



NEWS

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MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



Solving the overcrowding problem

Following more than a year of input, the school board may propose a solution for Mercer Island School District's overcrowding problems. The overcrowding solutions (to be financed by a possible bond) include:

- A new fourth K-5 elementary school on district-owned land near the high school.
- High school expansion to add eight to ten additional classroom spaces, including science labs.
- Middle school expansion to add 14 new classrooms, larger student commons and a new gymnasium.

Conceptual Design comes from the Educational Specifications Process

Teachers, administrators and architects have been meeting throughout the school year to learn more from each other about the spatial and functional needs of new buildings and classrooms. According to Cindi Pacecca, 1st grade teacher at Lakeridge Elementary, "We have visited new schools and

discussed what we saw and learned. It is fascinating to see how these spaces impact learning."

Using these observations, Mahlum Architects and Integrus Architects will work with the newly developed educational specifications to create the new school designs. They will share the conceptual schemes and cost estimates with the community. For more about the "Ed Spec Process," watch the video posted on the district website at www.mercerislandschools.org/edspecvideo. Community listening sessions are occurring this spring and summer, and online feedback is available at www.mercerislandschools.org/facilities

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.mercerislandschools.org



"The Power of We is about celebrating us, the synergy and power of working together in the knowledge that together we are stronger than anything we could ever do alone."

Dr. Gary Plano, Superintendent

Thank you to the Mercer Island community

As the school district waits to hear from Olympia, the Mercer Island community came together to help "bridge the gap" and retain 18 teachers, middle/high school instructional coaches, and a K-5 art specialist. "We sincerely thank all of our generous donors for supporting Mercer Island teachers and students!" said MISF Executive Director Penny Yantis, as she presented a check for \$1 million from the Mercer Island Schools Foundation and PTA *Bridge the Gap* Task Force.

iPads in the classroom

Supporting personalized learning through technology

This spring, the Mercer Island School District launched the 1:1 iPad program geared for teachers and students in 8th through 12th grade. Tenth and eleventh grade students received their iPads in April, and by August the rollout will be complete for all 8th through 12th grade students.

According to Jennifer Wright, Executive Director of Learning and Technology Services, "We have been piloting these devices for the past two years and found them to be an effective way to engage students through their accessibility and variety of learning applications." Technology Integration Specialists at MIHS and IMS are planning ongoing professional staff development for teachers and offering support for each specific curriculum as they integrate 1:1 environments.

MISD Teachers of the Year

Heidi Harmening has taught kindergarten at Lakeridge Elementary since 2006. She is known for her ability to create a safe and nurturing environment in her classroom. She is a positive influence to staff, parents, and students alike.



As one teacher wrote, "It's a rare day to find her without a smile on her face or a joke or funny story to share."

Jeff Randolph has taught English at Mercer Island High School since 2007. He is professional, an expert on Common Core curriculum, and is committed to supporting his students' extracurricular activities.

"Mr. Randolph genuinely relates to



us and is a consistently understanding and entertaining source of knowledge and support," said a student.

Tonya Van Orden has taught science at Islander Middle School since 1999. "Students love her and push themselves beyond their comfort levels in pursuit of knowledge. I wish that everyone could spend a few minutes in her



classroom, as watching her teach is truly motivational," said one peer.

Examples of the 1:1 iPad program:

ShowMe at Islander Middle School

Teachers at Islander Middle School are using iPads in a 1:1 environment in science, math, social studies and language arts. An application called ShowMe acts like a screen casting device, recording words, text and images. In science, students create movies that explain virus development, discovery and treatment. In math, students explain how to find the volume of objects. In social studies, they review maps of Washington State from different time periods, and in language arts, students recap chapters they have read.

“The beauty of ShowMe is that teachers can see right away where a student needs help grasping a concept,” said Technology Integration Specialist Sarah Olson.

iPad and Office 365

MIHS teachers are exploring how the iPad and the new cloud storage space of Office 365 will require



less paper in their classes. The goals are not just environmental, but to teach a more digital style of organization. Office 365 Education includes Microsoft Office, Exchange, SharePoint and Lync and integrates with the 1:1 program to further enhance student learning.

MISD Superintendent Gary Plano said, “Office 365 Education is a 21st century solution to the ever-increasing demand for online learning and communication. Imagine students in class working on a research project on the class computers. They collect their notes and begin organizing them into a paper. They save photos and source documents and are really engaged in the learning. But at the end of the school day they have to leave it all behind. With the 1:1 program and Office 365 Education, they can take their work home and keep going.”

eBooks – Changing how we teach literature

A review of the common titles read in the 9-12 language arts classes shows that about 50% of them are in the public domain and can be freely distributed to students

via their iPads. Not only is there a dollar savings from not buying new paperback copies, but more significantly, teachers will not have to schedule who reads which titles at which time. For example, since there are only 120 copies of *Huck Finn*, only four sections were able to read it at a time. With about 11-13 sections of English for each grade level, language arts teachers agree that having all 10th graders reading the same title at once could be a huge plus for student collaboration.

World Language

Students in Margaret Aguilar’s Spanish and Zhous He’s Mandarin Chinese classes use the iPad to work on crossword puzzles, practice listening comprehension, and answer multiple choice questions to test their understanding with a formative assessment site called QuestionPress.

Audrey, a student in Spanish 3, appreciates the flexibility of the iPad in this class and in some of her other classes. “We use it a lot in my English and American Studies classes, and we are also reading more books online. I think the iPad is a very effective tool, especially when everyone knows how to use them.”



DISTRICT NEWS
Mercer Island School District
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MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS

Honoring our retiring staff

Donna Doyle
Linda Duncan
Joy Dunne
Gary Fredeen
Bill Henneger
Jim Juba
Jan Lamont
Mary Lindquist
Kathy Morrison
Pat Turner
Steve Ward

Congratulations!

**To our new National Board
Certified teachers:** Erik Wallin
and Michael Aguilera.

**To the graduates in the MIHS
Class of 2013.**

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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