



# NEWS

Mercer Island School District

Volume 11 Issue #1, Fall 2009

This is the first issue of District NEWS for 2009-2010, designed to present information on the new 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)

## School Board refines 2020 Vision

In July, the MISD School Board reframed the Vision and Mission for our school district and encapsulated them into Board Policy 2020. The new Mission, Vision and 2020 Fundamentals are now displayed in a prominent place in all of our schools. The 2020 Vision statement reads: *Our students will thrive in the cognitive, digital, and global world while sustaining their passion and inspiration for learning.*

Our School Board set a singular goal for our collective work together: *By August 2011, the MISD will provide more personalized learning where student-centered education is responsive to students' strengths and learning styles, interests, needs, passions and affinities.* The superintendent looks forward to deep conversations with school principals, staff and parents to further define how we will assess progress on this goal.

Information regarding progress on our Vision and Mission will be shared with you in the Superintendent's E-connections. Also on this page you will find links to our new 'Spotlight on Mercer Island Schools', a blog, highlighting our amazing district employees.

## Welcome to 2009-2010— A Year of Challenges and Opportunities

By Dr. Gary Plano, Superintendent

I am pleased and excited to begin another year of exceptional teaching and learning in the Mercer Island schools. From our youngest kindergartners (and their parents) who are anxious to enter school for the first time – to our seniors looking forward to their last year, I say welcome to some of the most exciting learning opportunities that public schools have to offer.

### An unprecedented outpouring of support

This past year has been challenging for our education community. In the spring we faced a \$2 million deficit due to cuts in state funding. We were forced to eliminate 11 teaching positions from our staffing model. However, our community "stepped up to the plate." During the June 18 school board meeting, Penny Yantis, Executive Director of the Mercer Island Schools Foundation, along with MISF co-president Denise Hopkins and PTA co-presidents



Mary Kay Woolston and Marnie MacDiarmid presented the district with a check for \$430,000. This unprecedented outpouring of support allowed us to restore nearly six key staffing positions. Unfortunately we are facing the same deficit scenario in the spring of 2010 and are already taking steps to mitigate reductions by working closely with the MISF and our hard-working PTAs.

### Levies up for renewal

Finally, our Maintenance & Operations Levy and the Transportation Vehicle Fund Levy (replacement levies) are up for renewal on February 9, 2010. Our School Board is also exploring the possibility of a new Tech Levy. Stay tuned for more information.

Thank you all for your continued support for our schools and most of all, for your commitment to the value of education both at home, in the community and at school. I hope to see you soon.

Dr. Gary Plano

### Mercer Island School District's

## 2020 Vision & Mission

### 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.

## UPDATE on *Math Expressions* –

### Mercer Island's new K-5 Math curriculum

The district's Learning Improvement Day in August, as well as an additional half-day supported by the Mercer Island Schools Foundation was dedicated to math for 87 elementary teachers, including Special Education and Learning Support Professionals. Last year a committee of parents and teachers reviewed 9 curricula before settling on *Math Expressions*, a combination of reform and traditional teaching which is now used in several other districts in the state including Bellevue, Northshore, Edmonds and Kent.

Math coaches Kirsten Pickering (K-2) and Amy McDonald (3-5) from Bellevue led the training for MISD teachers. "We heard about Kirsten and Amy while we were doing the review," said Kathy Morrison, Director of Elementary Learning Support. "The experience of teachers who are actually in their second year of using the curriculum has been absolutely invaluable."

Morrison and Rich Mellish, Principal of West Mercer, along with several other district teachers are part of a *Math Expressions* Users Group organized by the Puget Sound Educational Services District. They have been sharing work around curriculum alignment, pacing guides and teaching strategies. Grade level leads serving all 3 elementary schools meet once a month to get feedback from teachers and problem solve issues. In addition, each grade level has been assigned to an email "buddy" from Bellevue. "The whole process of adopting *Math Expressions*, from the work the committee did last year, to the training this summer has been wonderfully collaborative," said Morrison.

### Parent Math Fair: Wednesday, 10/7

Parents will have an opportunity to review the curriculum and talk to teachers at the Parent Math Fair to be held on Tuesday, October 7 from 7 pm to 8:30 pm at West Mercer. Stay tuned for more information about Math throughout the year, including the work to adopt a new secondary curriculum.

### Breakfast of Champions event to be held on April 27 at MIHS

The 5th Annual Breakfast of Champions event, scheduled for April 27 will raise funds to minimize the anticipated budget deficit, a result of the budget crisis at the State level. Watch for more information later in the year.



### MISF PHONE-A-THON is October 26 & 27

On the evenings of October 26 and 27 Mercer Island Schools Association volunteers will be calling every household on Mercer Island requesting support to help the district prepare our students for the "highly competitive and evolving world ahead." This year's goal is \$537,000, including nearly \$200,000 for the new K-5 Math Curriculum and \$90,000 for Enrichment grants and the 2020 Vision Investment fund. The money is intended to support programs in Fine Arts, K-8 Science, School Improvement Plans, Student Support programs and Professional Development for teachers. The Foundation is suggesting a donation of \$500 per student.

## New faces in Administration

Fred Rundle, Dean Mack and Erin Anderson are all new to the district this year. The following is an excerpt from the district's new "Spotlight on Mercer Island," a blog highlighting six different employees every month. Watch for a link to the "Spotlight" at the end of Gary Plano's bi-monthly *E-connections* page. Archived Spotlights are on the drop down menu under "News and Events" on the district web site: [www.misd.k12.edu](http://www.misd.k12.edu)

### Fred Rundle – Principal of Lakeridge Elementary School

**Job Description:** Fred is new to Lakeridge this year, taking over for Ralph Allen who retired in June. Fred is the first line of support for students, staff and parents. His primary responsibility is to make sure Lakeridge is a safe and



welcoming school so that students learn everyday. He works hard to engage all stakeholders in the school community on the same goal – student learning.

**Best part of the job:** "The times I still get to teach, both children and adults."

**Outside interests:** Fred and his family moved to the area from Colorado where he most recently worked as an elementary school principal in the Douglas County School District. He and his wife Dana enjoy boating and camping with their two young children. Fred and Dana met while they were undergraduates at the University of Puget Sound and vowed that they would live in the Northwest someday. We are glad they did!

**Dean Mack –  
Executive Director of Business  
Services  
and Human  
Resources**



**Job Description:**  
Dean manages  
MISD Finances,  
Human Resources,  
Maintenance,  
Transportation,  
Food Services,

Construction as well as Bonds and Levies. He is new to the district as of July 2009 and has more than 30 years of management expertise in public school systems. He comes to us from the Issaquah School District, where he worked for 10 years.

**Best part of the job:** “I love all of my job, but the best part is working with people to solve problems.”

**Outside interests:** Dean enjoys spending time with his 5 year-old grandson and golfing, although he says he isn’t very good at it. He also likes visiting the many interesting communities around Puget Sound.

**Erin Anderson –  
Payroll Coordinator,  
District  
Administration**



**Job Description:**  
Erin is MISD’s new  
Payroll Coordinator,  
taking over for  
Dianne Hoelscher,  
who is retiring on  
September 30. Erin  
is responsible for

making sure everyone gets paid! Plus, she handles insurance and benefits, IRS reporting, COBRA insurance, Labor & Industries, unemployment and more. Working with the Department of Retirement Systems is one of her main job duties.

**Best part of the job:** “I love working with people and helping our employees with their questions and concerns.”

**Outside interests:** Erin has just moved to Issaquah from Lewiston, Idaho. She and her husband Chris are looking forward to boating and taking advantage of the shopping and entertainment available in the big city.

## Progress on PEAK

The Boys & Girls’ Club has commenced construction on the PEAK facility, located adjacent to the Maintenance and Operations (MOT) building and Crest Learning Center. The timeline for completion is projected to be June of 2010 depending on weather and other factors. During the month of September, the school board deliberated on a request from the Boys and Girls Club in order for them to obtain a construction loan from U.S. Bank. The \$8.2 million “bridge loan” over 5 years is intended to cover costs until all of the club’s pledges have been received. The board has outlined the key terms of the

proposed First Amendment in a document that may be found on the district web site: [www.misd.k12.edu](http://www.misd.k12.edu) Click on School Board, then September 10, 2009 Agenda.

The District is interested in preserving the original terms and conditions of the Ground Lease, particularly the agreement that the PEAK facility will continue to operate as a “local youth development center.” Resolution on this First Amendment to the Ground Lease is projected to come before the board in October 2009.

## MIHS receives state grant for International Entrepreneurship Study Program

Mercer Island High School has recently been awarded a \$20,000 state grant to develop an International Entrepreneurship Study Program. The grant was awarded under OSPI’s “high demand” category described to “expand access to and awareness of the opportunities offered by high quality career and technical education.” MIHS intends to use the funds to develop an International Entrepreneurship course to potentially be offered through the Washington Network for innovative Careers (WA-NIC). The course would be taught at MIHS, but through WA-NIC would welcome advanced business students from the region to participate in the course. The program is based on the high school’s Marketing/DECA classes taught by Carol Wiseley, in particular The Mercer Trading Company, featured in last spring’s MISF Breakfast of Champions and on King5 News. This

year, 22 students enrolled in this Advanced Marketing class (up from 11 last year) and another trading country (Malaysia) has been added in addition to Ghana. State funds will be used to purchase additional technology for the program, as well as time to further develop the course frameworks and market the program to students from other districts.

According to Mark Roschy, Director of Career and Technical Education for MISD, “Mercer Island is fortunate to have ready access to many successful entrepreneurs and international diplomats right here in our community. Because we cannot easily export our community out to other interested students and classes regionally, we want to develop a program through the WA-NIC Skills Center to bring students to our community.” The high school hopes to have the Skills Center course up and running by the fall of 2010.





## Congratulations!

To **Allison Ross**, MIHS student and recipient of a 2009 Davidson Fellow Scholarship

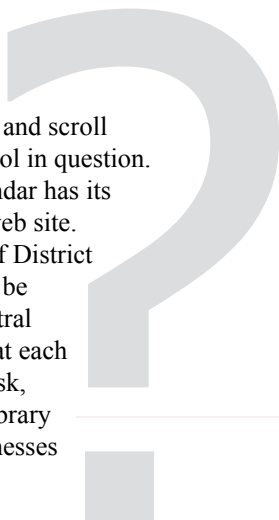
To **William Voit** and **Matthew Wiens**, MIHS students and graduates of the Washington Aerospace Summer Residency program

To the **MIHS Wind Ensemble** for being one of the few bands in the state to perform at the Washington Music Educators State Convention this coming February

To Mercer Island High School's National Merit Semi-Finalists:  
**Aaron Azone, Matthew Johnson, Aaron King, Alisa Owens, Martina Unutzer, Matthew Wiens**

## Where's the NEWS?

This issue of District NEWS, as well as the school calendar and PTA newsletters are now "paperless." All of these publications may be accessed off the District web site. For District NEWS, go to "News & Information" and scroll to District NEWS. For school and PTA publications, go to "schools" and scroll down to the school in question. The district calendar has its own tab on the web site. Limited copies of District NEWS may also be found in the Central Administration, at each school's front desk, the MI Public Library and several businesses around town.



## Important Dates

**October 7**  
Parent Math Fair, 7:30 pm at West Mercer

**October 26 & 27**  
**MISF PHONE-A-THON**

**Mercer Island School District**  
**4160 86th Avenue SE**  
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