

FIVE MEASURABLE DISTRICT GOALS

- Achievement and graduation for all students, regardless of their circumstances and abilities.
- Refine and implement a quality supervision and evaluation program for all staff.
- Define and implement a quality professional development program that encompasses best practices and supports the needs of all staff.
- Restructure the organization to become more efficient, effective and accountable to support the goals of the District.
- Cultivate and enhance staff, student, parent, business and community involvement.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2008, the Missoula County Public Schools Board of Trustees approved the district goals above in order to address the needs of 21st Century learners. One of the goals focuses on professional development “to provide staff with best practices and the expertise to make a difference for all students regardless of their circumstances.”

(Superintendent, Dr. Alex Apostle's, message August, 2008.)

Ongoing, job-embedded professional development builds a foundation of teacher excellence, a critical component to improving student achievement. Teachers must have not only an extensive knowledge of English Language Arts content, but must also possess a deep understanding of how students learn. Appropriate content and pedagogical preparation enables teachers to design lessons and implement curriculum using research proven practices and strategies in an environment where all students have an opportunity to succeed.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment means finding out what students know and are able to do. It is intended to improve teaching and learning. Information gathered through formative assessment assists teachers during instructional planning to determine students' prior knowledge, provide feedback to students during instruction, make decisions on how to modify instruction, and identify strengths and weaknesses. In English Language Arts classes, a variety of data is collected to provide evidence of achievement and success to students, families, and the community. Principles of effective assessment are as follows:

1. Treat assessment as an integral part of curriculum and instruction.
2. Direct assessments toward essential learning.
3. Set high standards for teaching and learning.
4. Clarify learning targets early.
5. Assess student performance through authentic tasks.
6. Collect multiple indicators of learning.
7. Provide ample opportunities for students to learn.

(Adapted from Walter Parker, Science in Elementary Education, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2005.)