

*Stakeholder Input Report for*

# ***Missoula County Public Schools Missoula, Montana***

*submitted by*



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**MCPHERSON JACOBSON, LLC**

**EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT**

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**Missoula County Public Schools  
Missoula, Montana  
District Stakeholder Input  
November 28-29, 2022**

**Executive Summary**

It was our great pleasure to meet with approximately 27 stakeholder groups over the course of two days. During that time, we had the opportunity to engage with diverse groups representing various interests in the Missoula County Public Schools. We asked each group to respond to three questions:

1. Tell us the good things about your district and community.
2. Tell us the characteristics, traits and attributes your new superintendent should possess to be successful.
3. What are the challenges and issues a new superintendent should be aware of?

Although every group viewed each question from a different lens, there were a great number of consistencies among the various groups. As a whole, the stakeholders in this community are extremely proud of the Missoula County Public Schools and the Missoula community. Groups overwhelmingly spoke of the amazing community support for public education in Missoula County, as evidenced in the number of bond and levy issues that have been passed by voters. The community is engaged and has a collective commitment to education, children, teachers and parents. Stakeholders are proud of the community partnerships established with the District to benefit students including the University of Montana, Missoula College, local arts programs, wrap-around services, nonprofits and local leaders. Missoula is a diverse community: diversity of opportunity, politically diverse, economic diversity, as well as diverse populations within the community. Stakeholders are proud of the community partnerships with the district that help to create an inclusive environment for students.

The teachers and administrators are highly respected in the community. People love their schools. There is a welcoming culture of connectedness and sense of community in the schools. There is a focus in the schools on high academic standards as well as whole-child education. Programmatic offerings in the arts, language, athletics and career-technical education are highly valued. There is a strong desire that the new superintendent will share these values and be an integral part of the community.

The community values leadership that is communicative, visible, collaborative, and brutally honest. They look for a leader who will actively listen to stakeholders and learn about the history of the district, be able to make informed and thoughtful decisions that benefit all students, and be tough and decisive. The new superintendent will need to be resilient, knowledgeable, experienced in classroom instruction and varied instructional strategies, and an advocate for public education at the legislative level. A business-savvy individual with the experience and ability to create effective and efficient systems of operations and procedures in the district, which are perceived as ineffectual and inefficient, is also desired.

The new superintendent should have a working knowledge of school funding in Montana. There is great concern that the budget will be severely impacted with the end of ESSER funding. Mental health support for students and staff was prioritized with this funding, and continues to be a top concern among most every group. Classroom safety is a concern with the growing mental health needs in the community. Homelessness, poverty, and the refugee populations are growing in Missoula, the Special Education population in the district has increased dramatically in the last year (180 students in one year), severe staffing shortages are impacting student services and staff morale, and it is difficult to maintain a viable substitute pool. There is a perception that the district is top heavy in central office administrative positions and teachers and staff are underpaid.

Missoula is experiencing a housing crisis and lack of affordable housing, which affects families, students, and staff. There is forecasted growth in enrollment with new affordable housing complexes planned, which will impact facilities and infrastructure. Boundary issues will continue to need close attention, especially with predicted shifts in enrollment. Transportation, currently contracted and deemed inefficient, will also be affected.

There is consensus that there needs to be continuity and consistency among the school sites regarding messaging, support and programming; while respecting site leadership, autonomy, and balancing the individual needs of the varied school populations. Although this was a consistent theme throughout, it was most evident in speaking to students and staff at Seeley Swan High School. The geographical separation creates a feeling that they are often overlooked and ignored.

The new superintendent will need to be proactive, forward-thinking, and be ready to take on the social, political and financial challenges facing the district coming out of the pandemic. It is universally understood that meeting the “wants and desires” of every stakeholder would be impossible, but finding a superintendent that is well-informed, experienced, competent, decisive, pragmatic, is willing to learn about the district, and has longevity is highly valued. To quote one community member, “it is not about what we want, but what we need”.

### Word Cloud

**Tell us the good things about your district and community?**



**What are the qualities or characteristics the new Superintendent should possess to be successful here?**





## **Stakeholder Group Responses**

**Date: November 28-29, 2022**

### **Tell us the good things about your district and community?**

#### **MMCEO**

- Teacher and classified unions work well and side-by-side with the district
- We have a large voice (400 members)
- Great community that is supportive of public education, as evident in local levies and bonds
- Our district recognizes the need for both unions
- MMCEO supports the community in outreach and fundraising efforts

#### **SPED staff/OT/PT**

- Teachers are knowledgeable
- We have a supportive mentorship program
- Specialist positions and instructional coaches are available for support
- School pride within all levels
- Beautiful place to live, great community
- Partnerships with the University of Montana
- Diverse programs
- Strong academic focus
- Consistent support for SPED to the greatest extent possible

#### **Counselors/Mental Health Services**

- District highly values mental health support of staff and students, and provides funding to support that
- Resilience
- Coordination with community partners and FRC's – priorities put in those areas
- Training to support staff in self-care to help burn out.
- District and board supports diverse populations in the community
- Current cabinet structure is supportive, not top down decision making, communicates and works as a team

#### **Supervisors**

- Diversity
- In district health services department
- Community support of public education – recently passed infrastructure bond
- University town
- Community is welcoming of refugees
- Value the arts
- Talented SPED team, full continuum of SPED services
- Usually have a good pool of candidate for certificated and leadership positions
- People want to come to our community

- Alternative HS program
- Partnership with outside agencies
- District resources – coaching support, staff mentors
- District technology is strong and solid

#### **PreK-5 Parent Focus Group**

- Amazing staff – approachable, meet the individual needs of students, provide the entry point for parents in the schools
- Arts programs
- Kids feel a part of the community
- Teacher retention
- Amazing culture
- Diversity of experiences among staff
- Inclusiveness in the educational environment
- Diversity of opportunity in community
- Partnership with U of M
- Student outside activities and field trips to sites of historical significance brings local appreciation of the community
- Communication at site level is excellent – keep parents informed
- Principals build relationships with students and parents
- Parental involvement is positive

#### **Seeley-Swan HS Students and Staff Assembly**

- Teachers are cool, teachers are supportive
- We are a small school but still have a big impact on the community
- Everyone knows each other – better sense of camaraderie
- Athletic programs
- Super small class sizes
- Community connection and activities
- Fewer students mean better opportunities for scholarships
- Everyone has an opportunity to join clubs and leadership opportunities
- Everyone has the resources to be successful if they want it
- Strong community support
- 4-day week

#### **Seeley-Swan Parent and Community Forum**

- Students feel connection to school and teachers
- Nice to have a school that knows the students
- Relationships between students, parent and staff create a unique environment of understanding and advocacy for the best scenario for the students
- School is working for the best interest of the students

### **Tech/HR/Payroll/Accounting/ Admin staff**

- Great community that is supportive of public education, as evident in local levies and bonds
- Community engagement
- Welcoming
- Collaboration between schools
- District provides support to those in need with outreach programs
- Diversity
- Inclusivity
- Hub of great outdoor activities great place for families
- Community and University partnerships
- Fine arts program
- Trade programs
- Kids are a priority
- In-house print shop in district
- Strong unions – good relationship with both

### **HS Principals and Assistant Principals**

- Supportive community
- Most progressive district in the state
- Accountability
- Teachers are solid
- School building run effectively

### **K-5 Principals**

- Amazing community, great community involvement and support, a great place to live
- People love their elementary schools
- Strong academic focus and amazing teachers
- University town
- Vibrancy with the district and community partners
- Admin is very supportive
- Feeling of support across the district
- Communication is good, consistent messaging
- A feeling of connection – we meet weekly and feel heard
- Know we have a direct line to the Superintendent
- Peer support
- Great leaders at every level
- Strong unions

### **CIVIC Clubs/Non-Profits**

- Deep understanding of diversity and equity in our community
- ¼ of population is over age 60 and 80% volunteer
- Multi-generational experiences
- Missoula is a center for the arts – reflected in the schools

- Wrap around services through community partnerships
- District has implemented a good strategic plan
- Good job at taking care of at-risk youth, which is much needed
- We have winter!

### **Sentinel HS Students**

- Sense of community and togetherness
- Positive environment
- Focus on academics
- Ability to rise above – remain positive despite challenges
- Great school community
- Mutual respect between staff and students
- Great fine arts program
- There is something for everyone at school – clubs, organizations, athletics, activities

### **Middle School Principals and Assistant Principals**

- Sense of community
- Visible presence in the community
- Whole child education valued – arts, sports, language, etc
- Communication has improved
- Current superintendent is accessible
- Appreciation of our structure
- Competency and trust- we are trusted to do our job
- Desirable place to live
- Connection to the University is so incredibly important
- Community supports education through levies and bonds

### **Elected Officials**

- Community is engaged and has a collective commitment to education, children, teachers and parents
- We value education - School bonds and fundraisers are prioritized
- Great place to raise kids
- University town
- Proud of our educational opportunities
- Most believe in public education as a priority
- People want to teach here
- Missoula has a unique and special culture that is celebrated – ie: the “soul” of Missoula and “keep Missoula weird”
- There is an understanding through Missoula County partnerships of the link between education and the work force – the blending of HS and post-secondary learning in recognized and valued
- New superintendent will have support through community partnerships and will not be “an island”
- Tech-based companies provide growing career opportunities

- University culture
- Parent engagement
- Community values parent engagement, outcomes, resilience, building community
- Opportunities to integrate with outdoors and environment

### **MEA Staff**

- Awesome, positive staff
- Team approach, very collaborative people are not an island
- Very supportive community especially financially
- Strong set of unions-Certified + Classified
- Teacher mentoring
- Labor-management partnership is very productive
- Arts integration many opportunities for kids
- Multiple opportunities for kids
- Families want to be involved
- Relationship with upper level administrators and unions is positive
- Growing building administrators
- Community support in music and the arts-Right to Read
- Schools reflect community values more tolerant to diversity
- Community values education
- Administrators know the district and community well
- Employees are invested in the district
- Missoula is a refugee landing spot - Community very supportive of refugee programs
- College town great collaboration with University
- Multiple activities with the City in the summer-Out to Lunch Art walks and other activities

### **Native American Services/Library Services/Fine Arts/Curriculum**

- Strong community support
- Strong Fine Arts Program
- Low staff turnover
- Community is 100% behind the schools
- University support-Lots to offer in the community
- Art in the outdoors-strong program
- For Montana as diverse as you are going to get
- Arts intertwined in the K-12 structure
- Full Arts program-Builds upon each other's strengths
- Neighborhood schools are unique to their setting, makes room for specialization
- Priority to keep elementary Art specialists
- Economic diversity
- Strong Native American programs

### **PTA/PTO/Booster Clubs**

- Partnering with active outdoor community
- Loving, supportive families and community
- Culturally rich for Montana
- Multiple programs for refugees
- Great diversity for Montana
- Creative mindset. Lots of people want to be here
- Strong Principals
- Great staff
- Strong transitions for Elem-MS-HS
- High academic expectations

### **Grades 6-8 Parent Focus Group**

- More opportunities than when I was in Middle School
- Competitive exploratory options
- Engineering program at Sentinel
- Community support for kids
- Dedicated administrators and teachers
- Community support kids
- Good education even during COVID
- Summer classes for kids
- Not a big deal regarding LGBTQ
- Cultural awareness Easy-going atmosphere

### **Student Leadership group at Big Sky**

- Good Programs and opportunities
- High priority on athletics
- Good range of class offerings from accelerated to less challenging
- Wide variety of social cliques
- Very little bullying accepting school and community
- Building administration listens to student concerns
- Connected to community and the Middle Schools it serves
- Focus on Agriculture and farming
- Strong counselors
- Solid Support Staff

### **Health Science Advisory Board and Staff**

- Robust CTE Program-gains skills in the trades
- HAS is a great program
- Love the Academy in general
- Field trips and multiple opportunities
- More academic academies in the future
- Community incredibly generous
- Outstanding On-Job-Training opportunities

- More opportunities for kids
- Make schools programs so kids want to stay
- HAS provides initial job-related certificates for kids
- All HAS Credits are dual credits
- Great partnering with UM and Missoula College
- Computer science pathway for kids
- Big Sky HSA works well with other buildings

### **Big Sky CTE**

- Comprehensive Agriculture program-Cattle, pigs, sheep and cropland
- Great meat processing in meat lab-Program profits from it
- Paid student employees
- Livestock and greenhouse program
- Local farm opportunities
- Successful FFA program-National Title
- Strong coverage in local media-lots of supportive press
- 300 students in Agriculture program almost 10% of MCPS HS students
- Giant community of positive people
- Administration is very approachable
- Large district for Montana

### **Community Forum**

- Coordination of High School scheduling liked later start for HS Students/teenager
- Highlight Missoula Robotics team-Only team in Montana in High level competition
- 50 students coming together for Robotics throughout district
- Strong CTE program
- Great multi-lingual program in some of the buildings
- Solid expansion of Arts programs throughout the district-Like Art specialists in district
- Strong emphasis on safety
- Strong communication for Jeannette Rankin
- Strong CTE Programs, especially Agriculture
- Strong IB and AP programs at the High Schools
- Good partnerships with the community and University
- Teacher are phenomenal-great communicators
- Strong trades programs
- Administrators are great mentors for younger teachers
- The community steps up for education

### **Operations and Maintenance/Trades and Crafts**

(No attendees)

### **Adult Education**

- Academic success for all students
- Excellent career training-grant funded

- Serves approximately 10,000 students over the course of the year
- Serves Disengage students well
- Serves students from area greater than MCPS
- Fee-based and free classes
- 275 instructors
- One administrator who is awesome
- Employees come to the building and stay
- Budget separate from MSPS
- Customer service oriented
- Look for continuous improvement
- Very welcoming school and community
- Partner with Missoula College
- Inspiring students and faculty
- Work with job training groups and other agencies
- Train individuals for Workforce and beyond

### **Willard Alternative Education**

- Flexible attendance is appreciated
- Great teaching staff
- Small school with small classrooms
- Call everyone by their first name
- Accepting community that helps each other
- Students connect with teachers at a high level
- Strong support systems with great opportunities
- Staff and building supports individuality of students
- Strong jobs programs
- Teachers appreciate the ability to co-teach and develop their own curriculum
- Collaborate well with community
- Open discussion with small classrooms
- Great counseling staff
- Great support staff
- Great after school program

### **9-12 Parent forum**

- Engaged parent population-caring staff and community
- Excellent Educational opportunities
- Community supports requests for funding
- Very Blue jurisdiction-unique for Montana
- University town-provides excellent learning opportunities for kids
- Few private schools
- Strong support for the Arts
- Income diversity
- Great community for a strong life balance
- Good Health Care in the community

- Short commute around town
- Refugee landing point for Montana
- Solid educational for students

### **Hellgate Student Group**

- Great Arts program, especially music
- Strong Varsity sports program
- Administration incorporates student voice
- Fair amount of IB and AP Courses
- Strong Student services program
- Strong teaching staff
- Students work well with the administrators

## **Stakeholder Group Responses**

**Date: November 28-29, 2022**

**What are the qualities or characteristics the new Superintendent should possess to be successful here?**

### **MMCEO**

- Open minded
- Communicative
- Be available – open door policy
- Be visible
- Not trickle down decision making
- Patient
- Be willing to listen to the history of where we came from , to know how we need to move forward
- Decent, common sense
- Know your people and what they do
- Ask questions – talk to us
- Be brutally honest, be open
- Embrace our community – don't come in and want to shape in from where you came from
- Look at our needs and then balance your experiences before making decisions

### **SPED staff/OT/PT**

- Don't be above any job needed to be a support
- Listen and want feedback
- Be ok making tough decisions, knowing some will not like it
- Be open to learning and recognizing you can't know everything
- Listen to the expertise of those who have been here
- Be a part of the community

- Make connections between school and community
- Down to earth – practical
- Have authentic conversations
- Be a part of the team
- Sense of humor
- Be available and visible to schools
- We want a small-town superintendent but we know we aren't a small district
- Just be nice
- Have the skill to bring all of the different departments together and facilitate communication

### **Counselors/Mental Health Services**

- Longevity
- K-12 experience
- Boots on the ground
- Ability to bring together all of the schools and departments
- Be a part of the team
- Visible – part of the community
- Have a process to support building principals and not micro-manage
- Non-reactive
- Not defensive
- Confident in leadership
- Open to new ideas
- Not quick to jump – get feedback from impacted groups
- Build bridges among silos
- Ability to listen and follow through
- Thoughtful, considerate, confident enough to make tough decisions
- Utilize supports, listen and work with current admin team
- Share our goals – to show up for kids. Value what is best for kids first – all students!
- Created avenues and pathways for leadership
- Utilize data to assess student needs – connect to SPED and MH
- Involved in day-to-day problem solving
- Ability to communicate to the board the priorities of the district
- Supports diversity and advocates for students preferences and choices

### **Supervisors**

- Leadership and principal experience, possible experience in Montana
- Varied background of knowledge
- Communicative
- Listening skills – develop relationships
- Combination of big picture skills with common sense strategies
- Participate in the community
- Decisive
- Team approach

- Multi-disciplinary
- Ability to bring together different operations
- Longevity, community buy-in – we don't just want to be a stepping stone
- Take the time to learn before making decisions – understand our history first
- Foster and nurture positive team culture among different work sites
- Understanding and embracing the strategic plan and ability to implement
- Champion of public schools at legislative level

### **PreK-5 Parent Focus Group**

- Open-minded – not top down
- Integrity
- Decision making process to include all sides – no biases
- Focus on learning in core subjects
- Value arts and PE
- Innovative problem solving – outside the box thinking
- Experienced Super or Asst Super preferred
- Longevity
- Data driven
- Usher in literacy curriculum
- Spend time in schools – be visible
- Build community and parental support and volunteerism
- Understanding where we've been to be able to move forward
- Open and regular conversation with parents and staff district-wide
- Understanding diversity in different learning needs and be able to take action – both gifted and struggling learners
- Sufficient visibility to insulate teachers from unnecessary backlash - Not afraid to take the heat
- Focus on all groups of people
- Ability to assess staffing needs
- Communicate with parents and clubs on needs of the district so they can be effective support
- A leader – not just a manager
- Understand and value the culture in MT
- Coalition builder – a leader in the community – involve stakeholders
- Lobbying and fundraising experience

### **Seeley-Swan HS Students and Staff Assembly**

- Understanding
- Support athletics
- Approachable
- Understand diverse students and learning styles
- Get to know the kids
- Open-minded
- Support and care about music and arts

- Flexible
- Background in Middle and Secondary education – experience in the classroom
- Understand and value education in the trades
- Understand neuro-divergent students
- Mutual respect
- Empathy for everyone
- Visible in Seeley – value Seeley as much as the other schools

### **Seeley-Swan Parent and Community Forum**

- Be a part of the community
- Be an advocate for education at the legislative level
- Provide a vision for education to staff and community

### **Tech/HR/Payroll/Accounting/ Admin staff**

- Effective communicator – ability to listen
- Open-minded
- Accessible
- Engaged in political, legislative and current research
- Growth mindset
- High energy
- Respect families
- Say what you do and do what you say
- Consistency
- Live in this community – be a part of the community
- Don't come in and try to change everything – learn about us first
- Be visible – get to know us
- Adaptability
- Easy and comfortable to talk to
- Have follow-through
- Not afraid to take on the big issues
- Honesty
- Experience with Montana laws and funding
- Recognize the importance of technology and value its importance as a priority

### **HS Principals and Assistant Principals**

- Experience in district-wide systems and operations
- Willingness to have challenging conversations and hold people accountable
- Supportive of administrator control of their buildings
- Collaborative leadership – listen to their team
- Ability to have difficult conversations
- Willing to analyze student needs and mental health of staff and students
- Honesty - We want to know where we stand after a meeting with Superintendent – the good, bad and ugly
- Servant leadership

- Ability to recognize – what do schools need to make their jobs simpler
- To the board: When choosing our next superintendent – it should not be what we want ... but think about what we need! Be able to get the job done.

### **K-5 Principals**

- Consistency of support
- Collaborative problem-solving approach
- Focus on student learning outcomes
- Understand the importance of early literacy and foundational skills
- Focus on equity and marginalized population in need
- Have a range of experience at all levels – experience in a sizable district
- Experience managing multiple areas of systems
- Forward thinking
- Open minded
- Can be in the trenches
- Balance between working with the culture and being a visionary
- Can listen to our history and where we've come from – as well as bring in outside knowledge and ideas
- Transparency
- Open communicator – know where we stand
- Problem solver – leverage partnerships
- Be visible – know who we are
- Be aware of challenges and help navigate legislation and OPI policy
- Vocal parents – do what is best for all kids not just the loudest voices

### **CIVIC Clubs/Non-Profits**

- Open minded
- Be able to understand and collaborate – partner with community
- Be community minded – we are a small town in a large community
- Open to diverse groups – understanding of all perspectives
- Ability to have tough conversations community-wide
- Understand the power of collective impact
- Understand schools are the center of the community
- Inclusive
- Creative - Curious
- Student centered
- Collaborative – level headed
- Classroom teaching experience
- Balance of work experience and understand in diverse needs of the community
- Deep knowledge and understanding of depression and racism – strategies and understanding of how to communicate needs
- Keep up with the changing face of public education
- Inspiring – passionate
- Focus on Mental Health

- Be a visionary - navigate the communities outside of Missoula
- Understand state and national politics – and volatile political climate
- Emphasis on supporting teachers
- Don't bow to the most vocal parents – value new voices
- Trauma response

### **Sentinel HS Students**

- Communication
- Take feedback
- Look at all of the schools
- Be visible in the schools with the students
- Involvement – we want to be able to put a face with a name
- Support staff, teachers and admin

### **Middle School Principals and Assistant Principals**

- Listen first, don't just jump in to make changes
- Clear communication of expectations for staff, keep everyone on the same page
- Understand our current structure
- Improving instruction – knowledge of varied instructional strategies
- Clear understanding and experience in operations processes and procedures
- Not afraid to take action – be collaborative but be able to make decisive action
- Visionary
- Don't just listen to the loudest voices
- Balance – understand and appreciate strategic plan and the work already done
- Knowledge at legislative levels
- Build and lead a common vision of instructional focus with the community

### **Elected Officials**

- Work with mayor and community members
- Engage in community
- Collaborative, humble, pragmatic
- Likes people – supports interaction
- Tough – listen, process and be decisive
- Be reciprocal of all available partnerships in the community
- Understand and navigate staffing concerns
- Support staff
- Supportive of the arts
- Understand and embrace Indian Ed for all students
- Visibility – outreach in schools
- General awareness of how schools are funded in MT
- Build trust fast as we look to navigate all that is coming down the pike
- Continue collaborative community leadership meetings established during Covid

### **MEA Staff**

- Special Education Background
- Not afraid to come in classroom, Visible and part of the community
- Set of Core Values they have the ability to share
- New superintendent will need a creative mindset and listen to SPED teacher input
- Willing to listen to the front lines
- Elementary teaching experience, classroom experience
- Better like cold weather
- Growth mindset
- Be willing to go out and understand the community, be invested in the community
- Support staff
- Relationship builder
- Be able to interact with staff
- Understand current values of the district
- Be thoughtful and decisive
- Care about kids
- Respectful negotiator
- Sense of Humor
- Transparent and real
- Public school advocate, work with legislature
- Know how to manage and lead a board of 11 members
- Continue to ask stakeholders

### **Native American Services/Library Services/Fine Arts/Curriculum**

- Integrity, willing to stand behind decisions
- Strong open communicator
- Global thinker
- Hope they are nice
- Have a family and want to stay
- Want experienced individual
- Understand refugees
- Empathetic person, be able to deal with staff stress, morale and burnout
- Sensitive to the needs of individuals with PTSD
- Good listener
- Love Missoula
- Have a plan, don't make decisions "off the cuff"
- Take care of your staff
- Make rational decisions with a thought-out process not on "who you know"

### **PTA/PTO/Booster Clubs**

- Approachability
- Visibility, want to see this person
- Person willing to stay for a while, make it a home
- Shred of humility

- See person around town
- Outgoing, an extrovert
- Good public speaker
- Understand conflict resolution
- Explain unpopular decision
- Inform the public of the process of decision-making
- Stay in or out of the trench
- Need to engage with legislature regarding funding
- Needs to be a collaborative leader
- Keep communication lines open, be an active listener
- Need consistent message
- Need to listen to community concerns

### **6-8 Parent Focus Group**

- Progressive, but not too progressive
- Understand the change process, don't change for change sake
- Proactive, be aware of past decisions and their ramifications
- Understand poverty and be hard-working
- Open-minded
- Empathetic and considerate
- Be accepting of other's view
- Understand the uniqueness of Missoula
- Do not isolate or ostracize groups

### **Student Leadership group Big Sky**

- Want an individual who will visit schools, don't be a stranger
- Sense of humor
- Understand children in this day and age
- Be interactive with buildings
- Believe in equality

### **Health Science Advisory Board**

- Firm decision maker
- Stick-to-itness
- Good listener
- Supportive of all in the educational community
- Very conscious of safety at school
- Accessible and approachable
- Have integrity and explain decisions

### **Big Sky CTE**

- Understand four year degree isn't for everyone
- Experience in CTE

- Good listener
- High School Experience
- Understand the business component of the Agriculture program
- Need a business savvy superintendent that appreciates the value of the Agriculture program

### **Community Forum**

- Excellent communicator
- Transparent and will to share the good and bad
- Strategic thinker
- Data driven
- Have confidence in staff and kids
- Be able to work with legislators
- Understand Montana funding system
- Experienced individual
- Do not use Missoula as a stepping stone
- Involve multiple individuals and groups in decision-making
- Work on teaching the whole student
- Need an innovative thinker who pays attention to what is going on in Missoula
- Be visible see the superintendent at the grocery store
- Listen to teacher concerns

### **The following was handed in written format to consultant at the Community Forum**

- Recognize cognitive and emotional development levels in children and introduce concepts with regard to such. E.G. Critical thinking skills first require the student to acquire the tools for thinking. Critical thinking develops later in a child's cognitive development.
- Do not promote contentious issues such as CRT or sex dysphoria or push social engineering agendas which distract from the fundamentals of education.
- Recognize ability differences in students and provide for appropriate academic challenge at all ability levels.
- Uphold standards for achievement and progression of students appropriate to those levels, restoring aspiration to achievement without stigma.
- Promote the aim of education to prepare students for citizenship and require civics education.
- Restore the teaching of formal logic.
- Recognize that not all students are on a college track and give equal weight to college prep and vocational/technical endeavors.
- Engender respect for and allow expression of students' faith traditions within appropriate contexts.
- Promote an atmosphere of partnership between parents, teachers, and administration.
- Do not chase after education fads but rely on tried-and-true education techniques.

### **Adult Education**

- A superintendent who understands Adult Education
- Empathetic and caring
- Spend time in our building
- Good listener
- Understands refugees
- Superintendent needs to represent all students
- Support Life-long learning
- Need an individual with positive energy
- Need a superintendent who understand what we do at this building
- Visible would like to see the superintendent

### **Willard Alternative Education**

- Understand difference between Alternative education and Special education
- Have taught in alternative school
- Someone who is a realist
- Not everything is in the rulebook
- Involve teachers in decision making
- Someone who struggled to get an education
- Have done work outside of education
- Show up at our building more than once a year
- Know people's name
- Listen to teacher input
- Need to understand the positive image of Willard and embrace Alternative Education

### **9-12 Parent Focus Group**

- Friendly welcoming
- Creative Open-minded
- Be transparent and explain decision-making
- Have ties to the community
- Willing to stay
- Think outside the box
- Want to retire in Missoula
- Good listener
- Collaborative

### **Hellgate Student Group**

- Be a nice person
- Come to our building

## **Stakeholder Group Responses**

**Date: November 28-29, 2022**

### **What are the challenges and issues a new superintendent should be aware of?**

#### **MMCEO**

- Employee safety from volatile students – it feels like there is little understanding of how severe things are in the classroom
- Student and staff mental health
- We are all educators – not just the teachers or those involved directly with students

#### **SPED staff/OT/PT**

- Staffing shortages in all areas
- There is a perception that funding is directed toward admin – and there are a lot of admin.
- Covid caused disconnection - help facilitate communication
- Missoula is socioeconomically diverse – homelessness, poverty, mental health needs all have an effect on the classroom
- SPED population increased by 180 students from Fall 2021 to Fall 2022
- Early childhood ed
- Classrooms are overflowing
- Infrastructure needs in unused buildings
- Local cost of living – housing shortage
- Large apartment complexes being built will impact school population
- Increase in violence and aggression in students
- Severe mental health concerns

#### **Counselors/Mental Health Services**

- Staff shortages – sub shortages
- Budget – MH funding cuts when esser funds end – we are concerned that the additional MH funding will disappear – coming back from a pandemic, it will be a long journey just to get back to baseline
- MH is the #1 thing affecting teachers, paras, staff and students – we have prioritized that and don't want to lose momentum
- Don't pit one school against another – recognize the individual needs of each school site
- Concerns of repetitive reconfiguration of upper admin and concerns with delaying progress – it is back to where it feels like it's working
- Communicate MH priority with staff and community – we're coming back but we have work to do
- Build academic interventions for support in the classroom
- Educator underpaid in MT
- Ability to find housing and live in our community

### **Supervisors**

- Mental Health crisis
- Staffing shortages – mostly classified
- Staffing changes that will be affected when Covid funding goes away
- Affordable housing in Missoula
- Potential impact on enrollment new construction of affordable housing complexes
- Understanding the size of the district – and the complexities with rural schools included
- Growing # of SPED students
- Growing # of homeless and refugees
- Staff absences – sub pool
- Understanding rural needs and communication processes – wifi, etc

### **PreK-5 Parent Focus Group**

- Specialists are not spread evenly through the school – previous attempt at “magnet schools” not successful
- Mental health – staff and students
- District-wide consistency and communication
- Teachers bear the burden of programmatic issues they have no control over – Supt needs to navigate and communicate those issues
- Staff shortages
- Sustain covid funded programs after funding ceases
- Food program – time, accessibility, health foods
- Because of diverse socio-economic communities between schools, some schools have more resources than others
- Homelessness and families in transition

### **Seeley-Swan HS Students and Staff Assembly**

- More opportunities for trade schools, music programs, arts, speech, drama, extra-curricular
- Public education remaining public
- Need for additional alternative ed opportunities
- School safety
- Absence policy and truancy
- Teacher and student mental health
- Cost of living high – low pay for teachers and staff – housing for teachers and staff
- Please don't close our school
- Seeley gets overlooked and ignored

### **Seeley-Swan Parent and Community Forum**

- Legalities of guardianship – so many hurdles it can be detrimental to kids
- In rural areas – ability to do more online classes for electives – more options available, possibly with Jr Colleges and opportunities for dual credit
- Connection between colleges – reps from colleges and trade schools to visit Seeley
- Have the same opportunities as the “in-town” schools.

### **Tech/HR/Payroll/Accounting/ Admin staff**

- Better communication between schools
- Hold admin accountable
- Budget issues with esser funds ending
- Growing population – may need to open closed buildings, infrastructure needs
- Boundary lines
- Support staff shortages
- Facilities
- We have a good board, but very new to the position. New Supt will need to work very closely with them
- Promote longevity

### **HS Principals and Assistant Principals**

- Accountability for all
- Create effective and efficient systems within departmental operations
- Grossly understaffed - Pay attention to the small things – small things that need appropriate staffing make a huge difference
- Budget – there will be difficult decisions and conversations
- Mental health staffing

### **K-5 Principals**

- Staffing current and looking forward with significant retirements on the horizon
- Lack of subs
- Esser funds going away
- Enrollment
- Housing crisis
- Strong unions
- Each schools is diversely different and has different needs
- New board
- Legislative impact on schools
- Budget
- Building maintenance
- Transportation – contracted transportation company has a monopoly, is expensive, not efficient, and controls our schedules

### **CIVIC Clubs/Non-Profits**

- Community is very politically diverse – we are large community geographically
- Need local access to community services, students are often displaced to access services
- School boundaries
- Navigate curriculum needs and local needs – literature, History, LGBTQ+ and trans issues, classism, etc
- Professional Development needs
- Teacher burn out – MH support

- Food services – healthy offerings and better access
- Budget and salaries
- Housing costs
- Alternative Ed at lower levels – need supports for younger students

### **Sentinel HS Students**

- Funding
- Politics coming out of Covid
- Diverse and varying political opinions
- Equal opportunity to participate in sports and athletics
- Finding subs
- Staffing shortages
- Happy teachers make happy students
- School safety

### **Middle School Principals and Assistant Principals**

- Continue with program equity across all schools
- Focus on what we can all do well
- We lack clear procedures around operations and funding
- Training on how to read a budget
- Staffing – especially SPED support
- Political and legislative issues affecting school sites

### **Elected Officials**

- Funding
- Housing
- Include Seeley – diverse needs with the district
- Teacher and staff shortages
- Be aware of and work with new state task force (developing an emphasis on career tech education, proficiency-based education, preparing teachers and educators, early readiness) as well as the Montana School Association Conference, OPI and unions
- Increased enrollment
- Homeless population
- Culture - “Montana is a small town”
- Supt will be a significant player in the landscape of education in the state.

### **MEA Staff**

- Special Education is a concern-number of kids have grown exponentially with staffing remaining stagnant
- ESSER (COVID) money going away and a potential down turn in personnel because of this loss
- Concern about support staff funding
- Continued funding for elementary art positions is in peril
- Scheduling of school start/end times and bussing is a concern

- Should we continue to contract our bussing?
- No substitutes at all levels and all job categories
- Constant lack of funding
- Lack of ELL services
- Strong need for SPED staffing need more services
- More support for special education teachers
- Need enrollment caps for special education students/classrooms
- Need to pay people living wage
- Lack of affordable housing-staff can't afford to live here
- Need a creative individual who examines all sides
- No substitutes
- Curriculum adoptions are behind and need more follow-through
- Need Leadership over the curriculum department
- Need more targeted intervention plans
- Transparent individual who can explain rationale for decisions
- Top Heavy at administration
- Collegial negotiator

#### **Native American Services/Library Services/Fine Arts/Curriculum**

- High Administrative turnover-no institutional memory of Arts programs
- Need computer science throughout district, not just one building
- Lots of support staff turnover-unable to retain staff
- Concern about end of ESSER Funding
- Be able to deal with individual autonomy
- Watch Open enrollment and its ramifications

#### **PTA/PTO/Booster Clubs**

- Low pay for teachers
- Keep support staff
- Better Public Relations
- Assessment of employee performance is inconsistent
- Involve the community in budget decision-making
- Funding and budget needs to be more transparent
- Community is supportive, but they need to know what kids need
- Needs to be an active listener
- Needs to deal with academic fallout of COVID Years
- Attempt to get funding outside of taxpayers

#### **6-8 Parent Focus Group**

- Funding issues. Parents are raising funds for items district should be buying
- Some schools renovated, when will the others happen
- Flip-Flop of HS-MS schedules wasn't articulated to the parents well.
- Consistent boundary lines for schools or maybe an update of boundary lines
- Splitting up neighbor kids

- Families do not feel supported
- Make more effort to reach out to parents

### **Student Leadership group Big Sky**

- Teachers and students are spread pretty thin
- Not enough substitutes
- Lots of vandalism lately
- Threats and Drug use in the bathroom
- Not happy with the bell schedule
- Consistent schedule of AP and IB classes
- More Dual enrollment courses
- Need more early Math programs at the school
- Online resources are terrible
- More communication of school events
- Need new intercom system
- Do not like the new hall pass system involving using your phone
- Most Math programs need help
- Do not know who superintendent is
- Funding not equally distributed
- Need Mental Health support for kids
- Need better Lunch options

### **Health Science Advisory Board**

- More autonomy of each building creating their own schedule-need continuity
- Poor transportation of students
- More creative ways of moving students around
- More collaboration with city and our agencies
- Dual enrollment challenges
- Why do all students not get the opportunities that are available at various schools?
- Each school needs their own identity
- Too administrative heavy in the Central Office
- Salaries are low
- Facility struggles

### **Big Sky CTE**

- Do not sell farm ground-Keep Agriculture program intact as an educational priority
- Trust your people
- Accounts payable problems-bills are not paid on time
- Businesses will not do business with Agriculture program
- Morale is really challenging
- Lack of consistency in administration decision-making
- Employees are becoming harder to find
- Lack of substitutes
- Understand the large capital expenditures of a successful agriculture program

- Scheduling autonomy for buildings
- Standardized test scores are dismal
- Awareness of the job-creating potential of our CTE programs

**Community Forum** (see separate attachment provided by community member)

- Staffing and substitute shortage
- More Mental Health support for staff and students
- Emphasize Safety and make a priority
- Articulate what is important for kids and stick to it
- Take politics out of the equation and do what is best for kids
- Pay attention to what is going on at the middle schools
- Need to challenge students at the Middle School-too easy
- Continue to build and expand community partnerships
- Understand how to get students back on track after two years of COVID
- Equal opportunities for all students
- Return to “real” books and paper and pencil
- Make every attempt to keep specialist at the elementary level
- Gifted education does not exist
- Involve the community
- Money challenges
- Find resources outside of the taxpayer
- Excellent communicator
- Work well with bargaining units
- Strategic thinker
- Bring in someone who will stay awhile, not a stepping stone
- Rein in the sex education program. This is a parent responsibility. Anything beyond intercourse and anatomy is too much
- Website is awful

**Adult Education**

- Less emphasis on graduation rate and give educational and give opportunity to all students
- Provide more opportunities for all students
- Need more funding, especially ELL
- Students need more time
- Understand our school is also a community center
- Multiple (up to 8-9) languages
- Have a pre-release program with Missoula County
- Need more transportation options

### **Willard Alternative Education**

- Counselor is over worked
- Give teachers a raise
- Lack of substitutes
- Include Willard in the conversation of transportation and scheduling
- Very limited budget
- Better lunch budget
- Better vending machines
- Understand college isn't for everyone
- Understand the intentions of Willard and the philosophy behind it
- Technology is not an equalizer or the answer

### **9-12 Parent Focus Group**

- Cost of Housing
- School system is disjointed
- Need a more cohesive curriculum
- Deep staff shortages at all levels
- Administration is top heavy
- Morale very low
- Bussing is problematic for many students
- Budget is inadequate and new superintendent need work with legislature on funding issues
- Very Blue consistency unique to Montana
- Diverse population has needs that aren't being addressed
- Raped evaporation of ESSER funds
- Attract and retain strong candidates
- School Safety
- Open enrollment policy needs to be examined
- Examine and update school boundaries
- Increased Professional Development for teachers and other staff

### **Hellgate Student Group**

- Way to get around gym credits
- Understand what a reasonable workload is for students and teachers
- Gap between district administration and building administration-do not know who the superintendent is
- Programs need to be funded equally
- Want more options that other schools have, all programs should be available to all students
- Offer more zero period options
- Need more Mental Health support for students
- Some students don't need Office Hours (study hall) but required to take
- Really bad parking

*Survey Monkey Results for  
Missoula County Public Schools  
November/December 2022*

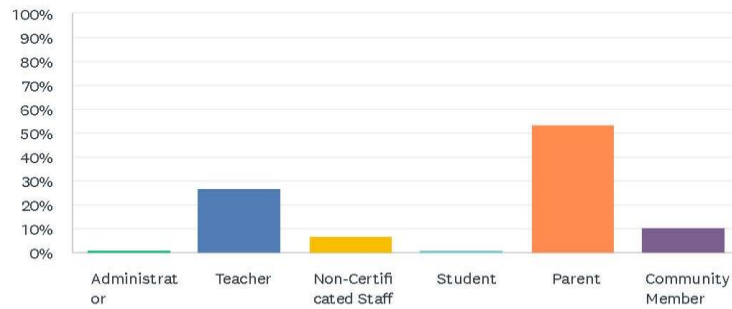
*(NOTE—these responses have not been edited,  
they are printed as entered by the stakeholders)*

**330 Responses**

Stakeholder Input Form--Missoula County Public Schools

Q5 Please indicate the stakeholder group you represent:

Answered: 330 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Administrator	0.91%	3
Teacher	26.67%	88
Non-Certificated Staff	6.97%	23
Student	1.21%	4
Parent	53.64%	177
Community Member	10.61%	35
TOTAL		330

Q1 Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

progressive district safe us others recreation areas fun inclusive work organizations  
 mountain want supportive public schools open space community values need small town  
 kids general support schools full help children diversity educated strong incredible  
 make University of Montana active place raise family live focused  
 supportive large Montana home many Involved lot really  
 education etc support many opportunities arts University  
 Missoula feel community take care people  
 open cares parks schools much great liberal families  
 always students variety opportunities quality life  
 Missoula community great place raise good well love part diverse  
 friendly city provides engaged Missoulians interested MCPS parents university town  
 generally place raise kids outdoor recreation outdoor recreation opportunities town  
 growing resources Beautiful value environment kind around teachers generous  
 community events think also creative

Q2 Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

excellent unique elementary schools variety create sports feel learning offer larger  
 involved active quality teachers Paxson part whole educators schools great  
 administrators safe also thrive work hard leadership lot resources arts  
 throughout teachers staff appreciate strong Quality education  
 Missoula Public Schools needs high schools families go beyond many  
 wonderful children opportunities community excellent teachers  
 good amazing support diverse teachers want  
 schools new students opportunities students staff  
 help kids place programs values parents arts education  
 work art music caring high school district Focus great building  
 supportive see well teaching really coming provide activities  
 Great teachers whole child love go care students passionate engaged will  
 dedicated small good teachers team MCPS always experiences individual  
 committed generally make paid professionals included

Q3 What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district?  
(This information is shared with the final candidates.)

safety support teachers feel need support classes much people really will large  
challenges enough education able funding right go place area focus  
learning middle school one support staff issue lost lot little parents  
classrooms work even also school district curriculum great  
teaching subs good MCPS kids see support arts  
many resources teachers use need help  
schools way students academic staff elementary  
district growing community due Missoula job  
program high schools children given make experience level still  
change coming superintendent want time special education lack  
year high school important well history keep housing seems increase building  
Montana US struggling provide believe families science pay elementary school  
mental health positions state current

Q4 What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be  
successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

important change comes present candidate Empathetic Montana opportunities  
need someone run vision good communicator help mental health stakeholders  
teaching new superintendent great value bring leader MUST  
good listener arts children integrity see respect superintendent  
superintendent needs person classroom kids ways also put Someone  
going education lead ability want teachers stay  
support academics community stand schools  
learn need keep students need someone will best  
Missoula will things work advocate district decisions staff system  
able approachable understand diverse know believe focus feel  
experience think making creative well levels people communicate caring  
others building school district MCPS superintendent will leadership high school  
parents job perspectives us strong safety programs smart listen talking knowledge  
right

*Survey Monkey Results for  
Missoula County Public Schools  
December 2022*

*(NOTE—these responses have not been edited,  
they are printed as entered by the stakeholders)*

**330 English Responses**

**Administrators**

**Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

- I heard at one meeting that we have a "diverse" community. If referring to racial diversity I would say, absolutely not. We are a refugee resettlement community which has added to our diversity however there hasn't been enough people arrive from other countries and cultures that would define Missoula and Montana for that matter "diverse". I do hope we get there someday though! Arts are huge in our community and for the most part, Missoula is very welcoming.
- Active, compassionate, progressive, vast socioeconomic gaps, more diverse for a Montana community, many resources
- Mental health support and needs are a priority!! District admin support and are in buildings helping when needed (they are in the trenches) District admin are good communicators and great authentic leaders, there is no micromanaging, but there is support and guidance!!!! We are a diverse community and the schools and admin support diversity! Current district admin structure is great - it has a community feel to it, meaning that these are our students and we work together to support them. Also district admin reaches across departments to do that. There is district-wide teamwork to support teacher and staff. Building level staff feel supported by district admin. Our community celebrates the arts along with other student interests like robotics. Our larger community supports our district and education.

**Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

- Right now, I feel like our district leadership is strong and working well together. We provide a variety of services to our families and are open to receiving support from community services and partnering with them.
- Supportive of students, parents, and school community; higher pay; many resources; community involvement
- We have so many positive, hard working and brilliant staff members in this district. Lots of good systems work (MTSS for ex) We just added a K-8 SEL curriculum which has been embraced by schools. Our schools support whole child development.

**What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)**

- Currently, our gifted education services is really non-existent. This is a huge weakness for us. Sometimes, some school leaders want to run their schools as a separate entity from the school district. I would like to see more equity from building to building as well as some systems in each of our schools be the same across the board.
- Poverty, mental health issues, lack of support staff and administrators, lack of time to get things done, substance use with students and families, lack of engagement, attendance/truancy concerns, lack of partnerships with law enforcement and other agencies
- We have had some big issues in the past and Dr. Watson and Superintendent Lodge and have really worked hard to bring this district back together as one community. I truly hope the person chosen understands that there is a lot of good happening now and that they do not uproot that just to "make their mark."

**What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)**

- He or she needs to be a good listener and respect the history of what has happened here before. He or she cannot be afraid of conflict that leads to benefits for our students and families. He or she needs to work well with others and be willing to take charge as necessary. He/she needs to be an informed decision maker and be willing to engage with anyone and everyone.
- Empathetic, possess integrity, strong work ethic, ability to draw in individuals from all areas and facilitate cooperation, open-minded, innovative, progressive, intelligent, emotionally intelligent, understanding of Montana communities and demographics
- Humility, authenticity (someone with self-awareness, has an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency), someone who uses a servant leadership approach, but can also make tough decisions when needed.

## **Community Members**

**Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

- Our community, like most Montana communities, is made up of creative, smart people with creative, smart kids. We want a superintendent who is committed to fostering creativity in our schools, through programs, staffing priorities and curriculum.
- Most people are tolerant and open minded, though there is a noisy minority. We have a robust number of nonprofits and folks who support their work.
- Small community minded- we support each other, local businesses and our outdoor spaces
- It is very diverse and all people are respected regardless of color, ethnicity or religion or lack thereof.
- Arts education is provided in the schools via arts integration organizations, such as SPARK! and Turning the Wheel Missoula.
- Diversity is a valued aspect of the Missoula area community. Born and raised in Montana, I have always enjoyed the opportunities and open minded vibe of this area. As a high schooler from Great Falls, I recognized this in 1970s when drawn here for college. Missoula has served as the cradle of the arts in Montana. An academic atmosphere has been valued here for all schools of education, I feel the respect and availability of the arts is paramount to the success of a well rounded, thriving community.
- I have lived in Missoula since 1974, having come from Great Falls, where I was born and raised. I have watched Missoula grow into a much larger city over those years. I've been pleased with how well our city and county governments collaborate to improve and meet the needs of our city. As a previous teacher and counselor in our public schools, I have witnessed the benefits of bringing community people and organizations into the schools for a variety of reasons - to talk about their vocations and interests; to support education and community links; to help students with their writing skills; to help educate students in a variety of ways to increase their knowledge and workings of civic life; to be touched by professionals in their areas of work and careers.
- Consistent and ongoing support of K-12 levies over many years. Strong connection to the Missoula community and to the University of Montana. Parents supportive of the education their kids receive and quality of teaching and administration.
- Community steps up financially to support schools. Great quality of life to live here from recreation, cultural offerings, University partnerships with businesses and schools.
- Missoula has an interesting arts & culture scene.
- People who are willing to work hard and to take care of others
- Arts & Culture. As a Billings-born and raised Montana native, I strongly believe the arts and culture of Missoula are what make it so special.
- Foremost, we are situated in a beautiful valley shared with The University of Montana, Missoula, and a forward-thinking, active, involved populace. Missoula tends toward being progressive in outlook. We have a new library, several parks and playgrounds, and venues for drama, music, art shows, sports, street races, farmers' markets, and fine food.
- We are a community that supports the arts; visual, musical, performance. We are inclusive, and try to take care of struggling families.

- We are a community that supports the arts; visual, musical, performance. We are inclusive, and try to take care of struggling families.
- Diverse Well-intentioned Offers opportunities for students and parents to advocate for what they need
- Great people, access to outdoors, fun vibe, great downtown and other shopping, the University of Montana and all of its resources.
- MCPS has an Arts Integration Initiative that is unprecedented in Montana and is one of the districts in the country that views Creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication as central in a child's education.
- Missoula is filled with a diverse group of people with a variety of social and political views. It is family-friendly, and attracts people who are not necessarily interested in making the almighty buck. They are interested in the quality of life that this area offers.
- Missoula is a welcoming and caring community. Missoula has wonderful recreational opportunities. Missoula has a rich culture in the arts University of Montana.
- Caring, committed, invested in our schools
- Creative, caring, passionate, artistic, musical, outdoorsy, progressive (in some parts),
- Missoula has a thriving arts community and great partnerships between these arts organizations.
- A vibrant arts culture, great cafes & restaurants, great craft beer scene, and have some of the friendliest people around.
- Community is broadly diverse with competing values of people, ie., progressives, conservatives, but yet there are people that enjoy creating chaos amongst leadership and staff.
- Missoula is an Arts based community.
- I am a parent who moved to Missoula approximately 18 months ago and work with the refugee population in healthcare as well as teach a graduate class in education at the University of Missoula.. These responses are primarily representative of the refugee committee. The refugees with whom I work are on the whole very eager to transition to life in Missoula and build a new life for their children. And of course they bring a tremendous amount of diversity to Missoula and the school system. Not only does the cultural diversity enrich the school system tremendously it also heightens awareness of global events and the tenuous situations for refugees.
- Supportive, open dialogue, enthusiastic teachers, support for the arts
- Highly engaged and active citizenry, good planning, recreational opportunities, access to public land and water, alternative transportation, tremendous support for the arts
- Missoula is very supportive of its public schools.
- Missoula is in a beautiful setting. The community values the arts and the arts enrich our lives and make it a even more beautiful place to live.
- It is very diverse and all people are respected regardless of color, ethnicity or religion or lack thereof.

**Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

- Our schools promote arts and arts education, they have excellent sports teams, they are egalitarian.
- The teachers are very caring professionals who need support from parents and school leadership. The children are generally lovely kids.
- Teachers are all working so hard
- The schools have teachers and staff that work hard to help students.
- The schools have great staff and teachers working hard for the sake of the student's education.
- There has been recent progress in the MCPS of the Arts regaining lost foothold in our schools. All scholastic research shows this must continue for increased student creativity, inclusiveness, well being and general success.
- -reviewing curriculum regularly to constantly update and improve it -building improvements and expansions over the last 10 years -employing support personnel (librarians, counselors, therapeutic programs for students and families) -maintaining neighborhood elementary schools -including the arts, sports, music, and vocational programs that often keep students in schools and prepare them for life outside of school - having high schools that specialize in various programs (health services, vo ag, business, the arts, industrial arts, etc.) -providing after-school programs for interest areas and help with homework
- Consistently have high-quality teachers and staff and superintendent. all have been refurbished based on a \$158 million bond issue passed several years ago. Well integrated into the neighborhoods of the community.
- Generally schools are safe. Some programs are excellent but not available to all high school students such as auto program, ag program, computer programs. Some schools are excellent at communicating with parents and others are lacking.
- Missoula schools graduate many talented and well-prepared students.
- Our schools are full of over-worked teachers who still provide individualised programs and lessons to meet the needs of all of their students, while maintaining the integrity of expected results.
- Our preschools, gradeschools, and highschoools are staffed with excellent teachers and caregivers. The Missoula populace includes a number of children of new immigrants, enabling our schools to present first hand variations in culture, music art, as these students participate and share in the classroom.
- Amazing instrumental music program, excellent theatre programs, and visual arts. In my experience faculty try to know students individually. Writing Coaches program also excellent.
- Amazing instrumental music program, excellent theatre programs, and visual arts. In my experience faculty try to know students individually. Writing Coaches program also excellent.
- Diverse Well-intentioned Offers opportunities for students and parents to advocate for what they need
- Lots of great programs. Great, committed staff.
- SPARK! Arts
- There are many caring and committed teachers and administrators in these schools, who genuinely want the best for the students and community they serve.

- Dedicated and caring teachers. Music program is very good and the art program is improving with more art for elementary students.
- Families send their children here! Very few private schools because there is such a commitment to public
- Have quality, caring teachers, allow for freedom of expression, appreciate the arts, encourage exploration
- MCPS has shown commitment to arts education through quality school music programs and the recent addition of more visual arts teachers. They also have opportunities for students to be connected to the various arts activities in the city through participation in attendance at symphony concerts designed for young people and theatre productions.
- Arts in Education is a priority and has a strong program through SPARK and the great work of Arts Education Director Monte Grisé
- The teachers as a whole group care about thier students achieving successful outcomes.
- Our schools reflect the communities values for equality and inclusion.
- Teachers are dedicated and passionate, putting in far more hours than they are contracted for. Schools are well designed and located in neighborhoods so they're accessible to all. Arts education is well supported and integrated.
- Each has unique characteristics, exceptional faculty, like that we have schools with Spanish immersion, religious foundation, coop schools and an alternative high school (Willard)
- Teachers are dedicated and highly qualified.
- There are very committed educators. They care about the students.
- The schools have teachers and staff that work hard to help students.

**What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)**

- We are struggling to hire and keep good teachers. The curriculum needs to meet the challenges of 2022, not 1955. Our kids our struggling and we need to offer more opportunities for more kids.
- Be aware of noise from the conservative parents rights side versus the majority of parents who believe in the school system. Also understand that there is good support among other superintendents but not from the state legislature, governor or OPI.
- Lack of money to get anything done. Lack of funding for special needs students. Teachers are struggling.
- The students should have the opportunity to get a great education snd learn how to think and not what to think.
- I believe arts funding could be increased, including providing money in the budget to continue arts integration programming.
- It's a shrinking world. Students need the multicutral exposure that the arts provide. Lower income students depend on the public school to deliver this education and with a strong arts background are 2x more likely to go on and graduate from college. Missoula historically stands for equality and we have a large population that depends on that.
- This is a very trying time for public schools due to financing, large classes, Covid, and finding the balance between parental, community, and professional beliefs. Children are

society's most precious beings. Because of that, there are many different opinions about what is right and wrong about their education. A superintendent has a hugely responsible job in leading this most important institution in our society. S/he must lead with courage.

- Strong arts connection in the community, with UM and the J.F. Kennedy Center to train teachers to integrate arts into STEM and other subjects as well as bring in artists to classrooms. This helps achievement and behavior. Great emphasis on STEM as well and strong use of Willard School to ensure that all youth stay in school. Strong emphasis on graduation from HS. Great specialty subjects such as health care and IB are integrated into the curriculum. Important to continue all of these areas.
- A plan to make up for the last two years of lost learning. There are no civics classes. The high schools need to be transparent and not hide curriculum content from parents along with gender neutral changing rooms. Health classes get back to basics and back off sexualization of kids at all levels. We do not need to follow NEA and what the unions think should be taught. Students go to school to learn the three R's and they're coming out sorely lacking. CRT/social emotional learning should be banned totally and respect for all students and not their history is what life is about. Gifted programs need to be developed. Stop the pronoun selection by students and teachers.
- Funding for the arts, music and languages needs to be maintained.
- We are living in difficult times with various cultural anomalies based on a social system devoid of cultural absolutes.
- Increase in mental health needs and a dearth of accessible mental health support in comparison to the needs both within school systems and the community at large.
- We live in a state which was once politically progressive, but which is now more divided politically. Montana has an exemplary State Constitution to protect our rights. Recently, the Republican-appointed Superintendent of Public Instruction, Elsie Arntzen, has emboldened conservative parents to take a proactive role at school meetings. While these parents are able to voice dissension about things like vaccines, they are heard but they have not presented arguments valid enough for much change. School board members tend to be well educated and informed, typically making good decisions and finding ways to address, and usually support, all participants in the educational spectrum, from the single parent worrying about a child with special needs to the local superintendent and to state laws.
- MCPS has a broad spectrum of students from a variety of backgrounds. Clearly many students are not as well supported at home as others. Teachers need to be supported by counselors and SPED staff.
- MCPS has a broad spectrum of students from a variety of backgrounds. Clearly many students are not as well supported at home as others. Teachers need to be supported by counselors and SPED staff.
- Need for more safety protocols Need for more voice from mental health professionals (ex. school counselors) Need for accessing local resources over bringing in expensive out-of-state trainings/etc
- Budget is always an issue.
- We are looking for a Superintendent who supports our arts initiative.
- There needs to be a deep knowledge of Missoula's culture. There was a huge problem with decisions made by a former superintendent that came in without this knowledge.

There are also some questionable hiring practices, particularly in administration, that are not transparent to the public or other applicants. I do believe that there is still a "good ol' boy" club in place. Women are hired that do not challenge the status quo. Those who do find themselves demoted or without a job.

- Tight budget. Teacher retention Lack of substitutes and other support staff State legislature
- CRT, diversity, transgender agendas -- the current public-school curriculum is not teaching, it is indoctrination. Graduating students can't spell or write but they are well-versed in equality, diversity, and white privilege.
- Missoula is at risk of losing its unique character due to difficulty in the ability to afford to live here. Let's embrace the arts, and the quirkiness that comes with that. Please don't cut arts and extracurricular programs. They're essential to cultural understanding and exploration.
- MCPS has created multiple opportunities for students in the district to participate in the arts. This includes participation in choirs, bands, and orchestras. MCPS has attracted excellent individuals to teach in the arts in its schools who are from the local area and from across the United States.
- "Our crime numbers are higher than they have ever been. We were involved in around 6,600 crimes in 2021, which is high and is trending up," Missoula County Attorney Kirsten Pabst said.
- Focus on student achievement re stem related topics and life skills necessary to hold a job and fostering a work ethic among staff and student together.
- Arts education is vital to supporting individuals that will express compassion and humanity.
- The refugee students could use more support in resource allocation. Travel for after school activities is incredibly difficult for the families and professional development for teachers is lacking. This thought comes after hearing from my graduate students at the U of M about their concerns for the refugee and immigrant children in their classrooms. More time and money needs to go into creating partnerships with the refugee families.
- Under-resourced, guidance counselors overwhelmed, not responsive, lack of in school support for college bound students
- There needs to be a realignment to ensure equity across the city. One school is Spanish immersion, one is health sciences, etc. A student's experience should be similar regardless of where they reside.
- The importance of the arts.
- The students should have the opportunity to get a great education and learn how to think and not what to think.

**What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)**

- He/she needs to be smart, creative and willing to learn. He/she also needs to be willing to take chances to make positive change, and not worry about what a few parents are going to say. Montana's constitution creates an obligation "to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person." Further, it guarantees

“equality of educational opportunity...to each person of the state.” We need a superintendent who will fight for that right and advocate for the best education for all students.

- You need a backbone and to be very supportive of the educated professionals who work in the system. You also want to be involved in the community and the network of agencies and nonprofits that support your work.
- **EXPERIENCE AS A TEACHER**
- The person must be honest, trustworthy, be a leader that requires the best from teachers who will lead the students to do their best.
- Ability to collaborate and re-educate themselves.
- Superintendent that believes in the importance of arts education and that will adopt (and work to extend) the current arts focus and funding for every student in our district.
- A superintendent needs to be a good listener and communicator, collaborator and decision maker. S/he needs to be open minded, respectful, patient, knowledgeable, kind and courageous. The superintendent needs to do all in his/her power to support (in particular new teachers) staff so they can become the best possible educators.
- Humility: the new superintendent should always act like they are not the smartest person in the room and be the first to listen and last to talk. They should have a great work ethic and emphasize that the needs of the "whole" child should be met in the classroom. Great collaborator is needed to bring all sides together. The superintendent should support the school board's right to determine what is taught and not allow the loudest parents or caregivers to dictate policy.
- Communicator and transparent. He/she works at the pleasure of the board. Encourage critical thinking skills in students along with people working in conjunction with the superintendent.
- The superintendent needs to be committed to providing a well-rounded education for the district's students, including instruction and experiences beyond the basics. A complete education includes opportunities to express artistic creativity and to learn about cultural traditions and contributions beyond one's local viewpoint.
- Kindness, compassion, a strong sense of true north, business acumen, and a sense of humour .
- Prevention focussed; holistic understanding, support and education of students; strong communication and collaboration skills.
- I would like to speak specifically to the inclusion of the arts in our schools. Drama, dance, music, drawing/painting, poetry, singing...the self expression offered through these activities cannot be overestimated. The joy and self-expression that students find in the arts provides a high level of satisfaction, increases students' perceived participation in the greater school community, and fulfills the making of individual identity in ways other activities cannot. Missoula is seeking to make the arts a vibrant part of all of our schools. I would hope the next superintendent would agree and support this endeavor.
- Communication skills. Willingness to listen and learn. Patience. Experience.
- Communication skills. Willingness to listen and learn. Patience. Experience.
- Resourceful Flexible Strong leader

- Strong visionary leaders, humility and strong collaborative people skills, excellent communicator, The ability to build and support multiple levels of leadership throughout the district, strategic thinker, the ability to adapt to various situations.
- Deep knowledge of Missoula, fair and transparent hiring practices, knowledge and implementation of practices embracing inclusion, diversity and equity.
- Qualities/Characteristics: Good listener Consultive Collaborative Innovative/Forward Thinking Caring-WHAT IS BEST FOR ALL STUDENTS! Sense of humor Skills: Excellent communications skills with all stakeholders Skilled with school budgets, building and maintaining Skilled with working with state legislature Skilled with working productively with school board Have broad knowledge of educational practices and philosophies. I want to know how the candidate navigated the Covid pandemic whether the candidate was a Principal or a Superintendent. I want the Superintendent to be visible in all the buildings/schools to be able to support each Principal.
- Engaging, communicative, wants to be part of the greater community
- Ethics, morality, truthfulness
- Open mind. Progressive, forward thinking.
- The new Superintendent should be committed to supporting the presence of the arts within MCPS schools and increasing the footprint of the arts by adding teachers in the visual arts to district staff. The arts are important for students to have opportunities to feel successful, to have opportunities to express themselves, and to be career-ready. A city like Missoula, with its thriving arts scene, is an ideal place for students to do this within their schools.
- Outstanding communication skills. Demonstrates high ethical standards and leads with creativity and integrity.
- The candidate needs to have a "spine" in the leadership role and have a student achievement focus.
- A strong stance that every person needs support, dignity, and an opportunity to learn and create.
- Able to listen and hear multiple perspectives and act on them Able to create visions based on multiple needs and plans to act on them Flexibility Diverse educational background with multiple roles
- Someone who is committed to raising the bar, passionate about education for all, possesses a can-do attitude despite constraints (there is always a way if there is a will), understands the profound value of the arts, appreciates the need for our schools to adapt to changing times/student needs, someone who is innovative
- Strong commitment to academic excellence. Schools need a greater focus and attention to student performance and respond, not with canned programs, but rather with common-sense initiatives.
- The person must be honest, trustworthy, be a leader that requires the best from teachers who will lead the students to do their best.

## **Non-Certificated Staff**

**Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

- By and large, Missoula is an "involved" community. Someone will most always step forward to advocate for those who are marginalized or truly disenfranchised.
- Great recreation opportunities
- Community support of schools. There are a lot of things to do and outdoor space to enjoy.
- Missoula community is strong but we need our schools stronger
- Active arts community and active in general (outdoor sports, interests) More open to differences than majority of state
- One of the good things about the community is the strong sense of collaboration and support for education. There are many organizations and individuals in the community who are dedicated to providing resources and opportunities for students to succeed. Additionally, the community offers a range of cultural and recreational activities, which can enrich students' lives and provide them with opportunities to learn and grow outside of the classroom.
- Missoula is a very giving society.
- Our community values the outdoors, recreation, open spaces and
- We have lots of outdoor activities, we tend to help others who need it the most and we take care of each other
- Strong public schools with qualified, dedicated and respectful teachers and staff; quality access to the outdoors; promotion of a healthy lifestyle
- Involved, concerned about our students and their education, participate in their education.
- Strong public schools with qualified, dedicated and respectful teachers and staff; quality access to the outdoors; promotion of a healthy lifestyle
- The Missoula Community generally supports public education. We usually pass bonds/levies because our community understands the value of public schools. Our community reaches out to us when we have events or concerts, not only those that have students in our district but others without kids, others with grown kids, people not from here, etc.
- Welcoming, compassionate, fun, supportive of the arts, love the outdoors
- Our citizens support our schools. Our bond requests have a high pass rate, and our citizens are involved and committed to our schools. This is an amazing place to live - our city has worked hard to make Missoula family friendly and beautiful.
- We have so many opportunities for outdoor adventures, as well as a thriving downtown and a lot of arts and theater. Missoula is a community that takes care of each other, and still feels small (but with all of the amenities!).
- Current admin - Russ and Vincent are supportive and understand the need
- Outdoors, great place to raise a family, concerned with socio-economic equity
- The Missoula Community is committed to the education of our students. They are very giving for the right cause and very gracious. The Missoula community is also one of the most liberal in Montana and many people are very open to new ideas, arts and very eclectic. This city is also very stubborn to keeping the Montana way of life. Our city is

nothing like you see on Yellowstone. There are lots things to do. Just be ready for the snow and cold months. Finally, our community is very vocal at Board of Trustee Meetings.

- The community is diverse.
- Beautiful. Family orientated. Supportive. Outdoor recreation is paramount.
- We are close-knit. Everyone pretty much knows each other. People take care of each other.
- I think that we have a good support system in our community. We really look out for each other and support one another in all endeavors.

**Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

- Schools are diverse in both the teaching, student and classified staff population. New arrivals in the state, the country and in any one school will find welcome and see diversity positively reflected.
- Supportive staff.
- Our teachers work hard
- Many staff are high achievers and continually strive to improve
- Our schools have dedicated and passionate teachers who are committed to providing a high-quality education for all students. The district offers a wide range of extracurricular activities, including sports, music, and clubs, which provide opportunities for students to develop their interests and skills. The community is supportive of the schools and often partners with the district to provide additional resources and support. The district also has a strong focus on equity and inclusion, ensuring that all students have access to the same opportunities and resources. Overall, our schools are a positive and nurturing environment for students to learn and grow.
- Classified staff are the vital connection in our schools.
- Our schools are staffed by educators and support staff that work so hard and really care about their students.
- We are a big family here. We make sure to take care of each other when we need to.
- Kind, educated and dedicated teachers. Quality clubs and extracurriculars for all students
- In our school we have quality teachers who are involved and genuinely care about our students. They continually strive to provide a solid education and look for ways to engage the students.
- Kind, educated and dedicated teachers. Quality clubs and extracurriculars for all students
- Our schools are communities in and of themselves. Our staff supports not only the students in the buildings but their families and each other.
- Excellent teachers, strong emphasis on social emotional learning, small classes in the lower grades.
- Our staff go above and beyond. They care deeply about students and work so hard.
- The professionals in our school district also live and raise their families here. It makes for a lot of teachers and staff who truly care about our students and their families. We are also a large enough district to offer ample educational and extracurricular activities and opportunities to our students.

- Strong team members and leadership
- phenomenal educators, great programs (fine arts)
- It was my sons elementary school Principal and staff that made me want to work for the district. We have good teachers that care about the students. We are moving forward at a cautious pace to meet up with larger school districts in metro cities in WA, OR, and Southern Idaho.
- Quality educators
- Good health services department. Hard-working staff, mostly. IT department is excellent.
- Our school has a great teacher/student ratio. Friday intervention and block schedule are very beneficial for students and staff. Staff knows all students.
- Our schools support all students and have really work with students from all walks of life. We have a great CTE program and a wonderful special education program.

**What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)**

- If there is one area of inequity in the district, it might well be the applied policies, recommendations and ersatz traditions within schools as those things apply to economically marginalized populations. Mission statement does not often enough match practice in schools where, for example, fund raising and dress-alike theme days call hurtful attention to kids who can't participate in the same way as the medium income, white, Anglo Saxon population.
- Mental health of students and staff importance.
- Our new Super needs to audit every school for maintenance, how money is spent, and the equipment the schools have.
- Engagement in school from students, parents and some staff has slipped since pandemic. Absences are up (students and staff). Gifted learners are underserved and an increasing number are disengaging, absent from school and not achieving academically.
- One major issue the superintendent should be aware of is the need for more resources and support for underprivileged and marginalized students. This includes providing additional funding for programs and initiatives that promote equity and inclusion, as well as hiring more diverse and culturally competent staff. Another issue is the need to address the achievement gap and improve academic outcomes for all students. This may require implementing evidence-based strategies and interventions, as well as providing ongoing professional development for teachers to support student learning. Additionally, the superintendent should be aware of the need for better communication and collaboration with parents and community stakeholders. This includes building strong partnerships with local organizations and businesses, as well as increasing transparency and accountability in decision-making processes.
- MCPS is top heavy with administators. The "Peter Principle" is alive and well in MCPS. In the past 3 years MCPS has forced out quality people in admin positons and replaced them with the inept employees. The "good old boys" are operating gleefully in MCPS.
- Our support staff are so underpaid. Our buildings need maintenance and are not equipped to deal with the influx of people coming into our area. Our arts funding feels like it is chronically precarious. Our gifted students are not given additional supports.

- Here at our school there has been a lot of change. Nothing is consistent. We need a leader who will support us when we bring concerns to them about things. We also need a leader who isn't afraid to help and jump in when needed. We also need a leader who will communicate with us.
- Balance between maintaining good mental health vs. checking out and not completing any work; attack from legislature and certain groups about talking openly about issues related to sexuality and gender, which debilitate students' awareness of diversity and ability to think critically and be open to others; class sizes; teacher burnout
- Our district is plagued with unhappy employees. We need to have an administrator who isn't afraid to make administrators tow the line and make their employees tow the line. We need to remember that ALL employees are valued and an essential part of the working system. We need to be more financially smart and on time paying vendors. We need to hold vendors responsible for the work they do.
- Balance between maintaining good mental health vs. checking out and not completing any work; attack from legislature and certain groups about talking openly about issues related to sexuality and gender, which debilitate students' awareness of diversity and ability to think critically and be open to others; class sizes; teacher burnout
- A candidate needs to be aware of many safety issues surrounding staff that work closely with kids. We have students whose violent behaviors have put folks in the hospital, sent them to the ER or out to see doctors' assistance. We all recognize that children have the right to a public education but at the expense of repeatedly injuring staff members is not right. Another thing I sincerely hope our superintendent recognizes is the presence of two unions, a teachers' certified and a classified union. We make up the majority of employees in MCPS and I hope s/he/they are willing to work closely with our unions, to recognize our value and listen to us.
- The art, music, library, and health education should be fully funded. Each elementary school should have its own full-time certified specialist in each of those areas.
- We are still trying to undo the damage caused by \_\_\_\_\_ when he separated us into 3 regions. Each region was supposed to specialize in something different. Now we have unequal programming at our schools, and our SLP and Extended Resource programs are clustered at certain schools, placing the burden for the more difficult students on a few schools. IB is only at some schools, (it also costs a fortune) which leads to unequal opportunities for students across the district. I believe it is only a matter of time before we face a lawsuit over unequal education access. Of course, the parents at the favored schools will fight tooth and nail to keep their special programs, so it will be battle to eliminate the program and get everyone back on equal footing.
- Any incoming superintendent should fully understand some of the risks of our students and families due to Montana culture and climate. We have long been a state with high instances of mental illness and suicide, and easy access to guns. Our climate contributes to mental wellness. Emotional and mental health need to be prioritized along with academics here to keep our students safe and to promote their best learning.
- Mental health has to be a priority for staff and kids- keep the BI position
- budget, some overcrowded schools
- Like in the medical field of Montana, our community is aging and retiring. Our Superintendent needs to be ready to work with our staff and faculty to fill the gaps and find excited teachers and expand our school curriculum to meet the needs of our growing

society. I also think our new superintendent needs to work to overcome a phrase that has become a part of the lingo. Too many people live by the phrase "this is how we have always done...." we need to grow to become sought after for careers in this community.

- Teachers need support, to be heard and retained and paid. Teachers and staff need to be safe while working. The school district is one of the largest employers in the city..and the backbone of the community...yet pay does not allow us to live here comfortably.
- Massive shortage of subs. Staff is underpaid, considering the housing prices in town. I feel like there's too many resources invested in the administration (\$\$) with very little to show for it.
- There are staffing issues. Seeley Lake is a difficult place to find employees. It can be hard for the district to compete with jobs in the county that pay better.
- It feels like all schools are their own island and no one wants to work with each other to get anything done.

**What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)**

- Perspicacity and practical application of big mission statements. More succinctly put: Advocating for authentic, not theoretical, goals.
- Flexibility
- Someone that listens, not only to the community but to the staff as well. Someone that takes time to get to know the staff.
- He or she needs to be able to communicate to every level of employment in our schools, but most of all they need to do their job. past supers have taken advantage of our system and Missoula has not benefited from their neglect!
- Utilize evidence-based research to guide decisions combined with a good dose of common sense, kindness, and general desire to excel. P.S. The stakeholder group I belong to is not an option. I am a certified, licensed employee but not a teacher.
- The new superintendent should possess strong leadership skills, a deep understanding of educational best practices, and the ability to build positive relationships with teachers, staff, students, and community members. They should also have a track record of success in improving student achievement, implementing effective programs and policies, and managing budgets and resources. Additionally, they should be a strong communicator and collaborator, with the ability to listen to and incorporate the perspectives of diverse stakeholders.
- Honesty, exceptional communication skills and the ability to recognize competence in employees. Accepting the skills and knowledge that exists in the non-certified staff.
- Flexibility in dealing with groups of people with diverging opinions. The ability to implement necessary changes without endless debate and research. Understanding of kids with abilities at both ends of the bell curve. The ability to look ahead and make a long term vision for our district.
- They have to be approachable. I would love it if they came to the schools more and to see how they are being run. Right now there is a lot of miscommunications in our school so it is frustrating

- Experiences as a teacher; familiarity with various curriculums; qualified leader; good communication especially in terms of expectations for teachers and the community; ability to connect with the community b
- Pleasant but firm. Not afraid to make changes. Listen to what is being said and be able to prioritize the needs and concerns. Pay attention to all employees.
- Experiences as a teacher; familiarity with various curriculums; qualified leader; good communication especially in terms of expectations for teachers and the community; ability to connect with the community b
- Patience; the ability to communicate effectively, not in 'edu-eeze'; being 'real', don't talk out of both sides of your face; the ability to hear others' ideas and thoughts without judgement; honesty - don't make promises you can't keep; integrity - if you say you're going to do something, stick to it; value ALL employees in MCPS, not just the Administration; the ability to recognize that people in the classified positions who DO those jobs more often than not know their jobs better than their supervisors!
- Compassionate, good management skills, supporter of arts/specials.
- Visibility- it would be nice to have a superintendent who is in our schools on a regular basis. A good communicator- someone who lets the staff know the direction the district is headed, but who can also build ties with our community. And someone who is willing to stay - not just use our district to get one more retirement plan in or jump to a higher paying job in a year or two.
- Strong understanding of mental health concerns, ability to grow special academic programs and opportunities (such as STEM, IB, etc...)
- Availability to be on site and actually meet staff not just tour once a year
- listener, compassionate and caring, committed to kids
- Our Superintendent should be a strong leader, a good listener, be willing to make changes even if they are not the most popular. I also think that our Superintendent needs to be a good communicator, to his staff and out in the community. He/She should also know what is happening in areas of school finances and funding, as well as staffing issues and training. Finally a prominent, active member of the Missoula community. Missoula County Schools is going to be their responsibility and that is taking care of everyone inside the schools and answering to the Missoula Community.
- Dynamic and hardworking. Willing to put at least as much time into the job as the teachers and staff.
- Approachable, flexible (things in Seeley are different sometimes than the other schools in Missoula)
- Someone that is accessible and visible to the public.

## **Parents**

**Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

- conservation easements, so mountains stay free of houses
- In reference to the question we will be talking about Missoula Online Academy. Resourceful and effective staffing. Hopefully a growing community. A community available for everyone.
- The Missoula community cares greatly for its neighbors and the outdoor spaces we spend time in all year. Even though it's a smaller town, it has a pretty global perspective, especially compared to most of Montana.
- Great place to live, work, and raise a family. A place where we care about each other. Rich art community, outdoor activities and robust civic engagement.
- Outdoor activities abound. Politically conservative, culturally conservative.
- Our community is safe and we know a lot of our neighbors
- The community itself is pro-education. Whether it be outdoor learning, academic, or socially.
- Missoula is a beautiful mix of all walks of life. It is artsy, fun and has a real pulse. Missoula is extremely family oriented and is notorious for being “The perfect place to raise a family.” Many whom are born here, stay and many people move here as well, to do just that. Raise a family.
- Missoula is a beautiful mix of all walks of life. It is artsy, fun and has a real pulse. Missoula is extremely family oriented and is notorious for being “The perfect place to raise a family.” Many whom are born here, stay and many people move here as well, to do just that. Raise a family.
- Great place to live, work, and raise a family. A place where we care about each other. Rich art community, outdoor activities and robust civic engagement.
- We care about each other and our outdoor environment. We want our young people to learn AND have good, active lives. We are more tolerant of diversity than many Montana communities and we want only to improve that.
- The sense of community and events that are open for everyone. We love the many different groups and opportunities here from outdoor recreation, community music and arts, environmental awareness and conservation efforts, local businesses, etc.
- There are still a handful of people who subscribed to biological gender roles.
- It's a good place to raise a family and there are outdoor opportunities.
- Outdoor experiences. Beauty. Eclectic. Excellent music scene.
- Unusually high level of support and financing for community resources like the YMCA, Parks and Rec, library, museums, and other family and kid-focused organizations and activities. It is really incredible how much goes on in this community.
- Involved - active - liberal- artistic - supportive
- My community is trouble free.
- I grew up in Missoula. It has always been a well educated and caring community. It also used to be a relatively poor community, which is quickly changing along with the social dynamics.

- Our community puts a high value on inclusivity and diversity. Our community cares and is supportive of its members as well as those around us. We stand against hatred, homophobia, transphobia. Our community is open-minded.
- I love that this community is tight knit. We are inclusive and open to all. We take care of our neighbors. As a life long missoulian, I am excited to be able to raise my children here in a district that cares so much about their health (mental, physical, and emotional) and providing a safe and fun learning environment for all. As parents we are able to take an active role in our children's school.
- Gorgeous scenery, exceptional recreational opportunities, a wonderful place to raise kids. Very kind and generous community, welcoming and increasingly diverse.
- Missoula has an amazingly strong arts community, which was established years ago and continues to feed the souls of area humans.
- Supportive to all.
- Engaged citizens, beautiful setting, socioeconomic diversity
- A variety of outdoor opportunities just outside of town. People are very friendly. Incredible arts and music scene in Missoula and various free events for the public throughout the year.
- Music and the Arts are strong in Missoula, and it's very important that they be nurtured in our public schools. Kids who participate in choir, band and orchestra are more likely to succeed in high school and move on to higher education.
- from what i see and have experienced is that the community helps each other out quite a bit. especially during the holidays.
- It's incredibly supportive and close knit. We help each other. It's a blue dot in a sea of red. :)
- Very supportive and engaged community members!
- Missoula is deeply invested in public education and the schools are truly as diverse as the community. I LOVE that students can petition to attend a high school outside of their district because I think it allows them to begin HS by making a choice about their education. I think that helps keep our graduate rates high.
- Missoula is a diverse community open to different ideas.
- The community itself is pro-education. Whether it be outdoor learning, academic, or socially.
- People are generally quite friendly and helpful. I know all of my neighbors and really like them and their families. I feel that I live in a safe community and environment. I love all of the outdoor activities that Montana affords us. I like the smaller community feel that is here.
- Engaged citizens, beautiful setting, socioeconomic diversity
- -Community service -Neighbors helping neighbors -Acceptance of all our backgrounds
- The overreaction to covid has subsided.
- Fantastic outdoor recreation with access to national parks, small town feel but great arts and culture opportunities. Down to earth, kind, supportive and inclusive community.
- People are helpful
- Clean, quiet, full of families, friendly, beautiful scenery.
- Beautiful place

- Friendly, great place to raise kids, food and festival culture, outdoor passions can easily be enjoyed. Compared to large metro areas: increased quality of life, no commute, less crime. Recent improvements: New library, investing in schools & parks, free bus, bridges. Beautiful location!
- Missoula is a tight community with generous and loving community members. There is a need for Missoulians to do good and that is shown every day.
- The community is tight knot and supportive.
- Mountains, rivers, university town
- Somewhat quiet, great location.
- We have a lot of family friendly and family oriented events around Missoula. We are an inclusive and welcoming community.
- We help each other out
- Access to nature, sense of community and connection, more diverse than some other areas within the Rocky Mountain West.
- Missoula is a family and community oriented city. The citizens actively support non-profits. The city has embraced the river and built toward it and has a vibrant downtown as well as dedicated open spaces and recreation areas.
- Children activities, generous, many non-profits and local businesses, churches, etc. help those in need. Great schools, and after-school groups.
- Active, community minded.
- restaurants, public land,
- We live in a beautiful mountain community full of opportunities for all ages. Living next to a University brings numerous opportunities for MCPS students.
- The community itself is pro-education. Whether it be outdoor learning, academic, or socially.
- Local people are engaged in our schools. The previous superintendents were easy to reach and communicated well with parents and stakeholders.
- Our community is inclusive, appreciates and supports the arts, welcomes refugees, and strives for excellence in our schools.
- It's Montana, so it's beautiful, and it's not Bozeman, so it has less sprawl. Super friendly and walkable/bikeable. We have great teachers in our schools! (I am a parent, not an employee.)
- Vibrant community that has an incredible amount to offer young children and families. Great place to raise kids.
- Missoula has a strong sense of community and a lot of truly good, caring people. It's a smaller town that has loads of opportunities but still feels like a safe, relatively quiet place. People care about this town and its families and kids. Plus there is great hiking, biking, skiing in every direction!
- Natural areas surround Missoula. Fun community atmosphere. Community spirit.
- Missoula is community-minded, generous, and fun-loving.
- People like to help each other We raise our children to be active members of the community We love the outdoors We stand up against injustice, hatred, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and social inequality
- Lovely mountain town community. People who live here like it.
- Arts rich community of kind people.

- Missoula is beautiful community where you can enjoy life to the fullest.
- It is a great place to live and raise a family. Missoula is an arts focused community with many arts organizations.
- Great place to raise children; lots of open space for recreation; promotes a healthy lifestyle.
- Missoula is an open hearted caring community
- Missoula is an open hearted caring community
- Missoula is a liberal city in a conservative state - the best of both worlds.
- Parents and families who are active in children's lives and education. Good people who are willing to help their neighbors.
- Engaged, compassionate, caring
- Missoula is a wonderful community, and a great place to raise kids. We have so much excellent public land and wildlife habitat, so the outdoor recreation opportunities are fantastic. There are also tons of fun cultural and community events.
- This community can be very supportive when there are needs that arise for individual/families. There's a general kindness and "small town" vibe. I appreciate that there are trailer parks mixed in with nicer homes throughout a lot of Missoula. It creates a socioeconomic diversity that is beneficial to everyone.
- There are still a number of people who believe in live and let live. And enjoy the environment without lecturing everyone about it. We care about our kids and their education and believe schools should stick to teaching factual based English, math, science, and history and let the families deal with social issues.
- The Missoula Community is a diverse and well-rounded community. Missoula included a wide variety of people, businesses, and programs. Missoula has traditionally been a place of welcome for many of it's residents, where individuality and uniqueness is encouraged and valued. In Missoula, there is something for everyone.
- Missoula is a progressive community. While not racially diverse, there are a wide variety of lifestyles, While there is always room for improvement, acceptance of diversity is relatively high.
- outdoor rec, good people, culture, arts, inclusion, beauty
- Community-minded. Missoula is a place that celebrates the uniqueness of others. We are small enough to know our neighbors, and not so small that we can't find new experiences. We are a University town, and have always had an emphasis on education.
- we take care of each other, we reach out, we fund a million different non-profits that make this town great
- Missoulians are willing to fund their schools. Nearly all tax levies pass with huge support.
- Parents are engaged, there is a ton of support for community events and organizations, the recreation and access to open spaces and public waters is unmatched, and folks are generally kind - a big city that is still holding on to that small town attitude.
- Big town/small town feel Supportive Caring Values the outdoors
- We have beautiful seasons with a range of outdoor activities; camping, hiking, fishing, skiing/snowboarding, community club sports, biking, running, etc...
- Inclusive. Progressive. Values education.

- This is a community that celebrates differences, loves to be outdoors/has a huge environmental emphasis and appreciates the arts.
- Tight knit, sense of belonging, passionate educators, quality art, music , and PE programming, dual language options, strong special education, sustainability education
- Great place to recreate outdoors. Also, we have a small town vibe (you can find parking and there's not much traffic.)
- Missoula is a beautiful town, close to outdoor activities. Its citizenship is active and cares about its future well-being.
- Families
- Kindness; Tolerance, Inclusion, Live and Let Live Attitude
- Active, caring. concerned about environment, open space, education, sports. We understand people are different and accept them (ideally)
- We are community oriented, that lil our after each other.
- Families and parents like to be involved in their kids education. We are in a beautiful location. We have a lot of creative and interesting people that call Missoula home and many of them are interested in sharing some of their talents with the schools. Overall I think Missoula is a friendly place.
- We've moved away from the overreaction to covid and lifted mask mandates.
- Our community rallies around the school and shows pride and compassion in our students.
- Relative safety. Not too many fascists. Mostly critical thinkers with sensible and tolerable dispositions. Cute. Nonmotorized and public transport networks suck.
- We have a diverse and liberal community with many opportunities for art and leisure
- People here are very friendly to those they don't really know. Lots of great community events to bring people closer.
- This is a very broad and sort of vague question and perhaps could have been worded better. Missoula has a progressive and inclusive feel to it. It's small and tight knit. There's a deep love for the outdoors and locally grown food.
- Town spirit. Culture of physical fitness and exercise - close to outdoor recreation opportunities. A thriving Downtown - good food, festivals, clothing boutiques.
- Safe, friendly area.
- Good, hardworking people. Great year round opportunities for outdoor fun. Lots of sports to play for young and old.
- Quality of life due to beautiful setting. Down-to-earth people. College town vibe.
- We have a community that has been very supportive of our public schools, both with funding as well as volunteer opportunities and mentorships,
- Our community is really safe for families and kids; generally pretty well-educated, generous, conscientious, civic-minded, and interested in improving our quality of life and those of our fellows. The community is pretty "healthy" and has lots of great things going for it.
- Four beautiful seasons, kind people, and easy access to rivers, lakes, and mountains.
- It's the most diverse county in all of Montana. The outdoor recreation is as good as it gets. I feel like the community is welcoming.
- Health oriented and beautiful scenery.
- Barbara Frank

- Beautiful, community minded, votes to support the general population, great size
- It's the most diverse county in all of Montana. The outdoor recreation is as good as it gets. I feel like the community is welcoming.
- It is a close-knit community with a lot of interest in supporting the schools and helping out families in need. There is a wide range of educational and socioeconomic levels among families in MCPS, which provides an important level of diversity, but also brings with it a variety of challenges.
- 1) Outdoor opportunities for all with lots of open space 2) Supportive community that has passed school, library, and park bonds 3) University town with all the resources and support that brings
- Missoula is a vibrant community with the University and Arts being big parts of our identity. The city is growing but still small enough to easily tap into community relationships between individuals businesses and civics.
- Involved families and community- willing to help!
- Lots of outdoor recreation! A community that helps each other.
- We celebrate diversity and have a city that generally cares about equity. Our community develops regions to benefit as many people as possible. Our community has art, non-profits and free ways to play and get outdoors.
- Inclusive, accepting, health oriented, community focused
- The outdoors! The ruralness of the area
- I am still fairly new.
- We take care of each other and care about the greater good. People talk about feeling at home here.
- Missoula is a creative, compassionate, generous and community-minded place to call home. We have more nonprofit organizations per capital than any other small town in the nation and more pulitzer prize-winning authors than any other small community in the country. We value the arts. We value education and taking care of one another. While Montana ranks in the top 2 & 3 poorest states in the nation (in terms of the value of the real wage), we also rank among the highest % of entrepreneurs per capita. People get very creative to live here.
- Support for public education, public parks and open space. A community that cares.
- Tight knit, safe, caring, and in general a wonderful place.
- Committed teachers that care about students
- people around are friendly and courteous
- MCPS has a history of supporting LGBTQIA students in their success at school. Our strong support of our Native American Services Dept. is a value in our community.
- We have a diverse and equitable community, with people who care about each other and about preserving a way of quality life. While also open to changes and making life better, we still honor and respect our history and small town feel.
- Good, hardworking, down to earth people who look out for each other.
- There are a lot of caring and engaged people here and a lot of fun things to do.
- Simple, close proximity to recreate in the outdoors 24/7 365
- We have beautiful seasons with a range of outdoor activities; camping, hiking, fishing, skiing/snowboarding, community club sports, biking, running, etc...
- Our communities is supportive of families of all dynamics shapes and sizes.

- Community involvement & the parents.
- Missoula is a "little big town." Though the population has grown, we are only a few degrees of separation from everyone. We are a community that cares about where the money goes and how our schools perform.
- Generally supportive of public schools. Beautiful area to live. Progressive leaning.
- It is absolutely breathtakingly beautiful. It IS a community, people still look out for each other and care about others. It is a great place to raise kids with good opportunities for sports, parks, etc. We have a highly educated population. Missoula is big enough that we have a lot of the retail options people would like, but small enough that we don't feel generic. Generally people support the schools by voting to pass levies. It is a liberal community and we haven't had a lot of the insanity of people calling for banning books. Our community cares about the earth and looks for ways to be more green. Our community cares about not equity and is trying to make sure everyone has the tools they need to succeed.
- Our community is full of a diverse and overall very caring community who generally seems to highly value education. Missoula is made up of a lovely combination of families who have been here for generations but many others who are relatively new & from all over the country & world. We are school teachers, parents, artists, academics, business owners, healthcare providers, retirees, etc...with a large diversity of interests & values. But by & large we are a strong community who value everyone's contributions despite our potential differences.
- Kindness and collective concerns about quality of life, like access to outdoors, beautification projects, and community engagement.
- Missoula is focused on children and creating a safe, consistent, positive environment to grow and learn.
- Unique, family friendly, outdoor activity focused and proud
- Closeness, involved parents.
- Helpful peers.
- Tight and cares about education.
- High quality of life, small town with large town opportunities, recreation, beauty
- Missoula has amazing outdoor recreation opportunities in all seasons, and intelligent, engaged community members.
- There are so many opportunities for our kids to be involved in numerous activities. This is a generous, passionate community.
- Caring, educated, strive to balance life-work, desire to set our youth for success in the long run
- Missoula is a wonderful place to live and a great place for families. It is growing, but still feels like a small community. I love that people genuinely ask how your day is while at the grocery store. I also appreciate that Missoula makes efforts at the city level to reduce waste, support diversity and inclusion, and make resources for our community members most in need of help and support.
- The community is a perfectly-sized small city (about 75,000 within city limits).
- Missoula is very inclusive and more liberal than most communities in Montana.
- The community desires strong, quality education.
- It's beautiful here. It is what keeps people here as wages are low and housing expensive

- It is growing so fast, not necessarily a good thing though. But in order to serve the schools here, they need to be able to adjust to this ever-changing community we have. We still have a sense of community that is based in respect for others.
- Access to open space, trails etc. A supportive involved community with respect to public schools and many organizations. A community that embraces the four seasons. A community that has influence from a major university, with lectures, classes, and incredible students.
- Involved, educated, helpful, respectful, knowledgeable
- The community holds its teachers in high regard.
- Spirit Competitiveness Well-rounded (academics, athletics, activities)
- We are very giving and hold education and knowledge in high regard. Missoula loves recreation, has many parks, and has many opportunities for fun and learning. Some examples of community resources that do this include our fabulous (best in the world!) public library, Montana Natural History Center, FreeCycles, and our Parks and Recreation Department programs and pools.

**Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

- strong teachers, involved parents, good students
- Strong teacher quality. The teachers are caring, versatile, and knowledgeable. They go above and beyond to help the students.
- Missoula has a district with engaged faculty and parents. While each school has its own personality, there seems to be a high level of engagement at each. Our kids' specific school focuses a lot on the whole child (beyond just academic) and puts focus on being part of our local community as well as being a world citizen.
- MCPS brings art education into all subjects and grades with an emphasis on opportunities for all students. Strong focus of reading and literacy skills. Middle School and High Schools offer choices for all kinds of interests that lay groundwork for professional success. Statewide Indian Education for All program.
- Personal fitness available as part of the curriculum.
- Our school has excellent communication skills and, so far, we have had teachers who have gone above and beyond to know my kid and us as parents
- There are many passionate teachers whom have had long term commitments to the schools.
- Schools are the backbone of Missoula. As Missoula is know as a family first community, for many, Missoula Public Schools are their main support system. Covid has meant that outside of family, for some, school is the only source of socialization, education, and support. Missoula Public schools have saved our community during these unprecedented times of need and support.
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- Teachers care about their students and go to great lengths to assist them in all number of ways beyond their regular job description. Many kids like to be at school.
- Our children are currently in elementary school and we very much appreciate the sense of building community at Paxson and the emphasis on social/emotional health that is included. We appreciate the experiences they have had in Native American and cultural education included at Paxson. It is important to us that these pieces continue throughout their schooling at every level. Paxson has programs in place to support families with additional needs. We also appreciate the enrichment classes that are included such as Spanish language, arts, music, band, etc. We want to see all of these continue and be open for all students. Paxson has also worked very hard to promote a zero waste initiative and we are in support of all efforts towards environmental sustainability.
- The teachers who don't subscribe to radical gender ideologies.
- We prioritize robust and diverse curriculum that embraces exposing our students to things that will enhance their understanding of the world and their place in it.
- Not too crowded. Selection.
- Fabulous teachers and staff! We have been so impressed with everyone we have encountered and feel very fortunate to be in such a wonderful school district. Tons of parent volunteer support, and the schools' Family Resource Centers are active in supporting kids and their families.
- Dedicated - committed - innovative - creative - kind - thoughtful -
- Our schools do foster child-centered education.
- Open minded, progressive and art-oriented. My kids have had really excellent teachers at Rattlesnake.
- Teaching about diversity. Stand AGAINST censorship. Teaching our children about diversity, kindness/empathy towards/for others.
- I absolutely love Lewis and Clark. The entire staff is amazingly caring for all the students that attend. I am so proud of this community. With one child part of the deaf education program there, I am thrilled to have my child be able to participate in classes where he has the support he needs to learn and have peers he can connect with both deaf and hearing. This school has made the IEP process as easy as I think it can be. To not have to fight for what your child needs but have a wonderful group be ready and willing to do what it takes to give your child quality education and make the necessary accommodations to make that happens means everything. Washington is also a wonderful school. Their inclusivity for all students makes it a wonderful school. They have a wonderful caring staff that does an amazing job helping these kids through a time in life that is not always easy to navigate.
- Teachers and staff are dedicated, hard-working, and very caring. Parents are involved and supportive.
- We SO appreciate that the arts are integrated into the curriculum of MCPS, and we value the well-rounded education our children get at every point of their schooling.
- Great teachers!!

- Supportive. Fact and science based curriculum.
- Great teachers, committed staff
- Staff and teachers at my children's school are outgoing and caring.
- Paxson Elementary school champions diversity and honors students' minority heritage. This is critically important in an predominantly white region, especially when racism and anti-Semitism are spiking.
- the school can make things happen when it is needed! pretty supportive and always willing to help the students.
- Gosh... it's frustrating lately. But, they're trying their best since the pandemic sort of blew everything out of the water.
- Knowledgeable and helpful staff at the local level create really wonderful learning environments.
- The teachers are willing to work with me to help my student.
- There are many passionate teachers whom have had long term commitments to the schools.
- I am grateful for our decated teachers who are reliant and caring towards our children and do a fantastic job at teaching them.
- Great teachers, committed staff
- -Teachers are very communicative -Willing to go the extra mile. -Open door policy - Not afraid to draw a line in the sand on hard decisions
- Diane Lorenzen is not involved.
- Great staff that truly care about each other and their students. Includes access to art and music. Focus on community incorporated into teaching plans.
- Great teachers that look out for kids
- The staff at JRE is amazing. Caring compassionate. Open to conversations and helping children succeed.
- Bilingual
- Really great teachers & leadership. Staff really seem to like coming to work & supporting our students. Even our lower income schools have staff to support kids who need a boost.
- Our schools are a community with a ton of potential for our students to thrive. The teachers, for the most part, are absolutely incredible and some of the most dedicated individuals you will ever meet. Trust your teachers, they have the students best interest in mind.
- Teachers are generally invested and supportive though overworked.
- Quality teachers, engaged parents
- We have mostly nice, well-behaved students although they are unfortunately undervalued and underserved because teachers and staff are overworked and underpaid.
- We have staff that is caring and responsive. Sentinel has many teachers that genuinely care about the well-being and positive goals for their students.
- The teachers are dedicated to the kids' success
- Staff and educators who care about the students. Intentional efforts to expand horizons and seek opportunities for growth.
- Missoula schools have solid teachers and good administrators.
- Great wrap-around support, great communicating, great Resource room/staff, amazing front desk staff, teachers, admin!!

- Teaches good foundational skills, involved and helps out the families it can.
- class offerings; especially like the PE class offering fitness in non-team sport activities.
- Our teachers genuinely care about their students. Our parent teacher organizations strive to aid each school's needs.
- There are many passionate teachers whom have had long term commitments to the schools.
- The teachers and staff care about our kids. They want the kids to do well and succeed.
- Our school push to offer high quality, consistent curriculum across the city. It attempts to serve all communities equitably.
- Great teachers. Flagship! Love this after-school option at schools with struggling kids. Battle of the Books! My kids have thrived with that great program.
- Community supports schools. Our teachers truly care about the kids.
- We have great teachers and staff. Involved parents and PTA's. A lot of support in the community. MCPS has worked hard to move education forward here and been flexible and responsive with all of the chaos of the past few years. It's a great school system.
- Really dedicated teachers, good programs. Fantastic and committed volunteers.
- The MCPS schools are great at keeping parents involved and notified regarding all types of information. There are many resources to help students in need, whether they be students in need of material items, academic resources, or social-emotional assistance.
- Friendly staff, safe environment
- We teach a diversity of cultures We stand up against censorship We teach our children to be inclusive, kind and active members of our community
- Public schools are full but not overwhelmed.
- Teachers being supported by administrators, and the current push to include visual arts in the elementary school curriculum.
- Caring staff, well funded.
- The current administration is making arts education a priority and I hope this continues with the new superintendent. Arts education is a natural way to achieve equity. It also addresses and impacts other priorities in the district (examples: mental health, gifted education, etc.)
- Teachers who care; most recent district-wide improvements per the bond helped enhance the aesthetics of the schools and modernized them.
- Teachers are truly invested in their students and happy work environment. There seems to be genuine concern for student well being.
- (We are new to MCPS)
- Excellent teachers Building administrators who care Active parents
- Wonderful teachers and administrators. ART and MUSIC as part of my kiddos daily lives in school. I can't tell you how much these contribute to my children's success (including academic success) and happiness at school.
- We have only just started getting involved with the schools (we have a kindergartener), but so far we've been so impressed with the quality of the teachers and administration. Everyone seems to genuinely care about the kids.
- We only have a new kindergartener so don't have much exposure yet.
- We have a lot of educators who take their job seriously and respect families.

- My school incorporates many of the values of the Missoula community. We welcome all, and applaud our children's' individuality. My school meets students where they are when they walk through the school doors. They build upon student experience and knowledge using real world examples and a wide array of programming and curricula. My school works hard to develop citizens of the world through all of the traditional subjects, but also through the Arts (music, visual art, drama), physical education (sports, dance, collaborations with community organizations), technology (robotics, coding), and more. All of these programs create well-rounded, knowledgeable, and healthy students who are ready to enter the world when they graduate.
- The teachers and office staff are the best thing about Missoula schools. In today's competitive job market, a school system cannot thrive without the ability to recruit and retain quality teachers. All members of the office staff I have interacted with have always been very helpful and solution-oriented.
- Arts offerings at Hellgate High Diverse student body Dedicated teachers Good sports offerings
- Our schools have involved teachers and staff, ask for parent volunteers, and try to pull in family activities through the year. Arts programs came into the school prior to COVID, although I don't think they've returned to what they once were.
- Our teachers.
- The schools that my kids have attended have caring, supportive teachers and staff. They are willing to work with kids and parents to find the best way individual kids learn, rather than teaching with a cookie -cutter approach that leaves different learners behind.
- Fortunately or unfortunately because teachers really don't get paid much they must really want to be here and show up for the kids. Teachers and staff are involved and care for each student and their families. There are so many awesome events and opportunities that the teachers create and support and get the families to help with it is really amazing for a public school system.
- Hard working teachers and staff Caring Values all students Values the arts as well as sports and vocational and advanced educational opportunities
- There are many excellent teachers throughout MCPS and many opportunities for students to pursue interests academic and otherwise through the schools, including visual arts, music, athletics, clubs, travel programs, after school programs, and agriculture, medical, and computer technology specialization at the high school level.
- Inclusive. Seeks to reflect community. Provides varied educational opportunities. Reasonably rigorous.
- I love the emphasis on art and music education, the exceptional library program and engaged teachers. I also love the counselors and the attention paid to whole person education - not just academics, but also social/emotional education. The kids go on field trips and take time with experts out of the classroom. I feel that all of these things have led to a well rounded education for my kids.
- Quality art, music, and PE programming, dual language options, small school, sense of belonging
- The faculty and staff that our family has encountered have been caring and helpful.
- The schools have a solid foundation with a central focus on the academic achievements of its students.
- Teachers

- Focus on Science facts (not religious or political interpretation of those) and History Events that are inclusive of all races and religion. Kindness; Tolerance, Inclusion.
- Engaged and supported teachers, safe and secure, open to parent input but not to the extreme.
- We have them, and wonderful teachers, that are under paid.
- We love the strong music programs that we have in the Missoula School District. Though some eroding seems to have begun with the overall restructuring of Big Sky HS, where music is not valued like it is at Sentinel and Hellgate H.S.
- Lots of good teachers and a teacher training program nearby. Lots of family support of schools. Lots of community support of schools.
- My kids.
- Our school is transparent. Rarely are parents blindsided by secrets in the classroom. If a teacher doesn't feel comfortable informing a parent what they're teaching the child, then it shouldn't be taught. It's okay to just teach reading, writing, and math without personal opinions forced into the curriculum.
- Mostly good teachers. My kids are definitely learning!
- They appear to have adequate safety procedures in place.
- There are many very good teachers. Facilities as a whole are pretty good.
- Again, this is an awkwardly broad question. I think it's good that each school has a unique flavor or specialty. Recently that was somewhat dismantled by getting rid of the IB and Spanish immersion.
- Many of them have new or recently remodeled buildings.
- Caring teachers. As far as I can see so far, free from indoctrination of children with woke ideology, CRT, and sexualization of the children. I believe that parents have a voice.
- We have dedicated teachers for the most part.
- Still trying to find something Too liberal
- Some great teachers. Strong special education.
- Our schools work hard to meet the ever changing needs of students as well as our community. Schools are good at training future citizens and workers.
- The schools are more contemporary in approach than others I have seen and others in Montana. It seems as though there is increasing and appropriate emphasis on making our schools safer and more useful for our kids. One thing I truly appreciate is the new later start times for high schools – that's a great example of approaching school improvement from a place of better serving our children.
- Newer schools, supportive parents, strong spirit.
- Big Sky is a great school with great teachers. I feel like the school administrators and teachers make their decisions with the students as their priority.
- Bilingual education and focus on S.T.E.M in curriculum.
- Barbara Frank
- Amazing staff. Rose to the hard challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Votes to support the public school
- Big Sky is a great school with great teachers. I feel like the school administrators and teachers make their decisions with the students as their priority.

- The teachers and counselors working in the school are dedicated and love the kids. Parents' associations are generally very active and try to support the teachers and administration.
- 1) Been updated with bonds 2) Have special opportunities like Health Science Academy, music for all in middle school, artist and farmer guests elementary school 3) Outdoor learning and sport opportunity 4) Great field trips 5) Flagship for all ages 6) A superb youth choir program
- Easy to communicate with staff and administrators. Devoted teachers and families.
- We have some excellent teachers! Paxsons Spanish immersion program is incredible
- Some of our schools care about equity and diversity. Some of our schools support teachers. Some of our schools have clear behavioral support plans.
- Safe with covid. High quality teachers, programs and administration, respectful and professional
- Small. Community minded. small student to teacher ratio
- The school has always reached out to me about my child which I do appreciate.
- We have always had solid, functioning, high-quality public schools throughout Missoula. My husband and I both went to public school here, as does our daughter. Our school's greatest treasures are our passionate, committed teachers, social workers and administrators. These teams are very creative and pro-active around how to meet the needs of our children, our community's greatest treasure.
- Strong teaching teams and opportunities.
- Teachers and staff clearly care deeply about the children. The schools are of high quality. Local community members contribute in ways that make schools better.
- Committed teachers that care about students, well-developed sense of community.
- inclusiveness
- MCPS has individual schools that have distinct populations/characteristics/communities. Our Students Thrive! We have more high achieving scholars than other communities in montana of the same size.
- I can only speak to those that my children attended, Big Sky and Target Range. Both have accessible leadership and teachers, where I can show up almost any time and be able to speak with the principles and teachers. They care, they don't push social agendas but have opportunities for those who would like information. The education is truly that, or just indoctrination you heard about from other larger cities. The block classes prepare kids for college schedules and the programs offered prepare other kids for working in specific industries. The IB program is amazing and helped my son skip a year and a half of college!
- There are a lot of intelligent and motivated students, teachers and staff.
- My children's teachers throughout all levels of the MCPS system have been well adjusted and responsive to their continued success thus far.
- There are many excellent teachers throughout MCPS and many opportunities for students to pursue interests academic and otherwise through the schools, including visual arts, music, athletics, clubs, travel programs, after school programs, and agriculture, medical, and computer technology specialization at the high school level.
- Our school holds a high standard of education that goes beyond just book smarts. Inclusion.

- Our teachers are amazing! So devoted.
- Teachers are what make this district great! There is no shortage of teachers who want to work for MCPS because of the community in which we live.
- Generally supportive in funding of the schools. School board tries to adapt to current best education studies. Excellent Health Services.
- The teachers are phenomenal and really care about the students. My kids have had such quality educators and educators that care about them as individuals. Our Fine Arts programs are incredible and really a credit to the community as a whole.
- Our schools seem to be full of teachers and professionals who genuinely & deeply care for their students and work hard for them.
- The teachers are well-trained and caring about the students and provide individual guidance for students despite class size pressures.
- The schools my student has attended have emphasized communication, parental support and trying to create a positive learning environment.
- Supportive
- Attention to each individual child, willingness to assist with their specific needs.
- Principals set the tone. Every school is special in their own way.
- Focused on education not politics.
- Very involved families. Enough choices that there is a fit for everyone.
- I feel we have good schools, but I don't have anything specific coming to mind to highlight. I personally am not convinced that the trend to become IB is necessarily all positive. I think most of our teachers and faculty are strong and committed, yet I also think strong leadership is needed to guide them.
- Coming out of COVID, the prior administration was able to implement a later start time for the high schools in accordance with multiple studies that show that allowing teenagers to follow their natural circadian rhythms and sleep later in the morning drives better academic outcomes and reduces tardiness and absenteeism.
- My kids have had amazing teachers, principals, and school staff. They are willing to work with me as a parent, respond to feedback, and address concerns quickly. Parent Teacher Organizations are very involved in the schools and do a great job of engaging families in school activities. Mental health services are available but more is needed.
- Caring, big hearted staff
- We are only recently back from several years of homeschooling, so we're getting back into the feel of the school day! We feel the teachers and staff at Russell School have been supportive and positive in welcoming us back.
- We have neighborhood schools that kids can often walk to (at least k-5th). My student is non-binary and the school has been very helpful and responsive to their special needs.
- Lewis & Clark Elementary is my only experience so far, but it is inclusive, culture-based, and has skilled teachers.
- The teachers are extraordinary!
- Great teachers, counselors and support staff at the schools. They are invested in the students. Would like to see the money that has been raised through our outrageous taxes provide better wages for these folks not so much for administrative staff
- Hawthorne Elementary is honestly the most wholesome school in Missoula. They work tirelessly on being inclusive and promoting respect and kindness in their school. My son

has a significant speech impediment and has never had an incident of being made fun of once. Also, the intervention to help with his speech was quick and ongoing. Such a wonderful school!!

- High quality, open minded, student centered, strong enough to stand up to loud but small numbered factions that may undermine public education.
- Dedicated staff, parent involvement, supportive communities
- The teachers are outstanding.
- School climate
- Many quality dedicated educators.
- We have a school system with lots of unique opportunities for our students, including multi-lingual education in elementary schools, art and music in all schools, computer sciences and health science academy in high schools, and good special education programs and resources throughout.

**What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)**

- need more staff, higher staff wages we are perpetually understaffed in classified positions.
- They need to support and provide for online learning and other learning environments.
- Missoula tends to be a pretty culturally-eclectic community. We value our diverse neighbors.
- MCPS must prioritize student success above the sometimes self serving interests of the teachers union. This is a tough balance to strike. MCPS must do better.
- No well advertised Saturday School program. We moved from an area that offered Saturday School once a month with breakfast and lunch, as a beneficial option to gain access to library and computers on weekends, catch up on homework, gave a healthy breakfast and lunch, make up absences, and give structure to youth that might otherwise be home alone all day.
- I am somewhat concerned about the lackadaisical approach to homework. My son had more homework last year as a kindergartner than he does this year. My bigger concern is the politics inherent in our school- specifically, the push to indoctrinate the kids in all things LGBTQ stuff. There is no reason for this to be present in school whatsoever and it is appalling how young kids are being presented with this subject matter. My child in his first year of school brought home a gender non-conforming book, which was so upsetting. I also cannot understand why the use of pronouns is even discussed in school and I have heard from many kids how uncomfortable it makes them when they are made to feel like they need to participate in the nonsense. The push for LGBTQ related materials must be removed from the school.
- The teachers, especially new ones, are grossly underpaid. I fear this will lead to a significant drop in teacher retention.
- The superintendent must be proud of our Community and Public School System . We as a community have done and continue to do everything in our collective power to uphold the integrity and continuity that is MCPS. The “perfect” candidate should vow to do so as well. They should take in consideration of the many facets of our diverse community and

be flexible when need be, pationate about the success of our children and their family's and ultimately steadfast in all pursuits of facilitating the "Well Oiled Machine" that is MCPS.

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- MCPS must prioritize student success above the sometimes self serving interests of the teachers union. This is a tough balance to strike. MCPS must do better.
- We surely can do WAY better with the quality of school breakfasts and lunches. We need to keep in mind whole-child happiness and health and education. SB-99 is not in our young people's best interest and you should know about it and be ready to support staff and students well around it. Indian Ed for All is an awesome part of our state constitution and should be upheld and teachers should be trained for it.
- School safety. Focus on diversity, inclusion and belonging. Reduce bullying and teach online safety. Expand language and STEM programs.
- It is important to my family that our district continues to support and value diversity and community. Across the country in some places, there seems to be a trend away from this and we strongly advocate for these values for our community here in Missoula. We feel it is essential for our children to learn about hard histories in this country at every level of schooling including issues around indigenous rights, race and privilege. It is essential to our family that school curriculum emphasizes respect and compassion for others with supports and resources in place at every school and in every context. It is essential that school supports academic development as well as healthy social/emotional and interpersonal skills. These cannot be separate things in order for ALL of our children to succeed. There is a housing crisis in Missoula for many families and many families do not have regular access to healthy food. The leadership must be ready to support students and families experiencing these issues and be able to problem solve and allocate resources to support. They must be willing to work with other groups in the community that are also working to support these needs.
- Missoula is a very liberal city, full of people espousing and subscribing to very bad, poorly thought out ideologies around politics and sexuality. This has become manifest in the schools and foist upon the students by the school board, the administrators and the faculty. It is completely inappropriate and needs to stop. Students are constantly being inundated by lgbtqiamap+ talking points and material which are confusing and disturbing.
- This district needs consistent leadership. Someone that will be proactive and not reactive and someone that values teachers.
- Current agenda.
- From my perspective, it seems that income and wealth inequality have increased a lot in Missoula in recent years. However, the schools and the community in general provide a lot of resources and support to make sure all kids have opportunities and are not left out of activities based on finances.

- We support the arts and focus on the whole child. We provide students with a well rounded opportunities and experiences. We value our art teachers and have art teachers assigned in each building. We need an awesome superintendent who will stick around - it's hard having constant changes. We need to be student - teacher centered! There are a lot of administrators. How will we sustain our current staffing?
- Our teachers should not divert the attention our children by teaching something that is not exist in the curriculum.
- I am fortunate to have a good home in my hometown, but unfortunately, many longtime Missoulians can't afford to live here anymore. As social stratification increases, there seems to be an increase in hostility as well.
- Censorship is threatening our public schools. There is not a program for "gifted" or high achievers.
- There are some large discrepancies amongst different schools, both in demographics and administration. Funding for anything other than the basics comes from individual PTAs, which means different schools have access to different levels of resources, a frustration and at times a real disservice to certain school populations.
- Banning knowledge through book bans or stopping the teaching of topics you don't like is not ok.
- Teacher and staff burnout and shortages MCPS is suffering from turnover in leadership. Every long term initiative announced by a superintendent takes years of discussion, buy in, negotiation, implementation.... Then the leader moves on and the initiative stalls without a champion driving progress. The next superintendent should take stock of initiatives left by previous leaders and decide how to resolve those before starting anything new. Examples- Spanish immersion and widespread IB curriculum adoption.
- As is the case with many other school districts, we are losing educators due to burnout, and students are experiencing high levels of stress. We need a way to motivate good educators to stay in the system, and also a support system for students that need counseling or assistance with problems such as mobile device addiction.
- Not all of MCPS is unified behind the support of DEI. We need policies that champion educating our children about cultures, religions, and nationalities that are different than the mainstream. This is how we prevent prejudice.
- i believe the kids can get away with too much. from skipping, to class work to home work. wait what homework? i dont understand how a kid can miss soo much class time and turn in an assignment or two and pass the class. not even putting in much effort. i think there is too much slack. i cant speak for others but ever since covid hit. i cant get my kids to go to school. they say it just sucks now and is compleatly diffrent than before. from the teachers, to teaching style to other students. nothing is like what it used to be. the kids dont even treat eachother like they used to. from what my kids say.
- The bar is too low for our students. No consequences for poor attendance, no consequences (really) for not doing school work. The extreme ends of student ability - like the super smart and the super struggling have a lot of resources (it appears), but the average student in the middle just muddles through. The squeaky wheel definitely gets the grease.
- The last superintendent did not seem to care about the community's opinions, making decisions and then involving us after the fact. He also seemed to promote gender bias at the highest levels of MCPS.

- Problems with subs! I know that this is a national problem, but the subbing process here is antiquated and confusing. Also, Hellgate HS and the City really need to sort out who owns/manages what when it comes to the practice fields at the Riverbowl. It is incredibly frustrating to see the disparities between high schools when it comes to practice space at the school.
- That there is a huge need for mental health awareness and help for the students. The schools we have been involved with have said they are supportive of mental health but more still needs to be done.
- The teachers, especially new ones, are grossly underpaid. I fear this will lead to a significant drop in teacher retention.
- 1) Keeping kids safe from pandemic illness as per CDC and health department recommendations. 2) making sure schools are safe and welcoming for all children regardless of background, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, abilities, or other differences.
- My only concern as a parent is that I sometimes feel that my students are pressured into feeling like if they are not part of the LGQBT community that they are less valued and a bigot. I want caring for all individuals and am tired of all of this issues that seem to be constantly brought up.
- Teacher and staff burnout and shortages MCPS is suffering from turnover in leadership. Every long term initiative announced by a superintendent takes years of discussion, buy in, negotiation, implementation.... Then the leader moves on and the initiative stalls without a champion driving progress. The next superintendent should take stock of initiatives left by previous leaders and decide how to resolve those before starting anything new. Examples- Spanish immersion and widespread IB curriculum adoption.
- -Poor behavior of students at sporting events -Stay away from clicks -Be your own person -Listen to all sides before making a decision -Having a business background - because unfortunately, running a school is a business.
- Covid is still here. Masks aren't. So either A) Masks didn't do anything to stop covid; B) The mandate was an overreaction to covid; or C) The MCPS board all of a sudden stopped caring about the safety of our children. Boom baby. MCPS board - 0. Parents - 100. Take the L baby. Take the L.
- Need for more equity across the district.
- The lunch hour is a mess. Kids don't finish eating and have minimal supervision. Recess is unsafe for to lack of staffing.
- Keep the school open, keep sexuality books and curriculum out of school and library.
- 1) Missoula housing challenges. 2) Like in many school districts, there are competing pressures regarding gender issues (between parents, kids, staff): are we promoting or supporting? 3) Education inequity between some schools (i.e. Lowell vs Lewis & Clark). 4) Career paths for Missoula youth (to retain them in the community & not move away)
- This district is full of upper management who has not earned their right, but has been put into a position because of who they know. There is a startling amount of principals and vice principals who, despite significant feedback from both parents and teachers, are still in positions they are not equipped to handle. In the last several years a staggering amount of teachers have left their position due to the lack of leadership. The incoming Superintendent needs to do a complete overhaul of the leadership team; Assistant Super -

Assistant Principals. Shift the focus back on the students and teachers and away from the politics that are currently in play.

- There is an epidemic of drug/vaping use in high schools especially THC/cannabis. There is a marked decline in student STEM and English skills.
- Missoula has all of the problems that larger cities do and these are reflected in our schools—need funding for the arts; class sizes are large in many schools; need attention to diversity and inclusion; Covid gap; need funding for programs like MOA; consider alternative school for Middle School
- Lack of cultural diversity.
- There is classism and racism. There are a lot of people who have never been outside of Montana or lived in an urban area. There are a lot of "Good Ol' Boys" Who fight change and growth. There are a lot of born and raised Montanans who fear anything perceived as "Different"
- Rob Watson has left big shoes to fill
- Lack of diversity, which can lead to rigidity in problem solving when the same perspectives are brought to defining issues and exploring solutions.
- Chronic underfunding coupled with a growing student population. The community typically supports bonds for improvements, but with increasing property taxes and other expenses, that support could wear thin.
- Families are struggling with cost of housing, no housing, childcare expenses. Advocate for the need for affordable housing and childcare, to keep women in the workforce!
- Lack of diversity both in subjects taught and experiences. Narrow minded view of the world, anger towards those they see as outsiders
- **PROMOTING GENDER DYSPHORIA** - Missoula District schools advertising LGBTQ sexuality is inappropriate in a public-school setting. Children are being introduced to the idea of 'gender identity' at younger and younger ages through school library books, month-long school 'celebrations' of LGBTQ sexuality, including LGBTQ book displays, flags, posters, learning LGBTQ 'history', and LGBTQ sex ed. Children should be allowed to be kids/teens and not be bombarded with sexuality decisions. I know a female student that believed she must be lesbian since she admired another girl's hairstyle in class. Another female student thought she must be LGBTQ since she didn't like wearing dresses. Gender dysphoria 'contagion' is spreading across the country where 30% of teen girls now identify as transgender. Our schools should not be abusing our students in this way by adding confusion to their already difficult lives. Kids have enough worries without forcing them to decide and identify their 'gender identity' at increasingly younger ages. Sexuality is a private matter and should not be taught and on constant display in the schools. The only sex education the public schools should teach is reproductive biology (including intercourse) and sexually transmitted diseases. Schools are for teaching academics ONLY. 'Gender identity' is a state of mind - not biology, not medical, not science, NOT in our schools. **MISPLACED SCHOOL VALUES** - Let's contrast the month-long 'celebration' of LGBTQ in Missoula schools with how veterans are honored in Missoula schools. There are no month-long celebrations honoring those that lost their lives for our country, no book displays, no posters, no flags, etc. My children lost their brother to the Iraq war, but the unintentional message my children receive from Missoula schools is 'veterans aren't worth mentioning but being gay or transvestite should be honored and celebrated for a month'. Sexuality should not be

promoted in any school. EQUALITY - We need more 'equality' regarding the American experience. For example, four generations of my children's Italian-American family suffered from bigotry and discrimination, yet there are no 'equity' and 'inclusion' discussion/lessons, posters, school library displays, etc. during Italian-American Heritage Month in October, despite the former Ft Missoula Internment Camp for Italians, Japanese, & Germans, right here in town, and Montana's history of anti-Catholic 'eruptions' over the last 100 years. In addition, consider the history of Columbus Day. After 11 innocent Italian Americans were lynched in 1892, President Harrison, being aware of the nation's bigotry, hatred, and institutionalized racism against Italian Americans, proclaimed the holiday of Columbus as an official rebuke against racist abuse toward Italians and as an olive branch to the Italian American community by giving them this day to celebrate (which they still do in Italian American communities). Though Columbus wasn't the best poster child for Italian American pride, this is where the teaching takes place, or at least could take place if Missoula schools taught the history behind Columbus Day instead of letting current politics dictate how students should view this day. If 'Equity' and 'inclusion' need to be taught, it should encompass all religions and ethnicities and not just be a euphemism for LGBTQ, African/Native American viewpoints.

- The Covid-19 pandemic brought forth misinformation for many Missoula families, as it did across the nation. There will likely be continued concerns coming from these families fueled from this misinformation, as well as by our current state legislature and Governor.
- The teachers, especially new ones, are grossly underpaid. I fear this will lead to a significant drop in teacher retention.
- Montana's crazy law about no discussion of sex, sexuality, sex ed, etc., in the curriculum. This negatively impacts our children's education in all subject areas, not just health class. We also have a group of conservative parents and community people who believe they should be able to change all school curricula to meet their conservative ideals and, often, religious zealotry.
- Our district administration is disproportionately male and does not reflect the male/female percentages in our staff. Over the past 10 years as administration has been reworked more females have been removed from position than males and more males have been hired than females.
- Inaction on the grant funding Flagship after-school programs could threaten that valuable resource for families.
- There is unnecessary political division at school board level. We've lost focus on the basics of a good education due to Covid disruption. Need to go back to the basics.
- We are a fairly liberal community in a very rural, conservative state. This means Missoula often has conflict with the surrounding districts and voters. It's a challenge.
- Pushing non-school related curriculum such as LBGQT and critical Race theory. This is a family issue, not an academic topic
- Local families are struggling and can't afford housing and basic needs because of the influx of out of state investors and families.
- There is a real threat of censorship in our school programs that could negatively impact our children's ability to learn. Politicization has no place in schools. It is up to our superintendent to stand up against harmful political agendas

- Boundaries:** We have issues with boundaries, particularly with the transition from middle to high school, and more particularly with Washington to Sentinel/Hellgate. There is a strong push for students at Washington within the school to attend Hellgate, but this puts a lot of stressful peer pressure on the students and families in the Lewis & Clark neighborhood to send their kids to Hellgate when it makes more sense to send them to Sentinel. One example of this is that they invite Hellgate staff and students to come and tell them about their school, but they do not invite Sentinel representatives. The Lewis & Clark neighborhood would like to see our kids want to go to Sentinel. It is hard to convince them to do this because the staff and their peers steer them to Hellgate. Sentinel's numbers are also high. It seems that Lolo should attend Big Sky and the number of out of boundary applications for attendance should be reduced to allow for the neighboring communities to attend. This issue was studied in the spring of 2020 right before the pandemic, but it halted with the school closure and has not been continued.

**Middle School Curriculum:** **Math:** Another issue is that our middle school curriculum is not challenging for many students. We are losing kids during this time because their interest in school wanes dramatically. There is a lack of challenging courses for those that need them. For example, my son needs a higher level math, but there is no room in the Advanced math. The principal said they have about 18 students who qualify that they don't have space for and that the Advanced math sections they have are full. To me, that seems like a good time to be proud of getting the kids to that point (that's awesome progress) and to either expand the advanced math options or up level the regular math classes. **Science:** The science curriculum the last few years was phenomenal, but around late October of this year, the teachers started using a canned curriculum. My son and other students have completely lost interest where prior to the change it was their favorite class. My son went from telling us all about their studies of bugs and things under microscopes to saying nothing other than that it was really dull and how much he misses the way it was taught at the beginning of the year. My daughter, fortunately, was given the previous curriculum before the teachers were required to teach the "set" curriculum, and she wants to be a health care worker. She attributes it to her middle school science teachers exciting her about science. It is so sad that the district is not allowing these phenomenal teachers teach the material the way they want. This is not best for students, and it doesn't prepare them for the exemplary science courses they are headed to, particularly at Sentinel. **ELA/English:** Finally, it is important to either give writing teachers at the middle and high school level more time (less classes to teach), less student numbers, or more pay for their time grading. This would reduce teacher burn out and increase student success as reading and writing are essential life skills and critical to success in other classes. We need to better support these teachers in their efforts. The school district needs a program for Dyslexia and other reading challenges. It is not being addressed and is a disservice to students and their families. We have amazing schools because we have amazing teachers in the buildings. The district does not seem to recognize their value and allow them freedom and support. The title one money needs to be readdressed. There is no reason why Sentinel should be left out of receiving the funds. It puts a tremendous pressure on the staff there to fill gaps and create classes for lower level students and takes away from the regular classes (making those numbers higher). Also, the teachers teaching what should be title classes have not received training

to do so. This means that results are low and teacher stress is high, which in turn means kids suffer.

- Staff want to be appreciated and paid competitive wages. The arts and social workers are essential, and often overlooked.
- The need to permanently include visual art in the elementary curriculum with an art teacher at each elementary school.
- Poverty in Missoula is real. It's easy to turn a blind eye to it. We need a Superintendent that can consistently put the needs of our most vulnerable kids first. Even if that sometimes means angering the wealthy parents.
- Our high school students are not engaged in or excited about what they are learning. Arts integrated education enhances engagement.
- There is a lot of housing development slated to occur in the Lower Miller Creek area and rumor has it that the Jeanette Rankin Elementary School likely does not have the space for the influx of kids. Lots of parents are wondering where their children are going to go to school once the influx of people fills in.
- The board is incredibly one-sided and lacks balance/diversity of opinion. Parent/family rights are sorely underrepresented. This became obvious during COVID/mask mandates. Parents are not truly encouraged to engage in decision-making at the administrative level and when they are, they have been selected so as to agree with the positions of the administration. Taxpayers need to know exactly how money is spent. District is not transparent.
- It is critical to maintain the extra support that schools have gotten since COVID- especially mental health services and critical specials such as art and music.
- Parents are being shut out of the education process and even schools themselves, especially after Covid. Having parents involved at the school provides them with assurance their kids are safe and keeps teachers moving in a family friendly direction.
- Historically, there has been some disparity regarding programming between the schools within MCPS. This has caused some friction since MCPS does not offer the opportunity for parents to choose a school of their choosing for their child. There has also been some friction with staff regarding expectations being different from school to school. This has been somewhat driven by the administrative evaluation process, or lack thereof.
- Affordable housing is an issue in Missoula
- Mental health of both teachers and students, access to arts, pulling in more parent involvement. Nutrition has taken a step backwards. Prior to COVID, the cafeteria staff offered more options that were cooked/baked in house. Muffins in the morning made with zucchini from the school garden, ground meat options were from Big Sky's ag program. Now the lunch menu reads like any other school, not reflecting as many healthy or local choices.
- The young elementary kids are behind in basic skills due to covid. They NEED more emphasis on basics: reading, writing, math, Please make time and stop dumbing down tests to make up for it. Get legislature to fund schools.
- Teachers are the most important part of the school. To keep good teachers they need to be compensated well, respected, and listened to. I value the teachers that have touched my children's lives. I also think safety needs to remain high priority. Not just due to the danger of school shootings and violence, but for the danger of bullying and violence towards students who are LGBTQ+.

- Missoula is not insulated from the extremes we all feel in our country, we need someone who will focus on the commonalities of our families and understand there is a critical catch up that especially the younger students (K-5) need in reading and math post covid.
- The previous superintendent has done a fantastic job so build upon the work he began. Go slowly and thoughtfully before instituting large changes. Continue the widely beneficial support of the arts. Creativity is a prerequisite for success in today's world where many future jobs cannot be predicted.
- There is income and opportunity disparity between the schools. Since the pandemic, High School class work is increasingly done through Google classroom and there is less in-class discussion and interaction. I do not know if this is true in Elementary and Middle Schools. It has contributed a sense of, "what is the point?" amongst students and poses the question of how much students are expected to be in the classroom if they are often doing independent work online. They are not seeing their efforts paying off, either in the short term and are wary of continuing to exert effort when they feel there is no benefit or reward. I think that some of this is due to a reliance of external rewards rather than cultivation of intrinsic motivation in the earlier grades but certainly the pandemic and changing classroom dynamics have exacerbated the situation. Many of the teachers are closer to retirement. We are already experiencing teacher and staff shortages and there is an increased number of teacher absences since the pandemic. I am concerned about things like generating a pool of qualified teachers in the future, loss of institutional knowledge as more teachers retire, making services available for transitional and high risk students, mental health services and counselor availability, and the growing number of students who benefit from the alternative high school option.
- Push back against politicization of education. Significant youth mental health challenges in Montana. Need to keep up with national standards.
- I hope that the superintendent can be creative in keeping art, music, library and counselors funded so that their impact can continue to be felt in this district. Our teachers are underpaid.
- The encroachment of alt right political backing of Missoula candidates for School Board
- He/she might not be able to afford a house -- to buy or rent.
- The schools do not make very many attempts to progress beyond the average in terms of academic achievement. Many students are not being challenged enough. They see academics as secondary to socialization. Social media technology is rampant.
- Too much effort and time is taken away from teachers ability to teach to the middle and high students because of behavior management
- Politics should be checked at all times. School is for facts, history as it truly and inclusively occurred and strict separation of church and state - all religions, or lack thereof, should be respected but not endorsed. Focus on improving safety and security.
- Cost and availability of housing is challenging. Missoula Urban Median price is \$520,000.
- **CLOSE THE CAMPUSES! THESE CHILDREN CANNOT HANDLE THIS FREEDOM. WE HAVE TO BE THE WORST SCHOOL DISTRICT.**
- It feels like the socioeconomic divide is becoming bigger.
- The current board has an utter lack of regard and disgust for the parents of the students.
- We need to re-focus the schools on the science education as it relates to the basics with STEM. Students and teachers only have so much bandwidth and that bandwidth needs to

be education and not personal philosophies. Let the parents handle the social awareness aspects of America today. Let the teachers handle reading and writing. With both parties focused and in their lanes we can guarantee our children will be set up for success in the future.

- DO NOT KOWTOW to the "parent rights" people and their fascist backers. Their mission is to undermine and dismantle public education. Though many will choose to remain silent, please know that the vast majority of the good people of Missoula SUPPORT public education and the mission of MCPS. I would also like to see the new superintendent focus on improving communication practices from schools to parents. Particularly at JRE where \_\_\_\_\_ is crazy. Sadly, \_\_\_\_\_ is not much better. This is a DEEP weakness. Did you know \_\_\_\_\_ was sharing messages of anti-masking and 'parents rights' on her Facebook page? Frankly, most believe she need be relieved of her "duties".
- The schools are overcrowded, except Willard.
- The schools work hard to maintain the status quo. Not a lot of innovation or support for those who want to move things forward.
- Spanish immersion at Paxson ended and many people are still really upset about that. The new program seems weak.
- Drugs in the middle schools and high schools. Staffing - not enough teachers. No subs.
- Commitment to keep sexualization out of schools, especially the younger children. Safety and recognition of parental role in determining curriculum and how a child should be educated and raised. Fundamentals like reading, writing, math, science, computer skills, should take top priority, over politicization, pronoun focus, and activism. This is not California.
- Bullies are not dealt with except by talking to them. Punishment should be clearly known and applied. Kids are not taught how to use the original computer - their brain ! How can kids study their subject when there are no books to take home for studying? Parents and community should have input when curriculum is discussed and chosen. Let's have kids learn English well before teaching foreign languages! Cursive writing needs to be taught. They're going to be adults, they need to have adult penmanship. It seems schools are not really preparing kids for adulthood and jobs. If not performing to a grade standard stop promoting to next grade; kids don't need to work to get passing grades since promotion is guaranteed . Why are kids given endless chances to pass a test/exam? That does not teach responsibility or pride in accomplishment.
- Don't pander the squeaky wheels
- Need better counseling services, particularly for college-bound. Need to preserve art education and provide advanced classes.
- It is important to find a superintendent that is aware of the ever changing "face of Missoula". This community is not only growing in size but we are becoming more diverse. This leads to great opportunities but also great challenges for the school systems. We need to be thinking about significant refugee population that is growing in Missoula. The schools need to be aware and build supports for students who don't speak English as their first language. In addition, supports need to be put in place for parents of these students who have little idea as to how public schools work. Please make sure the new superintendent has ideas about diverse populations and ESL supports.

- The rampant anxiety and depression running like a plague through the student body. More than a third of our students (some data suggest as much as two thirds of high school students nationwide) are mired in emotional turmoil (and trauma) and unable to fully attend to school work (or even class) and are affecting outcomes for the student population as a whole, bottom-lines for the schools as a system, and their own individual progress negatively. There are as yet untapped methods for supporting individual students, and new structures for supporting students at large that could alleviate much of the stress students experience, and help them to process some of the feelings that otherwise block them from being able to do their best at school. Traditionally this has been left to parents and considered an "at home issue". But the plain fact is, our kids aren't getting enough support at home, and it is ruining their chances at school. So schools need to pick up the slack, and partner with parents to help them too. Among other things, what we could really use is principals, teachers, parents, and anyone else helping our kids learning about and creating \*emotionally safe space\* for our children in which to grow and learn. If you don't know what those terms mean, I recommend you start by finding that out. The undeniable fact is: if a third to two-thirds of our kids can't show up (at all or with full presence of mind) to class and their schoolwork because they're feeling too much anxiety or experiencing too much depression, then we absolutely have to figure out ways to support them to deal with their feelings. The Missoula-based Center for Emotional Education is a great resource. (406) 531.1270
- Cell phone usage,
- Open enrollment is a big problem. Cost of living is rough. Teacher/staff turnover is probably at an all time high. Being a superintendent in a very democratic county and having to fight the politic landscape of the rest of MT.
- Some teachers push their left-wing agenda in the classroom.
- Barbara Frank
- Challenges due to the pandemic in regards to staffing. Housing problems.
- Open enrollment is a big problem. Cost of living is rough. Teacher/staff turnover is probably at an all time high. Being a superintendent in a very democratic county and having to fight the politic landscape of the rest of MT.
- Due to the wide range of achievement and preparation levels, especially in the lower grades, the current opportunities for true enrichment for high-achieving students are limited. Having additional resources for such programming would greatly approve the currently available opportunities.
- 1) The bus service is a monopoly and as a result it is expensive to move students for field trips and sports 2) There are alot of students with low resources and the cost of living is making that worse 3) Many high schoolers are working ALOT outside of school to support their families 4)Teachers salaries are inadequate for the cost of living here. 5)Getting the schools covered in solar and the buses electric should be a priority .
- Programs for kids with BOTH special ed and behavioral issues are non-existent for middle school. My son's needs include both of these things. Even meeting with district professionals to solve this has shown there is NOTHING.
- Staffing/ wages. Disinterested students. Lack of funding and support from the city. Lack of resources.

- MCPS has very involved parents. Your success as superintendent is a top priority to your MCPS families. We want to be helpful and involved in processes, changes, policies. We can make a GREAT team!
- The schools are very busy. It can be hard to get someone to respond to you. Lead pipes at some of the older schools
- Most of our schools and our district support 'historic' precedent and hire with the idea of historic precedent ("what Montana has always done...") over what makes the most sense for students and learning and safety... Our district makes decisions based on one person or a handful of squeaky people without a community census or data driven approaches. Our district also has a hard time sharing 'why' they make the decisions they make (transparency). Our buildings still have high lead levels, broken toilets and walls with holes and issues- even after years of discussion and concern.
- Our school is very community minded and SSHS matters!
- They should have more options available for bussing for children who have an IEP or mental disorder.
- Indigenous Justice and Indian Education for all are very important in Montana. The superintendent should come in with as much awareness as possible and be willing to learn about our rich Indigenous history and present cultures in our communities.
- ONE: Ensure that every effort is made to fully fund highly functioning and creative curriculum... beyond math/language arts.... art, music, science, tech and more. Keep our kids and curriculum on the cutting edge ensuring our kids have the opportunity to become leaders in their communities one day. TWO: Protect the critical roles of social workers in our schools, especially given that the need for kiddos and families has more than doubled during COVID. Social workers in the school help keep kids safe, save lives and help families both hold it together and heal. THREE: Ensure there is no reckless, small-minded (and potentially illegal) censorship on the part of the schools and the administration (in the face of the invaluable curation of our libraries by our incredibly thoughtful and skilled librarians) in response to the concerns of a few parents.
- Number one is safety. I would want to hear about what the plan is to prevent school shootings and respond to those who show up to schools with guns. Need to develop greater opportunities for challenge at the middle school level. We see too few books being read, too little homework to really develop growing minds. Can imagine required great books programs where volunteers partner with the schools, projects that require some digging deeper in these years where there is too much time on kids' hands to sit on phones. (Our experience has been strong elementary ed, lax middle school, and good opportunity for those who will chase it in high school (if they haven't forgotten how in middle school). Not bad teachers in middle school, but a philosophy of little beyond class. Teachers are so tired post-covid with kids at different skill levels. They need lots of love and support. They need a leader who they respect and admire for her/his passion for kids' potential. We need more money from the state. Property owners have been glad to say yes to every levy, but we are getting maxed out.
- The community is interested in a thoughtful leader that does not repeat past mistakes. For example, the prior superintendent \_\_\_\_\_ was not a good communicator. The prior superintendent did not \*really\* involve the community, choosing to instead pretend to involve us after making important decisions in an admin vacuum. This led the prior superintendent to not come off as trustworthy. Notably, when the last superintendent

started, he changed the structure of administration, whereby several high-level women administrators that reported directly to the superintendent were moved out of their roles. The superintendent then hired his friend (now the interim superintendent) to manage other admin. This and other actions led to what many of us saw an old boy's club that negatively impacted the gender ratio at the highest levels. The interim superintendent and other admin have done a nice job improving communication. Many of us feel things are better now, although we really need someone in this role outside of the bubble, and hopefully from outside of MT, to inject some new ideas.

- The importance of administration support of teachers.
- different culture of international/immigrant students
- We need more support for our homeless families. Racism is an issue. Change without buyin has been difficult in this district.
- I would say that big changes need to be justified and be the right fit for our children and communities. We have engaged parents and schools, so thinking bc we are in Montana so we need to change to be like other school systems isn't necessarily true. I would be open to listening to the community, and not always just those who have the loudest voices. Reach out to as many as you can to get to the heart of any issue and our community is very good about assisting with what you need.
- Schools seem to have trouble finding staff. There is consistently no crossing guard and very few subsitutes at my children's schools. The teachers and staff at my children's schools seemed overworked. They do not have seem to have much motivation/energy to engage with the broader community or foster individual interests my students have.
- There's a few unrealistic bad apples (parents) but that is life in general.
- There is income and opportunity disparity between the schools. Since the pandemic, High School class work is increasingly done through Google classroom and there is less in-class discussion and interaction. I do not know if this is true in Elementary and Middle Schools. It has contributed a sense of, "what is the point?" amongst students and poses the question of how much students are expected to be in the classroom if they are often doing independent work online. They are not seeing their efforts paying off, either in the short term and are wary of continuing to exert effort when the feel there is no benefit or reward. I think that some of this is due to a reliance of external rewards rather than cultivation of intrinsic motivation in the earlier grades but certainly the pandemic and changing classroom dynamics have exacerbated the situation. Many of the teachers are closer to retirement. We are already experiencing teacher and staff shortages and there is an increased number of teacher absences since the pandemic. I am concerned about things like generating a pool of qualified teachers in the future, loss of institutional knowledge as more teachers retire, making services available for transitional and high risk students, mental health services and counselor availability, and the growing number of students who benefit from the alternative high school option.
- After school programs may need supervision, or better training on how to engage and have fun at the child's age appropriate level.
- School lunches are expensive & often families can't afford to send home lunch or pay for school lunch, especially since losing the grant.
- If I were the superintendent, I would require an audit of all admin building positions and what they do. MCPS is top-heavy. Many, many out-of-date systems are preserved to keep individuals in jobs that have become obsolete in more efficiently running districts.

Teachers are what make this district great, yet district administration only provides opportunities for professional development in the district. There is "no money" for teachers to travel to national conferences, even when presenting themselves. District supervisory positions should be closely examined as to what they do to support teachers and programs at MCPS. Many of these figurehead-type positions could be reduced to instructional coaching jobs that could provide support for specialized teaching positions.

- Underfunded teaching staff. Open enrollment creates have and have nots in high schools. BSHS has smallest population but largest area and growing community. However, many of those area students go to SHS and HHS. Coaches at SHS and HHS recruit athletes. Administrative staff in high schools is weak, especially at Big Sky. Athletics is highly valued, at the expense of education. Not enough subs to cover classes because subs are underpaid. Upgrades to schools were incomplete, leaving obvious holes--literally at HHS.
- While we do have a community that generally supports us, a lot of Missoulians are being priced out of the city and are seemingly becoming more hesitant to pass levies. It is REALLY difficult to find workers right now in Missoula, especially in the lower paying jobs. While Missoula is a liberal community, the state of Montana is overwhelmingly Republican and the legislature is not always happy to fund schools.
- At the elementary school level, special programming such as the Spanish immersion at Paxson, seems to still be an issue concerning to parents. The lack of communication with parents about this issue by administration was unfortunate and has left many parents with concerns about trusting administration to properly take on & communicate future issues.
- Population growth potentially leading to loss of unique Missoula cultural foundations; e.g., appreciation of the arts, engagement in community activities, and identity with the city.
- My student's academic experience has not been as positive at the high school level. While I understand the challenges an older student can pose, there is an overall "attitude" or "prejudice" that older students are difficult or in need of constant correction or supervision. There are educators that are respectful and have a healthy perspective on older students, there are more that do not. I would like to see a focus on educators creating a more positive, respectful way of working with the older student.
- Improved career and secondary education counseling. improved 504 support perhaps with technology. School safety - bullying and violence prevention and response - what is the plan, expectations for all parties. I would love for us to be the first strength based school and as a certified Gallup Clifton strengths coach I would be happy to help
- \*Bullying. Unfortunately Bullying is becoming more and more experienced. This issue is negatively impacting the system within the schools. Please provide more para professional/treatment teams for each school. I kindly request that there is more resources provided among each school that promotes healthy and safe mental/emotional health resources for all schools. When a child feels safe in their learning environment. They will thrive. Classrooms will improve. Schools will improve. \*Free lunch for all children. Children should always be nourished and never hungry. Prisoners in jail even get free meals daily. Please work on this issue for children across the works among the MCPS. Thank you :) \*Books in the library should be only PG-13 and appropriate for only minors. No mature books as they are detrimental to our children's minds and learning process. Learning should be fun and safe. All books in each library school district could be filtered and investigated so that they are appropriate.

- Massive economic disparity over the last few years that will create well documented educational challenges.
- the world has changed, but school hasn't.
- Like in many places there is a growing trend of polarized politics with some people trying to gain power that want to shut down free speech, ban books, etc. while at the same time an element of people who are almost militant the other direction and intolerant of people who might struggle a bit with issues around gender identity being such a big focus in the educational realm. We need a middle ground where we are not intolerant of others, and not forcing one group's values onto other people--we expect all people to treat everyone with respect and we convey that expectation consistently.
- The current interim administration attempted to revert to the prior early high school start time, citing difficulties with the district's third-party bus transportation provider. Thankfully the MCPS Board rejected that proposal, but any new superintendent should be aware that there is an undercurrent in place in the current administration that puts budgetary issues relating to a third-party contractor above the needs of students.
- Mental health concerns and how to address them within our schools. There is a school-based mental health program (CSCT) in MCPS, but it's been severely cut over the last couple years for several reasons. Any alternative ideas or feedback from staff in these programs should be sought.
- Cost of living being a huge challenge for teachers and public school staff. Big environmental education non-profits in town can provide quality place-based NGSS curriculum with more meaning and involvement from the community than generic national curriculum. University town - partner!
- I believe kids need our utmost support and that our teachers are stretched thin by the pendulum of learning styles, behaviors, levels within the classroom, and stresses of keeping everyone safe in an environment that has been under siege by parental "rights" in-fighting and the increasing risk of violence. Our kids are the future and we need to nurture that and make them and their well-being an absolute priority in our community.
- Our special education program includes many students that have intense behavioral needs, we could/should do much more to support inclusion and lessen SRO involvement (especially in the K-5th level). This requires more staffing and thoughtful community support. We cannot ignore and isolate these kids. The same is true of our LGBTQ+ youth, despite state resistance against trans youth in particular, they are at the highest risk for suicide attempts and completion and cannot be bullied into staying in the closet.
- We are relying too heavily on testing, our students curriculum wastes multiple weeks on different types of online testing, from basic Star, IRLA, IReady, and state testing. When kids should be actively learning. Our classrooms are too large, from third grade on my kids have 27-28 children per class - this makes it really hard to teach.
- cost of living not only affects our students but also our teachers. To teach in Missoula our educators must also be able to live.
- Housing is expensive shopping is less than desirable and flights out of Missoula can be limited.
- We are a growing community, we need someone progressive-ish to move us forward with our growing area. We cannot be stuck in a "Good ol boy" way of thinking. They need to be thinking ahead towards the betterment of our school system as it pushes its limits.

- The MCPS has had a policy of graduation matters -- this is very true, but some think it has come at the cost of education matters and we may need to continue to work to find this balance and grow the program. The schools here offer an incredible variety for the size of the schools and this important to the students and the parents.
- Personal agendas of individuals. Also, a clean sweep of current administration, there is no leadership in the district.
- Boundary issues (transfers) Elementary school class sizes and school sizes (JRE overflowing with more houses being built daily)
- School board, trustees and parents disconnect.
- Paxson Elementary recently changed their language education away from dual language immersion, to a 45 min/day Spanish class. This caused a lot of contention amongst parents, but in many ways it may be making school more accessible for more students. Finding ways to continue multi-lingual education at all levels, especially elementary, will be important. Also, school staffing is a major issue district wide. In particular, positions that are below a living wage (substitutes, para-professionals, food service staff, maintenance/janitorial staff, bus drivers) are all in very short supply.

**What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)**

- dedicated, but able to give each school the power to run themselves. Not on a power trip. Plan to stay more than 3 years
- We believe Missoula County is one of the stronger school districts in Montana. We are not looking for drastic adjustments. Steady improvements in all programs. Someone who will respect the rights of everyone.
- The superintendent should be open to maintaining each school's ecosystem and give teachers space to do their job. They should also understand that our community is for everyone and everyone should feel welcome. No bigotry, no hate, no violence should be in any school.
- We need a superintendent who works strategically and invests in relationships with all stakeholders. The superintendent needs to be a skilled oral and written communicator. I always appreciated Rob Watson's exceptional communication skills, especially during the covid pandemic. No -political and focused on incremental progress and student success.
- Empathy is ours to demonstrate. Every youth should have this embedded in them. Every adult should demonstrate empathy by their own example.
- I want a superintendent who is nonpartisan. The last one was outrageously political and did not make sound leadership positions that were in the best interests of the students or teachers
- We don't need someone who will "shake things up". We need someone interested in restoring some of Missoula's former educational opportunities.
- The "perfect" Candidate should be kind, compassionate, trustworthy and forthcoming on all platforms of education. They should be pleasant, informative and transparent with pertinent information. The honesty within the team of families and schools is paramount.

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- We need a superintendent who works strategically and invests in relationships with all stakeholders. The superintendent needs to be a skilled oral and written communicator. I always appreciated Rob Watson’s exceptional communication skills, especially during the covid pandemic. No -political and focused on incremental progress and student success.
- Ability to constructively find common ground among people of all political leanings and positively take steps forward in the best interest of young people... instead of dividing us any more than we already are.
- Empathetic, strategic, organized, extremely strong communicator. Leads with integrity. Advocate for teachers and students.
- Promote forward thinking ideas that are inclusive for all groups of learners and their families. Respect for individual rights without undermining those that tend to have less of a voice. Be a leadership voice for the under served student and family populations in our community including native families, those experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ+ students, students with disabilities and learning challenges, etc. We would like a candidate that supports and promotes mental health services in every school and supports allocation of resources to make these meaningful. We would love for environmental sustainability programs to be implemented across the district and our community.
- I would like to see a superintendent hired who does not use preferred pronouns and instead goes by the common sense, biological, inferred pronouns, which are given to us through the rules of grammar in the English language.
- Open mind. Not devoted to one party or agenda.
- Energy and enthusiasm to jump in and get to know this active, energetic, and enthusiastic community!
- Creative - compassionate- thoughtful - diplomatic- Montana minded - invested - art centered-
- He ought to be a good listener
- I would want our superintendent to be well-read, utilitarian and generally open-minded.
- A firm supportive stance on inclusivity and diversity and the courage to stand up against those who want to marginalize members of our community. A leader to bring our community together, bridging conflict and NOT divide it. A leader who will stand against censorship whether that is in regards to books in library or education regarding sexuality, contraception, gender identity, healthy relationships.
- Patient! Missoula is a very active, engaged and informed community which means lots of people have lots of opinions! Informed and up-to-date with best practices in public education!
- I think it's imperative that the new superintendent is a supporter of the arts and artists, and that they advocate for arts in the schools. They need to understand that STEM is NOT the only thing these kiddos need - art and music make us human!
- Be logical. We are in a conservative state and a fear we will go down the route other conservative states have gone. I'm terrified we will ban accurate history or science lessons because it makes parents uncomfortable to learn slavery existed or something similar.

- Strategic thinker, proven track record of engaging stakeholders and seeing initiatives through, skilled negotiator, focus on supporting teachers and staff, focus on all students achieving their potential (not simply attending to the lowest common denominator). Someone who understands finance and budgets and is a skilled and experienced administrator of fiscal and human resources.
- The new superintendent should have clear goals related to academic success, and should be able to communicate these goals clearly to school principals and ensure that the goals are transferred to staff and teachers. The superintendent would also need to be creative in their ability to create or borrow tools to evaluate and ensure forward-thinking academic success of students from other school districts that have achieved increased academic success over time, most notably in math, but also other subjects such as science.
- We need a champion of DEI, a champion of music and the arts, and one who will not tolerate misogyny, anti-Semitism, racism, or sexual harassment
- a lot of energy! drive, compassion, kindness, and a heart. but still stick strong to what is ok and what is not. possibly get the kids involved and ask them what they would like.
- Belief in quality education, awareness of the impact of mental health issues in schools.
- The best candidate would seriously engage with the community and value all stakeholders. I personally hope the candidates bring unique skills and experiences from working in different environments throughout their career. I hope we can recruit a diverse candidate. After years of men, it would be great to see a woman in this role.
- I want someone who believes in science, can see through political shenanigans, and fight Helena (when they need to) in order to do right for Missoula.
- Care for students above everything else.
- We don't need someone who will "shake things up". We need someone interested in restoring some of Missoula's former educational opportunities.
- I love when you have a superintendent who knows the students by name and teachers by name. Who cares about the success of the school and has leadership qualities that allow others to bring up concerns and help make our community better, educate the students, and a safe place to learn and grow.
- Strategic thinker, proven track record of engaging stakeholders and seeing initiatives through, skilled negotiator, focus on supporting teachers and staff, focus on all students achieving their potential (not simply attending to the lowest common denominator). Someone who understands finance and budgets and is a skilled and experienced administrator of fiscal and human resources.
- Lean Six Sigma HR Toast Masters 10- years min experience running a company or non-profit or management with no less than 100 employees
- Humility. A believer in Christ Jesus. (He even loves people like those on the current MCPS board)
- Understanding of current best practices including the need to incorporate mental health/coping skills into curriculum. I don't know how it all works but prefer a philosophy that is less grade based. The candidate needs to be able to maintain a calm and consistent approach to unexpected challenges such as the pandemic (like Rob Watson did!)
- Caring, positive and respectful

- Experience with children in classrooms. Willing to learn from others. Open to feedback. Humble. Willing to advocate for better wages for staff
- Focus on academics
- 1) Judicious communicator, 2) union negotiation skills & expertise, 3) demonstrated ability to effectively navigate and accomplish things in a highly political environment
- Teacher/Student focused, able to go against the norm for the betterment of the school and our students.
- Skill and experience with improving academic performance, and with educating students in a scientifically rigorous way about drug risks
- Smart; appreciates importance of arts in education; sees value in alternative education; has teaching experience; open minded and visionary, collaborative
- The ability to handle irrationally angry, fear-filled and shrill parents who participate in school policies simply because they have been radically politicized.
- I would love to see a superintendent that is well versed in all walks of life and ways of doing things. Someone who is focused a lot on the social and mental well being of the students and who doesn't bend to political peer pressure and that does what is morally right based on kindness and inclusivity and not religious or political bias or pressure. Let's bring in someone who is ready to move forward with the times and progress and is willing to test the ways of growing Values and not taking a step back in time.
- More thoughtful, strategic decisions rather than quick decisions
- Inclusive approach to leadership - capacity to elevate perspectives that are not already dominating the conversation, respect for people and place, without blind deference.
- Forward thinking, consensus building, have an education background
- Compassion, pragmatic, big picture thinking, focus on community needs. Kids can't succeed if they don't have proper shelter, food, etc.
- Larger viewpoint, ability to balance local wants and moving this area into a more cultured and diversity community.
- 1) Consider parent viewpoints in decision making 2) Non-political - Ensure teachers don't influence students with their own political/personal agendas & viewpoints. (ex. Sentinel HS health teacher passing out anti-heterosexual flyer). 3) Student 'Equality' Focused – In the name of 'equity', our schools only emphasize 2-3 ethnic groups at the exclusion of all the other ethnic groups that contributed to the making of this country and suffered from discrimination. 4) Improve resources for gifted students 5) Ability to make hard decisions and work within the current budget.
- Forthright, honest, and forward thinking in a growing community.
- We don't need someone who will "shake things up". We need someone interested in restoring some of Missoula's former educational opportunities.
- I want a superintendent committed to giving my children the best education to succeed in all aspects of life. This includes a broad and diverse curriculum that helps them see and understand various perspectives, develops critical thinking skills, and provides them with the tools needed to be successful in further education and careers.
- Our superintendent should hold a lot of experience in education and in teaching.
- I believe an excellent Superintendent of Schools puts students first and foremost in any of their decision making. Second are teachers and staff and third parents. Their duty is to balance the needs of each party and stand strong in face of budgets, parent or union

complaints and state or federal overreach. If the candidate is willing to always put student needs first they will be a good fit for the Missoula community.

- Honest, frank communication. Transparency will be valued. Parents and others can tell when they're being spun. Please just be real.
- Someone who wants to stay in Missoula long term, someone who will show up at the schools and talk to folks, not just since behind a computer all day.
- Great communication, the ability to listen to different viewpoints and arguments without getting pulled into them, calm and competent presence, vision for the future of education and solid goals and paths to achieve those.
- Open-minded, caring, can work with many different types of people and get things done. Values volunteers.
- The new superintendent would be business-minded enough to run a large school district, but will also be caring and empathetic - particularly when thinking of how to address the needs of students in special education. My own child has a profound disability he was born with, and his team at Russell Elementary is fantastic. I hope this is a priority across all schools, staff, and program levels.
- Core Education centered, not pushing social constructs on children.
- Integrity. Montana values are being lost to political self interest.
- Experience Inclusive, affirming stance on diverse student populations, and protecting those who face discrimination in our schools Ability to bring people together with different views and solve problems that include what is best for ALL students Creative processes to bring our community together to solve problems that affect our schools, such as supporting homeless and houseless students, giving teachers the support they need in the classroom, protecting our students' access to sexual education, including learning about healthy relationships, gender identity, sexual orientation and contraception.
- Strong leadership skills with a balance of power. Primary focus on the health of the team (staff) and the whole student (academics + social/emotional).
- Open minded and flexible, good communicator and mediator.
- Someone willing to put policy into action. For example bringing back community eligibility provision for school lunches in struggling schools.
- A strong leader who believes in the importance of arts education.
- Good communication. Good at public outreach. Willingness to listen to each school and make their voices feel heard.
- Pursuit of: \* Academic excellence first and foremost \* Critical thinking ("how to think, not what to think") \* Unity, not division \* Equality of opportunity, not equality of outcome
- Deep appreciation for parental involvement and a proven history of working with, taking input from, and implementing ideas from a variety if stakeholders on a proactive basis. Business background Politically moderate Parent Native Montanan
- Open to a multi-faceted school experience for kiddos that prioritizes creativity, social skills, and critical thinking that actually sets them up for full and meaningful lives, not just teaches them math....
- I'd really like to see a superintendent who's committed to sustainability so MCPS can do its part to protect this planet under threat. That means seeking funding for solar panels on every school, electric schools buses/other vehicles, zero-waste initiatives, and other

initiatives like that. Not only will these things protect the world these kids will grow up in, but they'll also be excellent educational opportunities for the kids and help give students a leg up in new energy economy jobs.

- I believe we need an open-minded leader who is self-aware, emotionally intelligent, and shows they have a growth mindset. They should be curious, nonjudgmental, and open to new ideas. We need an out-of-the-box thinker who has a backbone and can stand up to social/political pressures, in order to make the best decisions for our children. We need someone who's willing to make decisions rooted in justice and equity. We need someone who's not going to settle for simply what works, but someone who strives for excellence...for pursuing the highest standards in education.
- Respect for academics, family involvement, and an appreciation for encouraging critical thinking. Ability to focus on traditional education and not social issues which take up valuable learning time and are seldom productive to any of the students in the end.
- The new superintendent should hold the same values as the Missoula community, and should uphold and support those values through their work, actions, and communications. They should value ALL students and staff with the same fervor. They should support traditional programming in MCPS before considering new (and sometimes fad trends and programs) when looking to the future. The new superintendent should be a supporter and bolster all previously mentioned programs within our schools (Arts, Phys Ed, Technology, etc.). And finally, the new superintendent should value the mental health and well-being of all MCPS staff, students, and families.
- Staffing. Recruit and retain high quality teachers and support staff. Support for fact/science-based curricula. It should be understood that when you send your kids to MCPS they will receive a high quality fact-based education regardless of the parents' understanding or acceptance of those facts.
- Commitment to the Arts, Equity in Schools, Child-centered curriculum Focus on developing creativity and citizenship in our schools Open mind and heart Experience in a variety of educational philosophies, schools and approaches to learning
- Be present, focus on overall well-being not just test scores, emphasis on education within and outside of the classroom. Safety for our students, attract and retain teachers that can support students to learn. If that takes smaller class sizes, how can that be managed? A superintendent that can do what's right for students (ex. stand up to parents demanding no masks when it's clearly a health issue in 2021)
- Lobbying, thick skin and can take heat and answer questions rather than hide.
- I would like to see a superintendent that truly acts in the best interest of the students and teachers. Someone who follows science. Someone who listens to the American Pediatric Association, mental health professionals, and the local health department when it comes to deciding what is best for schools. Not what politicians think.
- We need someone who is willing to hear from all sides, all perspectives. A good listener and a good problem solving. Someone that can bring folks together through values of education, community, integrity, and compassion.
- Openness Empathy Focus and vision Creativity and ingenuity Communication skills Passion for education, support of educators and children
- I realize there is value in choosing a superintendent who has vision broader and experience. But particularly in these challenging times, I feel like we need someone who is in touch with our local community, the assets and struggles we face and offers more

than just ideas but the ability to do the work and inspire teachers, staff and students to do the same.

- Good communicator. Puts all children first. Advocate for underrepresented students. Supports teachers.
- Skilled communicator, ability to understand the values of Missoulians to navigate dealing with the educational mandates coming down from the state.
- Someone like Mark Thane, understanding if underrepresented populations specific to Missoula and how their voices are often overwhelmed, someone who will support the arts in a community where that is so important
- The ability to listen to all sides. The superintendent shouldn't make decisions just because a small group of loud parents are demanding something.
- The successful candidate should be able to have a personal connection with the teachers of Missoula. Must be able to interact with them in order to lead them. Also, please be ambitious. Students of the community need guidance on the payoffs for academic achievement. Please also keep political ideology out of the school curriculum. Be guided by the quest of knowledge and not beliefs.
- Person that is able to recruit community assistance and grow our district
- Ability to communicate directly to all via multiple direct email and social media platforms. Information distribution and transparency are critical. Demonstrate skills and knowledge appropriate to improving safety and security. Posses the qualities of kindness; tolerance, and inclusion.
- Collaborative, Transparent, Communicative, Open Minded
- Willing to listen
- Positive attitude. Good listener. Trusting of teachers and building administrators and their ability to know and do what is best for their students. Ability to be flexible and open minded and allow schools to maintain some of their individuality. Team player.
- Believe in and put Jesus Christ first. Forget about yourself and your ego driven agenda.
- An alert mediator. Someone who is in tune with what the teachers and parents are facing. Someone who is willing to listen to both sides and find common ground.
- They are endowed with the best type of CRT--CRitical Thinking. They will not be a pushover. They will not be a wolf in sheep clothing, attempting to undermine our education system from within. Be a listener, but don't be a pushover. Take time to get to know the community, the district, the schools and our practices and the parents and the kids. Be a communicator. Be thoughtful with your messaging and think deeply about how it need be composed, organized, and shared. Show us you care about the safety and well-being of our children.
- Good planning and problem solving skills and the ability to empathize with students.
- The willingness to listen and understand students and parents needs. The school district needs a leader not an administrator.
- Able to watch and listen to the whole community, not the few most vocal members. Please do not hire some right wing wacko. Put the interest of kids first. Communicate early and consistently about important changes.
- Ability to weigh information and opinions to determine what is best for teachers, students, and parents. A willingness to decide and act. Strong communication.

- Respect, diplomacy, competency in enforcing and supporting high quality education. He or she should refrain from CRT, sexualization of children, activism. He or she should be fully committed to the children's well being and keep the school open if another outbreak of Covid hits. Vaccination requirements should not include mRNA covid shots. He or she should be dedicated to providing a safe, educational environment.
- Not be a "woke" person & be really interested in all the curriculums especially the progressive methods which do NOT help kids learn math. If it did we would not have kids in high school who cannot do basic math without using fingers or electronic aids.
- Not to have any hidden agendas, support teaching truth about this country and the constitution
- Do not hire some woke individual but rather someone with common sense and real Montana values. And not someone looking to continue to lower the bar to the lowest common denominator but rather keep standards high and offer extra help as needed. No more walking the stage if you didn't earn a diploma, etc.
- Smart, collaborative, strong management and leadership
- They need to be a good listener. Do not implement change simply for the sake of change. We don't need an ego - we need a problem solver who is able to work closely with the whole Missoula community. Open minded with a background including dealing with immigrant/refuge populations.
- Keen eye for possibilities Hope Systems orientation, but with special ability to improve current modes Ingenuity
- Assertiveness, confidence, and common sense approach to conflict resolution.
- Compromiser, communicator, negotiator, empathetic, and goal driven.
- Focus on academics and stay away from politics. Keep the school open, (kids need in person classes)
- Barbara Frank
- Being able to support staff. They are so important to our children and the system at large. Being able to manage a wide variance in skill sets in children.
- Compromiser, communicator, negotiator, empathetic, and goal driven.
- An ability to listen to the needs of a broad set of stakeholders will be vitally important to succeeding in this job. Missoula is a city of broad divides, and pleasing everyone will be virtually impossible. Building coalitions, making sure that people are heard, and showing a true interest in the community and its needs will be crucial to success.
- The right decision may be unpopular and there will be resistance to change so having a strong, well articulated set of values is crucial to ground decision making. She should respect teachers and staff as professional adults. Finally, the superintendent should like children and fiercely defend their best interests.
- Innovative thinker willing to try new approaches to inspire a lust for learning amongst our children. More interdisciplinary styles of learning.
- communication skills, transparency to the public/families, fiscally conservative- our funds are not unlimited (as has been treated in the past), we need to be creative to work within our budget and be willing to cut useless spending as appropriate. willingness to hear diverse opinions
- Help the schools catch back up, just feel like some kids and teachers werw lost in the pandemic

- Someone not from our district - who understands how schools run outside of Montana. A fresh perspective to help us update how we maintain and run our educational settings. So all benefit. Someone who supports processes and expectations and consequences - so everything is clear to parents, students and teachers...
- Equipped with compassion toward special needs populations.
- Strong leader, respectful, experience in the field, willingness to see all schools and their uniqueness.
- Compassion, empathy, kindness, awareness of mental health conditions.
- - Transparency - Accountability - Strong Communication - Organization - Compassion - A history of kind leadership
- 1. Deeply pro-public education and pro-public funding of education. 2. A true advocate for our children and a believer in the right of our children to receive phenomenal and well-funded education, regardless of income bracket. 3. Someone willing to think outside the box, get creative and even look to other exciting national models in order to protect quality public education in Missoula. 4. Someone who sees challenges as opportunities and will work collaboratively and creatively to overcome these challenges whether that be more science, more tech, more art/music, more supplies, etc. 5. A strong leader who both inspires, is a person of action and follow-through, and builds a culture and team that lets others lead and shine as well. 6. Someone who is honest, transparent and a proactive communicator. 7. Someone who can bring people who disagree together around a common cause.
- Dogged about safety first. The first quality in desperate need is to get my children home to me alive. Then. A team leader who can inspire and encourage teachers and students to take joy in their work of growing hearts and minds. Confidence and humility. Not arrogance. Excellent communication to staff and to families. Honesty. Authenticity. Longevity. Wisdom to keep us out of political disputes. Advocate with the legislature for funding.
- The new superintendent should have diverse experiences and training, with a record of exceptional performance. We are hoping for diverse candidates that come from outside of the area and outside of the current admin bubble. The new superintendent should realize that diversity matters and that the community notices when you do not take it seriously. Mostly though, we are looking for a smart and thoughtful leader to make the future of MCPS even brighter!
- Transparency, integrity, communicative, collaborative, supportive of teachers
- adept not only in technical but to cultural differences and the situational awareness in carrying his job with respect to culture
- Team builder, knowledge about law, ethical in their work,
- The person should believe in equity, not judging a child based on the home situation or social class. Someone who has good experience in being an empathetic leader, a caring person, and a good listener. Also, the candidate has to be brave, to stand up for his/her constituents and support them against government over reach or under support. Confidence and being humble are necessary as well.
- Respect the rights of parents to be involved in, and informed about, their child's education, especially when it comes to controversial topics such as sex education and morality.

- An open-minded person who is a good listener and committed to doing their job in a kind and efficient manner.
- Intelligence, excellent orator, persuasion is better than force mentality coupled with a buck stops here spine in order to know when to stand firm and make an unpopular decision
- I realize there is value in choosing a superintendent who has vision broader and experience. But particularly in these challenging times, I feel like we need someone who is in touch with our local community, the assets and struggles we face and offers more than just ideas but the ability to do the work and inspire teachers, staff and students to do the same.
- Inclusion for all. Caring for the child as a whole. Uplifting, kind, supportive, playful, interactive, organized, dedicated, great communicator, stand up leader.
- Teaching experience, in classroom experience, leadership experience, should have multiple school qualifications, IBM experience, Restorative justice experience, dual credit knowledge.
- The new superintendent should be forward-thinking and understand how systems and protocols could be updated to lessen the load on teachers in the classroom. They should have a working knowledge of how all district departments run and be able to create a plan to fix the district's broken, antiquated system.
- Leader that makes confident, informed decisions based on collaboration with school board, staff, and community. Willing to weather storm from opposing viewpoints. Proactive in asking for funding with levies and bonds. Realizes that Missoula community is growing, perhaps with retirees, so adjusts expectations accordingly. Kind. Woman???!!!!
- Montana knowledge, ethical person, kindness, a good communicator (and listener,) someone who puts families and kids first, someone who is sensitive to inclusion and puts a priority on making sure all socio-economic groups have opportunity in the schools
- We need someone who will make clear decisions based on data and concrete information. Someone who will be able to incorporate views from many stakeholders and perspectives, effectively communicate decisions, and be a consistent leader we can all trust. I want someone who I know will be fighting for our kids & our teachers, and not just echoing statements and ideas from “higher” authorities.
- Open mindedness, focus on ideals aligned with tackling issues like social isolation, climate change, and population growth in western Montana.
- Honest, open minded, respectful, approachable, empathetic, student focused, mindful of all different types of students and people.
- Global cultural steward, advocate of DEI, strategic, innovative, ability to set vision and empower execution
- I think the most important characteristic is that we choose someone local who has been working in Montana schools for most of their career. Please no out of staters.
- I think the new superintendent should be innovative and creative and willing to push the district - and the State - forward in education. Montana does not prioritize education and it should do better.
- Non biased upon students of different races. \*Fair minded. No political motives or agendas as this is a seat for focusing on improving education. Politics should stay out of

the system when it comes to the children in the schools. \*Keeps education first!

\*Receptive \*Open minded \*Remains Teachable

- Focus on education not politics. Grow our kids don't push political woke crap.
- Creativity-- I would love to see more high schools offer the curriculum of Willard for example. Communication skills patience focus on equity and belonging understanding that the rubrics for success must change push for alternative tracks (trade schools, apprenticeship, 2 and 4 year) post high school
- We need exceptional strong leadership from someone who holds convictions and is willing to make tough decisions and accept and be resilient to public criticism. We need a person who cares about the educational progress of all students, not just the lowest common denominator, and not just the exceptional kids. Every student should be learning and growing from year to year, even the most gifted.
- A willingness to break through an entrenched administrative bureaucracy that often seems more focused on dollars and cents rather than student health and academic outcomes. A school district always needs to take into account financial and logistical considerations, but every decision cannot be reduced to dollar amounts -- decisions need to be based on putting students first, in fact as well as in rhetoric.
- It's important that the superintendent hears all sides of issues and communicates clearly with both staff and parents. They should be able to take action, rather than give answers and information that patronize others. It's also important to work with community and contracted groups, especially those that work on the ground level.
- Creative, assertive, open minded and clear communicator
- The ability to listen well, to all sides, and the ability to respond with caring, dignity, knowledge, and forward-thinking. Dedicated to kids FIRST, supportive of our teachers and all staff. The superintendent should want positive youth development and be willing to listen to their voices as much as anyone.
- Sincerity, thoughtful follow-through, determination and a love for the community/students are all essential. It's also best if they understand that new initiatives sound great to folks, but are useless without meaningful follow-through. Kids are more than data-points.
- a good listener.
- An understanding of small town values and why people choose to live here to raise our families. Characteristics that support our educators to be safe in the workplace.
- Someone who has the ability to balance a budget. Stop spending on unnecessary expenses. Our taxes support the schools someone needs to be held accountable for being fiscally conservative.
- Decision making Forward thinking Inclusive Understanding Empathetic Able to listen to their community and take advice if need be
- I think that in the past decade or so, both our higher ed and MCPS has succumbed to big talkers/ "car salesmen". I would like to see someone able to navigate the politics, but a boots on the ground kind of worker. I have loved to see Mr Combs at almost every concert from grade school to high school. That feels like caring about a program at its very core.
- Open-minded, supportive, friendly, well educated, knowledgeable on current issues facing students
- Listening.

- Well-rounded People person
- Must be sensitive to diversity and inclusion. A good communicator. A good listener. A good builder of community segments.
- Communication and the ability to work with various community stakeholders. Creativity in order to find ways to fund programs and keep the good programs going. Resolve to keep Missoula schools at a high standard, keep improving, and stay with this position long enough to push improvements (more than 2 years!)

### **Students**

**Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

- Teachers that we can reach out to and get a positive response
- I love the unity in my community. Yes everyone has their differences but we do all come together when necessary
- Everyone is chill, no one seems explicitly mean.
- The Missoula community is overall quite generous and supportive of the public schools. Having a liberal arts university in town gives us the ability to collaborate on projects provides our students with many additional opportunities. Lastly, there are many fun community events due to the vibrant arts community in town.

**Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

- The friendliness you get when you are in the building
- I like the inclusivity in our schools from the staff and employees
- There is a good rivalry, and some teachers do a good job teaching.
- We have strong elementary schools with passionate leaders and parent involvement.

**What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)**

- Middle School is dealing with kids already vaping/smoking and having access to marijuana and bringing it to school.
- People are a lot worse to others than they might think. a lot of stuff is online now a days so it's hard to tell
- They need to be aware of the amount of lgbtq presence in the schools, and they will need to be and open with people's sexuality if they want to actually have a job here.
- Missoula is an Arts rich community and families desire the opportunities to learn musical instruments, pursue visual art and have other arts opportunities during their school day.

**What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)**

- The person should be able to have compassion for kids, but a firm standing on policies that need to be in place for everyone to feel safe. There needs to be a strict dress code for boys and girls. No short shorts, no bra straps showing, no underwear of any kind showing, no see-thru shirts or those horrible white tank tops that boys like to wear, no shirts that indicated sex, drugs, profanity, no pajamas! Kids need to dress like they are representing their best selves and how can kids do that if they are allowed to wear skin tight clothing, baggy clothes that fall off of them as they walk? Kids need to be held to the higher standard of caring about themselves to hopefully help keep them on the right path and making positive choices for their futures. It kills me to know that kids are able to get such easy access to vapes, cigarettes, marijuana and any other drug out there. However, I do understand that a huge part of this comes from home and parents need to be responsible, but maybe if kids get more strict penalties by doing this all at school it will help them make better choices?
- I think it's really important that people who aren't as present in school activities/sports receive just as much support from faces in our education system
- The superintendent needs to listen to students more and be more casual, I think they should joke around when talking to students and be more serious behind the scenes so they maintain a nice facade so the students feel welcomed by the superintendent.
- 1) A true leader with the ability to make the hard decisions and stand by them. 2) A professional who wants to commit to this community for longer than a couple of years

### **Teachers**

**Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

- Involved and engaged - supportive artistic community. Teamwork. Supports the arts!
- In many parts of Missoula you can still leave your doors unlocked while you're away from home. Most folks still know how to be a genuine neighbor in Missoula.
- It's a small, rural yet urban for Montana community. It is far more liberal than most of Montana. You have such a range of outdoor activities, cultural opportunities, and safety. It is a friendly atmosphere of community connection.
- Generous, academic, liberal and progressive
- Our community is very supportive of public schools. Our community has a lot of very strong leaders in many different areas of business, health, and education.
- We are creative, inclusive, friendly and active. We value community and community events. We love Montana and Missoula.
- Support for those that are struggling financially and mentally. Collaboration between the community with the schools
- We have lots of outdoor recreation summer and winter.. We have a Community Theater and Symphony. We have a University that can provide advance education. We have many sports event and opportunities. The Missoula Community always shows support for our schools through mill levies. The community has a terrific volunteer core. They need to understand the economic diversity in Missoula.
- Missoula is a place that can quickly feel like home. There is a strong connection to the outdoors and a commitment to maintaining open space. The community is interested in

the world and connecting to a bigger picture, all while maintaining a value for practicality.

- For the most part, we are community who takes care of each other. While we may disagree in some areas, we all agree that we love our community.
- Although Missoula is diverse in its social, political, and economic makeup, the citizens of Missoula have always placed a high value on the respect and acceptance of beliefs that may be different from their own. The love of the outdoors, the arts, and the University keep a steady influx of fresh young ideas flowing through the community.
- The Missoula Community has proven time and time again, through the consistent passing of bonds and levies, that it is committed to education. Our community is home to the University of Montana. Missoulians are creative and value the arts. Our community loves social gatherings and Grizzly football.
- Our community is inclusive, appreciates and supports the arts, welcomes refugees, and strives for excellence in our schools.
- Missoula is a well-meaning community that values the differences and genius of all members. The focus on supporting local business and public schools is of utmost importance. Students in Missoula are provided with opportunities through community partnerships and the generous donations from individuals.
- There is something for everyone: outdoors, arts, sports, shopping.....
- Outdoor recreation, variety of restaurants, vibrant art and music scene
- The Missoula community is special. Overall people in Missoula are extremely supportive and helpful. We have a large number of non-profits that are successful because of community support. Missoulians have a strong connection to their surroundings and protecting the rivers and public lands around our town.
- We have a lot of parks, bike trails, close to three excellent rivers, cross country skiing very close, and various hiking/walking paths nearby.
- Our community values public education. We are generally more progressive than other cities in Montana and we value diversity. We have incredible outdoor recreation opportunities and a vibrant downtown with many cultural opportunities.
- Big Sky is inclusive, creative, dynamic and resilient
- Open spaces, outdoor recreation, the arts, and community events make Missoula a wonderful place to raise a family.
- The Missoula community is vibrant and exciting. On any given night, you can find a live band, a poetry reading, a pick-up basketball game, or a service organization meeting. We love our community and tend to stay for many years. Our schools are important to us, and we want our children to have a comprehensive education that stresses diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical thinking.
- Missoula is an incredible place to live and work. The beauty is amazing, the community is welcoming, and there are so many ways to be involved no matter what your interests are.
- People really care about each other and advocate for each other. For the most part, people want to see each other succeed. Kids' needs are at the forefront and we come together to build them a strong foundation.
- High Quality Teachers

- Most people in Missoula intentionally choose to live here because of the access to recreation and positive, community lifestyle. Missoula has heart.
- We are globally conscious and work for high level educational programs regardless of funding. Community partners so readily step up to be involved w school programs when asked.
- Economic and ethnic diversity are valued (at least as of recently). We have a strong and vocal and empowering native american community.
- It is a fun, something for everyone, any personality fits community.
- Friendly, helpful, pro education, pro teacher
- They like us. The mill across the street often donates lumber the lumber yard manager delivers it to our school. The local news paper writes articles about our art classes as well as the sporting events. They feature the new teachers in the paper so the community can get to know us.
- I don't know much about the community around us but we have a great community in Chief Charlo.
- The desire to be better
- Access to nature through public land
- There are many great things about the Missoula community. We are outdoorsy, kind, and have many opportunities to attend events related to arts and entertainment. We have many stores, tons of restaurants, and everything you need, right here. We are only a short drive to lakes, ski areas, and campgrounds. We have a lot of local sports teams and events. In Missoula we have a lot of resources to help those less fortunate.
- Missoula likes to think they support the schools, it is a pro-schools community.
- A wonderful place to raise children abundant outdoor activities.
- Great outdoor recreation, a vibrant arts scene, and a general commitment to equity and inclusion
- supports schools
- Spirit Generosity Balance of Academics/Activities/Athletics
- We are an outdoor loving, arts loving, university town with many people who like to be engaged in a variety of facets of our community. Families move into our school neighborhood for the schools and unfortunately find out they may not make it into our crowded middle school.
- Inclusive, outdoorsy, friendly, kid-centered.
- As a MCPS District educator, I can honestly say that I am surrounded by skilled professionals! Teachers work hard to provide the lifelong learning skills for our students.
- Our community is largely supportive of education and is interested in engaging with our schools when given the opportunities to do so.
- Our community values education and the teaching profession.
  - globally-minded - environmentally conscious - active in outdoor activities - open-minded to different lifestyles, family structure, gender identities, etc.
- We care about and support students and teachers, we live in a beautiful place with lots of recreation activities
- Missoula is a special place in the heart of the mountains of Montana. It's full of kind and warm people. Life does not happen fast, but our community is bustling with energy and optimism.

- Like-minded, lovers of nature, progressive, open-minded
- Diverse, arts enriched, university town, "big" city (for MT) but still feels like a small town, lots of recreation
- I love that Missoula is a little blue island in a sea of red. The influence of the university helps keep the community focused on learning and culture.
- Has great opportunities for community engagement and the community always supports the school district financially.
- We care about each other and have a million non-profits that work to make this community and world a better place for all.
- Missoula is a little quirky, outdoorsy, artsy, and always has something going on for just about anyone. With access to so many outdoor activities, those tend to take precedence but we have a strong arts community as well with theatre, symphony, concerts, dance, and galleries. With the University of Montana in the heart of town, there is also access to all the sporting events that come with a University system and UofM football game days create a town within a town. There are multiple outdoor markets in the warmer months and that typically draws people to Caras Park to watch kayakers, river surfers and a visit to the carousel. It's a pretty special place.
- Missoula is an active community. There are so many opportunities for self-edification. There are courses for all ages (like the Emma Dickenson Lifelong Learning Center) and folks want to grow and learn. There are also tons of outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Our community is welcoming, kind and open minded.
- The community is passionate about protecting the very good life we have here, and being inclusive for all and providing opportunities for everyone.
- Missoulians cares deeply about the Arts and Cultural offerings within our schools and community.
- Many ways to get involved through volunteerism, music & art, and easy access to the outdoors for recreational activities.
- As a college-town, our community is diverse (from a Montana standpoint) and has global influences. We have many opportunities to pursue fun and healthy activities, and ways to engage as a community member. Missoula is also a place where, if one struggles, other community members want to help scoop them up. I am proud to be a Missoulian!
- It is diverse and purple politically.
- The community has progressive pockets and the outdoor opportunities are vast.
- Small, rural community with good community support for students, schools, and families.
- Missoula as a whole is a great community. Events that encourage the participation of people from all walks of life. From sporting events to concerts, there is almost always something going on for all groups of people.
- Missoula is a truly special place. As a community, we support those in need. We problem-solve together and try to find the best solutions as a group. We truly want the best for our people and our home.
- Community typically supports our district and our levies and bonds.
- The high school community needs a true PTA, not a booster club parent organization only interested in extra curricular activities.. There are competent parents in this community who would step up to the role if the administration did the leg work to make it happen.

- Blue Collar! We get up and go to work. Look for a challenge. Proud of where we come from and what we represent.
- People here are considerate, friendly, and generally nice people.
- Our community is relatively diverse. We know how to support each other and our schools.
- progressive, open-minded, arts/humanities-focused, friendly
- This community values public education and take a lot of pride in its k-12 schools.
- Although it is beginning to change with such a sudden and large influx from out of state, in general, Missoula has a strong sense of place, of community, and there is strong civic engagement.
- Community typically supports our district and our levies and bonds.
- very strong sense of community. misSOULa
- Missoula is community that embraces all types of activities and athletics which are critical to make of the school district.
- Easy access to outdoors!
- Small, rural, supportive community. Variety of members including socio-economic status with retired/well off , middle class, and low end poverty. Seeley Swan is a Title One school.
- Real Sports-rivers, lakes, mountains
- There are many resources for a school district to draw from.
- Caring, supportive, progressive, community-focused.
- Helpful, friendly, and beautiful
- Quality people who support one another.

**Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

- Loyal and dedicated - child centered. We have invested in programs and offer ring opportunities/ experiences to students positively since Covid - teachers are passionate! We love our students - teaching is hard and never the less we persist.
- The high schools strive to sustain discrete programs that create student/parent investment as stakeholders. We have remarkably invested parents and coaches who create small communities of excellence within the larger schools. We have fantastic support staff e.g. my custodian takes pride in his work and is a pleasure to talk to every day.
- High quality staff in a fairly small district, compared to others across the country.
- Sentinel- great team work, warm, dedicated staff. Progressive and caring.
- We have good quality teachers who work hard at their jobs to teach and support students.
- We put our kids and their safety and learning first. We work collaboratively to meet the kids needs and our own.
- Creating a community that attempts to provide a circle of support for families not just the students. Helping them recognize there are multiple roads to educational success
- We have a very collaborative staff. As a staff we are willing to learn new strategies and techniques to use in our classrooms. We have a great specialist program. We have a hard working Indian Ed. for All Program. We have fantastic parent support.

- The Missoula Online Academy is a unique alternative school within the school district - it has been an especially beneficial program for students returning from hospitalization, managing significant mental health challenges, those who have otherwise had chronic absences, and more. Our district has been responsive to the needs of its students and made a significant effort to create as many paths to success as possible.
- Our schools care about the whole child through fostering kindness, high achieving goals, and creative tools for engagement.
- MCPS teachers are highly qualified. In an educational era defined by the lack of quality teachers, Missoula continues to attract the best and brightest young teachers that Montana has to offer.
- The schools are full of dedicated individuals that seek new ways to reach students. Our high schools have unique programs that support a variety of learners and the arts continue to be a priority across the district.
- Our school push to offer high quality, consistent curriculum across the city. It attempts to serve all communities equitably.
- Our schools are diverse and reflect the values of the neighborhoods in which they are located. Schools provide different experiences and programming based on the needs of their immediate communities.
- Parents are involved and the staff is a cohesive groups that supports each other.
- Educators who are committed to their students and being their best possible professional selves.
- We have some of the best teachers around. Our teachers are continually going above and beyond to support students.
- In general, our schools have passionate educators. Our elementary schools offer Spanish classes and have a partnership with Sparks Art Grant.
- Our schools are staffed by dedicated professionals who do everything they can to ensure students to achieve their potential.
- Big Sky is inclusive, creative, dynamic and resilient
- Our school communities are focused on student success and whole child wellness.
- Our schools have wonderful administrators, staff, and teachers who love children. Teachers are experienced, skilled professionals who are experts in their field and should be trusted to teach as they were trained to do.
- Our schools are all unique and serve as a central part of each neighborhood. Teachers are incredibly hard working and dedicated. Families want to be involved.
- There is a lot of creativity in our schools and an excellent drive to perform. Many come with significant academic achievements and many have a strong desire to serve their communities at large.
- Teachers work really hard to do their job.
- Missoula schools make an attempt to offer unique experiences for diverse learners.
- Ditto
- We have frequent music/arts education throughout all the schools and ages. We have the opportunity to provide more to our entire community through our schools.
- The staff help each other and are always helping when needed. The students are great and a joy to teach, work with, and it makes you want to put in the extra effort to make sure each student succeeds.

- Devoted teachers, engaged kiddos, and a great place to learn.
- We know each other. We care for each other and our Students. Communication between teachers is a strength in our community and the administration
- Our school is so team oriented we always are there to help each other.
- The effort from staff
- Teachers that work really hard and care for their students
- Our schools have good teachers who are passionate about education and forming relationships with students. We have supportive parents who want to be involved in the education of their children. We have a refugee population and supports in place for working with those students.
- Quality dedicated teachers a very nice environment to work within.
- -A great diversity of elective course offerings -A strong music and art education program district wide
- works together for the most part forward thinking
- School Spirit Balance of everything
- We are filled to capacity and have a waiting list to get in. We have students from a variety of households and some students from group homes. In our district our students with emotional and significant cognitive needs do not always go to their home schools.
- Kid-centered, safe, concerned with mental health and well-being of the students, teachers are trusted as professionals who can make logical decisions without too much prescriptive oversight.
- Russell School is a secret gem in the district. We build meaningful relationships and provide outstanding educational opportunities.
- We have quality teachers who are invested in educating students in a mostly comprehensive model, allowing for a variety of student interests and the opportunity to explore potential areas of interest while receiving a strong core education.
- Our teachers do good work everyday at every level. And we have good kids.
- educated and dedicated teachers - very involved parent community (depending on school)
- We have some amazing teachers, specialists, and students. We have retained counselor and teacher librarians in our schools. Our staff build relationships with students and with each other and want to do well.
- Our K-5 schools are full of passionate, experienced educators whole believe in putting students first and strive to deliver quality learning opportunities for their students.
- Everyone is welcome, sports and arts are balanced, we support our lowest 30%
- Teachers are dedicated to student achievement and success, teachers are trained in best practices, lots of professional development opportunities for teachers, active parents, Title I support
- The schools have strong programs in the arts. Our libraries are reasonably well-funded, and students and teachers seem to have (mostly) the technology and supplies to learn.
- We have a lot of facilities and teachers that provide diverse opportunities for students to receive a quality education.
- We have some great teachers and lots of diversity in our student population, from University professor's kids, to Somali refugees, parents that work in fire and forest science, and parents that are struggling through homelessness at the moment.

- I've been fortunate to spend time in many of the elementary schools and well as the preschool. MCPS has so many staff that remain in the same school for the majority of their careers. We have committed staff that work hard to do what is best for kids.
- MCPS schools are supported and loved by their communities. People are vested in this system and want their children to succeed.
- Our schools are full of dedicated educators and well educated professionals.
- We are very passionate about protecting the quality of our instruction and our autonomy as teachers while still working to provide quality education for our students. We have lots of staff who are very caring and working hard to help our students and our community.
- There are a lot of great programs, teachers, and students and families in this community. The music and fine arts programs have had national attention. We need a Superintendent who can help support and retain what has taken decades to build.
- The teachers in this district go above and beyond to support their students as well as our support and administrative staff.
- Our schools are active, engaging, positive and safe places for staff and students to grow and thrive in.
- Teachers love their subject area and are really involved in the community.
- The teachers are committed and hard working, often overworked.
- Small class sizes allow Seeley-Swan High School to provide the intensive support that many students need to succeed. Small class sizes and the fact that we see students for multiple years means that we have the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with our students. This kind of social and emotional support ensures that students have a sense of belonging and are secure in knowing that they are an integral part of our school community. Our low enrollment and small staff does mean that we have limited course offerings compared to the urban high schools, and yet our college-bound students are still able to score well on standardized tests and are able to gain admission to the schools of their choice. We operate on a four-day school week with strategic intervention for students scheduled on Friday mornings. Providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency, even when it comes at a later date than some other students, has encouraged many students to keep working on achieving instead of accepting poor grades.
- I am new to the district, but have felt nothing but welcome here. Teachers, administrators, support staff and students have been welcoming and excited to have new faces around!
- The teachers are passionate. The students are eager to learn and grow. Our love for the community filters into our schools!
- Good curriculum, good teachers.
- There are a number of experienced staff members who have the knowledge to promote common sense changes to improve the climate in the high school.
- We have a good mix of socio-economics in our school. The space we have.
- They teach good quality education and are attentive to each student.
- Our schools have a student-centered mindset. We value the arts and the whole child.
- whole-child focused education (not just reading, writing, and math)
- Schools are supportive of all students and help kids feel safe. Additionally, our schools meet the basic needs for many students.

- Big Sky offers many pathways to success, from the HSA to strong Ag programs. The student body is more diverse than either of the other high schools, and the faculty work hard to engage all students.
- Good curriculum, good teachers.
- students are generally well supported by parents. great teachers
- Sentinel has a population that is highly involved in a variety of activities and extracurriculars that define our culture.
- Many teachers are being trained in the Science of Reading and those teachers will be the best reading teachers you could possibly find.
- Great teachers who live here, challenges recruiting teachers due to housing and pay. Part of MCPS but removed from many resources. Good teacher/family relations and community support. Many students and families are at the poverty level. More resources needed.
- Quality teachers
- There are some high achieving schools.
- High quality teachers
- very diverse in terms of socio economic levels, not so diverse in race. We are not a 1 size fits all district
- Small class sizes occasionally. Staff who truly are for students.

**What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)**

- Funding! Maintaining art programs for example 9 elementary art teachers - it's completely reasonable to maintain an art teacher for each elementary! We need a super who sees and understands our active community and values art in our schools! We need a super who is positive- honest- consistent- eloquent - loyal and supports the arts!
- There is a small but significantly disruptive group faculty in both the elementary and high schools who dismiss student reading proficiency before 4th Grade as "unattainable" and "unnecessary". There are Special Education and Classroom teachers who still practice going-slower-but-in-the-same-manner-instruction with any kid "who doesn't get it" Dyslexia is commonly dismissed as either "laziness" or "unsolvable" or "Oh, we don't have the training for that." The teacher's union is often out of touch with or uninterested in best practices at the classroom level and instead picks ideological fights.
- Montana is facing significant education hardships with staffing with our pay being lower than most states. We have a Superintendent of Education who has very opposing views to public education with very little support from the state level due to this factor. The amount of mental health concerns is astronomically high; Montana experiences far less resources with far high substance abuse rates, suicide completions, and poverty.
- I think school safety, school wealth discrepancies, need more diversity and celebration of such.
- We need continuity in the district as far as curriculum. For example, we are currently using Ready Gen for our ELA curriculum. However, many teachers at my grade level are not using Ready Gen because it is so weak in many areas. As a result, all schools are doing different things. Lewis and Clark uses one curriculum, Franklin uses something

different, and Rattlesnake is doing something different than those two schools. We are failing as a district to choose appropriate curriculum for our students as a whole district. If a student transfers from one elementary school to another in the district, the same standards are being taught, but the method used to get there is completely different. We need to be on the same page for curriculum. Every year we are given something new to "try" and see how it goes. Some are good, others are not. We need to stop having a "buffet" of curriculum and have several main programs that are the best for students.

- Please talk to the teachers, not just the people in the admin building. We are the ones who knows what is really going on.
- Poverty!!!! Housing insecurity! Hunger! Transportation issues! Need for more shared resources between schools (access to technical shops, music programs, etc.)
- The candidate needs to be able to work with the budget and prioritize funds to salary raises. It is becoming harder and harder to get by on the salary we have. In order to recruit and retain high-quality educators AND support staff, the rate of pay needs to match the cost of living, at least. It's a miracle we have any custodians, paras, subs, etc. at this point considering they could make more and have benefits working at a fast food restaurant. In addition, as a single woman, without children, and two masters, I am working a second job to afford the cost of living in this area. I don't live frivolously and my apartment is a part of town I have to smell sewage and worry about my safety constantly. It's incredibly insulting that these are the living conditions of a great deal of staff. There are too many admin positions and money should be reallocated to help those "on the frontlines".
- It would be nice to look at a gifted/enrichment program districtwide. It would be nice to have a report card that can be used for multiply years. It would be nice for students to have more experiences such as plumbing, and electrical choices.
- Missoula is a rapidly changing community - It may be a difficult job to maintain core values at the essence of what makes Missoula Missoula while also welcoming growth.
- We have an amazing special education staff, however, both our staff and our students require more support. General education and special education teachers need to be heard and validated when they are asking for help.
- Lack of clear, consistent, and effective philosophy as well as policy from building to building. Each school is doing its "own thing". Lack of qualified classified staff.
- The school schedule is an issue for early elementary grades. Young students are currently attending school for the same amount of time as high school students. Also, staff morale and mental health need to be priorities for a bit.
- Our district administration is disproportionately male and does not reflect the male/female percentages in our staff. Over the past 10 years as administration has been reworked more females have been removed from position than males and more males have been hired than females.
- A future superintendent must recognize the unique differences and needs of each school. For too long there have been conversations about commonality among schools, which is necessary for certain systems. However, student needs vary widely from school to school and these differences must be respected. Historically there has been a lack of trust in upper school district administration from both parents and staff members. Although I have witnessed a vast improvement, it will be vital that future leadership take the time to build relationships based on respect and trust.

- Frustration with school day times the past 2 years. Kindergarteners have as much contact time as high schoolers. Not appropriate amount of time for primary grades.
- We need leadership. Someone with a long term plan. We need to quit planning for right now and look for lasting solutions.
- There are a number of issues in our district. For starters, there are many inequities between schools. The largest inequity is the staff-per-student ratio within our elementary schools. We need more qualified certified teachers in many of our buildings to help with behavior and academic needs. Instead, we have three superintendents. The money should be going to pay for certified teachers. Another inequity is technology within our buildings. Many teachers are still working without any SMART technology in their classrooms. Other schools have all of the latest technology and more.
- Attendance problems, general lack of disciplinary actions for poor behavior, increasing teacher turnover rate, and a lack of generalized curriculum across all grade levels.
- There are silly external factors like Beach Transportation schedules that place limitations on what we can do and ultimately offer to students. Missoula's cost of living has outpaced many educators' salaries and high housing costs are impacting both employees and our students and their families. Montana's funding formula seems inadequate since it seems we are always facing a either a budget shortfall or telling staff there is little money available to increase wages. At the same time, we have inefficiencies in our schools and district systems that waste money.
- We are struggling with behavior issues and lack of clarity around policies, including attendance, drugs, and class attendance. It feels like we never have enough administrators to handle the very serious behavior problems -- particularly vaping, drug use, and vandalism in the bathrooms. There seem to be no consequences for kids' bad behaviors. The apparent norm for many of our students seems to be that vaping and using drugs in the bathrooms is totally fine -- there is so little fear of consequences that they don't even leave campus to use.
- Art education has been expanded to provide k-5 with one or more weekly lessons. Budget concerns are a threat to this vital program. Arts education improves student engagement, among many other academic and emotional benefits. Preserving this essential program is crucial to our student's social—emotional, and academic growth.
- Teachers are exhausted, overworked, and stressed. They need support in the form of fewer testing and reporting obligations and meetings and more time to work alone/with PLC's. They need to have some rest.
- Teachers and support staff are being asked and required to do more and more each year be necessity based on needs of students and by requirements of the district and state. Asks of teachers should always be based on research and best practices to make our work impactful. On the other hand, teachers should be highlighted and used for their expertise. Administrators can elevate teachers into leadership roles that highlight their strengths, giving them time to do this during the contract day or paying them for this speciality and committment to leadership and excellence. Opportunities for educators to go to professional development as a team and then come back to their schools and the district to train and help implement their learning is a great way to do this.
- There are some fractures in our infrastructure that someone with resilience could really heal. Teachers and staff need to believe they are worth keeping around.

- Support Staff! Pay them! This year our school wide sub had to move back home because he became homeless since the cost of renting in Missoula is higher than what we pay support staff. As a teacher, I also struggle to make it in Missoula. I can barely pay rent and get enough food for myself and my family with inflation. The increase in pay from year to year does not come close to inflation. Pay everyone a living wage!
- Administrative structures were created by a superintendent who was here many years ago. Parts of those structures have lingered yet have been altered in so many ways that it's a wonder if our current structure is appropriate. Furthermore, so many admin jobs have switched hands, it doesn't seem that community members and faculty understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Lack of integrity within the district—high schools do whatever they want regardless of being in the best interest of students. District PIR and specialists are discounted by the high schools and professional growth is at an all time low.
- We do not have consistent policies. Teachers are left to their own rules with no universal supports. Students are confused by ever changing rules per teacher or year. We still over punish males and minorities. We do not support teachers when parents have unhealthy requests or attack. We do not use our schools as well as we should for our community. We have broken buildings, but build new CTE spaces. Our money goes to small groups - not the equitable whole. Parents are permitted to attack, yell, berate and slander teachers.
- This district is in disarray. It needs a lot of work. It needs tough decisions to get it on track. So many academic coaches that are not needed. A reading program that is terrible which is leading to readers without the basic building blocks of a good reader. The testing/assessments/ data collection is out of control especially for our youngest. The district is taking the fun of school away. We have Spanish, schools IB schools, Regular education schools science schools. Basically we focus on many little things poorly instead of putting our best efforts into the core of school such as reading, writing, math. What makes Missoula great also makes it hard to change. If you try and get on the right track you will make a group of people angry. Getting back on track will be a tough job but needs to be done. Reading, Math, Writing, P.E. Music, Library, Recesses, and appropriate play for age level. I have been in multiple AA districts and this is by far the worst run district.
- We are beginning to see the cost of living have a direct impact on teacher retention - what can be done? The sub situation is dire. We need to be creative about how to provide coverage when teachers are out, including potential adjustments to the schedule.
- That we are small but making a big impact in the district. We are working hard to widen the places the district touches and we respect the power the superintendent has in our school system and community
- As a para, our emotions run strong. We love our kids and love how we can help them but at the same time we cannot live on what we earn.
- Facilities are not where they need to be and if Missoula keeps growing, we will quickly outgrow facilities
- There are many underserved individuals in schools that have a lot going against them in our current culture/society/state legislature. For example: BIPOC & members of the LGBT community. These communities do not see themselves in a lot of our curriculum and this needs to change. These individuals are even banned from seeing themselves in the curriculum.

- We need some real change in some areas. Boundaries for attendance are unequal and need to be changed. An attendance policy for elementary/middle schools should be in place. Currently, kids can miss most of the year and go on to the next grade, regardless of attendance or academic performance. Many kids have learned that there are no consequences for this behavior until high school, where the consequence is often times dropping out. Kids can fail for years at a time and keep passing on. We have a huge substitute shortage and a higher turnover rate for tenured teachers than we have ever had before. The "don't rock the boat" culture here is pretty thick. Lots of smiling and pretending everything is okay.
- Housing, subs for all areas of our work force, building maintenance, curriculum and assessment.
- Overly saturated administration. lack of fair pay for teachers and staff not keeping up with inflation. Lack of substitute teachers to cover absences.
- -The shortage of subs and starting the school year with many teaching and administration positions unfilled creates a lot of stress for teachers and doesn't offer the best experience possible for students - There is a lot of discrepancy between buildings for how many new initiatives building principals can push on staff at one time. (ex. Ehall pass, standards based grading, academies) There needs to be more unification between the three high schools and when a new initiative is pushed it needs to be supported by the district instead of forcing teachers to figure it out on their own.
- we are top heavy with administration need more teachers, pay increase
- Boundary issues Overflowing schools (JRE has 200+ new houses coming)
- Like all communities and schools in the country, we don't have enough mental health resources or support for those who need it. Although we recently completed renovations and built a new school our new elementary school is already filled even though there is room for more homes to be built in that area. We have some schools which are very crowded and some which have extra space. This causes some in our community to question how well this district manages it's funds and those provided for school improvements. District admin changes have been happening a lot over the last several years in this district.
- The high schools are very different from each other and that is OKAY! We don't all have to operate the same if it works for our different kids. We have had a few changes in superintendents recently - each time they restructure the admin and nothing substantial gets done as they invent new offices...please actually let the current admin be and let them do their jobs.
- The superintendent needs to understand that MCPS is overloaded with programs and mandates. Streamlining our systems would be most beneficial for all stakeholders!
- We are not working well as a collective district with any vision. It's all a bit 'every man for himself' for our schools, which then trickles some lack of clarity and direction to staff, students, parents and community.
- Each school has its own distinct character and traditions. However, we often work in silos and there isn't coordination between the schools. I hope a new superintendent would unify us as a district.
- - lack of communication in Teaching and Learning department - inconsistent messages being given at different schools about grading, assessments, etc. - variations in socio-

economic backgrounds at different schools - program equity among different schools - funding for special programs

- We are facing an effort by a group in the legislature and in OPI to damage and potentially try to privatize public education and push public dollars away from public schools. There is a tendency to adopt too many initiatives rather than to make sure that everything is well thought out and well-funded. Many groups have looked at the schedule and they always determine we can't change because of the bus system/company/resources. Housing and cost of living is an issue for families and for teachers who don't already own homes.
- -Our staff (especially K-5) is being pushed to their limits. Our schedule is brutal, we don't have enough prep time, and we face a moving target of programs, curricula and projects to implement in our classrooms. -Due to the above, we're losing experienced teachers and new teachers alike because the burdens of this profession just feel too big. - We have significant inequities in our buildings. Some buildings have all Smart technology, some are still using chalk boards or projectors. Some schools have 1:1 student devices, some schools don't. We need to level the playing field so that all teachers and their students have access to the same developments in technology. -There is a gloat of administrators. I truly believe a new superintendent needs to embrace re-organization and streamlining at the administrative levels to free up funds for schools to hire additional academic staff (interventionists) or - better yet - vice principals at the K-5 level. - We, teachers, expect to have a voice. Some prior superintendents have been great at providing opportunities for feedback or at convening special Superintendent advisory committees. Other prior superintendents have not and have met friction from staff.
- School equity, antiquated systems like using paper for everything, ideas driven by school board, not by educators
- The new MCPS should have a K-12 focus and have had actual elementary experience. Too many decisions in the past have been made that have benefitted the high school at the expense of elementary and middle school students and teachers. K-8 teachers need to feel seen and heard.
- Some of the support staff is stretched to the breaking point. Specialists and other staff are getting pulled away from their already demanding responsibilities on a regular basis to babysit and provide "other duties as assigned", at least at the elementary level. There aren't enough subs.
- That our district would say we are operating as a Professional Learning Community, but many of the most critical elements that are necessary to raise student achievement are missing. This stems from a lack of focus on learning in our strategic goals and principal's ability to pick and choose which goals they want to focus on. We say we are a standards-based district, but still do not have intervention that is required when students have not met priority prerequisite skills and knowledge.
- They will be the 5th person in 6 years, yet our district continues to function. This shows how little impact that position has on the day to day work teachers and students do.
- The challenges in special education are impacting our ability to retain really wonderful staff. This includes para retention due to pay/benefits, staff fear of being hurt by students, difficulty hiring enough staff to have programs function at a safe level, having enough time for the classroom team to debrief and plan together daily, and making sure behaviors and lack of staff don't impact the ability for staff to get their lunch break and for the teacher to have prep time. These are all things that impact our ability to retain

really, really good special education staff. Because we often have sub shortages as well, when staff are absent in our specialized special education programs, this increases the concern for safety and we often don't have enough coverage for these classrooms. When this happens (often) the student schedules need to be adjusted which can cause anxiety and increased behaviors for the students. In addition, without being able to fully staff these programs, it decreases the opportunities for the students to be in the general education setting. Many of these students benefit and NEED to be in the regular classroom but if there aren't enough staff to support that, they need to remain in a more restrictive setting so staff can supervise more students at once. Separate, but on the same topic of special education is the preschool special education program. This program has grown immensely and the students only attend 3 days per week for 2 1/2 hours (7 1/2 hours total per week). When they transition to full-day kindergarten, it is really difficult. Many of them don't have the stamina for 6+ hours of school per day. Having a plan for that transition to ease them into that demand would take a huge amount of stress off these students.

- This superintendent should know that MCPS has a history of change and instability. We want someone that is in for the long haul. We also need someone that will listen and receive information from many sides, consider what the community wants/needs, and make informed decisions that benefit students and teachers.
- Some of our logistical processes are antiquated. We could benefit from a district wide push into the 21st century. We could also benefit from more oversight and compliance as it relates to Special Education.
- We need to find creative ways to solve the sub crises, and we need an attendance policy - something that will actually have some consequences as student absences and tardies are beyond the pale. Quite a few other issues would be solved if we had administration that would hold our students and families accountable for how much time students are out of the classroom, or late to the classroom.
- There has been a lot of autonomy for schools to be run differently. Some of that may be a good thing based on different demographics, some of it may be creating inequitable access, procedures, grading, etc from school to school - specifically high school. There should be more equitable procedures across the board as far as grading standards, curriculum standards being followed (some changed have transpired at individual schools where curriculum requirements have been changed to suit individual administrative preferences) teacher accountability, administrative accountability. Need for Professional open communication and need for teachers to be treated as educated professionals in their content areas.
- Schools in MCPS are hemorrhaging for direly needed mental health supports and services due to state level budget cuts to school mental health services. In our one building of close to 1400 students, we have 1 school based CSCT provider who can only service 18 students. Other schools have lost their social workers or providers completely.
- We need to redraw our school boundaries so that the lowest SES communities are not funneled into one set of schools. This creates a haves vs have-nots situation regarding resources and opportunities.
- If Special Education and at risk students had more preventative resources and time spent on them instead of waiting and then scrambling to fix the problems- every person

involved would be less stressed, more productive and in the end we would spend less time, money and resources.

- 2022 spring/Summer the 10 year bilingual program at Paxson was closed and the program now has 45 minutes a day in Spanish. 2022 superintendent was pursuing spanish in every elementary as a special. How will this superintendent sustain current elementary language programs, insure equity across the district and provide language in all elementary schools?
- High School: All five of our high school have their unique qualities and problems. They can't be treated with a "one size fits all" attitude. It's also important to realize that many of the feeder schools for the high schools are not part of MCPS. It would be great to see more collaboration with the non-district schools, especially as students reach the middle school, to ensure a smooth transition to high school
- Demographics - especially at the schools with higher poverty and need Lack of substitute teachers Teacher choice versus principal mandate with respect to grading scales and other procedures SB 99 and how it is effecting our schools
- We need to restructure the boundaries for the schools. Lack of subs Lack of paras
- The current high school schedule is not working for students, staff or parents. The school board needs to listen to the teachers. This is why so many teachers are leaving MCPS. The organization has lost it's way.
- Open enrollment and the transferring of kids. The late start schedule and the issues it causes. The inadequacies between schools and the support for all schools.
- Safety issues in schools. Keeping our children safe.
- Our district is evolving because of what we learned from Covid. We need to continue to evolve and move into more innovative approaches to teaching and learning.
- We have not fully adopted the science of reading (we are still missing big pieces in our curriculum to support teachers in this area along with a lack of training, but we are finally starting to make steps in the right direction. Elementary schedule/timing needs tweaking. Our start and end schedule right now is not ideal and is causing teachers to work more outside of their contract hours.
- There are loud people with varying opinions. We have a very affluent community and a very impoverished community and we need to make sure both groups feel heard and supported.
- MCPS does not have a shared vision (at least not one that I am aware of) and the schools/school cultures vary widely. I think there are perceptions about each school that affect who attends there and even guide decisions made about the various schools.
- We need to restructure the boundaries for the schools. Lack of subs Lack of paras
- Keep in mind that all of the following comes from an MCPS high school science teacher. very little vertical integration in the K-12 programs. central admin often seems very disconnected from the foot soldiers who carry on the foundational work of the district. Very little if any support for teachers when working with new curriculum materials and/or new software, such as IC. Central admin has a history of constructing facades, creating policies that give the impression that things are being done when they really aren't. "The Emperor has no clothes." Examples might includes policies describing attendance committees at the high schools and the actions they are tasked with, when those committees don't actually even exist.

- We have not had quality professional development for as many years as I've been in the district (twelve). It is a major pain point for teachers. We need more support staff and to look at how the Title funds are distributed. Schools like Sentinel are struggling with the current lack of Title support for teachers and students. There was a futile attempt to look at school populations and boundaries in 2020, but it came to nothing. This district needs to seriously look at this issue with regard to class size and sending neighborhood kids to neighborhood schools. Many teachers feel unappreciated and unfairly treated by HR.
- We need a superintendent that is supportive of extracurriculars and is willing to be involved in helping create a positive experience for all students and schools.
- District communication and collaboration needs a lot of work. We need more consistency and cohesiveness. We need better systems in all areas. We need someone who will lead and support other staff in leading our district to greatness.
- Poverty level families, students need mental health services, teacher incentives are a need, housing in the community is overpriced and scarce, students commute from Condon and Potomac, challenges keeping teachers and food service workers, many current teachers are at retirement age and will be leaving in next two years, no in-person full time counselor.
- Bookkeeping, purchasing, custodial, maintenance, I.T....everything that happens behind the scenes could be looked at for increased efficiency
- We need a clear concise plan in place with a superintendent willing to make decisions for the good of all.
- Lots of changes in the administration lately, a need for a change in certain systems. Teachers collectively feel overwhelmed and want to feel less disenfranchised with what happens at the admin level.
- We have a good relationship between the union and the admin, we would like to keep this going. We have a lot of veteran teachers and a lot of new teachers, and not so many in between, treat us with respect, and let us do our jobs. Keep the new teacher mentoring program, new teachers need HELP, don't make us do busy work.
- District it not in compliance with Dyslexia Bill SB 140.

**What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)**

- Ability to work with a variety of dynamics and weave all these needs poetically together to create meaning - rigor to our schools. Fund the arts!
- The Superintendent must consistently demonstrate 1) a high level of subject area expertise and professionalism, 2) a concision and clarity in all communication, 3) a reluctance to defer decision making, and 4) a resolution to develop civil relationships and discourse in every leadership situation. Know and demonstrate the difference between being a boss (power) and being a leader (influence).
- A superintendent that truly knows Montana, which can't happen without living and experiencing Montana. A superintendent that will stand up to the Superintendent of Education to fight for the rights of students, staff, and families. A superintendent that will put mental health and safety as a priority.

- Forward thinking!! Not status quo. Interesting, innovative and creative! Hard working and excellent communication skills. Present and active in the schools.
- The superintendent has to be a strong leader and not "wishy-washy" in any way. Our previous leader would listen to all input, but in the end, he made the final decision based on his input and best judgement. I respect that.....someone who is willing to listen to all points of view, but in the end, is willing to make the best final decision for the schools. I am talking about curriculum, the hiring of principals and teachers and other administrative staff. I want a superintendent who is approachable. Our last superintendent was very approachable, and that was so nice. It felt good that I, as a teacher, knew I could go to him, or communicate with my opinions, feelings, issues, etc. We need someone who knows how to listen, how to communicate, and how to problem solve when there are conflicts among staff, students, parents, etc. We need to have someone who is willing to make decisions that are best for students, not just made to keep certain groups, parents, community members, etc. happy. We need someone to focus on safety. Whether it be a pandemic or school shootings, we need someone to be objective and strong. We do NOT need someone with an ego!! We do not need someone who is here to just add to their resume things they have accomplished. We do not need someone with the attitude that "I am going to come in here and fix everything and change everything" We need a person who is willing to come in, get to know people, look at situations fairly and objectively, and then make good, sound decisions. We need someone to be here, not for money, not for status, but because they truly care about this community. We do not need someone who is going to use this position as a stepping stone to another position in a few years....but someone who is willing to be invested in this school district.
- 1. They remember what it is like to be a classroom teacher. 2. They put the needs of the students first. 3. The new superintendent isn't overly enmeshed in the administrative role and office, and makes decisions based on a skewed point of view. 4. Would love to have a superintendent who spends time in the schools and interacts with kids.
- MUST have been a teacher for at least 5-10 years in classroom. MUST have some experience working outside of education. MUST advocate for ALL students, not just those with loud, financially contented parents!
- See above.
- They need a willingness to listen. They need good communication skill with the public. They need to have good problem solving skills.
- - A listener - Willing to make difficult decisions that may face disapproval - Ideally, a commitment to stick around for longer than a couple of years. - Present themselves as constant, consistent, and engaged - Reflective and self-aware
- Our new superintendent should be a strong communicator, should validate the needs of both students and teachers, and should look to their district with a positive lens.
- The new superintendent will need to have the ability to clearly and consistently articulate the vision they have for the district. They will need to have the gumption to put effective leaders in positions that will allow this vision to come to fruition. In addition to Missoula's population growth, the community is also changing in its economic and political makeup. How is the new superintendent going to plan for and navigate this anticipated growth?

- A successful candidate is a clear communicator, a supporter of the great work already happening across the district, and they work to collaborate with all stakeholders. An effective leader knows to connect with the community and to use the talent within the district as support. I would hope that a new leader will be chosen that is ready to focus on the needs of our community's children and schools, verses making a name for themselves.
- Our superintendent should hold a lot of experience in education and in teaching.
- Flexibility, strong decision-making skills (especially for those decisions that must be made quickly, such as within an emergency situation), and a high level of focus on what is best for students
- Problem solver
- Charismatic, honest, transparent, smart, communicative, boots on the ground leadership
- The superintendent will need to work with a number of different stakeholders all with unique perspectives. The superintendent will need to be goal-oriented and make decisions that will get us closer to the district/community goals. The superintendent will need knowledge of best teaching practices K-12. This is important when making decisions about curriculum adoption and staffing.
- This person must have a clear cut plan for how to tackle attendance.
- We need an active leader who will spend time in our schools and get to know staff and students. The new superintendent should be a creative problem solver and value best educational practices. We need someone who will work to build community partnerships and be willing to go to the legislature to advocate on behalf of public education.
- We need someone who is able to hold students accountable for rules in order to create safe school environments. While allowing exceptions is important -- for example, a zero-tolerance attendance policy should allow room for students in extenuating circumstances -- it feels like we have swung so far in the opposite direction that there are no consequences whatsoever for student behavior or attendance and the schools are not safe places for kids to be. It also feels like when we have a desperate need in our building -- like, currently, for a third administrator and for more mental health support -- the attitude of the district appears to be that we're on our own, best of luck. Our counselors don't even have the resources right now to follow up on suicide assessments, they are so overwhelmed by the amount of student need and the lack of resources that have been slashed at the state level (CSCT support was cut by something like 85%; we had like seven and now we have one). We need support to get us through hard times without sacrificing student safety.
- Community building beyond training days and accolades. A plan to support teaching and learning beyond the latest program, or development course.
- Skilled communicator, ability to work with diverse groups with differing goals, strength to face community outrage in the form of book challenges and curriculum challenges, vision to see where the district is going and how to get there, ability to listen to what teachers actually need, extensive experience in both teaching and administration
- The new superintendent should be a great listener, seeking input across all stakeholders in a variety of ways. They should believe that teachers have the best intent. They should be visible and personable. They should be invested in keeping up with research and best practices alongside educators.
- A desire to see our community maintain its strengths but also a push for growth where our students' futures are concerned.

- The candidate needs to see the big picture and make changes to a system that does not work. The pay is small, the class sizes are huge and there is too much weight on standardized testing.
- Administrative structures. Focus on simple, achievable goals.
- Inquisitive, data-driven, forward thinking, gracious
- A new perspective - not a historic Montana perspective. A fair, thoughtful, data driven (all, not cherry picking) approach. Transparency - and a desire to help teachers stay and students feel the consistent safety of healthy universal approaches.
- We need a leader that has experience with elementary students, schools, and teachers. This is where learning starts. We do not need more high school oriented people. By the time they are in middle school and high school it is too late. We are just trying to patch holes at that point. The more time a candidate has spent in elementary setting the better. They will hopefully understand the importance of getting students hooked on school, reading, writing, math, play way before middle school and High school. I think that has been lacking.
- Kindness is key. The new superintendent needs to be relatable, casual, and friendly with both staff/students. I don't envision our superintendent in a suit.
- That they value the small ways we touch our community here in Montana as well as large impacts. That the next ground breaking student has the ability to raise up in smaller communities as well as large AA communities. We have close contact with our students because of the size of our classrooms and school and that makes a difference in how each student feels about education.
- Know who you are working for and meet with them and actually do something to help with our financial troubles
- Great communicator, listens to all sides - makes a decision - then stands by the decision, ability to take in information quickly
- Anti-racist & able to acknowledge their own biases toward minorities. Make change in the district. Enthusiasm to make our MCPS accepting to all people.
- The new Superintendent needs to not be in the "good 'ol boys" club. This person can't be afraid to make some changes that are badly needed. This person should be a good listener and have conversations with stakeholders as well as being present in buildings. The new superintendent needs to have a vision of the long-term big picture as well as realizing that some of our methods and things that we have always done need to be changed. This person should be an excellent communicator and public speaker.
- TRUSTWORTHY, dedicated to teaching, spent enough time teaching, comes in the schools, approachable, thoughtful and informed on best practices K-12.
- A general understanding of industry and the needs of employers to mold students for the future. Strong understanding of CTE programs and the impact on society.
- -Organization -A commitment to supporting equity and inclusivity -Personable; makes an effort to be active in the community and be present at district events
- listener, needs to be a leader, visionary good energy
- Ability to talk to/relate to different groups Backbone
- Our district is in need of someone who is not afraid to be a leader with a vision, a decision maker, and someone not afraid to make changes if necessary. We need a leader who can help manage the finances of this district to build up rotating budgets for solid

and complete curriculum purchasing in the future and building needs which will arise. We also could use someone who plans to stick around awhile and build a district leadership team who will also stick around awhile and see through a district vision.

- Empathetic. Good listener and be willing to take advice from principals who are actually in the buildings. They know what they're talking about.
- The superintendent needs to be someone that leads with kindness and compassion. He needs to be able to fire-up faculty and staff by instilling a sense of positive moral! He needs to be willing to make changes to our district by being able to make hard decisions while communicating respectfully. I would love to have a person with strong Montana values lead our district!
- A supportive philosophy - administration should be there to support the students and teachers and create a model that is commensurate with that philosophy. They should want to be in our schools, involved with what is happening and invested in listening to lead. They should see themselves as an educator and conduct themselves as such.
- Observe first before prescribing solutions to issues. Trust the teachers and their knowledge of the classroom.
- - trusting of teachers to be the experts in their field (not trying to change things up or give top-down mandates right away) - please don't overload teachers with mandatory but unnecessary meetings - good communication to facilitate collaboration between buildings - clear with expectations
- Support inclusiveness and respect all students and families. Be a supporter of intellectual freedom and students' and families freedom to read and select personal books that meet their family values without restricting rights of others. Listen to staff and specialists who use a "we not me" approach, not just squeaky wheels. Be prepared to work hard and be present in the schools and community to see what's going on on-the-ground.
- -Systems-wide approach/thinker -Creative problem solver -Knowledge of best practices for academics at all levels
- 1. understanding of W. Montana and our demographics, 2. progressive ideas, but not with a strong hand 3. a commitment to stay
- A visionary with a K-12 focus. Multi-skilled Good communication skills Committed and able to make hard decisions A dedicated leader
- The new super must be prepared to fight for academic freedom and the right to read. The censorship and anti-intellectualism must be met head-on. We cannot pussyfoot around and implement policies that have a chilling effect on teaching difficult or controversial topics.
- The ability to continue to gain community support, align all initiatives to support the Professional Learning Community process, and the ability to lead in a way that build critical momentum in areas that impact student achievement. We need more oversight over our curriculum department and principals. In other words, we are not monitoring what actually impacts student achievement from the top to the bottom. Communication is a major challenge in this district as well.
- Willing to take less money for this position. Any dollar amount we can save and put into direct student interaction would be money well spent. Preferably someone willing to earn 5 figures like a real teacher.
- A strong sense of the importance (and legal requirement) of 3-5 year old programming and the intense needs of our special education department.

- The new superintendent needs to be a good listener and decision maker. MCPS needs guidance from someone who makes careful decision after hearing all the perspectives offered. Also, this person needs to stay in the job for more than 1 or 2 years. MCPS needs stability and leadership.
- Strong leader, not politically motivated, focus on elevating our practices regardless of people's years in the district and personal feelings
- The ability to get something actually done and listen to the staff and make changes that will move us forward. They need to be creative, know how to celebrate the good work being done, hold people accountable at all levels and accomplish basic housekeeping goals that will produce greater dividends down the line.
- Diplomatic, Engaging, Genuine, Professional, Transparent, Fair, Experienced with High Praises from the last teachers and community members
- Uses data-based decision making to inform decisions affecting students, teachers, families, and school systems. Not just using this position as a stepping stone, but making this position a longer term commitment to increase consistency at the administrative level. Transparent in their communication, goals for the district, and ideas for improvement. We need a superintendent that will advocate for mental health supports and services in our district as well as methods for addressing attendance at the system level. We need a superintendent that can assist in facilitating staffing support and/or collaborating to build community partnerships with local agencies to help support our students.
- Empathetic, driven, high-achieving, community-minded, able to engage with community stakeholders, able to have difficult conversations and see others' perspectives, positive, and interested in longterm investment in our schools and community.
- Be authentic, teachers are tired of all the ed-speak mumbo jumbo, just pick one or two real projects and get them done.
- Diverse background Present, Political free. Open, available and progressive.
- Classroom experience at the middle or high school level Empathy Support for all diverse student groups Community mindedness Willingness to see and be seen in all our schools
- Good communication, observant, organized, ability to inspire and empower other staff
- Inclusive!! Open-minded!! Critical-thinker! The superintendent must appreciate how each school is different and special. The superintendent must value teachers' and school staff input for change and growth.
- Be able to hear from opposing sides and then make a decision about things. Looking at the needs of all schools and making decisions that are in the best interest of students. Not afraid of change, because we have always done it is not a good reason. Have ideas to solve the lack of substitutes in our district.
- Find creative solutions to fund schools beyond running a bond.
- Willing to work with (as roll up the sleeves and join in) staff. Be supportive of all of the parts of school, such as activities and athletics. Willing to make the hard decisions even if it is against the school boards will.
- Good socialization skills.
- They should be a great communicator and a "bridge builder". They should demonstrate empathy and have a vision for K-12 education and for MCPS specifically.

- Plenty of experience as a k-12 educator, so can be empathic towards school personnel's needs (teachers, admin, etc). An understanding of our community politically and culturally.
- A good communicator. A problem solver. Someone who is familiar with relatively large school districts.
- Articulate. Classroom experience. Ability to build shared vision, articulate vision to all stakeholders. Positive. Investment in staying and building.
- Be able to hear from opposing sides and then make a decision about things. Looking at the needs of all schools and making decisions that are in the best interest of students. Not afraid of change, because we have always done it is not a good reason. Have ideas to solve the lack of substitutes in our district.
- 1. Be a good listener. 2. Not have a predetermined notion of what our district should look like or how it should function. 3. If they think that PLC's are a good thing, send them on their way. 4. Must be willing and able to give a direct answer to a question or explain clearly why a direct answer is not appropriate. Waffling and/or evading the question are a no-go.
- Communicate, approachable, well rounded, and understand Montana values especially Missoula.
- Someone with a vision and experience developing systems that are easy to implement. We need someone strong who doesn't have a personal agenda and who will not allow other people's personal ideas or agendas to go unchecked.
- Experience in the trenches in schools as a teacher, understanding of rural school needs, supportive of mental health services and counseling services on site, supportive of teacher pay raises and incentives for new recruits, awareness of making resources more accessible for Seeley Swan.
- MCPS do not need major change or overhaul in general. You have quality staff. The kids are the most important aspect of the school. Everyone else is here to support their successes
- Leadership is a key.
- Needs to be someone who will make decisions and have follow through. Willing to look at evidence based-approaches and engage directly with teachers to understand what exactly is happening in our schools. Advocacy for teacher needs. Understanding of mental health needs in a post-pandemic education system.
- a good listener, a problem solver, someone who is approachable and not afraid to work with kids.
- Not be afraid to spend money on getting the best curriculum. The curriculums now are very subpar.