

Meridian School District

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Initiative 728 (I-728) – Making a Difference for Student Learning

In 2000 the people of Washington gave resounding approval to a significant new investment in our children's education. With an overwhelming 72 percent in favor, voters adopted I-728 "to improve public education and to achieve higher academic standards for all students through smaller class sizes and other improvements."

This landmark law provides dedicated funding and resources aimed directly at ensuring students meet the learning requirements set forth in the state's education reform program. It also encourages school districts and their communities to work in partnership to determine where and how those resources can be used most effectively, within the broad categories set forth in I-728:

- Providing extended learning opportunities such as full-day kindergarten and before- or after-school programs;
- Providing additional professional development for educators tied to state standards and student needs;
- Providing early assistance for children who need pre-kindergarten support; Reducing class sizes by hiring more teachers;
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- Making facility improvements to directly support class size reductions and extended learning opportunities.

During the 2001-02 school year, the Meridian School Board and the district administrative team worked closely with the community to develop a four-year plan for using I-728 funds. This is the second in a series of yearly reports on how the district's Student Achievement Improvement Plan is being carried out and how we are progressing on student learning.

I-728 Funds Received by the Meridian School District

I-728 funding is based on the number of students enrolled in the district. For the 2002-03 school year, the Meridian School District's I-728 appropriation was \$311,660. (This compares with a total district budget of \$11,286,931 for 2002-03). The I-728 committee has developed a multi-year plan for implementation of I-728 activities. As outlined in that plan, the I-728 funds were used as follows for the 2002-03 school year:

Grades 5-12 Class Size Reduction: \$18,819.00, or 5.84%

- As in 2001-02, the district hired a part-time teacher at Meridian Middle School to provide extra support in the areas of Language Arts and Social Studies.

Extended Learning Opportunities for Students:

\$224,233.00, or 69.56%

- The district continued the following programs:
 - An Extended Learning Coordinator is responsible for coordination of in-school and after-school programs, and supports differentiation of instruction within the classroom.
 - In-school academic support: Additional staff members are provided for grades K-8 to support students struggling in math and reading. The program provided additional instructional services for 137 students (52 in reading, 85 in math), during the school day. Students receiving math support gained an average of 9.1 points on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). (For comparison, the average growth of all students is 8.1 RIT points. Forty-five percent of students receiving math support met or exceeded their growth targets for the year. Fifty-four percent of students receiving reading support met or exceeded their growth targets for the year.
 - After-school academic support: School staff members stay after school 3 days a week at the middle school and 2 days a week at Ten Mile Creek Elementary School to provide homework help and support students struggling in math and reading. 153 students attended after school support programs. Thirty-five percent of these made greater than expected gains on the MAP.
 - Enrichment programs: I-728 supported programs such as the Math and Science Olympiad and History Day at Meridian Middle School and Geography Bee and Math Olympiad at Ten Mile Creek Elementary School. At the middle school, 60 students participated in after school enrichment programs such as art, yoga, dance, and Russian.
 - The district provided a variety of staff development opportunities for school staff to provide extended learning opportunities for students within the regular classroom. Over 52 teachers and classified staff were involved in 9 different activities.
 - Transportation: I-728 funds were used to supplement the 4:00 bus run when additional buses were required for students in the after school support program, and provided transportation to and from the summer school.
 - Summer school was expanded to included grades K-8 (it was grades 1-6 in 2001-02). Forty-four students were served by the academic support program for three hours daily for 4 weeks. In addition 102 students were served in the academic enrichment portion, which was 2 hours a day, for 4 days a week for three weeks.

Professional Development for Educators:

\$26,000.00, or 8.07%

- Each school was provided funds to support the district mission and strategic plan, focusing efforts on differentiation of instruction, use of data, and school improvement planning.

Early Childhood Education:

\$53,326.00, or 16.54%

- The district provided a variety of activities to support children and families.
 - Funded a portion of the Special Education preschool teacher and funded a paraprofessional for the preschool program to focus on activities that help all children be ready for school.
 - Funded screening efforts for all entering kindergarten students.
 - Funded a part time teacher to work with kindergarten students identified in the screening process who needed help with large and small motor development.
 - Provided additional time for the district's Readiness to Learn coordinator to work with students and families to reduce barriers to learning.
 - Provided fencing around the preschool play area.

District Progress on Student Achievement

I-728 requires each school district to provide information regarding the progress being made in increasing student achievement as measured by required state assessments and other assessments deemed appropriate by the district. The following tables show the percentage of Meridian School District students meeting standards on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) from 1996 through 2003.

Percentage of Students Meeting Standards on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning 1996-2003

Grade 4	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Reading	44.9	60.6	44.6	64.8	60.7	62.6	51.8
Mathematics	13.3	28.7	14.9	35.9	36.8	47.7	33.8
Writing	46.9	29.4	23.1	26.0	44.4	51.4	44.6
Listening	59.2	75.2	62.0	56.3	74.4	61.7	64.0
Grade 7	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Reading		35.7	36.3	32.8	33.9	37.1	43.0
Mathematics		21.7	21.1	21.6	29.9	24.2	27.4
Writing		47.0	40.3	34.5	50.4	53.2	64.4
Listening		72.2	87.9	74.1	83.5	81.5	84.4
Grade 10	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Reading			51.4	59.8	62.4	59.2	59.9
Mathematics			33.0	35.0	38.9	37.3	39.4
Writing			41.1	31.7	46.9	54.3	60.4
Listening			72.7	77.8	84.0	81.8	75.8

An invitation to work together on student learning

Under the provisions of I-728, the Meridian School Board held its annual public hearing on the district's Student Achievement Improvement Plan on August 20, 2003. There will be periodic reports to the School Board throughout the 2003-2004 school year, and an annual public hearing in April of 2004. If you would like more information or have any comments about the I-728 plan, please contact Bruce Burpee, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment at the district office (398-7111).

Thank you!

I-728 is a significant resource in our community's efforts to improve student learning and assure a successful future for our children. Thank you for your interest in this material and your support for Meridian public schools!