



Serving the Communities of Ferndale, Lummi Island, Custer, Lummi Reservation and North Bellingham.

FERNDALE SCHOOLS

Winter 2005-06

Voters will consider facility bonds and M&O Levy

Tax rate is estimated to decrease from the current rate

Ferndale School Board unanimously accepted the recommendations of the Citizens' Bond/Levy Committee and has placed on the March 14 ballot two bond propositions and a four-year maintenance and operations levy for Ferndale Schools.

Voters will be asked to approve Bond Proposition 1 in the amount of \$32,200,000 and Bond Proposition 2 in the amount of \$4,600,000. The propositions provide for 1) addressing health and safety issues, 2) construction of a new elementary school, 3) purchase of land for a future school site, 4) renovation and upgrade of existing facilities,

5) extensive renovation of Custer Elementary School and Ferndale High's Memorial Field, and 6) the creation of an off-campus natural resources center (outdoor classroom).

Voters will also consider a four-year M&O Levy for each of the years—2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. This is a replacement levy to the expiring levy of 2002. Total cost of the levy will be: in 2007, \$8,500,000; in 2008, \$9,500,000; in 2009, \$10,200,000; and in 2010, \$11,210,000.

The estimated tax rate decreases from the current rate of \$4.56 to \$4.38.

Voting is done by mail-in ballot. All registered voters in



Skyline Elementary School students Samantha Petrie, Emily Bunch, Greta Gustafson, Hannah Rooth and Heather Duncan (left to right) share a light-hearted moment together.

Ferndale School District can vote. Validation requires 3,685 voters to submit ballots.

See levy pg. 3, bond pgs. 4-5

Horizon Middle School Nominated for National Blue Ribbon Award

Horizon Middle School is one of seven schools in the state to be nominated for the federal Blue Ribbon Schools' Award.

Horizon was nominated in the *dramatic improvement* category due to the school's progress in closing the

achievement gap by showing strong and consistent improvements on its state reading and mathematics assessments since 2002-2003.

Only 288 schools nationwide were nominated. Winners will be announced early fall 2006.

Horizon opened in 2001 and serves 386 students in grades seven and eight.

Congratulations, Horizon staff and students!

For more information on Blue Ribbon Schools visit www.ed.gov

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School Election—Tuesday, March 14

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In addition to these recent computer donations, Ferndale Schools receive many computer donations throughout the year. In recent times that has included contributions from

Premier Graphics
State of Washington
Port of Bellingham
The Opportunity Council
and private individuals.

Computers are used for multiple purposes in computer labs, libraries and throughout the district.

BP provides training to Ferndale teachers through the annual summer National Energy Education Development Conference where the integration of technology and science is emphasized.

Thank you to all these companies and individuals for supporting Ferndale students.

Businesses provide computers for kids

BP Cherry Point contributes 13 computers to Vista and Windward schools

For the 2005-06 school year, BP Cherry Point Refinery launched a comprehensive education initiative in Whatcom County that included donating 110 IBM laptop computers to schools for work in the math and science academia.

Vista Middle School received seven laptops and Windward High School received six.

Vista Teachers Travis Brown and Les Maxwell plan to set up a mini-lab to support students in their science classes.

Windward Teacher Chuck

Schelle plans to use the laptops in his science classroom using Vernier Data-Collection Technology which includes computer interfaces, high-revision sensors and data-analysis software. The laptops will also allow for easy transport to on-site, outdoor study areas where students can work in the field.

Frito Lay and Wal Mart contribute to vocational education

Through the Computer for Kids promotion, Frito Lay teamed with Wal Mart and donated two Compaq Presario computers to Ferndale High School. The computers will be



Ferndale High School's Vocational Director John Young (right) accepts the computer contributions from Frito Lay District Sales Leader Michael Brown.

used in Family and Consumer Science classes for teacher/student presentations and in the Career Center for students to explore career options.

Boys' & Girls' State teaches leadership

What is Boys' & Girls' State?

Boys' and Girls' State offers youth training in practical citizenship, leadership, and to instill a working knowledge of the structure and operation of state government.

It is designed to supplement the information taught in high school civics classes.

Student delegates participate in classroom instruction in subjects of law, civil service,

election procedures and parliamentary procedures; and functional activities (learning by doing) such as elections, caucuses, conventions, operations of courts, legislative assemblies, law enforcement and public welfare.

Program Objectives

Boys' and Girls' State is structured to meet the following objectives

- to develop leadership and pride in American citizens
- to educate citizens about our system of government
- to instill a greater understanding of American traditions
- to stimulate a desire to maintain our democratic government processes.

Selection Process

To be eligible, boys and girls must meet the following criteria:

- completed junior year of high school
- interest in government and current events

- have high moral character
- have strong leadership abilities, and
- have an above average scholastic standing.

State delegates are selected by American Legion Auxiliary Units working with local high school educators who assist in evaluating potential leadership qualities of the delegates.

The program is funded by the American Legion Auxiliary, with some additional support coming from other civic and nonprofit organizations.

For more information about Boys' and Girls' State contact:

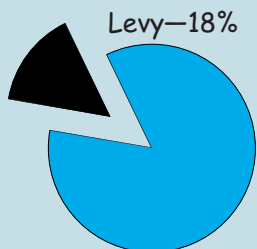
The American Legion
Kulshan Post 154
Ferndale
Mr. Richard Hartley
Evergreen Boys' &
Girls' State Coordinator
360/380-3825

or visit the national legion website at: www.legion-aux.org



Ferndale High School participants at Evergreen Girls' State 2005 Stephany Mankins, Brittany Fraser, Asia Hirsch and Marnie Ledford (pictured left to right)

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Operating Budget

How much will it cost?

- Year 1: \$ 8,500,000
- Year 2: \$ 9,500,000
- Year 3: \$10,200,000
- Year 4: \$11,210,000

The levy replaces the existing levy that voters approved in 2002.

For information about voting call:
Whatcom County Auditor's
Office at 360/676-6742

What is an M&O levy?

On March 14, Ferndale voters, like voters in some of the state's other school districts, will be asked to cast their ballot in consideration of the district's maintenance and operations levy. Seeking voter approval of maintenance and operations levies is a common occurrence statewide. In fact, over 90% of the state's public school districts seek voter approval for maintenance and operations levies.

A levy is simply a special tax

upon real property owned by residents of the school district. When voters approve a levy, they authorize the county treasurer to collect this tax and distribute it to the school district.

Ferndale School's levy accounts for approximately 18% of the district's budget. In February 2002, district residents approved a maintenance and operations levy which provided funds for 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. District voters will be

asked to vote on a new levy, which will replace the expiring 2002 levy.

When voters approve a levy, they approve a specific dollar amount to be provided to the school district. When property values increase, the district doesn't receive any more money. It is just that taxpayers pay a smaller tax rate, thus providing the same amount of money to the local district.

Proposed levy items

Underfunded Positions from Previous Levy

There are numerous staff positions funded from the levy, including teachers, counselors, coaches, activity advisors, para-educators, administrative assistants, etc. The amount provided by the levy for salaries and benefits has not kept up with warranted increases due to education, experience, benefits and state funded salary increases for which we receive no state funding. For example, there are 26.8 certificated positions currently funded by the levy. This levy will provide funding to ensure that it fully supports the salaries and benefits of levy funded positions.

Classroom Teachers

High school English and math teachers to help students meet the 10th grade Washington State learning standards and focus on reading, writing, listening and mathematics; music teachers for grades K-6; full-day kindergarten at all elementary schools; new elementary school positions—librarian, counselor, physical education and music.

Elementary Classroom Assistants

Para-educators at the elementary schools to help students who are in need, and assist teachers in a

variety of ways with classroom programs and in computer labs.

Summer School Remediation - Elementary Students

Approximately 200 children in grades 3, 4, and 5 are served throughout the district with 2 1/2 hours of instruction per day during four weeks in the summer months. Targeted areas for instruction are reading, math and written language.

K-12 Teacher Training

In order to address the updated state standards, technology and home and family connections, teachers are selected to share and demonstrate effective teaching strategies with other teachers directly in classrooms. The program is K-12 in scope, but would place an emphasis at the K-6 level which will coincide with the implementation schedule of the state standards.

K-12 Textbook Adoptions and Instructional Materials

Funding for reading, math, spelling and biology textbooks, and instructional materials which are basically needed due to the new standards that need to be implemented from the state. In order to meet these new standards, the district must consistently upgrade its curriculum in order to teach it to

students.

Remedial Assistance in Math and Reading

Provide a full-time teacher to help students who are experiencing difficulty with learning reading and math skills. The teacher works directly with students, as well as regular classroom teachers and parents, to improve student skills in math and reading.

Upgrade Computer Labs

Upgrade computer hardware, software and training for all K-8 labs, as well as mini-labs and vocational department lab. These computers and related software need to be upgraded so that technology can be integrated throughout the curriculum. Ferndale has been a state-wide leader in providing students with access to computers and thereby utilizing technology to enhance their learning.

Extended School Programs for Grades 3-5

Extended school programs in reduced class size settings to help grade 3, 4, and 5 low-achieving students improve academic skills and meet the state's learning standards.

see page six, M&O Levy

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How much will it cost?

Proposition 1
\$32,200,000

Proposition 2
\$ 4,600,000

The current combined tax rate of \$4.56 is estimated to decrease 18 cents to \$4.38 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

A home with an assessed value of \$300,000 in 2005 and 2007 (the year when the school taxes go into effect) would have an estimated decrease of \$54 per year in local school taxes.

For additional levy/bond information, call 360/383-9207 or log on to www.ferndale.wednet.edu and select "2006 Bond Issue"

What is a bond?

A bond is a special tax upon property voted by the people to provide for capital (building) needs. Because the amount is usually too large to raise in one year, a bond issue is usually based on a *pay back* period of 10, 15, 20 or 30 years.

After a bond issue is approved, the school district hires both a bond counsel and a financial advisor. The advisor arranges for the sale of the

bonds. The school district then receives the money and places it in the school district's capital projects fund. The bond money is then used to pay contractors, equip the school, etc., to complete the building projects.

Each year, for the length of the bond issue, e.g., 15 years, the county treasurer assesses a tax on property which the school district uses to make annual payments to the bonds'

holders. Of course, in return for having provided the bond dollars to the school district *up front*, the payments to the bond holders will include interest as well as payment on the principal (the amount of the bond).

The money received from the property tax assessment is placed in the debt service fund and these funds pay the bond holders.

Proposed facility projects

The proposed facility projects focus on the building of a new elementary school, upgrades and renovations to various schools, purchase of land for a future school site, adding classrooms at certain schools, and addressing health and safety issues.

Proposition 1

Address Health and Safety Issues

Provide for health and safety improvements at various schools including interior locks, video surveillance, parking lot lighting, separation of bus/vehicle/pedestrian traffic, ventilation system updates and disabled access.

Construct a new elementary school

Build a new elementary school on existing land that the district owns on Church Road to ease overcrowding at other schools, especially at Skyline, Mountain View and Eagleridge elementary schools. It is anticipated the school would open fall of 2007 and house 500 students when at capacity.

Purchase additional land for a future school site



Above, site for new elementary school on Church Road, looking east toward Mount Baker

Left: Preliminary drawing of how the front entry of the school may be structured.

The district experienced rapid growth from 1985 through 1995, followed by a no growth period. However, in 2002, student enrollment once again rose and there are indicators it will continue to rise. The district plans to pursue the purchase of land for a future secondary school. Ferndale High is the largest high school in Whatcom County with over 1,500 students enrolled.

Renovate and upgrade facilities

The district prides itself in maintaining the wonderful facilities which the community has purchased through passage of bond issues. Much like one's

home would need repair/upgrades over time, so do district facilities. They include:

- Extensive renovation of Custer Elementary
- Additional classrooms at Mountain View Elementary and Ferndale High
- Reconfigure two Ferndale High classrooms to science classrooms
- Electrical improvements to Ferndale High, North Bellingham Elementary and Mountain View Elementary
- Roof repair and plumbing improvements at various sites
- Upgrades to Ferndale High's auditorium, gym and vocational areas
- Provide additional bus/vehicle service bays and restrooms that are accessible for the disabled at the transportation facility

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Every vote counts

A large voter turnout is needed by March 14 in order to validate the school bond and levy elections.

For the November general election, 9,212 Ferndale voters submitted ballots.

In order for the school bond and levy elections to pass, a 40% turnout figure of 3,685 people must vote and at least 60% or 2,211 people must be in favor of the issues.

The district encourages members of the community to vote in all elections.

Is there a tax exemption for senior citizens and disabled persons?

Senior citizens and disabled persons may be eligible for an exemption or deferral of excess levies and a portion of regular levies. Annual household income determines the level of exemption. Other requirements must be met. Contact the Whatcom County Assessor's office at 676-6790 for an application.

Proposed facility projects

Proposition 2

Upgrade Memorial Field

Memorial Field Complex is over 40 years old. The complex is used less than ten times per year. Upgrades are needed for utilization of the field year-round by school activities including football, soccer, track and field, band programs, and middle school programs. Additionally, a variety of community groups such as the Boys' and Girls' Club, Red Lion Soccer, YMCA and others would have access to the complex. The field would have the capacity to serve over 200 events per year.

The field would also be a shared facility utilized by students at the new secondary school when it is built.

Upgrades include the installation of artificial turf, resurfacing the track to address drainage, adding restrooms, adding visitor seating, adding seating for disabled persons,

installing a new scoreboard and sound system, upgrading electrical components, improving grandstand lighting, providing storage under a portion of the stadium and enlarging the concessions area.



Ferndale High School Campus

Create a Natural Resources Learning Center

The creation of an off campus agricultural/natural resources learning center would be accessible by all students of the district grades K-12. The lab would provide the district's students the opportunity to experience in a *learn by doing* setting for environmental science studies.

Passage of the bond would provide \$1.2 million for labs, renovation of existing structures and educational technology.

District officials have been working to lease a parcel of land to house the center. Two sites are being studied that would accommodate the center. One is located on the Trigg Road and the other is located at the intersection of Mountain View and Lake Terrell roads.

Applied learning opportunities would include natural resources, wetland/stream enhancement, animal science, salmon habitat, wildlife biology, landscaping

and turf grass management, agriculture, and forestry.

Educational resources would include

- classrooms for high school students
- integrating the science-in-a-lab environment with English, focusing on writing, research and communication skills
- field trips—seasonal activities and year-round for hands on science experiments for elementary and middle school students
- college undergraduate and graduate level studies
- community resource for Master

Gardeners, Master Composters, 4H, Girl and Boy Scouts, Recycling, plant sales, and soil conservation service.

This project is the grassroots effort of Mr. Dick Rightmire, former vocational teacher for Ferndale schools, and citizens who feel strongly that students should have an opportunity to study and apply their knowledge to natural resources.

To get a vision of what the site may include, visit a model program in Battleground, Washington, www.casee.org.



One of the proposed sites for the natural resources center

Board Member begins term

The district welcomes Ms. Lee Anne Riddle who will serve in Director District No. 4. Riddle ran unopposed and was elected to the school board seat in November 2005 and began her term in December.

Ms. Riddle is a lifetime Whatcom County resident. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Western Washing-

ton University; experience in mental health and nutrition; works for Washington State University Whatcom County Extension as coordinator of the Food Sense program; was a Steering Committee member for Whatcom County Readiness to Learn Consortium; has volunteered the last 16 years in Ferndale schools in many

capacities. Her three children have either graduated from or attend Ferndale schools.



Lee Anne Riddle

continued from page three

M&O Levy

Extended School Year for Disabled Students

Federal and state laws require an extended school year program for some children with disabilities, however neither the federal nor state governments specifically fund this mandate. Because the state places a limit on special education revenue, the budget cannot support extended school year services without reducing services during the year.

Nursing Services

Registered nurses who help meet the health related issues of students—illness or disability; supervised student medication distribution; CPR, first aid, hepatitis and HIV/AIDS trainings; screen students in areas of head lice, vision, hearing, scoliosis and other concerns; and assist in developing health care plans for students with life-threatening conditions such as

diabetes, seizures, and allergies of many types.

Student/Family Coordinator

Continue full-time student/family coordinator in the district's elementary schools. This coordinator works with children and their families to help increase communication between school and home, provide liaison with county agencies who can assist students and families, and coordinate parent support groups, etc.

Elementary Administrative Assistants

Continue assistant time in district elementary schools. Assistants dispense medication, supervise the sick room, answer telephones and keep track of student records. Teachers rely on assistant secretaries to keep the office machines running and assist with food service counts

and attendance records.

Purchase School Buses

Purchase school buses to maintain a safe fleet for transporting students.

Utility Costs

Fund increased electrical, natural gas, oil and fuel prices.

Inflation

Make up shortfall for unfunded and not fully funded state and federal programs that total more than \$2 million.

Carry Forward Expiring 2002 Levy

Carry forward portions of the expiring 2002 levy which included classroom furniture, preventative maintenance, summer school, co-curricular activities, counselors, gifted and talented, additional teaching staff and others.

continued from page eight

Superintendent's Message

education is under funded by \$800,000, transportation by over \$300,000 and the list goes on. During the last ten years, when adjusted for inflation, the revenue per pupil has dropped by over \$500 per student. As I said, the levy is vital to maintaining the programs we have and for paying our bills, particularly

the rapid increases in fuel and electrical prices.

We estimate the total tax rate will result in a reduction of \$18 for a \$100,000 home from the current rate. That reduction became possible because we have paid off debt, refinanced debt, have been conservative in how we manage our financial re-

sources and the district's assessed valuation has increased.

In simple form, the issues you will be voting on deal with maintaining what we have and providing for the future.

Please be sure to vote and thank you for your support, understanding and the deep care you have for children.

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Kindergarten registration

Parents with children who are planning to enter kindergarten in Ferndale School District the fall of 2006 are to register during the week of March 6-10. Registration hours are 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Parents should register children at the school they will be attending. If unsure of which school that is, please call 383-9207 or 383-9236.

To be eligible to register for kindergarten, a child must be five years of age prior to midnight on August 31, 2006.

Reminder for vehicular traffic

Drivers are reminded to drive safely and use caution around schools, crosswalks and bus stops.

This is especially important when students are present.

Please ensure our children are safe going to and from school.

Parent information

WAHA and District Team together for healthier students

Ferndale School District and Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access (WAHA) have partnered to assist families in obtaining healthcare. Washington State has a program for kids of all ages and families.

You might be surprised that a family of four making \$4,000 per month can qualify.

WAHA will assist families in understanding their healthcare

options, provide health insurance counseling, assist with completing insurance paperwork, find a doctor and schedule appointments, connect with other community programs and resources, and assist with enrollment in Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP), Basic Health and other insurance programs.



With insurance, a child has better access to care that keeps them healthy.

Applying is easy! Call Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access at 360/715-6594.

Meningitis Notice

As of 2005, schools are required to provide meningococcal information to sixth grade parents and students.

The Department of Health wants parents to be aware of meningococcal meningitis and the availability of a vaccine to protect against the disease. Vaccination can help protect against up to 83% of the meningococcal disease cases occurring among adolescents and young adults.

Meningococcal disease, commonly known as meningococcal meningitis, strikes up to 3,000 adolescents and adults in

the United States each year. Adolescents and young adults have an increased rate of contracting meningococcal disease compared to the general population, accounting for nearly 30% of all U.S. cases annually. According to one study as many as one out of every four adolescents infected with the disease may die. Of those who survive, up to 20% suffer long-term disabilities, including brain damage, hearing loss, kidney disease and limb amputations.

Parents are encouraged to learn more about this disease and speak to their child's physician

about immunization. In addition, speak with your child about good hygiene and not sharing personal items that may help transmit the disease.

For more information contact the Special Services Department 360/383-9213 or

Washington State Department of Health Immunization Program at www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/meningococcal.htm.

Immunizations required for school attendance

The state of Washington requires that all students be immunized prior to enrolling in school. Listed are the immunizations required for the 2006-07 school year.

GRADE	Varicella (Chicken Pox)	DTaP/DTP/DT/Td	POLIO	MMR	HEP B
Kindergarten (ages 4-6)	1 dose given on or after the 1st birthday OR Parent reported history of the disease	5 doses Pertussis-containing vaccine recommended 4 doses acceptable provided the last dose is given on or after the 4th birthday	4 doses recommended 3 doses acceptable provided the last dose is given on or after the 4th birthday	2 doses MMR recommended both given on or after the 1st birthday and at least 28 days apart	3 doses
Grade 1-5 (ages 7-13)	Recommended, not required	Td/Tdap		2 doses Measles; 1 dose Mumps & 1 dose Rubella acceptable both given on or after the 1st birthday and at least 28 days apart	
Grade 6	1 dose given on or after the 1st birthday OR Parent reported history of the disease	Pertussis is not required above kindergarten (age 7) 5 doses recommended; the last dose must be received on or after the 4th birthday			
Grades 7-9	Recommended, not required	Booster dose of Td/Tdap recommended at age 11-12			
Grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)		3 doses acceptable provided the last dose is given on or after the 4th birthday			3 doses recommended, not required

Superintendent's message



Roger Lehnert

Dear Community Members:

As you well know the school district will shortly ask voters to approve two bond propositions and our maintenance and operations levy.

The bond proposals took two plus years to develop. A lot of time was spent visiting and talking with parents and staff, plus seeking input from professionals who work in the capital construction field.

The citizens' committee chose four criteria to help guide them in their deliberations. Safety and health, renovation to facilities, additional classroom space, and the purchase of land for a future secondary site. The

choices they made are contained in Proposition 1.

The list is extensive—if you would like to see that listing you can pick one up your neighborhood school or visit our website at www.ferndale.wednet.edu.

The committee felt that a second bond proposal was necessary because the two items in it did not fit into the criteria used in Proposition 1. The committee recommended we upgrade Memorial Field to a community field which would serve all age groups and become a field used by various groups and activities. The field would also serve a second high school if it were to be built. The current field has limited use due to its natural turf which deteriorates over time due to weather conditions and use. Thus, the field can only accommodate one sport. A lack of seating has been apparent for a long time. I have been told that the stadium is over 40 years old.

A natural science resource center is included in Proposition 2. The land lab is not a

new idea. The idea was brought forward by the district's former vocational director Dick Rightmire. In essence, the lab would sit on leased land and provide a site for K-12 students to apply their knowledge of the environment in a real setting. It is hoped that other community groups would use the site as well. We are interested in two sites. One is located on the southeast corner of Mountain View and Lake Terrell Roads. The others is located on property off Portal Way behind the PUD.

The maintenance and operations levy is vital to what we do. Over 26 teaching positions are contained in it, along with money to pay for curriculum materials and a host of programs which range from full-day kindergarten to gifted and talented. It includes elementary and some secondary counselors, elementary P.E. specialists, remediation programs, activity buses and some maintenance positions. This levy asks voters to provide money to help offset unfunded mandates like special education

and transportation. The levy also provides money to ensure that all kindergartners will attend full day kindergartens which will be phased in over the next two years.

For a number of years, we have operated our levy at 78.8% of the statutory lid. Last summer we reduced our budget by \$850,000. We currently have a fund balance that is the lowest in 15 years with our expenditures exceeding our revenues by \$900,000. How does that happen? I have spoken with you before about unfunded mandates and, in our case, they total over \$2 million dollars. That is money that has to come from somewhere in our budget because those requirements are not funded or not fully funded. We end up robbing Peter to pay Paul.

I have felt for a number of years that our state and federal governments have flunked the funding test miserably. Those are strong words. Special

see Superintendent's Message page six

School Board of Directors

Dr. John Hruby, President
Mr. Norm Robertson
Ms. Lee Anne Riddle
Mr. Stuart McKay
Mr. Justin McKay

Superintendent/Board Secretary

Dr. Roger L. Lehnert

Editor

Tammy Bengen

FERNDALE SCHOOLS is a newsletter for Ferndale School District community members. Its purpose is to improve understanding of school programs. Questions or comments may be directed to the administration office, P.O. Box 698, 6041 Vista Drive, Ferndale, Washington 98248, 360/383-9207.

Visit the district website at <http://www.ferndale.wednet.edu>

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Ferndale School District is an equal opportunity employer. The district is committed to providing equal opportunity for all persons without regard to race, color, creed, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, age, or the presence of any non-job related sensory, mental or physical disability.

Our Mission

Ferndale School District, in partnership with families and the larger community, will educate each student to develop the knowledge, skills and character necessary to lead a self-reliant, socially responsible life.