



NEWS

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MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Islander Middle School expansion includes new classrooms, commons, gyms, library

The expanded Islander Middle School was dedicated on October 1, as the community had its first opportunity to tour the new commons, gymnasium, library and classrooms.

"We are grateful for the support our community gave to this project with their passage of the 2014 bond proposition," said Superintendent Dr. Gary Plano. "These improvements will enhance the instructional programs at Islander Middle School for many years to come."

The construction at Islander Middle School provides expanded learning space to replace the 10 portable classrooms previously on site. It also provides a new commons designed to accommodate a growing student population.

Integrus Architecture of Seattle designed the expansions to IMS. Kassel & Associates is the general contractor. Brandy Fox of CPM Seattle, Inc. managed the project for the district.

The new building is 93,000 square feet and the site includes a new commons and kitchen, library, main and auxiliary gymnasiums, locker rooms, administrative offices and a new entrance for the school. There are eight new



Islander Middle School Co-Principals Mary Jo Budzius and Aaron Miller and Associate Principal Tara Stone cut the ribbon at the dedication ceremony for the school expansion.

general-purpose classrooms, two science classrooms, two special education classrooms, two shared learning areas, three music classrooms and six practice rooms.

"The exceptional layout, design and equipment are of high quality and the music rooms are uniquely designed for the Islander music program," said music teacher Carol Krell as she demonstrated the sound system. "They can hear themselves and each other better."

The building design embraces the concept of shared learning areas. Clustering classrooms together supports a variety of activities, teaching styles and learning styles.

"The shared learning areas are a wonderful addition to our school," said Litza Johnson, social studies teacher. "It's great to be able to have small group work going on outside while another group is in my classroom taking a test."

Construction at the middle school began in the spring of 2015 and the addition opened on schedule for the first day of school, August 31. On the same day, Northwood Elementary opened its doors to students as the first new school building constructed on Mercer Island in more than 50 years.



The expanded Islander Middle School features two gymnasiums for school and community use.

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

We are off to a smooth start to our 75th anniversary school year. Northwood Elementary and the new addition at Islander Middle School opened without incident and presently within budget.

The district began the school year with 4,346 students, 26 more than projected and about 100 more than at the end of last year. Our Island community continues to grow in both numbers and diversity. Among our newest students, 57 percent report as white or Caucasian, compared to 66 percent of all district students. Nearly all of the federally designated race categories show increases with the exception of those who identify as Caucasian and African-American.

We welcomed more than 300 new families to the district this fall, and the Diversity Advisory Committee held a successful event on October 5



Dr. Gary Plano
Superintendent



Diversity Advisory Committee member Julie Ogata Ciobanu talks with new families at the Welcome Event on October 5 in the commons at Northwood Elementary.

at Northwood to introduce them to over 20 community organizations.

We continue to increase our social media presence. Please keep in touch with us daily on Facebook at facebook.com/mercerislandschooldistrict, follow us on Twitter @mercerislandsd and look for our posts on Nextdoor Mercer Island.

This represents my 10th school year as your superintendent, and I

am incredibly proud to work together with you to deliver a world-class public education to the students in our Island community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Plano".

Gary Plano, Ed. D.
Superintendent

Nominations open for 2nd year of Pathfinder Awards honoring Mercer Island HS alumni

The Mercer Island School District is now seeking nominations for its second annual Pathfinder Awards. The award celebrates graduates of Mercer Island High School whose achievements, strength of character, and citizenship inspire and challenge today's youth. The deadline to submit nominations online is January 15, 2017.

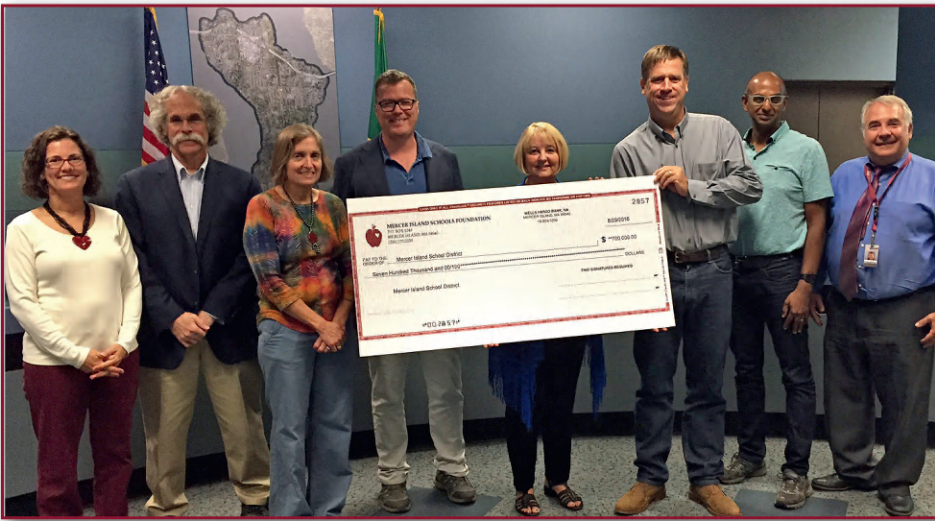
"The inaugural 2016 Pathfinder Awards were such a great success, honoring four outstanding graduates," said Superintendent Dr. Gary Plano. "These men and women and countless others have made significant contributions to society in meaningful ways through their service, leadership, and creativity in communities both local and national."

Visit mercerislandschools.org/alumni to view the selection criteria and submit a nomination online. Winners will be honored at the Mercer Island Schools Foundation's Breakfast of Champions on April 25, 2017.



2016 Pathfinder Award recipients Dr. Michelle Flowers Taylor, left, and Dr. Warren Brown.

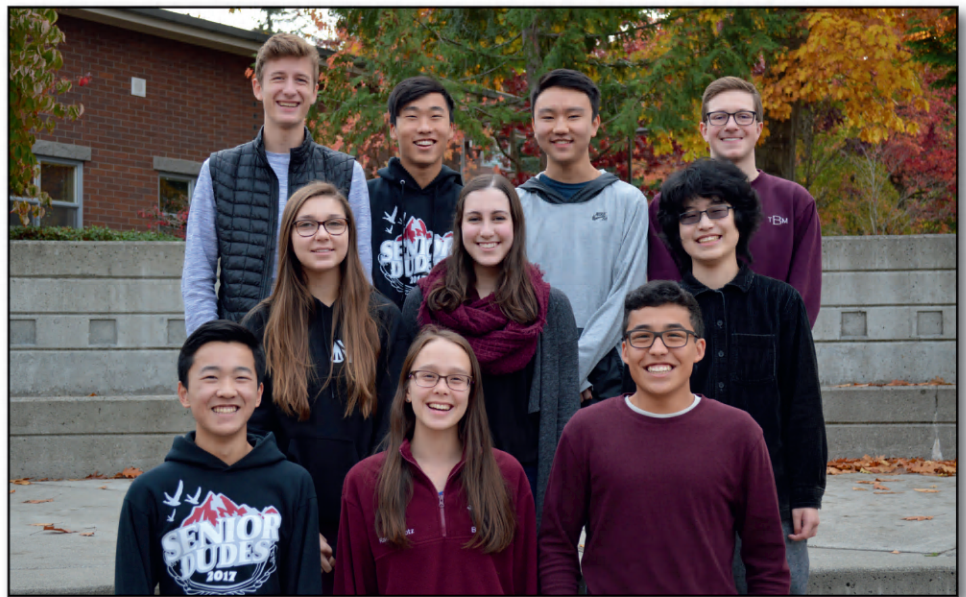
POINTS OF PRIDE



◀ The Mercer Island Schools Foundation (MISF) presented a \$700,000 check to the Mercer Island School District Board of Directors at the August 29 meeting from the Bridge 2016 campaign to support Mercer Island schools.

"Thanks to the supreme generosity of our parents, businesses and community members, the Foundation is able to help prepare every student to succeed and make Mercer Island schools among the very best in the state," said MISF Executive Director Penny Yantis.

▶ Ten Mercer Island High School seniors have been named National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalists, ranking in the top 1 percent of high school seniors nationally. They are: Larissa Bitners, Matthew Chansky, Charles Cuono, Nikita Marcou, Rachel Motz, Elaine Shen, Christopher Shin, Joshua Shin, Adam Tucker and Bryan Zhao. The semifinalists qualify to compete for about 7,500 National Merit Scholarships worth \$35 million.



◀ The Burao Academy in Somalia has opened with the help of donated supplies collected by MIHS students through the advanced marketing class and purchased surplus school furniture from the district.

Founder Asha Farah said those items "not only saved the day, but elevated the school to a level never seen in Somaliland and possibly in the entire continent of Africa. Thank you for giving Burao Academy students to chance to succeed."

FALL DISTRICT NEWS

Mercer Island School District

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Mercer Island, WA 98040

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Foundation Phone-A-Thon calling for kids Nov. 15-16

On November 15 and 16, phones across Mercer Island will be ringing when volunteers make calls to friends and neighbors on behalf of the Mercer Island Schools Foundation, asking them to make an investment in the tradition of excellence for schools and students. The fall "All in for Kids" Phone-A-Thon campaign has a goal to raise \$484,300 for strategic K-12 programs in core academics and enrichment. Your gift fuels success for every student at every school! To volunteer, contact Tammy@misf.com.



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.

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