

Mustang Back-to-School Updates - July 28, 2026



Dear Mustang Students & Families,

We can't wait to welcome all of our Mustangs to the 2026–2027 school year! Whether your summer was packed with adventures or filled with memorable moments at home, we hope it brought you some joy and time with the people you love. The start of the school year is just around the corner, and we *cannot wait* to see your smiling faces back at Meridian! We know that many of you are excited to reconnect with your friends, teachers, and your school that feels like home. A new year means a fresh start. Let's show up ready to SHINE, grow, and support each other in becoming the very best versions of ourselves we can be!

Each new school year gives us the chance to come together around a shared focus—a theme that anchors our work and helps guide our path forward. Last year, our theme was “**Strong Roots, New Branches.**”



Meridian continues to have deep, strong roots—years of hard work, care, and commitment from students, families, and staff who have helped shape who we are today. This year our theme will be, “**We See You, Every Voice Matters.**” This year, we'll continue working to make Meridian a place where every student, family, and staff member feels connected, supported, and known. When we are able to hold high academic expectations paired with individualized support we create hope rooted in direction and common purpose. This is where data-driven, relationship-based practices help us meet each child's unique needs. The purpose of this theme is a focus on the idea that our school belongs to all of us. Students need to be seen and heard and feel as if they are part of something bigger than

themselves as an individual. Instructionally, last year, we worked on the idea of productive struggle and Building Thinking Math Classrooms. This year, we want to expand on that philosophy by reminding students everyday that their voice contributes to the greater good and that all will be challenged to think and share.

As we gear up for the 2026–2027 school year, we want to take a moment to say thank you. The staff at Meridian feels truly lucky to partner with our families in the important work of making our school stronger each year. At the heart of everything we do is a commitment to creating a welcoming, caring place where every student feels seen, supported, and cared for. We know that when families and staff work together, we can continue to build something truly special—a school community we're all proud to be part of. Growing the hearts and minds of our Mustangs is big work, and we can't do it without you. When we all show up and take ownership of our community school, there's no limit to what we can accomplish for our kids.

Ultimately, Meridian belongs to all of us. It's a place where students, families, and staff come together to create a safe, welcoming, challenging, and joyful environment where every child can learn and thrive in their own unique way. Everyone who walks through our doors has the chance to grow into the best version of themselves. And when we work together, that growth becomes something we can all rally behind in support. Please see the rest of the message below for some important upcoming dates and news from our staff. This includes an overview of some of the events and information to be mindful of as we kick-off the year. Once the year gets underway, most weeks, we will send out an update on Friday with important news, happenings, and details of upcoming events throughout the year.

Until we see you on Back to School Night, enjoy the last days of summer break, and....GO MUSTANGS!

Jason Gooding
Principal

Jessie Bishop
Asst. Principal

Meridian Staff Changes

These new additions will undoubtedly have a positive impact on our school and we are so excited to welcome them to our Meridian family. When you get a chance, please introduce yourself and welcome the following new staff members this fall.

- Brooke Keefe – Interventionist (0.5)
- Lindsay Guerrero – Social Worker (0.5)
- Rachel Ticich – SLS Classroom Teacher
- Brianna Hintz – 4th Grade
- Kim Jackson – ELD
- Brittany Rinderle – 5th Grade
- Rebekah (Becky) Cheon - SLS Para
- Mikael Leonhardt - SLS Para
- Tanya Cooper - Part-time SLS Para
- Kiki Grenning – Occupational Therapist
- Susan Jones - Kitchen Manager
- Justin Anderson – District Safety and Security Liaison

Here is the complete list of everyone in new positions for the upcoming year:

- Kristin Olson – 1st Grade
- Miranda Reynolds – 2nd Grade
- Amy Primrose – 5th Grade
- Terri Thompson – Technology

Important Reminders & Dates

- **Online Check-In**
 - All returning families are **required** to complete the district's [online check-in](#) by **August 7** through your [Infinite Campus Parent Portal](#).
 - **If you do not complete this process by July 31st, you will not be able to view your student's teacher assignment in Infinite Campus when it is released on July 31.**
- **School Supply Lists & Technology Devices**
 - Available on our website under resources or linked here: [Meridian Supply List](#). If you ordered a school supply kit through 1st Day, those supplies will be waiting for you at your classroom on Back-to-School Night.
 - Due to changes at the district level and working to minimize screen time for students, grade levels will be sharing device carts this year and each student will no longer carry their own device back and forth to and from school on a daily basis.
- **Teacher Assignments**
 - Teacher assignments can be **viewed in the Infinite Campus Parent Portal beginning July 31** for families that have completed the online check-in process. Please make sure you have access to the IC Parent Portal. Here is the guide if you need to get yours set up. [Parent Portal Guide](#).
 - Our staff has put a lot of thought and consideration into the class lists for the upcoming school year to ensure balanced class make-up and size. **Meridian does not accept teacher/classroom change requests.**

- **Visiting Meridian & Volunteer Opportunities**

- The Office staff is available from 7:30 AM-3:00 PM weekdays beginning July 28th. Please call 720-972-7880 if you need any assistance.
- There will be opportunities to volunteer in classrooms starting after Labor Day. Your classroom teacher will reach out to you with more information. Volunteers must first complete a short training video and sign a volunteer code of conduct prior to starting.
- Each classroom teacher will ask for at least one parent to volunteer to be a room parent. During Back-to-School Night, each classroom teacher will have a form asking for your permission for the room parent to contact you as well as ask if you would like to volunteer for this role.
- The Meridian PTO also has many volunteer opportunities available. The first event that is in need of volunteers is the Mustang Mile. Look for communication from PTO in the coming weeks.

- **School Hours for All Grade Levels**

- Normal School Hours
 - Monday - Friday: 7:50 AM - 2:35 PM
- **Arrival:** Please see the [Meridian Arrival & Dismissal Procedures](#) in order to help your family plan your entry and exit from school each day. Unless eating breakfast, all students may be dropped off or arrive at school between 7:40-7:50 AM for a "soft start." Class will begin promptly at 7:50 and students are asked to be in their classroom at that time or they will be considered tardy.
- Breakfast will begin at 7:30 AM each day. Students eating breakfast may arrive after 7:30, enter through **door # 2** by our main entrance and will be dismissed to class from the cafeteria after 7:40.
- **Please note that there will not be outdoor supervision prior to 7:35, so please try to arrive between 7:35-7:50 if not eating breakfast.**
- **Students who arrive after 7:50 AM will be marked tardy.** They will miss important announcements and connection time with their teacher and classmates. **If you arrive after 7:55 AM, please park your car and walk your student to the front office to check them in as there is no outside supervision after 7:55.**

- **Important Upcoming Dates & Notes**

- **PTO Popsicles in the Park** - August 3rd (3:00 for K and 4:15 for 1-5) - PTO is hosting a whole school meet & greet next Monday afternoon. Kindergarten will be from 3:00-4:00 on the Kindergarten playground and grades 1-5 will be on the main playground from 4:15-5:15. You may also see Meridian staff members there to meet & greet as well!
- **Back to School Night** - August 6th (4:00PM - 6:30PM) - You will receive communication from your child's teacher on August 3rd to sign up for a time to attend along with further instructions. If you have a *SHINE sign* from last spring, please return your SHINE Yard Sign. You can drop it off outside of your child's classroom door during Back to School Night. Thank you.
- **Kindergarten Assessment Day** - August 10 - As the school year starts in August, we are hoping to be able to meet and learn more about your child before the first day of school. This will give us a chance to see them in a small group environment, get to know them, and

hopefully make them feel more comfortable on the first day of school on August 11th. Please save the morning of August 10th to bring your child in for an hour time slot between 7:30 am -11:30 a.m. There will be a sign up coming a week prior to that date for you to sign up your child.

- **First Day of School - August 11th**- Arrival time is 7:40 with school starting at 7:50.
 - **Mustang Mile & Fall Festival** - September 18 - Be sure to save the date for our biggest event of the year! There will be more information to come from our PTO as the school year starts.
 - Please visit and bookmark the [Meridian Website](#) to view all upcoming events, school calendar, and other important information throughout the school year.
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- **Family Communication** - Most Fridays throughout the year, you will receive a weekly Meridian newsletter complete with messages, updates, upcoming events, and celebrations. We ask that you take a few minutes to read this communication each week as the email will contain highlights from the prior week and lets you know what is coming up. Please make sure you have access to the Adams 12 App to receive all important school communications. You will also receive routine communication from your child's teacher and/or grade level team using the same Adams 12 App. If you don't have access to the Adams 12 Communications App, please click this link for instructions. [Adams 12 Mobile App Setup Instructions](#)
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- **District Cellphone Policy** - Please take a moment to review with your student district cellphone and personal technology devices [Policy 5030](#). The policy defines a personal technology device (PTD) as cellphones, smartphones and wearable technology such as smart watches, wireless earbuds/headphones. At the K-8 level, students are required to have PTDs off or in silent mode and stored out of sight for the entirety of the school day. The office staff is happy to get any needed messages to students during the school day, and students may also contact home either using a classroom or office telephone.
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- **Nutrition Services & School Meals**
 - Please click on the [Adams 12 Nutrition Services Link](#) for information from Nutrition Services on school lunch/breakfast, on-line menus, and School Cafe account set up .
 - **All students** will have **access to free breakfast and lunch every day** at the start of the year.
 - We encourage all families to [apply for Free & Reduced Benefits](#) even though meals are currently free this year. This helps the district receive funding and can offset some student fees. Families must complete a new application each year as benefits do not carry over.
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- **New Fee Payment System - PaySchoolsCentral**
 - The district will be using [payschoolscentral.net](#) for all student fee payments this year. They no longer will use PayForIt.
 - Helpful Resources:
 - [PaySchools Account Registration video](#)
 - [PaySchools Making Payments video](#)
 - [PaySchools Parent Registration](#)
 - Username & Password from PayForIt will carry over but you must update a payment method/credit card.

Building Improvements

There are a few upgrades around Meridian that we want to make you aware of:

1. **HVAC** - We have received all new air flow controllers to better distribute air flow more evenly to all parts of the building. Additional HVAC issues will be addressed in the future as part of the 2024 Bond Project.
2. **Paint** - All purple walls in common areas have been freshly painted and refreshed.
3. **Gym Ceiling** - The tops of the duct work, beams, and ceiling were thoroughly cleaned using a 2-story lift. The whole gym has a refreshed air quality and feel.
4. **Cabin Skirting** - The skirting around the bottom of the cabins was replaced and the areas under the ramps and stairs were cleared of debris and powerwashed. The cabins look almost new.
5. **Second SLS Classroom** - The second SLS classroom has been physically modified to remove the door to the quiet room from the hallway to inside the classroom.
6. **Library Re-Vamp** - In its 3rd year, the library re-vamp project is now nearly complete. All the mobile shelving and book racks were delivered this summer along with the maker/create space work tables. This paired with the prior two years of projects has the space finally looking complete. The last two minor projects we will work on to finalize the library this year is a mural project in the reading corner and stocking the maker/create space.

2024 Bond Project Updates:

1. This year, as part of the 2024 bond, we will be working on purchasing new furniture in various areas throughout the building. This may include student/teacher classroom furniture as well as common space upgrades such as flex areas and cafeteria.
2. Between 2027-2029:
 - a. We are slated to have a more extensive HVAC system upgrade
 - b. Parking lot/cement/blacktop repairs or replacement
 - c. Playground overhaul