



# Meridian Public Schools

## The Hoof Print - Home of the Mustangs

### Mission Statement:

Meridian Public Schools will educate all students in a safe, nurturing environment while challenging them to develop their integrity, knowledge, and unique talents to become responsible, productive citizens.

Newsletter

[www.meridianmustangs.org](http://www.meridianmustangs.org)

October, 2023

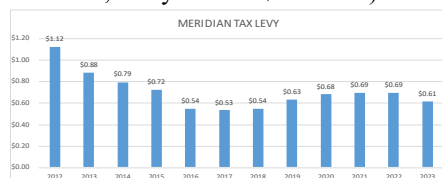
Newsletter - October, 2023  
Superintendent  
Randy Kort

It is hard to believe but we are well into the school year. The first quarter will be concluding on Friday the 13th.

Harvest has been in full swing so everyone please take a few extra minutes with your driving and be safe with all the farm equipment on the highways and gravel roads.

The Meridian band marched at the state fair at the end of August. They will be marching again in the Harvest of Harmony Parade in Grand Island on Saturday, October 7. Please come support our band.

The Meridian Board of Education met on September 18, 2023, the Board approved the 2023-2024 annual budget as presented. The Budget Hearing was held at 7:00 P.M. and the 2023-2024 Tax Request Hearing immediately afterwards. The District Assessed Valuation increased 9% to a total of \$470,599,413 from last years \$431,724,724. Based upon this evaluation the Board of Education approved tax requests and levy requests of: \$2,808,081 (\$0.596703 per \$100 assessed valuation) for the General Fund; \$58,889 (\$0.012514 per \$100 assessed valuation) for Special Building Fund; \$0 (\$ .0 per \$100 assessed valuation) Qualified Capital Purpose Undertaking Fund; \$0 (\$ .0 per \$100 assessed valuation) for the Technology Bond Fund. Each of the amounts includes the County Treasurer's one percent commission. The total tax request for the 2023-2024 budget is \$2,866,970 (\$.609217 per \$100 assessed valuation, last year was \$.694313).



### NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK

October 16<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> is National School Bus Safety Week. Meridian would like to thank our great bus drivers: Elizabeth Noel, Janelle Heiserman, Charles Houser, Tonya Griffin, Emily Corter, Lisa Hermsmeier and just starting Mark Houser. These individuals safely transport our students to and from school during daily routes, field trips and school activities. Safety is their number one priority. Please thank them when you have an opportunity. Please encourage your child/children to obey these School Bus Safety Rules:

1. Be at the bus stop at least 5 minutes early.
2. Always use bus handrails when entering or exiting the bus.
3. Take your seat promptly.
4. Keep aisles clear at all times.
5. Stay seated until the bus stops or as directed by the driver.
6. Be quiet to avoid accidents – there must be absolute QUIET at a railroad crossing stop.
7. Keep your head and arms inside the bus at all times.
8. Cross street/roads only when it is safe.
9. Obey the bus driver.

**If you are interested in learning more about being a substitute bus driver, please contact Mr. Kort for further information.**

**Board of Education  
Meridian Public Schools  
District – 48-0303  
Daykin, Nebraska, 68338  
Monday, September 18, 2023**

**Special Budget Hearing – 7:00 P.M.**  
Meridian Public School Board of Education met on September 18, 2023, as per notice in the Fairbury Journal-News.

President Bartels called the hearing to order at 7:02 p.m. The open meeting law information was presented.

Roll call was taken: Barton – present, Sobotka – present, Rut – present, Scheer – present, and Bartels – present. Also present were Superintendent Kort, Principal Drees, and Principal Hull.

Nothing new was added to the agenda.

Sobotka moved and Scheer seconded to excuse Niederklein from the meeting. Vote taken: Barton– aye, Sobotka – aye, Rut – aye, Scheer – aye, and Bartels – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Superintendent Kort provided information regarding the proposed 2023 -2024 Budget. The FY 2024 tax request is \$121,212 lower as compared to the FY 2023 request.

No comments were heard from the public.

President Bartels closed the Special Budget Hearing and adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

### Special Tax Hearing

Meridian Public School Board of Education met on September 18, 2023, as per notice in the Fairbury Journal-News.

President Bartels called the hearing to order at 7:07 p.m. The open meeting law information was presented.

Roll call was taken: Barton – present, Sobotka – present, Rut – present, Scheer – present, and Bartels – present. Also present were Superintendent Kort, Principal Drees, and Principal Hull.

Nothing new was added to the agenda.

Scheer moved and Rut seconded to excuse Niederklein from the meeting. Vote taken: Barton– aye, Sobotka – aye, Rut – aye, Scheer – aye, and Bartels – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Superintendent Kort provided information concerning the proposed 2023-2024 levy and tax request. The FY 2024 levy is 8 ½ cents lower as compared to the FY 2023 request.



No comments were heard from the public.

President Bartels closed the Special Tax Request Hearing and adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

**Regular September 18, 2023, Meeting**  
Meridian Public School Board of Education met on September 18, 2023, as per notice in the Fairbury Journal-News.

President Bartels called the hearing to order at 7:10 p.m. The open meeting law information was presented.

Roll call was taken: Barton – present, Sobotka – present, Rut – present, Scheer – present, and Bartels – present. Also present were Superintendent Kort, Principal Drees, and Principal Hull.

Nothing new was added to the agenda.

Bartels moved and Scheer seconded to excuse Niederklein from the meeting. Vote taken: Barton– aye, Sobotka – aye, Rut – aye, Scheer – aye, and Bartels – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

No comments were heard from the public.

Rut moved and Scheer seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented.

- A: Minutes of Sunday, August 20, 2023 Regular Meeting
- B: District Financial Report
- C: Activity Fund Report
- D: Hot Lunch Fund Report
- E: Bills

Vote taken: Barton– aye, Sobotka – aye, Rut – aye, Scheer – aye, and Bartels – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Superintendent Kort presented the curriculum update to the Board.

Sobotka moved and Rut seconded to approve the 7% Base Growth Resolution. Vote taken: Barton– aye, Sobotka – aye, Rut – aye, Scheer – aye, and Bartels – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Sobotka moved and Barton seconded to approve the 2023-2024 Tax Request Resolution # 230920. Vote taken: Vote taken: Barton– aye, Sobotka – aye, Rut – aye, Scheer – aye, and Bartels – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Scheer moved and Rut seconded to approve the 2023-2024 Annual Budget. Vote taken: Barton– aye, Sobotka – aye, Rut – aye, Scheer – aye, and Bartels – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Rut moved and Scheer seconded to use North Star Negotiation Software for the 2024-2025 teacher negotiations. Vote taken: Barton– aye, Sobotka – aye, Rut – aye, Scheer – aye, and Bartels – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Negotiations with the Meridian Education Association (MEA) are scheduled to begin on Monday, October 16, 2023 and a following meeting on November 20, 2023.

Superintendent Kort gave an update on ESSER/Safe Return.

**Principal’s Report:**

- Current student count – Elementary – 120 and High School – 102 with 47 Girls and 55 Boys.
- Evaluation team has started meetings
- Fall MAP testing completed
- Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP) process
- Parent Teachers Conference September 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>
- Homecoming week of September 25<sup>th</sup>
- Continue planning for new Elementary Math Curriculum
- Grade reports home weekly
- Continue the SAT and PBIS process to support students
- Study Hall/Intervention process has gone well
- Discussion and Action of football classification at October and November meetings

**Superintendent’s Report:**

- President Bartels and Superintendent Kort attended the Regional NASB meeting in Kearney
- State NASB meeting in Omaha is November 15<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup>
- REAP money is up \$2,000 from last year at \$27,000

Next Meeting was set for Sunday, October 15, 2023, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Scheer moved and Rut seconded to adjourn at 7:38 p.m. Vote taken: Barton– aye, Sobotka – aye, Rut – aye, Scheer – aye, and Bartels – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

*Scott Sobotka,*

Vice President Meridian District #48-030



**“The Dish” with Drees**

We have been back at school for seven weeks! It’s wild to think about everything we have packed into this first quarter of the school year. It is exciting to see all the positive things happening at Meridian and our students' successes. I want to spotlight just a few of the big events in elementary so far this year. The 4th graders went to Ag Venture Day in Geneva. The 5th graders went to The Earth Festival at Camp Jefferson. The Preschool and Kindergarten classes celebrated Grandparent’s Day, and we loved having all the visitors in our building! We also had a book fair and spirit wear clothing drive. We especially want to thank MPIE for hosting both events for us. Thank you, families, for donating to the teacher/classroom book wish lists and the clothing drive. I thought the clothing drive was a huge success. I love these opportunities to support and help one another.

There is just one last thing I want to leave you with this month. Every week, I write a new message on my whiteboard in my office for me to reflect on and for anyone else who sees it. I pick something from one of my devotions or newsletters that I read. This week, I found something from Jon Gordon and especially liked it. I wrote, “I am \_\_\_\_\_!” Fill in the blank. It’s easy to say I am tired, or I am sick (which last week I was), or other negative thoughts, but I tried this week to be positive. Every time I filled in that blank, I filled it with a positive feeling or action. It made a difference! It changed my thinking. When you feel the negativity start to creep in, fill in that blank with something powerful. As we face uncertainty, bad news, busy schedules, or anything else life throws at us, I encourage you to fill in the blank.

We are Meridian! We are making a difference!





PRINCIPALLY SPEAKING WITH MR. HULL

As we get into the fall we have a lot to celebrate so far. Our football team continues to work hard, our dance team continues to learn cheers and routines, and our volleyball team is having an excellent season so far. Additionally, our organizations such as FFA and FBLA have been going to competitions and preparing for conferences and conventions. The choir is busy practicing and the band is preparing for their upcoming events.

I wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate our Mustang Way Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Process. The core principles are: Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible. You may see posts on our social media pages about our weekly winners. Every time a staff member sees a student doing something "the Mustang Way," the student is issued a ticket which enters him/her into our weekly drawing. The students whose names are drawn are celebrated every week on our Facebook page.

Be sure to check our social media accounts: Twitter/X and Facebook for news, updates, and information about the great things going on at Meridian.

COUNSELOR'S CONNECTION by Lisa Hermsmeier

Testing:

- The On To College Prep (formerly John Baylor ACT Prep) is an investment provided by our school to assist your student in preparing for the ACT. All students have access to this test prep. All seniors are more than welcome to take it this semester, and all juniors will take in next semester before the required state ACT test. For more information, talk to Ms. Hermsmeier.

Seniors:

It is time to start the admission process! College may still seem far off, but admission deadlines will hit as early as December. Follow these steps to stay on track:

Contact your top colleges NOW and ask:

- About application deadlines for admission, college-based scholarships, and financial aid.
If you need a separate application for scholarships.
If you should apply online or submit a hardcopy application.
About application fees.

Much of this information can be found by visiting their website and visiting the college rep when they come to Meridian.

Follow these tips to increase your chances of earning scholarships:

- Don't pay for scholarship services! Free resources include ScholarshipQuest at EducationQuest.org, your school counselor's office, and EducationQuest offices in Omaha, Lincoln, and Kearney.
Focus on college-based and local scholarships. You're more likely to earn them over large national awards.
Keep an updated list of activities, honors, and volunteer or paid jobs
Earn the best possible ACT/SAT scores by taking the exams in the spring of your junior year and again in the fall of your senior year. Use the On To College Prep to help study.
Use quality references such as a teacher, coach or counselor. Give them advance notice (at least 2 weeks), a specific deadline, and a copy of your Activities Resume.
Ask at least two people to proofread your college or scholarship application.

Senior "To Do" List:

- Create an FSA ID for you and one for a parent. You'll need them for FAFSA.
Complete the FAFSA. FAFSA will not open until December 2023.
Complete college applications.

EducationQuest Website a Useful Tool

EducationQuest provides a FREE service to students, parents, and schools in Nebraska for:

- Nebraska-based scholarship search
Nebraska college search and links to Nebraska college websites
College Funding Estimator (estimates students' eligibility for financial aid)

- Countdown to College - students may sign up for monthly college planning tips by email (grades 9-12)
College preparation and financial aid information
Student loan calculations

The website for EducationQuest is: www.educationquest.org or you can contact them for free personal help and make an appointment: Omaha - 888.357.6300, Lincoln - 800.303.3745, Kearney - 800.666.3721.

Resources for Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may require accommodations in college, ask Ms. Hermsmeier for a copy of College Planning for Students with Disabilities. In addition, visit Educational Opportunities Beyond High School at: http://www.unl.edu/ssd/content/accommodations.

E-FUNDING

Meridian Public Schools has submitted the paperwork to accept credit cards. As of this writing, we are waiting for a reply from e-Funding for Schools letting us know what our next steps will be. We are still hoping this option will be made available during the first semester. Meridian will continue to keep you up to date as we progress in this endeavor.

Just a From the Music Department

October, already? We have had such a wonderful first quarter of the school year! A few highlights so far: the band marched at the State Fair at the end of August, 5th graders began playing ukuleles and many of them continued their musical experiences into beginning band as well! The high school band has also been busy providing music for our home football games!

Congratulations to McKinley Skiles & Creighton Stewart, fifth graders, who were selected to participate in the 2023 Nebraska All State Children's Choir on Thursday, November 16 in Lincoln! We are so proud of all the students who auditioned and are excited to have Meridian represented at this event!

We wanted to take this opportunity to reach out to members of our school community who might have an extra musical instrument they'd like to donate to our band program or sell to a



beginning band student. Music stores around the country are currently facing an instrument shortage, and as a result, we are needing a little extra help in locating instruments for our beginning fifth graders to utilize. If you or someone you know is interested in donating or selling an instrument, please reach out to Ms. Drees!

We are so proud of all of the students' hard work, and would love to invite you to support our musicians at any of their upcoming performances. Our next performance will feature Junior High and High School musicians in concert on Sunday, October 8 at 2pm. Please feel free to contact either of us with any questions ldrees@meridianmustangs.org or mhalama@meridianmustangs.org.

*Thank You!*

Thank you to everyone who donated their gently used Meridian apparel to MPIE's spirit wear drive. Because of your generosity, we were able to help all Meridian families and students show their Mustang spirit. Thank you for supporting this project!

-MPIE

**WHITE ELEPHANT SALE**

A White Elephant Sale will be held on October 14 and 15 in the Western Gym. The sale will run from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. on both days. The activities include a silent auction, concessions, and a lot of treasures.

**CAMP SPOOK 2023**

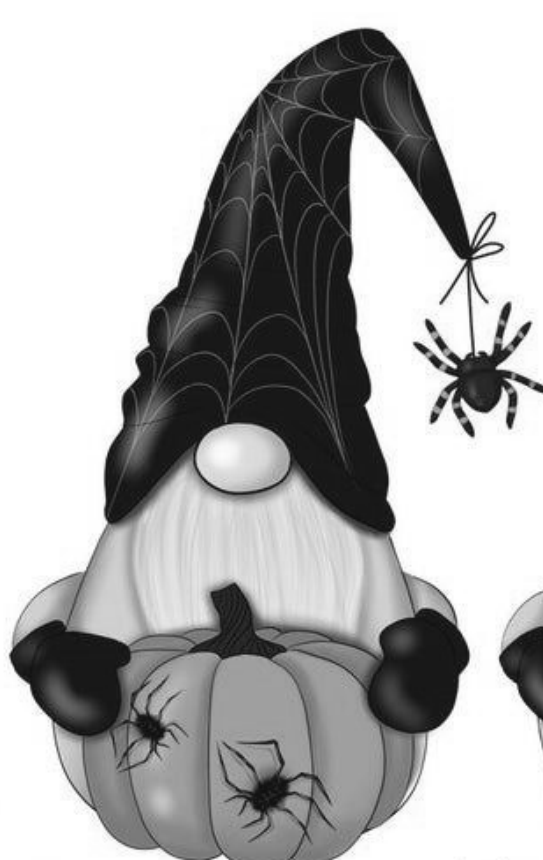
Enjoy trick or treating at Alexandria State Lakes on Saturday, October 14, 2023. Your children are welcome to visit participating campsites from 6:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. Alexandria Presbyterian Church will be serving hot chocolate and apple cider for free will donations. If you wish to drive into the lakes area, a Game and Parks permit will be required.

**TRUNK OR TREAT**

Western is once again holding their annual "Trunk or Treat". The event will be on Friday, October 27, 2023 from 7:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Please join us for a "Spooktacular" evening.



by Tanya Kart



by Tanya Kart



# Camp Spook 2023

Saturday, October 14

Alexandria State Lakes

*Trick-or-treaters welcome 6-10*

*Campers are encouraged to decorate their campsites and pass out candy to trick-or-treaters. Please remember to clean your campsite.*



*Alexandria Presbyterian Church will be serving hot chocolate & apple cider for free will donation.*

*Game and Parks permits are required to drive in.*



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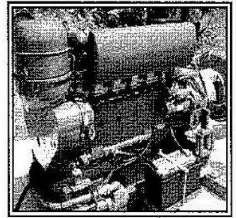
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