



# NEWS

VOLUME 18 ISSUE 2 WINTER 2017

MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

## District facing budget shortfall if state fails to provide solutions to education funding

When the academic year began, the Mercer Island School District was hopeful that the landmark McCleary decision would generate much needed education funding for public school students. The McCleary decision found that the State of Washington was not meeting its constitutional obligation to amply fund a uniform system of education.

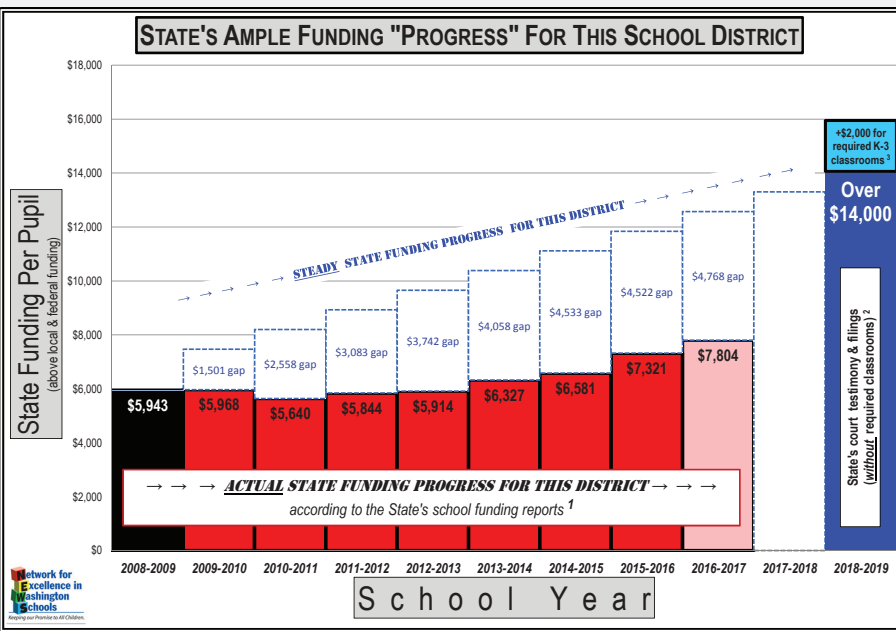
While modest increases in funding have occurred (as seen in the chart at right), the increases are not sufficient to cover the true cost of educating a student in our District. Based on the presumption of additional state funding in this coming biennium, improvements and enhancements to the District's educational program were made, particularly at the elementary level.

Such improvements have included but are not limited to: a K-5 Spanish-language program; the addition of an elementary arts specialist; additional administrative time allocated to the elementary schools; and opening the new Northwood Elementary.

New additional state funding has not been provided as predicted and future state funding remains uncertain. The Legislature is considering several bills but has not found a way to both provide ample funding to enrich basic education and to guarantee dedicated funding to do so. The bills also place significant restrictions on the use of available funding, such as limiting the flexibility of districts to respond to student needs.

Also under consideration is a bill to extend the levy rate for one more year. If this bill is not passed by the Legislature, the District will lose nearly \$900,000 for the 2017-2018 academic year, which amounts to about 20 staff and will face a combined budget shortfall of approximately \$1.8 million over the 2017-18 and the 2018-19 school years.

### Mercer Island



The per pupil state funding amounts for 2008-2009 through 2014-2015 are the amounts the state specified for Mercer Island. The "over \$14,000" per pupil state funding amount is based on the state's sworn testimony and court filings in the McCleary case, but without any of the additional classrooms required to implement the all-day kindergarten & K-3 class size components of the state's basic education program under the prototypical school model. The "\$2,000 for required K-3 classrooms" amount is based on state reporting of the additional classrooms required to implement the all-day kindergarten & K-3 class size reduction components. For more information, visit [waschoolexcellence.org/news-and-resources/faqs/](http://waschoolexcellence.org/news-and-resources/faqs/).

Due to a current budget deficit and in order to safeguard the resources of the community, the District has commenced discussions to contract programming and reduce budget expenditures for next year.

We are grateful to the Mercer Island Schools Foundation for their unwavering support of our educational programs, and to the schools PTA's and various booster clubs which abound. This community has repeatedly demonstrated its support of its schools and will have a chance again at the annual Breakfast of Champions Bridge campaign on April 25, 2017 in the high school gymnasium. Register today at [mercerislandschoolsfoundation.com](http://mercerislandschoolsfoundation.com). Hope to see you there!

As you may already have heard, I have announced the end of my tenure as superintendent of the Mercer Island School District on June 30, 2017.



Dr. Gary Plano  
Superintendent

While I hesitate to use the word retirement, I know that my newfound time will enable me to discover new passions and perhaps build on existing ones in new ways. It has been a great privilege to serve our Island community these past 12 years. It has been an honor to end my 40-year career in education in a community that so values learning and honors educators. I will surely miss the wonderful people, including my entire staff, colleagues, parents and community

members I have met over these many years. You have given me a lifetime of memories that I will always treasure. I am very proud of the work that we have accomplished together over my 10 years as your superintendent. Our collective work has changed our students’ lives in many positive ways that are too numerous to count. I am thankful to the school board who hired me in 2007 and to new board members and new boards who have extended my contracts over and over again. I am thankful to be surrounded by so many talented educators, support staff, volunteers and parents. You have a heart for children and for learning - thank you for being part of my educational career. As I look back, I smile when I see myself as a teacher in a classroom with students around me, whether it was in elementary, middle or in high school. To

those of you who know me well, you must know that I relish in finding teachable moments. My mom often told me there is always the teacher in me speaking. Perhaps I will once again find myself with students and their smiling faces and again will share in their delight when they learn something new. Over these next four months, I hope to see you in the classrooms, playfields, auditoriums and simply “just around town.” I will be relocating to Ashland, Oregon this summer where I plan to live the next chapters of my life. Thank you for all that you have given to me, as I am forever grateful. Sincerely, Gary Plano, Ed. D. Superintendent

Community input sought on Demographic Study update

The District has begun the process of updating its 2012 Demographic Study as a best practice for long term planning for operations, transportation, and facility needs as population data for the next five years and beyond is studied and analyzed. “The outcome of this study is one key piece of information that helps inform future district plans,” said School Board President David D’Souza. “The board believes it is important that community input regarding Island growth be considered as we develop our model.” At the Feb. 9 School Board meeting, consultant Dr. Les Kendrick of Educational Data Solutions presented the processes and variables that he takes into account for preparation of a new forecast. Dr. Kendrick authored the previous demographic studies in 2008 and 2012 that accurately predicted the District’s growth which resulted in a bond for expanded facilities and the development of new school boundaries. Dr. Kendrick told the Board that typically demographic studies include:

- Enrollment trends

- Birth data and birth forecasts for King County and Mercer Island
  - Population data and growth rates
  - Housing data (single family and multi-family home sales)
  - Private school enrollment and trends
- At the meeting, individual members of the board requested that Dr. Kendrick

consider additional variables such as impact of the coming light rail station and I-90 mobility changes. Community members are encouraged to submit any information they believe would be valuable as the District undertakes a new demographic study by March 15 to demographicstudy2017@misd400.org.

**Two School Board positions up for election this year**

This fall, two of the five Mercer Island School Board seats will be up for election. This includes board positions 2 and 4. Board members are elected to four-year terms by Mercer Island voters. Specific responsibilities of board members include, but are not limited to: systematically measuring the district’s attainment of Board Policy 2020; monitoring superintendent performance; setting district policy; adopting an annual operating budget; placing levies and bonds before voters; and ratifying contracts negotiated with the local bargaining unit. The board will present an overview of board governance for interested community members at meetings at 6 p.m. March 9 at Mercer Island City Hall and at noon March 29 in the MISD Board Room. Individuals who wish to run for one of the two seats up for election must file with King County Elections between May 15 and May 19. To run, an individual must be a registered voter living in Mercer Island. If more than two people file for a single position a primary election will take place.

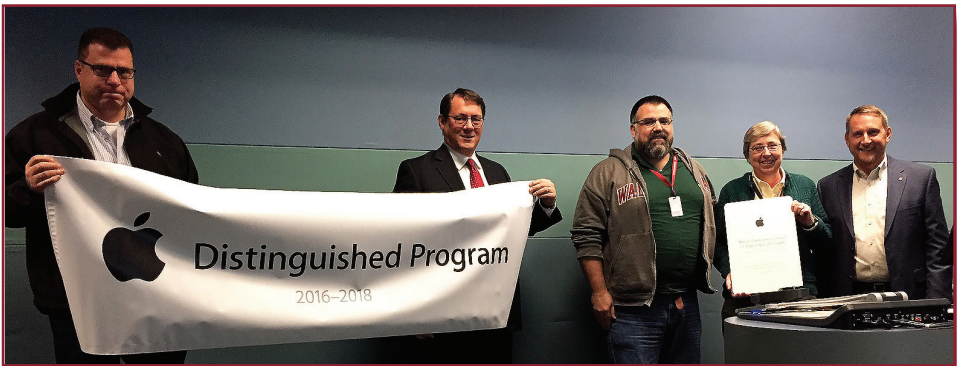


▲ Ninety-three Mercer Island High School students have qualified to compete in the Washington State DECA State Career Development Conference March 2 to 4 in Bellevue. They are among 179 students from Mercer Island High School who competed in DECA’s Area 3 event in January with 1,000 other students from local area high schools. MIHS has the fifth largest DECA chapter in the state. Teachers Jennifer McLellan and Shannon Tapp are the chapter’s co-advisors. DECA is an international organization that provides real-world experiences to students who aspire to become entrepreneurs and business professionals.



◀ Adam Tucker, a senior at Mercer Island High School, (pictured here with his teacher Kim Schjelderup) has achieved a rare distinction by earning perfect scores on two Advanced Placement (AP) exams, in calculus and microeconomics. According to the College Board, Adam is one of three students in the United States to get 100 percent on two AP Exams. Only 18 students worldwide earned a perfect score on the AP Calculus AB exam, and just 75 students worldwide out of earned a perfect score on the AP Microeconomics exam.

▶ The Mercer Island School District has again been recognized as an Apple Distinguished Program for its implementation of iPad in the classroom. The Apple Distinguished Program designation is reserved for programs that meet criteria for innovation, leadership, and educational excellence, and demonstrate a clear vision of exemplary learning environments.



## WINTER DISTRICT NEWS

**Mercer Island School District**

4160 86th Ave. S.E.

Mercer Island, WA 98040

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# Breakfast of Champions

**BE WOWED!** By students who are experiencing opportunities of academic excellence in math, sciences, literacy and the arts

**BE AMAZED!** By teachers who benefit from donor investments to nurture every student while building vital foundations of educational success

**BE INSPIRED!** By 2017 Pathfinders, Mercer Island High School graduates whose achievements, strength of character and citizenship inspire and challenge today's youth

**RESERVE YOUR SEAT:**

[MercerIslandSchoolsFoundation.com/breakfast-guest-form](http://MercerIslandSchoolsFoundation.com/breakfast-guest-form)

**APRIL 25, 2017 MIHS • 7am-8:30am**



**MERCER ISLAND**  
SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

## MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS

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.

### MISD Board of Directors

**David D'Souza, President**

[david.dsouza@mercerislandschools.org](mailto:david.dsouza@mercerislandschools.org)

**Tracy Drinkwater, Vice President**

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**Adair Dingle**

[adair.dingle@mercerislandschools.org](mailto:adair.dingle@mercerislandschools.org)

**Ralph Jorgenson**

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**Dave Myerson**

[dave.myerson@mercerislandschools.org](mailto:dave.myerson@mercerislandschools.org)

**Dr. Gary Plano, Superintendent**

[gary.plano@mercerislandschools.org](mailto:gary.plano@mercerislandschools.org)

### Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Compliance Officer:

Erin Battersby, Senior Director of Compliance and Legal

Affairs, (206) 230-6227

[erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org](mailto:erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org)

### Title IX Compliance Coordinator:

Erin Battersby, Senior Director of Compliance and Legal

Affairs, (206) 230-6227

[erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org](mailto:erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org)

### Section 504 & ADA Coordinator:

Dr. Lindsay Myatich, Director, (206) 236-3326

[lindsay.myatich@mercerislandschools.org](mailto:lindsay.myatich@mercerislandschools.org)

### Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator:

Erin Battersby, Senior Director of Compliance and Legal

Affairs, (206) 230-6227

[erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org](mailto:erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org)