
MEREDITH HILL MESSENGER

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Changes Announced in State 'WASL' Assessment

The Washington Legislature recently approved changes in our state testing program, the "WASL" (Washington Assessment of Student Learning). The first class of students affected by these changes will be our current 8th graders. The Commission will determine how well students must score in order to pass the WASL and to receive a high school diploma. Details are included below.

What WASL Changes Have Already Been Approved by the Legislature?

Governor Locke signed these changes into law on March 18:

- The "Certificate of Mastery," required for high school graduation beginning in 2008, was renamed the "Certificate of Academic Achievement" (CAA).
- This certificate is earned through success on the reading, writing and math sections of the high school WASL. Science will be added to the certificate and graduation requirements in 2010.
- A student's high school transcript will include his/her highest score and WASL level, and will note whether the student earned the CAA through passing the WASL or through an alternative assessment.
- Alternative assessments for students to demonstrate mastery of state standards are being developed. These assessments must be comparable in rigor to the WASL, and

must be approved by the Legislature prior to use.

- Beginning with the 2004-05 school year, retakes of the high school WASL will be available, subject to funding. Beginning in September 2006, students may retake the assessment up to four times in those subject areas in which they were unsuccessful, at no cost to the students. Students who are successful, but who wish to improve their score, must pay to retake the test.
- School districts must prepare plans for students who do not meet standards. Plans for 9th graders will be developed in 2004-05, and plans for 5th and 8th graders in 2005-06. The plans will include courses, competencies and steps needed to meet standards to stay on track for graduation. Parents will be notified of the plan.

Calendar Change

Due to school closure for snow in January, Federal Way Public Schools WILL be in session Friday, May 28th, and Monday, June 21st. The last day for preschool will be June 17th, and the last day for kindergartners will be June 18th. Please be sure to



mark your calendars.

Commission Developing 'Minimum WASL Standards'

The Washington State Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission will soon decide how well students in public schools should score on the WASL in order to earn a certificate of academic achievement. Earning a certificate of academic achievement will be a requirement for graduation, but not the only requirement. In order to earn a diploma, students will also have to meet other state and local requirements.

The important decision facing the Commission is this: What score or combination of scores in reading, writing, and mathematics should be the lowest score students could earn and still receive a certificate (and thus be eligible to graduate, if they meet all other requirements)?

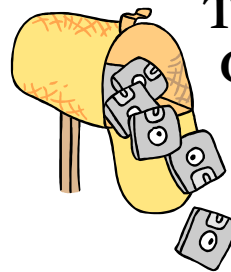
In February and March, the Commission was presented with nine different models developed by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for how certificates might be awarded. The Commission discussed the models and narrowed the selection down to six. A final selection of the model to be used is expected at the May 10 meeting. Under the new law, the Commission will need to present its decision to the Legislature later in the year and give the Legislature time in the 2005 legislative session to consider the matter before the Commission's decision can be finalized and implemented. Legislative action approving the Commission's decision is not necessary.

The Commission invites you to visit its web site and to review background information concerning the models under consideration. You may wish to consider how difficult those

models appear to be for Washington students (the "pass" rates under the various models).

Commission Director Christopher Thompson notes that, "The state high school graduation standard is a vital issue. This decision will affect the lives of 8th grade youngsters across our state, and each group of students following in their footsteps." He says that the Commission welcomes comments from the public, and encourages parents to take time to become informed about these issues and share their thoughts.

Sincerely,
Cindy Kelsey, Principal



The New Commons

Effective immediately the SeaTac Mall is now "The Commons at Federal Way", and the address

there for the Community Relations department of the Federal Way School District has changed to: Federal Way Public Schools, Community Relations Department, 1813 South Commons, Federal Way, WA 98003.

Battle of the Books

Meredith Hill's Battle of the Books competition was held May 11th. The winning team, "Too Much Info" (TMI), included Chloe, Jill, Kara, and Joey. Second Place was won by "The Long Patrol", and Third Place was won by "Reader Leaders." TMI will go on to represent Meredith Hill at the District Level competition on Tuesday, May 18 at Decatur High School at 7:00 p.m. Families

and friends are welcome to come and support the students in what promises to be a fun and challenging event.

Library Reminder

In preparation for inventory, the library is asking for the return of all overdue books. In addition, they would like to remind students that, at the end of the year, the library will withhold the report cards of students with outstanding fines or missing books.

Wanted: AmeriCorps Volunteers for 2004-2005

Federal Way Public Schools AmeriCorps team is looking for talented, enthusiastic people who are willing to commit 10.5 months of service to improve literacy in the schools and to strengthen our community. Member will be trained in skills such as tutoring, conflict resolution and team-building, and will be assigned as volunteers in Federal Way schools four days a week for the 2004-05 school year. One day a week is set aside for training and for community service projects.

In exchange for their service, members receive \$4725 to help finance their college education or vocational training or to pay back student loans. Members also receive a living allowance of \$825 per month before taxes, health insurance, and childcare assistance where needed.

Next year's AmeriCorps "Washington Reading Corps Grant" will allow thirteen full-time members to provide tutoring to students in five elementary schools in the district. The "Education Team Grant" will provide the district with 40 full-time members to tutor students in 30 schools and two community center after school programs. If you or someone you know would like to become a

part of the AmeriCorps program, contact Monda Holsinger at 253-945-2282 or at mholsing@fwps.org.

Calling All 5-Year-Olds!

Do you know a family in this area with a child who will be five years old by August 31? We'd like to meet them, too! Kindergarten registration for the 2004-05 school year will be held May 3 through 14. The office will be open to receive registrations from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

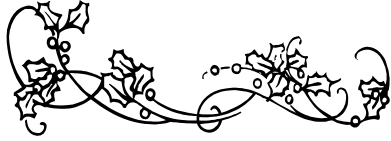
We're already making plans for next year's kindergarten program! We hope to offer kindergarten parents the option of a half-day or full-day class for next year. Full-day requires parents to pay \$200 each month in tuition. To plan in advance for these classes, we need everyone to come in and sign up!

At the time of registration parents are asked to bring: (1) a certified copy of their child's birth certificate to verify the age requirement; and (2) their child's current immunization record. The rest of the paperwork will be provided by us!

Our Kindergarten Round-Up for parents and students will be held on May 20 at 6:30 in the school library. New kindergarten students and families are invited to join us and be introduced to next year's program and staff. We can hardly wait to meet the class of 2017!

Thank You

On behalf of all the staff members, we wish to thank our parents and friends for thinking of us and treating us so kindly during Staff Appreciation week. We enjoyed the food and fun, and were overwhelmed by your thoughtfulness and generosity.



MAY Calendar

- 12– 4th Grade Field Trip
WA State History Museum
9:30 – 2:00
- 13– Cookie Day
4th/5th Grade Music Concert
7:00 p.m.
- 15– Track Meet 8:30 p.m. Grades 3, 4, 5
Walking Track Work Day
- 16– District Battle of the Books
Decatur 7:00 p.m.
- 20– Kindergarten Round-Up 6:30 Library
- 22– Walking Track Work Day
Championship Track Meet
10:00 a.m. Grades 3, 4, 5
- 25– Ron Matilla Classic
Track Meet 5:00 p.m.
- 26– Honor Choir/Steel Drum Concert
7:00 p.m.
- 27– Cookie Day
Steel Drum Tour
Volunteer Appreciation Celebration
5:00-6:00 p.m.
PTA General Meeting 6:30 p.m.
- 28– **Snow Make-Up Day**
- 31 Memorial Day
NO SCHOOL

JUNE Calendar

- 2– 3rd Grade Field Trip
Seahurst Park 9:30 – 2:00
- 3– Steel Drum Tour
4th Grade Field Trip
Fort Nisqually
- 4– Steel Drum Tour
- 7– Safety Patrol at Wild Waves
- 8– 2nd Grade Field Trip
Nisqually Wildlife Refuge
9:30 – 2:30
- 10– Portfolio Celebration 4:00-5:30

- 17– Field Day
Last Day for Preschool
- 18– Fifth Grade Celebration
Last Day for Kindergarten
- 21– Last Day Grades 1 –5
Dismissal 11:45

Free Immunization Clinics

Two free immunization clinics will be held before the beginning of the next school year. Sponsored by FWPS Health Services and the Seattle/King County Health Department, the first clinic will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., May 15, at the Federal Way Public Health Center, 33431 13th Place South, Federal Way. Another clinic will be held August. 28.

Primary immunizations will be available for students attending Federal Way Public Schools from pre-school through 12th grade. Students must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Immunization records should be brought along. Available immunizations include:

- Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR: a second MMR vaccine is required for students in Kindergarten through 4th grades and 6th through 12th grades.)
- Polio (IPV)
- Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib)
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DtaP)
- Tetanus, diphtheria (Td)
- Hepatitis B – (Hepatitis B vaccine will be required for students entering pre-school through 7th grade for the 2004-05 school year.)

Immunizations are provided at no cost, but donations are greatly appreciated.



Volunteer Hours

We thank our wonderful volunteers who have so generously given of their time and talent.

April: 254 Hours