
MEREDITH HILL MESSENGER

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Board Approves Illahee's Choice Program for 5th Grade

The School Board recently approved Illahee Middle School's Choice Program for students entering 5th grade next year. According to Illahee Principal, Stacy Lucas, the program is hoping to attract 25 to 50 fifth grade students in the district who may be ready for a middle school setting. Bus transportation will be provided only if the student lives within the Illahee service area (which includes students from Sherwood Forest, Enterprise, and Panther Lake Elementaries). Students living outside the service area must provide their own transportation.

The ideal Illahee 5th grader, according to Mrs. Lucas, is a student who meets one or more of the following criteria: needs a more challenging curriculum; wants performance music in 5th grade (band, orchestra or choir); would benefit socially from inclusion with middle school students; has repeated a grade in elementary school and is of typical middle school age; has a sibling who is enrolled at Illahee; or has a family need for an earlier start and end time (7:20 am-2:10 pm).

One of the students' favorite questions is, "Will there be recess?" Mrs. Lucas indicates that there will not be recess, however, there will be physical education daily for one hour, and students will have a half-hour lunch period each day. Another frequently asked question is, "Will Illahee 5th graders be in classes with 8th graders?" "No," says Mrs. Lucas. "Fifth grade students may have lunch, music, or p.e. with 6th graders, but they will

not have classes with 7th and 8th graders without parent permission."

The program is voluntary, and no students will be "assigned" to the program. If parents wish to have their child participate, they will need to sign up during the open Choice Enrollment period for elementary schools, March 22 through May 10. "In a district of choice," Mrs. Lucas says, "Illahee's 5th grade program gives parents one more option." For more information, parents are encouraged to contact Mrs. Lucas by phone at 253-945-4600, or by e-mail at slucas@fwps.org.

March Calendar

- 6- Scholastic Book Fair ends
- 7- Track after school
Tuesdays and Thursdays
- 9- Music Concert Grades 2 and 3
2:30 and 7:00
Cookie Day
- 10- PTA Family Dance 5:30-7:00
- 14- Meredith Hill Battle of the Books
1:25 in Gym
- 17- Teacher Inservice NO SCHOOL
- 21- Battle of the Books
Decatur Middle School 7:00
- 23- Cookie Day
- 29- Third Quarter Ends
(Progress Reports go home this week)
- 30, 31- Conferences NO SCHOOL

April Calendar

- 6- Cookie Day
- 10-14 - Spring Break NO SCHOOL

Meredith Hill's Battle of the Books

During the third week of March a fun and friendly literature contest will take place at Meredith Hill. Students from 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classes have formed teams and read and studied 17 books. They have focused their studies on the authors, settings, characters, plots, and themes of these books in an attempt to earn the right to represent Meredith Hill at the District Battle of the Books where they will compete against teams from every elementary school in Federal Way. Last year's Meredith Hill team swept the competition at the District Battle to become the reigning champs. We hope to retain our title and bring home the trophy again this year.

Everyone is welcome to attend our MHL School Battle which will take place on Tuesday, March 14 beginning at 1:25 in the gym, and the District Battle which will be held on Tuesday, March 21st in the Decatur High School auditorium beginning at 7 o'clock. Hope to see you there!

Conferences

March means it is conference and progress report time. Teachers will be scheduling individual conferences on March 30th or 31st. A conference form letter will be sent home shortly, and you are asked to return it to the teacher as soon as possible. There is no school for students on the 30th or 31st of March.

2006-2007 Choice Applications

Parents and guardians who would like to have their students attend a Federal Way school that is outside their neighborhood attendance area may apply to participate in the district's Choice Enrollment Program:

Secondary Open Application Period
January 5, 2006 – March 10, 2006
Elementary Open Application Period
April 1, 2006 – May 10, 2006

All applications must be submitted to the ESC. All Out of District applications must include a release from the home district.

Applications are available in the school office, and should be sent or delivered to Paula Curtis at the Federal Way Public Schools Educational Service Center (ESC), 31405 18th Ave. S., Federal Way, WA 98003. For more information call or e-mail Paula Curtis at 253-945-2013 or pcurtis@fwps.org.

Read Across America Day at Meredith Hill

Thursday, March 2nd was the National Education Association Read Across America Day! At Meredith Hill we celebrated in a



variety of ways, including enjoying an all-school Read Across America assembly in the gym where staff members performed theatrical interpretations of original student stories. In addition, the very famous monkey, Curious George, visited the school.

WASL Scheduled for April and May

You've heard the phrase, "Testing, 1, 2, 3"? That could be the theme at Meredith Hill and at schools across the district during the months of April and May. The table below shows the state tests that are planned for grades 3, 4, and 5. These assessments will be used—along with classroom assignments, observations and tests—to help teachers measure student progress toward meeting state and district standards, and to determine students' readiness for promotion to the next grade.

WASL (Washington Assessment of Student Learning)	Who will take the test?	When & how long is this test?
Reading & Math	3rd Grade	The tests are not timed, however, each sub-test must be completed within one school day.
Reading, Math, & Writing	4th Grade	
Reading, Math, & Science	5th Grade	Tests will be scheduled between April 18 and May 4.

How can I help my child prepare for these tests?

For any testing situation at school, parents can encourage students to stay calm and do their best. A good night's rest and a hearty breakfast provide energy and alertness. Third, fourth, and fifth grade students at Meredith Hill will be scheduled to take the WASL between April 18th and May 4th. If possible, try not to schedule any appointments or trips that would take students out of school during testing times.

The good news is, your work in helping your child meet grade level reading and math expectations is an on-going effort, and we encourage you to keep it up. Parents offer this support all year long by: (1) setting aside a 20-30 min. reading time with their children each day; (2) helping students practice skills in reading and math; (3) reviewing completed or corrected homework with their child; and (4) keeping in touch with the teacher regarding their child's progress.

When will I know the results of these tests?

Results will be sent to parents in early September 2006. Parents will receive individual results for each of the subject areas tested.

If you have specific questions about these tests, you can call your child's teacher or me. As you review March's progress reports, we encourage you to celebrate with your children the progress you see in their learning. It is also an important time to collaborate with teachers and school staff on ways to increase success if students continue to struggle. Let us continue our work together to help ALL children achieve their highest potential!

Sincerely,
Cindy Kelsey, Principal