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## April Recognitions and Celebrations Message From Superintendent Rundle

1 message

Fred Rundle &lt;communications@mercerislandschools.org&gt;

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### MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT #400

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Fred Rundle, Ed.D, Superintendent

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Dear Mercer Island School District and Community,

Moving to the Pacific Northwest from Colorado required some adjusting. Seattle's long summer nights and short winter days wreaked havoc on my sense of a day. The vast horizons in Denver offered spectacular sunrises and sunsets, giving a sense of openness and distance. In Seattle, we are confined by the snug enclosure of mountain ranges to the east and west and towering Douglas Firs blurring our vistas. Over the past 14 years, I have grown accustomed to these and other differences, but something that took longer than others to really grasp is the school calendar.

If you are from most other parts of the country the school year ends right around Memorial Day. (For those of you who made an international move, the adjustment is undoubtedly even tougher!) By the time school hits late April it should be time to start planning for summer; but here in the Pacific Northwest, not so fast! We are just coming up on the end of the third quarter, which means we still have a quarter of our year to go.

I point this out to remind us all to stay the course and keep our focus. Our students have more time for learning, growing, and preparing for next year. The longer days I mentioned above can fool us into thinking the end of the school year is closer than it really is. I urge us all, students, guardians, teachers, and staff, to remember that every school day matters.

Upcoming in April, we have more religious and cultural celebrations to recognize. Though some of these spiritual or days of significance fall either on a weekend or when the schools are closed for spring break, we will continue to recognize and make space for our students and staff who participate in the many traditions.

#### Autism Awareness Month

The United Nations marks World Autism Awareness Day each year on April 2. This is the start of a month-long effort to promote awareness about autism. Throughout the month, the focus is on creating a more inclusive world, particularly for those with autism. Autism Speaks, an international organization focused on advocacy, education, and change challenged us all to stand together and make a world of difference. It is estimated that 1:36 children are diagnosed with autism. Globally, but especially right here in our own school district, we all play a part in breaking down barriers to ensure our students with autism can reach their full potential.

#### Passover- April 5-13

Passover is a Jewish holiday to commemorate the Hebrew liberation from slavery in Egypt. The first night is typically honored with a dinner called the seder. While the eight days of Passover are filled with celebration, those participating in Passover often follow a more strict diet to recognize the suffering during slavery and exodus from Egyptian rule.

#### Good Friday and Easter- April 7 and 9

Good Friday and Easter are religious days and celebrations for Christians. Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus and his death. This is followed by Easter, the day Christians celebrate as the resurrection

of Jesus, which confirmed his teachings as the son of God.

**Yom HaShoah- Holocaust Remembrance Day- April 18**

Take a quick walk around the Island Park and Lakeridge campuses and you will notice an abundance of daffodils. Last year at Island Park and this year at Lakeridge, high schoolers from the Jewish Student Union worked with elementary students in the fall as part of the Daffodil Project. The daffodil bulbs planted in the fall and that bloom in the spring signify the lives lost during the Holocaust. Thus, on April 18 we will pause and remember those who suffered during the Holocaust.

**Eid al-Fitr- April 20-21**

The Muslim holy month of Ramadan comes to a close on April 20 and 21. Eid al-Fitr marks the conclusion of Ramadan and is a time of great celebration. While this marks the end of the fasting period and involves food, Eid can also be a time for togetherness, gift giving, and prayer.

**Earth Day- April 22**

Earth Day is an annual event on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First held on April 22, 1970, it now includes a wide range of events coordinated globally by [EARTHDAY.ORG](http://EARTHDAY.ORG). Invest in Our Planet is the theme this year. Please consider joining millions of others around the globe in participating in Earth Day 2023.

**Intra-District Transfers**

Elementary students are expected to attend the elementary school within their home boundary, except for those students who attend a district program outside of their geographic boundary (e.g., Highly Capable Program).

However, each year the district [opens a form](#) for parents to apply for their child to attend an elementary school that is out of their boundary area. The window opens on April 1 and closes on April 30 of each school year. If approved, parents are responsible for transportation of their child(ren) to school.

For more information, you may review [Board Policy 3131](#) which has detailed information on our Intra-District Transfer process. There will be no consideration for transfer requests outside of the April window.

Have a wonderful first full month of spring!

Sincerely,

Fred Rundle

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