

Connection

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER SPRING 2015 

Process of recovery

October 24, 2014. 10:39 a.m.

By Becky Berg, Superintendent

It has been nearly five months since the shooting occurred at Marysville Pilchuck High School, and it is difficult even now to write about the event and our process of recovery.

On that October day, we lost five students, leaving one additional student seriously wounded. We may never know the motives of the shooter, but mourn for the loss of such young lives.

We are learning that the process of recovery will last for years. As with any process of mourning and loss, it is highly individualistic. Some people can emotionally move ahead quickly and independently. Others need a great deal of emotional support and counseling. And of course, there is a wide range of people between both extremes.

The Tulalip Tribes, City of Marysville, and Marysville School District each have a designated Director of Recovery. Each director works on planning support and interventions needed for students, staff, families, and community members. In fact, a Community Recovery Committee has been

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meeting since the end of October. They currently meet monthly, and the group includes not only the recovery directors, but wonderful representatives of our faith community, community organizations, and other participants who have big hearts for our students. In fact, the Community Recovery Committee has its own website... find Marysville/Tulalip United at: mtunited.org. We are now preparing for different calendar dates that could be emotional for our students, such as prom, seniors leaving for college, and the one-year anniversary of the event. Our intent is to support each student as the recovery process unfolds.

“...These are uncharted waters for our community and our schools. A horrific shooting happened on our watch, but it will not define our community. Instead, we will be defined by how we respond and support each other.”

These are uncharted waters for our community and our schools. A horrific shooting happened on our watch, but it will not define our community. Instead, we will be defined by how we respond and support each other. We continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the City of Marysville and the Tulalip Tribes, and are thankful for their partnership during this journey. Chairman Herman Williams, Vice Chair Les Parks, Mayor Jon Nehring, City of Marysville Police Chief Rick Smith, and Tulalip Tribal Police Chief Carlos Echevarria, and Marysville Fire District Chief Greg Corn and Assistant Chief Martin McFalls, have served as exceptional leaders who care deeply about our community.

I leave you with one of my favorite quotes, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer: “The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children”.

It is an honor to serve in the Marysville School District, and to live in a community that so values its children.

Community Engagement



In December we invited our community to share their thoughts about the future of the Marysville Pilchuck High School Cafeteria. You can view the survey results online at:

<http://msvl.thoughtexchange.com>

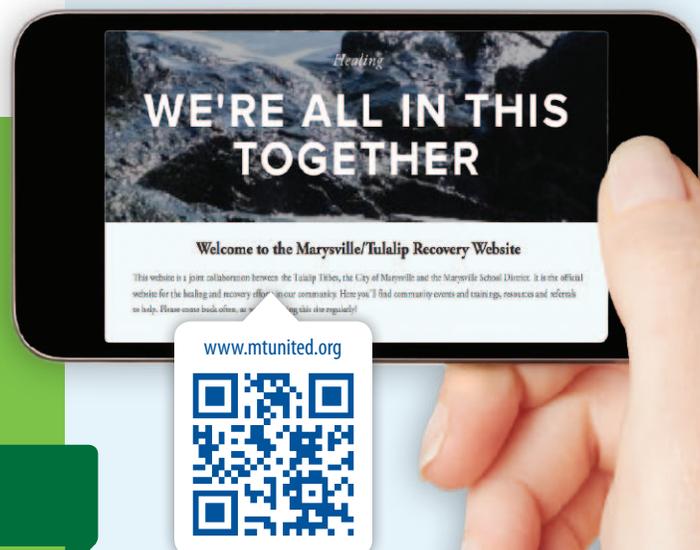
Community recovery team launches website www.mtunited.org

The landing page of the new community recovery team website reads: “We’re All in This Together”. The website is the product of a joint collaboration between the Tulalip Tribes, City of Marysville, and the Marysville School District.

The purpose of the website is to provide stakeholders across the Marysville and Tulalip communities with a common place to find information and resources on healing, hosted events, trainings and details on the larger recovery efforts in the aftermath of the tragic murder/suicide that occurred at the Marysville-Pilchuck High School campus on October 24, 2014.

Since the tragedy, the Tribes, City, School District, and the Marysville and Tulalip leaders, community members, and members in the field of post-trauma events have been meeting regularly to plan and coordinate efforts for the Marysville and Tulalip communities. Through this work, a Community Recovery Team developed and is comprised of members from all three entities including area-wide representation from Victims Support Services, the Ministerial Association, Volunteers of America, American Red Cross, Marysville YMCA, United Way of Snohomish County, and so many more who have come together in support of our youth and communities. The work of the committee has included coordinating trainings, providing resources, holding community meetings, and providing support for the families and victims of the tragedy and others. The website will now consolidate all the information generated by this team into a single website for community members to access.

The website is shared by the Tribes, the City, and the District, and will be updated regularly with new information and events as they are scheduled, resources, and other pertinent information.



Property tax increase explained



Local taxpayers may have noticed an increase in property taxes when they received their annual notice from the Snohomish County Assessor's Office. There are several reasons for this change.

The amount of your property tax bill is based upon the costs of your state and local government and voter approved levies. This includes the operating costs of schools, city, county, and taxing districts such as hospital, fire, and sewer districts. The assessed value of your property is multiplied by the tax rate necessary in your levy area to produce your share of the total levied tax by these jurisdictions.

In Marysville, the increase represented about 12.8%, or approximately \$11.00 per month on a home valued at \$200,000 for the levy. A portion of that increase (\$3.83 per month on a home valued at \$200,000) was a result of the 9th District Court of Appeals' ruling on federal lands in Grand Mound, WA, around revenue from the Great Wolf Lodge and other businesses in the area. This increase is a 2015 tax year only – a one-time additional assessment to capture lost local levy funds for our school district. The remaining increase represents the voter-approved technology levy (.49 cents per thousand) providing technology upgrades district-wide and surveillance cameras at front entrances of all schools.

A portion of this increase is a 2015 tax year only – a one-time additional assessment to capture lost local levy funds for our school district.

For school districts, taxpayers' property tax collections go towards:



LEVIES: "Levies are for Learning". Levy dollars pay for materials and supplies that support a child's learning, including support staff and teacher salaries, and technology, buses and bus transportation, and school security and safety.



BONDS: "Bonds are for Building". Bond dollars pay for the construction of new schools, health and safety upgrades, remodeling or other structural upgrades needed.

School district refinances bonds to save taxpayers money



There is good news around our local bonds. The bond rate actually reduced a little which lowered the per thousand cost.

Our school district recently refinanced a portion of its outstanding bonds in order to take advantage of lower interest rates. The recent refinancing will save local taxpayers nearly \$1 million collectively over the next eleven years. These savings flow directly to taxpayers through reduced tax levies and are not available for district expenses. The district has been monitoring bond market conditions over the past year and recent low interest rates allowed us to exceed our savings target. **Interest rates averaged just slightly over 2% on the new bonds compared to nearly 5% on the old debt.**

For more information about how your tax dollars are spent, contact our Finance and Operations office at 360-653-0803.

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Your technology levy dollars in use



One constant in the technology world is change. When Marysville schools last had funding for technology, it was from the levy that expired in 2006.

Several technologies we now take for granted did not yet exist. For example, Apple released the iPhone in 2007, and in 2010 the iPad was released. The first Chromebook became available in 2011. All of these technologies made an impact in their relative market spaces, and that included schools, although less so in Marysville. That sad fact is changing thanks to the support of our local voters.

We are now working hard to play catch up. For example, all schools now have Wi-Fi and free public Wi-Fi is active every evening at 5:00 and on weekends. After a competitive bid process, the district worked with Advanced Classroom Technologies, a local Marysville company, to install miles of cabling and hundreds of Wi-Fi access points in every school to make this possible.

We are now working hard to play catch up.

Simultaneous to building our wireless network, we've deployed more than 1,500 new Chromebooks in schools this year. We are also gearing up for our first large-scale deployment of computers to teachers in more than a decade, so we can equip teachers with modern devices to support student learning.

Along with upgraded devices for teachers we will embark this May on an ambitious plan to provide professional development for all teachers in grades 4-12, beginning with 4th, 6th and 9th grades, around learning in a connected classroom. This multi-year effort will continue for all grades 4 and up. Grades K-3 will have targeted trainings that apply to the teachers of students in these grade levels. We are beginning to realize the promise of a more connected future

“...Also planned and part of the technology upgrade, is an updated phone system that will result in easier communication between home and school and with emergency services and surveillance cameras installed at entries to each school district-wide.”

for Marysville's children. After a 10-year hiatus, the technology engine is humming again in Marysville, thanks to your generous support, and the future once again looks bright for our kids.

Quick facts about your levy dollars in use



ALL SCHOOLS NOW HAVE WI-FI AND FREE PUBLIC WI-FI IS ACTIVE EVERY EVENING AT 5PM AND ON WEEKENDS.



WE'VE DEPLOYED MORE THAN 1,500 NEW CHROMEBOOKS IN SCHOOLS THIS YEAR FOR STUDENTS.



WE ARE GEARING UP FOR OUR FIRST LARGE-SCALE DEPLOYMENT OF COMPUTERS TO TEACHERS IN MORE THAN A DECADE.



Advancing wellness and resilience in education



Marysville School District is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for students, families and staff. Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA),

Project AWARE is a partnership between the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Marysville School District, Battle Ground Public Schools, and Shelton School District.



What is SBAC?

Each district will work to:

- Increase awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youth.
- Provide training for school personnel, families and community members to detect and respond to mental health issues in children and young adults.
- Connect youth and families with needed services.
- These districts will work together over the next five years to develop a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated program to advance wellness and resilience in education settings for school-aged youth.

The goals of Project AWARE:

- Improve overall school climate
- Promote positive mental health among youth and families
- Increase mental health literacy of school personnel and other adults
- Increase access to school and community-based mental health services
- Build the capacity and leadership to sustain community-based mental health promotion, prevention, early identification, and treatment services
- Creating a foundation for better schools

Data collection

The Marysville School District administered several climate surveys to students, families and staff. This information, combined with results from the 2014 Health Youth Survey, will give the district valuable information to identify needs and areas for support.

For more information on Project AWARE, go to the website at: www.msvl.k12.wa.us/home/project-aware



The Smarter Balanced assessment is a test that is replacing the existing MSP tests for students in grades 3 – 8 and the HSPE in high school.

In the high school, Juniors in Washington state will take the math and English Language Arts tests while Sophomores will only take the ELA exam. Elementary and Middle School students will take both ELA and math.

Computer Adaptive Test

The SBAC will be administered online using Marysville's new voter-approved technology infrastructure and computer devices. These new tests will adapt to each individual student's ability, giving teachers and parents better information to help students succeed in a more timely manner.

More than Washington State

To help parents, teachers, and school leaders know whether students are on the path to success, states joined together to develop improved tests of student ability. This is a new test for 21 states, and it will have a new score to report.

New Purpose for the Test

The purpose of these tests is to determine our students' knowledge and skills as outlined in the new Common Core State Standards. This means our tests are designed to measure critical thinking with questions that ask students to show their research, writing and problem solving skills, and to ensure students are ready or on track to be ready for the rigors of college and career when they graduate from Marysville's High Schools.

Marysville School District seeks members for bond feasibility study committee

The Marysville School District is embarking on a community process to study the feasibility of a 2016 school bond.

The district is seeking interested community members to apply to serve on the committee, comprised of community members, parents, and school personnel. Beginning in April, the committee will meet approximately 5 – 7 times over a two to three month period in the district's Service Center Board Room, 4220 80th Street NE, Marysville. Meetings will be held on weeknight evenings. Once meeting dates have been established, we will publish the schedule.

The committee charter, outlining the scope of work and committee composition, as well as the application specifying roles and responsibilities are available online at: www.msvl.k12.wa.us/2016-school-bond-feasibility

Email applications to Jodi Runyon at Jodi_runyon@msvl.k12.wa.us or mail them to her attention, 4220 80th Street NE, Marysville, WA 98270. For more information, call 360-653-0800.



Announcements



Opportunity Expo 2015

Opportunity Expo 2015 is coming soon! On April 28th all high school juniors across the district, and some seniors, will attend one of two sessions at the Expo. The Expo is a dynamic college, career, and preparedness for work and life fair that will include nearly 100 vendors from 4-year colleges and universities, community colleges, tech and trade schools, military entities, and local business owners. The purpose of the Expo is to provide students time to learn about many of the post-high school options available to them as they plan for life after graduation.

New this year... added Partners



The Marysville School District has teamed up with Everett Community College, WSU, and the University Center. This added partner, along with the school district, Marysville Rotary and Rotary Education Foundation, and The Tulalip Tribes, will provide our students with even more options to consider for their futures. The Expo will be held at the college campus and will include tours of the new AMTEC program and the Health and Sciences program as well as a campus-wide tour which will give students greater understanding and knowledge of the many opportunities available to them right here in their own communities.

New District Website

The school district is excited to launch a new website! While still under construction, the site promises to be more user-friendly and allow for easier viewing access for all technology platforms. All school district departments and schools will be a part of this new website reconfiguration.

