

**MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 13, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.**  
**Administration Building A - Boardroom**

**Note:** If you have questions regarding the agenda, please contact the Superintendent's Office (728-2400, ext. 1026, prior to the meeting).

**Board of Trustees:** Board Chair Wilena Old Person, Jeffrey Avgeris, Grace M. Decker, Vice Chair Nancy Hobbins, Koan Mercer, Jen Vogel, Ann Wake, Vice Chair Arlene Walker-Andrews, Meg Whicher, Keegan Witt, Rob Woelich

**Student Trustees:** Emily Fortune, Atsede Glidewell, Devyn Deschamps, Wilson Freer, Regan Jones, Aubrey Matthew, Ryan Howell, Ashton Love

**AGENDA**

1. CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME AND ROLL CALL
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. REVIEW, REVISE, AND APPROVE AGENDA
4. APPROVE MINUTES – Action
  - A. **Board of Trustees Regular Meeting – January 23, 2024** **Page 5**
5. COMMUNITY CONNECTION: Music performance from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Red Wave band, directed by Randy Zschaechner, Meadow Hill Band Director.
6. PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE
  - A. **Written Correspondence** **Page 8**
  - B. **Public Comment** – Regarding Non-Agenda Items (3 minutes each speaker)
7. REPORTS / ANNOUNCEMENTS
  - A. **Student Trustee Reports** – Student Trustees from the individual high schools will report on activities at their school.
  - B. **Announcements from the Superintendent** – Superintendent Micah Hill will report on items of interest.
8. CONSENT AGENDA - In accordance with BP 1420 School Board Meeting Procedure, the Board approves the use of a Consent Agenda to expedite business at the regular monthly meeting. Agenda items dealing with perfunctory, routine matters may also be placed on the Consent Agenda by the Board Chair. Any item on the Consent Agenda may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the regular agenda upon request by any Trustee.
  - A. FINANCE, OPERATIONS and MAINTENANCE
    - i. **Topic: Ratify Out of District Attendance Agreements (Elem/Sec)(Action)** – Pat McHugh, Executive Director of Business and Operations **Page 128**  
**Background:** Pursuant to MCA §20-5-320, the Board of Trustees must approve out-of-district student attendance agreements. Attached in this packet is a list of those students requesting enrollment in accordance with out-of-district attendance agreements.
      - **Elementary Recommendation:** Administration recommends that the Trustees ratify the attached out-of-district elementary attendance agreements.
      - **High School Recommendation:** Administration recommends that the Trustees ratify the attached out-of-district high school attendance agreements.

9. OLD BUSINESS – Action

A. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- i. **Topic: Approve Grade 6-8 Social Studies Curriculum** (Elem)(Action) – Barbara Frank, Director of Academic and Community Service

**Background:** The middle school social studies committee met to review and adopt social studies standards. Information was presented to the Board of Trustees on December 12, 2023 and the selected publishers were open for public review from December 12, 2023 to January 31, 2024. The following textbooks were selected for student use:

- History Alive! The World Through 1750, Teachers' Curriculum Institute (TCI)
- History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism, Teachers' Curriculum Institute (TCI)
- Montana Stories of the Land, by Krys Holmes

The following was selected for teacher use:

- An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People, by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

**Board Discussion**

**Recommendation:** Administration recommends the adoption of the above referenced grade 6-8 social studies curriculum.

B. PERSONNEL, NEGOTIATIONS & POLICY

- i. **Topic: Approve Middle School Year Calendar for 2024-2025** (Elem)(Action) – Trevor Laboski, Executive Director of Human Resources **Page 130**

**Background:** The calendar committee finalized the detailed middle school calendar for 2024-2025 and presented the calendar for approval. The Board of Trustees tabled the calendar during the January 8, 2024 meeting pending further review. A copy of the calendar is included in the packet.

**Board Discussion**

**Recommendation:** Administration recommends that Trustees approve the middle school 2024-2025 school year calendar.

10. NEW BUSINESS – Information and Action

A. FINANCE, OPERATIONS and MAINTENANCE

- i. **Topic: Budget and Levy Committee Recap** (Elem/Sec) (Action) – Micah Hill, Superintendent, and Pat McHugh, Executive Director of Business and Operations **Page 131**

**Background:** The Budget and Levy Committee discussed administration recommendations for balancing the general fund budget on February 2, 2024. The committee work on the 2<sup>nd</sup> followed meetings on January 11<sup>th</sup>, December 7<sup>th</sup> and November 17<sup>th</sup>. The committee looked at proposed reductions, expenditure offsets and levies, and supported moving the plan forward for approval by the full board. The committee considered the action timeline associated with the staff reductions outlined in the attached plan in supporting action by the board. A plan with proposed reductions, offsets, and levies is attached, along with the updated FY25 budget projection.

**Board Discussion**

- **Elementary Recommendation:** Administration recommends Trustee approval of the approach to balancing the elementary budget as outlined in the attached summary with the caveat that the additions of two charter schools and enrollment shifts this spring may impact the final counts for FTE reductions.
- **Secondary Recommendation:** Administration recommends Trustee approval of the approach to balancing the high school budget as outlined in the attached summary with the caveat that the additions of two charter schools and enrollment shifts this spring may impact the final counts for FTE reductions.

- ii. **Topic: Approve Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Remittance** (Elem/Sec)(Action) – Pat McHugh, Executive Director of Business and Operations **Page 158**

**Background:** The City of Missoula requested assistance from the Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) in the form of a distribution of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds to meet its fiscal year 2024 funding gap of \$3 million. At its October 19, 2023 meeting, the MRA Board of Directors approved the distribution of funds. The MRA cannot make a remittance to just one taxing jurisdiction. Per state law (MCA § 7-15-4291) any remittance must distribute funds to all taxing jurisdictions in amounts proportional to their mills levied. The MRA intends to make the remittance from five Urban Renewal Districts (URDs). The total remittance amount for all taxing jurisdictions in fiscal year 2024 is \$8,061,335. The total remittance to MCPS is summarized below:

	Elementary	High School
URD Remittance	\$1,547,740	\$695,430

The agreement with the taxing jurisdictions attached hereto outlines the remittance details.

**Board Discussion**

**Recommendation:** Administration recommends approval of the Tax Increment Remittance Agreement for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 attached hereto.

- iii. **Topic: Elementary District School and Student Safety and Security Building Reserve Levy Resolution 2024-6(E)** (Elem)(Action) – Micah Hill, Superintendent, and Pat McHugh, Executive Director of Business and Operations **Page 173**

**Background:** The board is required to adopt a resolution calling for an election for building reserve fund levies at least 70 days prior to the election. The board approved the school and student safety and security building reserve levy resolution at the January 9th, 2024 meeting. The levy amount must be established by April 5, 2024, should the district run a school and student safety and security building reserve safety levy election. The resolution attached hereto provides for an Elementary District School and Student Safety and Security Building Reserve Fund levy of \$1,500,000 for the purpose of supporting and improving school and student safety through school security systems and technology maintenance and upgrades, and through preventative services in the elementary school district.

**Board Discussion**

**Recommendation:** Administration recommends trustee approval of Resolution 2024-6(E) for the Elementary District School and Student Safety and Security Building Reserve Fund levy.

- iv. **Topic: High School District School and Student Safety and Security Building Reserve Levy Resolution 2024-6(S)** (Sec)(Action) – Micah Hill, Superintendent, and Pat McHugh, Executive Director of Business and Operations **Page 174**

**Background:** The board is required to adopt a resolution calling for an election for building reserve fund levies at least 70 days prior to the election. The board approved the school and student safety and security building reserve levy resolution at the January 9th, 2024 meeting. The levy amount must be established by April 5, 2024, should the district run a school and student safety and security building reserve safety levy election. The resolution attached hereto provides for a High School District School and Student Safety and Security Building Reserve Fund levy of \$1,000,000 for the purpose of supporting and improving school and student safety through school security systems and technology maintenance and upgrades, and through preventative services in the high school district.

**Board Discussion**

**Recommendation:** Administration recommends trustee approval of Resolution 2024-6(S) for the High School District School and Student Safety and Security Building Reserve Fund.

**B. PERSONNEL, NEGOTIATIONS & POLICY**

- i. **Topic: Approve Personnel Report** (Elem/Sec)(Action) – Trevor Laboski, Executive Director of Human Resources **Page 175**

**Background:** The routine Personnel Report reflects the current requests for personnel to be hired, leaves to be granted, retirements and resignations to be accepted, and terminations to be approved. Included in the packet is the Personnel Report upon which the Board must take action.

- **Elementary Recommendation:** Administration recommends trustee approval of the items on the provided Elementary Personnel Report.

- **Secondary Recommendation:** Administration recommends trustee approval of the items on the provided High School Personnel Report.

ii. **Topic: Approve Enrollment for the Early Kindergarten Program (Elem)(Action)** – Vinny Giammona, Assistant Superintendent

**Background:** OPI requires board approval for the enrollment of student C.M. (4/7/19) into the Early Kindergarten Program.

**Board Discussion**

**Recommendation:** Administration recommends Trustees approve the student’s enrollment for the Early Kindergarten Program 2023-2024.

11. ADJOURN



**MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Meeting**

**Tuesday, January 23, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.**

**Administration Building A – Boardroom**

**Trustees Present:** Board Chair Wilena Old Person, Jeffrey Avgeris, Grace M. Decker, Vice Chair Nancy Hobbins, Koan Mercer, Jen Vogel, Ann Wake, Vice Chair Arlene Walker-Andrews, Keegan Witt

**Others Present:** Micah Hill, Amy Shattuck, Vinny Giammona, Trevor Laboski

**MINUTES**

1. CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME AND ROLL CALL: The meeting was called to order 6:00 p.m.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was said by all.
3. REVIEW, REVISE, AND APPROVE AGENDA: Vice Chair Walker-Andrews made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Seconded by Trustee Avgeris. No comments. The motion passed unanimously by all Trustees present.
4. APPROVE MINUTES
  - A. **Board of Trustees Regular Meeting – January 9, 2024:** Trustee Wake made a motion to approve the January 9, 2024, regular meeting minutes. Seconded by Trustee Witt. No comments. The motion passed unanimously by all Trustees present.
5. PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE
  - A. **Public Comment**
    - Jill Taber, Lewis and Clark parent, commented she emailed a letter to the Trustees and Supt. Hill which 75 parents signed. Spoke on behalf of herself. District is facing a budget crisis and positions are on the chopping block – behavior interventionists, art teachers, etc. Cuts would affect every student in every classroom. Shared her experiences and what she has witnessed in the school as a classroom volunteer. Staff take physical violence from students. Teachers don't have the time to manage behavioral issues and kids shouldn't be put in those positions. Administration should look to cut administrative positions. ESSER funds going away. District needs to be accountable and shared an example.
6. REPORTS / ANNOUNCEMENTS
  - A. **Health Insurance Trust Fund Report:** November and December 2023 reports were reviewed. No oral report.
  - B. **Announcements from the Superintendent:** Supt. Micah Hill made the following announcements:
    - The Board of Public Education approved the District's two charter school applications – Connect Academy and Teach Academy. The District now moving forward with preparations to launch the academies.
    - The District received \$331,600 from 16 donors for the Innovative Tax Credit. Last year earned approximately \$14,100. Donor names and amounts are confidential.
    - The Transformational Learning Grant was approved and the District's lottery ball was number 4. Hope to be partially funded in FY25. If not, will see funds in FY26 over a four year period. Represents about \$11M. Shared a funding example. On the low end it would be about \$5.5M.

- The middle school calendar remains tabled. Awaiting a response from OPI. Do not want to jeopardize instructional hours of day as calculated by the Office of Public Instruction.
- Shared traveling schedule for the next few weeks. Will be in Helena on January 30-31 for the Montana School Health Insurance Summit where 8 different organizations will be participating. On February 4 – 8<sup>th</sup> will be in Washington DC with SPARK! Arts Ignite Learning representatives for The Kennedy Center Arts Any Given Child Partners in Education National Conference.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

### A. PERSONNEL, NEGOTIATIONS & POLICY

- i. **Topic: Approve Enrollments for the Early Kindergarten Program:** Assistant Supt. Vinny Giammona explained there were two new standard enrollments into the Early Kindergarten Program. Vice Chair Walker-Andrews asked for the enrollment numbers. There are 15 at the three Title 1 schools and 29 at Jefferson. Trustee Avgeris inquired what the plan for early kindergarten would be for the 2024-25 school year. Giammona explained the District is working as a team to identify programs and working on funding. Conversations will be brought forth to the Board. Trustee Decker asked for clarification. Inquired if the classrooms were full and if there were openings. Giammona explained some families had moved so those families that had been waiting were added. Trustee Mercer asked what the criteria was for enrollment. Four different areas of criteria based on development, discretion, etc. Trustee Mercer asked about the enrollment process. The District will have a screener and will start the process in April. Trustee Decker spoke to the ANB. Students funded this year through a grant and the following years with ANB. Supt. Hill shared the exceptionality rule written into legislation. Next year the program will shift to an early literacy program. The grant funding was for two years. Would allow to expand to at least 3 new classrooms. Additional classrooms would have to be funded through an interlocal agreement. Shared an enrollment example. Trustee Mercer asked about the literacy piece. Supt. Hill explained the Board of Public Education (BOPE) has been working on it. BOPE is tasked to find the standard. Explained the quarter of ANB per student. Shared comments regarding a jump start program. Trustee Avgeris made a motion to approve the enrollments of students O.A. (8/7/19) and J.S. (9/7/18) into the Early Kindergarten Program 2023-2024. Seconded by Trustee Decker. No comments. The motion passed unanimously by all Trustees present.
- ii. **Topic: Approve Out-of-Country Field Trip Requests:** Assistant Supt. Amy Shattuck introduced Sentinel High School Spanish teacher Daniel Lochridge. Lochridge shared his experience teaching at Sentinel for 19 years. Takes students to Costa Rica every other year. Explained the Spanish 1 AP students would be traveling to Costa Rica during spring break in 2025 (March 17-21, 2025). Get to meet and spend time at local Costa Rica high school. Using Global Travel Alliance. Cost \$3,870 per student. Students will be fundraising. Will visit the rainforests and beaches of Costa Rica. Vice Chair Walker-Andrews asked if the students would be doing any work projects. Field trip is more of a cultural experience. Vice Chair Walker-Andrews made a motion to approve the out-of-country travel request. Seconded by Trustee Avgeris. Trustee Vogel made comments in support of the field trip and wants to see the students report to Board after the trip. No public comments. The motion passed unanimously by all Trustees present.
- iii. **Topic: Approve Seeley-Swan High School Calendar for 2024-2025:** Trevor Laboski explained once the regular high school calendars are set and approved then the Seeley-Swan High School calendar could be set. Vice Chair Walker-Andrews asked if there are any major differences. Laboski explained the school start date was earlier and the school was based on a four-day week. Trustee Wake made a motion to approve the Seeley-Swan High School 2024-2025 school year calendar. Seconded by Trustee Avgeris. No comments. The motion passed unanimously by all Trustees present.

Regular Board Meeting was adjourned 6:21 p.m.

As recording secretary for this Board meeting, I certify these minutes to be a true and correct copy of what was taken at the meeting.

Tracy Long, Minutes Recorder\_\_\_\_\_

Wilena Old Person, Board Chair\_\_\_\_\_

Pat McHugh, District Clerk\_\_\_\_\_

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**art matters**

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**Emily Walter** <emilyw@missoulawritingcollaborative.org>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Jan 29, 2024 at 1:12 PM

Dear MCPS,

I am writing on behalf of the potential changes to art in our elementary schools.

As a parent, educator and believer in the value of arts for all, I hope that MCPS would find funding to keep art teachers at their already established positions in our elementary schools.

As a once student in a rural setting, our art room was a confluence of ages, interests and even cultures. Our art room was a place where all students could express and explore their inner selves through visual expression.

Students need more than just an art room in each school, but an art teacher who helps facilitate these valued moments of growth through creative means. A teacher whose time is spent spanning the growth and development of a student over a period of time. Not someone who has cameo moments traveling between schools like a salesman.

If I have gleaned anything over the almost 30 years of teaching, I would add that education is about time, repetition and building relationships of depth and trust.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Emily Walter

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Emily Walter  
Residency Coordinator, Missoula Writing Collaborative  
emilyw@missoulawritingcollaborative.org

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## Art instruction in schools

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Jenna Tomiello <jtomiello@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Jan 29, 2024 at 8:18 PM

Dear MCPS,

I have heard that there is a potential for reduced arts in our elementary schools, going back to traveling art teachers. As a new parent, my daughter will be attending MCPS in the upcoming years, and I would be so disappointed if she gets only a percentage of the art instruction students have now. I understand budgeting is always a challenge, but the arts should not be cut. With traveling art teachers, the connection between student and teachers is diminished—there is much less face-to-face time, and teachers have so many more children to instruct, there is no way they would be able to build the same connections and have the same impact.

Art instruction was one of the best parts of my day as a child—the lessons learned and creativity sparked during my art class has helped me throughout my schooling and into my adult life, through the seeds planted in those foundational years. The arts have been proven to help in all aspects of education, please do not take that away.

I urge you to try and find a solution, where the incoming classes can benefit from the countless ways art education enhances students' learning experiences.

Thank you,

Jenna Tomiello

1314 Van Buren St, Missoula, MT 59802

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## Art

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**Molly Ray Cottrell** <mollycottrell@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 30, 2024 at 10:17 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Cc: Dan Cottrell <cottrell07@yahoo.com>

Hello,

Thank you for being open to public comment. I am a parent of two children who have been in MCPS for about 8 years now. We are so grateful for a strong district, schools, and amazing staff.

I wanted to reach out about the idea of cutting art teachers in the district and what a huge mistake I think that is. Specialists in the school form relationships with students and can be just as important and impactful as classroom teachers, as I've seen with my daughter and both the art teacher and librarian at her school. My daughter has never loved school, but she lives for her art class and it makes the overall school experience so much more positive for her.

As she enters middle school, it is so disappointing that there are mandatory music classes, but rare opportunities for an art elective. It would be our choice for her to take 3 years of art instead of music, but it seems music is more prioritized in a one-size-fits-all kind of mentality.

Our family would love to see art prioritized or offered as much as music and that each school retain its own art teacher as part of its staff. We appreciate having to make tough decisions, but looking back at decades of public school decisions, cutting art has never led to better education.

Thank you for reading!

Molly and Dan Cottrell

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## **I support full time art!**

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**Mary Poole** <maryopoole@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 30, 2024 at 11:07 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello-

I just wanted to drop a quick note to say that I find it incredibly important to have full time art teachers in each MCPS school. My kids have benefited greatly because of the wonderful art program at their elementary school. I have one kid that LIVES for art and has not found a "home" in any other activity. It has given her belonging and a sense of purpose in an environment ruled by academics and sports- neither of her strong suits at the moment. My other kiddo thrives in both academics and sports, and still consistently lists art as his favorite special.

I know that kids' mental health is a huge topic right now and we are seeing a huge increase in serious depression among kids. A couple years back, I remember reading an article talking about how kids with diverse interests are less likely to suffer serious depression- if they are unable to do an activity of interest for one reason or another (injury, bullying, etc...) they have another activity and even peer group to engage with, decreasing the chance for feeling isolated and alone.

For me, art is not second on the list to academics or other school activity, but an equal building block in a complete educational experience. Art promotes creativity, adaptability, problem solving, and many more essential skills. For many children in this district, the "free" activities that happen in school are the only chance these kiddos will have for this experience.

Thanks for taking consideration of my and others' comments in support of keeping full-time art in our schools.

In love and gratitude,

Mary Poole

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## Art

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**Meredith Ross** <meredithross9@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Jan 30, 2024 at 11:09 AM

Good morning,  
I am writing to implore you to keep art as a regular special at rattlesnake school. This is so important for our children's development.  
Thank you for your consideration.  
Meredith Ross

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## Keep Art Classes in each school

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**Michelle** <thenowels@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 30, 2024 at 11:37 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I have three children in the public school system. One in High school, one in middle school and my final in kindergarten these year. Art is a necessity to these children's well being, a road to creativity and helping develop their careers later in life. It cannot be taken from schools. We need full time art teachers in every school. It fosters a love for learning that can spread to other areas of their academic career. Through art, children can grow in confidence, enjoy curiosity and dexterity. All three of my children have a love for art and it's truly a highlight of each of their courses/grades. My older children continue to choose art classes and have now discovered engineering and robotics. Without art in their lives, I don't think they would have discovered their love for learning and creating at such an early age. Children who love learning will have better grades and self confidence. Why would we want to take this from our children? Please don't take this from our community.

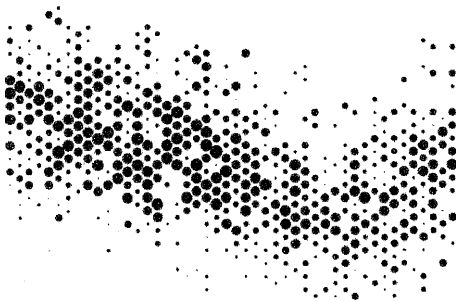
Michelle

Volume 43 • Number 1

February 2022

# Journal of Prevention

*An official journal of the European Society for Prevention Research*

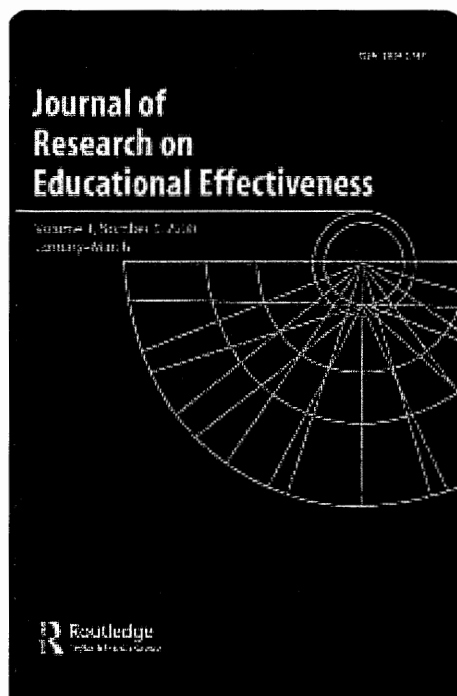


European Society for  
Prevention Research



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ISSN 1199-1401 (print)  
ISSN 1402-1199 (online)

**Culturally-Based After-School  
Arts Programming for Low-  
Income Urban Children: Adaptive  
and Preventive Effects - Journal  
of Prevention**  
[link.springer.com](http://link.springer.com)



**Measuring Critical Thinking:  
Results From an Art Museum  
Field Trip Experiment**  
[tandfonline.com](http://tandfonline.com)

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## Art in the Classroom

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**Jaymi White Newman** <jaymiwhitedesign@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 30, 2024 at 12:13 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hi there,

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Please consider this email as public input regarding the funding for having a full time art teacher in each school.

Art is extremely important to my family and adds so much value to my kids schooling. Our current model for education is beginning to lean away from interest-based education which is shown to fire-up new areas of a child's brain. The arts is one way this is kept alive in our children's education. It's often the thing in their school day they are most excited for. Please keep the current funding that allows this valuable asset.

Thank you,

Jaymi White Newman  
(Mother of 4 Missoula School Children)

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## Maintain full-time art teachers please

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**Brianna Randall** <brianna.randall@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 31, 2024 at 9:55 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear MCPS Board of Trustees,

I want to commend you for the fantastic “specials” provided to my children at Rattlesnake Elementary School! They both love music, PE, and — most of all — art. These curricula have taught my children invaluable life skills and important ways to integrate math, reading and writing into their daily life.

I heard that the district is considering cutting art teachers from schools and replace them with traveling art teachers, instead. I urge you to PLEASE KEEP FULL-TIME ART TEACHERS in our public schools. It would be disappointing and detrimental to the emotional and intellectual well-being of our children to cut down on their access to fine arts.

Thank you for considering my input. Have a great week!

Best,  
Brianna Randall

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## KEEP ART PLEASE

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**Ana Pederson** <ana.pederson@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 1, 2024 at 10:32 AM

Good Afternoon,

I am writing to stress the importance of art in our schools. Please help our kiddos realize their full potential with exposure to art, We parents are willing to fundraise in partnership for this. Please, please, please don't cut art funding

We know from data that art is crucial for kiddos. We can do better for our teachers....and our kiddos.

Thank you,  
Ana Pederson

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## Art Teach Positions MCPS

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**Aaron Atkinson** <aaronjatkenson25@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 1, 2024 at 2:21 PM

I am writing to share my public comment regarding the possibility that the permanent art teacher positions will be removed from each building within MCPS schools. Art contributes to the holistic development of students and enhances their overall learning experience. Art builds a child's creativity and self-expression, enhances their critical thinking and problem-solving, develops their fine motor skills, enhances their cultural awareness, and so much more.

Art classes contribute significantly to the educational experience, fostering creativity, skill development, and emotional well-being. Eliminating art classes may result in a less comprehensive and enriching education for students, limiting their opportunities for personal and academic growth. As a tax-paying citizen with two children in the MCPS school system, I ask that permanent positions not be eliminated within each school.

Kindly,

Aaron Atkinson

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## Keep Art Teachers in the Elementary Buildings

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**Katy Connors Szalay** <katyconnors@hotmail.com>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Feb 1, 2024 at 4:42 PM

To Whom it May Concern,

I am aware that elementary buildings may lose their art teachers.

I would like you to strongly consider keeping in place what you have now. Students love having art multiple times per month, and they have built strong relationships with their consistent art teachers.

Removing art teachers from elementary buildings will certainly have a negative effect on students. Having art only one day per month does not provide students with the artistic exposure and experience they need to be successful in middle school and high school art classes.

Thank you for your consideration,

Katy Szalay,  
JRE 5th Grade Parent

Get Outlook for iOS

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## Art

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**julie thomas** <julielthomas\_98@yahoo.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 1, 2024 at 4:59 PM

Please keep art as a regular weekly class for our students. The value of art for young minds is beneficial for their mental health and growth. Expression through art is very important and a crucial class to keep in our schools. Please do not take away weekly art classes in our schools. Students need this.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

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## For the love of ART

**Katie Wagner** <katie.wagnermt@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 1, 2024 at 5:01 PM

Dear MCPS Board of Trustees,

I am writing in support of keeping the existing art programs in place at all schools in Missoula County.

As a public health consultant, my current full-time, long-term contract is to help communities in MT establish healthy youth behavior programs. We utilize an evidence-based approach to identify priority risk and protective factors in communities that correlate with negative youth behaviors, then work to drive them down. Montana widely implements the Montana Prevention Needs Assessment every even year, and it didn't take me more than a quick glance to note that among Missoula County's top 3 risk factors for students in 8th, 10th, and 12th grade is Low Commitment to School, which is unfortunately a rising trend across the State (source: MT Prevention Needs Assessment 2022 Profile Report). While those are measured in older students, we utilize an upstream approach to prevent problems before they start, so including opportunities for students to be involved in healthy activities, such as art, starting as early as possible (as early as preschool) is integral to their health and well-being as they go through school and on into adulthood. We all learn differently, so offering a variety of the arts (not just art) is a best practice to help students be successful and find value in their education. This is not just good for their education, but evidence supports that this also helps reduce future behaviors like substance abuse, teen pregnancy, depression and anxiety, antisocial behavior, and others. Ultimately, meaningful connection in something students enjoy matters.

As a former professor of public health, it is evident to me that students learn in different ways, and it is imperative that we reach them in ways that are relevant to them including mediums they enjoy. I used art regularly in descriptions, had a photo essay assignment to explain public health crises, and ensured students had various ways to express their ideas - like through art.

As a parent, my most important job, it is not lost on me that our kindergartener's favorite special class is art. She takes after me as I was an art minor, which still serves as a healthy outlet for me. She has loved art since she was tiny and is constantly using her imagination to create cool projects. Our son will be in kindergarten next year and he loves art, too.

Art is such an important way for our kids to express themselves. The investment in the art teachers and programs that are already part of MCPS is a sound and wise investment for Missoula schools.

I am happy to share more resources or answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,  
Katie Wagner, PhD

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## Keep the Art Teachers in Elementary School!

**Harper**

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 1, 2024 at 6:58 PM

Hello,

I am a 5th grade student at one of the many schools in MCPS, . It has been brought to my attention that we will not be having a regular art schedule like we have over the past 6 months. Instead, we will be having art once a month for a time frame of 90 minutes. Which is not enough time to complete very complex art projects like we do with our art teacher,

What our art schedule right now at our school for 5th graders is, we have a 3-day rotation schedule. We have art for 3 days, music for 3 days, and PE for 3 days. So, when we have our art rotation, we do a project that will fill up our time over the course of those 3 days. In which, we have a 45-minute art frame every day when we are on our art time for the 3 day art rotation. So, when you take 45 multiplied by 3, you get 135. So instead of giving your MCPS art teachers 135 minutes to complete a project throughout the week, you will be giving them only 90 minutes to complete maybe, a little over half way of an art project. Also, that one day we will have art, kids who may be absent, means they can't finish an art project. What if a child who normally dislikes art is really looking forward to the art project they are doing in art that day of the month, and they miss it. I know if I were a kindergartener missing an art project I was looking forward to, I would probably be pretty sad. Which the district just has to take into consideration, making kids of all grade levels sad.

That brings me into my next topic, teachers having to teach art in their classrooms also why trying to keep up with all of the other work we do. In 5th grade we do stuff back to back trying to fit it all in. With writing, math, reading, science, social studies, in 5th grade at my school the teachers do read alouds, band and orchestra, recess, and specials. All of those things fit into a 7 hour school day will make it hard hard to fit in an art class in the classroom. Also, some classroom teachers may know a lot about art, and some may not.

I just do not understand why we are not giving the art teachers their job to teach what they got the job to do. Instead we are giving the classroom teachers to do the art teachers job. That is not what they probably were looking for when they wanted to become a teacher.

I understand art teachers may only want to teach a preferably hard class once a month, but they also want to give them a taste of creativity every week or week and a half. Being with a teacher once a month does not give a student an opportunity to build a relationship with a teacher. I have experienced throughout the time that my art teacher has been at my school that she is a kind, humourous, and good vibe person. I believe I have built a good relationship with her. In conclusion, we need art more than one day out of a month.

Thank you for reading my statement.

Sincerely,  
Harper

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## MCPS Art

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**Heidi Meierbachtol** <heidi.gaskill@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 1, 2024 at 9:04 PM

Hi,

I am writing in support of funding to keep art a regular fixture in the MCPS schools. I was informed MCPS is running out of grant funding which has helped support the current school art program and we may be looking at a traveling art teacher who rotates between schools which leads to a decrease in the amount of art days per class. Art should be a regular fixture in these young kids education. It is a wonderful option for expression and creativity. It also provides alternatives to sport for kids who are looking for elective outlets but drawn particularly to art or interested in a diverse array of opportunities. My child, a student at Rattlesnake Elementary, routinely mentions art as his "high" for the day during art specials week.

Sincerely,

Heidi Meierbachtol

Parent of a Rattlesnake Elementary School Student  
Sent from my iPhone

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## Keep Art Teachers Full Time at Elementaries

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**Erin Fuller** <efuller@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Feb 2, 2024 at 8:39 AM

To: Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Trustees,

I am writing as a parent and an educator to implore you to support art teachers at the elementary schools and to ensure all elementaries can keep their full-time art teachers in the building next year and for years to come.

Art is an integral part of a complete education. Students need art to develop creative and critical thinking processes. Studies show that art education helps students academically, socially, and emotionally. Having a building art teacher allows students to form relationships over the course of their six years in elementary school with that teacher, who can then assess student strengths, needs, and interests to tailor that student's, class's, and building's art education.

A traveling art teacher that sees students once a month is better than nothing, but will not provide the benefits that a building art teacher can.

With the district adopting an arts integration approach over the next three years, wouldn't it best serve students to have a building art teacher? I cannot fathom training teachers to provide arts integration instruction while stressing the importance of the arts and at the same time eliminating our building experts and the staff best positioned to collaborate with teachers as AIE rolls out.

Thank you for your time,

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**Erin Fuller**

Library Media Specialist

Jeannette Rankin Elementary School

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## Support District Librarians

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Erin Fuller <efuller@mcpsmt.org>  
To: Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Feb 2, 2024 at 8:58 AM

Dear Trustees,

I am writing to ask for your support of MCPS librarians during this time of budget discernment.

As the district is looking at how to staff after ESSER funds run out, I know that specialists will feel the crunch. It is a poorly kept secret that elementary schools will most likely lose their full-time art teachers next year, which means that schools will go down to three specialists.

At a large school like Jeannette Rankin, that means that librarians will be teaching six 45-minute classes per day while still expected to fulfill our library management, school technology and literacy development duties, which I have copied below. You may not know the full scope of a school librarian's position, but it is much more than teaching classes. If I do not have a workable schedule, valuable programs that I provide to staff, students, and families will have to be cut due to lack of time to plan and conduct them, such as Battle of the Books, I Love to Read Week, Daily Open Library, and more.

### **Elementary Librarian Duties Outside of Teacher Daily Classes:**

- Battle of the Books (Grades 3, 4, 5)
- District Battle of the Books
- I Love to Read Week
- Scholastic Book Fair
- Open library every day
- Knowing every student (+/- 475) and their reading likes/dislikes/interests
- Research professional journals for reviews of new books
- Managing an \$8000+ annual budget
- Vetting and ordering 500-1000 books/year based on research
- Processing new books (genre-fying, stickering, covering, changing call numbers in circulation system)
- Mending books
- Curating collection to meet needs of our specific readers/families
- Shelving books (hundreds weekly)
- Maintaining an organized, aesthetically pleasing library with signage, circulation program and circulation system
- Running reports for circulation evaluation
- Running reports for collection evaluation (Which books am I short on in Fiction/Nonfiction/Picture Books? etc.)
- Running and evaluating reports for weeding of old/inaccurate books
- Running reports for overdues
- Printing/Sending out bills for overdues
- Sending emails/calling families regarding overdues and fines
- Weeding books (pulling from shelves based on reports and individual evaluation, discarding in circulation system, removing library stamps/stickers, physically sending to district library)
- Circulate books (6,000 books so far this school year – 100s weekly)
- Daily Interlibrary loan with all schools in the district
- Manage curriculum materials tracking for all building staff
- Physical Inventory of 10,000 materials annually (all materials must be physically scanned one by one)
- Reconciliation reports run after inventory
- Physically/Digitally reconciling inventory
- Collaboration w/ teachers for tech/research/citing sources/curriculum support
- Pulling relevant books for teachers/staff for lessons/unit/reading groups
- Setting network passwords for all kids
- Manage tech questions/fixes from staff
- Assist staff with individual websites
- Manage Chromebook inventory
- Build materials
- Lesson plans without curriculum

Studies show that a robust school library program increases student test scores, builds school pride and community, and contributes to student success socially and emotionally.

In addition, our libraries, staff and students are suffering due to the loss of our District Library Secretary position. Although Barbara and staff are trying to support us, they and our building secretaries do not have the time or bandwidth to conduct all of Deb's duties.

Please support us by considering the following options:

- keeping four specialists in our elementary schools
- readjusting specials for K-3 to 30 minutes rather than 45 minutes and adjusting the school day to what we used to see with 4-5 getting out later than k-3
- Finding a way to remove librarians from the specials rotation and allowing them to set their own schedule of classes to meet student and building needs
- Rehiring the District Library Secretary position after the hiring freeze

Thank you very much for your consideration.

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Erin Fuller

Library Media Specialist

Jeannette Rankin Elementary School

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## Art Teachers

3 messages

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**Greta Bates** <gretabates@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Fri, Feb 2, 2024 at 1:22 PM

Dear MCPS,

I am writing today to ask that you keep art class as a regular special at MCPS.

As a mother of a kindergartner, I was thrilled that each elementary school had an art teacher. As a child, Art class was one of the best parts of my day. For me, art not only encouraged creativity but also offered a lense into an alternative way of seeing things which aided in my ability to think critically. Art education and the consistent presence of art teachers in our schools is such an important outlet for those of us that don't always find confidence or success in other subjects.

Art is such a valued part of our city and community and I never thought Missoula would be a place that would cut regular art programming in schools.

Please consider this comment and others before making your decision.

Greta

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## Library Support

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**Katy Connors Szalay** <katyconnors@hotmail.com>

Sun, Feb 4, 2024 at 5:41 PM

To: Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Trustees,

I am writing to ask for your support of MCPS librarians during this time of budget discernment.

As the district is looking at how to staff after ESSER funds run out, I know that specialists will feel the crunch. It is a poorly kept secret that elementary schools will most likely lose their full-time art teachers next year, which means that schools will go down to three specialists.

At a large school like Jeannette Rankin, that means that librarians will be teaching six 45-minute classes per day while still expected to fulfill our library management, school technology and literacy development duties, which I have copied below. You may not know the full scope of a school librarian's position, but it is much more than teaching classes. If I do not have a workable schedule, valuable programs that I provide to staff, students, and families will have to be cut due to lack of time to plan and conduct them, such as Battle of the Books, I Love to Read Week, Daily Open Library, and more.

### **Elementary Librarian Duties Outside of Teaching Daily Classes:**

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- District Battle of the Books
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- Open library every day
- Knowing every student (+/- 475) and their reading likes/dislikes/interests
- Researching professional journals for reviews of new books
- Managing an \$8000+ annual budget
- Vetting and ordering 500-1000 books/year based on research
- Processing new books (genre-fying, stickering, covering, changing call numbers in circulation system)
- Mending books
- Curating collection to meet needs of our specific readers/families
- Shelving books (hundreds weekly)
- Maintaining an organized, aesthetically pleasing library with signage, circulation program and circulation system
- Running reports for circulation evaluation
- Running reports for collection evaluation (Which books am I short on in Fiction/Nonfiction/Picture Books? etc.)
- Running and evaluating reports for weeding of old/inaccurate books
- Running reports for overdues
- Printing/Sending out bills for overdues
- Sending emails/calling families regarding overdues and fines
- Weeding books (pulling from shelves based on reports and individual evaluation, discarding in circulation system, removing library stamps/stickers, physically sending to district library)
- Circulating books (6,000 books so far this school year – 100s weekly)
- Daily Interlibrary loan with all schools in the district



- Managing curriculum materials tracking for all building staff
- Physical Inventory of 10,000 materials annually (all materials must be physically scanned one by one)
- Reconciliation reports run after inventory
- Physically/Digitally reconciling inventory
- Collaboration w/ teachers for tech/research/citing sources/curriculum support
- Pulling relevant books for teachers/staff for lessons/unit/reading groups
- Setting network passwords for all kids
- Managing tech questions/fixes from staff
- Assisting staff with individual websites
- Managing Chromebook inventory
- Building materials
- Lesson plans without curriculum

Studies show that a robust school library program increases student test scores, builds school pride and community, and contributes to student success socially and emotionally.

In addition, our libraries, staff and students are suffering due to the loss of our District Library Secretary position. Although Barbara and staff are trying to support us, they and our building secretaries do not have the time or bandwidth to conduct all of Deb's duties.

Please support us by considering the following options:

- keeping four specialists in our elementary schools
- readjusting specials for K-3 to 30 minutes rather than 45 minutes and adjusting the school day to what we used to see with 4-5 getting out later than k-3
- Finding a way to remove librarians from the specials rotation and allowing them to set their own schedule of classes to meet student and building needs
- Rehiring the District Library Secretary position after the hiring freeze

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Katy Szalay  
Get Outlook for iOS

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## Proposed budget

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**Whitney Heatwole** <wheatwole23@gmail.com>

Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 8:43 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Good Morning,

It has been brought to my attention that MCPS is discussing cutting their budget for art specialists in the elementary school. Art is my child's favorite subject and I can not imagine her attending school without this subject in her weekly routine. As a former educator and mother, I know the importance of engaging the whole brain. Not all children are left-brain thinkers. Having an art class allows right brain thinkers to shine and gives them confidence among their peers that they are good at something too. Children need to feel successful at something in school in order to continue to be motivated to attend and try their best.

Having a safe place to be creative with a passionate art specialist allows kids to learn self expression. Children who grow creatively in art can transcend those skills into the classroom. For example, having the experience molding clay and mixing paints allows children to create analogies in their writing. These hands-on experiences can not be replaced by simply reading about it. Children need to engage with art, not watch it on television. Our kids deserve a creative outlet in school by a qualified art specialist. I hope you will recognize the importance of these positions in our elementary schools. Our kids are worth it.

Thank you,

Whitney Heatwole

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## Certified Art Specialists

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Kaitlin English <kaitlin@peakmissoula.com>

Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 9:43 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello,

I wanted to write an email to express my concern over a portion of your budget cuts for 24/25. I feel that cutting art out of student's learning is a huge disservice to the highly creative kiddos attending MCPS. Letting kids create art and learn to express themselves creatively is hugely important and is one of the few ways students can have individuality in public schooling.

Moreover, students who struggle with ADD and ADHD benefit greatly from art class as it's a way to direct their racing thoughts and energy into art which is a great way to break up a school day for a kiddo who has a hard time focusing and paying attention in class.

You also have students who are visual learners and art is the best way to engage those kiddos in school. Further, you have MANY students who struggle socially and emotionally in school and art/creativity is a great way for those kids to work through their emotions. Many of those students have difficult home environments and aren't able to be creative outside of school.

I worked at Franklin Elementary for 2 years as a secretary and I had one specific child who had a really difficult home life. He was an incredible artist but told me he doesn't have supplies at home to be creative. I gifted him a set of colored pencils and a sketch book, his face lit up and he brought it to school every day. He hung out in my office during lunch and drew pictures in his sketchbook. It hurts my heart knowing that kiddos like him are at risk of not having that creative outlet at school.

My daughter is 8 and she is currently a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader at . Her main passion in life is art and that is her favorite class in school. She has had 20 brain surgeries in her life, 7 of those were during her 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year. Art has always been her way to escape emotionally from the challenges in her life. It sparks some anger in me that MCPS doesn't see the importance of having art in school for that reason.

Art teachers at all of your schools are great at showcasing student's work both in the school and in other public places in Missoula, including Southgate Mall. Taking those opportunities away from kids seems cruel and unnecessary.

For me, when I was a child, I struggled with school up until I graduated in 2009. Art was the one class that kept me motivated and kept me engaged during the day. It was always my favorite class and still to this day, I am a highly creative individual and I've learned to monetize my creativity now that I'm an adult. Not only is art a hobby, it can be a career path for many people.

I really hope you reconsider this decision as it's going to make a really large and negative impact on kids' education.

Thank you,  
Kaitlin Armerding

## Kaitlin English

Membership Sales & Service Representative

PH: 406.251.3344 ext. 505

E: [kaitlin@peakmissoula.com](mailto:kaitlin@peakmissoula.com)



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***\*Reminder: Dues are not based on club usage and all changes in membership must be submitted in writing 15 days prior to the end of the month. Please email any changes and/or requests to [membership@peakmissoula.com](mailto:membership@peakmissoula.com)***

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## Arts are for all

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**Rose Chadwell** <rosechadwell406@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 10:30 AM

I want to take a moment to advocate for the arts in our schools. All students benefit from the arts programs and it's imperative that they have access to it. Art is just as important as math, English, or Science. Art deserves the same respect and funding from our schools. Please do better for our students and support our art programs and teachers!

Thank you,

**Rose Chadwell**  
**Big Sky Brokers**  
**(406)241-6626**

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## Budget cuts

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**Wendy Branthoover** <shdwdncng@gmail.com>

Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 11:18 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

To the Board:

Cutting the Art program from the school is going to be detrimental to the children. There are a limited number of fun creative opportunities for our kids around the required curriculum. Taking Art away from the children will be removing one of the most important opportunities for the kids to grow and develop the other sides of their minds. With limited access to artistic resources and events for kids that have time and can afford it in Missoula, this cannot be allowed to happen. This is the only exposure a lot of kids get to Art and to be creative. Many of us parents already struggle to get our kids to go to school because "it sucks" and "it's boring" and you are talking about taking away one of the truly fun classes. Please don't let this happen to our kids.

Wendy Branthoover

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## Art!

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**Molly Nelson** <nelson.n.molly@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 12:13 PM

To the MCPS board:

Please, please, please keep the art teachers in the budget. They are so amazing and provide a great creative outlet for so many kids in our district. at Paxson is incredibly talented and would be sorely, sorely missed. She creates such beautiful work with the kids that then gets remembered for years by much of it being included in the school's yearbook.

PLEASE maintain funding for the art program in the school. Art once every six weeks is not sufficient.

Thank you,  
Molly Nelson

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## Admission into School District

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**Kordell Bowyer** <kord.bowyer@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 2:07 PM

I am writing to bring a concern for my family to your attention. I reside in Missoula, and my two children attend the Missoula County School District. Recently, we took in their older half-brother as their mother is homeless and unable to care for him. Since November, Missoula School District's admission department has repeatedly denied him access to enroll in the school. The enrollment department has informed us that the mother must sign over her rights to him and make me his guardian before he can be registered. However, this has been challenging as any action their mother has taken beyond signing her rights away has gotten denials for his enrollment.

We have contacted several agencies, including where my children attend school, the previous school district, and child protection services, among some agencies. The school's admissions department will not accept that the mother legally only needs to give power of attorney to me or instate the MiKinney-Vento Act to the enrollment offices. Unfortunately, the enrollment office has refused all such acts and will only allow my kid's older brother to enroll in the school district if she signs her rights away. As a result, he has missed almost two-quarters of school, and we are concerned that this could negatively impact his future.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Kordell Bowyer

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## Art position in elementary school buildings

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**Sydney Allen** <sallen@mcpsmt.org>  
To: Publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 6:06 PM

MCPS Board of Directors,

As you continue to work on the budget for the upcoming school year, please support having a certified art teacher in each elementary school building.

Thanks,  
Sydney Allen

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*Sydney Allen*

3rd Grade Teacher  
Jeannette Rankin Elementary  
5150 Bigfork Rd  
Missoula, MT 59803  
406.542.4010

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## Proposed budget cuts to Art program 24-25 school year

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**Magnusen family** <magnusenfamilymt@gmail.com>

Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 7:10 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: misty herzer <moosmtn@msn.com>, Morgan Loya <meloya@mcpsmt.org>

School Board members,

I have become aware of proposed budget cuts for the '24-'25 school year, one of which being the Art program.

My daughter is a 3rd grader at . During open house this fall the room that she HAD to show me was the new Art room.

"Mom! Look, Ms. Miller gets her own room! No more art-cart!"

Since 2020 the art teacher had nothing but a rolling cart to haul her supplies from classroom to classroom. She didn't have a space of her own to teach and inspire our children; and she SHARED a glorified closet as her office. This all made me furious!

I vote for every tax increase to better our MCPS schools, despite the effect it has on my family budget. I understand the importance of paying our teachers a living wage. In a brand new school how was it acceptable the art teacher didn't have a classroom?

Fall 2023 and our teacher finally has a classroom where she can properly teach. But barely one year later and you are considering cutting the Art program?! My daughter currently attends Art class 1-2 times per week, but you are proposing a decrease to less than once per month! This is outrageous!

How many times must it be stated, "the Arts are important!" Children need to learn the main subjects yet also be taught the importance of self-expression.

I, myself, am an artist by trade. I have used both my bachelor degree in business with my skill of sewing, and have made a career out of it. This is not a useless or expendable part of our children's curriculum. Our world is not only numbers and letters. It is colors and creativeness and imagination! Without a weekly Art program, you are failing to provide MCPS students with a well-rounded education. I truly hope you will reconsider your '24-'25 school year budget.

Sincerely,

Kelsyee Magnusen

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**Fw: Budget Cuts????**

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**misty herzer** <moosmtn@msn.com>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 8:08 PM

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**From:** misty herzer <moosmtn@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 5, 2024 7:56 PM  
**To:** meloya@mcpsmt.org <meloya@mcpsmt.org>  
**Subject:** Budget Cuts????

Why in the world are we discussing budget cuts? This neighborhood just increased their taxes to build a new school. It is a beautiful school, and I am so thankful my Granddaughter attends Jenette Rankin Elementary, my Grandson will be attending in the fall. He can hardly wait to catch that bus to the Big Kid school.

My daughter just informed me that Art classes were on the budget cut! I am disgusted by this, why do budget cuts always start with the arts? These kids need the freedom of expression, to see colors in action and understand texture. My kiddos have been doing art since they were able to actually hold a paintbrush, markers, crayons, play with playdough pick up items from outdoors and show me how they glue them down to make a new picture.

Art comes in so many forms, obviously the artist who sells their pretty work in galleries. Architects have to learn how to draw building and our homes. Construction workers have to use their craft, which is art to build your home and businesses. woodworkers use art to build the table your children have breakfast at and the bed they sleep in, seamstress' design those blankets. I am a jeweler, i work in color every day, I took every art class I could get my hands on. I could go on and on, but i think my meaning is clear. Don't put the art teachers out of work, don't take away the new class room you just gave her in September. My refrigerator is decorated with art work my grand children make in school, and that is the way it should be.

Sincerely an Artist and Grama  
Misty Herzer

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## Concerns

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**Kristen** <majork333@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 10:27 PM

Hello, I would like to voice my opinion on a few major concerns with MCPS.

- 1.) I received an email today stating that there is a possibility that art classes at the elementary level will either be eliminated or very limited next year. I have a 2nd and 3rd grader and they love art class! I feel that the majority of kiddos do and it is a way for them to express themselves and many of them find it therapeutic. Please don't take this away from them.
- 2.) I emailed the superintendent with my concerns with Jeanette Rankin where my students attend being at capacity. There is obviously major growth in the Miller Creek area and will continue to be for the next 10 years. What is the plan?
- 3.) My children will attend CS Porter for middle school with the current boundary lines. We will pass Meadow Hill in order to get to CS Porter. It is clear that the boundary lines have not been adjusted for quite some time. My kids will also attend middle school with kids that will eventually go to Big Sky and my kid will attend Sentinel. I also sent these concerns to the superintendent. The boundary lines must be reevaluated.

These items can't continue to be ignored as the solutions will obviously take time.

Kristen Hunter  
Sent from my iPhone

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## Art Specialists at our Elementary Schools

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**Jon Warner** <jonathandavidwarner@outlook.com>

Tue, Feb 6, 2024 at 9:22 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

MCSD Schoolboard,

It has been brought to my attention that you are considering cutting certified art specialists at our elementary schools. Without regular exposure to art and music, our community will lose much joy and color. These programs enrich the lives of our children, their parents, and our whole community. Removing certified art specialists from our elementary schools would dim a light within our children. While I can appreciate that money does not grow on trees, I do hope you reconsider such proposed cuts.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Warner  
2825 Carla Jo Lane  
Missoula, MT 59803

Parent

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## ART in our school

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**Holly Claussen** <holly.claussen@hotmail.com>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Feb 6, 2024 at 10:37 AM

Hello,

My name is Holly Claussen. I am a parent to a kindergarten and a fourth grader at Russell Elementary. I am writing in support of maintaining art as a regular, weekly class in our schools. I have two very different children and I find art class incredible valuable for each of them.

My kindergarten boy is a wildly active child. He struggles in kindergarten and has already been referred to the school counselor for a kindergarten friendship group. Each morning, getting my son ready for kindergarten is a battle. He asks "why do I have to go to school again", "why are there five days of school and just two weekend days", "I hate kindergarten", "can I go to work with Dad today". The exception to this trend is when he wakes up and I tell him, "You have art today!". He replies "Yes, Art is my favorite". I find it incredibly sad that my son already does not enjoy something he will be participating in for the next twelve years of his life. I think that for a child like him, removing the one class that he has a positive outlook about would be devastating. Having a regular art class is helping to improve his outlook on school in general.

My daughter is a fourth grader and she LOVES school. She is an excellent student, a helper in her class, has friends on the playground, and she also reports that art is her absolute favorite class to attend at school. In fact, if she happens to miss art class during an appointment she will follow up with her art teacher and ask to catch up on the project during recess. My daughter is a perfectionist in her school work and having a class that allows for creativity and a different cognitive drive is so important for her overall learning.

Please continue to support regular art in our schools.

Thank you!  
Holly Claussen

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## Art at JRE

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**Jason Herynk** <jherynk.sem@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Feb 6, 2024 at 10:50 AM

I would like to express my support for continuing Art education at JRE. I was informed that the Board of Directors is proposing cutting Art class in the next school year for budgeting purposes.

Art education plays a pivotal role in fostering creativity, critical thinking, and emotional expression among students. It provides an invaluable outlet for young minds to explore. Studies have consistently shown that engagement in the arts is linked to higher academic performance. I urge the board to consider alternative solutions that do not involve compromising students' education.

Jason Herynk

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## Budget cuts

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**Lindsey Ogle** <linz123\_83@yahoo.com>

Tue, Feb 6, 2024 at 2:04 PM

Reply-To: Lindsey Ogle <linz123\_83@yahoo.com>

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Good afternoon! I am a parent at Russell School and I know that upcoming budget cuts are just around the corner. I would like to take a moment to implore you to keep an art teacher as a part of the regular curriculum program. I have seen huge benefits not just for my girls but for their fellow classmates. I am in the school often and I have seen an improvement in mood and focus when kids leave the art room and return to their regular lessons. It has provided a needed creative outlet amidst a day of learning. It gives some time to recharge and have a more hands on style of learning skills that can then be applied in other settings and their future. Not all students have access to the arts nor the supplies outside of school. I remember the days of a monthly visit and it did not have the same impact on kids as it does weekly. I thank you for your time and appreciate your consideration of our concerns as parents.

Lindsey Schultz

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

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## Arts education director position for MCPS

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**Mike Kantor Kantor** <aleta.mk@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Feb 6, 2024 at 5:29 PM

It has come to my attention that there is a proposal floating to eliminate the position of Arts Education Director for Missoula county schools. I urge the school board to reject this proposal. I am a 1973 graduate of Hellgate High School. I cannot overemphasize how important music was to me during those years of my life. I was active in band, orchestra, and many choirs. It gave me a sense of great accomplishment and happiness to be a part of those programs. I currently have three grandchildren. One is a graduate of the orchestra program and is currently majoring in music at the University of Montana. The other two are very active in both band and orchestra at Sentinel High School. At least one is considering majoring in music at the university. Missoula has always been a proud supporter of the arts. I urge you to keep this tradition strong.

Sincerely,Aleta Kantor , Hellgate High School, class of 1973.

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## Arts education director

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Isaac Kantor <isaac@kantorlawmt.com>

Tue, Feb 6, 2024 at 8:12 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I write to urge you to keep the arts education director position. I am a 1998 graduate of Big Sky High school. My oldest son graduated from Hellgate in 2021 and I currently have two children at Sentinel. Two of my children play in orchestra and one in band. That experience has greatly enriched their education and social lives. My oldest son is currently in the Missoula Symphony and has a violin scholarship at the University of Montana. Music has opened many doors for him and will do the same for his younger siblings. The arts are critical to many students in MCPS and cutting the director position would reduce opportunity for many. Thank you for listening.

Isaac Kantor

Sent from my iPhone

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## Arts programs

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**Rachel Kantor** <patteecanyonoutdoorschool@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Feb 6, 2024 at 8:13 PM

MCPS board of trustees,

I am commenting on the upcoming funding deficit and the possible elimination or reduction of the arts programs. I can go on about the many benefits the arts provides to all people, young and old, but I think we are all fully aware of the expansive research that demonstrates this, so I will refrain from that here. What I do want to briefly mention is the positive impact it has directly had on my family. All three of my children have, or are currently, part of the music programs here at MCPS and it is what has driven their decision making process to choose to stay at MCPS, rather than seek alternative schooling elsewhere. They have thrived academically, socially and personally because of it. Music is a big part of their lives and what drives their decision making process and life choices. Please continue to give the arts the support that they currently receive, as it is truly the lifeline for so many students, and not only does it benefit the students, but our community as well.

Thank you,  
Rachel Kantor

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## Artistic Director

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**Gloria Handel** <ghandel3@yahoo.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 9:51 AM

My name is Gloria Handel and I am appalled that you are considering doing away with the Artistic Director for the Missoula School. I have read the description of the duties of this position and I urge you to keep the position. I think it is vital to this community and such a loss will be detrimental to our educational program. I have been a devoted member of Community and City band for approximately 20 years and an upstanding citizen of Missoula for 23 years.

Thank You for your consideration. Keep the Artistic Director.

Gloria Handel  
3550 Duncan Dr  
Missoula, Mt  
Sent from my iPhone

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## School Funding

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**Jasmine Roque** <jasmine.roque@icloud.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 11:59 AM

To whom it may concern:

Please do not take away funding from the arts and music. Children cannot thrive without a well rounded education that also nurtures their creative abilities. Arts and music can also improve their memories, language development, coordination, confidence, social skills, discipline, and their test scores in other areas. Our schools need these programs!! Thank you.

All the best,

Jazzi

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## Arts Education Cuts (Feb 13)

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**Nathan Stephens** <nathan.m.stephens@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 12:55 PM

Dear Trustees,

I hope this message finds you well.

I write to express my deep concern about the potential dissolution of the Arts Education Director position at MCPS, along with the broader cuts to performing arts programs. The impact of these reductions, attributed to the depletion of funds allocated for COVID-related challenges, poses a significant threat to the cultural vibrancy and educational richness our community values.

As a parent invested in our students' holistic education, I've witnessed the profound influence of the performing arts on our children's lives. My heart swells with pride as I've seen my daughter excel in visual arts and my son in violin, showcasing the essential role the arts play in fostering creativity, discipline, and overall well-being.

Considering the ongoing challenges faced by educational institutions, I understand the need to make difficult decisions to manage resources effectively. However, sacrificing the Arts Education Director position and implementing extensive cuts to performing arts programs would be a disservice to our students and the community.

I kindly urge you to reconsider these decisions and explore alternative solutions to address budgetary constraints. Preserving the performing arts programs is crucial for maintaining a well-rounded education that goes beyond traditional academics. The long-term benefits far outweigh the immediate challenges.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nathan Stephens Missoula, Montana

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## **Art&Music**

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**Mark** <mrknicholls@yahoo.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 1:07 PM

Please leave them alone. Important part of our children's education. Thanks  
Mark Nicholls  
Sent from my iPhone

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## Arts Education Coordination Position

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**Doug and Liz** <doug\_and\_liz@yahoo.com>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 1:50 PM

Reply-To: Doug and Liz <doug\_and\_liz@yahoo.com>

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Please don't cut the Arts Education Coordination Position my children and my niece and nephew and my friends children are all involved with music and arts. Music is very important to our family and if you cut this position it will diminish the Quality of music and arts in Missoula. One of my nephews even got a scholarship to the University of Montana in band after playing at big sky highschool and competing in district and state music festivals. And I hope my children will be able to the same.

Thank you for your time,

Liz Hertz

Parent

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

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## Music

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Heidi <bellamusica2@yahoo.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 2:26 PM

Hello,

I would like to address the upcoming budget cuts involving music and fine arts at MCPS. Music in our family goes way back. My husband was in choir and orchestra at Big Sky High School long ago. He and I both went into Architecture however stayed in choir all through college. We were able to travel the world singing (I went three times to Europe) we had some amazing opportunities, only because we were involved in music.

Our son is a Big Sky High School alumni, who was in every band, percussion, and jazz class that he could sign up for at Big Sky. Even though his academic achievements were off the charts, the zero period jazz band was the only reason he went to school during Covid. He was also in all of the programs coordinated by the Arts Education Director - MYS, District and State Music Festivals, and AA Music Festivals. He also traveled to Hawaii to join a music festival there his Junior year. He is now majoring in music at the University with a full music scholarship. Being that he was an advanced music student, the opportunities for music outside of class were critical to his development.

Our daughter is currently at Big Sky and is in percussion, orchestra, and choir. She recently attended All-Northwest choir as well as AA Orchestra festival that was hosted by Big Sky. For AA, Grise brought in two amazing guest conductors and the kids sounded wonderful! Again, an opportunity outside of normal class, to join with other kids around Missoula to make music together, is what music is all about.

One of the guest conductors last night commented on how he loved Missoula because he could see how much the town supports music. He said it was evident everywhere that music and the arts are important here. Let's keep it that way and not cut music and arts, like sadly other communities have had to do.

Research has shown the impact of music on the human brain. Music actually can make kids learn faster and be happier individuals in life. Isn't that our goal in schools? We want our kids to thrive!

Thank you for your time,  
Heidi Dosier

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## **Please reconsider**

**Harney, Kristin** <kristin.harney@montana.edu>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 3:04 PM

To: "mhill@mcpsmt.org" <mhill@mcpsmt.org>, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>, "javgeris@mcpsmt.org" <javgeris@mcpsmt.org>, "gdecker@mcpsmt.org" <gdecker@mcpsmt.org>, "nhobbins@mcpsmt.org" <nhobbins@mcpsmt.org>, "kmercer@mcpsmt.org" <kmercer@mcpsmt.org>, "woldperson@mcpsmt.org" <woldperson@mcpsmt.org>, "jvogel@mcpsmt.org" <jvogel@mcpsmt.org>, "awake@mcpsmt.org" <awake@mcpsmt.org>, "walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org" <walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org>, "mwhicher@mcpsmt.org" <mwhicher@mcpsmt.org>, "kwitt@mcpsmt.org" <kwitt@mcpsmt.org>, "rwoelich@mcpsmt.org" <rwoelich@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Missoula School Board members,

I have just heard that you plan to cut the Missoula District Arts Supervisor position

. As an Associate Professor of Music Education at Montana State University in Bozeman, I strongly urge you to reconsider. Eliminating this position will have huge ramifications for your district, your students, and your teachers. An arts coordinator directly and indirectly supports students and teachers. Even with a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) picking up some tasks, remaining teachers will undoubtedly have additional burdens placed on them, reducing their time and energy that could be better spent serving students.

Vote to retain the Missoula District Arts Supervisor position.

Sincerely,

Kristin Harney

Kristin Harney, DMA

School of Music

Montana State University-Bozeman

PO Box 173420

Bozeman, MT 59717-3420

kristin.harney@montana.edu

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## Missoula Director of Music Position

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Mess, Elizabeth <elizabeth.mess@montana.edu>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 3:19 PM

Dear Missoula School Board,

Please vote to retain \_\_\_\_\_ and keep the Director of Music position for Missoula Public Schools. The Bozeman School District has seen an unnecessary burden placed on public school music teachers as a result of the removal of the music supervisor and it would be beneficial to music in Montana to prevent the same happening across the state. Music teachers need to be able to focus on their students and not be administrators unless they specifically sign up to do so. Arts in schools is a critical part of a well-rounded education and we want students to receive the best of their teachers.

Sincerely,  
Katie Mess

Katie Mess-D.M.A., NASM-CES (she/her/hers)  
Assistant Teaching Professor of Flute  
Montana State University School of Music  
elizabeth.mess@montana.edu  
www.katiemessflute.com

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## Budget cuts: Art teachers in elementary schools

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**Hannah Riley** <hannahriley1@icloud.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 3:22 PM

Good afternoon,

In response to suggested budget cuts in Montana Schools, the area of art shouldn't be touched. As a mother to three girls currently attending elementary school, I can fairly say that art class, twice a week, contributes to their overall mental-emotional health. I wish there weren't budget cuts when it comes to schools and I understand the hard position of having to determine what to cut and what not to. I'm concerned that by taking away a class that is fun, therapeutic, and connective may lead to more than a few problems. First, many students express feelings in art that are hard to express elsewhere. Second, art connects each student to their creative side and allows them freedom of individuality. Third, many art projects may tie into the schools' curriculum in a way that allows retention of material. Collaboration in a way that is conducive to productivity may be a way to move forward: purpose paired with creativity. Art is a part of our present, past, and future. Many historical stories are better understood with the art that time. In many vocations the ability to draw is crucial. For example, vision in the realm of architecture and home construction/design is huge. Why not encourage schools to participate in art auctions? If an art teacher taught a skill and had the students work on that skill, the results would be wonderful. These products of creativity could be used as a way to sustain the program and create a community of support. Please, take art with the measure of appreciation it deserves when you look at budget cuts.

Respectfully,

Hannah Riley  
Mother of three elementary school girls

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## Board postings

**Liam Rose**

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 3:33 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Six days from now there will be a school board meeting. In that meeting the choice to cut the position of arts education director currently held by the exemplary . I understand that you want to terminate that position due to budget cuts. I understand your position and predicament but I assure you cutting that position is a huge fallacy.

provides a support network for every single fine art program in the district, coordinating instrument rentals for hundreds of children, overseeing AA Festival plans for hundreds of choir/band/orchestra students, providing support in planning All State Honors festivals, overseeing the Missoula Youth Symphony program that my mother before me was in, providing support for the grade 5-12 band programs, orchestra programs, choir programs, theatre programs, and so much more.

Cutting the arts director position would devastate all the schools, causing cracks in every program under his direction. That will lead to the decline of all of these programs, prompting less interest in fine arts across the district. Last week the three Missoula high schools chose 15 students from each of their pep bands to go on a tour to all 8th grade band classes in the district. Our job was to get them excited for high school. I myself was on this tour and saw firsthand how each of their faces lit up in excitement when we played for them, the future of the band programs. helped organize and support this event. Without a home supporting these programs they would not be what they are today. I strongly encourage you to rethink your decision, please.

Liam Rose

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## Music

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**caleb fey** <calebofey@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 3:35 PM

February 7, 2024

Dear Missoula School Board,

Please vote to retain the Director of Music position for Missoula Public Schools.

As a member of the Bozeman community and advocate for the arts and music education in our schools I can attest to the horrible repercussions that have befallen our Bozeman public schools since our school board voted to do away with the position recently. The extra burden put on our music teachers is onerous and detrimental to our recruitment and retention of quality individuals. It's only been a year and the community here is already seeing the impact in a negative way.

Please do not follow the same path that Bozeman has taken; it was a mistake.

Sincerely,

Caleb O. Fey

Montana State University  
College of Arts and Architecture

This message was sent from a mobile device, please forgive any typos and the brevity.

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## Letter from M.C. and D.K. in support of art

1 message

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**Holly Claussen** <holly.claussen@hotmail.com>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 4:28 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Dear School Board,

We are writing to support art in our school.

Reasons Art is our favorite special:

We like that in art we can do something that is less directed. In some of our day our brains feel stressed, but in art our brains can relax. We also love the projects we do. It gives us something to look forward to during the week. In art we also get to learn about other cultures and artists. These are just some reasons we like art. Please keep art in our school every week.

Sincerely,

M.C. and D.K. (Russell Elementary students)

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## Support of Arts Education Director

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**Vivienne Detrick** <vdetrick@mcpsmt.org>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 4:32 PM

School Board Representatives,

Thank you for all the work you have done in the previous years and continue to do so for our school district. It has been brought to my attention the consideration of cutting the Arts Education Director position, which I believe may affect our schools as a whole. I hope this does not take away the opportunity that students have in playing an instrument. Our 5th graders look forward to being part of band and or orchestra. I believe it is an integral piece of their education. We know what studies and reports have to say on how music impacts students minds and the impact it has on their education. Please reconsider this decision or please have an alternative that can be reasonable.

Respectfully,  
Vivienne Detrick

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**Arts director**

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**Mica Kantor** <micakantor08@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 4:40 PM

I am a student at sentinel, arts is one of the only reasons I enjoy school. Removing ARTS EDUCATION DIRECTOR: position would greatly effect the arts community in Missoula. Please keep my education enjoyable.

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(no subject)

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Mike Dosier <mandadosier@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 5:38 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I am very concerned about your decision to consider to eliminate the Art directors position. The experiences and value that art and music add to a students education is incredibly valuable! I have listed here a few reasons why it is so important to maintain it in our education system:

Art and music is a way for kids to be creative, which can make it an enjoyable part of their school day. Including creative courses in everyday curriculum can increase motivation which can lead to higher attendance and better attitudes at school.

The Mental and Physical Benefits of Music Education

Cognitive Development: Children exposed to music often **improve language development and memory and have better attention spans and mathematical capabilities.**

*Music improves cognitive and non-cognitive skills more than twice as much as sports, theater or dance.*

Kids who take music lessons have better cognitive skills ...

This is just a glance at what music and art can provide for our students. If you eliminate it in order to be able to afford instituting baseball for boys only- which would include about only 20 participants per team-you eliminate a field of study for so many more students to excel in. We have three high schools here that have a thriving band, orchestra, choir, and drama programs that include so many students. The opportunities afford them to participate in the Double AA festival for instance that Big Sky hosted this last week is such an opportunity for them to experience a higher level of music. The concert last night was amazing. Perhaps you all should have attended it to better understand why these programs are so amazing for our students.

If you are short on funds for the program charge an entrance fee as you do for the sports program. I'm sure there are other places you could cut the budget for the district. I worked for the district special ed for 22 years-so I am aware of how it all works.

Save the Art and Music program and make your cuts elsewhere.

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## Keep Music Strong in our Schools!

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Jessica Catron <jessica@growmusicmissoula.com>  
Reply-To: Jessica Catron <jessica@growmusicmissoula.com>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 6:12 PM

As a full-time music instructor, I can attest to the many ways music helps children. I see the unparalleled value in it every day.

Music education plays a crucial role in the overall development of students, and here are four reasons why it (or it's leadership) should not be cut from schools:

### 1. Cognitive Benefits:

- Learning music can enhance cognitive abilities such as memory, attention, and problem-solving skills. Music education engages multiple parts of the brain and fosters holistic cognitive development.

### 2. Emotional and Social Development:

- Music provides an outlet for self-expression. It helps students develop emotional intelligence, empathy, and a sense of belonging. Group music activities, such as playing in an ensemble or choir, promote teamwork, cooperation, and social interaction.

### 3. Academic Achievement:

- Research has indicated a positive correlation between music education and academic success. Students involved in music programs often perform better in other subjects, including math and language arts. Learning to read music, for example, can improve literacy skills.

### 4. Cultural Enrichment:

- Music education exposes students to a wide range of cultural and historical contexts. It fosters an appreciation for diverse musical styles, traditions, and world cultures. This exposure helps create well-rounded individuals with a broader perspective on the world. God knows we need more of that in this divisive country!

Music education contributes significantly to the intellectual, emotional, and social development of students. Cutting music programs from schools not only deprives students of these valuable benefits but also undermines the richness and diversity of their educational experience.

So...I hear this isn't (YET) about cutting the music programs, just the supervisor position. In my opinion, this is also a tragic move and a slippery slope to abolishing the fine arts in schools.

The role of a music supervisor in the public schools is crucial for several reasons, extending beyond the responsibilities of music teachers.

### 1. Administrative Support:

- Music supervisors handle administrative tasks associated with music programs, such as budget management, scheduling, and coordinating events. This allows music teachers to focus more on teaching and planning, ensuring smoother operation of the department.

### 2. Advocacy for Music Education:

- Music supervisors play a vital role in advocating for the importance of music education within the school system. They can communicate the value of music programs to school administrators, parents, and the community, helping secure resources and support for the department.

### 3. Curriculum Development and Assessment:

- Music supervisors contribute to the development of music curricula, ensuring that it aligns with educational standards and meets the needs of students. They also play a major role in assessing the effectiveness of music programs, implementing improvements, and staying updated on educational and relevant trends and innovations.

#### 4. Resource Allocation and Equipment Maintenance:

- Managing resources, including instruments, sheet music, and technology, is a significant responsibility. A music supervisor oversees the allocation of resources, ensures proper maintenance of equipment, and facilitates the acquisition of new instruments or technology when necessary.

#### 5. Community Engagement and Partnerships:

- Building relationships with the community, local arts organizations (like mine), and potential sponsors is essential for the sustainability of music programs. Music supervisors can actively engage with the community, organize performances, and establish partnerships that benefit both the school's music department and the broader Missoula community.

#### 6. Professional Development for Teachers:

- Music supervisors play a role in the professional development of music teachers. They organize workshops, training sessions, and conferences to keep teachers updated on new teaching methodologies, technology, and best practices in music education.

#### 7. Ensuring Equity and Inclusion:

- Music supervisors can work towards ensuring that music programs are accessible and inclusive for all students, regardless of their background or abilities. They can implement strategies to address potential barriers and promote diversity throughout the music department and all the schools.

The role of a music supervisor or manager is multifaceted, involving administrative, advocacy, and community engagement responsibilities. Their contributions are **essential** for creating a thriving and sustainable music education environment in schools beyond the efforts of individual music teachers.

**Jessica Catron** (she/hers)  
**GROW MUSIC MISSOULA**

800 Kensington Ave #LL5  
 Missoula MT 59801  
 406.493.4533

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## Keep behavioral interventionists in our schools

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**Deborah Schmidt** <reverdddeb@hotmail.com>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 6:38 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

As grandparents of two MCPS students, we strongly ask that you maintain the positions of behavioral interventionist in the schools. The mental and emotional health of our children is the highest priority.

Rev. Deborah Schmidt  
Thomas C. Schmidt

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

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## Arts Education Director

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Karl Englund <karljenglund@aol.com>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 7:24 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

MCPS Board of Trustees:

Please vote to retain the position of Arts Education Director. Without a person dedicated to coordinating the special features of MCPS' arts program, there will not be a well-coordinated arts program in a school system that serves (and should reflect the values of) a community steeped in music and art.

Music teachers will have additional duties placed upon them when they already have duties that completely fill their days and many nights and weekends. MCPS' music programs are among the very best in the state and in the Northwest and that is true because for years, MCPS has attracted and retained dedicated and talented teachers hired, organized, supported and supervised by an arts director. That position is critical to the continued success of a program that truly reflects one of the characteristics that defines Missoula.

Karl Englund  
301 Keith Avenue  
Missoula, Montana 59801

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## Strong support for retaining Music and Arts Supervisor

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Young, Gregory <gyoung@montana.edu>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 7:51 PM

To: "mhill@mcpsmt.org" <mhill@mcpsmt.org>, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>, "javgeris@mcpsmt.org" <javgeris@mcpsmt.org>, "gdecker@mcpsmt.org" <gdecker@mcpsmt.org>, "nhobbins@mcpsmt.org" <nhobbins@mcpsmt.org>, "kmercerc@mcpsmt.org" <kmercerc@mcpsmt.org>, "woldperson@mcpsmt.org" <woldperson@mcpsmt.org>, "jvogel@mcpsmt.org" <jvogel@mcpsmt.org>, "awake@mcpsmt.org" <awake@mcpsmt.org>, "walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org" <walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org>, "mwhicher@mcpsmt.org" <mwhicher@mcpsmt.org>, "kwitt@mcpsmt.org" <kwitt@mcpsmt.org>, "rwoelich@mcpsmt.org" <rwoelich@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Missoula School Board Members,

Having taught music at the university level for over 40 years, I strongly urge you to reconsider the importance of music and the arts in Montana. Please vote to retain and keep the Director of Music position for Missoula Public Schools. My sentiments are also informed by having my own children go through a wonderful music program in Bozeman, years ago, and the many and varied benefits they received from this important part of their education and development.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gregory Young, Professor

MSU School of Music

182 Howard Hall

Bozeman MT 59717

*11th and Grant performance*

*Insights into Music Composition, with Steve Roens, publ. Routledge 2022.*

*Routledge Undergraduate Research Series*

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## Elementary art education

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**Jessica Sempler** <kelly.jessicaa@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 8:20 PM

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in response to the proposal to decrease art education in MCPS elementary schools.

I disagree wholeheartedly with this proposal. The value of art education has been demonstrated time and again, including publications in the medical literature. As a double board certified physician (including Pediatrics) I can attest to the fact that access to expression through art is demonstrated to improve outcomes for children who experience Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). In a world where 75% of children will experience an ACE (and I am happy to provide further information and data on this), we cannot afford to strip our community's children of this outlet.

Saving money is nice. Saving children is better.

Jessica Sempler MD

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## MCPS Arts Administration Support

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**Dusty Molyneaux** <dusty\_molyneaux@gfps.k12.mt.us>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 8:29 PM

To: "mhill@mcpsmt.org" <mhill@mcpsmt.org>, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>, "javgeris@mcpsmt.org" <javgeris@mcpsmt.org>, "gdecker@mcpsmt.org" <gdecker@mcpsmt.org>, "nhobbins@mcpsmt.org" <nhobbins@mcpsmt.org>, "kmercer@mcpsmt.org" <kmercer@mcpsmt.org>, "woldperson@mcpsmt.org" <woldperson@mcpsmt.org>, "jvogel@mcpsmt.org" <jvogel@mcpsmt.org>, "awake@mcpsmt.org" <awake@mcpsmt.org>, "walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org" <walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org>, "mwhicher@mcpsmt.org" <mwhicher@mcpsmt.org>, "kwitt@mcpsmt.org" <kwitt@mcpsmt.org>, "rwoelich@mcpsmt.org" <rwoelich@mcpsmt.org>

Hello. I have heard the news that the Arts Administration position for MCPS is being considered as a possible cut for your school district. As someone who works closely with the Arts programs across the state, and also as a representative for Music Education in the Pacific Northwest I think this would be a devastating move to the students in your district. Please see the attached letter of support for maintaining this vital administrative position for the health of the Arts in your county and the state of Montana. Missoula and their public schools have long been a beacon for the Arts, and I hope you will continue to maintain this legacy.

Dusty Molyneaux

Music and Art Supervisor

Great Falls Public Schools

406-268-6079

NAfME NW Division President

NFHS Music Advisory Committee Section 8

MHSA Music Committee Chair

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 **Missoula support letter.docx**  
16K

February 7, 2024

To the Members of the Missoula County Public Schools Board,

My name is Dusty Molyneaux, and I am the Music and Arts Supervisor for the Great Falls Public Schools. I am writing this letter to support the position of Fine Arts Supervisor in your school district.

I have been a music educator for 30 years, the last 12 of those serving as the Music and Art Supervisor for Great Falls. I have been the president of the Montana Bandmasters, the Montana Music Educators, and am currently serving as the President of the Northwest Division of the National Music Educators Conference, and the section 8 Representative for the National Federation of High Schools Music Committee. I list these credentials not to boast about myself, but to give you some perspective from the state and Northwest region.

Missoula Public Schools have a reputation for a strong music and art program, and have had music program leaders with similar if not exact credentials that I noted above in the past. Your current Arts Education Director is the President-Elect of the Montana Music Educators, so he is definitely in the mold for a successful program leader!

Having a strong Arts advocate brings many beneficial influences to your school district. Having an Arts Education Director necessitates that the Arts faculty get proper evaluations in their highly specialized teaching fields, that they get the professional development opportunities that propel them to success in the Arts, and that they have support in planning and coordinating the hosting of the elaborate events that come with having Music and Art programs in a school setting.

As a student in high school music traveling to events in Missoula, a college music education major, and then as a young teacher, I looked to the Missoula school Fine Arts leaders as inspiration for a successful career and also reaped the benefits of the programs and the events that they helped coordinate. They definitely help mold me into the educator I have become. And now I rely on the current position as a peer and anchor in Arts programming for the state, and I worry that will no longer be the case in the future if the position is reduced.

Events like MHSA District Music Festival, Montana Music Educators Conference and MHSA All-State Music, AA Band/Choir/Orchestra Festivals, and city-wide music and Art programs require lots of logistics and planning in order to be successful. To push the coordination of those kinds of events onto the teacher plate is unfair to the students in the program, because the more time that classroom teachers have to devote to planning large events and Festivals is less time that they can be working with individual students or designing engaging lessons and rehearsals for their normal classroom duties.

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## District Arts Education Director

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Laura D <laurainmt@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 9:30 PM

To: mhill@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org, walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org, mwhicher@mcpsmt.org, kwitt@mcpsmt.org, rwoelich@mcpsmt.org

Dear Mr. Hill and Missoula County Public Schools Board,

I am the immediate past president of the Montana State Music Teachers Association. Recently, I have received news of consideration toward eliminating the MCPS Arts Education Director and therefore submit my commentary regarding that idea.

For several years, I worked with special needs students as a paraprofessional. Some of the greatest advances I observed in them were those that gave students a new avenue for communication. The floodgates of relief and exhilaration they (and we) experienced at connecting their thoughts with others' thoughts cannot be overstated. Neither can the wealth that is then available to the world through each student's perspective. Just the opening of a single avenue is often all that is needed for *communication*.

One of the most effective strategies in war is to cut *communication*, proving its crucial nature. How much does the average household or business spend on *communication*? With no actual knowledge of global industries, I believe I can safely say that It's likely one of the largest industries today.

The fine arts are an integral, indispensable form of *communication*. Each aspect uniquely provides avenues of communication. Please read this philosophy of music education (easily applicable to all fine arts) that was developed through years of experience in music and art making, experiencing, and teaching, along with providing of music and art opportunities and collaboration with many excellent music and arts enthusiasts—and consider it as an establishment for the high priority that our community, our society, our culture depends on.

“Music education teaches students literacy and artistry in a crucial form of communication that is unlike any other while yet employing many others. Cultures around the world and throughout time have been dependent on music for the sharing of and common affirmation of thought. It is an audible (though not necessarily) human expression, sometimes emanating from—sometimes resulting in motion, both physically and psychologically. There are a great many people for whom music is the most available conduit through which understanding of one's existence can be gained or shared. Therefore, it is imperative that its medium is made available to everyone. Human interaction without music is inconceivable, but in such a case, it would certainly be of greatly reduced quality.”

Hopefully this demonstrates the immediacy of placing music and arts at the highest level of attention. The structure that is gained through having a single music programming overseer in a district is vital toward consistent support and collaboration of music teachers.

Thank you for your time and consideration toward this appeal.

*Laura Detrick*

Immediate Past President  
Montana State Music Teachers Association  
SATB Arranger, Official Montana State Song

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**MCPS Art Program**

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tanya brand <tanya.brand@live.com>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 9:44 PM

Dear MCPS Board,

We have recently been made aware that the MCPS board is going to be reviewing, and may make cuts to, the arts program(s) within our school district. Currently, we have two students attending MCPS Elementary School and cannot stress enough the importance of having a structured art program that allows for art classes to be offered anywhere from 1-3 times per week.

Prior to COVID the school had a rotating art teacher that was shared between other schools. Our oldest child received an art class only once or twice per month. After COVID, MCPS hired a full-time art teacher for our school. As a result, our daughter has greatly flourished in terms of creativity and problem solving. She has been introduced to various forms of art media such as sculpting with clay, weaving, painting, drawing, treading beads, etc. These have all helped her to significantly advance her visual-spatial skills and fine motor skills. Since the incorporation of a more solid Art Program, her handwriting in particular has greatly improved.

A full-time art teacher also provides stability and consistency for all students. We have been lucky to have the same art teacher at our school for three years and as a result, she has been able to bond with the students and really help them grow. With our daughter alone, she has provided invaluable resources to pursue art outside of school and has been an excellent role model for both of our children. Art has also given our children an avenue to explore and expand their thinking, imagination, and has provided more cultural awareness through the introduction of Montana Native American Art.

There has been a lot of research and numerous studies on the importance of solid art programs at the development stage. A consistent art program (1 to 3 classes of art a week per classroom) has shown to improve behavior and attendance in school where families of students are struggling. Art has also been shown to provide improved academic performance. A report by Americans for the Arts state that "young people who participate regularly in the arts (three hours a day on three days each week through one full year) are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, to participate in a math and science fair or to win an award for writing an essay or poem than children who do not participate."

Since COVID it is our understanding that MCPS is onboard with providing our children with a consistent Art Program. On MCPS's own website it states, "Americans for the Arts research shows that arts education increases student engagement and achievement. The arts support student's communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity skills. MCPS understands that the arts present an experience which engages students in a collaborative and active approach to learning."

It is our hope that MCPS will continue to support, and/or increase, our current art teachers and art programs instead of using it as a way to slash costs for budget purposes. If anything we should be providing more support and ensuring that every MCPS school has a full-time art teacher and weekly art classes available for all students.

Thank you for your time,



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## Art Education

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**ryhan sempler** <mttrout01@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 9:54 PM

I appreciate the opportunity for you to hear our voices.

I strongly discourage MCPS from moving structured art away from our children's weekly curriculum. Art is a way for kids to express themselves in a way that might not easily come to them. I ask the folks that are voting on this one question. Did you enjoy art and expression when you were a child?

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## Director of Music position

2 messages

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**Matzinger, Ryan** <ryan.matzinger@montana.edu>

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 10:19 PM

February 7, 2024

RE: Director of Music position

To:

Micah Hill - Superintendent  
Board Public comment  
Jeffery Avgeris  
Grace Decker  
Nancy Hobbins  
Koan Mercer  
Wilena Old Person (Board Chair)  
Jennifer Vogel  
Ann Wake  
Alrene Walker-Andrews  
Meg Whicher  
Keegan Witt  
Rob Woelich

Dear Missoula School Board,

Please vote to retain \_\_\_\_\_ and keep the Director of Music position for Missoula Public Schools. I've known and worked with Monte since I was at Bozeman High when he was studying at MSU, and he is and always has been a remarkable person, musician, teacher, music administrator, and Montanan.

It would be a mistake to lose him and the position, and I can whole-heartedly attest to the enormity and fallout of the miscalculation made here in Bozeman in doing the proposed same.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Ryan Matzinger**  
Assistant Professor of Jazz & Saxophone  
Director of Jazz Ensembles  
School of Music  
American Studies Prog. Affiliated Faculty  
Montana State University - Bozeman



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## Letter of Support

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**MMEA State President** <mmeastatepresident@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 6:32 AM

To: mhill@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org, walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org, mwhicher@mcpsmt.org, kwitt@mcpsmt.org, rwoelich@mcpsmt.org

Attached please find a letter of support justifying the position of Arts Education Director. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kimberly A. Lorengo  
President, Montana Music Educators Association



**Letter of Support - MCPS.pdf**

33K

February 7, 2024

To Superintendent Hill and the Members of the Missoula County Public Schools Board,

My name is Kimberly Lorengo, and I am the president of the Montana Music Educators Association. I am writing this letter to ask you to reconsider your proposition to eliminate the position of Arts Education Director for the Missoula County Public Schools. Missoula Public Schools have been examples of exemplary music education in the state of Montana and in the Northwest region. This is a direct result of the outstanding music educators you have in your district and the Arts Education Director that helps to coordinate countless musical opportunities for the students in the Missoula Public Schools and across the state.

As a music educator in Montana for the past 26 years, I have always been impressed by the events that are hosted by the fine arts department in the Missoula Public Schools. These events include AA Orchestra/Band/Choir festivals, District Music Festival, State Solo and Ensemble Festival, Montana Music Educators Conference, MHSA All-State Festival, and numerous city-wide music and arts programs. These events are coordinated by the Arts Education Director and benefit the student musicians in Missoula but also benefit musicians from all over the state. In addition to what these events provide for students, they also provide revenue for the city of Missoula. Without the Arts Education Director position, the job of organizing these events falls to the teachers which means less time they can spend working with individual students or rehearsing their classes.

An Arts Education Director provides consistency and cohesiveness within a school district's arts department. One of the strongest parts of Missoula's music program is the succession of the program from the elementary up through the high school and beyond. Without this position, school music programs run the risk of "siloing" themselves in their own school buildings and not working together. Missoula has always prided itself on its identity as an arts community. Eliminating the position of Arts Education Director will divide your district-wide arts programs and risk damage to your reputation as a leader in the arts in the state and region.

It would be extremely unfortunate if the Arts Education Director position were no longer a part of the Missoula Public Schools. In order for Missoula to remain as a center for arts education and for the arts teachers in Missoula Public Schools to continue to feel supported, this position cannot go away. I strongly encourage you to reconsider your options and hope that you choose to keep this position so Missoula can continue its arts excellence.

Sincerely,

Kimberly A. Lorengo  
President, Montana Music Educators Association

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## Fine arts position

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**Lind, Chandra** <chandra.lind@bsd7.org>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 9:03 AM

Hello Missoula School Board,

I'm sure you're receiving a lot of emails right now about the negative effects of cutting the fine arts position in Missoula. I just wanted to say, as a music teacher whose administrator was cut, we are not the district you want to emulate. Things are different on the ground than at the 20,000 ft. view. We have indeed felt the negative effects from the cut. They are visible already if you are in the know. The resulting neglect will increase over time until our peak years are only memory and the quality deterioration will be the new normal.

I'm sure this is a concept that is easy to dismiss. It was here as well. I just thought I'd mention that things are not 'rosy' here and we are not an example that should be followed if a district wants a full, quality education for everyone.

Respectfully,

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**Chandra Lind**

Orchestra Director  
BHS/GHS Kamerata Orchestra  
Chief Joseph Middle School  
Bozeman Public Schools

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## February 13th Meeting Comment

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**Erika Hickey** <erikavosshickey@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 9:06 AM

I'm writing as a parent of an MCPS student, the current Hellgate Band Parent Board President, and a member of the Missoula Public Art Committee.

It has been brought to my attention that the MCPS superintendent has included the MCPS Arts Education Director position in his package of reductions for next year's budget. This concerns me on many levels. Cutting this position devalues the Arts in our community. This is a community where the arts THRIVE. This position allows the teachers at MCPS the time they require to support their students and do their jobs. I understand this position directs, manages, and/or supports the following access to music for our students: fine arts courses in all MCPS schools K-12 (music, art, theater, dance), curriculum development for all teachers, instrument rentals for grades 5-12, All-State Honors festivals and travel, All-City Jazz, Missoula Youth Symphony, All-City Middle School Band, Missoula Youth Orchestra, District Music Festival, AA Music Festivals, and the list goes on.

As a parent of two MCPS students (since 2008) who have been profoundly shaped by their engagement with the arts, I can attest to the immeasurable impact of these programs. I fear that cutting the director would put them in jeopardy. Witnessing one of my children transition to a collegiate Music Program underscores the transformative power of arts education. Our other child is headed in that same direction.

As Band Parent Board President at Hellgate, I see firsthand how much extra support a music program at the high school level needs. The removal of the Arts Director would put more pressure on teachers. A program cannot thrive without direction and support. Cutting the Arts Director would be detrimental to the teachers and directors that depend on that extra support K-12.

Thank you for your time.

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Erika  
(she/her/hers)  
owner at Coming Up Rainbows  
<https://cominguprainbows.com>

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## Art in elementary

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**Becca Snyder** <beccans@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 9:13 AM

Hello,

I'm a parent of a 3rd grader Jeannette Rankin Elementary and a 6th grader at Meadow Hill Middle School. Both of my kids have been lucky to have robust art education in their elementary school experience, and I learned today that there is a proposal to eliminate the art specialist in elementary schools. My kids absolutely love their art classes and art specialist. As my daughter said to me, "art is a time when I can breathe and express myself." She went on to say that school has so many pressures and tests, and that art is the one space where she can engage her brain in other ways. I really hope that funding will continue to allow kids to breathe and express themselves through art education with the ongoing tutelage of a dedicated art specialist. Art and music education are important. Please don't take that away from our kids.

Thank you for your time.  
-Becca

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**Please keep the Arts!**

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**Alexis Halland** <alexishalland@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 9:18 AM

## **MCPS Board of Trustees,**

First I want to thank you for your endless work for our kids. I am writing in support of keeping our existing Arts Programs in Missoula County schools. It is crucial to keep full time Art and Music in the budget! These programs enrich our children's lives (and ours as parents) and our children cannot thrive without an education that also nurtures their creative abilities. Please find the funding to keep our schools with the existing Art and Music Programs. Budget cutting and limiting Art and Music will negatively affect every single child in Missoula County. Thanks for your consideration in keeping the Arts for our kids!

Ali Halland  
Paxson Elementary School Parent

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## Fine Arts Director

Kirk Easter <kirk.alliance59808@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 9:29 AM

To: mhill@mcpsmt.org

Cc: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org, walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org, mwhicher@mcpsmt.org, kwitt@mcpsmt.org, rwoelich@mcpsmt.org

Folks -

Within the framework of MCPS there is **only one** individual that has the potential to reach every student in the district

- **Fine Arts Director.**

- Participation in the arts reduces dropout rates and improves student attendance - **Proven since 1978!**

- Arts participation is related to behaviors that contribute to the health of civil society, civic engagement, social tolerance, and reductions in other negative behaviors.

Understanding the financial issues that have appeared in the MCPS budget following the Covid funding I would impress upon you all that in the scope of the district impacts will be significant with the loss of a fine arts professional. Activities/Opportunities for students across the district will diminish drastically simply due to lack of time!

Around the state many of my past colleagues from Billings and Bozeman would share that a TOSA is not a solution but the beginning of the end for a program. Without their district supervisor they have lost continuity, representation and voice in curricular discussions, and in many cases have a mass exodus of colleagues - "We were the program that set the bar and standards in our region - all the while watching MCPS as a leader in the state - Michael Certalic, Bozeman Public Schools."

Within my career having the support as a classroom instructor I was only able to succeed and appear on regional and national stages representing the excellence of MCPS due to the assistance provided by Mr. Carl Smart, Mr. Paul Ritter, and Mr. John Combs in my tenure for 26 years.

Monte Grise is the highest qualified musician that has ever held the current position in contrast to his predecessors.

MCPS made the correct decision to hire this musician - **don't lose him!**

Happy Parents with children in attendance at public events pass levies, bond issues, and tax support.

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**We are all Worms, but I do believe I am a Glow-Worm - W.Churchill**

*Kirk Easter*

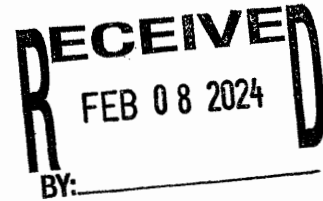
**Alliance Truck and Tank, LLC**

**1-(406)-544-2072 - (Cell)**

kirk.alliance59808@gmail.com

alliancetruckandtank.com

February 8, 2024



Dear MCPS School Board Members,

I am writing to implore you to retain the Director of Fine Arts position. This administrative position is vital to the continuation of the exemplary fine arts programs that MCPS has so proudly and successfully supported for many decades. Generations of students have benefitted from the programming that this position supports. To eliminate it would ultimately lead to the degradation of the music, visual arts, and drama programs offered at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels.

As a superintendent myself, I understand the challenges MCPS is facing with a budgetary shortfall. However, there is value in specialized administrative positions such as this. There is often talk about large districts being heavy on administration, and a great deal of support for eliminating administration instead of staff positions which have direct contact with students. However, administrators serve a vital role in districts that is frequently misunderstood. The loss of this position will diminish the program it supports and increase the burden on school level administrators to manage teaching positions and programs that they really don't understand because they are so specialized. It will increase the burden on the fine arts staff to take on the duties of the director if vital programming and extracurricular/co-curricular opportunities are to persist.

In this particular case, cutting a specialized art director position devalues the fine arts in the eyes of the public, board members current and future, and principals. It is demoralizing to the staff and students this position supports district wide. For some students, the arts are their passion and their career path, their reason for getting out of bed in the morning. Additionally, this position is vital for the continuation of the high quality district-wide and statewide festivals and events the Missoula County residents, staff, students and parents value, expect and appreciate. Finally, I would like to point out that most of the students in Missoula County filter into MCPS from the independent K-8s, who often struggle to provide even an adequate fine arts experience for their students, though not for lack of trying. The lack of properly certified teachers, especially in music, makes it nearly impossible. As the parent of a child who attends a small rural school and who will attend MCPS next year, I have been looking forward to the day when my child has greater opportunities to participate in the arts.

I question whether staff, parents and students had adequate notice of this recommendation. Have the voices of the music, visual arts and drama teachers and students, and their parents, been adequately heard by the board itself? Please reject the recommendation to eliminate this position and show Missoula County and the State of Montana that MCPS continues to value the fine arts and recognizes the overall value of the arts in a democratic society.

Respectfully,

Dr. Erin Lipkind  
Missoula County Superintendent of Schools  
Former MCPS Librarian



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## MCPS Arts Ed Director

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**Anyssa French** <nyssado@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 10:39 AM

I am highly concerned that the MCPS Superintendent is considering eliminating the MCPS Arts Ed Director position.

My adopted child came to MCPS with a significant trauma history. Through music classes at both CS Porter and Hellgate High School he has found an outlet for his feelings that has helped him heal. Music is integral for kids' self-expression and processing of big emotions.

Please do not allow this position to be cut from the budget.

Thank you,  
AF

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## Director of Music position concern

England, Jennifer <jennifer.england2@montana.edu>

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 11:06 AM

To: "mhill@mcpsmt.org" <mhill@mcpsmt.org>, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>, "javgeris@mcpsmt.org" <javgeris@mcpsmt.org>, "gdecker@mcpsmt.org" <gdecker@mcpsmt.org>, "nhobbins@mcpsmt.org" <nhobbins@mcpsmt.org>, "kmercer@mcpsmt.org" <kmercer@mcpsmt.org>, "woldperson@mcpsmt.org" <woldperson@mcpsmt.org>, "jvogel@mcpsmt.org" <jvogel@mcpsmt.org>, "awake@mcpsmt.org" <awake@mcpsmt.org>, "walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org" <walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org>, "mwhicher@mcpsmt.org" <mwhicher@mcpsmt.org>, "kwitt@mcpsmt.org" <kwitt@mcpsmt.org>, "rwoelich@mcpsmt.org" <rwoelich@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Missoula School Board,

Please vote to retain Monte Grise and keep the Director of Music position for Missoula Public Schools. As someone invested in the musical community in Montana, I am deeply concerned about the negative impact that eliminating this position would have on music and music education in our state.

Sincerely,

Jennifer England

**Jennifer Shafer England, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor of Music Theory

Montana State University

jennifer.england2@montana.edu

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## Certified Art Teacher

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**Crystal Whitmore** <crystalwhitmore@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 12:02 PM

I'm writing to express my concerns at the proposed budget cut to my child's art education. Creativity is a vital piece of child development and our family is in full support of keeping a certified art teacher in each MCPS elementary school.

I understand the challenges to meeting a budget, but please consider putting our children's art lessons as a priority in budgeting.

Thank you,

Crystal Whitmore

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## Letter to the Board

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**Amy Schendel** <schendelac@billingssschools.org>

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 12:22 PM

To: mhill@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org, walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org, mwhicher@mcpsmt.org, kwitt@mcpsmt.org, rwoelich@mcpsmt.org

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider all correspondence, to keep an open mind, and to be creative problem solvers that will help BETTER the future of your district, its students and its programs. Please see my attached letter in support of keeping the Fine Arts Supervisor position in MCPS.

--

**Amy Schendel** (she/her)  
Fine Arts Education Coordinator  
Billings Public Schools  
406-281-5048  
schendelac@billingssschools.org



**Letter to the Board.pdf**

49K

February 8, 2024

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and others in support of the Fine Arts Supervisor position in the Missoula County Public Schools. I have a unique perspective on this topic, as I am in my second year serving as the Fine Arts Education Coordinator for the Billings Public Schools. There are only four of these positions in the state of Montana, however they serve the largest, most populous districts - ones who arguably have the most robust, demanding and active Fine Arts programs in their schools. Missoula County Public Schools have a reputation of leading the state in their support, promotion and participation in the arts. What is impossible to see from this vantage point is how much of that success has come from the strong leadership of a Fine Arts Supervisor at the helm for over 50 years in the community.

Visual art and music programs are uniquely complex in our schools - particularly in our largest AA districts. Teachers are often alone in a given school building, but part of a much larger team of people, one that must have strong leadership. For the Fine Arts to be recognized and successful in a school and community, they must be present and seen. This takes a great deal of work in the shadows. What the community (and school district) see is but the tip of the iceberg of the work that goes into successful concerts, displays, events, festivals and community partnerships. In addition to the massive amount of coordination, planning and organization, the Fine Arts Supervisor must be the "face" of the department to the community as a whole. They must advocate for needs at the district level and beyond. They must observe and evaluate teachers, plan and implement professional development, review and recommend curriculum and attend all events.

Without this leadership position, it will be difficult to impossible for the district to maintain the level of quality and innovation that has been the hallmark of MCPS Fine Arts. Yes, teachers will continue to try to do the good work and cover what they can, but at the likely expense of burnout, program reductions and a lack of vibrancy that the Missoula community is accustomed to in their public school Fine Arts programs. There is simply too much work to attempt to spread around to teachers who are already overwhelmed.

When faced with a budget deficit or crisis, it is common to look at the Fine Arts, the creative arts, as superfluous or unnecessary within the educational system. I (and frankly, history) would argue the opposite. Without strong music and art programs, where might we be? I would encourage the board and district leadership to get more creative in their efforts to solve these dilemmas. Don't take the easy path cutting what you don't fully comprehend or personally value. Look at the students currently served, the historical significance of these programs in MCPS and the potential these cuts will have.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this work. It isn't easy. But it is worth it.

Amy Schendel  
BPS Fine Arts Education Coordinator

*"The arts are an essential element of education, just like reading, writing, and arithmetic... music, dance, painting, and theater are all keys that unlock profound human understanding and accomplishment."*  
- William Bennett, Former US Secretary of Education

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## February 13th Public Comment

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Matthew Pettigrew <soismouthwash@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 12:35 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Dear MCPS,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and spirits. I am writing to bring to your attention a matter of utmost importance concerning the proposed reductions in the upcoming MCPS budget. Specifically, the MCPS Arts Education Director position, currently occupied by Monte Grise, is under consideration for elimination. The superintendent's recommendation is scheduled to be presented to the board on Tuesday, February 13th, during the public school board meeting at 6:00 PM.

As parents of band students, we are deeply invested in the well-being of our children's education, and the potential elimination of the MCPS Arts Education Director position raises serious concerns. The impact of this decision extends beyond mere numbers and budget lines; it directly affects the quality and breadth of the arts education our students receive.

The MCPS Arts Ed Director is instrumental in guiding and supporting various music programs that contribute significantly to our children's growth. From fine arts courses to curriculum development, instrument rentals to participation in events like All-State Honors festivals, All-City Jazz, Missoula Youth Symphony, and more – this position plays a central role in fostering a rich and diverse arts environment in our schools.

I strongly believe that cutting such a vital position jeopardizes the very essence of comprehensive arts education. As parents, we understand the transformative power of the arts in shaping our children's creativity, critical thinking, and overall well-rounded development. It is imperative that we stand united in advocating for the retention of the MCPS Arts Education Director position.

In conclusion, the potential elimination of the MCPS Arts Education Director position is a matter that goes beyond budget considerations; it strikes at the heart of our commitment to providing a holistic and enriching educational experience for our students. As parents deeply invested in the well-being of our children's education, we recognize the pivotal role that the Arts Education Director plays in nurturing creativity, critical thinking, and fostering a vibrant arts community within our schools.

The various programs and initiatives overseen by the Arts Education Director, from fine arts courses to participation in prestigious events, contribute significantly to the growth and development of our students. The proposed cut threatens not only the immediate impact on these programs but also the long-term benefits that a robust arts education brings to our children's lives.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider the potential elimination of the MCPS Arts Education Director position. By doing so, we can ensure the preservation of a comprehensive arts education that plays a vital role in shaping well-rounded individuals prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to the well-being of our students

Sincerely,

Matthew and Tami Pettigrew.

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## The Director of Music Position for Missoula Public Schools

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**Linda Antas** <linda.antas@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 12:43 PM

To: mhill@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org, walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org, mwhicher@mcpsmt.org, kwitt@mcpsmt.org, rwoelich@mcpsmt.org

Dear Missoula School Board,

I am writing as a concerned citizen, musician, and educator (Associate Professor of Music, Montana State University). Please vote to retain and keep the Director of Music position for Missoula Public Schools. I live in Bozeman and eliminating this position is not working for our music teachers, and therefore our students. Even with a TOSA (Teacher on Special Assignment), teachers have had to take on a variety of administrative duties. Their time and talents should be spent educating our students, not doing uncompensated administrative tasks.

Respectfully,  
Dr. Linda Antas

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L.K.H.

February 8th 2024

Board of Trustees  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Missoula, MT 59801

Dear Trustees,

I am a 4th grade student at Jeannette Rankin Elementary School . I just heard that you are cutting art teachers' time in our schools. I would appreciate it if you do not do this . I love my art teacher and she teaches me so much. I love art because it brings me closer to my imagination. It can also help with my grades because if I didn't do art I wouldn't have the imagination I do now.

I would also like it if you leave the Fine ARts director alone because he is taking his time and his energy to do things for kids. He also supports our art teachers so they can do their jobs.

Please leave my teachers alone.

Sincerely,  
L.K.H.  
4th grade student at Jeannette Rankin  
Sent from my Parent's email



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## Budget Cuts for Art

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**Ashley Flanagan** <aflanagan@mcpsmt.org>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 1:23 PM

Dear MCPS Board of Trustees,

I am writing to you to express my concern for the upcoming budget cuts especially in regards to the Art Specialists. Art is a vital component for our students' education at MCPS. It is instrumental in their education to continue their learning in the areas of art. Exposing our students to imaginative activities helps them grow their skills in social interactions and express themselves emotionally. Lessons in the arts reinforce problem-solving techniques, which help them to see the world in new ways, and provide access to be creative in ways they typically are not exposed.

It saddens me to think that students across MCPS will lose their weekly arts exposure to only one time every 6 weeks. MCPS will be doing a disservice to our students by lessening their exposure to art. Please reconsider and keep art in our schools on a daily basis!

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration,

Ashley Flanagan

- Parent of students at Lewis and Clark Elementary & Washington Middle School
  - Teacher at Jeannette Rankin Elementary
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## Vote to retain the director of music position

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**Beth Antonopulos** <antonopulos@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 1:33 PM

To: mhill@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org, walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org, mwhicher@mcpsmt.org, kwitt@mcpsmt.org, rwoelich@mcpsmt.org

Dear Missoula School Board,

Please vote to retain and keep the Director of Music position for Missoula Public Schools.

Our state's music teachers work with great skill and dedication to bring quality arts education to all our public-school students. I have never met a music educator who is giving less than 100% to his or her programs.

If you cut the music supervisor position, you are directly asking each music teacher to take time from their work with the kids and spend it instead on management tasks. They may cope with this initially, but over a few years, many will tire out. Quality of instruction will inevitably suffer, and the music program will diminish.

Cutting the music supervisor position would also mean foolishly discarding a fine professional teacher and administrator. He is a highly-skilled and eminently respected professional who does a great job! As a college professor of music here in Montana, I've worked with him in many capacities. He looks out for the kids and teachers he serves every day.

Finally, I have seen the negative results of losing the arts supervisor position here in Bozeman where I currently live. The music teachers are trying to pick up the slack, but frankly I expect to see several premature retirements of outstanding teachers because they just can't handle anything more. Inevitably, the quality of our music program will decline year-by-year.

The current Missoula public schools' music program was built over decades through the continuous efforts of many school board members. Please be a part of this tradition of excellence, support a working approach, and retain the position!

Sincerely,  
Beth Antonopulos  
UM (Bachelors of Music, 1995)  
Missoula resident 1992-1996; 2003-2010

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## MCPS Director of Music position

Rachel Lamphear <rachiemary25@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 2:08 PM

To: mhill@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org, walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org, mwhicher@mcpsmt.org, kwitt@mcpsmt.org, rwoelich@mcpsmt.org

Dear Missoula School Board,

Please vote to retain and/or keep the Director of Music position for Missoula Public Schools. I am a staff member at a higher ed School of Music in Bozeman as well as a parent of a BSD7 band and choir student. The elimination of this similar position in the BSD7 last year was severely detrimental to the Bozeman musical community, and it is not working. Music teachers and band and orchestra directors at all of the schools had to take on all the extra administrative work that the Director of Music position entailed, which severely impacts these teachers' workload and thus our music students' education in a negative way. And from my professional standpoint, if all of the educators at the School of Music that I work at had to take on the workload of myself and our School's Director, there is no way that these educators would be able to deliver the same, high quality music education that they currently are delivering to students. This position that your school district is seeking to eliminate will inevitably impact your teachers and students in a way that is not sustainable for a quality education in music, and it will turn teachers away as they will be forced to either take on these extra responsibilities (and risk burn out) or look to teach in districts that don't require these types of demands.

Please re-consider your districts's determination in this matter. Your students rely on you, and this decision does not put your students first. Your mission should be to serve your students. Your bottom line is your students, NOT your monetary agenda.

Sincerely,

Rachel Lamphear

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## Fine Arts Director position

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diannelthraikill@icloud.com <diannelthraikill@icloud.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 2:23 PM

Board of Trustees  
Administration Building  
909 South Ave. West  
Missoula, Mt. 59801

February 5, 2024

We are writing in regards to the Fine Arts Director position considered for elimination at the February 13, 2024 Board Meeting. We believe this position is very important in the Missoula County school system. We have lived in the Missoula County area since 1998. We both attended the University of Montana and raised our son here. The Missoula County music and arts program has been an integral part of our experience in Missoula. It has contributed not only to our son's education and experience, but also to ours as continuing musicians. The following points come to mind if we consider the loss of a Fine Arts Director.

One of the biggest Montana High School Association sanctioned events in the state happens every year in Missoula is the District 2 Music Festival. Thousands of student musicians from Western Montana come to this three day event, all organized by the Arts Education office. If it's not done by that office, then each schools' music staff would have to hire the adjudicators, make sure they're taken care of during their stay in town, prepare and collate all the adjudication forms, plus a myriad of other tasks that will take them away from working with their own students.

The Washington Middle School Orchestra was able to perform at the Northwest Division of the National Association for Music Education in Spokane, the most prestigious event possible at that age level. There have been several middle school ensembles from MCPS represented at All-Northwest throughout the years.

High School and Elementary Art Shows at Southgate Mall are facilitated through the Arts Education office.

Several of our high school ensembles have been selected to perform at All-Northwest. They have attended the Fiesta Bowl Parade in Phoenix, Arizona and The Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena on FIVE occasions. That's more than any other school district in the US other than Los Angeles. Our high school ensembles have also performed Top Ranked ratings in Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Chicago, and California.

Our Fine Arts Director has provided leadership in music education for the state of Montana and beyond. Currently, one of our high school orchestra teachers is the President of the Montana String Teachers Association. Our current Arts Director is the President Elect for the Montana Music Educators Association. He is also being considered to lead the Northwest Division because of his strong leadership skills and dedication to the arts.

The University is a hub for teacher education. When they send out student teachers twice a year for music and visual arts, they are placed by the Arts Education office.

The Fine Arts director promotes the visual and performing Arts program for the purpose of improving the quality of student outcomes and encouraging student development. Involvement in the arts is associated with gains in reading, math, critical thinking, social emotional skills, critical thinking and verbal skills. Participation in the arts reduces dropout rates and improves student attendance.

Missoula has had a Fine Arts Director or supervisor since the late 1970's. This is not a position that can be filled by anyone but an experienced administrator who has the qualifications of our present Director. MCPS needs a fine arts director so that our teachers can focus their skills on teaching, and the director can manage all the other things that make our programs so successful.

Sincerely,

Grant Thraikill  
Dianne Thraikill

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## Fine Arts Director

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**Martin or Lois VanMil** <lmvanmil@msn.com>

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 2:52 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

This position should not be eliminated because of the importance it plays in all parts of the arts education in our schools.

All forms of art are essential to the complete education of our children.

Please find other places to cut costs.

Lois VanMil

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## Elementary School Art

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E.S.

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 2:55 PM

To: PublicComment@mcpsmt.org

Dear School Board Members,

I am a sixth grader at Meadow Hill Middle School. I have always loved school and have been very interested in art throughout my life. I personally think that it's important to introduce children to art in school, especially after my experiences with it.

Though budget cuts may make it harder to keep certain teachers in, art isn't something that deserves to be taken away. Besides laying off many teachers MCPS needs, we may also be removing an outlet of self-expression for these kids. Art is a way to calm down, to get kids interested in their environments, and it is also screen-free. For kids like me with ADHD, art might be like therapy, and to reduce access to art class is a little absurd. Art is one of the most important things to include in life because it introduces kids to different ways to express themselves, to grow, and to bloom in life. To find something like that in school might get a few more kids looking forward to their day. I think it's important to keep art in elementary school kids' lives.

Thank you for your time,

E. S.

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## MCPS Arts Education Director position elimination

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Radle, Tim <TRadle@mt.gov>

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 2:56 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I want to be clear as a father and stepfather of four children whom have all participated in MCPS music as well as the fine arts offerings that are available, I do not support the elimination of the MCPS Arts Education Director position. Not only would this negatively impact current opportunities for youth in these programs, I believe it is the next step towards eliminating further the music and art education offerings moving forward, as there will no longer be an advocate at the management level to fight for the historical funding granted to these programs.

I clearly understand the need for the reductions in the overall budget, as COVID funding has now disappeared it is easy to continue to desire the many positions and opportunities that funding allowed. However, to cut the art program further (it is a faint whisper of what I had growing up) or the music program to its bones is to ignore the overwhelming evidence of how these programs give a place, space, and above all improve the overall education of the participants.

Music specifically has over 50 years of research demonstrating how it improves math scores for its' participants. A Meta Analysis also showed it may help keep students engaged and ease fears and anxiety, goals I know are at the top of the school board agenda for students. (Citation of Meta study below)

Additionally, Music and the arts exemplify many of the goals that education has pursued more recently: Group work, teaching to mastery, clear demonstration of the skills acquired (often in a public venue), and the very structure of the band and orchestra (chairs and parts) has always allowed for differentiation amongst different learners. Music helps all youth perform better (in math and elsewhere) rather than focusing on accelerated or slower learners, and there is no doubt that music and art will be part of all of our lives till our ends, enjoyed perhaps even more when our bodies and minds may have long given up on other school activities.

I know it is never easy to find cuts, but let's look again at the priorities and not sacrifice such a lifelong skill and appreciation with so many side benefits, for short term solutions.

Thank you,

Tim Radle

<https://phys.org/news/2023-06-combining-math-music-higher-scores.html#:~:text=Mathematics-,Combining%20math%20with%20music%20leads%20to%20higher%20test%20scores%2C%20according,of%2050%20years%20of%20research&text=Children%20do%20better%20at%20math,on%20the%20topic%20has%20revealed.>

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## Arts Education Director

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**Hulsey, Roman** <roman.hulsey@umconnect.umt.edu>

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 3:17 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello, I'm writing in regards to the potential dissolving of the Arts education position. As a performance major at the University of Montana I'm against dissolving this position. The position is incredibly important to community organizing, taking weight off music teachers, and the arts in Montana as a whole. If it is dissolved it does not bode well for the state as a whole.

Thank You  
Roman Hulsey

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## Supervisor of Fine Arts- Missoula County

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Erin Grummett <grummette@billingsschools.org>  
Bcc: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 3:43 PM

Dear Superintendent Hill, and Missoula County School Board,

I would like to express my concern over the recommendation to eliminate the position of Supervisor of Fine Arts. As an educator, my supervisors have been invaluable to me over the last 30 years. The quality of my music program is due, in large part, to the persons serving in this role. Thank you to your Fine Arts Supervisor, for serving the staff and students in Missoula County!

I would ask you to consider the work of this position, because these Supervisors carry a lot of weight on their shoulders. Planning, organizing, attending events, showcasing the work of your incredible staff and students takes so much time and effort.

Besides *scheduling staff, concerts and supplying materials*, who would bring in pertinent *Professional Development and PLC* classes for this staff? It takes a Fine Arts Coordinator with connections to find something/someone relevant.

Who would be responsible for the handling/storage and payment for *school district instrument* repairs? Expensive items can get lost in the shuffle quickly if one person is not on top of this.

Who would schedule all of the buildings/rooms/adjudicators for soloists and ensembles during *District and State Music Festivals* (which bring a lot of revenue to your town, by the way).

Who would be the *community liaison* for Montana Music Educators Conference? The entire state will be on watch.

Let's not forget the culture of Arts within your community. **FINE ARTS THRIVE** in Missoula County. Who will your community members look to for social media?...How will your incredible staff and student population be showcased in your community?

What a shame this would be for your school district, and community.  
Please reconsider... Missoula County is too large and important to go without a Fine Arts Supervisor at the helm!

In Harmony,  
Mrs. Erin Grummett  
University of Montana, BME '94

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Mrs. Erin Grummett  
grummette@billingsschools.org  
Director of Bands,  
Will James Middle School  
281-6122

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**MCPS Arts**

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**Ed Childers** <ed.childers@charter.net>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 3:50 PM

To: Missoula County Public Schools  
Board of Trustees

From: Edward and Patricia Childers

Regarding: MCPS Director of Fine Arts

A lot of people have given you excellent reasons to support the arts, and the position of Fine Arts Director. Here's something personal.

Monte Gris  is our son-in-law. He left his job in Minnesota to return to Montana, and it's been great having him and his family in Missoula. I'd like them to stay if they can.

Our kids went through MCPS. They were active in music programs. They were fortunate enough to get scholarships in music at the University of Montana. Both of them, along with their spouses, are making their living through music. To quote Grace Decker's blog, music can give "career-focused, personalized, and real-world learning opportunities to kids."

Thanks for your consideration.

Ed and Trish Childers  
1755 W Central  
Missoula, MT 59801  
406-728-3751

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## Arts Education Director

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**KD Dickinson** <kd@porticorealestate.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 4:09 PM

Dear Trustees:

I am adamantly opposed to cutting or dissolving the Arts Education Director position for MCPS. Music programs in the schools are essential to the balance of education our kids receive. It is a necessary part of their growth. I have personally witnessed this in meeting so many music students of my partner - who has been teaching for many many years.

Missoula is one of the increasingly few remaining school districts IN THE NATION with music programs still in the schools. It's easy to take that for granted, but it is now highly at risk of disappearing or getting massively cut. Not acceptable in my opinion. What would schools be like without music programs? How does this affect our greater Missoula community in both short and long term?

Please do the right thing for our kids and our community and keep the music programs in schools alive and well funded and an important part of our kids lives.

Thank you,

KD Dickinson  
Business owner and active community member

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Tracy Hardy  
4409 23rd Ave  
Missoula, MT 59803

February 8, 2024

Board of Trustees  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Missoula, MT 59801

Dear Trustees,

When the budget proposal for the 2024-25 school year is put to you for a vote of approval, I am imploring you to VOTE NO!. The current budget proposal eliminates the position of Arts Education Director. This position is VITAL to the continued success and evolution of our Arts programs and should never be cut.

The Arts Education Director supports ALL students in our K-12 school district. Every student, K-5 gets music AND visual arts classes. Students in grades 6-8 get music classes with visual arts as an option. Every high school student must take a fine arts class (music, visual art or performing arts) to graduate. EVERY. SINGLE. STUDENT enrolled in our district is affected by the presence and support of the Arts Education Director. The Arts Director supports and manages all of the behind the scenes/day to day activities that must happen to have successful Arts programs while teachers get to focus their fabulous skills on teaching kids.

Missoula County Public Schools (and the Missoula community) is known for the quality of its arts programs. Our arts programs have been grown and cultivated, not only by the quality arts teachers we employ, but by the people who have been held in this position over the last 46 years. There has been a person employed in the position of Arts Director/Supervisor continuously since 1978. The people in this position have been staunch advocates for the arts while creating and growing traditions that Missoula is proud of. The Southgate Mall Art Show, Red Wave, Rose Bowl Marching Bands, ZACC monster project, All-City music groups, SPARK! Arts, The Fiddle Float and 5th grade Solo Day. If you have lived in Missoula and have had students in our public schools, you have heard and probably experienced all or some of the events listed. All of these public events, and many more are events and projects that came to fruition and continue to thrive because of the leadership of the Arts Director.

Without an Arts Education Director, the arts department will lose its advocate, protector and voice at the table within the MCPS administration structure making the arts department vulnerable to further attacks and cuts. Without an Arts Education Director, our teachers will be responsible for taking on the duties and responsibilities of that position if they want to provide the same opportunities to their students. Our already overburdened and underpaid teachers cannot teach students effectively AND do the job of the Arts Education Director at the same time.

The current superintendent may argue that the position has been cut in another AA school district and that it has little to no impact. This is not true. Staff and community members from that AA school district report that replacing the Arts Director with a TOSA has severely and negatively impacted their teachers and students. A superintendent should never make such a gross and negligent recommendation based on the fact that "someone else did it". Planning to replace a highly trained Arts administrator with a TOSA is

insulting to both teachers, our union, highly trained and educated administrators and to our Missoula Arts Community.

Consider the history, importance, and the impact that the position of Arts Education Director has had on our students, our families and our community over the last FORTY SIX years and do not approve the current budget proposal. Our arts community in our Missoula Schools will be forever changed if our district loses this valuable position.

Sincerely,

Tracy Hardy - MM, BME Parent, Music Educator, Product of MCPS arts department, Special Education Teacher, Concerned Citizen

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## Art Teachers in the MCPS schools

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Emma Wright <emmabwright@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 6:33 PM

I am writing out of significant concern for the potential transition from having art teachers embedded in our schools to having traveling art teachers once 'again throughout the district. This change threatens to rob students of a crucial opportunity to spend time expressing themselves through art, developing creative problem solving skills and learning flexibility. Not only that, but art teachers also serve as providers of support, encouragement and as trusted adults for children longitudinally over their time in school. Having transient art teachers would diminish the potential for those relationships to form and develop. As a Family Physician in Missoula, I can attest to the immense mental health burden that the pandemic has magnified in our children. What our children need now is more long-term, trusted relationships, not less. I also don't understand the significant discrepancy in the value placed on musical arts over visual arts in our schools. Why do students in middle school spend 1/4 of the time in visual arts that they do in musical education? I know that the district understands the value of the arts in this community which was expressed directly in an article about the new charter school that will emphasize arts education. In an article in the Missoulian from 1/22/24, I read the following quote from Barbara Frank: "This was a way for us to really dig deeper into an arts integration model, which is something that's been exposed to us over the years," Frank said. "We just see the joy that it brings students and teachers and so we really wanted to build this school around that model of joy and creativity. Just living in an art-rich community, we feel like this is a great school for Missoula." Don't *all* of our students deserve joy and creativity? Shouldn't all of our schools reflect the priority that this community places on art?

Finally, these art teachers have been serving our children tirelessly in the wake of the pandemic as much more than art teachers. They have been therapists and interventionists in addition to helping children explore their creativity at a time that we know has been immensely challenging for all in education. We owe it to them to make it clear that we value them and do not take all of their hard work and sacrifice for granted.

Please consider maintaining embedded art teachers in all of our district schools. Not doing so would represent a huge loss for our children and the community.

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## Art in School.

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**Stacey Duncan** <shollings@me.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Feb 8, 2024 at 7:46 PM

I am writing to voice my concern about removing art and art teachers from the school.

Art is an extremely important part of a child's personal expression and one of the only ways they get to show their own personality these days.

At the elementary level I feel that art, outdoor activities and movement are far more important for them to facilitate active learning. More so than sitting still working on a computer at school and being lectured at.

I have been shocked at the amount of time my kids tell me they spend on the computer at school. Often times they tell me they get to watch something or play games. Maybe be could remind that free time and make that art time?

Lastly, where is the money going from our increase in taxes? I don't understand when taxes keep going up and we keep voting levies yet we seem to always be money poor on our schools?

Please keep art in our schools and help the teachers with their current class load.

Thank you  
Stacey

Sent from my iPhone

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## Fine Arts cuts

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**Anna Puryear** <annalpuryear@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 8:20 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

MCPS Board Members,

I know there is a budget crisis in our district right now that has been on the horizon for many years. The idea that cutting the arts is the solution is not where we should be looking. The proposed cutting of the Fine Arts director seems like a devaluing of all the opportunities currently available to our students. MCPS is currently involved in the 21c grant with one of the arms being Art Integration. It seems there is a priority for arts integration but not for someone to guide the use of funds and implementation of plans.

In addition, arts education is vital to the success of our children. There is ample research showing the connections between language arts and math achievement to music and art. In addition, many times these areas are where children who struggle academically, socially, or emotionally have a place to connect, feel safe, and perhaps excel. MCPS has spent money, time, and effort in social emotional supports in the past few years. It seems all of these supports plus the fine arts are now on the chopping block.

I urge you to reconsider the cutting of the Fine Arts Director and the art teachers in elementary. Our children deserve a well rounded, well implemented education.

Anna Puryear



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**cutting fine arts administor**

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dizzycat6@bresnan.net <dizzycat6@bresnan.net>

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 9:44 AM

Reply-To: dizzycat6@bresnan.net

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

To All board members and superintendent of Missoula County Public Schools. This is the absolute worst decision that you can make. I am a 77 year old who has never not voted for a school levy but this decision could change my future choice when asked to vote again. I have had children and grandchildren involved in the school system over the past 50 years and all have them participated and flourished as a result of the Fine Arts offered. The program administrator is and has been a reason the Missoula Schools is considered to have one of the finest Fine Arts programs in the State. I have watched this program be targeted previously in years past. I have been pleased to see that for a number of years it has not been the subject of where to cut when budget issues arise. This is a travesty. When I see the addition of future sports teams (baseball) which will eventually tap the budget I am even more angered. I understand that a budget has to be met but how about asking sports to not have coaches or trainers.... Really... The fine arts administrator is the conduit that keeps this program viable and staff wanting to work in it. In years past, my daughter was a music teacher and over the early years of her employment in this area it was always the target for budget issues. This made her decide to get certified in a different area and has continued to be employed by Missoula County Public Schools. I hope that other options can be found.

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## Public Comment 2/13/24

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**Everett, Ashlynn** <ashlynn.everett@umconnect.umt.edu>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 10:01 AM

To the MCPS Board of Trustees,

My name is Ashlynn Everett, and I am a student at the University of Montana studying Violin Performance and Speech Pathology. I am writing in strong opposition of the proposed dissolution of the Arts Education Director position for Missoula County Public Schools.

As a student who grew up in the MCPS district and was involved in Missoula Youth Orchestra, Missoula Youth Symphony, AA Orchestra Festivals, All State Orchestra Festivals, and many other MCPS music events, music played a quintessential role in shaping who I am today. School ensembles have given me the opportunity to create a network of professional relationships, travel to Hawaii, enhance my leadership skills, and develop my identity as a musician. As a current member of the UM Symphony Orchestra, I am proud to play with my cohort and for my community. In order to develop the next generation of artists in our community, we must ensure that music remains an essential part of our schools' curricula, and the Arts Education Director plays a key role in coordinating all of the events that make our program special.

The MCPS arts program allowed me to see my potential as a musician, and these same opportunities should be available for my siblings, friends, and all future Missoula students. Part of my decision to attend UM is due to Missoula's thriving arts community, which is impossible to maintain without support in schools. Please continue to give the arts the support that they deserve, as it is truly a lifeline for our students and our community.

Sincerely,  
Ashlynn Everett

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## Arts Education Director

**J.T.W.**

Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 10:47 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello, I am reaching out in regards to the Arts Education Director position within MCPS. As a member of Sentinel High School Jazz Gold, I will be unable to attend the board meeting this coming Tuesday, the 13th. Though I will not be in attendance, I would like to share my insight surrounding the continuation of this position. As an involved member of the district's Fine Arts program, the role that he has had in my life has been huge. Being able to begin my musical career at such a young age with the opportunities I have had shapes who I am. Band festivals, events, and every other amazing opportunity organized by he has shaped me and my life. I cannot imagine a world where that could be taken away, and more importantly not in place for others in the years to come. Please consider keeping the role of Arts Education Director, and finding other spending cuts to make in places less vital to the wellbeing and life of hundreds and hundreds of students.

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## Arts Education Director Position

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**Beth Covitt** <bcovitt@umich.edu>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 11:00 AM

Hello,

As an MCPS parent of a fifth grader who has discovered a passion for the violin this year thanks in large part to the MCPS music education program, I am writing to let you know how important the Arts Education Director position and the MCPS music education program is in our City.

While I'm not a musician myself, I have long appreciated that Missoula is a music town with a vibrant music community that starts in our K-12 schools. My fifth grader was not a big music fan when he was a toddler, Kindermusik classes notwithstanding, but in the last few years, and especially with MCPS music programs like attending a performance at the University and choosing and learning to play an instrument in orchestra class, he has become a huge music aficionado. He brings his violin home on weekends and practices - venturing beyond the songs his orchestra class is working on and finding violin scores for his favorite popular songs by Imagine Dragons and trying them out on his violin.

The MCPS music program led by the Arts Education Director introduces music and other arts to our young children, making an investment in the continuation of Missoula as a vibrant arts community for a city of our relatively small size.

This is an investment that is well worth making - please maintain the Arts Education Director position at MCPS to help maintain Missoula as the amazing culturally vibrant community that makes music and arts learning available to ALL of the students in our public schools, not just youth who are able to afford expensive music and arts lessons outside of school (and I've recently been looking into this and violin lessons outside of school are shockingly expensive and likely to be out of reach for most).

Sincerely,

Beth Covitt, MCPS parent

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## Arts Education Director position

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A.G.

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 11:12 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: Lewis Nelson <lnelson@mcpsmt.org>

Dear MCPS board,

I'm assuming this email is reaching all members of the board.

My name is A.G. and I'm a senior at Sentinel High School. I have been involved in band programs since 5th grade and wanted to voice my concern about the possible elimination of the arts education director position. Unfortunately, I can't be present at the school board meeting due to my participation in a jazz band concert that I have been looking forward to.

The privilege of having such a strong music program and being able to partake in it is a very special and unique experience. It has shaped who I am as a person and what I will do in my future. As someone who focuses on STEM classes with a heavy emphasis on math and science, band has given me skills I wouldn't otherwise know. It has taught me appreciation for all forms of music. It has opened doors that would otherwise be closed. It has shown me a beautiful language that people worldwide can communicate with. The city of Missoula is so lucky to have this enriching program. I am concerned that by cutting this position, many students who wouldn't otherwise be involved in any art subjects would no longer have the opportunity to participate in such a way. I believe that the arts program director serves a role in making music available for a wider array of students and not just those seeking a career in the arts.

With this said, I am sure you are faced with a challenging dilemma where there is no option other than removing positions. I wanted to make sure to speak up for what made such a valuable contribution to my k-12 public school experience as well as many of my peers'.

Sincerely,  
A.G.

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**RE: MCPS Fine Arts Director**

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**Robert Ball** <rball@youkickit.com>

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 11:20 AM

To: "mhill@mcpsmt.org" <mhill@mcpsmt.org>, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>, "javgeris@mcpsmt.org" <javgeris@mcpsmt.org>, "gdecker@mcpsmt.org" <gdecker@mcpsmt.org>, "nhobbins@mcpsmt.org" <nhobbins@mcpsmt.org>, "kmercerc@mcpsmt.org" <kmercerc@mcpsmt.org>, "woldperson@mcpsmt.org" <woldperson@mcpsmt.org>, "jvogel@mcpsmt.org" <jvogel@mcpsmt.org>, "awake@mcpsmt.org" <awake@mcpsmt.org>, "walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org" <walker-andrews@mcpsmt.org>, "mwhicher@mcpsmt.org" <mwhicher@mcpsmt.org>, "kwitt@mcpsmt.org" <kwitt@mcpsmt.org>, "rwoelich@mcpsmt.org" <rwoelich@mcpsmt.org>

MCPS Board,

I was under the impression that the Missoula Education system was here to educate our students to become meaningful and productive members of society. You simply cannot accomplish that goal in a more efficient way than through the building blocks of the arts. The arts build invaluable foundational skills our students will use in life every single day. It doesn't mean every student is going to become accomplished artists, or even have a long term interest in the arts. Maybe that is the reason the arts are always towards the top of the list of chopping block items when it comes to budget discussions. Arts naturally push students to be creative when solving problems, they build confidence, they allow for the expression of ideas, the ability to see things from a different perspective, they provide the tools to make connections that transcend language barriers, and so much more.

You may ask why I'm so passionate about this. It's simple. I wouldn't be the person I am today if it were not for the arts. I'm not sure I would have stayed in school. Why is the Fine Arts Director role critical? I took part in the Missoula Red Wave, All City Jazz, All City Winds, and the District Music Festival. I was able to borrow a well maintained instrument from the schools in order to participate in those events until I grew my skills enough to warrant buying my own instrument, which was a big investment and a barrier to many. These events kept me engaged in school, and they were a much needed stress outlet. Without those key events in my early years, I wouldn't have confidence to stand in front of an audience and perform, and they gave me a pathway to a scholarship to be the first in our family to go to college.

Missoula has a very successful arts program and a huge portion of the success of that program rests on the Fine Arts Director. This role isn't something that can simply be "absorbed" by other school administrators. It takes a specialized skill set and considerable time to be successful. I ask, why would you even consider removing such an important and impactful role from this community?

--

Robert Ball  
Sentinel Class of 1998,

and all thanks to the arts!

Vice President of IT, Allegiance  
MSU-Billings Music Major  
UM-Business Administration Major  
Missoula Symphony Board Member  
Leadership Montana 2016 and Masters 2020 Alumni  
All City Jazz Participant  
All City Winds Participant  
The Red Wave Participant  
4 year All State Bands  
2 year All American Bands  
Missoula City Jazz Band  
Missoula Community Concert Band  
UM Alumni Band  
Private instructor on Euphonium and Trumpet  
Pilot  
Leather Smith  
Quilter

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## Fine Arts Director Position

**Bradley Elison** <bradleyelison@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 8:34 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>, "mwhicher@mcpsmt.org" <mwhicher@mcpsmt.org>, "woldperson@mcpsmt.org" <woldperson@mcpsmt.org>

My name is Brad Elison and I am a long time Missoula resident, a strong supporter of public education and a direct beneficiary of the outstanding fine arts programs that have made Missoula the premier arts community that it is. I also have nine years of experience as a school board member and chairperson in Clancy MT so I am familiar with the challenges of balancing a financially strapped district budget.

I am strongly opposed to the proposal to eliminate the position of Fine Arts Director from the MCPS budget. I understand the current budget crisis and the need to cut expenses but this is not the place to do so. It may seem that the responsibilities of an arts director could be shifted to a teacher or another administrator but I believe that is a short sighted and dangerous way of thinking. A dedicated arts director can and does provide the support and vision for arts education that makes the difference between excellence and mediocrity. While other districts may be cutting similar positions those are not districts Missoula should be emulating. As I suggested above, we are the premier fine arts community in Montana and once we lose that focus it will be extremely difficult to recover.

One last point. While the discussion is likely to address the position of Fine Arts Director and not the person currently in the role, the person in the role, should be considered. His level of expertise and knowledge is unparalleled in the Montana education system and we would be foolish to let that go.

Thank you for considering my perspective.  
Bradley L Elison, Ed.D.  
Hellgate Class of 1979

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## Arts Education Director Position

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**caleb nelson** <calebsonofnel@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 11:56 AM

Hello,

I'm just writing to let you know I STRONGLY disagree with getting rid of this position for the sake of the health of the overall arts education program. What about sports??? Can't you cut something there? Arts education always draws the short straw. What are the kids who aren't gifted in sports supposed to do? I have one child in middle school who is autistic and another in elementary with down syndrome. Neither of these kids will excel in the sports program, but the Arts education program is vital for them. They have made unlikely friendships through music programs where they can relate to other peers outside of a math room or on the gym floor where they flounder.

Think about the mental health of all students before pulling the rug out from under critical programs.

Thanks very much.  
Caleb Nelson

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## Cutting the Fine Arts Director

D.R.

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 12:05 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Mr. Hill and MCPS school board,

My name is D.R., I am a junior french horn and trumpet player in the Hellgate band and I am involved with theater at Hellgate, the fine arts mean so much to me and the people I care about, none of us want to see them be taken away from future students in MCPS. Just last week fifteen band students from Hellgate, Big Sky, and Sentinel went to all the middle schools encouraging kids to stay in band. We pointed out the opportunities that high school band could give them such as all of the traveling we do and the festivals we get to participate at. All of these incredible festivals such as All-State, Double AA, and All-Northwest, they are some of the best parts about being in high school music, are you really willing to take that away from future performing arts students? Band and theater are both very important to me and I hate to see them being treated as replaceable because they are not, arts are essential to teaching students confidence and creativity. You may think that fine arts will still be there without the Fine Arts Director but that isn't reality, you would be killing the fine arts in Missoula schools. These programs that mean so much to me and so many others can't survive without the proper funding and help from people like you. Slowly music in Missoula would change and disappear, it would go quiet and I don't want to believe that is what you want. Please consider what I have said and what all the others who are voicing their concerns are saying about this decision. You don't want to lose these programs.

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## Cutting the Arts and Education Director Position

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Mary Wooldridge <maryw@missoulapubliclibrary.org>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 12:07 PM

Dear Esteemed Members of the Board,

I trust this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. My name is Mary Wooldridge, and I am writing to you as a concerned member of our community, a parent, and an advocate for the integral role that arts and education play in the development of our children. I am compelled to express my deep concern and opposition to the proposed decision of cutting the Arts and Education Director position within our esteemed public school.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my gratitude for your unwavering commitment to our children's education. I understand that as board members, you face numerous challenges and difficult decisions in ensuring the efficient functioning of our school district. However, I earnestly implore you to reconsider the potential elimination of the Arts and Education Director position, a role that I believe is crucial for the holistic development of our students.

The Arts and Education Director serves as a linchpin in fostering creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence among our students. By orchestrating and promoting various artistic and cultural programs, this position plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals who are not only academically proficient but also possess a rich tapestry of skills and experiences that extend beyond the classroom.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance, social skills, and overall cognitive development. The Arts and Education Director acts as a catalyst in providing our children with opportunities to explore their creative potential, cultivating a love for learning that goes beyond textbooks and standardized tests. Eliminating this position would deprive our students of a well-rounded education that prepares them for the challenges of the future.

Moreover, the Arts and Education Director is instrumental in fostering a sense of community within our schools. Through collaborative projects, performances, and exhibitions, students not only develop a sense of pride in their achievements but also forge lasting connections with their peers, teachers, and the broader community. The arts have the unique ability to transcend cultural and social boundaries, creating a space for dialogue, understanding, and unity.


I understand that budget constraints and financial considerations are often at the forefront of such decisions. However, I believe that investing in the arts is an investment in the future of our community. The benefits of a comprehensive education, which includes a robust arts program, far outweigh the short-term savings that might be achieved by eliminating the Arts and Education Director position.

In conclusion, I implore you to reconsider the decision to cut the Arts and Education Director position. Our community, our children, and the future of education in our district depend on preserving the holistic approach to learning that encompasses both academic and artistic pursuits. I am confident that, as dedicated stewards of our educational system, you will weigh the long-term benefits and make the decision that aligns with the best interests of our students and our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am optimistic that, together, we can ensure the continued success and enrichment of our public school system.

Sincerely,

Mary Wooldridge  
Public Relations Specialist  
Missoula Public Library  
maryw@missoulapubliclibrary.org  
(406) 425-2013

cid:image002.png@01D9BFB9.DA21E650

Spark Curiosity. Make Connections. Thrive Together.

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## **We Support Art**

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**Katie Orozco** <katiemorozco@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 12:36 PM

We can say with confidence that our two elementary kids at MCPS value art as part of their curriculum. Our kids see art as a way to express themselves and to see others express themselves. Art is a universal language. We would be devastated if the full-time art teacher and art schedule was cut.

Katie and Ryan Orozco

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## Art Program

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**Kalynn McDaniel** <kalynn12.km@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 12:58 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hi,

My name is Kalynn McDaniel. I currently have a 7th and 5th grader in MCPS. I have been made aware of the drastic cuts the MCPS is planning for the Arts program moving forward.

My older son is in Meadow Hill, thanks to the amazing teachers he's had in band for the last 2 years, he was invited to the All-City wind ensemble this year. He was so proud and excited to be invited, it's a well known honor to be asked to be a part of. The opportunity is something as parents we couldn't have given him, we cannot afford private lessons. He works hard to get better because he has been told about the opportunities music can provide him in High School, college and beyond.

My 5th grader has ADHD and reduced processing speed, his favorite days are Art and Band days. He loves the opportunity to be creative. Learning in these ways is much easier for him and a very needed break for his brain, he comes home happier and is more engaged in his normal school work on those days.

Taking music and art out of the schools takes away culture, balance, joy and opportunities from children who would not get to experience these things outside of the school system. Missoula has a rich and vibrant art and music scene. I know the community in the past has stepped up for the kids and schools and I hope you will consider the students, and teachers who this will impact.

Thank you,  
Kalynn McDaniel

Get Outlook for Android

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## Arts Education Director

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**Dylan Wright** <dylan@familiesfirstmt.org>

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 12:59 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

To Whom It May Concern,

Please do not cut the position of the Arts Education Director. Missoula is a thriving arts community and the arts are our heart and soul. We need leadership in this department that can bring all of the different entities together.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dylan Wright, PCLC, LSC

*He/Him/His*

Wellness Education Coordinator

Families First/Montana Happiness Project

(406) 541-8963

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February 9, 2024

Dear Missoula County School Board,

Today I write imploring you to continue your support of the fine arts. They are an integral piece of Missoula youths' education. Art and Music education enrich our children and allow them to express themselves in ways that cannot be underestimated.

As a family nurse practitioner (FNP) in this town I have patients that are enrolled in your school system. When I ask what the child's favorite subject is, very often I hear art and music. The World Health Organization is currently conducting research to try and quantify the impact of the arts on health and wellbeing, but I can tell you from my practice, our children need those programs to develop emotionally and socially into healthy beings—especially after the damaging social isolation of the covid pandemic. Depression and anxiety is rampant amongst my pediatric population, and the arts are an amazing therapy for those conditions.

Research shows that education in fine arts contributes to brain development thus leading to greater success in reasoning and problem solving. Additionally it engenders better skills in social interactions, emotional regulation, cognitive reasoning and problem solving. These gifts of the fine art education train our children to think creatively thus allowing them to create a better future.

Think back to your own arts education, use those skills to problem solve, and let's come up with a plan that supports the arts.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Bloom, FNP

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## Arts education director

1 message

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**Jaclyn DeGroot** <degroot.jaclyn@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 9, 2024 at 2:21 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello. I am writing in support of the Arts Education Director. I am not only an MCPS parent but an MCPS employee. I see how not only my children, but all students benefit from fine arts and having a creative outlet. This potential cut is concerning because I fear it will lead to cuts of fine arts teachers or fine arts departments crumbling in schools. Please reconsider this potential cut.

Sincerely,

Jaclyn DeGroot



**February 9, 2024**

To Superintendent Micah Hill and the Members of the Missoula County School Board of Trustees:

We write to you as concerned parents, arts educators, and community members to strongly urge you to protect arts education in Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS). We as artists, arts educators, teacher educators and professors at the University of Montana (UM) believe that it is critical that the district keep the Arts Education Director position, the five elementary art positions and maintain funding for *SPARK! Arts*. This letter articulates the numerous benefits the Arts Education Director provides the students, teachers, and the arts education programs at MCPS and the UM, which ultimately improve arts teachers in the state of Montana, across the region and throughout the nation. Additionally, we provide reasoning below for keeping all visual art teachers and maintaining funding for *SPARK!*

The decades-long Arts Education Director position in MCPS provides focused, unified support for arts education for the students in the district. The Director offers centralized professional development for teachers. This professional development supports a sequential arts education curriculum for students, which fosters a deeper understanding of human expression across time, space, and culture for students. The Arts Education Director also provides for materials (including a wide variety of instruments stored at the Administration Building) and curricula for the music teachers in the district. When curricula and teachers are unified, they better prepare students to understand the visual world around them. The teachers are also best equipped to provide quality artistic experiences for the students. An Arts Education Director creates the cohesion needed at the district level to build a strong team across the arts.

*SPARK! Arts* serves a vital role in the Missoula community. From providing arts enhancements and integrative arts experiences for the students in the district, the programs *SPARK!* provides allow the MCPS students to connect with the wide and varied ecosystem of arts within our community. This exposure to a variety of arts through performances as well as through educational opportunities provided by visiting Teaching Artists allow these students to be informed consumers and participants in the arts from a young age. These students can, in turn, become more informed and cultured citizens as they enter adulthood. Having this kind of informed citizenry can only have a positive impact on our community.

The Arts Education Director partners with arts organizations such as *SPARK!* as well as with the Fifth Grade Arts Experience at The Missoula Art Museum. These partnerships give the students in the district direct, hands-on arts opportunities throughout their K-12 arts education in theater, dance, music, and visual art education. Through the Arts Education Director's office, Missoula has successfully hosted for several years one of the biggest Montana High School Association sanctioned events in the state: the District II Music Festival. This festival brings thousands of student musicians from across

western Montana to our community for this multi-day event. This festival would not be possible without the support of a competent Arts Education Director.

The managerial infrastructure needed to keep these decades-long community ties necessitate the background of someone who has been trained with a rich, robust arts background. While arts teachers have this robust background, managing the community ties takes more time and energy than a teacher can provide, being that they are with students 30+ hours a week. The Arts Education Director has been instrumental in providing enriching arts-based opportunities for our K-12 students. This includes helping to send our high school ensembles to events such as the Fiesta Bowl Parade in Phoenix, The Tournament of Roses Parade in California, and to such prestigious music education events as the Northwest conference of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). The current Director, Dr. Monte Gris , is the President-Elect of our Montana Music Educators Association organization and is being considered to lead the Northwest division of NAfME. Being in these positions gives him unique opportunities for influence and to make connections across the region that can only benefit our students and their ability to interact with the arts.

The Arts Education Director position is integral to music and art education programs at UM. Professor Michael Ruybalid and Professor Jennifer Combe developed close relationships with former Arts Education Director John Combs and current Arts Education Director as they placed teacher-candidates in field experiences across K-12 arts positions. Jennifer and Michael always appreciate the thoughtfulness that Monte and John and others before them had when they considered placements, from finding the best “fit” for the student teacher and cooperating teacher to being mindful of spreading the workload across the district so as not to overload the excellent arts educators we have in this District.

In addition to keeping the Arts Education Director position and the funding for *SPARK!*, we urge you to retain the five art teachers that are slated to be eliminated from the budget so that each school in the district has its own art teacher. One teacher per school eliminates the need for art teachers to travel between schools rather than develop one deeper relationship with a single school community. It is imperative that art teachers work with one school for numerous reasons. First and foremost, the ties a teacher makes with students and teachers at one school run deeper. These deeper relationships make for a stronger bond between students and teacher, which can result in higher student engagement and better learning outcomes. We have seen first-hand from our own experience as teachers in K-12 schools that engagement with the arts can serve to provide students with positive and uplifting experiences in their young life. For some students, engagement with the arts may be the highlight of their day. The opportunity for an integrated curriculum is greater when the art teacher is at one site, as the relationships can grow between classroom teachers and specialists. The general music teachers reap the benefits of teaching on one school site. We ask that the art teachers be able to reap similar benefits by being at just one school site.

We have been at this crossroads before. The budget shortfall is real, and we understand that choices must be made. We urge you all to not cut these positions and support for these programs. The city of Missoula is truly a hub in this region for the arts. A walk downtown can have you walking by a line of individuals waiting for a show in the Wilma, hearing the sounds of a concert from Caras Park or a concert in Washington-Grizzly stadium in the distance. Individuals like our Arts Education Director, those who are a part of *SPARK! Arts* and those arts specialists in our schools help link the students in this area with the vast array of arts opportunities available to them. The removal of these positions and support for these programs that are proposed to be cut will no doubt have a deleterious influence on our ability to provide exposure of the arts for our young people. We urge you to vote no on these budget cuts.

Sincerely,

***Ms. Jennifer Combe, M.F.A.***  
***Dr. Michael Ruybalid, Ph.D.***

(M) = MANDATORY





AGENDA ITEM: 9.B.i.  
DATE: 2.13.2024

# DRAFT

## Missoula County Public Schools

# 2024-2025 School Calendar

## Middle Schools Grades 6-8

<b>July 2024</b> S M T W TH F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	<b>August 2024</b> S M T W TH F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25  26  27  28 29 30 31	<b>September 2024</b> S M T W TH F S 1  2 3 4 <u>5</u> 6 7 8 9 10 11 <u>12</u> 13 14 15 16 17 18 <u>19</u> 20 21 22 23 24 25 <u>26</u> 27 28 29 30	<b>October 2024</b> S M T W TH F S 1 2 <u>3</u> 4 5 6 7 8 9 <u>10</u> 11 12 13 14 15 16  17  18 19 20 21 22 23 <u>24</u> 25 26 27 28 29 30 <u>31</u>
<b>November 2024</b> S M T W TH F S 1  2 3 4 5 6 <u>7</u> 8 9 10 11 12 13  14  15 16 17 18 19 20 <u>21</u> 22 23 24 25 26  27  28  29 30	<b>December 2024</b> S M T W TH F S 1 2 3 4 <u>5</u> 6 7 8 9 10 11 <u>12</u> 13 14 15 16 17 18 <u>19</u> 20 21 22  23  24  25  26  27 28 29  30  31	<b>January 2025</b> S M T W TH F S 1  2  3 4 5 6 7 8 <u>9</u> 10 11 12 13 14 15 <u>16</u> 17 18 19  20 21 22 <u>23</u> 24 25 26 27 28 29 <u>30</u> 31	<b>February 2025</b> S M T W TH F S 1 2 3 4 5 <u>6</u> 7 8 9  10 11 12 <u>13</u> 14 15 16  17 18 19 <u>20</u> 21 22 23 24 25 26 <u>27</u> 28
<b>March 2025</b> S M T W TH F S 1 2 3 4 5 <u>6</u> 7 8 9 10 11 12 <u>13</u> 14 15 16  17  18  19  20  21 22 23 24 25 26 <u>27</u> 28 29 30 31	<b>April 2025</b> S M T W TH F S 1 2 <u>3</u> 4 5 6 7 8 9 <u>10</u> 11 12 13 14 15 16 <u>17</u> 18 19 20 21 22 23 <u>24</u> 25 26 27 28 29 30	<b>May 2025</b> S M T W TH F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <u>8</u> 9 10 11 12 13 14 <u>15</u> 16 17 18 19 20 21 <u>22</u> 23 24 25  26 27 28 <u>29</u> 30 31	<b>June 2025</b> S M T W TH F S 1 2 3 4 <u>5</u> 6 7 8 9 10 11  12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

### Calendar Dates

### Early Release Dates

### Symbol Codes

August 26	Staff Development-No School
August 27	Staff Development-No School
<b>August 28</b>	<b>First Day of School-Grade 6 ONLY</b>
<b>August 29</b>	<b>First Day of School-Grades 7-8</b>
September 2	Labor Day
October 17-18	Professional Development-No School
November 14	Conferencing Day-1/2 Day
November 15	Conferencing Day-No School
November 27-29	Thanksgiving Vacation
December 23-31	Winter Vacation
January 1-3	Winter Vacation
January 20	Martin L. King Holiday
February 10	Professional Development-No School
February 17	Presidents' Day Holiday
March 17-21	Spring Break
May 26	Memorial Day Holiday
June 12	Last Day of School-1/2 Day (Half day records time.)

Every Thursday 45 Minute Early Dismissal	
<b>Exceptions</b>	
November 14	Parent Teacher Conferences 1/2 Day of School
<b>Quarter Dates</b>	
November 1	End of 1st Quarter
January 24	End of 2nd Quarter
April 4	End of 3rd Quarter
June 12	End of 4th Quarter
<b>Semester Dates</b>	
January 24	End of 1 <sup>st</sup> Semester
June 12	End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester

	Holiday or Unscheduled Day/ No School
	Conferences - No School
	Staff Dev/Prep Day - No School
	Half Day of School
	School Begins
	School Ends
	End of Quarter
	End of Trimester
<u>XX</u>	Early Dismissals (one hour)

**MCPS General Fund**  
**Budget Projections - 3% Inflationary Increase**  
**FY25**

Highest Budget Without Vote

Over Base Levy (Voted)

**Proposed Adopted Budget**

Prior Year Adopted Budget

Estimated Increase to General Fund

Estimated Salary & Benefit Obligations to Build into the Budget:

Certified Step

Certified Lane Movement

Certified &amp; Classified Retiree Savings

ESSER Funds to Cover Certified

MMCEO Step/Longevity

Estimate of Additional Obligations (Inc Salary)

**Subtotal of Salary & Benefit Obligations**Other Obligations to Build into the Budget:

Liability insurance-Estimated 15% increase

SRO/CRO/SSO

Utilities

Student Travel

Work Comp Credit

Adjust IDEA B Allowance

Tuition Funding for Excess SPED

**Subtotal of Other Obligations****before Other Adds & Reductions****Anticipated Budget Balance****before Other Adds & Reductions**

ELEMENTARY	HIGH SCHOOL
\$ 43,841,473	\$ 35,770,672
\$ 166,626.71	\$ 303,848.92
<b>\$ 44,008,099</b>	<b>\$ 36,074,521</b>
\$ 43,181,480	\$ 34,591,338
<b>\$ 826,619</b>	<b>\$ 1,483,183</b>
\$ (694,746)	\$ (311,647)
\$ (230,000)	\$ (135,000)
\$ 260,000	\$ 260,000
\$ (355,769)	\$ (753,000)
\$ (59,346)	\$ (43,072)
\$ (1,351,600)	\$ (1,110,000)
<b>\$ (2,431,461)</b>	<b>\$ (2,092,719)</b>
\$ (92,800)	\$ (76,800)
\$ (3,152)	\$ (4,728)
\$ (160,700)	\$ (131,000)
\$ -	\$ (340,000)
\$ (63,800)	\$ (46,200)
\$ 350,000	\$ (350,000)
\$ 100,000	
<b>\$ 129,548</b>	<b>\$ (948,728)</b>
<b>\$ (1,475,294)</b>	<b>\$ (1,558,264)</b>

Elementary General Fund Proposed Revenues and Reductions (Recalibration)				
		OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C
		No Levies	Operational Levy	Operational & Safety Levy
<b>Proposed Revenue</b>				
Increase Extracurricular Participation Fees	\$5,000-\$10,000	0	0	0
Increase External Facility User Fees (this includes \$105K for renting Emma Dickinson)	\$195,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
<b>Total Proposed Revenue</b>		<b>\$90,000</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>
<b>Proposed Reductions</b>				
K-8 Enrollment Based Reductions in Certified Staffing	\$756,000	\$756,000	\$756,000	\$756,000
K-8 Additional Reductions in Certified Staff	\$189,000	\$189,000	\$189,000	\$189,000
Reduce (Decentralize) District Office or Building Administration and Supports Funded in GF	\$500,500	\$500,500	\$500,500	\$500,500
Reduce .5 Secretary Support at 4 Buildings	\$66,000	\$66,000	\$66,000	\$66,000
Shutter Jefferson (move programs out to other sites)	\$32,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Eliminate Lifeworks Agreement	\$24,186	\$24,186	\$24,186	\$24,186
Decrease Building Budgets	\$37,500	\$37,500	\$37,500	\$37,500
Decrease Activity Budgets	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Total Proposed Reductions</b>		<b>\$1,583,186</b>	<b>\$1,583,186</b>	<b>\$1,583,186</b>
<b>Expenditure Offsets</b>				
Shift Transportation Supervisor Salary to Transportation Fund	\$31,700	\$31,700	\$31,700	\$31,700
Shift Benefits Technician Salary to Insurance Trust	\$33,000	\$33,000	\$33,000	\$33,000
Shift Custodial Supervisor Salary to Rental Proceeds Fund	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000
Offset Expenditures with Advanced Opportunity Grant	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$54,000
Offset Spark Expenditure with Grant Funds	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000
Utilize a Portion of Interlocal Funds (year 1)	\$333,000	\$333,000	\$333,000	\$0
Tuition Fund to Fund Special Education (SPED) Preschool	\$1,280,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Change in Allocation from 58/42 to 55/45	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000
General Fund (GF) Over Base Levy	\$166,627		\$166,627	\$166,627
Safety Levy				
Total Levy Voted: \$1,500,000 Tax Impact \$11.24 per \$100K	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,500,000
Current safety related costs moved out of general fund and coded to safety levy instead (SRO's, School Counselors, etc.)				
<b>Total Expenditure Offsets</b>		<b>\$947,700</b>	<b>\$1,114,327</b>	<b>\$2,281,327</b>
<b>Budget Additions</b>				
Administration consolidation and restructure - Meadow Hill Teacher on Special Assignment; SPED Coordinator from ESSER; Academic & Community Services Director	(\$195,000)	(\$195,000)	(\$195,000)	(\$195,000)
Increase support for Native American Student Services, English Language Learners, Gifted & Talented	(\$126,500)	(\$126,500)	(\$126,500)	(\$126,500)
Add SPED Positions Originally Medicaid Funds	(\$1,000,000)	(\$575,000)	(\$575,000)	(\$1,000,000)
Behavior Interventionists / Other Safety Support	(\$750,000)			(\$750,000)
Centralize K-8 Enrollments	(\$66,000)	(\$66,000)	(\$66,000)	(\$66,000)
<b>Total Budget Additions</b>		<b>(\$962,500)</b>	<b>(\$962,500)</b>	<b>(\$2,137,500)</b>
<b>Summary</b>				
Original Budget Deficit (without GF Over Base Levy)		(\$1,641,921)	(\$1,641,921)	(\$1,641,921)
Total Proposed Revenue		\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
Total Proposed Reductions		\$1,583,186	\$1,583,186	\$1,583,186
Total Expenditure Offsets		\$947,700	\$1,114,327	\$2,281,327
Total Proposed Additions		(\$962,500)	(\$962,500)	(\$2,137,500)
<b>(Deficit/Balance)</b>		<b>\$16,465</b>	<b>\$183,092</b>	<b>\$175,092</b>



## MCPS Elementary General Fund Budget Reductions

### Background Information

Missoula County Public Schools has been proactively tackling a K-12 General Fund Budget structural imbalance along with the loss of Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. ESSER funding reductions realized this year will be in excess of \$5,000,000. We are tasked with developing recommendations to trim over \$3,000,000 million from the K-12 General Fund Budgets. The General Fund Budget is a “people budget” of which 87-90% is personnel.

A District Budget Committee has been meeting over the past four months to engage in a thoughtful process in order to arrive at recommendations for consideration of the MCPS Board of Trustees. The committee, made up of trustees, administration, including union representation from both certified and classified staff has reviewed existing budgets, projections for the coming year and upcoming years, and demographic data. Presentations have been given to the Board of Trustees over the past several months and presentations have also been given to employees of the District.

Thanks to the support of the community, MCPS has dedicated funding sources in the following areas: *Transportation Fund, Building Reserve Fund, Technology Fund, Tuition Fund, and Adult Education Fund.* Cuts or reductions from any of these areas **will not** help the General Fund Budget. In most cases, costs within the General Fund cannot be coded to these funds.

The budget challenges are **NOT** the result of *poor planning, lack of community support, or wasteful spending.*

The budget challenges **ARE** the result of *declining enrollment, legislative funding, recruitment and retention, unfunded mandates, changing demographics, response to marginalized demographics and achievement gaps, and inflationary costs that exceed increased funding. In addition the end of ESSER funding creates significant reductions.*

Below, the plan recommended to the Board of Trustees is outlined in detail. For more details or specific questions related to the K-12 Budget feel free to reach out to Superintendent Micah Hill [mhill@mcpsmt.org](mailto:mhill@mcpsmt.org) or Executive Director of Business and Operations Pat McHugh [pmchugh@mcpsmt.org](mailto:pmchugh@mcpsmt.org).

### MCPS General Fund Budget Reduction Plan

The recommendations put forth are tied to not only balancing the budget but also to pursuing a Safety Levy. Passing this levy, in essence, will allow taxpayers to help reduce the impacts of the budget cuts identified by the budget committee and superintendent. The District will be able to move existing General Fund costs that are applicable to safety and security (school counselors, SRO's, etc.) from the General Fund to the Safety Levy Fund. Currently, we estimate that from the General Fund, MCPS spends over \$3,500,000 annually on school safety, including but not limited to: salaries and benefits for personnel, infrastructure, physical security, software and accompanying safety related devices, staff training, etc.

#### Background factors contributing to superintendent recommendation:

**Legal authority of the Board of Trustees** - The District has appreciated the long history of community support for bonds and levies. Being fiscally responsible with taxpayer dollars while maximizing educational opportunities for students is a monumental challenge and one that the District takes seriously. This community can be proud that it leads Montana in education by saying “yes” to the following:

- elementary and high school technology levies
- elementary and high school building reserve levies
- regular passage of elementary and high school operating levies
- passage of bond measures for new construction and renovations to our buildings

**Law regarding allowable costs in voted and permissive levy - [20-9-236\(1\)\(a\)](#):** "planning for improvements to and maintenance of school and student safety, including but not limited to the cost of staffing for or services provided by architects, engineers, school resource officers, counselors, and other staff or consultants assisting the District with improvements to school and student safety and security;"

**Law enabling levy structure - [20-9-502\(5\)\(b\)](#):** "A voted levy may be imposed with the approval of the qualified electors of the District to provide funding for improvements to school and student safety and security that meet any of the criteria set forth in 20-9-236(1)(a) through (1)(e). A voted levy for school and student safety and security may not be considered as outstanding indebtedness for the purpose of calculating the limitation in 20-9-406. The election for a voted levy for school and student safety and security must be conducted in accordance with the school election laws of this title, and the electors qualified to vote in the election must be qualified under the provisions of 20-20-301. The ballot for a building reserve proposition must be substantially in compliance with 15-10-425."

**MCPS Strategic Plan** - In 2021, MCPS engaged the community and stakeholders in developing a long range Strategic Plan. This plan acts as a compass to ensuring the District is meeting the stated commitments:

- Each student has been provided with enhanced learning opportunities.
- Our school environment is inclusive, safe and where students, staff, families and visitors feel a sense of belonging.
- Our staff are valued and supported and are provided training to be highly effective in their positions.
- Communications, connection to, and engagement with families and our communities are meaningful and effective.

**Innovation, Personalized Learning, MT Legislature** - The Montana Legislature continues to push the public education system to innovate and provide flexible and personalized learning opportunities for students. The continued push by some lawmakers to bring private charter schools to Montana has roots in the desire to see choice, innovation, and flexibility in educational programming for students. MCPS has been approved for two **public** charter schools that will operate under the auspices of the MCPS School Board. The first is the Connect Academy, providing remote and online learning opportunities for all MCPS students (grades 6-12), and the other is the EK-5 TEACH Academy whose foundation is an arts integration model - these charters are available to all MCPS students. Currently, the Missoula Online Academy (MOA) is funded through ESSER and will no longer continue at the end of the 23-24 academic year. The addition of the charter schools represent continued online opportunities for students and employment opportunities for current staff.

**Minimize the Effects of Budget Cuts on Under-represented and Disadvantaged Groups** - MCPS prides itself on providing opportunities for all students, regardless of their backgrounds. These proposed budget cuts, if not carefully managed, can disproportionately impact schools and students from disadvantaged communities; exacerbating existing inequities. We have a moral imperative to ensure budget decisions do not unduly harm groups that already face barriers to education. Cuts to funding or programs should be evaluated for their effects on low-income students, students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, and other historically marginalized populations.

### Key Components Of Superintendent Recommendation

**Maximize revenue to offset current General Fund expenses** - School Districts across the state have seen exponential growth in inflation in key areas like transportation, property and liability insurance, utilities (natural gas, electric, water, sewer, disposal), health insurance, and other components that make up a District budget. One way to address the gap between the actual inflationary increase and the minimal increase provided in state funding is to increase revenues where we can. There are only a few ways that public schools generate revenue to offset expenses - facility rentals, student activity fees, and entrance fees to athletic contests. It is my recommendation that we increase the charge for all of these - regardless of whether levies pass or not.

Proposed Revenue Increase	Elem (K-8) Budget	Notes
<b>Increase Extracurricular Participation Fees</b>	\$5,000-\$10,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Increasing the fee structure by 25% would generate an additional \$5,000-\$10,000 in revenue in the elementary District, allowing the District to reduce its current and future General Fund contribution to extracurriculars. Current scholarship and pay-it forward mechanisms would remain in place to support students who are unable to pay the fee.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Fee increases would be implemented starting with the fall 2024 activities season.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Increased communication with families letting them know about the scholarship opportunities. Communication with booster clubs, building administration, District and building activities staff, and coaches to ensure students experiencing hardship receive a scholarship.</p>
<b>Increase External Facility User Fees</b>	\$90,000-\$195,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Increase fees paid by external users to cover related costs currently paid through the General Fund. This process is governed by policy with administrative oversight. The changes to the increased fees will also serve as a reset in consistent expectations for building use by staff members outside the scope of their employment (private lessons, tutoring, and coaching). There are concerns around our ability to find staff willing to work external facility use events. An inability to provide coverage may result in partial facility closures and, as a result, impact the District's ability to rent our facilities and generate the revenue expected by this proposal. Right now the Emma Dickinson building is being used by the Lifelong Learning Center rent free and we're considering charging a nominal rental fee of \$2.50 per square foot which would generate an additional \$105,000. This would likely be a phased in approach over a period of two to three years.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> It is anticipated that revisions to rental fees or lease agreements will be added to board agendas in the spring of 2024. Revised fee structure would go into effect July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Communicate clearly and proactively with community stakeholders the changes in fee structures.</p>

**Staffing Reductions** - Since 2019, MCPS has seen their elementary enrollments decrease by over 470 students. During that same time period, staffing was increased by 14 FTE (not including ESSER funded positions). Accreditation standards cap grade K-2 classrooms at 20, grade 3-4 classrooms at 28, and grade 5-8 classrooms at 30. Staffing to accreditation standards would reduce certified staff by approximately 14 FTE. In addition to those reductions we're proposing reducing a small number of staff tied to positions that are not currently required by accreditation standards.

**The Superintendent also recommends convening a Board Committee consensus group during the 2024-2025 school year to study elementary boundaries and make recommendations for boundary changes for the nine elementary schools and three middle schools.**

While District enrollment projections have typically been accurate, the future of Missoula Schools' enrollment has never been more unforeseeable. Nobody has any idea how the combination of COVID-19, five years of

declining local live birth rates, soaring housing costs, and the politicization of public education will impact our long-term enrollment projections. Similarly, the shift of affordable housing and large scale projects in current elementary boundaries have the potential to cause “migration” within the District. With the open enrollment bills recently passed by the legislature, along with the addition of public charter schools it is hard to predict how those are going to affect our enrollment projections.

Proposed Reductions	Elem (K-8) Budget	Notes
<b>K-8 Enrollment Based Reductions in Certified Staffing</b>	\$756,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> The certified staffing reductions reflected in this item are based upon the balance needed to achieve the \$1.64 million dollar budget reduction target after all other areas were tabulated. It is anticipated that the bulk of the FTE identified for reduction will come from the K-5 elementary school grade level.</p> <p>Elementary K-5 staffing model efficiencies will need to be addressed by the District and the annual FTE allocations that are tied to elementary enrollment and adjusted annually. Loss of K-5 enrollment will primarily be addressed through reductions of certified staff via attrition. K-5 certified staff currently have one personal planning/prep period per day and a 45 minute duty free lunch. Additional staff reductions from the K-5 setting would likely need to come from non accreditation standard support staff positions such as behavioral support staff, instructional coaches, or non-Title I certified intervention staff. In addition, “specials” could be staffed by sections and not buildings - consistent with staffing for accreditation - with the intent to provide equity, access and consistent special offerings District-wide.</p> <p>Elementary 6-8 staffing model efficiencies will also need to be addressed by the District and the annual FTE allocations that are tied to elementary enrollment and adjusted annually. Currently, teacher classrooms in middle school are staffed to accreditation standards with the average class size in excess of 29 students per class. There are some efficiencies that could be made relative to the schedule and “WIN” periods.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> The elementary and middle school staffing assignments will be changed for the 2024-2025 school year.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The District will maximize reductions to the extent possible via attrition (retirements and one-year-only contracts). Any reductions that involve non-tenured staff will be scrutinized carefully and those individuals will receive support from the HR department to help secure future employment. Transparent and clear communication will occur during this process.</p>
<b>K-8 Additional Reductions in Certified Staff</b>	\$189,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> We currently have unfilled vacancies and part-time positions in our elementary schools that have been identified for reduction in part due to declining enrollments and participation in programs. These positions also represent disparities between schools for programs that only belong to those sites.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> The elimination of any positions or budget reductions will be finalized by June 30, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The District will</p>

		<p>maximize reductions to the extent possible via attrition (retirements and one-year-only contracts). Any reductions that involve tenured staff or staff with seniority will be scrutinized carefully and those individuals will receive support from the HR department to help secure employment in the District according to applicable laws and collective bargaining agreements. Transparent and clear communication will occur during this process.</p>
<p><b>Reduce Central Office or Building Administration and Supports</b></p>	<p>\$500,500</p>	<p><b>Notes:</b> It is always recognized and understood that whenever there are budget reductions, most eyes drift to administration or the central office with commentary that echoes a misunderstood and often misplaced notion that administration is somehow overstaffed.</p> <p>Centralized administration serves to reduce the burden on individual schools and provide for efficiencies that actually reduce costs, increase productivity and effectively steward a District with over 1400 full-time employees and almost 10,000 students. The operational capacity of the current administration is beyond capacity. Many of the administration work well beyond a 50-60 hour work week. They are on call 24/7 and have limited opportunities to take time away from their positions. The capacity to take on new, innovative, and functional responsibilities is very limited.</p> <p>Essentially, cutting back central administration doesn't eliminate the need for their job functions - it just decentralizes them. This can negatively impact schools as they absorb these responsibilities on top of their core mission of educating students. Teachers and principals end up becoming jacks-of-all-trades instead of focused specialists. The ship may keep moving with reduced crew, but not necessarily in the right direction or with great efficiency. The teachers will bear the burden of making up for the missing leadership, coordination, and support.</p> <p>Administrative staffing structures are under the purview of the Superintendent with final approval of the Board of Trustees. District administration positions include: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Executive Directors, Directors, Coordinators, Principals, and Assistant Principals. There are MT Accreditation standards and staffing ratios related to superintendent, curriculum directors and principal positions.</p> <p>Administrative and support staff structures at the District Office are continuously reviewed, especially when turnover occurs or when financial reductions are warranted. Since 2019, the District has restructured several times to reduce the strain on the General Fund. The following positions have been reduced and/or not hired: Three Executive Regional Directors were replaced by two Assistant Superintendents, Central Activities Director (never hired), Assistant Superintendent secretary (cut), Executive Director of Communications (rehired as a coordinator - \$80,000 savings).</p> <p>After a thorough review of the organizational chart of the District and recognizing the priorities of the Board, the Superintendent is recommending another restructure to the Centralized Administration of the District. We are recommending the reductions of the following positions: Sp. Ed Director, Fine Arts Director, CTE Coordinator, four instructional coaches, Work Comp Coordinator, Community Services</p>

		<p>Coordinator, Student Services Coordinator, Dray Services, Library Services, Middle School Assistant Principal, and a portion of the Willard Principal Salary (reducing stipend for extra assignment).</p> <p>Building administration has also been analyzed based on accreditation standards with recommendations for reductions.</p> <p>The positions being recommended are certified administrators, certified teaching staff, classified support staff and exempt positions. The reduction of all of these positions does not mean that more teachers or other staff were added back to the buildings.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> The elimination of any positions or budget reductions will be finalized by June 30, 2024. The results of the final reductions will help determine the central office support structure/s that will need to move back to the building level for the 24-25 school year. In addition, the reduction of any position or staff with tenure or seniority will further displace employees in other positions within the District.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The District will maximize reductions to the extent possible via attrition (retirements and one-year-only contracts). Any reductions that involve tenured staff or staff with seniority will be scrutinized carefully and those individuals will receive support from the HR department to help secure employment in the District according to applicable laws and collective bargaining agreements. Transparent and clear communication will occur during this process.</p>
<b>Reduce 0.5 Secretary Support at 4 Buildings</b>	\$66,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Similar to staffing buildings with certified staff based on enrollments, we are recommending that buildings with fewer than 450 students not be given additional secretarial support. Currently 5 of 9 schools have an additional .5 secretary support, but only one has an enrollment over 450.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> The elimination of any positions will be finalized by June 30, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The District will maximize reductions to the extent possible via attrition (retirements and one-year-only contracts). Any reductions that involve tenured staff or staff with seniority will be scrutinized carefully and those individuals will receive support from the HR department to help secure employment in the District according to applicable laws and collective bargaining agreements. Transparent and clear communication will occur during this process.</p>
<b>Shutter Jefferson School</b>	\$32,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> <del>It was the consensus of the budget committee that this reduction not move forward. Although, the two Early Literacy sections will be moved to neighborhood schools. Superintendent is recommending that the Board of Trustees consider closing Jefferson as a “center” for Early Kindergarten and Developmental Preschool and relocate those programs to existing schools. The Superintendent is recommending that the two early kindergarten sections be relocated to our lowest socioeconomic schools and that additional Early Kindergarten (Early Literacy) classrooms be added to elementary school sites that do not currently support Early Kindergarten.</del></p>

		<p><b>Timeline:</b> The placement of the Early Literacy Classrooms to neighborhood schools will begin starting with the 2024-2025 school year.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> It is anticipated that along with the budget recalibration, MCPS will need to engage stakeholders in a boundary study for possible reDistricting.</p>
<b>Eliminate Lifeworks</b>	\$24,186	<p><b>Notes:</b> Lifeworks is an online platform that the District purchased for its employees and is paid by our Health Insurance Plan. In review of this product, we have found the utilization rate to be very low and recommend that we stop paying for this service.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> The current Lifeworks agreement would terminate at the end of the renewal cycle.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Eliminating an underutilized program reinforces how we can be evaluating our limited resources and be conscientious stewards of our financial resources.</p>
<b>Decrease Building and Department Budgets</b>	\$37,500	<p><b>Notes:</b> Keeping in mind that we have costs associated with the buildings and departments that we cannot reduce - things like electricity, heat, garbage, internet, etc. Roughly 10% of our budgets provide for instructional materials, printing, furniture, equipment, repairs, contracted services (like snow plowing), etc. Items typically purchased from these budgets include supplies, field trips, professional development, software, special education support, curriculum, print shop supplies, and building maintenance items.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Building and department budgets for 2024-2025 would reflect the \$37,500 reduction.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Building and departments would make cuts that minimize direct impacts to student learning.</p>
<b>Decrease Activity Budgets</b>	\$10,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> These reductions could be in the form of supplies, travel, reduced seasons, etc.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Activity budgets for 2024-2025 would reflect the \$10,000 reduction.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Building administrators would make cuts that provide equity and opportunities for middle school activities - sports are not exclusive to these cuts.</p>

**Expenditure Offsets** - Expenditure offsets is typically a description of how we move budgeted expenses from one category to another. To the greatest extent possible, the District strives to appropriately code expenditures to the correct fund. The business office will look at all available expenditures including staffing, supplies, and other items to see if there are any savings by coding to different funds. Recognizing that there are many funds that comprise the District's budget and where expenditures are allowed is a function of the business and accounting department with deference given to the GASB rules and our auditor's findings. Below is the list of expenditure offsets identified.



Proposed Offsets	Elem (K-8) Budget	Notes
<b>Shift Transportation Supervisor Salary</b>	\$31,700	<p><b>Notes:</b> Currently this position is being paid for out of the General Fund and will be shifted to the Transportation Fund.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> This shift of expenditures will be effective July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> This shift of expenditures allows the District to continue to provide student related services without impacting the General Fund.</p>
<b>Shift Benefits Technician Salary</b>	\$33,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Currently this position is being paid for out of the General Fund. We would ask the Insurance Committee to shift this expenditure out of the General Fund to the Insurance Fund as the District contributes over \$8,000,000 annually to the Insurance Fund on behalf of the employees.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> This shift of expenditures will be effective July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> This shift of expenditures allows the District to continue to provide student related services without impacting the General Fund.</p>
<b>Shift Custodial Supervisor Salary</b>	\$21,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Currently this position is being paid for out of the General Fund and would now be paid out of the Rental Proceeds Fund.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> This shift of expenditures will be effective July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> This shift of expenditures allows the District to continue to provide student related services without impacting the General Fund.</p>
<b>Offset Expenditures with Advanced Opportunity Grant</b>	\$54,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Present expenditures for travel, supplies, stipends and other CTE related costs will be shifted from the General Fund to the Advanced Opportunities Grant.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> This shift of expenditures will be effective July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> This allows the District to continue to provide student related services without impacting the General Fund.</p>
<b>Offset Spark Expenditure with Grant Funds</b>	\$45,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> MCPS currently spends \$45,000 annually from the General Fund to support art experiences for elementary students. We value these opportunities and want them to remain so rather than cut this funding, we are going to shift the expenditure to the Innovative Education Program Fund.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> This shift of expenditures will be effective July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> This allows the District to continue to provide student related services without impacting the General Fund.</p>



<b>Utilize a Portion of the Interlocal Agreement Fund</b>	\$333,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> The use of one time only money is problematic in that it will reduce the ability of the District to make purchases, like curriculum, unanticipated expenditures, and other large dollar items in the future. Spending these dollars now means we will have to do with less in the future, however, given the current budget deficit, this is recommended as an appropriate use of these funds.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> There isn't currently a timeline on this but any decision should be made before the final budget adoption in August. It's recommended to wait to commit the full amount described in this plan as we await the outcome of levies and other budget recalibration scenarios.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The use of these dollars allows the District to continue to provide student related services. Using one-time only funds is a last resort as this is not a sustainable practice for ongoing budgeting purposes and delays other budget cuts for another year.</p>
<b>Tuition Levy to Fund Special Education Preschool</b>	\$250,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> MCPS prides itself on providing special services to students with disabilities and we have long identified students who have disabilities beginning at age 3 and offer a Special Education PreSchool for 3 and 4 year olds. In recent years this population has not only grown in terms of the number of students served, but also the severity of the disability and the intensity of the services needed to support those students. Presently we are paying for these positions out of the General Fund. Current staffing costs for the Special Education Preschool exceed \$1,200,000 and we intend to incrementally levy in the Tuition Fund to support this programming.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> We are looking at a phased-in approach to the tuition fund dependent upon the passage of our General Fund and Safety Levy, but would begin the process in July of 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> We have a legal and moral obligation to provide for students with disabilities and we recognize that all students deserve a free and appropriate public education along with the dignity and safety of a learning environment with their peers.</p>
<b>Change in Allocation of District Expenditures</b>	\$180,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> For expenditures that are coded to the District level like property and liability insurance, central administration, print shop services, etc, the costs are broken out by elementary District and high school District and are based on the enrollment proportions. Due to declining enrollments at the elementary level and increasing enrollments at the high school level we have to change the proportion from Elementary 58% : High School 42% to Elementary 55% : High School 45%. The net effect is that the elementary budget deficit was reduced by \$180,000 and the high school budget deficit increased by \$180,000.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> This change in proportion will be reflected in the next budget year.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The Board recognizes the equitable distribution of funds and supports a recalibration of the proportion to be aligned with enrollments.</p>

<b>General Fund Over Base Levy (Operational Levy)</b>	\$166,627	<p><b>Notes:</b> By law, Districts can ask voters to approve an “over base” levy for the costs associated with providing educational opportunities beyond what is required by law. Based on current enrollment projections and the inflationary increase we anticipate that our operational levy will be around \$166,627 and will ask our voters to approve this levy this spring. \$166,627 represents an increase of 0.3% of the overall budget.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> The levy election will be held in May and these funds will be built into the 24-25 school year if passed by our voters.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The Operational Levy is intended to keep our District funded at 100 percent. Without the passage of this levy, we will be facing additional budget reductions that may impact academic and extra-curricular offerings. We have a community that has overwhelmingly supported public education in MCPS and appreciate the collaboration that allows us to offer a world-class education to our students.</p>
<b>Safety Levy</b>	\$1,500,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> All of the previous recommendations are tied to, not only, balancing the budget but also to pursuing a Safety Levy. In essence, this request will allow taxpayers to help reduce the impacts of the budget cuts identified by the budget committee and superintendent. The District will be able to move existing General Fund costs applicable to safety and security (school counselors, SRO's, etc.) from the General Fund to the Safety Levy. Currently, we estimate that from the General Fund, MCPS spends over \$3,000,000 annually on school safety, including but not limited to: salaries and benefits for personnel, infrastructure, physical security, software and accompanying safety related devices, staff training, etc. Our request of \$1,500,000 does not fully represent the actual costs spent annually by the District on safety and preventative measures but is a balance of asking our taxpayers to help provide relief to the General Fund by shifting these expenditures to the Safety Levy.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> The levy election will be held in May and these funds will be built into the 24-25 school year if passed by our voters.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The Safety Levy is intended to offset our General Fund so that we can continue to provide the . Without the passage of this levy, we will be facing additional budget reductions that may impact academic and extra-curricular offerings. We have a community that has overwhelmingly supported public education in MCPS and appreciate the collaboration that allows us to offer a world-class education to our students.</p>

**Budget additions:** Some might ask, why in the midst of all of these cuts would the District consider adding expenditures to the budget? The answer lies in the fact that MCPS prides itself on serving a vital role in providing opportunities for all students, regardless of their backgrounds. The above proposed budget cuts, if not carefully managed, can disproportionately impact schools and students from disadvantaged communities; exacerbating existing inequities. We have a moral imperative to ensure budget decisions do not unduly harm groups that already face barriers to education. Cuts to funding or programs have to be evaluated for their effects on low-income students, students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, and other historically marginalized populations. Due to the addition of Charter Schools, Advanced Opportunities, Transformational Learning, Community Schools and other District programs, and the reduction of so many central office positions, we still have a need to provide support to the staff, students and programs represented in those reductions.

Proposed Expenditure Additions	Elem (K-8) Budget	Notes
<b>Administration Consolidation and Restructure</b>	\$195,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> The administration restructure resulted in a gross decrease of \$864,000 but due to the addition of charter schools and the continued need for administrative support for the reduction of Sp. Ed Director, Fine Arts Director, CTE Coordinator, four instructional coaches, Work Comp Coordinator, Community Services Coordinator, and Student Services Coordinator we have recommended that we incorporate all of those position responsibilities under the remaining central office administrators but add one position as an Academic and Community Services Director with responsibility for EK-8. In adding this position, we did not seek to add the two building administrator positions that we budgeted for in the charter schools. In addition to the central office reductions we also recommended the reduction of an assistant middle school principal based on enrollments. The committee also recognized that at the middle school level there is a need for additional support for student discipline and supervision. We have recommended that this position be staffed by a Teacher on Special Assignment.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> If approved, we would seek to open the positions immediately with an official start date of July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> We have made a commitment to our community to support the best educational outcomes for students and this cannot be done without administrative support. We supported the addition of charter schools and our community is expecting that to happen and we recognize that these schools will also need administrative oversight to be successful.</p>
<b>Increase Support for Native American Students, English Language Learners, Gifted and Talented</b>	\$126,500	<p><b>Notes:</b> We have identified gaps for students who are typically marginalized due to socio-economics, being students of color, English language learners and even Gifted and Talented learners. In the past five years we have seen these populations grow while support has not. We see this as a continuing priority and recommend increased support to these populations.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> If approved, we would seek to open the positions immediately with official start dates of July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> MCPS prides itself on serving a vital role in providing opportunities for all students, regardless of their backgrounds. Budget cuts, if not carefully managed, can disproportionately impact schools and students from disadvantaged communities; exacerbating existing inequities. We have a moral imperative to ensure budget decisions do not unduly harm groups that already face barriers to education. Cuts to funding or programs have to be evaluated for their effects on low-income students, students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, and other historically marginalized populations.</p>
<b>Add Special Education</b>	\$575,000 - \$1,000,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> We have long identified students who have disabilities and in recent years this population has not only grown in terms of the number</p>

<b>Positions to the General Fund</b>		<p>of students served, but also the severity of the disability and the intensity of the services needed to support those students. Presently we are paying for these positions out of a fund we commonly refer to as Medicaid (which is a reimbursement account for medicaid eligible services). At the conclusion of this fiscal year, the fund will be in a deficit of nearly \$750,000. We have to shift those expenses to the General Fund.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> We are looking at a phased-in approach to the General Fund dependent upon the passage of our General Fund and Safety Levy, but would begin the process in July of 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> We have a legal and moral obligation to provide for students with disabilities and we recognize that all students deserve a free and appropriate public education along with the dignity and safety of a learning environment with their peers.</p>
<b>Add Interventionists and Other Safety Support Services</b>	\$750,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> These positions will only be added if the voters approve the Safety Levy. The expenditures from this category are not currently budgeted for as they are positions that were previously funded with ESSER. These additions would be to provide the continued and necessary support and intervention to students.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> If approved, we would seek to open the positions immediately with official start dates of July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Similar to our desire to provide a range of services to students, these types of positions are not a legal requirement but rather a moral obligation to ensure that we provide for student safety beginning with intervention at the earliest moments not just for behavior, but for mental and emotional health.</p>
<b>Centralize K-8 Enrollments</b>	\$66,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Cutting building secretary services resulted in a decrease of \$66,000 but we have long recognized the need for administrative support for enrollment - especially at the EK-8 level where we don't employ people in those positions in the summer. We have recommended that we incorporate those reductions along with the responsibilities at the building level into two enrollment clerks for EK-8.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> If approved, we would seek to open the positions immediately with an official start date of July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> We recognize that accurate and timely enrollment processes are essential to supporting families. Having consistent, year-round, one-stop access to not only enroll students but to also support answering questions, providing support for ELL, Special Education, Title I, and other related services is critical to the relationship and partnership for our schools and families.</p>

High School General Fund Proposed Revenues and Reductions (Recalibration)				
		OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C
		No Levies	Operational Levy	Operational & Safety Levy
<b>Proposed Revenue</b>				
Increase Extracurricular Participation Fees (estimate of 25% incr.)	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Increase Gate Fees	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Increase External Facility User Fees (this includes \$105K for renting Emma Dickinson)	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Total Proposed Revenue</b>		<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>Proposed Reductions</b>				
9-12 Enrollment Based Reductions in Certified Staff	\$702,000	\$702,000	\$702,000	\$702,000
Reduce (Decentralize) District Office or Building Administration and Supports in GF	\$363,500	\$363,500	\$363,500	\$363,500
Eliminate Lifeworks Agreement	\$19,788	\$19,788	\$19,788	\$19,788
Seeley HS Block Grant Reduction	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Decrease Building Budgets	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
Decrease Activity Budgets	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
<b>Total Proposed Reductions</b>		<b>\$1,250,288</b>	<b>\$1,250,288</b>	<b>\$1,250,288</b>
<b>Expenditure Offsets</b>				
Shift Transportation Supervisor salary to Transportation Fund	\$26,000	\$26,000	\$26,000	\$26,000
Shift Benefits Technician salary to Insurance Trust	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$27,000
Offset Expenditures with Advanced Opportunity Grant	\$39,000	\$39,000	\$39,000	\$39,000
Utilize a portion of Interlocal fund ( year 1)	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Spend One-time only funds (Budget Amendment FY22)	\$595,000	\$595,000	\$595,000	\$100,000
Tuition Levy to Fund Excess Special Education (SPED) Costs	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
General Fund (GF) Over Base Levy	\$303,849	\$0	\$303,849	\$303,849
Safety Levy				
Total Levy Voted: \$1,000,000 Tax Impact \$4.08 per \$100K	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000
Current safety related costs moved out of general fund and coded to safety levy instead (SRO's, School Counselors, etc.)				
<b>Total Expenditure Offsets</b>		<b>\$887,000</b>	<b>\$1,190,849</b>	<b>\$1,695,849</b>
<b>Budget Additions</b>				
Administration consolidation and restructure - SPED Coordinator from ESSER; Academic & Community Services Director	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)
Increase support for Native American Student Services, English Language Learners, Gifted & Talented	(\$103,500)	(\$103,500)	(\$103,500)	(\$103,500)
Behavior Interventionists / Other Safety Support	(\$372,000)	\$0	\$0	(\$372,000)
Add SPED positions originally Medicaid funds	(\$400,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$400,000)
Change in Allocation from 58/42 to 55/45	(\$180,000)	(\$180,000)	(\$180,000)	(\$180,000)
<b>Total Budget Additions</b>		<b>(\$563,500)</b>	<b>(\$563,500)</b>	<b>(\$1,135,500)</b>
<b>Summary</b>				
Original Budget Deficit (without GF Over Base Levy)		(\$1,862,113)	(\$1,862,113)	(\$1,862,113)
Total Proposed Revenue		\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Total Proposed Reductions		\$1,250,288	\$1,250,288	\$1,250,288
Total Expenditure Offsets		\$887,000	\$1,190,849	\$1,695,849
Total Proposed Additions		(\$563,500)	(\$563,500)	(\$1,135,500)
<b>(Deficit/Balance)</b>		<b>(\$238,325)</b>	<b>\$65,524</b>	<b>(\$1,476)</b>

## MCPS High School General Fund Budget Reductions

### Background Information

Missoula County Public Schools has been proactively tackling a K-12 General Fund Budget structural imbalance along with the loss of Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. ESSER funding reductions realized this year will be in excess of \$5,000,000. We are tasked with developing recommendations to trim over \$3,000,000 million from the K-12 General Fund Budgets. The General Fund Budget is a “people budget” of which 87-90% is personnel.

A District Budget Committee has been meeting over the past four months to engage in a thoughtful process in order to arrive at recommendations for consideration of the MCPS Board of Trustees. The committee, made up of trustees, administration, including union representation from both certified and classified staff has reviewed existing budgets, projections for the coming year and upcoming years, and demographic data. Presentations have been given to the Board of Trustees over the past several months and presentations have also been given to employees of the District.

Thanks to the support of the community, MCPS has dedicated funding sources in the following areas: *Transportation Fund, Building Reserve Fund, Technology Fund, Tuition Fund, and Adult Education Fund.* Cuts or reductions from any of these areas **will not** help the General Fund Budget. In most cases, costs within the General Fund cannot be coded to these funds.

The budget challenges are **NOT** the result of *poor planning, lack of community support, or wasteful spending.*

The budget challenges **ARE** the result of *declining enrollment, legislative funding, recruitment and retention, unfunded mandates, changing demographics, response to marginalized demographics and achievement gaps, and inflationary costs that exceed increased funding. In addition the end of ESSER funding creates significant reductions.*

Below, the plan recommended to the Board of Trustees is outlined in detail. For more details or specific questions related to the K-12 Budget feel free to reach out to Superintendent Micah Hill [mhill@mcpsmt.org](mailto:mhill@mcpsmt.org) or Executive Director of Business and Operations Pat McHugh [pmchugh@mcpsmt.org](mailto:pmchugh@mcpsmt.org).

### MCPS General Fund Budget Reduction Plan

The recommendations put forth are tied to not only balancing the budget but also to pursuing a Safety Levy. Passing this levy, in essence, will allow taxpayers to help reduce the impacts of the budget cuts identified by the budget committee and superintendent. The District will be able to move existing General Fund costs that are applicable to safety and security (school counselors, SRO's, etc.) from the General Fund to the Safety Levy Fund. Currently, we estimate that from the General Fund, MCPS spends over \$3,500,000 annually on school safety, including but not limited to: salaries and benefits for personnel, infrastructure, physical security, software and accompanying safety related devices, staff training, etc.

#### Background factors contributing to superintendent recommendation:

**Legal authority of the Board of Trustees** - The District has appreciated the long history of community support for bonds and levies. Being fiscally responsible with taxpayer dollars while maximizing educational opportunities for students is a monumental challenge and one that the District takes seriously. This community can be proud that it leads Montana in education by saying “yes” to the following:

- elementary and high school technology levies
- elementary and high school building reserve levies
- regular passage of elementary and high school operating levies
- passage of bond measures for new construction and renovations to our buildings

**Law regarding allowable costs in voted and permissive levy** - [20-9-236\(1\)\(a\)](#): "Planning for improvements to and maintenance of school and student safety, including but not limited to the cost of staffing for or services provided by architects, engineers, school resource officers, counselors, and other staff or consultants assisting the District with improvements to school and student safety and security."

**Law enabling levy structure** - [20-9-502\(5\)\(b\)](#): "A voted levy may be imposed with the approval of the qualified electors of the District to provide funding for improvements to school and student safety and security that meet any of the criteria set forth in 20-9-236(1)(a) through (1)(e). A voted levy for school and student safety and security may not be considered as outstanding indebtedness for the purpose of calculating the limitation in 20-9-406. The election for a voted levy for school and student safety and security must be conducted in accordance with the school election laws of this title, and the electors qualified to vote in the election must be qualified under the provisions of 20-20-301. The ballot for a building reserve proposition must be substantially in compliance with 15-10-425."

**MCPS Strategic Plan** - In 2021, MCPS engaged the community and stakeholders in developing a long range Strategic Plan. This plan acts as a compass to ensuring the District is meeting the stated commitments:

- Each student has been provided with enhanced learning opportunities.
- Our school environment is inclusive, safe and where students, staff, families and visitors feel a sense of belonging.
- Our staff are valued and supported and are provided training to be highly effective in their positions.
- Communications, connection to, and engagement with families and our communities are meaningful and effective.

**Innovation, Personalized Learning, MT Legislature** - The Montana Legislature continues to push the public education system to innovate and provide flexible and personalized learning opportunities for students. The continued push by some lawmakers to bring private charter schools to Montana has roots in the desire to see choice, innovation, and flexibility in educational programming for students. MCPS has been approved for two **public** charter schools that will operate under the auspices of the MCPS School Board. The first is the Connect Academy, providing remote and online learning opportunities for all MCPS students (grades 6-12), and the other is the K-5 TEACH Academy whose foundation is an arts integration model - these charters are available to all MCPS students. Currently, the Missoula Online Academy (MOA) is funded through ESSER and will no longer continue at the end of the 23-24 academic year. The addition of the charter schools represent continued online opportunities for students and employment opportunities for current staff.

**Minimize the Effects of Budget Cuts on Under-represented and Disadvantaged Groups** - MCPS prides itself in providing opportunities for all students, regardless of their backgrounds. These proposed budget cuts, if not carefully managed, can disproportionately impact schools and students from disadvantaged communities; exacerbating existing inequities. We have a moral imperative to ensure budget decisions do not unduly harm groups that already face barriers to education. Cuts to funding or programs should be evaluated for their effects on low-income students, students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, and other historically marginalized populations.

### Key Components Of Superintendent Recommendation

**Maximize revenue to offset current General Fund expenses** - School Districts across the state have seen exponential growth in inflation in key areas like transportation, property and liability insurance, utilities (natural gas, electric, water, sewer, disposal), health insurance, and other components that make up a District budget. One way to address the gap between the actual inflationary increase and the minimal increase provided in state funding is to increase revenues where we can. There are only a few ways that public schools generate revenue to offset expenses - facility rentals, student activity fees, and entrance fees to athletic contests. It is my recommendation that we increase the charge for all of these - regardless of whether levies pass or not.



Proposed Revenue Increase	High School (9-12) Budget	Notes
<b>Increase Extracurricular Participation Fees</b>	\$25,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Increasing the fee structure by 25% would generate an additional \$25,000 in revenue in the high school District, allowing the District to reduce its current and future General Fund contribution to extracurriculars. Current scholarship and pay-it forward mechanisms would remain in place to support students who are unable to pay the fee.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Fee increases would be implemented starting with the fall 2024 activities season.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Increased communication with families letting them know about the scholarship opportunities. Communication with booster clubs, building administration, District and building activities staff, and coaches to ensure students experiencing hardship receive a scholarship.</p>
<b>Increase External Facility User Fees</b>	\$10,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Increase fees paid by external users to cover related costs currently paid through the General Fund. This process is governed by policy with administrative oversight. The changes to the increased fees will also serve as a reset in consistent expectations for building use by staff members outside the scope of their employment (private lessons, tutoring, and coaching). There are concerns around our ability to find staff willing to work external facility use events. An inability to provide coverage may result in partial facility closures and, as a result, impact the District's ability to rent our facilities and generate the revenue expected by this proposal.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Fee restructures were approved by the Board in August of 2023. We will continue to communicate with community groups and organizations that wish to use our facilities on the impacts of these fee increases.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Communicate clearly and proactively with community stakeholders the changes in fee structures.</p>
<b>Increase Gate Fees</b>	\$15,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Increasing gate fees helps to cover related costs currently paid through the General Fund for all activities including travel, meals, officials, operations and maintenance, utilities, etc. The increases in those costs have shifted greater than expected burdens to the General Fund thereby limiting resources for classrooms and general education.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> It is anticipated that revisions to gate fees will be added to board agendas in the spring of 2024. Revised fee structure would go into effect July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Communicate clearly and proactively with community stakeholders the changes in gate fees.</p>



**Budget Reductions** - Since 2019, MCPS has seen their high school enrollments increase by almost 400 students. During that same time period, staffing has increased to account for the enrollment projections (not including ESSER funded positions). Generally, accreditation standards cap grade 9-12 classrooms at 30. Staffing to accreditation standards would reduce certified staff.

Proposed Reductions	High School (9-12) Budget	Notes
<b>9-12 Reductions in Certified Staffing</b>	\$702,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> The certified staffing reductions reflected in this item are based upon the balance needed to achieve the \$1.86 million deficit after all other areas were tabulated.</p> <p>High School staffing model efficiencies will need to be addressed by the District and the annual FTE allocations that are tied to high school enrollment and adjusted annually. The increase in enrollment was over-projected last year, but staffing was added. Any additional staff reductions from the 9-12 setting would likely need to come from non accreditation standard support staff positions such as behavioral support staff, instructional coaches, or non-Title I certified intervention staff. In addition, sections with low enrollments that are not currently program based will be canceled to remain consistent with staffing for accreditation</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> The high school master schedule will be changed for the 2024-2025 school year to reflect these reductions.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The District will maximize reductions to the extent possible via attrition (retirements and one-year-only contracts). Any reductions that involve non-tenured staff will be scrutinized carefully and those individuals will receive support from the HR department to help secure future employment. Transparent and clear communication will occur during this process.</p>
<b>Reduce Central Office or Building Administration and Supports</b>	\$363,500	<p><b>Notes:</b> It is recognized and understood that when there are budget reductions, most eyes drift to administration or the central office with commentary that echoes a misunderstood and often misplaced notion that administration is somehow overstaffed.</p> <p>Centralized administration serves to reduce the burden on individual schools and provide for efficiencies that actually reduce costs, increase productivity and effectively steward a District with over 1400 full-time employees and almost 10,000 students. The operational capacity for the administration is beyond capacity. Many of the administration work well beyond a 50-60 hour work week. Administrators are on call 24/7 and have limited opportunities to take time away from their positions. The capacity to take on new, innovative, and functional responsibilities is very limited.</p> <p>Essentially, cutting back central administration doesn't eliminate the need for their functions - it just decentralizes them. This can negatively impact schools as they absorb these responsibilities on top of their core mission of educating students. Teachers and principals end up becoming jacks-of-all-trades instead of focused specialists. The ship may keep moving with reduced crew, but not necessarily in the right direction or with great efficiency. The teachers</p>

		<p>will bear the burden of making up for the missing leadership, coordination, and support.</p> <p>Administrative staffing structures are under the purview of the Superintendent with final approval of the Board of Trustees. District administration positions include: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Executive Directors, Directors, Coordinators, Principals, and Assistant Principals. There are MT Accreditation standards and staffing ratios related to superintendent, curriculum directors and principal positions.</p> <p>Administrative and support staff structures at the District Office are continuously reviewed, especially when turnover occurs and when reductions are warranted for financial reasons. Since 2019, the District has restructured several times to reduce the strain on the General Fund. The following positions have been reduced and/or not hired: three Executive Regional Directors were replaced by two Assistant Superintendents, Central Activities Director (never hired), Assistant Superintendent Secretary (cut), Executive Director of Communications (rehired as a coordinator -\$80,000 savings).</p> <p>After a thorough review of the organizational chart of the District and recognizing the priorities of the Board, the Superintendent is recommending another restructure to the Centralized Administration of the District. We are recommending the reductions of the following positions: Sp. Ed Director, Fine Arts Director, CTE Coordinator, four instructional coaches, Work Comp Coordinator, Community Services Coordinator, Student Services Coordinator, Dray Services, Library Services, Middle School Assistant Principal, and a portion of the Willard Principal Salary (reducing stipend for extra assignment).</p> <p>Building administration has also been analyzed based on accreditation standards with recommendations for reductions.</p> <p>The positions being recommended are certified administrators, certified teaching staff, classified support staff and exempt positions. The reduction of all of these positions does not mean that more teachers or other staff were added back to the buildings.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> The elimination of any positions or budget reductions will be finalized by June 30, 2024. The results of the final reductions will help determine the central office support structure/s that will need to move back to the building level for the 24-25 school year. In addition, the reduction of any position or staff with tenure or seniority will further displace employees in other positions within the District.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The District will maximize reductions to the extent possible via attrition (retirements and one-year-only contracts). Any reductions that involve tenured staff or staff with seniority will be scrutinized carefully and those individuals will receive support from the HR department to help secure employment in the District according to applicable laws and collective bargaining agreements. Transparent and clear communication will occur during this process.</p>
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<b>Eliminate Lifeworks Agreement</b>	\$19,788	<p><b>Notes:</b> Lifeworks is an online platform that the District purchased for its employees and is paid by our Health Insurance Plan. In review of this product, we have found the utilization rate to be very low and recommend that we stop paying for this service.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> The current Lifeworks agreement would terminate at the end of the renewal cycle.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Eliminating an underutilized program reinforces how we can be evaluating our limited resources and be conscientious stewards of our financial resources.</p>
<b>Seeley-Swan HS Block Grant Reduction</b>	\$15,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Seeley-Swan HS is a Class C high school with fewer than 100 students and receives a block grant allocation for support with its building budgets. There are no cuts that could be made at Seeley HS that wouldn't put the school out of accreditation standards. Therefore, it is the recommendation that we reduce the overall funding by \$15,000 and allow the administrator at Seeley HS to identify the specific areas for reduction.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Seeley-Swan High School budget for 2024-2025 would reflect the \$15,000 reduction.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Building administration would make cuts that minimize direct impacts to student learning.</p>
<b>Decrease Building and Department Budgets</b>	\$75,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Keeping in mind that we have costs associated with the buildings and departments that we cannot reduce - things like electricity, heat, garbage, internet, etc. Less than 10% of our budgets provide for instructional materials, printing, furniture, equipment, repairs, contracted services (like snow plowing), etc. Items typically purchased from these budgets include supplies, field trips, professional development, software, special education support, curriculum, print shop supplies, and building maintenance items.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Building and Department budgets for 2024-2025 would reflect the \$75,000 reduction.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Building and Departments would make cuts that minimize direct impacts to student learning.</p>
<b>Decrease Activity Budgets</b>	\$75,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> These reductions could be in the form of supplies, travel, reduced seasons, etc.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Activity budgets for 2024-2025 would reflect the \$75,000 reduction.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Building administrators would make cuts that provide equity and opportunities for high school activities - sports are not exclusive to these cuts.</p>

**Expenditure Offsets** - Expenditure offsets is typically a description of how we move budgeted expenses from one category to another. To the greatest extent possible, the District strives to appropriately code expenditures to the correct fund. The business office will look at all available expenditures including staffing, supplies, and other items to see if there are any savings by coding to different funds. Recognizing that there are many funds that comprise the District's budget and where expenditures are allowed is a function of the business and accounting department with deference given to the GASB rules and our auditor's findings. Below is the list of expenditure offsets identified.

Proposed Expenditure Offsets	High School (9-12) Budget	Notes
<b>Shift Transportation Supervisor Salary</b>	\$26,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Currently this position is being paid for out of the General Fund. This expenditure would shift to the Transportation Fund.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> This shift of expenditures will be effective July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> This shift of expenditures allows the District to continue to provide student related services without impacting the General Fund.</p>
<b>Shift Benefits Technician Salary</b>	\$27,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Currently this position is being paid for out of the General Fund. We would ask the Insurance Committee to shift this expenditure out of the General Fund to the Insurance Fund as the District contributes over \$8,000,000 annually to the Insurance Fund on behalf of the employees.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> This shift of expenditures will be effective July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> This shift of expenditures allows the District to continue to provide student related services without impacting the General Fund.</p>
<b>Offset Expenditures with Advanced Opportunity Grant</b>	\$39,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> Present expenditures for travel, supplies, stipends and other CTE related costs will be shifted from the General Fund to the Advanced Opportunities Grant.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> This shift of expenditures will be effective July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> This allows the District to continue to provide student related services without impacting the General Fund.</p>
<b>Utilize a portion of the Interlocal Agreement Fund</b>	TBD	<p><b>Notes:</b> Presently, there are no high school contributed funds in the Interlocal Agreement account. There are, however, funds that were contributed by the elementary District that could be used since funds that are contributed lose their identity when placed there. The use of one time only money is problematic in that it will reduce the ability of the District to make purchases, like curriculum, unanticipated expenditures, and other large dollar items in the future. Spending these dollars now means we will have to do with less in the future.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> There isn't currently a timeline on this but any decision should be made before the final budget adoption in August.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The use of</p>

		these dollars allows the District to continue to provide student related services. Using one-time only funds is a last resort as this is not a sustainable practice for ongoing budgeting purposes and delays other budget cuts for another year.
<b>Spend One-Time Only Funds</b>	\$595,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> In 2021, the Legislature revised their process for funding unanticipated enrollment increases. MCPS High School District grew during that time and one component of the new funding formula was to use the District's ESSER contributions as a portion of this expenditure. We have set aside \$595,000 from our ESSER award and will use those one time only funds to offset the deficit for next year.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> These funds will be built into the 24-25 school year, but will need to be assumed in subsequent years' budgets or this will need to be reflected as additional reductions in future years.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Using one-time only funds is a last resort as this is not a sustainable practice for ongoing budgeting purposes and delays other budget cuts for another year.</p>
<b>Tuition Levy to Fund Excess Special Education Costs</b>	\$200,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> By law, Districts can permissively levy the excess special education costs associated with students with disabilities. We anticipate that our increased costs will be around \$200,000 and will note this increase in our annual levy notices.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> These funds will be built into the 24-25 school year.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The increased costs, identification, and enrollments experienced in serving moderate to severely disabled students in MCPS has continued. We have a moral and ethical obligation to provide services for these students.</p>
<b>General Fund Over Base Levy (Operational Levy)</b>	\$303,849	<p><b>Notes:</b> By law, Districts can ask voters to approve an "over base" levy for the costs associated with providing educational opportunities beyond what is required by law. Based on current enrollment projections and the inflationary increase we anticipate that our operational levy will be around \$303,849 and will ask our voters to approve this levy this spring.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> The levy election will be held in May and these funds will be built into the 24-25 school year if passed by our voters.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The Operational Levy is intended to keep our District funded at 100 percent. Without the passage of this levy, we will be facing additional budget reductions that may impact academic and extra-curricular offerings. We have a community that has overwhelmingly supported public education in MCPS and appreciate the collaboration that allows us to offer a world-class education to our students.</p>
<b>Safety Levy</b>	\$1,000,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> All of the previous recommendations are tied to not only balancing the budget but also to pursuing a Safety Levy. In essence, this request will allow taxpayers to help reduce the impacts of the</p>

		<p>budget cuts identified by the budget committee and superintendent. The District will be able to move existing General Fund costs that are applicable to safety and security (school counselors, SRO's, etc.) from the General Fund to the Safety Levy Fund. Currently, we estimate that from the General Fund, MCPS spends over \$3,000,000 annually on school safety, including but not limited to: salaries and benefits for personnel, infrastructure, physical security, software and accompanying safety related devices, staff training, etc. Our request of \$1,000,000 does not fully represent the actual costs spent annually by the District on safety and preventative measures but is a balance of asking our taxpayers to help provide relief to the General Fund by shifting these expenditures to the Safety Levy.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> The levy election will be held in May and these funds will be built into the 24-25 school year if passed by our voters.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The Safety Levy is intended to offset our General Fund so that we can continue to provide the . Without the passage of this levy, we will be facing additional budget reductions that may impact academic and extra-curricular offerings. We have a community that has overwhelmingly supported public education in MCPS and appreciate the collaboration that allows us to offer a world-class education to our students.</p>
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**Budget additions:** Some might ask, why in the midst of all of these cuts would the District consider adding expenditures to the budget? The answer lies in the fact that MCPS prides itself on serving a vital role in providing opportunities for all students, regardless of their backgrounds. The above proposed budget cuts, if not carefully managed, can disproportionately impact schools and students from disadvantaged communities; exacerbating existing inequities. We have a moral imperative to ensure budget decisions do not unduly harm groups that already face barriers to education. Cuts to funding or programs have to be evaluated for their effects on low-income students, students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, and other historically marginalized populations. Due to the addition of Charter Schools, Advanced Opportunities, Transformational Learning, Community Schools and other District programs, and the reduction of so many central office positions, we still have a need to provide support to the staff, students and programs represented in those reductions.

Proposed Expenditure Additions	High School (9-12) Budget	Notes
<b>Administration Consolidation and Restructure</b>	\$80,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> The administration restructure resulted in a gross decrease of \$864,000 but due to the addition of charter schools and the continued need for administrative support for the reduction of Sp. Ed Director, Fine Arts Director, CTE Coordinator, four instructional coaches, Work Comp Coordinator, Community Services Coordinator, and Student Services Coordinator we have recommended that we incorporate all of those position responsibilities under the remaining central office administrators but add one position as an Academic and Community Services Director with responsibility for 9-12. In adding this position, we did not seek to add the two building administrator positions that we budgeted for in the charter schools.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> If approved, we would seek to open the position</p>

		<p>immediately with an official start date of July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> We have made a commitment to our community to support the best educational outcomes for students and this cannot be done without administrative support. We supported the addition of charter schools and our community is expecting that to happen and we recognize that these schools will also need administrative oversight to be successful. In addition, adding charter schools actually brings more state money to the District.</p>
<p><b>Increase Support for Native American Students, English Language Learners, Gifted and Talented</b></p>	<p>\$103,500</p>	<p><b>Notes:</b> We have identified gaps for students who are typically marginalized due to socio-economics, being students of color, English language learners and even Gifted and Talented learners. In the past five years we have seen these populations grow while support has not. We see this as a continuing priority and recommend increased support to these populations.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> If approved, we would seek to open the positions immediately with official start dates of July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> MCPS prides itself on serving a vital role in providing opportunities for all students, regardless of their backgrounds. Budget cuts, if not carefully managed, can disproportionately impact schools and students from disadvantaged communities; exacerbating existing inequities. We have a moral imperative to ensure budget decisions do not unduly harm groups that already face barriers to education. Cuts to funding or programs have to be evaluated for their effects on low-income students, students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, and other historically marginalized populations.</p>
<p><b>Add Interventionists and Other Safety Support Services</b></p>	<p>\$372,000</p>	<p><b>Notes:</b> These positions will only be added if the voters approve the Safety Levy. The expenditures from this category are not currently budgeted for as they are positions that were previously funded with ESSER. These additions would be to provide the continued and necessary support and intervention to students.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> If approved, we would seek to open the positions immediately with official start dates of July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> Similar to our desire to provide a range of services to students, these types of positions are not a legal requirement but rather a moral obligation to ensure that we provide for student safety beginning with intervention at the earliest moments not just for behavior, but for mental and emotional health.</p>
<p><b>Add Special Education Positions to the General Fund</b></p>	<p>\$400,000</p>	<p><b>Notes:</b> We have long identified students who have disabilities and in recent years this population has not only grown in terms of the number of students served, but also the severity of the disability and the intensity of the services needed to support those students. Presently we are paying for these positions out of a fund we commonly refer to as Medicaid (which is a reimbursement account for medicaid eligible services). At the conclusion of this fiscal year, the</p>

		<p>fund will be in a deficit of nearly \$750,000. We have to shift those expenses to the General Fund.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> We are looking at a phased-in approach to the General Fund dependent upon the passage of our General Fund and Safety Levy, but would begin the process in July of 2024.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> We have a legal and moral obligation to provide for students with disabilities and we recognize that all students deserve a free and appropriate public education along with the dignity and safety of a learning environment with their peers.</p>
<b>Change in Allocation of District Expenditures</b>	\$180,000	<p><b>Notes:</b> For expenditures that are coded to the District level like property and liability insurance, central administration, print shop services, etc, the costs are broken out by elementary District and high school District and are based on the enrollment proportions. Due to declining enrollments at the elementary level and increasing enrollments at the high school level we have to change the proportion from Elementary 58% : High School 42% to Elementary 55% : High School 45%. The net effect is that the elementary budget deficit was reduced by \$180,000 and the high school budget deficit increased by \$180,000.</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> This change in proportion will be reflected in the next budget year.</p> <p><b>Aligning With Best Outcomes and Board Priorities:</b> The Board recognizes the equitable distribution of funds and supports a recalibration of the proportion to be aligned with enrollments.</p>



## Missoula County Public Schools Safety Levy

### **Montana Law regarding allowable costs in voted and permissive levy - [20-9-236\(1\)\(a\)](#):**

"planning for improvements to and maintenance of school and student safety, including but not limited to the cost of staffing for or services provided by architects, engineers, school resource officers, counselors, and other staff or consultants assisting the district with improvements to school and student safety and security;"

### **The portion of staff salaries that directly support preventative safety measures in schools:**

Elementary District (K-8)	High School District (9-12)	Total
\$1,059,017	\$392,529	\$1,451,546

These salaries include but are not limited to administration, nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, interventionists, and other safety related personnel.

### **The portion of School Resource Officers and District Safety Personnel salaries that directly support preventative safety measures in schools:**

Elementary District (K-8)	High School District (9-12)	Total
\$218,920	\$347,232	\$566,152

These salaries include school resource officers, community resource officers, and other safety related personnel who manage our evening security and daily security systems for life, health and safety.

### **Technology, maintenance, and upgrades to existing security infrastructure:**

Elementary District (K-8)	High School District (9-12)	Total
\$247,825	\$276,661	\$525,486

The expenditures in this category include but are not limited to: camera systems, door and window security, alarm monitoring, fire suppression and notification systems, computers and software dedicated to safety, safety programming and training for staff and students.

The totals for high school and elementary are greater than the actual values represented in the levy request of \$1,500,000 for the elementary district and \$1,000,000 for the high school district.

**TAX INCREMENT REMITTANCE AGREEMENT  
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024**

THIS TAX INCREMENT REMITTANCE AGREEMENT is made this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024, by and among the City of Missoula, Montana (the “City”), Missoula County, Montana (the “County”), School District No. 1 (Missoula), Missoula County, Montana (the “Missoula Elementary District”), High School District No. 1 (Missoula), Missoula County, Montana (the “Missoula High School District”), School District No. 4 (Hellgate), Missoula County, Montana (the “Hellgate Elementary District”), the Missoula Urban Transportation District (the “Urban Transportation District”) and the State of Montana (the “State”) (collectively, the “Taxing Bodies”), and the Missoula Redevelopment Agency, a component unit of the City (the “MRA”).

WHEREAS, under the provisions of Title 7, Chapter 15, Parts 42 and 43, Montana Code Annotated, as amended (the “Act”), the City is authorized to create urban renewal areas, prepare and adopt redevelopment plans therefor and amendments thereto, undertake urban renewal projects therein, provide for the segregation and collection of tax increment with respect to taxes collected in such area, issue its bonds to pay the costs of such projects and to refund bonds previously issued under the Act and pledge to the repayment of the bonds the tax increment and other revenues derived from projects undertaken within the urban renewal area; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Act and Ordinance No. 2803, adopted by the City Council of the City on December 16, 1991, as amended and supplemented by Ordinance Nos. 3215 and 3489, adopted by the City Council of the City on July 22, 2002 and January 7, 2013, respectively, the City established its Urban Renewal District II (“URD II”) and adopted an urban renewal plan therefor, which urban renewal plan provides for the segregation of tax increment and assigns the administration of URD II to the MRA; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Act and Ordinance No. 3163, adopted by the City Council of the City on December 11, 2000, as amended and supplemented by Ordinance Nos. 3309 and 3557, adopted by the City Council of the City on December 12, 2005 and November 9, 2015, respectively, the City established its Urban Renewal District III (“URD III”) and adopted an urban renewal plan therefor, which urban renewal plan provides for the segregation of tax increment and assigns the administration of URD III to the MRA; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Act and Ordinance No. 3359, adopted by the City Council of the City on October 15, 2007, the City established its Front Street Urban Renewal District (the “Front Street URD”) and adopted an urban renewal plan therefor, which urban renewal plan provides for the segregation of tax increment and assigns the administration of the Front Street URD to the MRA; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Act and Ordinance No. 3380, adopted by the City Council of the City on July 21, 2008, the City established its Riverfront Triangle Urban Renewal District (the “Riverfront Triangle URD”) and adopted an urban renewal plan therefor, which urban renewal plan provides for the segregation of tax increment and assigns the administration of the Riverfront Triangle URD to the MRA; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Act and Ordinance No. 3534, adopted by the City Council of the City on August 25, 2014, as amended and supplemented by Ordinance Nos. 3550, 3556 and 3698, adopted by the City Council of the City on July 20, 2015, November 2, 2015 and May 23, 2022, respectively, the City established its North Reserve-Scott Street Urban Renewal District (“NRSS URD”) and adopted an urban renewal plan therefor, which urban renewal plan provides for the segregation of tax increment and assigns the administration of NRSS URD to the MRA; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Act and Ordinance No. 3533, adopted by the City Council of the City on August 25, 2014, the City established its Hellgate Urban Renewal District (“Hellgate URD”) and adopted an urban renewal plan therefor, which urban renewal plan provides for the segregation of tax increment and assigns the administration of Hellgate URD to the MRA; and

WHEREAS, the City has issued and there are outstanding certain bonds and other obligations payable from tax increment with respect to URD II, URD III, Front Street URD, Riverfront Triangle URD and NRSS URD, as more particularly described on Exhibit A hereto (collectively, the “Bonds”); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 7-15-4291 of the Act, the City is authorized to enter into agreements to remit any portion of the annual tax increment not currently required for the payment of urban renewal costs pursuant to Section 7-15-4288 of the Act or pledged to the payment of the principal or premiums, if any, and interest on bonds referred to in Section 7-15-4289 of the Act (such portion of the annual tax increment, the “Available Tax Increment”); and

WHEREAS, the City has determined to remit a portion of the Available Tax Increment from some or all of URD II, URD III, Front Street URD, Riverfront Triangle URD, NRSS URD and Hellgate URD (collectively, the “Districts”) to the City in the aggregate principal amount of \$2,165,944; and

WHEREAS, in connection with such remittance to the City and pursuant to Section 7-15-4291 of the Act, the City must provide for the remittance to each other Taxing Body for which the mill rates are included in the calculation of the tax increment for the applicable District(s) in an amount proportional to the Taxing Body’s share of the total mills levied in the applicable District(s); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Resolution Nos. 8716 and 8717, adopted by the City Council on August 21, 2023, the City adopted its 2023-24 Annual Budget and approved levying taxes for municipal and administrative purposes for the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget, which included a remittance of Available Tax Increment to the City of \$2,165,944; and

WHEREAS, on October 19, 2023, the Board of Commissioners of the MRA acknowledged a remittance of Available Tax Increment to the Taxing Bodies in Fiscal Year 2023-24; and

WHEREAS, the Urban Transportation District, the State, the County, the City, the High School District and the Missoula Elementary District levy taxes within a taxing jurisdiction designated the “1-1 Jurisdiction” in the amounts and respective proportions set forth in Exhibit B in the table titled “1-1 Jurisdiction Mill Levies;” and

WHEREAS, the Urban Transportation District, the State, the County, the City, the High School District and the Hellgate Elementary District levy taxes within a taxing jurisdiction designated the “4-1 Jurisdiction” in the amounts and respective proportions set forth in Exhibit B in the table titled “4-1 Jurisdiction Mill Levies;” and

WHEREAS, URD III, Front Street URD, Riverfront Triangle URD and Hellgate URD are all wholly located within the 1-1 Jurisdiction, such that remittances from those Districts shall be distributed to the Taxing Bodies in the proportions set forth in Exhibit B in the table titled “1-1 Jurisdiction Mill Levies;” and

WHEREAS, URD II and NRSS URD are each located partially within the 1-1 Jurisdiction and partially within the 4-1 Jurisdiction, such that remittances from the 1-1 Jurisdiction portion of each of those Districts shall be distributed to the Taxing Bodies in the proportions set forth in Exhibit B in the table titled “1-1 Jurisdiction Mill Levies” and remittances from the 4-1 Jurisdiction portion of each of those Districts shall be distributed to the Taxing Bodies in the proportions set forth in Exhibit B in the table titled “4-1 Jurisdiction Mill Levies;” and

WHEREAS, the MRA, as the agency responsible for administering the Districts, will be responsible for determining the amount of Available Tax Increment in each of the Districts and remitting Available Tax Increment to the Taxing Bodies from the Districts in accordance with this Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties hereto mutually agree as follows:

A. Pursuant to Section 7-15-4291 of the Act, the City hereby agrees to remit, from one or more of the Districts, as determined by the MRA, Available Tax Increment received in fiscal year 2023-2024 to the applicable Taxing Bodies, and hereby directs the MRA to administer such remittance in accordance with this Agreement.

B. In December 2023 and June 2024, the MRA will review the tax increment revenues collected in each of the Districts as of November 30, 2023 and May 31, 2024, respectively. After setting aside amounts required to pay Bonds and any amounts the MRA determines in its sole discretion are required to pay other costs under Section 7-15-4288 of the Act, the MRA will determine the amount of Available Tax Increment with respect to each of the Districts.

C. Based on the amount of Available Tax Increment with respect to each of the Districts, future redevelopment plans or projects in each of the Districts and any other information it deems relevant, the MRA will determine, in its sole discretion, how much Available Tax Increment to remit from each of the Districts; provided that:

(i) except as provided in paragraph D, below, the aggregate amount to be remitted to each of the Taxing Bodies from Available Tax Increment received by the City in fiscal year 2023-24 is as follows:

(1) to the Urban Transportation District, \$518,734;

- (2) to the State, \$360,420;
- (3) to the County, \$1,872,472, plus \$845,455 for countywide schools;
- (4) to the City, \$2,165,944;
- (5) to Missoula High School District, \$695,430;
- (6) to Missoula Elementary District, \$1,490,045; and
- (7) to Hellgate Elementary District, \$106,609.

(ii) the MRA will determine and may adjust amounts to be remitted from any District, but shall not change the aggregate amounts to be remitted from URD II or NRSS URD, each of which are located partially within the 1-1 Jurisdiction and partially within the 4-1 Jurisdiction, in order to provide for proportionate remittance to each of the Taxing Bodies in the amounts set forth in subsection (C)(i) above.

D. The MRA shall distribute remittance amounts to each Taxing Body in two substantially equal payments, with the first payment expected to be made in January 2024 and the second payment expected to be made in June 2024 or July 2024. It is acknowledged and agreed that the timing and amounts of the payments to be made under this Agreement will be determined by the receipt of property tax revenues from the County pursuant to its property tax collection and distribution procedures.

E. If property tax collections are less than expected, such that there is not Available Tax Increment in the Districts in an amount necessary to remit the amounts set forth above to the Taxing Bodies, the MRA will reduce remittance amounts proportionately as necessary. All parties acknowledge and agree that the only source of funds to be remitted is Available Tax Increment. Failure to make all or any portion of the payments described in paragraph C above due to lack of Available Tax Increment is not an event of default under this Agreement. This Agreement is not and shall not be construed to be a debt of the City or the MRA.

F. This Agreement shall terminate on the later of (i) the date the second payment described under subsection (D) is made or (ii) July 16, 2024. All parties agree and understand that the remittance of Available Tax Increment under this Agreement is expressly limited to Available Tax Increment received with respect to the Districts in Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to apply to or affect tax increment received in future fiscal years.

G. This Agreement may be amended and any of its terms may be modified only by written amendment authorized and executed by the parties hereto.

H. This Agreement and the legal relations between the parties hereto will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Montana, without giving effect to any choice of law statutes, rules, or principles.

I. This Agreement may be simultaneously executed in several counterparts, each of which will be an original and all of which will constitute one and the same instrument.

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**CITY OF MISSOULA, MONTANA**

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Andrea Davis, Mayor

Attest \_\_\_\_\_  
Claire Trimble, City Clerk

APPROVED FOR LEGAL CONTENT:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ryan Sudbury, City Attorney

## **MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

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Karl J. Englund, Chair, Board of Commissioners

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Ellen Buchanan, Director



## **MISSOULA COUNTY, MONTANA**

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Josh Slotnik, Chair, Board of County Commissioners

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Chris Lounsbury, Chief Administrative Officer

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Andrew Czorny, Chief Financial Officer

**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1 (MISSOULA),  
MISSOULA COUNTY, MONTANA**

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Wilena Old Person, Chair of the Board of Trustees

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Micah Hill, Superintendent

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Pat McHugh, Exec. Director of Business Operations

**HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1  
(MISSOULA), MISSOULA COUNTY,  
MONTANA**

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Wilena Old Person, Chair of the Board of Trustees

---

Micah Hill, Superintendent

---

Pat McHugh, Exec. Director of Business Operations

**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4 (HELLGATE),  
MISSOULA COUNTY, MONTANA**

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Tom McLaughlin, Chair of the Board of Trustees

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Molly Blakely, Ph.D., Superintendent

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Justine Reese, Business Manager/District Clerk

**MISSOULA    URBAN    TRANSPORTATION  
DISTRICT**

---

Don McArthur, Chair, Board of Trustees

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Corey Aldridge, General Manager

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Allison Segal, Finance Director

**STATE OF MONTANA**

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Eric Dale, Director of Tax Policy & Research  
Department of Revenue

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Chelsey Gochis, Financial Manager  
Department of Revenue

## **EXHIBIT A**

### **Outstanding Bonds**

#### **URD II Bonds:**

- Series 2006 Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Note
- Series 2007 Safeway/St. Pats Project
- Series 2013 Silver Park, Trestle, Wyoming St
- Series 2013 Intermountain Project (Corso/The Source)
- Series 2022A 2006 Refunding Bond
- Series 2022B Bridge Apartments

#### **URD III Bonds:**

- Series 2015 S. Reserve St. Pedestrian Crossing
- Series 2016 Mary Avenue East Improvements
- Series 2017A Mary Avenue West
- Series 2018A MRL Property (taxable)
- Series 2018B MRL Park & Trail (tax exempt)

#### **Front Street URD:**

- Series 2014 Front Street Parking Refunding
- Series 2017A FIB Note Refunding (taxable)
- Series 2017B FIB Note Refunding (tax-exempt)
- Series 2017C East Front Street - Public Parking
- Series 2019 The Mercantile
- Series 2021 AC Hotel

#### **Riverfront Triangle URD Bonds:**

- Series 2019 Stockman Bank

#### **North Reserve – Scott Street URD Bonds:**

- Series 2015 Bretz, Consumer Direct, Scott Street Village Phase 1
- Series 2020A Scott Street Property (tax exempt)
- Series 2020B Scott Street Property (taxable)
- Series 2021 Scott Street Village Phases 2 & 3; 2017 Partial Redemption & Refunding

## EXHIBIT B

**Note: Remittance amounts are based on fiscal year 2022-2023 mill levies.**

### 1-1 Jurisdiction Mill Levies

Taxing Body	Mills Levied	Percentage of Total Levy
Missoula Urban Transportation District	57.57	6.43%
State of Montana	40.00	4.47%
Missoula County	207.81	23.21%
City of Missoula	240.38	26.85%
Missoula High School District	77.18	8.62%
Missoula County for Countywide Schools	93.83	10.48%
Missoula Elementary District	178.63	19.95%
Total:	895.40*	100.00%

### 4-1 Jurisdiction Mill Levies

Taxing Body	Mills Levied	Percentage of Total Levy
Missoula Urban Transportation District	57.57	6.57%
State of Montana	40.00	4.57%
Missoula County	207.81	23.72%
City of Missoula	240.38	27.44%
Missoula High School District	77.18	8.81%
Missoula County for Countywide Schools	93.83	10.71%
Hellgate Elementary District	159.36	18.19%
Total:	876.13*	100.00%

### Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Tax Increment Remittance Summary<sup>1</sup>

Taxing Body	Remittance Amount	Per Payment (January 2024 and June or July 2024)
Missoula Urban Transportation District	\$ 518,734	\$ 259,367
State of Montana	360,420	180,210
Missoula County	1,872,472	936,236
City of Missoula	2,165,944	1,082,972
Missoula High School District	695,430	347,715
Missoula County for Countywide Schools	845,455	422,728
Missoula Elementary District	1,490,045	745,022
Hellgate Elementary District	106,609	53,305
Total:	\$ 8,055,110	\$ 4,027,555

\* Total levy amount reduced by 6 mills levied by the State for the University system, which are not included in tax increment.

<sup>1</sup> Subject to Section (C)(ii) of the Tax Increment Remittance Agreement.



**MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
ELEMENTARY - DISTRICT NO. 1  
MISSOULA COUNTY**

**RESOLUTIONS 2024-6 (E)  
SET ELEMENTARY DISTRICT SCHOOL AND STUDENT SAFETY AND SECURITY  
BUILDING RESERVE FUND LEVY AMOUNT**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Resolution 2024-5 (E) the Board of Trustees, Missoula County Public Schools – Elementary District No. 1, Missoula County, State of Montana, called for a School and Student Safety and Security Building Reserve Levy Election to be held on the seventh day of May, 2024 for monies in addition to the levies authorized by law in such number of mills as may be necessary to raise the amount needed for the purpose of supporting and improving school and student safety through school security systems and technology maintenance and upgrades, and through preventative services in the elementary district; and

WHEREAS, the trustees of this district shall have the authority under the provisions of MCA §15-10-425 to set the amount of a mill levy.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Elementary District No. 1 declare that the amount of the elementary building reserve fund levy election to be held on May 7, 2024 shall be \$1,500,000.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Elementary District No. 1 will meet on or before the fifth day of April, 2024 to certify the ballot.

RESOLVED this 13<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2024

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Wilena Old Person  
Chair, Board of Trustees

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Pat McHugh  
Clerk, Board of Trustees

DATE: 2.13.2024

**MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
HIGH SCHOOL - DISTRICT NO. 1  
MISSOULA COUNTY**

**RESOLUTIONS 2024-6 (S)  
SET HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL AND STUDENT SAFETY AND SECURITY  
BUILDING RESERVE FUND LEVY AMOUNT**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Resolution 2024-5 (S) the Board of Trustees, Missoula County Public Schools – High School District No. 1, Missoula County, State of Montana, called for a School and Student Safety and Security Building Reserve Levy Election to be held on the seventh day of May, 2024 for monies in addition to the levies authorized by law in such number of mills as may be necessary to raise the amount needed for the purpose of supporting and improving school and student safety through school security systems and technology maintenance and upgrades, and through preventative services in the high school district; and

WHEREAS, the trustees of this district shall have the authority under the provisions of MCA §15-10-425 to set the amount of a mill levy.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of High School District No. 1 declare that the amount of the elementary building reserve fund levy election to be held on May 7, 2024 shall be \$1,000,000.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of High School District No. 1 will meet on or before the fifth day of April, 2024 to certify the ballot.

RESOLVED this 13<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2024

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Wilena Old Person  
Chair, Board of Trustees

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Pat McHugh  
Clerk, Board of Trustees

ELEMENTARY CERTIFIED/PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL REPORT			
<b>ADMINISTRATION RETIREMENTS</b>			
Virginia Haines	Director of Special Education	District	Effective: June 30, 2024
<b>ADMINISTRATION ASSIGNMENT/FTE CHANGES</b>			
Susan Bageant	From: Interim Principal	To: Principal	Effective: July 1, 2024
	Meadow Hill Middle School	Meadow Hill Middle School	
<b>ADMINISTRATION NON-RENEWALS</b>			
John Stromberg	Assistant Principal	Meadow Hill Middle School	Effective: June 30, 2024
<b>CERTIFIED/LICENSED NEW HIRES - Contingent upon satisfactory results of a criminal background check, as required.</b>			
none			
<b>CERTIFIED ASSIGNMENT/FTE CHANGES</b>			
none			
<b>CERTIFIED AUTHORIZED FTE</b>			
Michelle Mathson	TOSA - Interventionist (Learning Lab)	District	Effective: January 16, 2024
	increase from .50 fte to .75 fte		remainder of 2023-24 school yr
<b>CERTIFIED RETIREMENTS</b>			
Dorothy Morrison	General Music	Lewis & Clark Elementary	Effective: June 7, 2024
Wendy Wilson	Grade 7	Meadow Hill Middle School	Effective: June 7, 2024
<b>CERTIFIED RESIGNATIONS</b>			
none			
<b>CERTIFIED LEAVE OF ABSENCE</b>			
none			
<b>CERTIFIED RETURN FROM LEAVE OF ABSENCE</b>			
Tanya Johnson	Grade 8	CS Porter Middle School	Effective: 2024-25 school year
	(.50 fte LOA - returns to 1.0 fte)		
<b>HIRE OF LONG TERM SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS - Contingent upon satisfactory results of a criminal background check, as required.</b>			
Kelly Engen	Grade 4	Russell Elementary	Effective: January 5, 2024
(for Megan Fandrich)			<b>ATTACHMENT 1</b>
Jordan Parker	Grade 4	Franklin Elementary	Effective: February 15, 2024
(for Rachel Kamura)			<b>ATTACHMENT 2</b>
<b>TERMINATION OF LONG TERM SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS</b>			
<i>Administration recommends termination of the long term substitute teachers listed below in accordance with the attached resolutions.</i>			
Kelly Engen	Grade 4	Russell Elementary	Effective: January 5, 2024
(for Megan Fandrich)			<b>ATTACHMENT 1</b>
Jordan Parker	Grade 4	Franklin Elementary	Effective: February 15, 2024
(for Rachel Kamura)			<b>ATTACHMENT 2</b>

ELEMENTARY DISTRICT # 1 PERSONNEL BOARD REPORT FEBRUARY 13, 2024

[illegible]

RESOLUTION FOR TERMINATION  
AND NON-RE-ELECTION OF THE TEACHING CONTRACT OF  
NON-TENURED TEACHER

WHEREAS, Kelly Engen is assigned to substitute teach and will receive a NON-TENURED teaching contract with the Missoula County Public School District #1 beginning on the first (1st) day of substituting for Megan Fandrich during the 2023-24 school year until the end of the school year, June 7, 2024 or upon the return of Megan Fandrich, the teacher on leave, whichever occurs first. Kelly Engen will begin receiving a prorated daily rate of pay and a non-tenured contract in the absence of the regular teacher, Megan Fandrich.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of Missoula County Public School District #1 that pursuant to Montana Codes Annotated, Section 20-4-206, the non-tenured teaching contract of Kelly Engen, beginning on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) day of substitute teaching for Megan Fandrich during the 2023-24 school year, is hereby terminated in the Missoula County Public School District #1 effective upon the return of Megan Fandrich, the teacher on leave, or the end of the school year, June 7, 2024, whichever occurs first.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that written notice be sent to Kelly Engen, regarding the termination and non-reelection of his contract as provided by law and that such notice shall be in substantially the following form:

NOTICE OF TERMINATION FOR A NON-TENURED TEACHER

*You are hereby notified that at a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Missoula County Public School District #1 held on **February 13, 2024**, it was resolved after a majority vote of the Board to terminate your non-tenured contract, which begins the first (1<sup>st</sup>) day of substitute teaching for Megan Fandrich, **upon the return of the teacher on leave or the end of the school year, June 7, 2024, whichever occurs first**, and not to elect you for re-employment for the **2024-25** school year. The action of the Board of Trustees was taken pursuant to M.C.A. Section 20-4-206.*



Chairperson, Board of Trustees  
Missoula County Public Schools

RESOLUTION FOR TERMINATION

AND NON-RE-ELECTION OF THE TEACHING CONTRACT OF

NON-TENURED TEACHER

WHEREAS, Jordan Parker is assigned to substitute teach and will receive a NON-TENURED teaching contract with the Missoula County Public School District #1 beginning on the thirty-sixth (36th) day of substituting for Rachel Kamura during the 2023-24 school year until the end of the school year, June 7, 2024 or upon return of Rachel Kamura, the teacher on leave, whichever occurs first. Jordan Parker will begin receiving prorated daily rate of pay and a non-tenured contract if the absence of the regular teacher, Rachel Kamura, continues for more than thirty-five (35) consecutive work days and if the assignment of Jordan Parker to substitute teach for Rachel Kamura continues for more than thirty-five (35) days.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of Missoula County Public School District #1 that pursuant to Montana Codes Annotated, Section 20-4-206, the non-tenured teaching contract of Jordan Parker, beginning on the thirty-sixth (36) work day of substitute teaching for Rachel Kamura during the 2023-24 school year is hereby terminated in the Missoula County Public School District #1 effective upon the return of Rachel Kamura, the teacher on leave, or the end of the school year, June 7, 2024, whichever occurs first.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that written notice be sent to Jordan Parker, regarding the termination and non-reelection of her contract as provided by law and that such notice shall be in substantially the following form:

NOTICE OF TERMINATION FOR A NON-TENURED TEACHER

*You are hereby notified that at a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Missoula County Public School District #1 held on **February 13, 2024**, it was resolved after a majority vote of the Board to terminate your non-tenured contract, which begins the thirty-sixth (36th) work day of substitute teaching for Rachel Kamura, effective **upon the return of the teacher on leave or the end of the school year, June 7, 2024, whichever occurs first**, and not to elect you for re-employment for the **2024-2025** school year. The action of the Board of Trustees was taken pursuant to M.C.A. Section 20-4-206.*



Chairperson, Board of Trustees  
Missoula County Public Schools

ATTACHMENT 2

ELEMENTARY DISTRICT # 1 PERSONNEL BOARD REPORT FEBRUARY 13, 2024

ELEMENTARY CLASSIFIED STAFF PERSONNEL REPORT			
<b>CLASSIFIED NEW HIRES</b> - <i>Contingent upon satisfactory results of a criminal background check, as required.</i>			
Christopher Swartz	Custodian	Paxson Elementary	Effective: February 5, 2024 repl: A.Eastridge
James Jacobs	Kitchen Helper	CS Porter Middle School	Effective: January 19, 2024 repl: T.Sweten
Alana Rotter	Sp Ed Ext Resource Para	Russell Elementary	Effective: January 19, 2024 repl: B.Spahr
Emily Harrington (formerly a substitute)	Sp Ed Life Skills Para	Lowell Elementary	Effective: January 9, 2024 new fte
<b>CLASSIFIED ASSIGNMENT/FTE CHANGES</b>			
Tiffany Brown	From: Bookkeeper/Grants Coor District	To: Federal Grants Coordinator District	Effective: January 11, 2024 repl: L.Coon
<b>CLASSIFIED AUTHORIZED FTE</b>			
none			
<b>PERMANENT SUBSTITUTE NEW HIRES</b> - <i>Contingent upon satisfactory results of a criminal background check, as required.</i>			
Emma Blyton	Permanent Building Substitute	Lewis & Clark Elementary	Effective: January 9, 2024 repl: S.Wolsky
Greydon Hart	Permanent Building Substitute	Franklin Elementary	Effective: January 23, 2024 repl: T.Gertz
<b>CLASSIFIED RESIGNATIONS</b>			
Madeline Feeney	Sp Ed Resource Para	Paxson Elementary	Effective: January 23, 2024
Elyse Johnson	Noon Duty Aide	Chief Charlo Elementary	Effective: January 18, 2024
Julie Groenig	PC/Network Technician	District	Effective: February 9, 2024
Whitney Guthrie	Sp Ed SLP Para	Jeannette Rankin Elementary	Effective: February 5, 2024
<b>CLASSIFIED RETIREMENTS</b>			
none			
<b>CLASSIFIED PROBATIONARY RELEASES</b>			
Jacob Sattleen	Custodian	Franklin Elementary	Effective: January 29, 2024
David Guthrie	Sp Ed Resource Para	Franklin Elementary	Effective: February 2, 2024

HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFIED/PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL REPORT			
<b>ADMINISTRATION RETIREMENTS</b>			
Virginia Haines	Director of Special Education	District	Effective: June 30, 2024
<b>ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZED FTE</b>			
TBD	Director of Acad & Comm Serv (9-12)	District	Effective: July 1, 2024
<b>CERTIFIED/LICENSED NEW HIRES - <i>Contingent upon satisfactory results of a criminal background check, as required.</i></b>			
none			
<b>CERTIFIED ASSIGNMENT ADDITION</b>			
Kathleen Wyskiver (current teacher)	French Teacher - add'l .17 fte	Hellgate High School	Effective: 2nd semester 2023-24
<b>CERTIFIED RETIREMENTS</b>			
Julie Parker	School Psychologist	Willard Alt & Big Sky High School	Effective: June 7, 2024
Mary Fillmore	Family & Consumer Science	Big Sky High School	Effective: June 7, 2024
<b>CERTIFIED RESIGNATIONS</b>			
none			
<b>CERTIFIED LEAVE OF ABSENCE</b>			
Lori Messenger	English - .67	Sentinel High School	Effective: 2024-25 school year
<b>CERTIFIED AUTHORIZED FTE</b>			
Jennifer Keintz	Pathways Advisor	Big Sky High School	Effective: 2023-24 school year
		\$1,500	#215-50-100-2100-50150-29021
Tyra McDonald	Media Business Academy Coach	Big Sky High School	Effective: 2023-24 school year
		\$1,500	#215-50-100-1000-50150-29102
Trevor Subith	Ag & Natural Res Academy Coach	Big Sky High School	Effective: 2023-24 school year
		\$750	#215-50-100-1000-50150-29102
Hannah Houser	Health & Pub Serv Academy Coach	Big Sky High School	Effective: 2023-24 school year
		\$2,000	#215-50-100-1000-50150-29102
Gretchen Watkins	Arch/Constr/Manuf/Engin Acad Coach	Big Sky High School	Effective: 2023-24 school year
		\$750	#215-50-100-1000-50150-29102
Christine South	Global Academy Advisor	Big Sky High School	Effective: 2023-24 school year
		\$750	#215-50-100-1000-50150-29102
Matthew Keenan	Global Academy Advisor	Big Sky High School	Effective: 2023-24 school year
		\$750	#215-50-100-1000-50150-29102



HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT # 1 PERSONNEL BOARD REPORT FEBRUARY 13, 2024

[illegible]

## HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT # 1 PERSONNEL BOARD REPORT FEBRUARY 13, 2024

HIGH SCHOOL CLASSIFIED STAFF PERSONNEL REPORT			
<b>CLASSIFIED NEW HIRES</b> - <i>Contingent upon satisfactory results of a criminal background check, as required.</i>			
Nakia Bird-King	Custodian	Big Sky High School	Effective: January 31, 2024 repl: T.Cardarelli
Astrea Steen	Sp Ed Resource Para	Hellgate High School	Effective: January 23, 2024 repl: K.Woodbridge & N.Hymes
<b>CLASSIFIED ASSIGNMENT/FTE CHANGES</b>			
Britt Wren	From: Custodian/Activities Coor Sentinel High School	To: Custodian Sentinel High School	Effective: February 19, 2024 repl: S. Asby
Tiffany Brown	From: Bookkeeper/Grants Coor District	To: Federal Grants Coordinator District	Effective: January 11, 2024 repl: L.Coon
<b>CLASSIFIED AUTHORIZED/CHANGED FTE</b>			
none			
<b>PERMANENT SUBSTITUTE HIRES</b> - <i>Contingent upon satisfactory criminal background check results, as required.</i>			
none			
<b>CLASSIFIED RESIGNATIONS</b>			
Julie Groenig	PC/Network Technician	District	Effective: February 9, 2024
Sarah Avery	Administrative Secretary	Sentinel High School	Effective: January 23, 2024
Stacie Staples	Administrative Secretary	Lifelong Learning Center	Effective: January 10, 2024
<b>CLASSIFIED RETIREMENTS</b>			
none			
<b>PERMANENT SUBSTITUTE RESIGNATIONS</b>			
Melanie McMaster	Permanent Building Substitute	Big Sky High School	Effective: January 26, 2024
Anthony Ferrero	Permanent Building Substitute	Sentinel High School	Effective: March 1, 2024