



# MEAD

## MATTERS

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### Superintendent Letter

Dear Mead Community:

Now that school has been in session for three months and everyone is back into the swing of things, I would like to extend a warm welcome from the Mead School District Board of Directors and the entire Mead staff. The fall months have been full of open houses, extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, but mostly – a lot of good learning! We are looking forward to another highly successful year for each and every student. We encourage you to become a school volunteer, or attend any one of a variety of athletic or performing arts events. You will be

impressed by the quality of our programs, our staff, and our students.

I would like to personally thank you for your support of the 2009 Maintenance and Operation Levy. Simply stated, these M&O tax dollars are essential to providing both the breadth and depth of the educational programs we offer to our children. The Mead School District takes great pride in offering a well-rounded learning experience. We appreciate having a community that values students and exceptional learning programs.

As with most every other part of the American economy, school districts in Washington State are dealing with budgetary deficiencies. Mead School District will continue to face fiscal challenges until

State funding budgets are rectified. However, Mead has a long history of providing children with the best possible programs, using available resources to their best advantage, and we will continue to do so. We are proud of our longstanding tradition of excellence in education, a service we could not provide without the support of our community.

I extend a sincere thank you to the entire Mead community for your support and commitment to the students of Mead School District. Mead is a wonderful and beautiful place to live, but more importantly, Mead is a great place for students to learn and grow.

Sincerely,  
Tom Rockefeller

### District-Wide Congratulations

District schools, students and teachers celebrated a number of accomplishments and honors during 2009. To highlight a few:

■ John Hook, Principal at Mt. Spokane was named the 2008-2009 GSL Principal of the Year.

■ Colbert Elementary was one of only 314 schools in the nation to earn the designation *Blue Ribbon School* by the U.S. Sec. of Education. This prestigious award recognizes outstanding student achievement.

■ Meadow Ridge Elementary received an OSPI academic achievement award for the fourth year in a row.

■ Mead High Girl's Volleyball team won first in state at the 4A state tournament. Mount Spokane High Girl's Volleyball team was second in state at the 3A tournament.

■ The WIAA named Mead High School the 4A Scholastic Cup Champion (top award) for 2008-2009. Points are awarded for academics, sportsmanship and athletic performance.

■ M.E.A.D. received the 2009 Chase Youth Award for community involvement.

■ In 2008-2009, Northwood Middle School had the top WASL ranking among Spokane County middle schools.

■ The AVID program was initiated four years ago to encourage average but underperforming students to attempt a college track offering accelerated course work. 100% of the first graduating class of AVID students were accepted to the college of their choice. The program is now offered in grades 7-12.

■ High school students took 875 Advanced Placement exams last year, a 76% increase in three years.

■ Mount Spokane High School was rated among the nation's top 1200 high schools by *Newsweek* magazine.

### Mead Matters

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**Mead School District Guiding Principles**

As the Mead Community we are:

Focusing on students and their learning

Creating democratic structures for participation

Increasing the connections between parents, business, community and our schools

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**Questions or Comments?**

Questions, comments or news to share? Write to us at: Mead Matters, c/o 12828 N. Newport Highway, Mead, WA 99021 or e-mail us at: MeadMatters@mead.k12.wa.us



*Mead School District Board Members (L to R) Robert Olson, Supt. Thomas Rockefeller, Denny Denholm, Maureen O'Connor, Tom Hunt, Ron Farley*

**Enrollment Holds Steady**

Enrollment in Mead Schools held steady this October, with 9,334 students as compared to 9,338 students last year. On a full-time equivalent basis (FTE) enrollment grew from 8,877.22 to 8,884.07. Enrollments are adjusted to an FTE basis for state funding purposes.

Enrollments by building are in the process of leveling out since the district's realignment of attendance boundaries three years ago. Mountainside and Northwood Middle Schools are now the same size. Next year will be the end of the four year implementation of the secondary boundary which will see the two high schools enrollments even out.

**Mead Welcomes Two New Directors**

**Chris Jose, Director of Transportation**

Chris Jose joined the Mead School District in August 2009 as Director of Transportation replacing Mr. Jack Lewis who retired from the district after 14 years of service. Mr. Jose is a graduate of West Point and recently retired as a Lieutenant Colonel after a 24-year career with the U.S. Army. Mr. Jose brings exceptional leadership skills along with a wealth of knowledge and experience in fleet operations.



**Jill Christiansen, Director of Personnel**

Jill Christiansen began her tenure as Director of Personnel for the Mead School District this fall. Ms. Christiansen is filling the position vacated by Michelle Powers who resigned to accept a similar position with ESD 101. Ms. Christiansen recently worked as a consultant for Red & Associates, a Human Resource consulting firm here in Spokane. She also worked as an Assistant Administrator at the Rockwood Clinic for ten years and spent three years with Spokane Public Schools as Director of Classified Personnel.



**State Funding/Budget Update**

At the October 26<sup>th</sup> school board meeting, State Senator Chris Marr and State Representative Kevin Parker presented information and responded to questions regarding the current state budget shortfall and the difficulties that lie ahead. The current economic conditions, continue to result in lower than expected tax receipts. As a result the legislature will be wrestling with another round of state budget cuts, most likely including cuts to education funding. In fact, the Spokesman Review (11.13.09) reported that the State expects an additional 2 billion dollars shortfall in revenue for the remainder of this budget. This is in addition to the 9 billion dollar reduction at the beginning of this year.

Having made budget reductions the past three years, we are hopeful that any further reductions will be

small. However given the magnitude of the decline in tax collections, it is difficult to be overly optimistic. The current funding system for schools was created in 1977 and has not kept pace with the mandates and requirements issued by the State and Federal government. Many of the funding inequalities between districts that existed in 1977, continue to exist today because of the need to overhaul the system.

Our duty is to continue to offer the students in Mead the best educational program we can, given the current funding system. Please be looking for future editions of *Mead Matters*, as we will be attempting to keep our parents, patrons, and community up to date with budget issues.

*For updated information on weather related changes in routes, call the district "Snow-Phone" @ 465-SNOW. School closure information will be available on local news, TV and radio stations, as well as the Mead School District web site @ [www.mead354.org](http://www.mead354.org).*

## Facilities Planning

Last March, the Board of Directors authorized the development of a six-year (2010-2016) Capital Facilities Plan based on a District-wide needs assessment. Patrons of the District who expressed interest in the planning process were selected to equitably represent the District and serve on a Facilities Planning Committee.

The Committee began its work on April 8 and has held 20 meetings. Meetings last spring included tours of school buildings eligible for state funding assistance for modernization. The Committee listened to the K-12 principals describe the needs of their respective buildings. District-wide infrastructure and systems needs, 2004 bond projects unrealized, and the vision of a District venue, or venues, for high school competitive sports were other topics studied last spring.

The Committee adjourned for the summer after its June 17 meeting and reconvened again on September 9. Topics studied this fall included enrollment projections, state funding assistance for new construction and modernization, new school sites, the Mead Support Services building, the old Mead Middle School site, overcrowding at Prairie View Elementary, District-wide technology needs, growth in the North Metro area, school security, and bond issue financing.

After a recent joint work/study session with the Board of Directors the Committee is scheduled to resume its work of developing a recommended bond package for consideration by the Board. The following menu of issues and projects will continue to be subjected to further scrutiny and consideration as the Committee works to wrap up their deliberations by the end of December.

The Committee's interim report for the six-year planning cycle (2010-2016) contains the following observations and recommendations:

- Enrollment projections do not justify the need for any new schools.
- Projected enrollment growth at the secondary grade levels can be accommodated in existing buildings.

- Portable classrooms at Prairie View Elementary are needed by next September to address the increased student population on Five Mile Prairie.
- The Committee recommends the modernization of Midway Elementary, Shiloh Hills Elementary, and Northwood Middle schools.
- The Committee recommends inclusion of a prioritized list of user needs at each of the K-12 schools.
- The Committee supports improved school security measures in all K-12 schools.
- There is a need to upgrade and replace certain existing building systems and other infrastructure to keep buildings in good operating condition.
- The Committee supports a funding solution that will continue the support of technology in our schools.
- The Committee supports the funding of land purchases for future school sites.
- The concept of a District venue, or venues, for high school competitive sports should be revisited and studied in the next planning cycle (2016-2022).
- The Mead Support Services building will need to be kept operational for the next six to eight years.
- The Committee recommends undertaking a selected number of roofing, carpet replacement, handicapped accessibility, and other miscellaneous projects from the 2004 bond. These projects were unable to be completed due to hyperinflation in the construction markets.
- The old Mead Middle School site should undergo a separate analysis/study to develop options for the future use of the site.
- Adequate bonding capacity should be reserved for the next planning cycle of 2016-2022. Enrollment increases in the K-8 grade levels will likely justify a new school.

## Boys and Girls Club of America comes to the Mead Community

The Boys & Girls Club of America has been actively fundraising in order to lease an area of the former Mead Middle school building on Market Street for an after-school student program for students 6 through 18 years of age. Assistant Superintendent Dan Butler said "the district is very proud to be able to help this organization provide services like after-school care, counseling and meals to students." The anticipated opening date is early January. The program will

run daily during after-school hours 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The Boys and Girls Club program will primarily be using the south lobby, east gym, kitchen, student commons, and several classrooms adjacent to the commons in the old middle school building. Plans call for busing to be available at elementary buildings for those who wish to attend. For further information, contact Ryan Davenport, Executive Director, Boys and Girls Club of America (509)489-0741.

## Scott Named School Social Worker of the Year

The Washington Association of School Social Workers named **Jack Scott** of Colbert Elementary the 2009 School Social Worker of the Year in recognition of his service to students, families and school staff.

Scott has worked in the Mead District for 19 years as a social worker at both Evergreen Elementary and Colbert. While at Evergreen, he initiated a neighborhood after school program recruiting volunteers from local colleges

to mentor students who might otherwise be home alone. Colbert Principal Jared Hoadley describes Scott as "...student-centered. He serves everyone with a smile. Mr. Scott has been at Colbert for three years and his work makes a great school even better." Scott is also a part-time instructor at Eastern Washington University and active on the Social Work Professional Education Advisory Board.

## Mead Support Services

In June 2008, students of Mead Middle School passed through its doors one last time. With the opening of Mountainside Middle School, the old building was no longer needed to serve the students of the Mead School District. However, the old school wasn't done yet, and to this day continues to provide much needed space to a number of people and programs. As a result, the former Mead-Union High School, Mead High School, Mead Junior High School, Mead Middle School has undergone one more name change and is now referred to as Mead Support Services.

The Mead Maintenance Department has transformed the entire west wing into a maintenance shop with work areas for the district's electricians, painter, locksmith, carpenter,

plumber, grounds crew, maintenance workers and HVAC technicians.

Child Nutritional Services is housed on the upper floor of the main building in the old office. With a staff of four, CNS is able to provide support and guidance to the fourteen sites where breakfast and/or lunch is provided to Mead students each and every day.

With the collapse of the district's bus garage last winter, the old school provided desperately needed space to keep the bus fleet in operation during one of the worst winters of all time. Using several classrooms, Mead Transportation Services set up a new operations center to manage the District bus fleet. It's anticipated that Transportation Services will continue to be

housed in this building even after the bus garage is rebuilt.

Mead Support Services houses several student programs: Quest, ELL, Transitions, and Tutoring Services. Beginning in January 2010 the Boys' and Girls' Club of America will provide after school activities for Mead District students; and the gym continues to be used as a practice facility for our district's gymnastic teams and by our community for several additional athletic activities.

Though no long-term plan has been made for the future of the old school, the Mead Support Services building will continue to provide a warm, dry place for a variety of people and programs that serve kids and our community.

## Annual District Report Card

Each year, Mead School District is pleased to provide our community with our current performance report outlining our success and ongoing challenges. The performance report is based on results from the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). This state assessment measures progress in grades 3-8 and grade 10 on reading, writing, math, and science. The results can be viewed by accessing the OSPI link for School Report Cards (<http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us>). We provide a link to this site on our webpage and always keep our information up to date on our own district profile page.

We continue to exceed state averages as a district. Our students continue to perform at very high levels in reading and math. This past year, ninety percent of our 10<sup>th</sup> graders met standard in reading and ninety-three percent met standard in writing. We are proud of our successes, but continue to look at how we can increase individual student success.

Our district administrators lead a data analysis process with the staff each year. Each building, with their Council for Learning Improvement, uses this analysis to develop a school improvement plan that sets the focus for the year. The goals set in this process talk about what specific actions

steps, specific student intervention plans and professional development will occur in a building to increase student achievement.

At the district level, our focus is on publishing clear course targets and building common assessments. The teachers will receive training in creating accurate assessments that mirror state assessments. This focus will allow us to intervene quickly for students who have not understood the skills that have been taught.

Our staff believes strongly that our students can succeed and we are committed to making that happen. We appreciate your continuing support of our students, staff and our district.

## Replacements for the WASL (Washington Assessment of Student Learning)

Beginning in the 2009-10 school year, the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) is replaced by two new tests: the grades 3-8 Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) and the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE).

The MSP will be shorter to take than the WASL and will be moved online over the next few years. Reading, math and science will take just one day each instead of two with the WASL. For now, writing will still take two days. The testing window for the grades 3-8 test will be moved to mid-May.

The HSPE name conveys the goal of the test: to measure a student's proficiency of basic skills. Students in the classes of 2010-2012 must pass a reading and writing assessment to be eligible to graduate. If a student has already passed a specific

assessment via the WASL (ie., reading), they will not have to take the HSPE in that content area.

Students in the Class of 2013 are the first to be required to pass reading, writing, math and science assessments.

High school students are still given multiple opportunities, if necessary, to pass the tests. Alternatives also are available for students who have tried the exam at least once. The testing window for the high school generally remains the same: Reading (March 16), Writing (March 17-18), Math (April 13) and Science (April 15).

## Mead School District Dominates GSL

*In addition to completing an impressive Fall sports season that included both GSL and state championships, every varsity team from Mead School District garnered WIAA academic awards.*