

ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL

**THE PLAN for SCHOOL YEARS
2014/15 TO 2018/19**

*A community guide to
the five-year strategic plan
for Missoula County Public Schools.*



Forward Thinking, High Achieving.

**THE STRENGTH OF
OUR COMMUNITY
IS EVIDENT IN THE
STRENGTH OF OUR
SCHOOLS.**

Every year, communities around Montana place education levies for facilities and technology on their ballots — and they don’t always pass successfully. Since fall 2008, Missoula has passed every school levy placed in front of voters.

That demonstrates well our community’s support of education, important as we embark on a new strategic plan and a new direction for our public schools. Those votes indicate more than a willingness to provide funding, they show that education matters to our community, that it is a priority for you.

And that’s crucial.

Globalization, access to information, accelerated pace of change, economic forces, cultural diversity and more are not only changing what children must learn, but also how they learn it. Hand an iPad to a 2-year-old, ask a fifth grader to look up a historic fact, look over the shoulder of a high schooler doing calculus, and you’ll see what we mean.

Our community, then, is tasked with preparing children to compete in a shrinking, interconnected and rapidly changing world. That begins in school.

Over the past 18 months, Missoula County Public Schools leadership has carefully and systematically aligned input from parents, faculty, staff and the public to create an aggressive and exhilarating five-year strategic plan. The plan is built from the strong foundations of the 21st Century Model of Education, the 2009 MCPS Strategic Plan, the Professional Educators of Montana Code of Ethics, SHAPE P20 work to enhance pre-K–graduate school public education, the development of initiatives and the Professional Learning Community At Work Institute. The plan, titled Achievement for All, is built around student success – and ensuring that we consistently provide the talent, leadership, organization and infrastructure required to make it happen.

Our plan is also built around a new model for education – The 21st Century Model – with a vision for professional learning communities, career academies and capstone projects that better fit how children learn today so that they can be better prepared to lead, tomorrow.

As you review this plan, please keep in mind that you are a significant contributor to its success. Your commitment to implement the plan and, more importantly, to engage with and support it is crucial.

Schools indicate the strength of a community. Together we can show the world that Missoula is strong.

Strong schools are among the key drivers in attracting economic development.

THE COMMUNITY’S ROLE IN A 21st CENTURY EDUCATION

Strong schools are among the key drivers in attracting economic development. Strong schools develop students who are better able to excel and to lead the community in the future. Strong schools are an indicator of innovation, adaptability and prosperity. Whether you have children in a public school or not, it is vital that you be involved. Here are ways we encourage you to connect with education in Missoula.

- **Attend meetings** (www.mcpsmt.org)
- **Encourage learning outside the classroom**
- **Follow our progress** (www.mcpsmt.org)
- **Support new initiatives**

METHODS CHANGE. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES DO NOT.

The mission, vision and core beliefs of MCPS are the foundation for the future of our schools. We will create an inspired 21st Century Educational Culture that improves lifelong student achievement, develops remarkable educational leaders and engages the Missoula community in the future of its children.



MISSION

To ensure every student achieves his or her full potential, regardless of circumstance and ability.

VISION

We communicate; we collaborate; we think critically; and we create. We are Missoula County Public Schools – educational leaders in a global society – fostering uncompromising excellence and empowering all learners.

CORE BELIEFS



EVERY CHILD *deserves to be challenged, equipped and prepared for life beyond school.*

Therefore, we stimulate and develop each student’s curiosity and creativity; we engage every child with a holistic education that inspires lifelong learning; and we collaborate with parents – who are every child’s first and most influential teacher.



INNOVATIVE, COMMITTED TALENT *– leadership, teachers and staff – drive success in the classroom and beyond.*

Therefore, we create a professional and supportive working environment; we insist on instructional competency and educational best practices; we put the right people in the right places to confront change and who are committed to a common purpose; and we hire leaders who listen well, engage others and confidently shape the future.



LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS *must continually evolve to be engaging, safe and up-to-date.*

Therefore, we skillfully use modern technology; we embed the best practices of professional learning communities in our schools; we instill respect for diversity in our students and staff; and we use resources efficiently and effectively in ways that keep our facilities current.





STRONG COMMUNITIES *start with a strong public school system.*


Therefore, we answer to the community as a whole; we develop partnerships and cohesiveness in the community; we set a clear mission, vision, goals and measurable benchmarks; we are fiscally responsible; and we challenge the community to be everything it can be.


ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL, our five-year plan

Over the next five years, Missoula will work to continue its vision for our schools. This plan outlines the objectives, goals and benchmarks to get us there. For deeper information including annual work plans, please visit www.mcpsmt.org.

21st CENTURY OBJECTIVES	DISTRICT GOALS	PROGRAMS/PRIORITIES TO WATCH	JUNE 2019 BENCHMARKS	YOUR ROLE
<div> LEARNING INCREASE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</div>	<p>Student Achievement for All</p> <p>Achievement and graduation for all students regardless of their circumstances and abilities.</p>	<p><i>Graduation Matters Missoula</i></p> <p><i>Common Core State curriculum Standards / Next Generation Science Standards</i></p> <p><i>RTI / MBI</i></p> <p><i>International Baccalaureate</i></p> <p><i>Career Academies</i></p> <p><i>Dual Language Immersion</i></p> <p><i>STEM</i></p> <p><i>Early Childhood Education</i></p> <p><i>Any Given Child – Kennedy Center</i></p> <p><i>Capstone Projects</i></p> <p><i>i3 Missoula</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 96% cohort graduation.• 90% of students on grade level or above in reading, writing, mathematics and science.• Response to Intervention (RTI) and Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI) systems in each school.• K-12 International Baccalaureate Programme continuum in place.• At least one thematic career academy implemented in each urban high school.• Dual language immersion program implemented K-6.• Science, technology, engineering and mathematics – known as STEM – education implemented K-12.• Common Core curriculum and Next Generation Science Standards are embedded in instructional delivery.• Community-based early childhood program.• K-8 art programs enhanced through community partnerships.• All students in grades 5, 8 and 12 complete capstone projects.• Problem-based, interdisciplinary i3 learning experience implemented.	<p><i>Volunteer in the classroom.</i></p> <p><i>Encourage learning and discovery outside of school.</i></p> <p><i>Hold students accountable.</i></p> <p><i>Encourage students to find programs that excite them.</i></p> <p><i>Support programs through public funding by voting and speaking to state legislators.</i></p>

21st CENTURY OBJECTIVES	DISTRICT GOALS	PROGRAMS/PRIORITIES TO WATCH	JUNE 2019 BENCHMARKS	YOUR ROLE
<div><p>TALENT</p><p>PERSONALIZE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH & SUPPORT INNOVATORS</p></div>	<p>Quality Professional Development</p> <p>Define and implement a quality professional development program that encompasses best practices and supports the needs of all staff.</p> <p>Refine and implement a quality evaluation and supervision program for all staff.</p>	<p><i>Professional Learning Communities</i></p> <p><i>Distributive Leadership</i></p> <p><i>Collective Responsibility</i></p> <p><i>Evaluation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All staff know key characteristics of professional learning communities.• All certified staff participate as members of a professional learning community with a focus on student learning.• All certified staff have dedicated time during the contract day of not less than 60 minutes per week to meet in their professional learning community teams.• Each grade level and department team clearly addresses the four critical questions of a professional learning community.• Guaranteed and viable curriculum, formative assessment, intervention and enrichment are common throughout MCPS.• Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards are embedded in instructional delivery.• All staff are engaged in the district’s mission and major initiatives.• Annually, all staff members develop personal and team goals aligned with district goals and initiatives.• Job-specific evaluation instruments are developed for specialized certified and classified positions.	<p><i>Get to know our innovative teachers and staff.</i></p> <p><i>Learn how you can support SHAPE P20 pre-K–Ph.D. education initiatives in the future.</i></p> <p><i>Give feedback to leadership on teachers and staff.</i></p> <p><i>Support programs through public funding by voting and speaking to state legislators.</i></p> <p><i>Participate on a district or school-based advisory board.</i></p> <p><i>Share your time and talents.</i></p>

21st CENTURY OBJECTIVES	DISTRICT GOALS	PROGRAMS/PRIORITIES TO WATCH	JUNE 2019 BENCHMARKS	YOUR ROLE
<div></div> <div>OPERATIONS</div> <div>ENHANCE COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATE TO MAKE DECISIONS</div>	Cultivate Involvement Cultivate and enhance staff, student, parent, business and community involvement.	<i>Professional Learning Communities</i> <i>Community Outreach & Partnerships</i> <i>SHAPE P20</i> <i>Communication Styles</i> <i>Ongoing Feedback</i> <i>MCPS Online</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All schools have a schoolwide intervention and enrichment model during the school day.• Ensure new staff have a deep understanding of the key characteristics of professional learning communities.• Each school site includes opportunities for student, staff and community leadership.• Yearly focus groups at each school for students and teachers deepen understanding of My Voice Survey results.• Annual climate survey data from parents, students and staff informs yearly operations benchmarks.• Business and community representatives participate on district-level committees and task forces.• Collaborate with UM on pre-K–20 initiatives.• SHAPE P20 staff survey results guide future grant activities.• A district communication plan supports two-way communication between students, families, staff, community and the district.• Staff respect and refine individual communication styles that support collaboration and shared decision-making.	<i>Attend school board meetings.</i> <i>Participate on a district or school-based advisory board.</i> <i>Provide feedback on progress.</i> <i>Hold the school system accountable.</i>

21st CENTURY OBJECTIVES	DISTRICT GOALS	PROGRAMS/PRIORITIES TO WATCH	JUNE 2019 BENCHMARKS	YOUR ROLE
<div><div>ENVIRONMENT</div><div>TRANSFORM THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</div></div>	<div>Restructure Organization & Facilities</div> <div>Restructure the facilities and organization to become more efficient and effective in support of 21st century learning.</div>	<div>Facilities Master Plan</div> <div>Technology</div> <div>Safety & Security / Mental Wellness</div> <div>Budget</div> <div>Regional District Model</div> <div>Restructuring Academic Programs</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilities long-range strategic plan complete.• Major bond initiative to address instructional, facility, technology and safety / security needs.• Robust wireless network in all schools.• Support for a Bring Your Own Device or BYOD program across the district.• Hardware and software installed to meet instructional needs across the district.• Montana Behavioral Initiative in all schools.• Autolocks on all school doors; all staff trained in active resistance; obvious and secure front entry to all school buildings.• Budget aligned to support programs and priorities of the district.	<div>Attend master plan meetings.</div> <div>Learn about technology costs.</div> <div>Encourage using technologies for learning purposes at home.</div> <div>Support safe schools by complying with new school entry and exit policies.</div> <div>Support your student with positive reinforcement of school culture.</div> <div>Support programs through public funding by voting and speaking to state legislators.</div> <div>Consider your organization as a community partner with the school district.</div>

CREATING CAPABLE LEADERS

As we implement the strategic plan, we anticipate four primary outcomes for students. These four stories illustrate how those outcomes will impact student success, as well as the prosperity of our community.

Lifelong Learning



In an International Baccalaureate school, students are immersed in the learner traits of the IB Learner profile. Everyone in the school strives to be an inquirer, a thinker, a communicator, a risk-taker – while being principled, open-minded, balanced, reflective, knowledgeable and caring.

“In order to be a learner of anything (in a class, at a job), you are doing all of those traits while learning,” said Susan Anderson, interim principal and former teacher at Lewis and Clark Elementary. “We use these all the time in what we do in the hallways, on the playground, in the lunchroom ... everything we’ve done is connected into that – so it carries the learner profile farther out – to the family dinner table, to the community and eventually to the world ... Having kids think about these attitudes and engage in them in the practice of learning helps to teach them that these are the kinds of things we need to do in life.”

Margaret Petty, a third grade teacher at Lewis and Clark, added, “Many of our teachers completed a unit of inquiry that taught very specifically about what it means to be courageous, knowledgeable, principled and an inquirer ... The areas I think we should instill in students are the disposition and the capacity to be a lifelong learner, which means that they are able to ask questions and know where to find answers.”

Knowledge & Skills



John Fines’ first class of kindergarten students at Cold Springs elementary are now fifth graders headed for middle school. “Cold Springs has really been proactive with the writing piece. Those students about to graduate got some pretty intense writing,” Fines said.

Cold Springs implemented a writing workshop, hiring retired teacher Barbara O’Keefe as a writing mentor working with all kindergarten staff to immerse students in literature and writing. “We have seen success at each grade level as a result of this work,” he said.

Kindergarten and first grade students need to gain confidence in putting their thoughts on paper so they are not reluctant writers. Teaching young students the skills to become real readers and writers starts with reading great literature, then hopping off the backs of authors to write stories in the style of books read in class, and then creating picture books students can read to an audience. As students progress, they put letters together and write the words.

“They are already writers when they come in – they have stories to tell,” Fines said. “They may not be able to write them just yet, but we give them the skills and the confidence necessary to take the stories they already have inside them and get them out on the paper.” Building skill and confidence in writing enhances students’ communication, leadership and learning – throughout their lives.

Community & Citizenship



As Sierra Lenox listened to Forward Montana’s Debi Lombardi in her history class at Big Sky High School, she thought, “Hmmm. That doesn’t sound like too big of a time commitment, maybe I will try it.” Sierra always loved history, but with her first internship – learning to organize and get involved in public process – a fire sparked. “I loved (the internship) so much because it was about independent learning,” Sierra said. She was to register students to vote but had missed training classes. “I was out of my comfort zone, having to reach out to upper classmen to register them to vote. It was a competitive thing for me to see which intern could register the most voters. In the end, the act of trying to convince students to advocate for themselves was really motivating for me.” Sierra then worked to support the (successful) 2012 Technology Levy. “One day in science class, my teacher was reading a letter from the Missoulain and about halfway through it, I realized that it was MY letter to the editor. When I realized it was my work, I understood what a big affect I could have on the community.”

Sierra in 2013-14 continues interning with the organization that’s a leading voice for young people in Montana – she’s focused on Montana’s rural schools and finding youth leaders to get involved as emerging civic leaders in their own communities.

Career Development



Scott Edge started teaching STEM concepts to his CS Porter Middle School students in 2013 when he incorporated Project Lead The Way engineering curriculum and robotics projects into his computer applications class. “Right up front, it puts into their heads that there is a career out there like engineering,” he said. “I don’t think kids really understand that things all around them are being innovated. They understand ‘invention’ but if you say ‘innovation,’ they say, ‘Huh?’”

This hands-on work helps kids see that what they are learning in math and science classes actually means something, Edge said. “It is amazing to watch. Kids typically associate failure with something bad in their regular classroom. I don’t think they connected failure with eventual success. In the engineering classroom, I see them persevere through that failure to get to success. That is happening in the engineering field all the time and we need to teach students that failure is okay as long as they persevere through it.” More than one student has told him, “This is the only class that I enjoy ... because I know that eventually I will use this in a job.” This project-based learning teaches more than science, technology, engineering and math – it also teaches collaboration. “I do see them working hard on their teamwork skills and they understand that essential skill can translate into any career.”

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