



# NEWS

MERCERISLANDSCHOOLS.ORG SUMMER 2018

MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

## *From Island to Island:*

## **MIHS helping Puerto Rico band get to 2019 Rose Parade**

**T**he Mercer Island High School Marching Band has begun its preparations for the 2019 Rose Parade presented by Honda.

Tournament of Roses President Gerald Freeny and his wife Trina presented the band with its official banner during their weeklong visit to the Island earlier this spring. This will be the fourth Rose Parade appearance for the Mercer Island Band, with the most recent in 2012.

The MIHS Marching Band is helping to support the Banda Escolar de Guayanilla (BEG) from Puerto Rico, a community band that was also chosen for the 2019 Rose Parade, two weeks prior to the devastation of Hurricane Maria.

BEG was founded in 1975 and serves its small community in south Puerto Rico. They have marched in four Rose Parades, including in 2012 with Mercer Island. The MIHS band sent students, band directors and others to Guayanilla over spring break in April to build relationships with BEG's student leadership and to assess how best to provide aid and to form a lasting partnership. The students met with Puerto Rico and Guayanilla civic leaders and marched and played with BEG in their annual festival.

The MIHS band has raised over \$15,000 for BEG through a variety of fundraisers. Visit [mercerislandbands.com](http://mercerislandbands.com) to learn more about the MIHS Band, their trip to the Tournament of Roses and their work with Banda Escolar de Guayanilla.



Tournament of Roses President Gerald Freeny and his wife, Trina, presented the MIHS marching band with its banner signifying its participation in the 2019 Rose Parade.

## **Congratulations to the MIHS Class of 2018!**



Mercer Island High School graduated 360 seniors at its 61st commencement on June 7 at KeyArena in Seattle. The class of 2018 has eight valedictorians, all with perfect 4.0 grade point averages: Annika Evens, Jon Ho, Mithril Hugunin, Miti Parikh, Sarah Pickles, Zoe Sheill, Leah Wootton and Jasmine Zou. Salutatorians are Alison Dickstein, Brian Smoots and Kenneth Wang. The faculty speaker was math teacher Laurie Schwartzberg, the student speaker selected by the class was Sophie Poole. Performers included guitar/vocalist Sophie Feldman and guzheng soloist Ena Wang. (Photo by Allison Nelson)



Mercer Island High School marching band members visited Guayanilla, Puerto Rico during spring break to explore ways to help support the Banda Escolar de Guayanilla (BEG), which was invited to participate in the 2019 Rose Parade just as Hurricane Maria devastated their community.

# SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

*Dear Mercer Island community,*

The 2017-18 school year is in the books as we said goodbye to 360 Mercer Island High School seniors at commencement and to a dozen retirees as they ended their careers with MISD. As I complete my first year as your superintendent, I want to thank you for your warm welcome as I have met so many wonderful Islanders.



Our District is incredibly grateful for the support shown by voters in approving the Replacement Educational Programs and Operations levy earlier this year with 70 percent approval, the highest in King County.

Our local levy dollars stay on Mercer Island, providing educational experiences beyond

the state's definition of basic education. They fund 17 percent of the District's general fund budget, including 35 percent of special education funding.

With respect to state funding, the Washington Supreme Court recently decided that the Legislature has met its requirement to fully fund education pursuant to the McCleary case. The legislative action increased state funding for schools, but decreased the District's local levy authority.

While significant changes and progress have been made, districts statewide are still seeking guidance and clarification to changes in the law.

The District's 2018-2019 budget is being designed around the implementation of several factors, including salary increases resulting from the 2018-19 collective bargaining agreement with the Mercer Island Education Association. Additional funding will support reductions to K-3 class sizes, an additional academic counselor in

support of the pathway to high school, the restoration of the instructional coaches, and strengthening our professional development in support of quality teaching and learning for every student. The current plan for the 2018-19 budget also makes the adjustments necessary to restore the District's fund balance.

The community is invited to join the Board on August 23 at a special study session on the 2018-19 budget and to share any thoughts you may have on our District. This "linkage" session will begin at 6 p.m. at Mercer Island City Hall.

Have a wonderful summer, and we look forward to the first day of school on Wednesday, September 5.

*Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Colosky".

**Donna Colosky, Superintendent**

## Retirees leave a legacy of service to Mercer Island

**T**he District honored its 2017-18 retirees at a reception during the May 24 School Board meeting. Retiring this year are:

**Suzy Albrecht**, secretary for special programs at MIHS, hired in 2001.

**Pam Baumler**, administrative assistant for special services in the District office since 2009.

**Tom Cox**, choral music teacher and choir director at Islander Middle School and Mercer Island High School since 1992.

**Teri Johnson**, paraprofessional at Lakeridge, hired in 1995.

**Annmarie Laird**, third grade teacher at West Mercer, hired in 2008.

**Debbie McKenzie**, athletics, activities and facilities secretary at MIHS, hired in 1994.

**Beth Nielsen**, first grade teacher at Island Park, hired in 1989.

**Mike Radow**, social studies teacher at



Left to right are Jennifer Wright, Mark Shafer, Cheryl Sandstrom, Beth Nielsen, Mike Radow, Annmarie Laird, Tom Cox and Suzy Albrecht.

MIHS, hired in 1994.

**Cheryl Sandstrom**, third grade teacher at Island Park, hired in 1989.

**Rhonda Schweinhart**, second grade teacher at Lakeridge, hired in 1997.

**Mark Shafer**, mathematics teacher at MIHS, hired in 2006.

**Jennifer Wright**, executive director of learning and technology services, hired in 1993.



# TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR

## **Creighton Laughary, High School Teacher of the Year**

Creighton has taught English for 18 years at the high school and is currently co-department chair. He also served as head wrestling coach for 11 years.



Principal Vicki Puckett praised Creighton as a humble professional who works with his students and all of their individual needs. She said she appreciates most the care Creighton has for others, his leadership among staff, and his approachable professional demeanor to all who come into contact with him.

## **Jessica Steinle, Middle School Teacher of the Year**

Jessica Steinle has taught math at Islander Middle School since 2004. Co-Principals Mary Jo Budzius and Aaron Miller say she has high expectations of all her students and provides ample opportunities for students to come in and get extra help.



"She is sensitive to kids and what is happening in their lives both in and out of school. She is concerned and reflective about her teaching and learning.."

## **Stacy Smedberg, Elementary Teacher of the Year**

Stacy Smedberg has taught in our district since 2009 and is the physical education teacher at Northwood Elementary. She is described by Principal Aimee Batliner-



Gillette as a caring, warm, welcoming, and inclusive educator.

She is diligent in her efforts to get to know each child's needs, adjusting and adapting her P.E. instruction and activities to make learning accessible and to engage each child's body and mind.

## **Tony Ham, custodian, Northwood Elementary - Support Staff of the Year**

Tony Ham is a critical part of the Northwood community. He maintains very high standards to keep the school safe, clean, and high-functioning for students, staff, and parents.



He connects positively with students throughout the school day, getting to know them and engaging with them at lunches and across the campus. He has built a cadre of helpers, enlisting students to help clean up the commons and instilling in them the sense of pride he feels in caring for the building and the people within it.

## **Kathleen Long, Human Resources Coordinator - Support Staff of the Year**

"Kathleen is amazing," says Erin Battersby, senior director and Rosie Burns, director of

HR. "She wears many hats and juggles many responsibilities in her role.

"When District staff and job candidates contact HR, Kathleen is always very helpful and kind to whomever needs assistance. Her detailed orientation is unparalleled. She can be counted on to do what needs to be done and she adds special touches that enhance the culture of our central office."



## **Jessie Ong, paraprofessional, Island Park Elementary - Support Staff of the Year**

Jessie Ong is a professional, talented and hard-working member of the Island Park staff.

During the year, Jessie has performed a myriad of duties that included working one to one with children who need assistance, remedial teaching, or catching up from being absent.

Positivity, kindness and patience radiates from her smiling face as she greets students in the morning and throughout the day.



## **40 years of service to Mercer Island High School students**

Jane Dolence marked a milestone this spring as she completed her 40th year in food service at Mercer Island High School. She was recently honored at the high school and joined by Superintendent Donna Colosky and School Board Director Brian Giannini Upton.



# PATHFINDER AWARDS HONOR FOUR DIST

**T**he Mercer Island School District presented its third 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.

The 2018 Pathfinders are:

**Dawn Bennett, 1982, co-founder of the Multicultural Education Rights Alliance (McERA).**

**Mary Lindquist, 1967, former president of the Washington Education Association and a teacher for 36 years at MIHS.**

**Marty Lott, 1968, founder and CEO of Sanmar Corporation, the nation's leading supplier of imprintable apparel.**

**Joel McHale, 1991, actor, comedian and host of "The Joel McHale Show with Joel McHale" on Netflix.**

The newest Pathfinders were honored at the Mercer Island Schools Foundation's *Breakfast of Champions*. A permanent Pathfinder Awards wall has been created at Mercer Island High School alongside previously recognized distinguished graduates.

The recipients were selected from over 40 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.

*Continued on next page*



Pathfinder Award recipients, from left: Mary Lindquist, Marty Lott and Dawn Bennett with their awards presented at the Mercer Island Schools Foundation Breakfast of Champions. (Photos by Larry Gill)

## ARE YOU ONE OF THE 34%?

So far, that's how many families in the district have donated to support the spring's BRIDGE|2018 fundraising campaign.

The last bell has rung for this school year but it is not too late to make your donation!



**Do it today and be counted!**

**MERCER ISLAND SCHOOLS FOUNDATION**

[MercerIslandSchoolsFoundation.com/donate](https://MercerIslandSchoolsFoundation.com/donate)

*Thank you to everyone who has already invested to guarantee innovative, world-class public education for every Mercer Island student.*



Twitter: @mercerislandsd  
Instagram: mercer\_island\_school\_district  
Facebook: @mercerislandschooldistrict



# TINGUISHED MERCER ISLAND ALUMNI

## Dawn Bennett, Class of 1982

Dawn Bennett has been an advocate for children and teens throughout her career. As a basketball player and coach, gang prevention specialist and caseworker for the City of Seattle and Seattle Public Schools, Dawn has worked to support those who might otherwise fall through the education gaps.

During her work on political campaigns and as a community organizer, she co-founded the Multicultural Education Rights Alliance (McERA) to eliminate the school to prison pipeline through education and action. Dawn continues to work with teens and is board chair of the African American Leadership Forum, which focuses on improving the economic health of communities through public and private partnerships.

## Mary Lindquist, Class of 1967

Mary Lindquist taught English and Social Studies for 36 years (1971-2007) at MIHS, and coached the debate team during much of that time, earning a place in the WIAA Debate Coaches Hall of Fame. An innovative educator, she combined literature, writing, and social studies, and advocated the use of



Pathfinder award recipient Joel McHale was unable to attend the event, but entertained the audience with humor via Facetime from his car in Los Angeles.

this interdisciplinary method for all students.

She served multiple terms as president of the Mercer Island Education Association (MIEA), then rose through the ranks to become the president of the 80,000-member Washington Education Association, the statewide teacher union.

## Marty Lott, Class of 1968

Marty Lott is CEO and founder of SanMar Corporation, the largest supplier of

imprintable apparel in the U.S., with more than 4,000 employees and operations in eight states, and factories around the world.

Begun by Lott as a college project at the University of Washington, SanMar is governed by a set of values they refer to as the SanMar Family Values, a personal approach to corporate responsibility, supporting communities, delivering sustainable products and taking action to reduce its environmental impact.

## Joel McHale, Class of 1991

Joel McHale may be the most well-known Mercer Islander alive, with nearly four million followers on Twitter. He has made a hugely successful career in the most precarious of professions, acting and stand-up comedy. He got his start in acting at the high school and at Youth Theater Northwest.

He is best known as the longtime host of "The Soup," which ran for a decade on the "E!" television network; star of the NBC-TV sitcom "Community" which ran for five seasons; and leading role in the CBS sitcom "The Great Indoors" which ran in 2016-2017. His new weekly Netflix show "The Joel McHale Show starring Joel McHale" debuted in February.



Joel McHale's parents, Laurie and Jack McHale of Mercer Island, accepted the Pathfinder Award on his behalf.

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 23, 2018, 6 p.m.**  
**City Council Chambers**  
**Mercer Island City Hall**  
**9611 SE 36th St.**

For more, visit [MercerIslandSchools.org](http://MercerIslandSchools.org)

# POINTS OF PRIDE



▲ Thirteen student staff of the Mercer Island High School radio station KMIH 88.9 The Bridge received honors at the 78th annual Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Golden Microphone Awards in New York City. The station was also chosen as the best in the state in the Washington High School Radio Awards.



▲ Mercer Island High School has been again recognized with a Gold Medal ranking among the nation's Best High Schools in the 2018 annual rankings by *U.S. News & World Report* for student achievement. Gold medal recognition was given to less than two percent of the nation's high schools this year by *U.S. News*.



◀ The Mercer Island Fine Arts Advisory Council was honored for community service by the Mercer Island School District in May. The Fine Arts Council received the Community Recognition Award from the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA). For five decades, the Mercer Island Fine Arts Advisory Council has dedicated itself to supporting arts education as it partners with the MISD.

▶ Dana Berejka, a senior at Mercer Island High School, was selected as a U.S. Presidential Scholar. Berejka is one of 161 American high school seniors who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement, artistic excellence, leadership, citizenship, service, and contribution to school and community. She named as her most influential teacher Kara Millsap, her first-grade teacher at Lakeridge Elementary. Millsap is now the district's elementary technology specialist. The U.S. Presidential Scholars were honored for their accomplishments in Washington D.C. in June.





# POINTS OF PRIDE



Each year students in Lindsay Oliveira's fourth grade class at Northwood Elementary become pen pals with residents at Aljoya on Mercer Island. Students and residents exchange letters monthly. At the end of each school year, the students visit Aljoya for a pen pal party. For many of the pen pals, this is the first time they have met in person after getting to know each other so well through letter writing. The pen pals were able to sit together to visit, eat ice cream sundaes, and tour the Aljoya gardens and facilities. Many of the students will continue to write and send summer post cards to their pen pals.

MIHS is the only school in the world to have four students attain a perfect score on the spring 2017 AP exam in macroeconomics, according to the College Board. All four students had the same teacher, Kim Schjelderup. Two are seniors this year, Zack Gottesman and Alex Mueller. Two graduated in 2017 – Adam Tucker attends Yale University and Bryan Zhao attends UCLA. Tucker had two previous perfect AP scores in 2016 in calculus and microeconomics, and was one of only three students to get two perfect scores that year.



The Mercer Island High School Destination Imagination (DI) team "Syntax Folly" placed third in the technical challenge at the recent Destination Imagination Global Finals in Knoxville, Tenn. This is the first Global Finals trophy for MIHS. Their coach is West Mercer Elementary teacher Mark Headlee. DI is an educational program in which student teams solve a variety of open-ended challenges and present their solutions at tournaments. The Technical Challenge prompts students to complete tasks by using engineering, research, strategic planning and related skills.

## SUMMER DISTRICT NEWS

### Mercer Island School District #400

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### MISD Board of Directors

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**Donna Colosky, Superintendent**

*donna.colosky@mercerislandschools.org*

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.

**Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Compliance Officer:**

Erin Battersby, Senior Director of Compliance and Legal Affairs, (206) 230-6227  
*erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org*

**Title IX Compliance Coordinator:**

Erin Battersby, Senior Director of Compliance and Legal Affairs, (206) 230-6227  
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**Section 504 & ADA Coordinator:**

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

**Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator:**

Erin Battersby, Senior Director of Compliance and Legal Affairs, (206) 230-6227  
*erin.battersby@mercerislandschools.org*



# WELCOME NEW FAMILIES

## Please register your children for school now!

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



**Mercer Island  
School District**