Greetings Meridian High School Community:

It is unbelievable how fast the semester is closing in to completion! Your students have been simply outstanding—both as students and as citizens. If you haven’t read the district newsletter, please do. There is great news about our fantastic students during Wish Week. For us, it’s every day that we are reminded about how courteous and supportive our students are to each other. They make us proud! The last day of the semester is Wednesday, January 30th—and is also an early release day. The first day of the second semester is Thursday, January 31st.

Senior Projects: For those of you with seniors it is extremely important that your students are progressing with their projects. Each senior has a staff advisor to help them navigate their project. If your student is struggling, has questions or needs help, please have them contact their advisor or Martha Stephens.

Included below are several items of interest:

Construction continues to move forward at break-neck speed! At the end of this semester we are turning our South Gym over to Tiger to be torn down so they may build a new one for next year. Please note that parking by the gym will be restricted. The Education building is going to be completed two and a half months early—which is fantastic! We ARE extremely excited and we ARE moving in during spring break! When everyone returns, we will have moved into the new Education building. We will be hosting an open house celebration before May. Stay tuned! For progress photos, click here.

Our next Parent Roundtable is scheduled for Thursday, February 7th at 6:30pm. Each month I host an MHS Parent Roundtable to share ideas on topics of interest to you. If that time does not work for you, I invite your ideas and comments via email or phone call. I will be in the library on Feb. 7th, with hot coffee and cookies!

Our HSPE testing dates are coming up in March. The writing exam is March 12, 13, and the reading exam is March 15 this year. It is important our students are prepared, well rested and at school. Please mark your calendars now so they are here. Thank you!

James Everett
School Closure Information

In the event that it is necessary to close schools or delay opening because of extreme weather conditions or other unusual circumstances, the following radio and television stations will be notified. Information will also be posted on the school district website.

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Notes from the Registrar

January 30th, marks the end of first semester. Please expect final semester grades in your mailboxes around February 7th. If you have moved recently please contact us to record the new address in order that you receive all school correspondence. The semester report card will be withheld if your student has fines for overdue library books, sports gear, lost textbooks, fees, etc. Instead of the report card a bill for fines will be mailed. Once the fine/fines are paid the report card will be mailed to the parent.

Just a reminder! If you would like to have your student meet you out front during the school day, send them with a note to sign themselves out. This will expedite the process for you and the office. Thank you for helping us be more efficient with attendance issues. Contact Gina Heslep with any questions at 318-2283.

Talent Show

The MHS Talent Show will be here before we know it. Start getting your acts together and be ready for try-outs on March 21st. K-8th grade dress rehearsal will be on April 10th, and 9-12th grade on April 11th in the MHS Auditorium. Talent Show performances are scheduled for Thursday, April 18th for grades K-8, Friday, April 19th for grades 9-12, and the finals are on Saturday, April 20th. All shows are in the MHS Auditorium and start at 7:00pm. Tickets will be available to purchase at the door starting at 6:30pm each night.

Free Dental Care

The annual Whatcom County Free Dental Care Day is Saturday, February 23, 2013. It is held at the Interfaith Dental Clinic at 220 Unity Street in Bellingham from 8:00am-4:00pm (by appointment only). Free dental exams, sealants, fluoride and x-rays will be available to children ages 1-18 from low-income families. Please call (360) 714-9010 for an appointment (leave a message and they will call you back).

Music Notes

It has been a sincere pleasure working with the 75 students of the MHS music department so far this school year. We have had a strong start and improvement is happening!

A lot of great work is being done. Our concert band is supporting our winter teams by providing music and energy at the girls and boys varsity basketball games! We love supporting our Trojan athletics! Our MHS drumline is rocking along nicely in their Monday night rehearsals. We have a record 16 entries in the SJMEA solo/ensemble contest coming up at Bellingham High School on January 26th. Currently, our choirs and concert band are preparing for the SJMEA large group festival, which will happen just before spring break. Before the SJMEA event, on Thursday, March 14th, we present our festival material at our annual Festival Concert taking place in the MHS auditorium.

In looking toward the future, all students are preparing musically and financially for our big spring trip to Coeur d’Alene, Idaho for a weekend performance trip culminating at the Silverwood Theme Park.

In leadership, we had 5 parents attend the Inaugural Booster meeting in January. That’s a GREAT start!! Keep in mind, by attending these meetings, you are not committing to anything. These meetings are a way to build ideas and acquire the parent support we need to move to the next level and to learn about how to structure a booster club.

The next music booster meeting will be on Monday, February 11th, 2013 at 6:30pm in the music room. All music parents are welcome! Please come and support your students by being a part of the first steps of our music department booster club.

Great musical work is being done by the students at Meridian. Drop by! We look forward to seeing you!
Great Resource for All College Bound Students: The Federal Student Aid website (www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov) has recently published on-line College Preparation Checklists for the various age levels from elementary school through each year of high school. The to-do lists help students and their parents prepare academically and financially for education beyond high school. They also include information about useful publications and links to helpful websites. I encourage you to explore these with your students.

Sophomores and juniors who took the PSAT test in October will be meeting with Mr. McMains to receive their score reports. They will be given information on the free services available for SAT test preparation and skill building, and college and career searches that are available at the College Board website. (www.collegeboard.org/quickstart).

Juniors who plan to attend 4-year college should sign up for the May or June SAT or the June ACT. The registration deadline for the May 4th SAT test date is April 5th. The registration deadline for the June 1st SAT test date is May 2nd. The online registration websites are: SAT website- www.collegeboard.org; ACT website- www.actstudent.org. Test preparation help is also available at those websites.

This spring, Mrs. Stephens and I plan to take interested juniors to the annual Spring College Fair at WWU on March 26th. They will have the opportunity to hear presentations from representatives from a number of colleges. Sign-up will be announced in the bulletin.

Important info for Seniors:

I am meeting individually with seniors to assess their progress toward graduation and to provide a written detail of their status. We discuss plans for next year and the processes for applying to a 2 or 4-year college and financial aid. I encourage students who are uncertain of their future goals to complete their Career Center visit that is required for the Grad Project as soon as possible. This involves completing an online career interest inventory on the WOIS website. The next step is to set up an appointment with Mrs. Stephens, our Career Specialist, to explore the identified interests and options.

Searching for scholarships can be overwhelming and time consuming. The WashBoard (www.theWashBoard.org) is a free, web-based, nonprofit scholarship search engine for Washington students seeking college scholarships. The WashBoard is advertising and spam free and will not sell your information. Students are able to set up a personal profile and explore scholarships that match their profile.

Students who are still uncertain about their progress toward graduation need to meet with me. Credit retrieval options for the rest of the year are: Digital Learning Commons on-line credit retrieval coursework, or spring quarter Running Start classes @ WCC or BTC.

As of January 1st, seniors in need of financial aid and their parents can begin submitting the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form. This form is used to determine financial aid eligibility for technical colleges, community colleges, and 4 year colleges and universities as well as many scholarships. The deadline for completion varies from school to school but some deadlines were as early as January 15th. A hands-on FAFSA workshop was offered to seniors and parents/guardians here at MHS on January 8th. Expert volunteers were on hand to help with FAFSA submission. All qualified College Bound Scholars are required to submit the FAFSA by February 1st (www.fafsa.ed.gov).

Student transcripts are required for college and scholarship applications. They can be ordered by filling out a request form in the attendance office. Transcripts can be given to the student or sent to the school as needed. New transcripts should be ordered at the end of first and second semesters if colleges require them.
Students requesting letters of recommendation need to give 1-2 week notice to teachers and counselors. The counselor report portion for many college applications includes a section for recommendations. Students who want me to write a recommendation need to give ample notice and a copy of the Student Information Forms found in the Grad Project portfolio so I have enough time and information to write a strong letter.

Seniors should be finishing 4-year college applications, as deadlines are fast approaching. Students in need of scholarships should provide their e-mail address to Mrs. Stephens in the Career Center to receive updates on scholarships.

Once a student receives an offer for admission to a 4-year institution he/she must inform the college of his/her decision to attend and send the required deposit by May 1st in order to finalize the admission. Students who are awarded scholarships need to inform Mrs. Stephens, so that scholarship recipients can be recognized at the Evening of Excellence Awards in the spring.

Graduation Project final deadlines are quickly approaching (March—see Graduation Project folder). Reminder: 13th Year Plan Packets are a required component of the Portfolio section of the Graduation Project and help to detail the necessary steps for post-graduation planning.

Mrs. Kheriaty, Counselor

Career Center News

Senior Graduation Project

It is that time of the year when the seniors are very busy completing their senior graduation project and portfolio.

**Important Due Dates:**
- March 7th - Applied Activity Due
- March 14th - Portfolio Due
- March 20th - Practice Presentation with Adviser
- April 24th - Panel Presentation

Scholarships

There are many great scholarships for students to help with the cost of a college education. If you have questions about scholarships, contact Mrs. Stephens. mstephen@meridian.wednet.edu or call 318-2279.

There is a free web-based clearinghouse for Washington students seeking college scholarships. It is run by a public/private partnership of nonprofits and the state’s Higher Education Coordinating Board. Students go to www.thewashboard.org and complete a profile (information is confidential). Lists of scholarships will be sent that match the student’s profile. See Mrs. Stephens for information on how to get the most from this website.

Local Scholarships for Meridian High School Seniors

**Mt Baker Rotary Scholarship:**
Scholarships will be awarded to seniors graduating from Lynden, Lynden Christian, Nooksack Valley, Meridian, Mt Baker and Cornerstone high schools. There are two types of scholarships: scholarships will be awarded to students that indicate plans to follow a vocational education track (technical or trade school) and to students planning on attending a 4 year college/university. **Mrs. Stephens will make an announcement when the applications are available.**
Meridian Public School Foundation Scholarship:
The Meridian Public School Foundation provides scholarships for Meridian graduates who plan to attend a 4 year or 2 year college. Some of the scholarships are awarded for a specific course of study or for certain schools. For example, there are some outstanding scholarships for students who plan to attend WSU and pursue agricultural or engineering studies. **Mrs. Stephens will make an announcement when the applications are due.**

Scholarships for Juniors:
**Masonic Scholar-Citizen Awards Program:**
The Masonic Education Council annually recognizes outstanding members of the Junior Class of each public high school in Whatcom County. Any junior may enter this competition by submitting an application by **March 1, 2013.** See Mrs. Stephens for the application. Finalists are selected from each school to be recognized at an awards program with a certificate and a letter of commendation. Also, two top finalists from all nine schools will receive a $1,500 scholarship and the top finalist from each school will receive a $500 scholarship. As seniors they will have an opportunity to apply for a $1,000 scholarship given by the state Masonic organization.

**Worksource Services**

**YOUTH VOCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP**
The youth vocational scholarship supports low income youth in vocational training at local public colleges: Bellingham Technical College, Whatcom Community College, and Skagit Valley College. This scholarship will help with the costs for students enrolled in Health Care, Construction and Manufacturing programs. Priority will be given for scholarships in the following occupations:

- Nursing Assistant
- Laboratory Technician
- Dental Assistant
- Medical Records Technician
- Home Care Aid
- Medical Assistant
- Industrial Machinery Mechanic
- Plumber, Pipefitter and Steamfitter
- Process Control Technician
- HVAC
- Instrumentation

See Mrs. Stephens for an application.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR RUNNING START STUDENTS:**
WorkSource can provide: Money for textbooks, school fees, & transportation assistance. Call for eligibility appointment:

- Worksource Whatcom
- Contact: Rhonda Tuurie

101 Prospect Street
Bellingham, WA
360-676-3239

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**MHS Career Center Trips**

**COLLEGE PLANNING DAY**
On March 26th, we will be taking Juniors to Western Washington University for college planning. Students will have an opportunity to listen to admission representatives from 2 year and 4 year colleges located in Washington.

**TRY A TRADE DAY**
On February 26th, we will be taking some students to Bellingham Technical College for classroom visits. This is an opportunity for students to spend approximately 70 minutes in three different classrooms of their choice and participate in lessons presented by college faculty.