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June Celebrations and Recognitions Message From Superintendent Rundle

1 message

Fred Rundle <communications@mercerislandschools.org>

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Fred Rundle, Ed.D, Superintendent

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Dear Mercer Island Community and Friends,

Well, we made it to June! However, this is a bit like our hopes and dreams for each graduating class. Our dream for our graduates is to not just get into college or on a career trajectory, but instead to thrive wherever life takes them. Thus, we need to all remember that getting to June is not the objective- it is now time to excel all the way through June 23rd!

We will celebrate our students and their accomplishments in and out of the classroom this month. June is also an opportunity to live our mission, vision, and values. This year, we utilized Dr. Tammy Campbell's 4B's as pathways to academic excellence, safe and supportive schools,, inclusive and equitable learning environments, and support for the whole-child:

- Belief- an unwavering belief in the full potential of every student.
- Belonging- a deep sense of belonging for each student, staff, and community member in our schools.
- Barriers- a commitment to recognizing and removing barriers.
- Broadcasting- an unequivocal recognition and promotion of student voice in their educational experience.

With the 4B's, our values, and our students in mind, let's finish strong and honor several recognitions and celebrations upcoming in June.

2023 Graduation

On Tuesday, June 13, 385 seniors will walk across the Benaroya Hall stage and earn their Mercer Island High School diploma. Some of the students began as preschoolers on MI and others joined in elementary, middle, or high school. Regardless of where their journey in the Mercer Island School District began, I am proud of the impact our staff and community have had on them and excited for their future. We will benefit from the class of 2023's future impact on our world near and far.

National Gun Violence Awareness Day

On Friday, June 2 (tomorrow), we are encouraging everyone to wear orange in support of National Gun Violence Awareness Day.

The #WearOrange Campaign and [National Gun Violence Awareness Day](#) was launched in 2013 after a 15-year-old from Chicago, Hadiya Pendleton, was killed by a stray bullet days after performing at President Obama's second inauguration. Her friends took action in her honor and they selected orange because it is the color used by hunters to protect themselves.

Our communications team will be at schools on June 2 taking photos of students and staff to use on our social platforms to drive awareness of Gun Violence Awareness Day. If you would like to help us raise awareness of National Gun Violence Day you can also send photos of you and family and friends wearing orange to communications@mercerislandschools.org for posting on our platforms.

Juneteenth

For the first time since being signed into Washington State Law, Mercer Island School District will observe Juneteenth as a holiday (no school) while school is still in session. Juneteenth is celebrated each year on June 19 and has also been referred to as Freedom Day or Emancipation Day. On June 19, 1865, General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and announced the end of slavery. Though President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation two years earlier, it marked the official enforcement of the proclamation.

While Juneteenth marks the theoretical end of slavery and an acute reminder of the resilience and sacrifices made, our nation's social justice work is not complete.

Please join students from our MIHS Black Student Union (BSU) on Monday, June 19th at Mercerdale Park from 12:00 to 4:00. The BSU partnered with the City of Mercer Island to plan a community celebration in the afternoon to recognize the holiday and unite the community. The event will be complete with food trucks, live music, and joy!

Pride Month

In conjunction with recognizing Juneteenth and in alignment with our values and 4B's, Mercer Island Schools will recognize and celebrate Pride Month. Pride Month is an annual celebration of the LGBTQ+ community's resilience, accomplishments, history, and ongoing push for greater acceptance.

Pride Month's origins date back to the June 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York City. Amidst persistent discrimination and targeting, tensions between members of the LGBTQ+ community came to a head. Guests staying at the Stonewall Inn fought back against a raid by police. The incident ignited several days of protests and demonstrations. This proved to be a pivotal moment in the fight for social justice for LGBTQ+ individuals.

As the superintendent of our school district, I acknowledge the spectrum of beliefs within the community. Some argue discussions and education about gender identity and sexual orientation do not belong in our schools or classrooms while others believe this is essential to preparing our students for their world both on and off Mercer Island. Regardless of our opinions, we cannot turn our backs on our students, staff, and community members who identify as LGBTQ+. In order for our schools to be places of belonging, ensure safe and supportive learning settings, and promote inclusive schools, we must acknowledge and lift up our LGBTQ+ friends right along with every other member of our school communities. They are students in our elementary, middle, and high school, staff within our district, and citizens on Mercer Island.

Every other year our students are given the opportunity to participate in the Healthy Youth Survey. This survey is given to thousands of middle and high school students across Washington. The anonymous survey asks 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students about their gender and sexual identity, and here are the MISD results from 2021. The percentages below represent the range of responses across the three grade levels surveyed. (The next administration of the survey will be in fall 2023.)

- Students Who Identify as Male- range from 46% to 53%
- Students Who Identify as Female- range from 38% to 45%
- Students Who Identify as Transgender- range from 0.6% to 1.1%
- Students Who Identify as Questioning or unsure of gender identity- range from 0.9% to 1.1%
- Students Who Selected More than One Response- range from 5.3% to 5.6%
- Students Who Identify as Heterosexual (straight)- range from 69% to 74%
- Students Who Identify as Gay or Lesbian- range from 3.8% to 5.1%
- Students Who Identify as Bisexual- range from 8.9% to 14%
- Students Who Identify as Questioning/Not Sure- range from 6.1% and 6.7%

In addition to the values, Mercer Island School District has aligned its policies and procedures to providing gender inclusive schools:

[Policy 3211- Gender Inclusive Schools](#)

[Procedure 3211- Gender Inclusive Schools](#)

June is a time for us to recognize and appreciate the diversity and inclusion that enriches our schools and community as a whole. Pride Month serves as a reminder of the importance of championing these values. To this end, I will be inviting our students, principals, and staff to display the Pride Flag at their schools throughout the month of June.

2023-2024 Cultural Calendar

MISD serves the wonderfully diverse community on Mercer Island. The District commits to inclusive schools where students feel a deep sense of belonging. To this, MISD recognizes different customs, cultures, and religions that are part of our students' and families' identity.



MISD has developed a 2023-24 Cultural Calendar in partnership with students, staff, and families. The calendar is meant to serve as an overlay or in concert with the adopted school calendar. It is meant to raise awareness, assist with planning events in and out of the classroom, and create even more inclusive schools for students, staff, and the community.

[View our 2023-24 Cultural Calendar](#)

The following descriptions provide a better understanding of the expectations for school-sponsored events and activities.

Cultural Days of Significance – these identified days are school days, but activities in and out of the classroom will be impacted, amended or canceled. This may include but is not limited to:

- Tests, quizzes, and major projects neither held nor due;
- No school assemblies, open houses, curriculum nights;
- No after school meetings, events, competitions, performances, or practices.

Cultural Days of Recognition – these identified days are school days, but activities in and out of the classroom may be impacted, amended or canceled. This may include but is not limited to:

- Holding meetings, practices or rehearsals but excusing students and staff; and
- Canceling/Rescheduling competitions, formal events, or performances.

Cultural Days of Awareness – these identified days are school days, and the community should be aware that students, staff, and families may be observing these days. Before and after school activities may continue, but schools will be aware that some students may be impacted and request support.







Observance Begins at Dusk or Sundown –

some observances begin at dusk or sundown. On these days before and during school activities may continue as scheduled, but considerations should be made for after school activities.

Sincerely,

Fred Rundle
Superintendent

Mercer Island School District																							
2023 - 2024 Cultural Calendar																							
August '23								September '23								October '23							
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S		Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S		Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S	
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12		10	11	12	13	14	15	16		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19		17	18	19	20	21	22	23		22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26		24	25	26	27	28	29	30		29	30	31					
27	28	29	30	31																			
November '23								December '23								January '24							
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S		Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S		Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S	
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11		10	11	12	13	14	15	16		14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25		24	25	26	27	28	29	30		28	29	30	31				
26	27	28	29	30				31															
February '24								March '24								April '24							
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S		Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S		Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S	
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25	26	27	28	29				31															
May '24								June '24								July '24							
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S		Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S		Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S	
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25		16	17	18	19	20	21	22		21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
26	27	28	29	30	31			23	24	25	26	27	28	29		28	29	30	31				
								30															

	School/District Closed (Federal or State Holiday)		Observance begins at dusk or sundown
	Cultural Day of Significance -No after school meetings, events, athletics or practices. No class assessments will be conducted or class projects presented.		First and Last Day of School
	Cultural Day of Recognition -Canceling or Rescheduling competitions, formal events or performances. Practices and regular meetings optional with absences excused. Normal classroom procedures.		Cultural Day of Awareness -Before and after school activities may continue, but schools will be aware that some students may be impacted and request support.

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