



DISTRICT NEWS

Summer 2019

Congratulations to the MIHS Class of 2019!

Mercer Island High School held its 62nd commencement on June 11 at the accesso ShoWare Center in Kent, awarding diplomas to 395 seniors in the class of 2019.

The valedictorians were Christopher Elliott, Elizabeth Hetzel, Thomas Horton King and Katelyn Orndorff.

The salutatorians were Margaret Baker, Alan Bi, Samantha Kinder, Andrew Motz, Geonwoo Brian Park, Minje Park, Ethan Torok, Ella Veljovich and Rani Woerner. The faculty speaker was math teacher Kim Schjelderup, and Jonathan Na was the senior class speaker. (Photo by Joseph Chen)



Class of 2019 by the numbers

3	National Merit Scholars
4	Valedictorians
9	Salutatorians
10	National Merit Semi-Finalists
13	AP Scholars with Distinction
18	AP Scholars with Honors

48 Athletic teams

75 Clubs at MIHS

225 Seniors received the Washington Honors Award for being among the top 10% of all Washington state graduates.

233 President's Educational Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence

18,071 Hours of volunteer service to the community



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THE MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Mercer Island School District Board of Directors are elected to four-year terms. Responsibilities include goal setting; employing the superintendent; setting district policy; adopting an operating budget; placing levies and bonds before voters; approving the instructional program; and ratifying contracts. Learn more at: www.mercerislandschools.org/board

Brian Giannini Upton
President



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Ralph Jorgenson
Director



David D'Souza
Director



Tracy Drinkwater
Director



Donna Colosky
Superintendent
Secretary of the Board



SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Mercer Island community,

It's always bittersweet for me as we say farewell to our seniors at commencement, but it's with a great deal of anticipation that we will welcome our new kindergarteners, the class of 2032 (!!!) in September. In this issue of *District News* we celebrate not only our graduates, but also our teachers and classified staff of the year and 2019 retirees.

Over the past several months I have been holding focus group meetings throughout the District, getting reactions from parents, students, staff and community members to the draft core values, vision and mission statements for Mercer Island schools. The intent of this work has been to center our "why" around students as the priority and supporting the whole child.

Using the digital tool "ThoughtExchange," we received input from nearly 700 participants. The results are available on our website at mercerislandschools.org. The School Board reviewed the data in June and is expected to consider the revised values, vision and mission in August. These new documents will guide the District as we move forward.

The community is invited to join the School Board at 6 p.m. on August 22 in the Council Chambers at Mercer Island City Hall for a special linkage session and public hearing on the 2019-20 budget and to share any thoughts you may have about our District.

Have a wonderful rest of the summer, and we look forward to the first day of school for grades 1 to 12 on Wednesday, September 4, and for kindergarten on Monday, September 9.

Sincerely,

Donna Colosky, Superintendent

Be involved in your schools

WE WELCOME YOUR INPUT

**Come share your ideas about education in
Mercer Island public schools!**

Connect with the School Board at a linkage session with the
community:

Thursday, August 22, 2019, 6 p.m.
City Council Chambers
Mercer Island City Hall
9611 SE 36th St.

For more, visit MercerIslandSchools.org

PATHFINDER AWARDS

The Mercer Island School District presented its fourth annual Pathfinder Awards to four 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.

They are:

Caroline Fraser, 1979, author and winner of the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for biography for her critically-acclaimed book "Prairie Fires" about the life of author Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Pete Nordstrom, 1980, Erik Nordstrom, 1981, co-presidents of Nordstrom, the Seattle-based fashion retailer, and posthumously, Blake Nordstrom, 1978.

The newest Pathfinders were honored at the Mercer Island Schools Foundation's *Breakfast of Champions* on April 30. KING 5 Morning News co-anchor Steve Bunin, Class of 1992, served as the emcee for the event.

A permanent Pathfinder Awards wall has been created at Mercer Island High School alongside previously recognized distinguished graduates. Fifteen alumni have now been honored since the awards began in 2016.

The recipients were selected from dozens of nominations submitted by the community at large and chosen by a selection committee comprised of staff, students, administrators, community members and alumni from the district and board of the Mercer Island Schools Foundation.

Caroline Fraser, Class of 1979

Caroline Fraser was awarded the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Biography for "Prairie Fires: The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder," which also received the National Book Critics Circle Award for Biography, the 2018 Heartland Prize for non-fiction, and was named one of the 10 best books of 2018 by *The New York Times*.

Formerly on the editorial staff of *The New Yorker*, Fraser served as editor of the Library of America edition of Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House books and has written for *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Outside Magazine*, and *The London Review of Books*,



From left, Pathfinder Award recipients Erik Nordstrom, Caroline Fraser, Pete Nordstrom and Molly Nordstrom and emcee Steve Bunin at the 2019 Mercer Island Schools Foundation Breakfast of Champions at MIHS. (Photo by Larry Gill)

among other publications. She earned a doctorate from Harvard University in English and American literature. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with her husband, Hal Espen.

Pete Nordstrom, 1980, Erik Nordstrom, 1981, and posthumously, Blake Nordstrom, 1978

The three Nordstrom brothers all began their careers as teens working in sales and in the stockroom, the fourth generation in their family's iconic store founded in 1901. After graduating from the University of Washington, all three of them worked their way up in the company, together building on the legacy of customer service for which Nordstrom is famous.

Blake Nordstrom served as co-president of Nordstrom, Inc. and a member of the company's Board of Directors until his passing in January 2019. Blake's wife Molly accepted the award on behalf of her late husband.

He worked closely with co-presidents Pete Nordstrom and Erik Nordstrom, under whose combined leadership Nordstrom expanded its reach into new markets and opportunities while delivering solid financial results and increasing the number of stores from 115 to more than 370 during a challenging environment for retailers. The brothers also took the company international in 2014, opening the first Nordstrom store in Canada, and will open the first full-line Nordstrom store in New York City this year. All three have been active in philanthropy in the greater Seattle community.

POINTS OF PRIDE



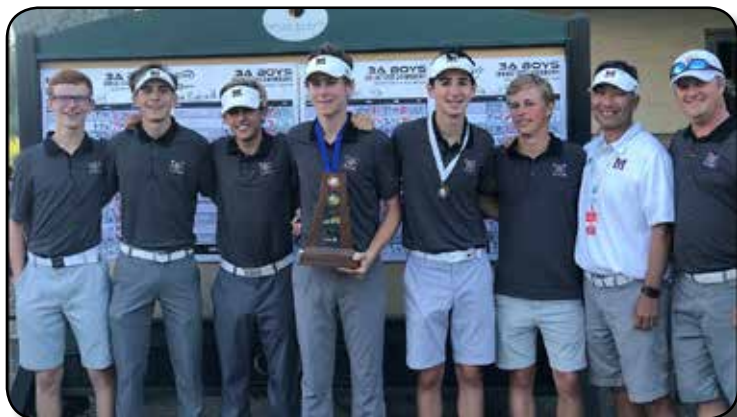
! Mercer Island boys and girls lacrosse teams both won their respective state 3A championships this spring. It was the first-ever state title for the girls.



! Team LegibIn't finished second in the secondary level Engineering Challenge as the Mercer Island Destination Imagination teams performed admirably at the Global Finals in Kansas City.



! Mercer Island High School was presented with its "No Place for Hate School" designation by the ADL Pacific Northwest in recognition of its work this year to promote respect and inclusion.



! Ethan Evans holds the trophy for winning the State 3A boys golf individual championship in Lacey, surrounded by his teammates who finished tied for third overall in the state as a team.

! The Mercer Island Schools Band Boosters were honored with a Community Recognition Award by the Washington Association of School Administrators for its incredible support of the band programs and helping Banda Escolar de Guayanilla from Puerto Rico fulfill its dream of marching with Mercer Island in the 2019 Rose Parade.



POINTS OF PRIDE



! The School Board recognized the Green Teams from each school at its June 13 meeting. These hard-working teams remind our students and faculty about the importance of reducing our waste, sorting our trash, conserving energy and water and much more. These teachers and students continue to keep this important work going. Mercer Island is a certified Green District and the schools have been recognized as Sustaining Green Schools by King County.

! The combined efforts of the MIHS Islander staff and Northwood Elementary fourth graders have resulted in a jointly-published newspaper called "The Owlander," full of interesting articles about both schools and the greater Mercer Island community. Students in teachers Chris Twombly and Amy Kerby's classes met for several weeks as part of this creative mentoring project.



! The Mercer Island High School orchestras won several awards from the Heritage Festival in Fullerton, Calif. Their awards included first place and outstanding orchestra in the chamber orchestra division, second in the symphonic orchestra division and students Bridget Navarro and Lauren Majewski were recognized as outstanding soloists for the whole festival. The orchestras also participated in a recording session at Disney Studios.

EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

Classified Employees of the Year

Jay Little, Dispatcher, Transportation

Jay is the MISD Transportation Department's unsung hero and behind-the-scenes wizard who daily manages the coordination of students, drivers, and buses with kindness, patience, and resourcefulness.

Jay works through the stressful situations that can arise suddenly in the world of student transportation. Whether it's a concerned parent on the phone whose student may be on the wrong bus, or a driver experiencing a mechanical issue, Jay will jump into action and get the problem resolved.



Karen Hubbert, Business Services

Karen does her work in the District's central office in a calm and efficient way and never makes anyone feel like they are causing a problem. Although she deals with seven schools, she makes every staff member feel important when they call.

Karen knows how to help others and get things done to keep the Business Services department running smoothly.



Liz Kuhn, Northwood Elementary

Liz is the PALS (Practicing And Learning Skills) coach for Northwood, part of the Multi-Tiered System of Support for behavior learning.

As such, she builds authentic, effective relationships with kids who are struggling with specific behaviors and/or self-regulation skills. She creates individualized plans for them, identifying target goals and providing daily feedback and encouragement to her students. She is thoughtful about her work with each child, and she collaborates effectively with teachers and staff throughout the school building.



Teachers of the Year

Julie Biggs, Islander Middle School

Artist, teacher and leader - Julie's dedication to student enrichment is awe-inspiring. She embodies the idea of lifelong learner. She sets high expectations for herself and for her students. This year she partnered with a community artist and a writer in order to create an experience for students that was completely "out of the box," the Lego Superheroes project that was featured at the Mercer Island Community Center and the Foundation Breakfast of Champions.



Parker Bixby, Mercer Island High School

Parker has put the MIHS Band Program on the international map of recognition, including its selection for the 2019 Tournament of Roses Parade.

With inspiring leadership, he has taught students what it means to be compassionate about what they do in life and to serve their community in ways beyond the music they learn, including the annual band food drive and the support for Banda Escolar de Guayanilla from Puerto Rico.



Chris Cocklin Ray, West Mercer Elementary

Chris is an exemplary teacher and leader. Her work is always focused on students; their academic and social emotional needs and how she can meet those needs. She inspires others, students and staff, through her positive attitude, infectious enthusiasm, and thoughtful, well researched lessons.



She also builds strong relationships with students, staff, and families. It is not unheard of for Chris to spend her planning time co-teaching in another staff member's classroom, that is how much she values students and teaching. She has been a strong leader for welcoming and embracing innovative teaching approaches.

2019 RETIREES



The School Board honored the District's 2019 retirees at a meeting in May. These employees gave a combined 157 years of service to the District and the students of Mercer Island.

They are Cathy Gentino, Mercer Island Youth and Family Services counselor at Mercer Island High School; Bonnie Barthelme, Islander Middle School nurse; Jan Brousseau, Islander Middle School French and ELL teacher; Bill Harris, bus driver, Transportation; Carol Krell, Islander Middle School music teacher; Trish O'Malley, Islander Middle School paraeducator; and Jan Sayers, Mercer Island High School English and Business Communications teacher.

Two young children, a boy and a girl, are seen from behind, painting the words "THANK YOU" on a large white board. The letters are colorful and hand-painted. The boy is wearing a green shirt and the girl is wearing a blue shirt. They are both holding paintbrushes and are in the process of finishing the letters.

to everyone in our generous community who
has invested to guarantee a world-class public
education for every Mercer Island student.

The last bell has rung for this school year
but it's not too late to make your donation.
Don't forget to initiate your corporate match.



MERCER ISLAND SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

MercerIslandSchoolsFoundation.com/donate

Mercer Island School District No. 400
District News Summer 2019

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children for the
2019-20 school
year now!**

**[mercerislandschools.org/
NewStudents](http://mercerislandschools.org/NewStudents)**



**NONDISCRIMINATION
NOTIFICATION**

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 following people have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

**Harassment, Intimidation and
Bullying (HIB) Coordinator:**

Erin Battersby, Executive Director
206-230-6227
erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org

Title IX Compliance Coordinator:

Erin Battersby, Executive Director
206-230-6227
erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org

Section 504 & ADA Coordinator:

Nova Williams, Assistant Director
(206) 236-4510
nova.williams@mercerislandschools.org

Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator:

Erin Battersby, Executive Director
206-230-6227
erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org