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## **Mercer Island School District**

# **DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL SERVICES NEWSLETTER**

Volume 1 Issue #1 | January 2022

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## **Special Services Will Ensure Recovery Services For All Students That Qualify**

Welcome to our first issue of the Mercer Island School District Department of Special Services monthly newsletter. It is our intention to provide monthly updates on important topics as well as highlight the wonderful work of our Special Services team.

### **RECOVERY SERVICES**

The Department is working hard to ensure recovery services for all students that qualify. We are still a little bit behind our internal estimates on providing additional Recovery Services options as it took until December to sign a MOU with the union. Our original goal was to have services in place for a majority of students by the start of the new year. We did not anticipate COVID-19 hitting the District as hard as it has this season. The staff's energy and ability to prepare and plan has been impacted by COVID-19 – and like all of us, the staff is no different, in battling COVID-19 fatigue.

We will be extending the original estimate from August 31, 2022 to August 31, 2023 to complete all services. We are prioritizing high school students as they have fewer days until graduation, but will be providing options for all students in the second semester. Teachers have come forward with ideas at all levels, but with COVID-19, fatigue, and balancing work and family responsibilities we are waiting a few more weeks to implement.

### **COVID-19 IMPACT**

Mercer Island School District has been working very hard to keep students safe and in-school. We have offered drive-up testing kit pick-up for staff

and students so they can test-to-stay in school or return based on updated Department of Health guidance. Our special services coaches and administration have been subbing in classrooms to ensure that students are continuing to receive their special education services. We have been very fortunate that we have 3 highly qualified Special Services Coaches that can pivot responsibilities and work directly with students. Beth DeGrace as well as myself can be found in classrooms ensuring services are being provided. Some staff, as appropriate, have been working virtually with students with dedicated personnel in classrooms so that instruction can continue uninterrupted.

Superintendent Donna Colosky has made it clear that our priority is to keep schools open and in-person. Rest assured that the Special Services department does have a back-up plan to provide in-person support to students that are highly impacted just like we did last school year with appointment services in September of 2020 and enhanced appointment services in November 2020.

## **SSALD**

The Special Services Department is excited to announce the partnership with the PTA Committed of Special Abilities and Learning Differences (SSALD). SSALD is co-chaired by Jennifer Crespi and Jessi Biagi. There are representatives from each school that report back any suggestions or issues they see at their respective schools for the committee to cover in their meetings. The representatives for each school are as follows:

**Northwood:** Cathy Chen & Jennifer Gilbert

**Island Park:** Destiny Bachman & Alexis MacLean

**Lakeridge:** Jessi Biagi

**West Mercer:** Vivian Zhou

**IMS:** Meg Hamill

**MIHS:** Kathy McDonald

The next meeting is February 9 at 6:30 pm. Please email Jennifer and Jessi at [ssald@miptacouncil.org](mailto:ssald@miptacouncil.org) if you would like to be added to the SSALD contact list and receive the Zoom link for the meetings.

## **NEXT ISSUE:**

Topics in our next issue will include

1. Transitions (Pre-school to Kindergarten; Middle school to High school, and high school to Pathways)
2. Recovery Update
3. Extended School Year

We look forward to highlighting all the creative ways recovery services will help all students during this time.

In future issues of this newsletter we are going to be highlighting our great staff and all the work they are doing.

## **Important Dates To Remember**

**January 17**

Martin Luther King Jr. Day - No School

**February 21-25**

Mid Winter Break

**April 11-15**

Spring Break

## **Quick Links**

- [Mercer Island School District Website](#)

- [MISD Special Services Website](#)

- [MISD Learning Services Website](#)

- [Kindergarten 2022-23 Registration](#)

- [MISD New Families Enrollment](#)



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