



NEWS

Volume 13 Issue #3, Summer 2012



Educating the Idea-Makers of the Future

OUR COMMUNITY IS MAKING IT POSSIBLE

Once again, the Mercer Island community has come together to “bridge the gap” in state funding so that the district is able to retain 20 teachers, maintain current class sizes and provide students with the education they need in order for them to be the “idea-makers” of the 21st century. The Mercer Island Schools Foundation and PTA *Bridge the Gap* Task Force announced the final number on June 14, 2012. MISF executive director Penny Yantis said, “We received donations from families, individuals, community organizations and

business groups. We also received a very generous challenge grant when we reached the \$1 million mark. It is truly an amazing accomplishment and proof, once again, that this community is more than willing to step up and support teachers and students.”

Thank you!
The *Bridge the Gap* campaign raises \$1.2 million for Mercer Island schools!

This issue of the Mercer Island School District NEWS is designed to present information on the 2020 Vision, district and school improvement planning and other programs. Please continue to check the district website for the most current information. www.misd.k12.wa.us

Superintendent's Message



Reflecting on the Bond failure

Dr. Plano shared the following message at the April 24th *Breakfast of Champions*:

“I want to thank everyone who exercised his or her civic responsibility to vote. We will learn from the message that voters sent and continue to communicate the challenges that we face. While many are disappointed, we will not be deterred from continuing the long tradition of educational excellence on Mercer Island. When the time is right, a new solution will be evident and I believe you, Mercer Islanders, will rise to the challenge and speak loudly with one voice that we will provide our children with the best educational environment this community has ever seen.”

Seeking New Solutions

The District is taking time to understand the message the community sent regarding the failed \$196,275,000 bond proposition to rebuild Mercer Island schools. The MISD Board of Directors authorized the bond to modernize and expand district facilities, basing their action on over four years of deliberation, beginning with demographic studies in 2008 that projected at least 800 more students by the beginning of the next decade. There are 650 students currently housed in portables.

Superintendent's Message continued inside...

Superintendent's Message
continued...

Following the bond failure, the Board took the following actions:

- Conducted a community survey with EMC Research to better understand the community's priorities and perceptions of the school improvements encompassed by the defeated bond measure. A citizen's task force, appointed by the Board, assisted EMC with the development of the survey tool.
- Conducted listening sessions to provide community members with the opportunity to express their views, regarding facility solutions and growing enrollment.
- Invited citizens' comments via email at schoolboard@misd.wednet.edu

Portable classrooms are coming next year: The District is adding six new portable classrooms to accommodate growing enrollment; two will be at Lakeridge, two at Island Park and two at Islander Middle School. Chief Financial Officer Dean Mack states, "Due to our current facility limitations, we must move to provide classroom space for students projected to arrive on our doorstep in September, 2012."

Dr. Plano added, "I am confident that our teachers and staff will continue to work within our existing facilities and will provide the very best education possible to Mercer Island students and their families."

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Mercer Island School District's 2020 VISION Fundamentals

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

Pursuing academic passions beyond traditional curriculum

Fifty speakers from a wide range of businesses, organizations and government agencies discussed learning applications in the real world during Mercer Island High School's Career Day. "Pay your dues and follow your passion," advised Erren Gottlieb and Jim McKenna, producers of *Bill Nye the Science Guy*, *Almost Live* and many other Emmy award-winning productions. Gottlieb quoted the actor, Jack Black, who said, "If you don't look like Brad Pitt, you'd better be able to write." "Every good idea begins with a writer," said Gottlieb.

Secret Service agent Bryan Molnar echoed that theme when he talked about what it takes to join the government agency. "You have to have a Bachelor's Degree," he said. "They want to know that you can think and express your ideas in writing." Molnar went on to talk about the many jobs that are "behind the scenes" at the Secret Service – administrative assistants, technicians, forensic scientists, attorneys, accountants, chemists, engineers and photographers. At the end of the morning, more than one high school student came away with a greater awareness of the possibilities of life beyond high school. "It's cool to learn about so many jobs," said one student.





Mercer Island School District's 2020 VISION Fundamentals

Creating a more personalized learning environment



Eighth grade students in Donna Johnston and Bill Henneger's math classes at Islander Middle School discovered that demonstrating their knowledge of area, perimeter, circumference, surface area and

volume is much more than answering questions on a test. Thanks to a computer-aided design program known as *Google SketchUp*, the students created virtual *Geo Towns*, including shopping malls, their "dream room" and more to apply pre-algebra and geometry skills to real life challenges. "We are willing to try anything to help our students understand math concepts," said Donna Johnston. "It is truly magical to watch them excel and gain confidence through projects like this."

Technology and teamwork joined forces at Island Park Elementary when third grade students in Sharon Stypulkoski's class learned to create Public Service Announcements (PSA's) to promote energy and water conservation. The students worked in teams to select a message, map out a storyboard and script a PSA. Then they filmed the footage using iPads, edited with iMovie, and then uploaded their finished PSA's to Vimeo (online video hosting). "We learned about all of this technology at a conference earlier in the year," said Ms. Stypulkoski. "It was wonderful to see it working in the classroom. My students really did it all!"



Third graders in Heather McLyman's class learned about First Nations with an innovative writing and recording application for the iPad known as *Toontastic*.

Students write stories, draw pictures, and record music and narrative on their iPads. But no matter where they start and which medium they choose to use, all of the students are engaged in learning the writing process in their own way, at their own pace. "This kind of technology can be the key to unlocking the mysteries of learning to read and write for many of my students," said Ms. McLyman.

Developing Global Awareness

West Mercer kindergarten students are learning to compare biodiversity on Mercer Island and Borneo with their teacher, Sabrina Hetland, who is traveling to Borneo this summer to help at a primate conservation station. "My goal is to find ways to bring my experience back and connect our school and district in ways to solve real world issues with math and science," said Ms. Hetland.



Congratulations!

To our **six new National Board Certified teachers:**

Erica Hill, Susan Jobe, Aaron Noble, MIHS;
Danae Burger, IMS; Heather McLyman, Lakeridge and Julie Hovind, Technology Integration Specialist, Elementary.

The total number of Mercer Island teachers with this highest level of national certification is 45, or about 18% of the total teaching staff.

To the **graduates in the MIHS Class of 2012.**

To our **retiring staff:**

Glyn Bordelon • Deanna Haaland • JoAnn Hornsten •
Didi (Joan) Kearsley • Bunnie Lehan • Marlene Liranzo •
Nancy Loorem • Deborah Shagena • Suzie Scaringi •
Sue Sheppard • Kathy (KT) Tobiason

Residential Customer

MISD Teachers of the Year



David Baxter came to West Mercer Elementary in 2006 and has taught both primary and upper elementary students. He is now a 4th grade teacher in the Highly Capable program (E2). According to West Mercer principal Rich Mellish, “David raises the level of education at West Mercer. He consistently offers his time and expertise to his peers. He provides advice and support to his peers by exploring integration of technology, and does so in a way that honors each individual as a lifelong learner.”



Bob Sagerson first came to teach math at Mercer Island High School in 1992, then left for 11 years to work in private business. Since returning in 2007, he has continued to work with the math team at MIHS and is currently teaching geometry and pre-calculus. According to Jennifer Wright, Executive Director of Learning and Technology for MISD, “Bob can teach any math to any type of student. He also has the ability to bring the real world into the learning so that students can better connect with the subject.”



Danae Burger teaches 7th grade Language Arts and Social Studies and has been teaching at Islander Middle School since 2007. Many peers offered comments about Danae including this one: “By consistently modeling the way, putting herself out there for all to see, and by finding new and improved ways to actively engage all learners, Danae’s work and dedication is an inspiration to us all.”

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.

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