



*Board of Trustees
Missoula County Public Schools
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Forward Thinking, High Achieving.

January 30, 2013

Evaluation of Superintendent Dr. Alex Apostle for 2012

Scott Bixler:

Four and one half years ago Dr. Apostle came to Missoula and told us what he was going to do. He has done it! He said he wanted us to be the best in the state; OK we said. Then he said he wanted us to be the best in the nation; What?! Well, here we go. Thanks to Dr Apostle, we are going in that direction.

Welcome the 21st century in Missoula County Public Schools. Highest completion rate of all “AA” schools in the state? (Sentinel) check. Lowest dropout rate: (Big Sky) No problem. Health Science Academy? Of course. iPads for all? Let’s Just Do It. MCPS is fulfilling the vision Dr. Apostle articulated four years ago; that this school district would not only be the best in the state, but would compete with the best educational institution in the United States.

In this New Year, any Superintendent’s evaluation must consider the horrific events that occurred at Sandy Hook elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, as well as our local tragedies. I believe Dr. Apostle’s response to these incidents exemplifies his entire tenure at MCPS in a microcosm; a calm, reasoned response, collaboration with appropriate professionals, and finally a call to action that included trustees, staff and the community at large. As he has done all year, Dr. Apostle exceeded expectations in each of the standards described in the Superintendent Evaluation content during this difficult period.

I would like to discuss his approach to each of the six key elements that comprise our district’s vision of 21st Century learning.

Key Elements 1 and 2: Increase Student Engagement and Transform Learning Environments.

The three programs itemized at the top of this page are good examples of ways this District is working to keep kids connected. Couple that with Sentinel’s Journalism’s class connection with the University of Montana, the possible movement of MCAT to the Sentinel campus and dual language immersion at Paxton next year, it demonstrates Dr. Apostle is leading the charge to keep our students energized and connected.

Key Elements 3 and 4: Support Early Innovators and Personalize Professional Growth.

The 1.6 million dollar grant Dr. Apostle secured from the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation should be first and foremost on the minds of trustees and the Missoula educational community. As I have stated, many of our accomplishments are a direct result of the dedication and hard work of the MCPS staff; however, Dr. Apostle is solely responsible for this grant. His vision, organizational skills and tenacity won the day and inspired Mrs. Washington to put her faith in our school district; that we are on the right track, and will stop at nothing to secure the best chance for all our children to be successful from pre-school through their undergraduate

degree. This funding will be specifically used for professional development by our staff in conjunction with a robust new relationship with the University of Montana.

Key Elements 5 and 6: Enhance Communications and Collaborate to Make Decisions

To use the recent events in Sandy Hook as an example, Dr. Apostle met with police, cabinet and communicated directly with parents and news outlets in an all out multi-media blitz to assure everyone our children will be protected. It would have been easy to spout platitudes about the safety measures we already have in place, but Dr. Apostle is never one to take the easy route. Working with all of the above, Dr. Apostle has once again pushed everyone in this district and community to be an active participant in our school's welfare.

I am grateful that Dr. Apostle is our Superintendent. He is the right man at the right time to continue to lead our district to national prominence. I support his vision and goals and am proud to be a part of this team.

Shelly Wills:

What has Dr. Apostle's tenure meant to the Missoula community? When Dr. Apostle started here in 2008 our MCPS graduation rate was around 76%, while the state average was closer to 80%. MCPS now has the highest graduation rate in the state. In 2012 the graduation rates at MCPS were almost 90%. In student terms this means over 100 more students are graduating from MCPS than would have graduated if we would have continued at 76%. Financially this means that MCPS is receiving \$6,500 per student from the state for support. Thus the district has \$650,000 more in its budget. More importantly than that to the community these 100 extra graduates means 100 more citizens can take their place in supporting the community instead of being a burden. The average increase in wages for a high school graduate is over \$6,600 annually more than non graduates. That means \$6.6 million more annually in wages and the associated taxes to support the community. Even more striking is the average cost over the lifetime of a non high school graduate is almost \$200,000 in social services. Meaning each time a student graduates we have saved the community \$200,000 or \$20 million for graduating 100 more students in taxpayers money. Besides increasing the graduation rate, since Dr. Apostle's tenure the district has seen increases in standardized test scores across the board in every discipline; math, science and reading at every tested grade level.

Dr. Apostle's work is being recognized for his excellence on a national, state and local level. Nationally our school district received a magna award for Graduation Matters Missoula, was interviewed by the American School Board Journal on our initiatives and had two elementary schools receive national Blue Ribbon Awards. On a state level, Denise Juneau, our state superintendent of schools, has adopted our Graduation Matters for Montana, Schools for the 21st Century and Student Academic Success initiatives. Most remarkable on a local level, Dr. Apostle has secured over 2 million dollars in private local donations from community business leaders for our schools. The Missoula business community understands the huge need for an educated workforce and believes that Dr. Apostle is the superintendent to lead us forward. This feat of soliciting and inviting the community to help share in the cost of education of our students is unprecedented in the state of Montana. These over 2 million dollars have allowed MCPS to fund many programs by paying for the professional development and stipends for our teachers who want to teach IB, the Health Science Academy, and 21st Century teaching and learning. These three programs are only the beginning, as next year a pilot program for language immersion at the elementary schools will launch and more and more professional development and programs will follow. If we were to just look at the donations Dr. Apostle has secured since

his tenure he has paid for himself multiple times over and we still have money for professional development and stipends for programs we would otherwise not have.

Joe Knapp:

The last ten years our country and our District have drifted because we were rudderless. Leadership is not complicated; it is just HARD! The last 4 years Alex has delivered a clear message to our community and our District; we have 5 goals and we are sticking to them. Dr. Apostle's job requires that he "win this game". As Vince Lombardi said, "Winning isn't everything; It is the only thing." Dr. Apostle has demonstrated his conviction completely. We are dealing with a generalized process and we have a ton of work to do. Dr. Apostle is exactly the right person to do what he is doing. Keep going!

Jim Sadler:

Five years ago this month when our board was interviewing superintendent candidates we desired an educational leader. There was nothing in place institutionally to address the dropout rate. We now have the lowest dropout rate of all AA school in Montana. The changes that have happened in our District have happened because of Dr. Apostle; Health Science Academy, International Baccalaureate Program, the beginnings of a Journalism Academy and the foreign language immersion program to mention just a few. He has generated 2.2 million dollars in outside funds. No other superintendent has done that and it is not for bricks and mortar. This should be a great source of pride for our district. Our schools are different now and that is important!

Drake Lemm:

Currently the national student debt is \$1 trillion. Dr. Apostle is doing a lot to help Missoula families avoid facing such a financial burden upon graduation from college. He has put many dual credit classes in place, added more AP classes, started the Health Science Academy and the IB program. Through these programs students can begin college with sophomore or junior status. This can save families tens of thousands of dollars.

More students are graduating from high school. The quality of life and the expected incomes of these students will be substantially enhanced because of the Graduation Matters Initiative. The District also receives more than \$6000 each year from the state for each student that stays in school. Dr. Apostle has also raised \$2 million from private sources. He has made a profound impact on our district. The increase in Dr. Apostle's salary is insignificant compared to the dollars he has generated from private donations as well as the increased funding from the state.

Marcia Holland:

Our district has been recognized nationally as well as locally. That reinforces that Dr. Apostle's views are nationally recognized. Alex's leadership has created an environment where innovators thrive. Students at Paxson are learning with iPads to collaborate and thrive. His leadership has allowed other people to become leaders and that is not often seen. He has integrity and promotes transparency. He has done everything in his ability to include everyone. Some examples of outreach are; Washington Foundation grant, annual retiree luncheons, weekly meetings with parents, Most Inspirational Students banquet, partnerships with UM, Missoula, OPI, legislators, etc.

Mike Smith:

Dr. Apostle's leadership is unmatched. He demonstrates progress, enthusiasm, forward thinking and integrity. "A rising tide lifts all boats". This tide won't go down. We are seeing

results and we will continue to do so. It is not a blip; it is growth. Dr. Apostle is the single most important investment in the future of this district. We have already seen great returns.

Debbie Dupree:

Dr. Apostle gives this district forward movement. He lives by our five district goals. The money he has raised has made our new programs possible. I give him my support and look forward to many more great things from this district under his leadership. I appreciate Dr. Apostle's humility. Men and women of character have humility.

Joe Toth:

Shared vision and goals based on solid values are articulated by Dr. Apostle. Across all groups in the community his vision is coordinated. Alex is reaching ALL students; those who are harder to reach. He is unique in being able to pull the whole community in to help our students. He has drive for all of us to improve and be better. If the public came to us and said if we give you \$200K, what will you do with it? The best we can do is pay Alex that amount. He supports teachers doing the best they can.

Toni Rehbein:

Many of Dr. Apostle's accomplishments have been noted by the Trustee's comments above. Many others are listed in the document entitled, "Summary of Accomplishments" 2008-2012. Significant improvements in our 5 critical school district goals have already occurred. The students and families of Missoula will benefit hugely for years to come from the initiatives that Dr. Apostle has implemented. The private dollars Dr. Apostle has raised will continue to offer teachers the opportunity to obtain further training and support critical programs to help our students achieve the skills they will need to succeed. The goals that the Trustees have set for Missoula County Public Schools are best accomplished by the continuation of leadership Dr. Apostle offers our community.

For the fifth consecutive year the Board unanimously voted to extend Dr. Apostle's contract for another year, making the maximum allowed by law; a three year contract.