
MEREDITH HILL MESSENGER

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Cindy Kelsey, Principal
Mary Jane Henry, Office Manager

Jane Arthur, Secretary
Lynette Edwards, Office Clerk

Seasons Greetings *From the Staff at Meredith Hill*

Last Minute Communications to the Office

On many days at Meredith Hill, the last hour before dismissal can be the busiest. The office always appreciates advance notice of any special communications that need to go to the students, and the teachers are happiest when their final instructional minutes are not interrupted.

We are asking for your help. Although some last minute arrangements are unavoidable, we would appreciate it if you could please try to make plans with your student before they leave for school in the morning. This helps the student, teacher and office. Thank you for your assistance.

From the Counselor

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has developed "A Family Guide To Keeping Youth Mentally Healthy & Drug Free" at <http://family.samhsa.gov>.

This website will help support adults-parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, and other youth mentors in their efforts to help children aged 7 to 18 make good decisions, feel safe and protected, and have successful lives. The ultimate goal is to

promote youth mental health and discourage youth drug use.

To join the Family Guide Site's E-Mail Update online, visit:
<http://family.samhsa.gov/main/listserve.aspx>.

DECEMBER Calendar

- 3– NO SCHOOL
Staff Development Day
- 9 – Cookie Day
- 10– PTA Family Winterfest
6:00-8:00 pm
- 17– Celebration Assembly
2:30-3:30 pm
- 17– REPORT CARDS Go Home
- Dec 20 - Jan 2– Winter Vacation

JANUARY Calendar

- 11– PTA Board Meeting 6:30 pm
- 13– Cookie Day
- 14– Martin Luther King Assembly
10:00 am
- 17– NO School
Martin Luther King Holiday
- 19– Steel Drum/Honor Choir
Concert 7:00 pm
- 20– Preview of HIV/STD Curriculum
5th Grade Parents
ESC Board Room 6:30 pm



Thank You Volunteers

Our warmest thanks to the many volunteers who put in 183 hours in October, and 301 hours in November, to help the students and teachers at Meredith Hill. Your presence here makes Meredith Hill an even better place to be.

From the Nurse: The, Oh So Common, Cold

Winter is here, and with it comes cold season. Each cold may last from one to two weeks, and may progress through various combinations of stuffy nose, runny nose, sneezing, sore or scratchy throat, cough, watery eyes, fever, and feeling tired.

First a note about prevention. Cold viruses spread easily. The best prevention is GOOD HANDWASHING. You should wash your hands after blowing your nose, after using the restroom, and before preparing or eating food. Other preventive measures include turning your face away from people and covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze, using tissues and disposing of them promptly, getting plenty of rest, eating nutritious foods, and dressing appropriately for the weather. Finally, help reduce the spread of illness by staying home when really sick.

Rest and drink plenty of fluids. A cool mist vaporizer may help. Take the least medication possible. In general, whether you take drugs or not for a cold, you'll be getting better in about a week or two. Only treat symptoms that are actually interfering with sleeping, eating, working or playing. Avoid multi-ingredient products designed to treat all possible symptoms. Chances are that only one or two are really bothersome and the "extra" ingredients are just increasing the chance of unwanted side effects. Remember, the common cold is a viral infection; antibiotics will not help unless complications develop.

Every child with cold symptoms can't stay out of school or be sent home. But if a child is not well enough to participate in class, because of an uncontrollable cough or fatigue for example, he doesn't belong in school. A child with a temperature of 100F or greater needs to stay home.

School district policy guidelines state that children with any of the following symptoms must be sent home:

- * Oral temperature of 100 degrees or higher.
- * Any vomiting or diarrhea at school.
- * The presence of any of the following untreated communicable diseases – head lice, scabies, measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox, fifth's disease, strep throat and/or scarlet fever, pink eye, ringworm, and impetigo.

Complete and accurate information on your child's emergency card is critical. If you have changed your address, telephone number, or work place and phone number, please let us know immediately. Be sure to have the name and telephone number of a person whom we can contact if we cannot reach you to pick-up an ill or injured child.

All health room visits are logged. Parents will be notified if their child is making frequent health room visits so that the situation can be evaluated.

Any school staff, including the school nurse, is prohibited from giving any medication to students unless there is a parent/physician medication form which has been signed by both the doctor and the parent, and brought to school with the medication. These forms are available in the school office.

Please feel free to call 253-945-3200 with any health concerns that may impact your child at school.

Concert Schedule

*Please mark your calendars for our
music concert season:*

Winterfest Steel Drum Concert
Friday, December 10

Honor Choir and Steel Drum Concert
Wednesday, January 19

2nd/3rd Grade Concert
Tuesday, March 8

Kindergarten/1st Grade Concert
Thursday, April 21

4th/5th Grade Concert
Thursday, May 12

Honor Choir and Steel Drum Concert
Tuesday, June 7

Steel Drum Tour
Thursday, June 9

Steel Drum Tour
Thursday, June 16

Steel Drum Tour
Friday, June 17

News from Mr. Navilio

Our first month of the "Feelin' Good Mileage Club" is complete. We have over 180 students signed up for the club. If you still want to sign-up, pick up a permission slip in the office. You can see below the top student performances in the club so far. Keep up the good work everyone!

Top Miles per Grade Level

1st: 3rd Grade with 145 miles

2nd: 4th Grade with 135 miles

3rd: 2nd Grade with 90 miles

Top Students Miles per Grade Level:

K: Carlie Jones, Mrs. Dennison's
Class--18 miles

1st: Yuliya Kadilyak, Mrs. Balydga's
Class--20 miles

2nd: Jeremy Traxel, Ms. Winningham's
Class--18 miles

3rd: Igor Kadilyak, Mrs. Tweedie's
Class--35 miles

4th: Justin Allmaras, Mrs. Drouet's
Class--45 miles

5th: Ian Gettis, Ms. Carson's Class--30
miles

Homework Help

The Federal Way Regional Library provides free homework help for students in kindergarten through high school.

StudyZone is held at the Federal Way Regional Library, 34200 1st Way S., on Mondays from 6-8 p.m. and Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4-6 p.m. For information, call 253-838-3668, Ext. 3. No need to sign up. Students should bring their own study materials.

Dress for the Weather!

Meredith Hill students will be going outside as much as possible for recess throughout the winter so that they can get physical activity. Please dress your children to be at recess on wet and cold weather days. When the weather is severe, we will make sure the students are inside and safe.

‘Understanding by Design’ Will Guide Instruction at New Middle School

What will be going on at the new middle school? Math, science and a whole lot of fun, Planning Principal Mark Demick says.

The district’s middle school transition report calls for opportunities for active learning inquiry and problem solving, with a solid foundation of skills. Demick and his team have developed several recommendations, including the implementation of an instructional program called Understanding by Design (UbD).

To understand UbD, think about the process of building a house. Before pouring a drop of concrete, a builder studies the blueprint. With the finished house as the desired outcome, the builder plans backward, thinking through and scheduling each step of the project necessary to achieve the outcome.

Understanding by Design applies the same principal to teaching. It simply says, “What are the big ideas that students need to understand when they complete this class?” From there, the instructional team plans backward. The teachers’ lesson plans reflect a coherent design -- big ideas and essential questions clearly guide the design of, and

are aligned with, assessments and teaching and learning activities.

Some features of Understanding by Design:

- * Multiple forms of assessment let students demonstrate their understanding in various ways.
- * Instruction and assessment provides opportunities for students to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize, and self-assess.
- * Assessment of understanding is anchored in authentic performance tasks that allow students to demonstrate their understanding and apply knowledge and skills.
- * Clear criteria and performance standards for teacher, peer, and self-evaluations of student products and performances.
- * Guidance for students in revisiting and rethinking important ideas to deepen their understanding.
- * A variety of resources are used, with the textbook serving as only one resource among many (rather than serving as the syllabus).

For more information about Understanding by Design, go to

<http://www.ubdexchange.org/resources.html>

To read more about the new middle school plans, go to:

<http://www/fwps.org/info/middle/>



*Please save and donate your gently used, clean play pants for the Health Room.
We are in need of all sizes, but especially those which fit our younger students.
Sweat pants are practical, and very appreciated.*

A, B, C Redefined: Parents' Report Card Questions Answered

First trimester report cards will be sent home with students in grades K-5 on Dec. 17. This is the second year that Federal Way's elementary schools have used this updated standards-based report card. Following are seven questions and answers that parents need to know in order to understand their child's report card. As you will see, grades don't carry the same meaning today that they did when we were in school!

Q: What is the main purpose of the report card?

A: Its main job is to inform parents of their children's progress toward meeting state standards for their grade level. This is a big change from report cards of 10 or 20 years ago. More often than not, former report cards showed a child's achievement compared with other students in the class, and grades were strongly influenced by a student's efforts. The current report card shows progress toward meeting "grade level expectations," which are the standards for every child in the state.

Q: Who created the standards for the State of Washington?

A: Washington is one of 49 states in the country to adopt a standards-based K-12 education system. In 1993, the Washington State Legislature outlined a process for setting achievement standards for K-12 students, and for measuring students' success in meeting them. The grade level expectations (GLEs) describe what students should know and be able to do. They also form the basis of what teachers teach at each grade level. (For a complete list of the GLEs for your child's grade level, contact the school office, or visit this website www.k12.wa.us and look under "Curriculum and Instruction.")

Q: How can parents know if their children are meeting the standards?

A: First, they can look at results of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), given each spring. This year the test will be expanded to cover grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10. Beginning in 2008, students must pass the high school WASL in order to graduate. Second, parents should look at their child's report card. The report card grades for K-2 and 3-5 describe each child's progress toward meeting the state standards:

	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Below Standard
K-2 Report Card "Scale Model"	E	M	A	B
3-5 Report Card "Grade Model"	A, A-, B+	B, B-, C+, C, C-	D+, D, D-	F+, F

Q: Isn't it confusing for kids and parents that "A" and "B" report "approaching" and "below" standard for students in grades K-2, but when you get to grades 3-5, these same grades stand for "exceeding" and "meeting" standard?

A: Yes. This is a possible area of confusion with the current reporting system. Pay close attention to the "key" for your child's report card, so you can understand each mark.

Q: Aren't D's and F's a harsh way to report progress that is "approaching" or "below" the standard for students in gr. 3-5 if they are doing their best?

A: Yes, this is a big change in the current reporting system. When we were in school, D's and F's were often associated with poor effort or poor work habits. Now for students in grades 3-5, they simply attempt to communicate how far a student is from meeting the grade level standard. Two groups of students are not graded in this format. Students who qualify for help through special education receive individualized reports on their specific learning goals. And students in our English Second Language (ESL) program receive a separate report in reading and writing which does not involve letter grades.

Q: What if I prefer the "scale model" over the "grade model?"

A. That's not a problem. Parents can request that their 3rd, 4th or 5th grade student's report card is printed in "Scale Model" (E, M, A, B) rather than "Grade Model" (A, B, C, D, F). Just write a note to the child's teacher and state your request. With the click of a button, the printer will take the same information entered by the teacher and print it in either "grade" or "scale" model. It's your choice. If you do not make a request, report cards for 3rd, 4th and 5th graders are printed in "grade model."

Q: What can I do if my child is "approaching" or "below" the standards for his/her grade level?

A: First, make sure that your child is completing all assigned work. Next, ask the teacher for specific information: (1) Which skills need to be mastered? (2) What activities can we do with our child at home to help him/her gain these skills? Finally, check in often with the teacher through a weekly note or phone call to monitor your child's progress. Students who are meeting or approaching their grade level reading standard by the end of the year will qualify for promotion to the next grade. Students who are below the standard in reading may need summer school, or may need another whole year to acquire the necessary skills.

Standards provide clear targets, and parents and teachers working together provide the strongest possible team for helping our students reach them. We will work closely with you to clearly communicate the standards, and to provide multiple opportunities at school and at home for your children to practice and master each one! Have a wonderful December and winter holiday break with your children, and keep them reading!

Sincerely,
Cindy Kelsey, Principal

