

# MERIDIAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### School Board Meetings M.M.S. Library 7:00 PM

Wed. Feb. 20, 2008

Wed. Mar. 19, 2008

Wed. Apr. 16, 2008

Wed. May 21, 2008

### Parent-Teacher Conference Dates

Apr. 1—3

K-8 Early Release Only

### Upcoming Early Release Dates

January 30, 2008

March 26, 2008

April 30, 2008

May 28, 2008



# Compass

...Student Achievement at the Center...

VOLUME 2007-08, ISSUE 2

JANUARY 2008

## Superintendent's Message Timothy S. Yeomans

### What are the positive aspects about attending school in a small school district like Meridian?

The sense of belonging and connection to our community that the students in Meridian experience is really something unique and special. Positive personal relationships with their teachers, support staff and school leaders is a prime factor cited by many research studies in the academic achievement of students.

To maximize the opportunity for connection we have in Meridian, we are working on improving our methods of communication and standards for performance evaluation.

Another very positive trait

that our students regularly experience in Meridian is the ability to partake and experience all the co-curricular programs that our schools have to offer. It is not uncommon for our students to partake in leadership, sports, music, drama and/or other activities all in the same school year. In most larger schools the access to these opportunities is competitive and in turn limiting.

As a system we are also working to make certain that these wonderful opportunities persist and that our students who partake in them do so on a high level. As mentioned before the advantages of belonging and connection are key to student performance. We see the district support of these programs as an integral part of the educational

experience of our children.

Did you know that Meridian offers four Advanced Placement classes taught on campus, as well as online access to many others through the Digital Learning Commons, or DLC. The opportunity that our students have to experience small classes and high level academic rigor is a very real advantage of our size. Again, we continue to explore how we can leverage our small size with classes  
*Continued on P.2*



## School Levy Information

On March 11, 2008 Meridian, along with five other county school districts will be running replacement levies that will be coming to the end of the last four year cycle. In 2004 the voters of the Meridian School District approved a four year levy that would collect a tax at a rate of \$3.26 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation. In all four years that tax rate was lower than pro-

jected, and this year the rate is actually \$2.52 per thousand. For many years Meridian has collected the lowest percentage of Levy authority (the amount that the district is allowed to collect) of any district in Whatcom County. In addition, the Meridian School District has made facilities last, and has continued to use them even after they have been identified for upgrades and/or replacement. On the front page

of the district website there is a link to the state required "Study and Survey" that gives insights into lifespan and condition of the educational and support facilities. I would encourage each parent and community member to read the report, finished in June of 2006 for yourself.

<http://www.meridian.wednet.edu>

We are committed to continuing

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MERIDIAN  
SCHOOL  
DISTRICT

## Event Dates

### PTA Skate Night

Feb. 28, 6-8:30,  
Lynden Skateway

### HS Athletic Clearances

Feb. 22

### MS Season Three Clearances

Feb. 8

### Mid Winter Break

Feb. 15, 18

### Spring Break

April 7-11

# Superintendent Message *...Continued from Page 1*

With a variety of course offerings to support the varied interests of our students.

The final observation I wish to make about the advantage of attending a school in a district the size of Meridian was evident throughout the months of November and December as I attended events at the schools during the school day and in the evening. The support that our students receive from the community is truly outstanding. At parent-teacher conferences, concerts, games, and recognition events the participation by our community was outstanding! While having large numbers of parent, relatives and community members in attendance at events is wonderful, it is the personal connection of our

community to the children and their genuine interest in seeing our students do well that makes such a real difference in the experience of our students.

We, as a district are committed to looking inward with a very positive and critical eye at how we can continue to enhance the educational experience in Meridian. Working with our community volunteers in PTA, Youth Sports, Booster Club, The Levy Advisory Group and the district Accountability Committee, we will continue to seek your input on how we can continue to improve the educational program in Meridian every day. Thanks for your support of our schools!

## Special Programs — Early Childhood Education

The Meridian School District's Early Childhood Program offers many exciting opportunities for children and families to learn and develop friendships in school. Our pre-school program is home to thirty three families. The warm and inviting atmosphere allows children to grow to their true potential, learning the skills they will need to be successful in the primary grades while developing friendships that will remain with them throughout their years in the Meridian School District.

Our program offers exciting opportunities for children to learn with the talented staff that includes an early intervention teacher, a special education teacher, paraeducators, speech and language pathologists and an occupational therapist. Children attend as members of one of three class groups, meeting Monday through Thursday for either a morning or afternoon session.

We have open enrollment throughout the year for children with developmental delays. Several children also participate in our program as members of a cooperative pre-school.

In addition to the pre-school programs, we host EXPLORE, a community playgroup that is open to all families with children ages birth to six years old. Parents and children visit with friends and participate in crafts, games and music during EXPLORE. Children ages three through six are welcome to stay and play with our early childhood team so that their parent can volunteer in the classroom of an older sibling at Irene Reither Primary School or Ten Mile Creek Elementary. EXPLORE is held on all Fridays that school is open.

Mother-read Father-read classes will be offered this spring. If you have a pre-Kindergarten age student and are interested in learning about fun reading activities you can do with your child, this program is right for you. Families receive a free book at each class session. These classes will begin in May.

If you have any questions about the Meridian School District Early Childhood Programs, please contact Jeanne-Claire Saucer or Lynne Jermunson at Irene Reither Primary School, (360) 398-2111.



# Curriculum Update

We receive questions from time to time inquiring into what areas curriculum development process works and what it is currently focusing upon...

Very briefly, Curriculum decisions are based on district mission and goals, and are organized around the Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements and Grade Level Expectations. These documents provide guidance to the district as new materials are considered, and also guide day-to-day decisions by classroom teachers. Parents have access to curriculum materials through the district website, <http://www.meridian.wednet.edu/curriculum/> or at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) at <http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/default.aspx>.

There is a focus this year on mathematics curriculum development. OSPI is conducting a review of the mathematics standards, and new standards will be finalized by January 1, 2008. The draft standards

have been examined by Meridian teachers to note any changes in emphasis. Preliminary analysis indicates that there will be a greater emphasis on basic math facts, and there have been some changes in expectations at each grade level, with the trend to have concepts taught earlier.

This year, the district has also added additional science kits at grades 1-5. Each grade now has two kits to use during the year, each of which is in use for about 10 weeks. In addition to content knowledge there is an emphasis on science inquiry and the scientific process. Kits include the study of Plants, Insects, Simple Machines, Earth Science and more! They provide many exciting learning activities for students.

As we further refine our curriculum development process to align with state and national standards we will keep you informed in the *Compass*.

# Sportsmanship in Support of Our Students

Whether it is a youth game on weekend, a middle school contest in the afternoon or much anticipated county match-up on a Friday night, there is always a great deal of excitement and support for our teams in Meridian!

Knowing that our children always receive great interest and support from our community, it is also appropriate to mention that the manner in which we support our students is also very important. Our new Director of Athletics for the Meridian School District, Mr. Eric Tripp, with the support of the district administration is placing a special emphasis on sportsmanship as we support our students at every level. We encourage and expect our community to support our students by cheering posi-

tively for our team. Positive support from the crowd is often mentioned by players at every level as a factor that improves their performance. On the other side, negative comments directed toward opposing teams or referees have no potential to positively impact the outcome of a game. Our students are too important to support them in any way other than a positive one! We have the opportunity to set a great example for our children and students every time we attend a contest. Together we can create the very best environment possible for our students to compete, grow and achieve. Please cheer positively and represent our community and schools with excellence and class! GO TROJANS!



# School Levy Information

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our history of careful fiscal and facility management.

Due to changes in the state funding formula and the recent changes in the overall valuation of the district, Meridian will be losing approximately \$300,000 of state funding over the next two years. This loss of "Levy Equalization Funds" in addition to some very specific education needs around the areas of technology, professional development and curriculum materials will provide some unique challenges for the district as we continue to move forward in the overall improvement of the educational program in Meridian.

Other fiscal pressures such as the ongoing physical maintenance of

facilities and the need to maintain and update our fleet of buses that transport our children will also be considerations in the work of the school board as they determine a levy rate to send to the voters.

We encourage each voter to examine the information available regarding the levy and to exercise your right to vote when the issue of local school funding comes before you on March 11, 2008.

We thank our community for their continued support!

**Meridian is a great place to be!**

## COMPASS



**MERIDIAN  
SCHOOL  
DISTRICT**

## Free Dental Care!

Dental Screenings, Sealants, & Fluoride for children of low income families, age 0-18.

Saturday, February 9, 2008

Interfaith Dental Clinic

220 Unity Street

Bellingham, WA 98225

**Call 360 714-9030 for an appointment**

The health care system can be confusing and time-consuming.  
Have questions?  
Need health insurance?



a nonprofit, community service can help.

(360) 788-6594

[www.whatcomalliance.org](http://www.whatcomalliance.org)

# After School Program

Meridian School District's C.O.M.P.A.S.S. (Creating Opportunities at Meridian for Parent and Student Success) after school program is in its fifth year. The program was made possible by a grant from the federal government. The program's goals are to improve academic achievement and increase family connectedness to the school community. One hundred students in grades 1 through 5 stay after school 4 days a week and are involved in exciting learning opportunities.

Many activities are happening at Irene Reither and Ten Mile Creek schools to meet the goals. Students work in small groups on projects that focus on improving reading and math skills. Projects include real world skills such as estimating, measuring, sorting, classifying, and building reading skills.

In addition, one day a week students are involved with 4H after school activities. So far this year students have participated in 6 week units such as arts and crafts, dance and cooking. Volunteers with the help of school district personnel teach the groups. This year we have teamed

up with high school seniors to complete their senior projects by teaching art, origami, photography, and writing to the after school students. It has been a very successful experience for all.

With the hard work of teachers, school district staff and volunteers the program is running smoothly and students look forward to their COMPASS days. Additional volunteers are always welcome and if you have time available in the afternoon, please call Judy McCourt, project director (318-2167) or Sheree Johnston, site coordinator (318-2562).



**Meridian School District No. 505**  
214 W. Laurel Rd.  
Bellingham, WA 98226

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# The Arts

# Success Continues in Athletics