

## School Year Moves Along Quickly

by Bob Prusator, Superintendent

The 2008-2009 School year is coming to a quick close as we enter our last two months of the school year. The School Board and staff have worked diligently this year to establish both short and long term improvements for students and over-all District operations. In particular, the School Board is currently working on updating and upgrading the Meridian CUSD #223 policy manual. When completed (projected prior to beginning of next school year), the policy manual will be customized to meet the specific needs of the District and also formatted to be easily accessed by the community on the District's web page. The Board has also approved a District monitoring instrument that will assist the Board and community in evaluating the progress of the District in critical areas. Again, the instrument will be formatted to be easily accessible to the Board and community on the District's web page. The District's staff has focused much time and energy on working collaboratively to align the District's curriculum. This work has been done primarily on

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## Board Recognizes SVHS Illinois State Scholars

20 Seniors Earn Prestigious Award

Stillman Valley High School announced that 20 members of the Class of 2009 earned the designation as Illinois State Scholar. It is worth noting that only the top 10% of the state's approximate 140,000 graduating seniors qualified for this distinction which is based on a combination of the ACT test score and class rank at the end of the junior year. While the program does not provide a monetary award, being named a State Scholar is an impressive honor that can be listed on applications for college admission and scholarships.

The Meridian School Board recognized these students at its meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Each State Scholar received a certificate from the School District for this accomplishment. On behalf of the School Board, Board President Ron Steenken expressed appreciation for the support of the students' parents and the effort of the students themselves in earning the designation of Illinois State Scholar. Mr. Prusator relayed that the honor is one of the most prestigious available for SVHS students. 20 Illinois State Scholars is the most earned by an SVHS class. The following SVHS students were recognized:

Gabrielle Bunk	Ethan Standard
Grace Bushnell	Jordyn Strohmman
Darby Canciamille	Jessica Sweeney
Faith DeVries	John Tackes
Nicole Gorsegner	Caleb Warner
Sarah Langston	Shaya Weir
Zachary Mengel	
Taylor Miles	
Bethany Myelle	
Alex Nyman	
Sara Pearson	
Nathan Robert	
Jaimi Shaver	
Hannah Smith	

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the District's early release days and other committed times during the school year. Beyond those activities, the staff has also participated in professional development on becoming familiar with a new research-based assessment tool (AIMSweb) and instructional intervention activities to improve student learning. We're excited about the progress we've made and are committed to continuous improvement for our students. As always, the District believes in a strong connection with our communities and seeks feedback in any way that can assist us in improving. Please feel free to contact the District office or any building office with questions or concerns. Have a great spring!

## School Board Election

*Election on Tuesday, April 7, 2009*

Five candidates will seek four seats on the Meridian CUSD #223 School Board in the April 7th election. The five candidates are:

Ron Steenken (Marion North)  
Tim Jagielski (Marion North)  
Kevin Glendenning (Scott)  
Steve Pierce (Marion North)  
Bob Mellon (Monroe)

Barb Reeverts (Monroe Township), Bruce Larson (Marion South Township) and Tim King (Marion South Township) are currently serving terms that expire in 2011. Ron Steenken has served on the Board since 1994; Tim Jagielski since 2001; and Kevin Glendenning since 2005. No more than three board members may be elected from any one township.

The successful candidates will serve a four year term which will expire in 2013. Deb Bonne, who has served since 1997, is not running for another term. The District thanks Mrs. Bonne for her committed service as a Meridian CUSD #223 Board member.

## Board Adopts Resolution Opposing Byron School District's Withdrawal from OCEC

At its regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, February 26, 2009, the Meridian School Board unanimously passed a resolution opposing the Byron School District's intended withdrawal from the Ogle County Educational Cooperative (OCEC). In the resolution, a negative impact on educational programming and finances on the Meridian School District were cited as reasons to oppose Byron's withdrawal. Byron's departure from the OCEC could add nearly \$100,000 annual cost to the Meridian School District. Additionally, the resolution identifies Byron's geographic location within Ogle County and the fact that many OCEC programs are located at Byron as reasons to oppose Byron's leaving the OCEC.

The Meridian School Board believes very strongly in collaborative, shared programming among Ogle County School Districts when those programs benefit students. The OCEC has been a successful, long standing special education cooperative for over 20 years. While cooperative ventures do require a high degree of communication and commitment, the Meridian School Board believes the potential benefit to students is worth the time and effort.

## 2009-10 Calendar Finalized

The 2009-2010 school year calendar was recently approved by the Meridian School Board. The calendar was developed in conjunction with the Byron, and Oregon School Districts because of the significant number of shared courses at the high schools and in the area of special education. Another goal of the calendar was to provide enough attendance days so that SVHS first semester exams could be administered prior to the Christmas Vacation. Five early release school improvement days are also part of the calendar. The first day of student attendance will be Tuesday, August 18, 2009. The last day of school (without using any snow days) is scheduled for Monday, May 24, 2010.

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Please go to [www.meridian223.org](http://www.meridian223.org) for additional 2009-2010 calendar information.

## Modifications to MJH Social Studies Curriculum

The Meridian School Board approved a recommendation to change course of study for the MJH social studies department. The recommendation was made after the MJH and SVHS social studies teachers evaluated the social studies curriculum through the first part of the current school year. The evaluation included a review of the Illinois Learning Standards; the SVHS social studies curriculum; course of study from other higher performing school districts; and the 6-12 Meridian CUSD #223 social studies outcomes. Previously, the course of study included: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: World History; 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Geography; and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: US History. The new course of study is: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: World History; 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: US History through Reconstruction; and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: US History (Civil War to present). The new course of study will provide for greater depth of learning of history and preparation for the high school social studies program. The School Board also approved a recommendation for new textbooks for each of the three MJH social studies courses.

## Board Sponsored Community Focus Group Session Scheduled for April 13<sup>th</sup>

The Meridian School Board will host its third community focus group session on Monday, April 13, 2009 at SVHS. The session will begin at 7:00 p.m. Approximately 70 community members will be invited to participate. Each School Board member and administrator are inviting five community members which should reflect a cross section of the communities.

The purpose of the focus group session is to accomplish three goals:

- 1) Provide factual information related to the School District, including performance levels, financial status and the present organizational long range vision.
- 2) Provide an opportunity for small group discussion. Seven groups will be utilized with one School Board member and two administrators assigned to each group. Each group will be asked to respond to the following potential topics: transportation; student discipline; safety/security;

scheduling; and facilities.

3) Provide the Board, Administration and District Leadership Team a better understanding of the participating community members' perspectives of the School District.

Since not all of those invited can attend, any community member who would like to participate in the focus group session may do so by contacting the superintendent's office at (815) 645-2606.

## Board Reviews Updated Demographic Study and Enrollment Projections

At its regularly scheduled meeting on March 19, 2009, the Meridian School Board reviewed an updated study on the District's enrollment projections. The original study was provided in August of 2006. The purpose of the most recent study was to determine to what extent the current economic climate impacts enrollment projections. The Board is committed to tracking student enrollment to establish appropriate planning for the potential need to expand facilities. The report showed a decrease in enrollment projections from the 2006 study. For example, the 2006 study projected a district enrollment of over 2,800 by 2020. The updated projections place the district's enrollment at just under 2,400 by 2020. The administration will begin preparing facility options to the Board to meet the revised projections. Please go to [www.meridian223.org](http://www.meridian223.org) for additional information on the demographic and enrollment projection study.

## Board Approves Improved Resources for Transportation Department

The Meridian CUSD #223 School Board approved the purchase of a routing software program, Versatrans. The program will provide the Transportation Department with the capability to more efficiently design routes and monitor bus capacities. The Meridian School Board also reviewed current student ride time for each of the District's bus routes during a presentation by Transportation Director, Jeff Sherman.

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## MERIDIAN CUSD #223 NEWSLETTER

### Meridian CUSD #223 Contact Information

#### Administrators

Mr. Bob Prusator, Superintendent  
Mr. Michael Mandzen, SVHS Principal  
Mr. Jeff Voltz, SVHS Assistant Principal  
Mr. Bill Davidson, MJH Principal  
Ms. Leslie Showers, MJH Asst. Principal  
Mr. Adam Zurko, Monroe Center Principal  
Mr. Mike Coulahan, Highland Principal  
Mr. Steve Stewart, 6-12 Activities Director

#### Directors

Ms. Jennifer Porter, Dir. of Business/HR  
Mr. Jon Mickle, Director of Buildings/Grounds  
Mr. Jeff Sherman, Director of Transportation  
Mr. Jayce Bolhous, Director of Technology  
Ms. Kim Glendenning, Dir. of Health Services  
Ms. Lisa Reber, Director of Food Service

**District Information on Web Page:** [www.meridian223.org](http://www.meridian223.org)