



NEWS

VOLUME 18 ISSUE 3 SUMMER 2017

MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Congratulations to the Class of 2017!

328 seniors graduated from Mercer Island High School during the school's 60th commencement exercises on June 8 at KeyArena in Seattle.

This year's class includes:

- 7 Valedictorians
- 7 Salutatorians
- 25 National Merit Commended Scholars
- 10 National Merit Finalists
- 18 AP Scholars, 14 AP Scholars with Honors and 5 AP Scholars with Distinction
- 1 United States Presidential Scholar Finalist
- 174 President's Educational Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence (G.P.A. 3.5 and above)
- 89 percent will attend a four-year college.
- The Class of 2017 gave a remarkable total of 16,100 hours of service to the community.



Donna Colosky appointed as superintendent

The Mercer Island School Board has unanimously named Donna Colosky as superintendent of the Mercer Island School District. She will join MISD on Aug. 1.

Colosky is currently superintendent of Paradise Unified School District in Paradise, Calif. She brings 19 years of experience in educational leadership and 32 years in total in public education.

"We feel Donna Colosky is a great fit for Mercer Island, said Board President David D'Souza. "Her caring and passion for public education, experience and breadth of knowledge were evident during our interviews with her. We look forward to welcoming her to our Island community."

"Thank you to the Board for placing their confidence in me to serve as the next Mercer Island superintendent," Colosky said. "I'm excited to be joining such an awesome team and community and building on the great foundation of Mercer Island Schools."



Prior to her current position, Colosky spent 27 years in the Apple Valley Unified School District in the High Desert area of Southern California. During her tenure, her positions included assistant superintendent of human resources, director of curriculum and instruction, principal in charge of establishing a new, technology-based elementary school, elementary principal, assistant principal, master/mentor teacher and classroom teacher. Before joining Apple Valley Unified School District, Colosky was an elementary teacher, teaching primary grades and school-wide music.

Colosky received her master's in Educational Leadership and administrative services credential from Chapman University. She earned her Bachelor of Music, as well as her teaching certificate, from the University of British Columbia. She was raised in Burnaby, B.C.

The Board has had an intensive five-month process, since Dr. Gary Plano announced his retirement effective June 30, to find the next Mercer Island superintendent. That process included hiring a search firm, soliciting of public input to define the district's needs, conducting weekly search meetings with public input, evaluating and researching 64 applications, and many hours of candidate interviews, including the community forums with the candidates.

TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR

The District honored its Teachers and Support Staff of the Year at a recognition event May 31 in the Mercer Island High School library.

Peggy Aguilar, Mercer Island High School Teacher of the Year

Peggy joined Mercer Island High School teaching Spanish in 2012. She also serves as an instructional coach.

Principal Vicki Puckett says Peggy is a natural "coach."

"She is a teacher of teachers and a master of teaching students. Students find Peggy to be very professional and caring about them individually. She makes learning in her class fun and experiential for her students."

Her colleagues commented,

"She is full of great, new ideas while honoring what has been good in the past. I know her mentees have benefited by her keen insights, thoughtful approach to challenges and reflective questioning and coaxing to improve practice."

"Peggy supports and inspires everyone around her. She knows her students as individuals and creates strong relationships with them. This allows her to hold them to a high but achievable standard, while setting a great example for other teachers around her to do the same."



Peggy Aguilar



Jason Meade

Jason Meade, Islander Middle School Teacher of the Year

Jason has been at Islander for four years and in that time has proven to be an outstanding educator.

Says Co-Principal Mary Jo Budzius, "He evokes passion in students and inspires them to do their very best. Students talk about him as the person who unlocks meaning for them and helps them understand why studying history helps them better engage in contemporary issues."

Academically and interpersonally he connects with students across the whole spectrum of the IMS community. Every student feels heard in his class.

"He is powerful, show stopping, dedicated, creative and real," a colleague wrote. "He is a teacher who is thought provoking and caring and amazing all at the same time! IMS is a better place because of fabulous teachers like Mr. Meade."

Susan Hamp, Island Park Elementary Teacher of the Year

Susan Hamp is a product of Mercer Island schools and has taught at Island Park, where her children attended, since 2001.

"Susan has an amazing way with her students," said Principal David Hoffman. "She guides them patiently and thoughtfully and her classroom management is effective and impressive."

"She instills in students a true love of music and understanding of how important it is to share their gifts," Hoffman said. "Students, even those who initially are reluctant, come to look forward to performance days. Susan Hamp embodies the master teacher, supporting colleagues and students in an exemplary fashion."



Susan Hamp

Betsy Seiler, Support Staff of the Year

Betsy joined the district nine years ago and worked at West Mercer and Lakeridge prior to joining Northwood as its technology specialist this year.

Technology Director Andreeves Ronser said, "Betsy is truly amazing. Her commitment to her building and to this district is evident each and every day. Betsy arrives to work early, stays late to support student programs and is always willing to do that extra little bit to help ensure staff and students feel supported. Every August, Betsy reports back to work early to begin preparing laptops, desktops and iPads for the upcoming school year. This task alone is monumental, but in addition Betsy helps staff reconnect classroom technology and works with our TOSAs to provide workshops for our professional development trainings."

Northwood Principal Aimee Batliner-Gillette said, "Betsy is an outstanding member of the Northwood team. She

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2016-17 RETIREES

The District honored its 2016-17 retirees at a celebration May 31 in the Mercer Island High School library.

Carol Burdett, Lakeridge paraprofessional, hired in 1994.

Roger Curtis, custodian, Islander Middle School, hired in 1985

Karen Danklefsen, Speech and Language Pathologist, West Mercer, hired in 2011.

Ginny Hardman, Lakeridge teacher, hired in 1993.

Mj Hillstrom, Mercer Island High School, hired in 2004.

Leela Mathur, Mercer Island High School paraeducator, hired in 2001.

Ann Meisner, athletics and facilities coordinator, Mercer Island High School, hired in 2003.

Don Papasdero, Mercer Island High School teacher, hired in 1996.

Dr. Gary Plano, MISD Superintendent, hired in 2005.



Left to right are Carol Burdett, Izzy Rosane, Barbara Tivnan, Tom Tivnan, Gary Plano, Ginny Hardman, Mj Hillstrom, Leela Mathur and Roger Curtis.

Elizabeth "Izzy" Rosane, West Mercer teacher, hired in 1997.

Kathleen Stearns, Mercer Island High School counselor, hired in 2009.

Tom Tivnan, West Mercer teacher, hired in 2006.

Barbara Tivnan, Lakeridge teacher, hired in 1998.

Employees of the Year

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Betsy Seiler

is incredibly organized, she anticipates classroom and school-wide needs, and she efficiently supports the whole building. She is flexible and always willing to stop what she is doing to answer a question, check out a machine, or troubleshoot an application."

Linda Morice, Support Staff of the Year

Linda joined the district in 2005 as a special education one-on-one paraeducator, and has worked with a student in his home since 1998. She has said that the relationship is fundamental to reaching children with special needs and giving them the opportunity to learn. She has been working with children with special needs for nearly 40 years.

"Linda is truly dedicated to the independence and success of all students she works with," said Special Education Director Dr. Lindsay Myatich. "She believes strongly that our time with students is valuable and should be used to progress them towards their passions and future goals."

Over the years, Linda has consistently changed to meet the needs of her home-based student according to his medical and educational programming. She follows these complex programs with a smile and always is an active leader in the teams' development of next steps and goals.

"Linda works closely with the IEP team, listening to others' opinions, not afraid of advocating for the student's needs and always willing to try something new. Her work ethic is honorable. She is always on time and an efficient team member," Myatich said.



Linda Morice

PATHFINDER AWARDS HONOR THREE DIST

The Mercer Island School District presented its second annual Pathfinder Awards to three graduates of Mercer Island High School whose achievements, strength of character, and citizenship inspire and challenge today's youth to make significant contributions to humankind.

Patricia (Trish) Coffey, Ph.D., M.P.H., 1979, program advisor and leader of the Health Technologies for Women and Children group at PATH, a nonprofit global-health organization.

Leslie Hendricks Fall, M.D., 1981, pediatrician and professor at Dartmouth College and co-founder of MedU.

Adrian Hanauer, 1984, majority owner of 2016 Major League Soccer (MLS) Cup champions Seattle Sounders FC.

Fall and Coffey were in attendance at the Mercer Island Schools Foundation's Breakfast of Champions on April 25. Hanauer was unable to attend but was represented by Sounders star and MIHS graduate Jordan Morris, the 2016 MLS Rookie of the Year.

The recipients were selected from over 40 nominations submitted by the community at large and chosen by a selection committee comprised of a high school teacher, two high school students, two former MISD board members, a retired teacher, a city councilmember, community members and alumni, and officials from the District and the Mercer Island Schools Foundation.

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Pathfinder Award recipient Trish Coffey, second from left, with her daughters Aurora and Oona and her mother Suzanne Coffey of Mercer Island.



Seattle Sounders FC forward Jordan Morris, left, a 2013 graduate of Mercer Island High School, accepts the Pathfinder Award on behalf of Sounders majority owner Adrian Hanauer.

INGUISHED MERCER ISLAND ALUMNI

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Dr. Patricia (Trish) Coffey has pioneered user-centered product development for reproductive and maternal newborn health technologies.

Trish's desire to make a difference in the world has been characterized by her dedication, enthusiasm and selfless efforts to improve the lives of women and children in low and middle-income countries through the development of lifesaving health innovations. She collaborates frequently with Ministries of Health in countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, the World Health Organization and the United Nations.

She holds a doctorate in Applied Population Research from the University of Exeter in England, Masters in Public Health from UCLA and Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University of Washington.

Dr. Leslie Hendricks Fall is a nationally recognized expert in faculty development, learning design and use of technology in medical education. As co-founder and executive director of MedU, she is transforming medical education by working with most of the nation's medical schools to bring virtual case studies and online learning to students.

MedU works to develop innovative tools to educate tomorrow's physicians to meet the needs of today and tomorrow's healthcare environment. The non-profit has advanced medical education through collaborative development, maintenance, and research of innovative and comprehensive training programs. Today, more than 40,000 students take MedU courses.

After receiving her medical degree from Dartmouth and completing a pediatric residency at the University of California at Irvine, Leslie completed a medical education fellowship at Michigan State University.

Adrian Hanauer first kept the flame of professional soccer alive in Seattle before helping to reignite the community's passion for the game with the arrival of a Major League Soccer expansion franchise in 2009, and culminating with the Sounders' first MLS Cup championship in 2016.

Hanauer also served as the club's general manager, leading the organization to extraordinary success during



Pathfinder Award recipient Leslie Fall, right, with her mother, Yvonne Hendricks of Mercer Island.

its first six years of MLS history. During that span, Sounders FC claimed one Supporters' Shield and four Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cups, while simultaneously setting the seven-highest single-season attendance totals in North American soccer history.



Adrian Hanauer

Hanauer spearheads the RAVE Foundation, a non-profit organization working to build small and innovative soccer fields dedicated for free play in neighborhoods throughout the city. Additionally, Hanauer served as the honorary chair for Washington Youth Soccer's 50th anniversary celebration in September 2016.

POINTS OF PRIDE



▲ The Islander Middle School PTSA dedicated the new bronze gator sculpture to the school in honor of co-principals Mary Jo Budzius and Aaron Miller. The plaque reads, "Thank you for your leadership to our IMS students, staff, families and community."



▲ Mercer Island High School has been recognized with a Gold Medal ranking among the nation's Best High Schools in the 2016 annual rankings by U.S. News & World Report for student achievement. Gold medal recognition was given to only 2.4 percent of the nation's high schools this year by U.S. News.



◀ The Mercer Island High School girls basketball team celebrated its first-ever 3A state championship in the Tacoma Dome. The Islanders, led by Seattle Times state player of the year Anna Luce and state 3A coach of the year Gillian d'Hondt, defeated rival Bishop Blanchet 52-47 and finished 24-6 for the season. Luce, who will play for Dartmouth this fall, was named the tournament's most valuable player.

▶ Island Park, Lakeridge and West Mercer Elementary and Islander Middle School (IMS) were named recipients of 2016 Washington Achievement Awards by the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Washington State Board of Education. Island Park earned awards for High Progress and English Language Acquisition; Lakeridge, West Mercer and IMS for High Progress.



POINTS OF PRIDE



◀ Lakeridge Elementary is among the 2017 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools award honorees. Lakeridge was honored for its innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, improve health and wellness, and ensure effective sustainability education. Representatives from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Green Ribbon Schools' corporate sponsor, California Casualty presented a \$2,500 award to Lakeridge and the school's Green Team. Lakeridge first formed its Green Team in 2009, spearheaded by parent Nancy Weil and teacher Heather McLyman.

▶ The Mercer Island High School Orchestra received two awards for excellence at the recent World Strides Heritage Festival in Vancouver, B.C.; first place for a full orchestra in its school division and one of only four Adjudicator's Awards, singling the orchestra out for outstanding tonality and interpretation. Nathan Wacker, bass player and graduating senior, won the Ovation Award for his dedication to his music, school and community.



◀ Team "This Isn't Legible" finished in fourth place in the Middle School Structural Challenge at the global Destination Imagination event held recently in Knoxville, Tenn. Two other Mercer Island teams finished in the top 20 at the world finals. Destination Imagination is an educational program in which student teams solve open-ended challenges and present their solutions at tournaments. Mark Headlee, teacher at West Mercer Elementary, coaches all three teams.



SUMMER DISTRICT NEWS

Mercer Island School District

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Mercer Island, WA 98040

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WOWED, AMAZED & INSPIRED!

Thank you to every parent, community member and business partner who made an investment in Mercer Island's exceptional students and extraordinary teachers! Special thanks to a private donor, who through their incredible generosity, pushed this year's BRIDGE2017 campaign over the top—exceeding the goal of \$1.2M!

Your generous donations will provide much needed resources to allow the district to remain competitive, supportive and flexible. Our schools will continue to provide personalized learning experiences and smaller class sizes on average that are designed to meet our students' needs. Your inspiring support this spring will allow the district to fund teaching positions well beyond what is funded by our state government, because no one wants anything on Mercer Island to remain "basic."

Thank you and enjoy your summer!



MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS

MISD Board of Directors

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The Mercer Island School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, marital status, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The Mercer Island School District offers classes in many College and Career Readiness programs, admission to which is non-discriminatory. Lack of English-language proficiency will not be a barrier to admission and participation in those programs.

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Compliance Officer:

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Come share your ideas about the
2017-18 MISD budget

Connect with the School Board
at a public hearing:

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017, 6 p.m.

**City Council Chambers
Mercer Island City Hall
9611 SE 36th St.**