

# Education for a better world

Mercer Island School District  
Annual Report  
2009-2010



## Superintendent's Message



On behalf of the Mercer Island School District's Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the Mercer Island School District's Annual Report for 2009-2010. We are in our second year of implementing our School Board's 2020 Vision and last year we initiated a district-wide focus on personalized learning to work towards the board goal of *providing more personalized learning where student-centered education is responsive to students' strengths and learning styles, needs, interests and affinities.*

One significant way we are achieving more student-centered education is through the lens of environmental stewardship, which touches on many of the fundamentals of our 2020 Vision. Preserving the environment for future generations depends on critical thinking, cross-discipline thinking, creativity, innovation, collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and information and technology literacy. It is very exciting to watch our students acquire these skills while working on creative solutions to one of the critical problems facing our world today. I invite you to read more about the Green Schools project in the pages ahead.

The school year 2009-2010 was another year of budgetary challenges. When the Governor presented her preliminary budget a year ago in December 2009, we began preparing for cuts up to \$1.5 million. In early 2010, our community gave us a wonderful vote of confidence in the passage of the general fund, transportation and capital projects levies. Later last spring, the deficit was down to \$500,000 and again, our community stepped up to the plate. 1,493 people contributed to the *Bridge the Gap* campaign and participation among families with children in the schools we increased by 139 percent!

As a result of an incredible grant of \$850,000 from the *Bridge the Gap* campaign, we are able to retain teachers and ease crowded classrooms at all levels. In fact, we added nearly three more teachers in 2010-11 over last year's staffing levels.

On behalf of our teachers, staff, but most of all our students, thank you so much for all you do. I am honored, and quite honestly humbled to serve in the capacity of superintendent of the Mercer Island School District. Because of your commitment to learning and extraordinary generosity, our students *will* be prepared for the cognitive, global and digital world of the 21st century.

Dr. Gary Plano, Superintendent



### 2009-2010 School Board

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*Left: As part of his culminating project, this high school student (at right) taught Ingrid Stipes' fourth-grade class about the benefits of a healthy diet, which includes a variety of vegetables!*

*Cover photo: MIHS staff and student volunteers celebrate the high school's new Rain Garden, which filters contaminants out of stormwater before they have a chance to damage Puget Sound.*

***Vision:** Our students will thrive in the cognitive, digital, and global world while sustaining their passion and inspiration for learning*

***Mission:** Mercer Island schools will deliver a 21st century education that prepares students to convert information into knowledge and create innovative solutions demanded by tomorrow's world.*

The vision and mission of the Mercer Island School District is focused on successfully preparing students for their future. District curriculum and learning activities are designed to teach our students how to think across all content areas, to collaborate, to be socially and emotionally ready to be productive citizens, and to be creative and effective in the interconnected world. Led by our talented principals, our amazing school teams continue to maintain the highest standards in all of the content areas while connecting with students through a more personalized style of learning.

## Successfully Preparing Students for the Cognitive, Global and Digital World

### 2020 Vision in Classrooms and Beyond

These projects are examples of the district's 2020 Vision fundamentals for teaching and learning in our schools.

*2020 Vision Fundamental: Encouraging students to pursue passions and interests beyond the traditional classroom environment*

### High School

Mercer Island High School is home to Washington State's first **Global Entrepreneurship skills center class**, offered through the **Washington Network for Innovative Careers (Wa-NIC)**. Students enrolled in the program operate The Mercer Trade, Inc. – "To sustain and strengthen our global trading partnerships while promoting environmental and social improvement." This year the students are partnering with students in Ghana and Shanghai and will use profits from their company to support clean water/sanitation, education and sustainability in Mambosa, Kenya.

### Middle School

**Islander Middle School's Crossing Boundaries** brings 8th grade students from around the Seattle area together once a month to discover the commonalities and differences they share with other students and learn the importance of cooperation and interdependence.

### Elementary

**Third-graders** discover their cultural heritage in an innovative approach to global learning through a **Culture Fair**. Teachers develop hands-on learning projects that incorporate many skills such as research, reading, writing, math, art, design and project sharing through "Voice Thread" software.

**Elementary students** develop leadership skills, global understanding and an appreciation of the power of giving by hosting the **Pennies for Peace** drive to support the building of schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan.





## 2020 Vision Fundamental: Including 21st Century Thinking and Process Skills such as cross-discipline thinking, creativity, and innovation using technology

### High School

**Mercer Island High School** math teachers promote collaboration and problem-solving through **WizIQ**, an online education platform where you can teach and learn in real-time on the Internet using a Virtual Classroom.

### Middle School

**Islander Middle School** students learn how to use imovie, PowerPoint and other programs in **Media Tech**, a multi-disciplined, creative class that teaches technology skills, promotes community and is most of all – fun. Students engage in the school community and create innovative video projects on topics that can be global or unique to the halls of IMS. Some of the most popular include “Translating Japanese” and “The Nerdy Kid Makeover.”

### Elementary

American history comes alive for **fifth-grade students** when they embark on “**electronic field trips**” to **Colonial Williamsburg**. These web-based field trips have themes 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. Students benefit from these types of online learning experiences made possible through our community’s support of the capital projects levies.

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## The Green Schools Program

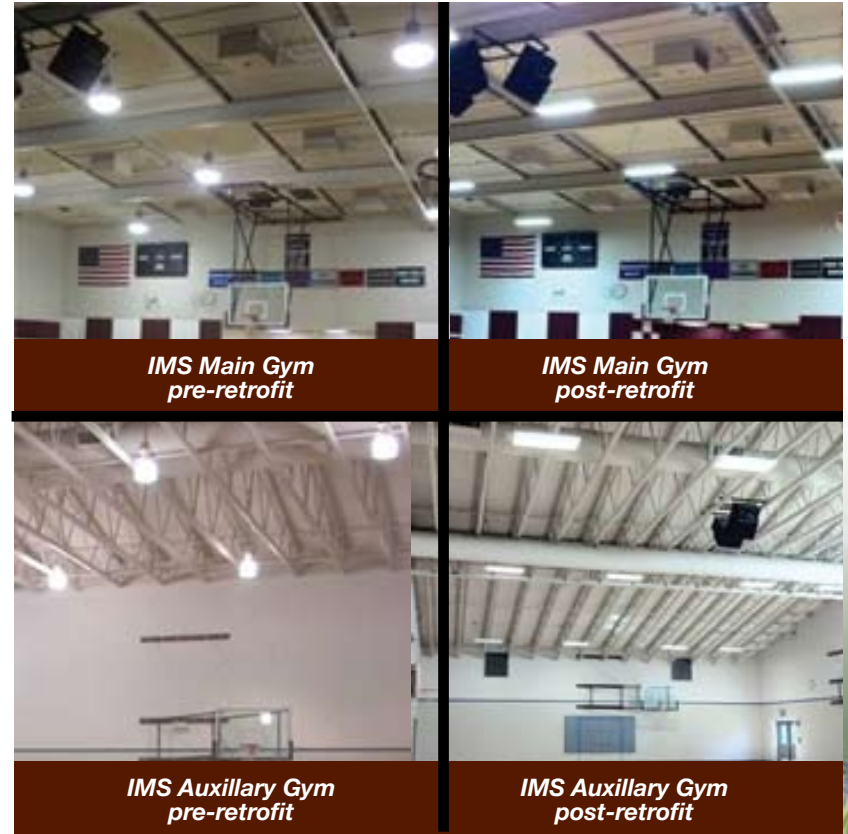
Last year the Mercer Island School District joined the King County Green Schools Program to involve school communities in environmental stewardship. The program includes three levels of green certification: Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One), Energy Conservation (Level Two), and Water Conservation (Level Three).

Our district has 75% of its schools at Level One green certification. This is a huge accomplishment made possible by our hard-working students, staff and community partners. We are especially grateful for the support of the City of Mercer Island, IslandVision and MISD's "Green Team" for working with our teachers to help students develop global awareness, while learning to understand and solve a real-world problem.

## Green Schools Progress Report for 2009-2010

Students are separating lunchroom trash into compost, recycling, garbage and liquids. This has reduced the lunchrooms' trash output by 85%!

- Plastic utensils have been discontinued and replaced with silverware at most schools; all containers are compostable.
- District garbage costs have been cut in half in just one year.
- A Puget Sound Energy grant has resulted in economically and environmentally safe lighting at Islander Middle and Mercer Island High School.
- Mercer Island High School students worked with the Friends of the Cedar River Watershed to install a rain garden to filter rainwater from the roof of the school.
- Two schools are preparing to work on Level Two certification, which is Energy Conservation.
- Solar panels were installed at MIHS, which was a culminating project for a 2010 MIHS senior. These panels power the student store.





## Growing Enrollment: Challenges and Opportunities

The MISD school board appointed a 19-member, community-led, volunteer committee called the 21st Century Facilities Planning Committee (21CFPC) to recommend a facilities master plan to the school board in late 2011 or early 2012.

This district is facing a growing student population along with aging facilities. According to a 2008 demographic study, the district is projected to have 800 more students by 2020. The work of this committee, along with more resources about 21st century education, can be found at <http://www.misd.k12.wa.us/departments/facilities/>

As of September, 2010, The Mercer Island School District's 2010-2011 K-12 enrollment grew to 4,020 students or full-time equivalents (FTE) which is a 3% increase over last year's enrollment. The district is up by 114 students K-12. Most of the growth comes from the elementary grades (77 more students). Our middle school is up by 5 students over projections and our high school is up by 27 students over projections.

Average elementary class sizes range from 21.6 FTE to 25.3 FTE. Average middle school core class sizes range from 25.1 to 27.3. High school core class sizes range from 26.5 in math to 29.2 in science. Class size information is posted on the district web site.

## Our District

The Mercer Island School District is comprised of five schools located on Mercer Island, a six square mile suburban community of 22,650 residents in the middle of Lake Washington, within a 10-minute drive to Seattle and Bellevue. The community has high expectations for the school district and has supported its maintenance and operations levy every year, as well as \$54 million in capital bonds to renovate all five schools. The current bond debt of \$27 million will retire in 2015.

## 1990's Capital Improvement Bonds

1993	\$10.95 million	65% passed	Islander Middle School
1994	\$16.4 million	61% passed	all elementary schools
1998	\$26.7 million	71% passed	Mercer Island High School

Mercer Island students and teachers benefit from over \$3 million in annual donations from the PTA/PTSA's and the Mercer Island Schools Foundation, as well as the time and energy of countless volunteers serving on committees, planning fund-raising programs, coordinating field trips and assemblies, serving as art docents, general classroom volunteers, and many more activities.

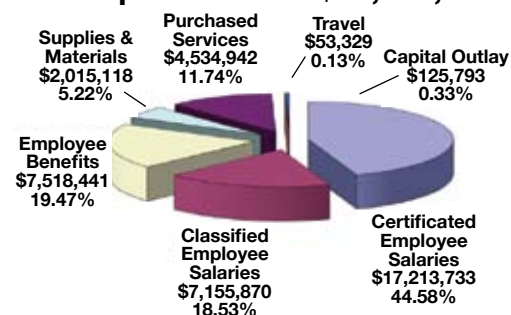
## District Statistics 2009-2010

Three Elementary Schools • One Middle School	
One High School • One Alternative Program called Crest Learning Center	
Certified Staff.....	266
Classified Staff.....	205

## Total student enrollment

(as of October 2010)	4,019.92
Island Park	513
Lakeridge	552.5
West Mercer	623.5
Islander Middle School	928.38
Mercer Island High School/ Crest Learning Center	1,402.54
Running Start	29.36

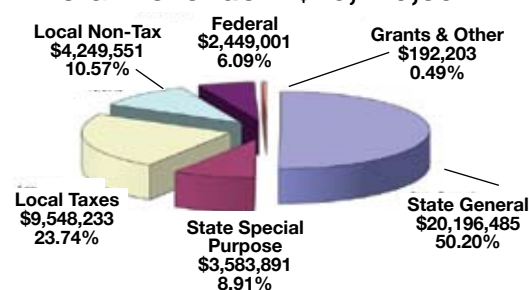
## Total Expenditures = \$38,617,226



## 2009-2010 Ethnic Enrollment

American Indian/Alaska Native	0.3%
Asian	19.7%
Black	1.2%
Hispanic	2.1%
White	73.3%
Other	3.4%
Special Programs	
Free or Reduced-Price meals	1.8%
Special Education (May 2010)	9.3%
Transitional Bilingual	1.9%

## Total Revenue = \$40,219,364



# Continuous Outstanding Achievement

On August 31, 2010 State Superintendent Randy Dorn announced the results of the new state tests introduced this year: the grades 3-8 Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) and the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE). The tests are shorter than the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) tests used for the past 12 years, and in some cases measure different standards. Mercer Island students continue to outscore the state average and their peers across the state. In fact, both IMS and MIHS placed in the top 10 schools in the state for the highest average percent of students passing the MSP and HSPE. All the three elementary schools placed in the top 4 percent of all schools in the state based on the 2010 MSP results.

## Mercer Island School District

### Measurement of Student Progress Results 2010

#### MSP

	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
<b>Grade 3</b>	91.8%	85.0%		
WA State	72.1%	61.8%		
<b>Grade 4</b>	90.9%	86.0%	88.7%	
WA State	67.2%	53.7%	61.1%	
<b>Grade 5</b>	92.3%	84.7%		63.1%
WA State	69.6%	53.6%		34.0%
<b>Grade 6</b>	88.8%	86.7%		
WA State	64.6%	51.9%		
<b>Grade 7</b>	92.2%	86.1%	94.2%	
WA State	63.4%	55.3%	70.3%	
<b>Grade 8</b>	90.0%	87.5%		88.5%
WA State	69.4%	51.6%		54.5%

### High School Proficiency Exam Results

#### HSPE

	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
<b>Grade 10</b>	94.9%	81.2%	96.0%	81.8%
WA State	78.9%	41.7%	86.0%	44.8%

## Other Assessments:

### Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and ACT Assessment

While the SAT and ACT are not required tests, most Mercer Island High School students take one or both of these for college applications.

SAT				
# Tested	Class	Mean Scores	State	National
328	2008	Math-614	533	515
		Critical Reading-584	526	502
		Writing-573	509	494
308	2009	Math-630	531	515
		Critical Reading-596	524	501
		Writing-586	507	493
281	2010	Math-626	532	516
		Critical Reading-593	524	501
		Writing-582	508	492
ACT				
# Tested	Class	Mean Composite	State	National
210	2008	26.2	23.1	21.1
197	2009	27.1	22.8	21.1
216	2010	26.5	23.0	21.0
National Merit Scholars				
Class	Finalists	Commended Scholars		
2008	12	29		
2009	12	31		
2010	6	29		
AP Test results				
Year	# Students Tested	# Tests Taken	Percent of Students Passed Scored a 3 or higher	
2008	328	572	69%	
2009	319	571	81%	
2010	262	470	79%	

## Points of Pride

- **Outperforming district:**  
Council of Chief State School Officers and Standard & Poors has identified Mercer Island as an “Outperforming District” for performing at a level that significantly exceeds statistical expectations.
- **Nationally recognized:**  
*Forbes* Magazine rates MISD as among America’s 25 best school districts for your housing dollar and among the top ten districts in small cities across the country.
- **High graduate percentage:** Manhattan Institute study ranked Mercer Island High School #1 nationally for the percentage of students who graduate “on time.” 94.9% of students who enter the ninth grade at MIHS graduate in four years. Seattle area schools: 73%; WA state schools: 66%.
- **Award-winning high school:**  
Mercer Island High School was awarded a Silver Medal of Distinction in *U.S. News and World Report* magazine’s Best High Schools 2009 Search for the top-achieving high schools in the nation.
- **Best at college preparation:**  
The *Seattle Times School Guide* rated MIHS the #1 public high school in Washington for quality of preparation for students.
- **Two Blue Ribbon Schools:**  
Mercer Island High school (2006) and Islander Middle School (2003) have been designated “Blue Ribbon Schools” by the US Department of Education.



# Highlights from Our Schools

## Island Park Elementary

*Built in 1957*

*Remodeled in 1995*

*Four Portables on campus*

Island Park is located in the middle of the island, at 5437

Island Crest Way. Principal Nancy Loorem leads her staff and community in “guiding all students to achieve their highest potential while nurturing their social and emotional well-being.”

### Measurement of Student Progress Results MSP

	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
<b>Grade 3</b>	86.7%	77.6%		
<b>Grade 4</b>	91.3%	91.6%	89.1%	
<b>Grade 5</b>	89.5%	81.6%		57.9%



### Green Schools program

Island Park is home to the Learning Garden, created by students, staff, and community volunteers to promote healthy living while integrating grade level lessons in science and sustainability. Soil for the garden comes from kitchen compost, and last year every grade level grew edible plants for the whole school to enjoy.

## Lakeridge Elementary

*Built in 1954*

*Remodeled 1995*

*Seven Portables on campus*

Lakeridge is located at the south end of the island, at 8215 SE

78th. Principal Fred Rundle leads

his staff and community in “giving all students the opportunity to gain knowledge, grow in wisdom, develop confidence, and become creative, compassionate and critical

### Measurement of Student Progress Results MSP

	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
<b>Grade 3</b>	91.9%	91.0%		
<b>Grade 4</b>	91.0%	82.0%	94.0%	
<b>Grade 5</b>	93.3%	87.6%		61.8%



thinkers, and to ensure that all children, regardless of level of ability or individual needs, will have the opportunity to reach for, achieve and extend their potential in a changing world.”

### Green Schools Program

Last year the Zero Waste Committee of teachers and parent volunteers worked with students in the Recycling and Science Friday Clubs to begin recycling and composting in the lunchroom. Before recycling, the lunchroom produced 700 pounds of trash in

## West Mercer Elementary

*Built in 1962*

*Remodeled in 1995*

*Eight Portables on campus*

West Mercer is located at the north end of the island at 4141

81st Avenue SE. Principal

Richard Mellish leads his staff “to create a place where every student learns as much

### Measurement of Student Progress Results MSP

	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
<b>Grade 3</b>	96.4%	85.5%		
<b>Grade 4</b>	90.6%	85.0%	84.3%	
<b>Grade 5</b>	93.6%	84.4%		67.9%

and as well as he/she possibly can; to create a place where every teacher teaches as well as he/she possibly can; to create a place where every student, staff member, parent, and volunteer want to be because they feel safe, competent, valued, and know that it makes a positive difference that they are, in fact, a part of West Mercer.”



### Green Schools Program

The West Mercer Green Team volunteers and Garden Club did a trial run on waste reduction in the lunchroom last year and reduced their contribution to the landfill by 90%. The rest will be transformed into usable compost/soil for the school’s future



*Moving compost/mulch into West Mercer's courtyard garden*

## Islander Middle School

*Built in 1958*

*Remodeled in 1994 and 2000*

*Seven portables on campus*

Islander Middle School is located at the south end of the island at 8225 SE 72nd Street. Co-principals MaryJo Budzisz and Aaron Miller lead their staff in “meeting the unique needs of students in the middle grade; to be a caring community where all members feel safe to take the necessary risks to grow; to strive for high quality in all we do; to value diversity and to believe that respect, cooperation, and kindness provide the foundation of the Islander community.”

### Measurement of Student Progress Results MSP

	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
Grade 6	88.8%	86.7%		
Grade 7	92.2%	86.1%	94.2%	
Grade 8	90.0%	87.5%		88.5%

### Green Schools Movement – Gators Go Green

Islander students have taken the lead in lunchroom recycling through their “Gators Go Green” environmental club. Students in the club work with teachers and community volunteers to engage the entire student body in creating greater environmental sustainability at the school.



## Mercer Island High School

*Built in 1957*

*Remodeled in 1998*

Mercer Island High School, home of the Islanders, is located on the north end of the island at 9100 SE 42nd Street. Principal John Harrison and Associate Principals Craig Olson and Mark Roschy lead their staff in “providing students with challenging educational activities and experiences that encourage students to reach their individual potential.”

### Crest Learning Center

Crest Learning Center is Mercer Island High School’s alternative program. The staff of nine adults works to create a learning environment that meets the needs of a diverse population of about 115 students. The curriculum at Crest is designed to focus on the development of cognitive powers, creativity, and essential skills.

### Green Schools Movement

Last year the high school’s student club, Committee to Save the Earth, partnered with the Friends of the Cedar River Watershed to build Mercer Island’s first demonstration rain garden at the front entrance to the high school. Through this project, students apply academic excellence to community problem-solving while addressing water pollution in our local waterways.

### Green Culminating Projects

High school seniors are increasingly choosing green action ideas to satisfy the Culminating Project graduation requirement. Some of these include:

- The installation of solar panels in the student store.
- Teaching elementary students about healthy food choices and organic gardening.
- Joining leadership students from other districts to research and produce an annual video broadcast of the Watershed Report.
- Working with the Green Ribbon Commission to reduce home energy consumption and increase walking, bike riding and bus use on Mercer Island.



*BEFORE: Watershed Report leadership students and members of the MIHS Committee to Save the Earth build a demonstration rain garden to help reduce storm water runoff. Spring 2010.*



*AFTER: The same rain garden six months later in the fall with seniors doing maintenance.*

## College Placement

92% of the graduates of the Class of 2010 had plans to continue their education: 86% at a 4-year institution and 6% at a 2-year school. Of the college-bound students, 52% went out-of-state. Students from the class of 2010 are attending 88 different colleges and universities across the nation and the world. Of the 88 colleges, 57 are private institutions. Some of the schools are: Amherst, Barnard, Bates, Boston U, Bowdoin, Bryn Mawr, Brown, Carnegie Mellon, Cal Poly, Chapman, Claremont McKenna, Colby, Colgate, Colorado College, Columbia, Dartmouth, DePaul, Duke, Elon, George Washington U, Georgetown, Gonzaga, Gordon, Hamilton, Harvard, Hilsdale, Hofstra, Hope, Johns Hopkins, Kenyon, Linfield, Loyola Marymount, Manhattenville, Marymount, McGill, Middlebury, MIT, Mount Holyoke, Northeastern, Northwestern, Oberlin, Occidental, Pacific Lutheran, Parsons School of Design, Pitzer, Princeton, Reed, Rice, Rochester Institute of Technology, Santa Clara, Sarah Lawrence, Scripps, Seattle U, Seattle Pacific U, Smith, Stanford, St. Mary's, Sweet Briar, Trinity College of Dublin, Ireland, Tufts, UCLA, U Chicago, U Colorado, U Denver, U Michigan, U Minnesota, U Redlands, U Portland, USD, USC, USF, US Naval Academy, Union, Victoria U of New Zealand, Wake Forest, Washington U in St. Louis, Wheaton, Whitman, Willamette, Williams and Yale in addition to many out-of-state public and the 6 Washington Public Colleges.



## Special Education

In 2009-2010, 9.3% percent of the MISD K-12 student population qualified for one or more special education services. We are committed to all students on the continuum of learning and offer programs from pre-school to transition for students age 18-21. Special education is a federal and state-mandated program that districts are obligated to provide. Funding for this mandate, however, is insufficient, requiring school districts to support the shortfall out of their general operating budgets. Last year this shortfall was almost \$900,000.

## Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) – No Child Left Behind

The Mercer Island School District started 2009-2010 with 99.8% of its teachers being highly qualified. At the end of 2009-2010, all teachers, or 100% of the certificated staff, had met requirements for highly qualified certification. To view the MISD report card and/or a School Report Card, go to <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us>. Currently our annual reports include the state requirements listed in RCW 28A.655.110, as well as ESEA Report Card elements not available on the OSPI website.

## Nondiscrimination

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, 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, RCW 49.60 Law Against Discrimination. District programs shall be free from sexual harassment.

The district strongly encourages individuals who believe that they have been subjected to discrimination to bring their complaints and concerns to the immediate attention of their building principal. If the problem is not addressed at the building level, the individual should bring the complaint to the Executive Director of Business Services and Human Resources, who has been appointed as the Title IX Compliance Officer or to the Director of Special Education, who has been appointed the Section 504 Coordinator.

## ChildFind

The district has a duty to provide disabled students with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you have a child age birth to twenty-one, who you suspect has a disability or whose development is of concern to you, please contact the Director of Special Education at 206 236-3329.



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Mercer Island, WA 98040


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## Residential Customer

This Annual Report is published by the Mercer Island School District  
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Compiled and edited by Marion Mohler  
Designed by Vanessa Adams  
MISD Publishing Center



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cognitive, digital, and global world  
while sustaining their passion and  
inspiration for learning.

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Aaron Miller, Co-Principal,  
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#### Lakeridge Elementary

8215 SE 78th

Fred Rundle, Principal  
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(206) 230-6232 fax

#### West Mercer Elementary

4141 81st Avenue SE

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