

Meridian Connection

MERIDIAN SCHOOL DISTRICT | SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER

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Superintendent's Message

Dear community,

We have reached the end of another school year. This year was full of celebrations, one being that we were back in school full-time for the entire year. A few resurgences of virus variants meant more adjustments and being flexible to address changing conditions. We have outstanding staff, dedicated families, and amazing students who were able to adapt during those times.

Thank you to everyone for hanging in there this year and I look forward to seeing you all back this fall. Except, of course, our graduates! Congratulations to our graduates for their perseverance and tenacity. We are proud of them and we hold great hope for their exciting futures!

We have many great things to look forward to in Meridian. Our Strategic Plan Development Committee is continuing their work and we intend to share our new five-year strategic plan with the school board in January 2023. This plan will be much more representative of our values as a community than our current plan.

We are continuing to improve our communication and engagement with families through our newly designed website and new communication tool, ParentSquare. Families will now be able to communicate with their school in their preferred language using their preferred communication method. We also are

introducing a new email list so anyone in the community can follow important updates from the district.

We continue to build a welcoming culture where everyone feels that they belong here in Meridian. It is important we recognize, embrace, and protect the dignity of each student as valued and important members of our school community. Thank you for your continued support of our schools. I hope you have a joyful and fun-filled summer.

Dr. James Everett
Superintendent



A Conversation with our School Board

We recently checked in with School Board Chair Craig Mitchell to learn more about him and what Meridian School District is doing to support students.

What are some steps Meridian School District is taking to support all students?

“Meridian has partnered with another agency to put together an early childhood development program at the elementary school. In middle school students are given the opportunity to look at pathways that will take them beyond the standard K-12 education system. At the high school level there are courses for people to help them if they are college bound and there is coursework for people who may want to join the workforce or skilled trades once they leave high school.”

What is important to you in Meridian School District?

“I feel that it is important that all students feel respected and that nobody should be overlooked. We have a diverse community



Above from left to right: School Board members Steve Corwin, Craig Mitchell, Marty Gray, Sara Bernardy and Jarrod Karuza.

and it is important that we have a diverse range of highly qualified and dedicated educators.”

What are you looking forward to in Meridian School District?

“I’m looking forward to seeing how the district is going to navigate the population growth we are experiencing and how the students are going to achieve at a higher level after having a nearly two year interruption of their education pathway.”

What are you most proud of or excited about from your time on the board?

“During my time on the board of directors I am proud to have been able to give MP3 its own campus on school property. This campus frees up shared spaces at other buildings.

I am also pleased that we were able to add the portable buildings at the elementary and middle school locations at a very minimal cost.”

District Updates

2022-23 budget

In April, we sought feedback on budget priorities from staff, families and our community, asking this question, “As we plan for the next school year, what are the most important things we should consider in order to support all of our students?”

Some themes from budget feedback included: competitive staff compensation; mental health/wellness support for students and staff; need for more substitutes; requests for small class sizes; support for Special Education students and staff; staffing needs and support; learning opportunities for students and support for student technology.

Our school district budget receives funding from three main sources: the federal government (12%), the state (69%) and locally through levies (19%). Since the majority of our funding is provided through state dollars, we closely monitor the work of the legislature and development of the state budget.

This year, the state legislature provided additional funds to school districts in a few key areas including enrollment stabilization, health and behavioral health services for students and cost of living adjustments for staff. Taking this into consideration and the feedback from our community we developed our budget for 2022-23. The proposed annual budget for 2022-23 was presented to the School Board on May 25, 2022.

Sign up for district news

We are introducing a new communications tool called ParentSquare for the 2022-23 school year. This tool will help us streamline communications for families by providing all district communications in one location. This tool also allows us to communicate with families in their home language.

Another great feature is a community email list. If you are interested in getting

updates from Meridian School District, but you do not have children attending our schools, you can sign up for our community group list. Use the QR code to visit our sign-up webpage, visit www.meridian.wednet.edu/sign-up or call us at 360-318-2159.



Seeking feedback on our strategic plan

We began the process of developing our new strategic plan in February 2022. A committee was convened of over 30 people including staff, families and community members. You can follow the progress of our Strategic Plan Development Committee on our website at www.meridian.wednet.edu/strategic-plan-development-committee/.

We recently established five values and a vision statement. We'd like to get feedback from our community on our values and vision statement. Paper feedback forms are available in the District Office or you can submit your thoughts by using the QR code right.



Thank you for taking the time to respond. The committee will reconvene in August and continue work on goals and outcomes.

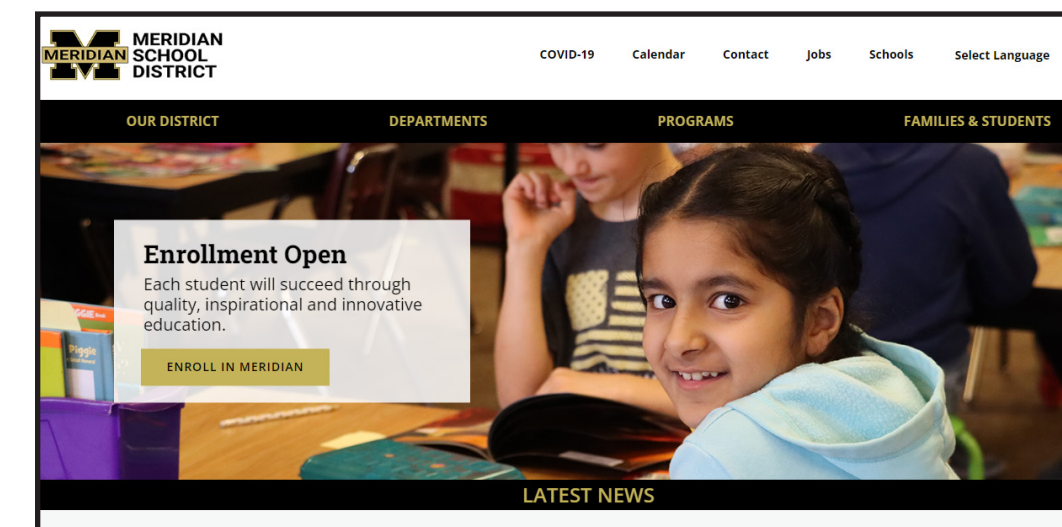
Summer hours and calendar reminders

The first day of school is Sept. 1, 2022. During the summer, school offices are closed. The District Office is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday from June 20 to Aug. 12. The District Office resumes normal hours the week of Aug. 15. Meridian High School reopens Aug. 16 and Meridian Middle School reopens Aug. 18. Irene Reither Elementary and MP3 reopen Aug. 22. Our school year calendars can be found at www.meridian.wednet.edu/calendars/.

Introducing our new website

We are excited to introduce our new Meridian School District website (www.meridian.wednet.edu). After listening to feedback we have thoughtfully redesigned our district website to be a hub of district information that is easy to navigate and understand. You'll note new features like a searchable staff directory, a district calendar that you can subscribe to, robust search and quick links for the most sought after webpages. We hope this will be a welcomed and valuable resource.

Have questions, thoughts or wonders about the new website? Please contact us at communications@meridian.wednet.edu.



Above: A preview of the new district website homepage.

A Look Inside Our Schools

Congratulations, graduates!

Congratulations to the class of 2022! Graduation is always a special time and this year that was especially true. This year, graduation felt very much like it did pre-pandemic with more families and friends in attendance, graduates could sit next to each other without social distancing and the high school band was there to perform.

Meridian High School Principal Derek Forbes took a moment to acknowledge this momentous occasion.

“We have such amazing students and each graduating class offers fond memories,” Forbes said. “The class of 2022 will be remembered for the way they enjoyed experiences that had been missed the previous two years. Students worked hard to create memories and enjoy the moment with their peers.”

Forbes said he hopes graduating seniors see these past few years as defining moments where they chose to make the best of situation.

“Building on the experiences of their past, I hope they take on new challenges with the grit and grace needed to learn both from success and failure, always moving forward to positively impact their family, their friends and serve the greater community,” Forbes said.

In their own words

Before they moved their tassels and tossed their caps in the air, we checked in with a few of our graduating seniors to hear about advice they have for future students, their plans for the future and reflections on their time in Meridian.

Skyleigh James

“After high school I plan on attending West Texas A&M University to get a bachelor’s degree in an agriculture major. Right now my biggest interest in agriculture is becoming a high school agriculture teacher. The biggest piece of advice I have for new students at Meridian High School is to get involved! Try out clubs, sports, or volunteer activities as an underclassmen. It’s great to try new things, challenge yourself, and figure out what you love! I would just like to say, thanks to everyone in this community who has supported me. Meridian has been a place where I’ve felt welcomed, challenged, and encouraged every step of the way, so once again thank you!”

Isaac Berschauer

“The thing I am most looking forward to after high school is the independence from the traditional system. I will be going to college, so there obviously will still be some structure in my life, but what I am looking forward to is focusing more on what you want to do with the rest of your

life. I am going to Northwest University in Kirkland, Washington. My advice is to embrace your high school experience and your classes, and not just brush them off as unimportant because you may not care who the 17th president of the United States was. I think every teacher here has something important or influential to share, and the only way to get that is to actually care about what they have to say. Thank you for the opportunities I’ve been given here. I will and have recommended Meridian to as many people as I can!”

Ambarpreet Kaur

“After high school, I hope to meet new people in college and in life, make new friends, and save money for university. I plan to attend Whatcom Community College. My school is special because we have a unique system that allows us as students to make our way to a better future. We have a community of respect and love for everyone no matter their race or skin color. It feels like a secure place since no one judges you or bullies you.

Meridian High has the most caring teachers and they help you with everything. My advice to new students is to finish your assignments on time because it is the easiest way to pass a class. Don’t be afraid to ask questions. Don’t compare yourself to others because everyone is special in their own way. Meridian High School was an amazing joy for me.”

Welcome new leadership team to Irene Reither Elementary School

We have hired three outstanding individuals to form the administrative team at Irene Reither Elementary School. Please join us in welcoming Principal Tyler Dockins and Assistant Principal Trisha Norman. Please welcome back Instructional Dean of Students Nate Beede.

Dockins joins us from Bellingham Public Schools (BPS) where he has been an instructional coach and principal designee at Kulshan Middle School since 2019. Prior to Bellingham, Dockins was the assistant principal of mathematics and science, dean of students and Special Education department chair for grades 5 through 12 at KIPP New Jersey for eight years.

Dockins has a master’s degree in education with a focus in Special Education from Arizona State University. He earned his administrative certification from the Danforth Educational Leadership Program at the University of Washington in 2020. Dockins is an experienced educator who believes children should be excited to attend school. He believes quality instruction creates more equitable outcomes for all students and seeks to establish strong relationships with staff,



Above from left to right: Principal Tyler Dockins, Assistant Principal Trisha Norman and Instructional Dean Nate Beede.

families and students to create the best educational experience for students. Dockins is known for being positive and student-focused. He builds strong relationships with students by showing them respect, setting high expectations and continually communicating his belief that they will be successful.

Trisha Norman has 20 years of elementary teaching experience, with 15 of those in BPS. She has taught music for PreK through fifth grade. For the past four years, Norman has been the districtwide PreK-8 music coordinator for BPS. Norman earned her principal’s certification in July 2020. She has a master’s degree in music performance and a bachelor’s degree in education with a focus in K-12 general and instrumental music. Norman is known

for her collaborative style of leadership and is looking forward to building strong relationships with the IRE school community to continue to foster a positive and joyful learning environment.

Nate Beede has been the instructional dean of students at Irene Reither since January 2022. He will continue in that role next school year as he works toward his certification to become an assistant principal. Beede taught elementary and middle school at Evergreen Christian School for 12 years. From 2019 to 2021, he was the vice principal at Bellingham Christian School. Beede has already built strong connections with students, staff and families at Irene Reither and looks forward to continuing to support the school. These hires are pending School Board approval.

Meridian Family Support Center now open

The Meridian Family Support Center is located at Irene Reither Elementary School (954 E. Hemmi Rd.) in portable 400A and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the school year. The family center can assist with basic needs such as food, clothing, hygiene supplies and more.

Community donations of new and gently used clothing (kid and adult), kitchenware, linens, and small appliances that are still in excellent condition can be brought to the family center during business hours.

During the school year, families who need language support, can request services

or ask questions by contacting Elvira Rozen, cultural liaison, by calling 360-306-2886. Our school district is committed to improving meaningful, two-way communication and promoting access to programs, services and activities for students and parents with limited English.

This summer, the Meridian Family Support Center is open 2 to 6 p.m., on Wednesdays from June 15 through Aug. 24. The family center will return to regular hours the week of Aug. 29. Resources available during the summer include groceries, adult and kid clothing and school supplies (as available).

“We are so excited to be able to provide these resources for families throughout the summer,” said family services coordinator Alicia Roberts. “Thanks to a partnership



Above: Inside the Meridian Family Support Center.

with Miracle Food Network we are able to provide shelf stable foods on Wednesdays.”

Families or community members who have questions can reach the family center by calling 360-318-2486 or emailing aroberts@meridian.wednet.edu.



From left to right: Skyleigh James, Oscar Huaracha Jr., Karanveer Dhaliwal, Tyler Graybill, Gwenyth Greiner and Katelynn Ahern.

First graders use technology to enhance learning

Students in Trent VanDyken's first grade class at Irene Reither Elementary School are adding technology into their reading lessons.

"Most of my incorporation of technology started when we went one-to-one with devices" VanDyken said. "It's always been something I've been passionate about, but the students having their own individual devices has made it so much easier!"

Students in kindergarten, first and second grades have iPads, while students in grades three through 12 have Chromebooks. VanDyken uses a variety of strategies and programs to enhance student learning using district-issued iPads.

One program VanDyken uses is i-Ready, a districtwide assessment and instruction program that helps promote student growth.

The i-Ready lessons are student specific and based on their needs. If a student is struggling with a skill after a lesson

has been completed, i-Ready notifies VanDyken so he can work with the student one-on-one to support them with that specific skill.

Another program VanDyken uses is called Pink Cat Games. This program is a platform that allows students to practice what they've learned in a way that is fun and engaging.

"Before, I'd make games for the students to practice their learning, but I would often notice kids skipping the learning aspect to play the game. For example, they wouldn't read/solve the flash card, and they'd just roll the dice and move their piece forward. Using Pink Cat Games adds the accountability that my old games didn't have." VanDyken said.

A benefit of Pink Cat Games is that VanDyken can use the exact same questions, but change the game in a matter of seconds, so it always stays fresh and fun. It also allows students to play together, and help each other learn.

VanDyken is intentional about balancing the use of technology with traditional classroom teaching.



Above: Students engage in lessons on iPads to reinforce their learning through fun, learning games. Above right: Students water a plant in the MP3 garden.



"It's not lost on me that students already spend a lot of time on devices outside of school," VanDyken said. "In my mind, I try to tap into the benefits of technology. We only use programs at school that are highly engaging and allow students to practice what they are specifically learning. It's not free time, and they aren't just using whatever app they want. They're using it as a tool to help them learn."

VanDyken said students only spend about 30 minutes a day practicing what they're learning on iPads. It does not replace direct instruction, but instead enhances instructional practices.

"I'm still teaching traditional classroom instruction. I still do direct instruction. I still do mini-lessons. We still explicitly teach and model a skill. The kids still learn from the carpet," said VanDyken. "None of the direct instruction and teaching has changed. It's the practicing of the skills that has changed in my classroom. And, in my opinion, it's changed for the better."

District-issued one-to-one devices are provided by the passage of the 2020 technology levy thanks to generous support from our community.

MP3 school garden grows minds and plants

For many years, staff and students have dreamt of a school garden at the Meridian Parent Partnership Program (MP3). This year, that dream became reality thanks to a generous donation from Petrogas Corporation.

"Along with providing a place for learning more about the Earth, stewardship, the growth cycle and responsibility, it has provided a place for students to connect with one another," said teacher Glenda Elgersma.

The garden is designed to be used as an outdoor classroom setting with seats for students and also to be used as a social setting where students can visit and eat lunch together.

"This space meets standards for both academic learning and social-emotional learning," Elgersma said.

Petrogas donated \$4,500 which enabled MP3 to purchase the items necessary for starting the garden. Items included a shed, tools, tool organizer, soil, wood chips, cedar for the boxes and outdoor faux wood stumps for seating.

"Without these funds, MP3 could not have constructed this garden or purchased needed materials and resources," said teacher Janet Giesen.

Building the garden was a team effort of staff, students and volunteers who helped assemble the shed, build the boxes, and haul and shovel wood chips and dirt. The plan also included an ADA-accessible raised garden bed.

"It was our dream that everybody could access the garden, so it was one of our must haves to have a garden bed that was accessible for wheelchairs," said teacher Rebecca Montgomery.

Students have expressed excitement for the school garden.

"It's really cool, we're making a garden. I like to see the update every day," said fourth grader Autumn Bastion.

Montgomery shared that teachers began brainstorming how to incorporate the garden into learning even before the project was complete.

"Everything here is project-based learning, and I have a passion for gardens, so we will be using this garden as much as we can," Montgomery said.



Above: Students work on a lesson in the school garden. Below: MP3 teacher, Rebecca Montgomery, works on a new garden bed.



Above: VanDyken works with a student one-on-one.



Above: Culinary arts students prepare breakfast for staff during an in-service learning day.
Bottom right: A student in Advanced Floral Designs displays a completed bouquet.

From students to professionals: classes encourage real work skills

Students in Maria Schatz's Advanced Floral Design are getting real-world experience by creating floral designs that Meridian staff can purchase.

The monthly floral club is a five-month subscription of flower arrangements created by the Advanced Floral Design class. The subscription costs \$75 for five months which ends up costing \$15 for each arrangement.

"This provides students additional designing experience while providing community members a good product at a great price," said teacher Maria Schatz.

Students process flowers, build the arrangements, write thank you cards and deliver the finished products. Students also price out arrangements so they can learn markup, labor costs and how much an arrangement would be sold for.

"The monthly flower club subscriptions are important because it teaches students

customer service and teaches them to work hard and have pride in their work," Schatz said.

Schatz explained her goal is for students to learn employable design skills that they could use in a floral shop or any profession. At the end of the course, students have the opportunity to earn a Principles of Floral Design Certificate through iCEV.

Floral design is not the only opportunity students have to learn employable skills. Students in Tami Scott's classes are learning valuable culinary skills.

At Meridian High School students can enroll in Introduction to Foods and Nutrition, Culinary Arts or Baking and Pastry.

"Everyone eats and for the vast majority of us, at some point in our lives, we'll all need to cook for ourselves at the very least," Scott said.

Through these classes students have the opportunity to showcase their skills through a variety of events.

"Catering requests vary quite a bit from year to year and are not limited to desserts, though we do get a fair amount of those!" said Scott.

Catering events from recent years have included senior presentation luncheon desserts, Booster Club craft fair, seniors evening of excellence refreshments, staff workday meals and more.

Students work in teams, have to manage their time and follow state and local regulations for safety and sanitation.

"These are all good skills that will serve them in any occupational field," Scott said. "Reading and preparing a recipe is simply a great way to practice reading and following directions, a life skill, and you get to eat your results!"

Scott is always looking for new opportunities for her students to further their skills and experience. She organizes a variety of after-school activities for the Trojan Café club. This past March, Meridian High School hosted a county-wide cupcake competition.



Above: A creature made of clay for the middle school stop-action videos.

Scott said she hopes her students build their confidence and develop a sense of adventure.

"Confident of basic skills in the kitchen and knowing that they can fend for themselves, and that they have a foundation to build on and continue learning," Scott said. "A sense of adventure to try new foods and new recipes so that it never gets boring! In our world today, we have access to foods and recipes from all over the world!"

Scott is always looking for community members to provide industry insights to students through an advisory committee. Members attend three meetings a year and discuss how to enrich students' experiences in and outside of the classroom. Interested community members can reach Tami Scott at tscott@meridian.wednet.edu to learn more.

Meridian Middle School students create clay animation videos

Students brought their clay figures to life using their school laptop computers to create a clay animation video. The multimedia art class is new this year at Meridian Middle School.

Art teacher Alison Yeager, wanted to create an experience for students to incorporate

their art creativity with technology to create a fun and visual final product.

Using Chromebooks and Google Slides, the goal was to create a one-minute stop motion video that tells a story with a clear beginning, middle and end.

For the lesson, students were broken into groups and had to sign up for jobs within their groups. The different jobs were storyboard creator, background/set designer, character designer, photographer and videographer.

"Even though they each had their individual jobs, they needed to work as a team to put it all together," Yeager said.

Students used clay to design figures and paint and other materials to design set backgrounds. Once their figures and sets were complete, they used a camera to take many still images of the figurines, moving them slightly for each image.

Once students completed all of their images, they uploaded these to Google Slides to create the stop motion video. For this part of the lesson, Yeager invited Cynthia Richardson, instructional coach

for technology integration, to explain the process.

"I have worked with Alison Yeager's class on a few different media projects that tie in an art aspect," Richardson said. "I think it's cool that I get to join because it's giving students a new way of thinking of what they have the power to do with their devices that they haven't had before and it seems like the kids really enjoyed the project."

Yeager said she hopes this project has helped students expand their thinking on what is possible when you incorporate technology into art.

"The overall takeaway is to give students the experience of how art and technology mesh as well as getting experience working collaboratively in art," Yeager said. "Having technology in the classroom has opened a lot of doors for incorporating technology based art projects in the classroom and I am excited to see how the videos come together!"

Use the QR code to view one of the stop motion clay animation videos created by students.



Below: Students in Alison Yeager's multimedia class work on their stop motion videos.



Meet Meridian

We have outstanding staff in Meridian School District, each with their own incredible story. Please take a moment to get to know the wonderful people who work for our district and make it a great place to be!



Monica Campfield

Secretary/Registrar

Meridian Parent Partnership Program

"I started my career as a legal secretary, but then I turned my focus to my boys when they were growing up. Looking back, I probably always wanted to be a teacher. Through certain circumstances and my own decisions, I just didn't go that path, but I always loved going in and volunteering in my kid's classrooms. I loved the atmosphere of school. I felt like it was uplifting. I was eventually hired as a student monitor at Ten Mile Creek Elementary. I loved being part of the staff. Then secretary jobs came up and I thought well, those are my skills and I could still be with kids in the school, so it just was a natural fit.

For one year, I worked at Ten Mile, MP3, the transportation and the athletic departments. I had to learn four new jobs and do them all the same day. It was a challenge, but I wanted more hours and I learned so much. I really have enjoyed all my jobs at Meridian and I've had a lot! What's great about that is I got to meet so many people. I got to know all the bus drivers and all the people in the athletic department, it was great. I learned about all the inner workings that everybody takes for granted, like the amount of work that goes into transporting our kids. It is a big deal, and it takes a lot of planning and organizing. The athletic planning and the

scheduling, especially during the spring, that was a lot! I had an opportunity to really see what many people do. Everybody works really hard in this district.

I feel like too, the staff here in Meridian have always been so kind and loving and they loved my kids. My kids loved them. With Meridian not having necessarily a town, everything does revolve around the schools, they are the glue in this community.

I've been a full-time secretary at MP3 since 2008 and I love it. I think that alternative learning can sometimes sound negative and it's anything but negative here. It is very welcoming here to everybody. Our students and families are a joy and I have the privilege to work with an amazing staff. They are my friends. We love to answer questions, we love to inform people about how this school operates and we're all very proud of it."



Roberto Santana

Lead Custodian

Meridian High School

"I've been here for 28 years and I love this place. Everything about this job is awesome, the people, the kids. Even though I'm walking distance to some schools in another district and I've been offered positions there. I turned them down.

Meridian is a family-oriented district and everyone is friendly. We wear a lot of hats around here. I clean up the lunch room, open up campus and greet kids as they arrive. I help the teachers and the kids. Whatever needs to be done, I am here to do it. It's an awesome place.

Meridian is a great place to be, and you want to be part of it. We treat each other like family. Every day is a great day for me here."



Doneva Froberg

Classified Substitute
Districtwide

"When my boys transferred to Meridian, about 20 years ago, that's when I started subbing. We lived in another district and my boys would come home from school cranky because the school was so crowded. They wanted to go to Meridian because they knew other kids who went here. They started at Meridian Middle School and it was such a good fit for them. It is so supportive here. I am not kidding. My boys used to come home and I'd say, who are your friends? And they were like "mom, everybody's just one family" and it is, it's really true. It's just a close-knit community. Everybody knew who my kids were here and knew who I was.

One of my first times subbing, I noticed this little boy who was in the office everyday. He was a Dennis the Menace, and I had a Dennis the Menace too. Every

day in his lunch I saw he had a sleeve of Oreos and a bag of Doritos. At the end of the day, I asked the principal if I could talk to her and I told her what he was eating in his lunch every day. She said we need to get him on the free meals program. After that, I was watching him read his milk carton and he had it right up close to his face. The boy couldn't see. So, I went back to the principal and the next thing I know, he got glasses! Our staff are great, but they can't be everywhere all the time. When you love children, and you love people, you just want to be part of the solution. When you see you've made that difference at the end of the day it's like, mission accomplished!

I love the flexibility of subbing. I have 13 grandchildren, and four of them attend Meridian schools. I remember one of the first times I subbed my little grandson was in kindergarten and was being very well-behaved, so the teachers asked what was going on and he said, "my grandma is going to be the duty!" I love seeing my grandkids at school and I love that when they have an event, I can just pick and choose when I work. I love the diversity of jobs. I love getting paid to see all my friends, literally. It's a new beginning every day. Like this week, I've done secretarial, and I've done recess. Every day I try to encourage somebody to sub, it's the best gig ever."



Bobbi Frost

Lead Food Service Worker
Meridian Middle School

"I like to say this job keeps me young. Working with the kids keeps me from taking myself too seriously.

My interaction is probably just a minute or two during breakfast and lunch as kids

are coming through and picking up their meals. I'm right out there in the thick of it since I cashier. I get to interact with the kids, joking and talking with them. I get to ask about their weekend and get to know them a little, I enjoy that part of it. I try to be aware of if kids are having a bad day and make sure to check in with them and ask how they are doing.

COVID brought its own unique twist to this work because we were serving meals-to-go and you actually got an opportunity to interact with the whole family, rather than just the kids. I was so thankful to have this job, especially during COVID. It was a reason to get up and get dressed in the morning. I had a purpose. And the community, they were so thankful. It made you feel really good about what we were doing.

When I started here 24 years ago, the job was perfect for me because my children were young. I only worked when they were in school, and I could be home with them after school. It was also great because I was very aware of what their day was like and they loved it because if they forgot something, they could run out to the kitchen and have me sign it! Now they are out of school but, it's still such a great job and good community here. The hours are really good, plus you have summers off and holidays off.

It's a busy job, which I like. You're always moving, it's active. There is a lot of mental work too, everything is math. We have to figure out how many meals to make and servings, so my times tables are really good. We come in and prepare everything, then serve everything and then clean up and go home. It's not a job where you have to take it home with you. We are always looking for people, so if you want a fast-paced job and enjoy getting in there and rolling up your sleeves. This would be a great place for you. It's a great job, I really enjoy it. I can't imagine doing anything else."



Natalie Eining

Kindergarten Teacher

Irene Reither Elementary School

"I love this age group. They are full of joy. They are so excited to be here, to make friends, to learn and they're just naturally curious. Their inquiry is just amazing to be a part of. The energy that they bring and the genuine joy for learning and making friends. If you ask them what their favorite parts of the day are, it is work time or recess or for some it's reading and math, but ask them why they come to school or what makes them most excited, they're going say to see their friends. You can't take that joy away. It's the best.

This is my ninth year teaching kindergarten at IRE. I often reassure parents that it's our job to be ready for kids wherever they are and to meet them where they're at. We spend so much time working on fostering relationships and learning how to be together in a group. In the fall we do a lot of community building and get to know one another.

The whole team here loves and supports our students and wants to provide them with what they need. There are children every year who come in who have had less social opportunities or are nervous to start. But we really work on building those connections and friendships to create a classroom family in which each child feels safe and that they belong."

Read more interviews on our website:
www.meridian.wednet.edu/news/category/stories



@meridianschooldistrict505

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Meridian School District No. 505
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Bellingham, WA 98226



Register to vote!

Register to vote online: Voter.votewa.gov/WhereToVote.aspx. Pick up a voter registration form in any school office or at the District Office. Register at the county elections office at 311 Grand Ave, Suite 103, Bellingham, WA.

Meridian School District

214 W. Laurel Road
Bellingham, WA 98226
360-398-7111

Superintendent

Dr. James Everett

School Board

Sara Bernardy
Steve Corwin
Marty Gray
Jarrod Karuza
Craig Mitchell

Connect with us!

@meridianschooldistrict505



@meridian505



The Meridian School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following employee has been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Title IX, ADA, and Compliance Coordinator (RCW 28A.640/28A.642) Kurt Harvill, Assistant Superintendent, kharvill@meridian.wednet.edu. Section 504 questions and complaints can be directed to Aaron Jacoby, Director of Special Education, ajacoby@meridian.wednet.edu. The mailing address for each director is: 214 W. Laurel Rd., Bellingham WA 98226. 360-398-7111.