, Vice President**

[lisa@leggerslaw.com](mailto:lisa@leggerslaw.com)

**Janet Frohnmayer**

[janet\\_frohnmayer@misd.wednet.edu](mailto:janet_frohnmayer@misd.wednet.edu)

**Dave Myerson**

[dave@mischoolboard.com](mailto:dave@mischoolboard.com)

## Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century:

### Mercer Island School District continues the Facilities Planning Process

The last time a new school was built on Mercer Island was in 1963 with the completion of West Mercer Elementary. Since then, MISD facilities have been remodeled and added onto in order to accommodate the ebb and flow in enrollment and the changing needs of students and teachers. Demographers project up to 800 more students by 2020 and a Building Assessment Engineering study for each district site shows that while our buildings are safe and well maintained, they are all aging and may require additional retrofitting to meet current earthquake codes. The exception is Mercer Island High School, which was extensively remodeled in 1998. "We have aging buildings, a growing population and a commitment to the community to be good stewards of public facilities," said Dr. Plano. "It is really important to have a plan in place that anticipates the needs of our future students and families."

To this end, Dr. Plano and the facilities team held two Town Hall meetings to present an overview of facilities planning and to listen to community issues and concerns. Phase I and II proposals were presented as "springboards" for further discussions. Phase I focuses on the "megablock" that houses Mercer Island High School, the North Mercer campus buildings and Mary Wayte pool, and Phase II deals with the elementary schools and the district administration building. A newly formed 21st Century Facilities Advisory Committee made up of 18 volunteers representing all facets of the community will be reviewing the data and making recommendations to the school board for further action. This process is expected to last a year or more and all of the meeting notices and minutes will be posted on the district web site.



**Mercer Island's youngest students may learn in new buildings before they graduate in 2024**



Mercer Island School District's

# 2020 VISION *in Classrooms and Beyond*

The following projects are examples of the district's 2020 Vision fundamentals for teaching and learning in our schools funded in part by donations to the Mercer Island Schools Foundation

## **Jazz Improvisation**

*Angela Carey, music teacher (LR)*

Every spring Lakeridge Elementary produces an All-School Musical and this year the theme was "Jazz." As part of a MISF grant, Lakeridge elementary students had the unique experience of practicing their performing skills with professional jazz musicians in our community. "We hope that students will be inspired by these wonderful musicians to continue playing and performing for the rest of their lives," said Angela Carey, music teacher at Lakeridge.



*MIHS students interviewed recent immigrants to the USA at Seattle's World School*

## **The World School: New American Voices**

*Ed Puchalla and Creighton Laughary (MIHS)*

Students from 11th grade American Studies collaborated with high school students from the Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center (SBOC) on a number of multimedia projects related to immigration. "Seattle's World School," as the SBOC bills itself, helps transition recent immigrants to the Seattle public school system. MIHS students interviewed these re-

cent immigrants to the United States and then combined their stories with independent research to produce podcasts on the subject of Immigration and the American Dream.

## **Media Tech Class**

*Doug Davis (IMS)*

It takes lots of equipment to operate the popular Media Tech class at Islander Middle School. But thanks to a 2020 Vision grant from the Mercer Island Schools Foundation, students have access to computers, video cameras, tri-pods, memory cards and more. Teacher Doug Davis attributes the popularity of the class to the freedom it gives students to engage in the school community and create innovative video projects on topics that can be global or local.



*Media Tech class at IMS teaches technology skills while promoting community at the school*

- *pursuing passions and interests beyond the traditional classroom environment*

- *cross-discipline thinking, creativity, and innovation using technology*

### **iTouch in the classroom –**

## **A powerful way to personalize learning**

***Stephanie John-Lewis,  
5th grade teacher (IP)***

A tool better known for entertainment is being used to personalize learning in Stephanie John-Lewis's classroom at Island Park Elementary. A Vision 2020 grant from the MISF provided seven iTouch's to the class, adding a whole new level in personalized learning through technology that will become more and more widespread in the years to come.



*5th graders at Island Park enjoy learning with the iTouch*

## **Electronic field trip to Colonial Williamsburg**

***Julie Langley,  
5th grade teacher (WM)***

The first time Julie Langley traveled to Colonial Williamsburg for a teacher training field trip over ten years ago, she knew she wanted to bring this dynamic hands-on experience in living history back to her students at West Mercer. Since it was impractical to take the whole class to Virginia, she tried scheduling a video-conference at Mercer Island High School with limited success. But now, thanks to the district's greater broadband width, students are taking "electronic field trips" to Colonial Williamsburg.

These web-based field trips, made possible with funding from the MISF and other community members, each has a theme such as the *Bill of Rights*, *Freedom Bound* and *Women of the Revolution*. A live panel of experts field questions from students and answer them over the web. "The students really enjoy preparing their questions and being featured on the show," says Ms. Langley. Next year, thanks to the greater bandwidth, all district 5th graders will be able to participate in the field trips.

## **We 'Bridged the Gap'**

*continued*

"We are just so grateful to all of our donors," said Penny Yantis, MISF executive director. "This is a community that truly cares about our schools, teachers and most of all – our students."

These additional funds will allow our district to retain teachers and help ease crowded classrooms at the elementary, middle and high schools. Other districts are laying-off teachers, but because of the incredible response to this campaign, Mercer Island's class sizes on average will be smaller when school starts in the fall.

At the end of the day on June 1, 2010 the Mercer Island Schools Foundation and PTA Bridge the Gap Task Force announced that our community met the \$170,000 challenge grant put forth by generous donors to inspire all families to give!

## **More Congratulations!**

- To the Mercer Island School District for being recognized by *Forbes Magazine* as one of the top ten public school districts in small cities across the country.
- To our 12 new National Board Certified teachers: Eric Ayrault, Jamie Cooke, Maria Fontana, Lynn Frickey, Bruce Harrington, Clay Laughary, Creighton Laughary, Melissa Ralph, Karen Schaps, Karen Sherwood, Jessica Steinle, Kate Yoder
- To the Class of 2010 graduates at Mercer Island High School!

## Residential Customer

### Recognizing Staff:

#### Honoring our retiring staff

On June 7, 2010, MISD said goodbye to our 2010 retirees and acknowledged employees who have been serving students and community in benchmark service years of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years of service. “The quality of education in Mercer Island Schools is because of your dedication,” said Dr. Gary Plano. “We are grateful and honored to include you among the best employees in public education.”

Retiring staff include: Diane Hampson, Patricia Malatesta, Linda Pearson, JoAnn Peterson, Neil LeMaster, Brian Racy, Thelma Ritchie, and Lucia Schubert.

#### Important School Dates 2010-2011

**July 6 – August 5** – K-8 summer session

**August 31** – Start of 2010-2011 school year

**September 6** – Labor Day, no school K-12

### MISD Teachers of the Year



**Maria Fontana** came to Islander Middle School in 2006 and currently teaches sixth-grade math. She is highly respected among students, teachers and parents for her ability to create math learning communities in her classrooms. As a Global Visionaries Curriculum Writer and Trip Leader, Ms. Fontana helps her students to be more aware of the world around them and teaches connections and global awareness with such ease that students respond willingly.



**Julie Hovind** has taught in the Mercer Island School District since 2000 as a fifth-grade teacher at West Mercer and as a Teacher on Special Assignment since 2008. As a technology TOSA, Ms. Hovind helps elementary teachers integrate technology into their curriculum. According to Jennifer Wright, Executive Director of Learning and Technology Services, “Julie is great at getting the students engaged in projects, supporting those who need a little extra help, and allowing those who are capable to explore more on their own.”



**David Willecke** joined the social studies department at Mercer Island High School in 2008 and is currently teaching AP American Studies and World History. According to his colleague, Creighton Laughary, “Dave Willecke works tirelessly in and outside of school. I think it might be due to his high level of expectation of himself that he is able to expect and get so much out of his students.”