
MEREDITH HILL MESSENGER

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Student-Led Conferences Scheduled October 28-29

Elementary students across the district are preparing for two special days at the end of this month when they will tell parents about their performance in reading and other core subjects, and share goals they plan to achieve this year. These Student-Led Conferences will take place on October 28-29, and no regular classes are scheduled on these days.

What is the student's role?

We believe that allowing students to talk to parents about their learning will give them a stronger sense of ownership and pride, and a greater understanding of how they can continue and improve their achievement. The student's job at conference time will be to explain some of the standards and goals they are working on, and to show examples of their current level of performance. With the support of teacher and parents, they will also set goals for future improvement.

What is the parent's role?

One of the most important things a parent can do is attend the conference! This gives a strong message about the importance parents place on their child's learning. During the conference, parents are encouraged to listen, to compliment and talk with their child about his/her work, and to identify ways they can help their child reach his/her goals.

What is the teacher's role?

Teachers have spent the first month of school getting to know the strengths and needs of each child. They have helped their students

understand the standards and goals they are working on. By conference time, teachers will help children select work samples which show their level of performance in these areas. They will assist students in setting goals for the remainder of the year. Prior to the conferences, teachers will also provide opportunities for students to practice their part in the conference in order to put them more at ease.

What is the timeline and schedule?

Conference schedules will come home the week of October 11th. We will do our best to schedule conferences back-to-back for families with more than one student.

Conferences will be scheduled every 15 minutes, with extra time slotted, as the teachers may have to give extra time for some students. In order to give students full attention during the conference, we request that brothers and sisters do not attend. School-age children are invited to participate in activities that the school will have available while you are in their sibling's conference.

We look forward to this time when students can show off their learning, and identify goals which they and their teachers have set for the remaining months of the year. Mark your calendars and plan to join us for some very special conversations with your children on October 28 and 29!

Sincerely,

Cindy Kelsey, Principal

State Releases 4th Grade Assessment Results

Results from last April's statewide test for 4th, 7th, and 10th grade students were released in September.

The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (or WASL) is part of the long-term reform efforts of our state, and is designed to show whether students are meeting new and higher standards in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and mathematics. The percent of Meredith Hill students who met the standard in each of these areas is given below.

Students Meeting State Standard In:	READING			WRITING			MATH		
	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
Meredith Hill 4th Grade	75.9%	74.4%	80.6%	60.9%	55.8%	59.7%	56.3%	60.5%	63.9%
Federal Way 4th Grade	71.6%	72.6%	80.9%	53.2%	56.7%	58.6%	55.6%	61.0%	61.8%
WA State 4th Grade	65.6%	66.7%	74.4%	49.5%	53.6%	55.8%	51.8%	55.2%	59.9%

Students' individual scores were sent home with 5th graders in September. A special letter from the governor and from our superintendent was presented to each student who met the state standard in all four of the areas tested.

A parent handbook entitled "Reaching Higher" is available upon request to any parent who wants more information about the WASL test and the state's learning standards.

Meredith Hill Welcomes AmeriCorps Worker

My name is Mary Moser, and I will be serving as the AmeriCorps member at Meredith Hill for the 2004-2005 school year. I just finished my undergraduate term at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, where I earned a degree in English. I am originally from Virginia, but grew up the majority of my life in Omaha, Nebraska. Most of my family still lives in Omaha, but I have an older brother who lives in California. I joined the AmeriCorps Federal Way Team because I thought that I should benefit myself and my community in my time away from further school. Hopefully, I will be of great service to the students while I determine if I should pursue a career in education.

Meredith Hill is pleased to welcome Mary Moser as our Volunteer Corps member this year. Volunteer Corps is an arm of the AmeriCorps which is a domestic Peace Corps program that serves our country in many different arenas--disaster preparedness, building homes, working with the homeless, sustaining the environment, etc. The Federal Way Team is an education-based program and works with the schools in the Federal Way School District. Miss Moser will be at Meredith Hill every day.

Miss Moser provides a lot of extra help for our students! How we appreciate the service and success which AmeriCorps brings to our school! Welcome, Miss Moser!

Kelso's Choices: Conflict Management at Meredith Hill

Kelso's Choices is a problem solving and conflict management curriculum taught in our 1st through 3rd grade classes by Mrs. EagleCruz, our school counselor. Students are taught that they are old enough, smart enough and capable of solving small problems. Small problems can be important, but are annoying, frustrating, bothersome, and can 'bug' the student. They are taught to use two of Kelso's choices to solve their small problems. These Kelso's choices are:

1. Go to another game.
2. Share and take turns.
3. Talk it out.
4. Walk away.
5. Ignore it.
6. Tell them to stop.
7. Apologize.
8. Make a deal.
9. Wait and cool off.

Students get a chance to learn and practice these skills. They are to use Kelso's choices at recess, in line, on the bus, and in the classroom. Students may go to an adult also if they have really tried two of Kelso's choices and these did not work.

They are taught to go to a trusted adult for "big problems". These are problems that are scary, dangerous, where someone is hurt or may get hurt. The feelings involved in these problems are terrified, panicked, very frightening. We list adults at home and at school that the students can tell about big problems.

If you have any questions about Kelso's choices, please call Mrs. Patty EagleCruz at 253 945 3208. The Steps to Respect program, an anti bullying curriculum, will be taught in

the fourth and fifth grade classrooms later. Kindergarten students will be taught Second Step, a problem solving curriculum just for them, beginning in a few weeks.

October is Child Health Month

Give your home a safety check. Injury is the leading cause of death in children in the U.S. Six common types of childhood injuries are motor vehicle injuries, pedestrian injuries, bicycle injuries, drowning, burns, and firearm injuries. Most injuries can be prevented. Keep in mind a child's body proportions are different from adults – the head is large and heavy compared with the rest of the body. A child's eyesight and hearing take time to fully develop. They copy adult behavior and begin to learn how things work, but lack judgment and understanding of potential risks. Try these simple steps: Set an example of safe behavior by acting safely yourself. Encourage sage actions by giving simple, clear instructions about what they should and should not do. Remove or keep them away from things that might harm them.

Here's a place to start. Make your home safe. Are all poisonous substances – cleaning supplies, medicines, plants, etc. – kept out of child's reach? Are stairs and hallways clear and well lit? Are windows secured with locks? Are fire extinguishers installed where they are most likely to be needed? Are smoke detectors in working order? Are matches and lighters kept out of child's reach? Is the water set at a safe temperature? Is the child supervised whenever around water? If you have a gun, do you keep guns and ammunition stored separately and locked up? Is a list of emergency numbers posted near the telephone?

Mark Your Calendar

OCTOBER

- 7 – NO SCHOOL Waiver Day
- 8 – NO SCHOOL State Inservice Day
- 14 – Cookie Day
PTA Board Meeting 6:30
- 25– Through November 9 –
PTA Wreath and Candle Fundraiser
- 28-29– Student-Led Conferences

NOVEMBER

- 4 – Cookie Day
PTA General Meeting 6:30
- 5 – PTA Family Night Bingo
- 11 – NO SCHOOL Waiver Day

Lunch Money Now

Nutrition Services now has an on-line service called “Lunch Money Now.” Parents can check their child’s meal card balances and add money to their accounts at www.computersdi.com/lmnfwy. You will need your student’s ID number to access this website. Call the Meredith Hill office, 253-945-3200, if you need the ID number.

School lunch prices for the 2004-2005 school year are as follows: elementary lunch is \$2.00, milk is \$.50, and adult lunch is \$3.25.

Lunch tickets may be purchased at any time. A 10-lunch ticket is \$20.00, a 20-lunch ticket is \$40, etc. Checks should be written to Nutrition Services. Tickets can also be purchased with a credit card by calling Nutrition Services at 253-945-5555.

Federal Way Public Schools Special Education Open House

An Orientation to Special Education Programs in Federal Way

This is an event for all parents in the District who have children receiving special education services.

Wednesday, October 20, 2004, 7:30-8:30 p.m.
Federal Way Educational Services Center (ESC), Board Room
31405 – 18th Avenue South, Federal Way

Sponsored by: Federal Way Special Education
Parent Professional Partnership Advisory Committee

Questions? Please call:
Jodi Reimer 253-839-2374 or Ginger Kwan 253-813-8407

If you need an interpreter, please call 253-945-2084.

Playground Information

Due to safety considerations, Meredith Hill will no longer be able to permit use of its preschool playground during non-school hours. In addition, any students using the rear playground and track area before 4:00 p.m. must be accompanied by an adult, and checked through the office. Thank you for helping to keep our school accident-free.

Ten Year Anniversary Celebration

Plans are being made to observe Meredith Hill Elementary School's ten year anniversary as part of the greater Federal Way community. Ceremonies and celebrations will be held on March 11th, 2005 in conjunction with the annual PTA Family Dance. Please plan to participate, and be part of the fun and festivities! Watch future newsletters for important information about this wonderful upcoming event.

Orientation Survey

We are very interested in some feedback from you on the orientation day held on the first day of school. We have included three survey questions that we ask you to respond to. The survey is short and should not take much of your time, but will be so valuable to us. Your responses will help us fine-tune the process to make our next orientation even better.

1. Overall, Fall orientation was:

- a) Excellent
- b) Good
- c) Not Good
- d) Not worthwhile

Comments:

2. Meeting the teachers and learning their expectations for my child in the coming school year and completing the necessary registration activities seem to be:

- a) Excellent
- b) Good
- c) Not Good
- d) Not worthwhile

Comments:

3. My child/children found the process of meeting their teacher, viewing their classroom, and completing the registration activities to be:

- a) Excellent
- b) Good
- c) Not Good
- d) Not worthwhile

Comments:

Grade Level of Child _____

Parent's Name (optional) _____

Sign Up Now!

The Salvation Army of Federal Way is now taking appointments for our Christmas Assistance program for low-income families with children, ages 0 to 17. Qualifying families will be able to shop for toys at our Toy N Joy and will receive a gift card from a local grocery store to help pay for their holiday dinner. To make an appointment, please call 253-946-7933 Monday through Friday, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

We are also looking for volunteers to ring bells during our 2004 Red Kettle Campaign. If you are interested in doing this, you may call the same number for an application.

Have a wonderful Holiday season.