

# Achievement for All ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

May 2016



Forward Thinking, High Achieving.

# STAFF AND STUDENTS TOGETHER

## Creating a 21st Century Educational Culture



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## A Message from the Superintendent PROGRESS: GOALS BECOMING REALITIES

The mission, vision and core beliefs of Missoula County Public Schools are the foundation for the future of our schools. We will continue to foster the development of an inspired 21st century educational culture that improves lifelong student achievement, develops remarkable educational leaders and engages the Missoula community in the future of its children.

“Forward Thinking, High Achieving” is a tagline that we use at Missoula County Public Schools. It highlights our goal of continuous improvement of existing programs while also seeking to identify new opportunities to enhance student engagement. MCPS continues to strive for success for every student every day and this year will be no exception.

We are transforming our district’s future through the implementation of our 21st Century Model of Education and the “Achievement for All” five-year strategic plan which call for enhanced student engagement, updated learning environments, increased collaboration and communication with all stakeholders, more “personalized” professional growth opportunities for staff, and development of a culture of innovation throughout the District.

I am proud of the accomplishments that are detailed in our 2014-15 annual report. These accomplishments reflect the continuing efforts of all staff to provide an engaging and relevant educational experience for the students we serve. These efforts, coupled with the promise of the facility projects supported by the Missoula community through the passage of our November bond request, bode well for the future of MCPS. The bonds will provide the necessary investment in our schools to repair aging buildings, update technology infrastructure and increase capacity for our growing student body. A high-quality workforce augmented by well- educated students will attract new businesses and jobs. Improving our schools will truly be an investment in our local economy.

With continued community support and dedication to our children, we will further increase academic rigor, improve graduation rates and prepare our students for post-secondary education and the workforce. I look forward to partnering with the Missoula community to provide the foundation to ensure success for all students.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Thane



# DISTRICT STATS AT A GLANCE

## STUDENT ENROLLMENT

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
<b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS</b>			
Chief Charlo	417	411	450
Cold Springs	472	477	495
Franklin	280	253	268
Hawthorne	349	362	375
Lewis & Clark	470	491	485
Lowell	295	281	282
Paxson	383	402	415
Rattlesnake	429	454	474
Russell	364	374	397
<b>MIDDLE SCHOOLS</b>			
Meadow Hill	487	485	493
CS Porter	467	491	471
Washington	569	543	579
<b>HIGH SCHOOLS</b>			
Big Sky	914	941	1050
Hellgate	1124	1134	1196
Sentinel	1082	1099	1171
Seeley-Swan	112	108	99
Willard	157	155	169
<b>TOTAL K-12</b>	<b>8,371</b>	<b>8,461</b>	<b>8,869</b>



## DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWNS

### Gender

Male	52%
Female	48%

### Ethnicity

White	86.3%
Hispanic	3.1%
American Indian	7.2%
Asian	1.9%
Black	2.0%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	0.4%

## GRADUATION RATE

District

# 91.6%

## DROP-OUT RATE

District

# 1.9%



## YOUR MCPS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Missoula County Public Schools, a unified district, is governed by an 11-member elected Board of Trustees. Members serve without compensation for overlapping terms of three years each and convene monthly on the second Tuesday of each month. We appreciate the 11 trustees who have dedicated hundreds of hours in thoughtful discussion and procedural meetings during the 2014-2015 school year to support MCPS students, employees, families and community members.



### MICHAEL BEERS

Beers was elected to the Board of Trustees in May 2013. He is a youth transitions coordinator at the Summit Independent Living Center and a stand-up comedian. Beers is a K-12 trustee serving the elementary and high school districts.



### JENNIFER NEWBOLD

Newbold was elected to the Board of Trustees in 2014. Newbold is an attorney for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In addition, Jennifer has authored a children's book about UM mascot Monte's adventures in Missoula, entitled *The Great Monte Mystery*. Newbold is a K-12 trustee serving the elementary and high school districts.



### DEBBIE DUPREE

Dupree was elected to the Board of Trustees in 2002. She owns Seeley Lake Auto Parts. A graduate of Shelby High School, she earned a degree in mechanics. She is involved with the Seeley-Swan High School Booster Club and the Seeley Lake Trailblazer 4-H. Dupree is a high school trustee, representing Seeley Lake, Swan Valley, Clinton, Potomac and Sunset.



### JIM SADLER

Sadler was elected to the Board of Trustees in 1994. He is a consultant for several federal agencies, including the Department of Education and Administration for Native Americans. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Great Falls, a law degree from the University of Montana, and a master's in social work from Portland State University. Sadler is a high school trustee representing the areas of Target Range and Bonner.



### MARCIA HOLLAND (VICE CHAIR)

Holland was elected to the Board of Trustees in 2009. She is an attorney with a bachelor's degree from the University of Montana and law degree from The College of Law, Chicago-Kent. Holland is a high school trustee representing the Hellgate School District community.



### MICHAEL SMITH (VICE CHAIR)

Smith was appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2010 and elected to the board in 2012. He has a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Rennselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, and is currently an engineer with Missoula's WGM Group. Smith is a K-12 trustee serving both the elementary and high school districts.



### HEIDI KENDALL

Kendall was elected to the Board of Trustees in 2014. She is the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator at the Missoula City-County Health Department. Kendall grew up in the Missoula area and graduated from Hellgate High School. She represents the elementary and high school districts.



### JULIE TOMPKINS

Tompkins, a K-12 trustee, was elected to the Board of Trustees in May 2013. She has worked for the University of Montana for 15 years and currently is pursuing a graduate degree in systems ecology. Tompkins is a K-12 trustee serving both the elementary and high school districts.



### JOSEPH KNAPP JR. (CHAIR)

Knapp was elected to the Board of Trustees in 2009 and is a cardiologist with the International Heart Institute of Montana. Knapp completed his undergraduate studies at Saint Clara University and earned a medical degree at Georgetown University. Knapp is a K-12 trustee serving the elementary and high school districts.



### ANNE WAKE

Before election to the trustees in May 2013, Wake worked for MCPS, four years, the city, 13 years, and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in Reno, Nevada, eight years. Wake represents the K-8 districts of Lolo, Woodman and DeSmet on the MCPS high school board.



### DIANE LORENZEN

Lorenzen was elected as K-12 trustee in May 2013. She works as an environmental engineer in the wood products industry. Lorenzen grew up in the Missoula area, graduated from Stanford University and served in the Peace Corps. She represents both the elementary and high school districts.

## METHODS CHANGE. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES DO NOT.

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

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

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

## CORE BELIEFS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## BENCHMARKS

- All staff know key characteristics of professional learning communities.
- All certified staff participate as members of a professional learning community with a focus on student learning.
- All certified staff have dedicated time during the contract day of not less than 60 minutes per week to meet in their professional learning community teams.
- Each grade level and department team clearly addresses the four critical questions of a professional learning community.
- Guaranteed and viable curriculum, formative assessment, intervention and enrichment are common throughout MCPS.
- Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards are embedded in instructional delivery.
- All staff are engaged in the District's mission and major initiatives.
- Annually, all staff members develop personal and team goals aligned with District goals and initiatives.
- Job-specific evaluation instruments are developed for specialized certified and classified positions.



## EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS IN MISSOULA

The Missoula Education Foundation (MEF) Student Board recognizes teaching excellence in MCPS, through its Exceptional Teaching Award. Qualities the MEF seeks include: leadership, compassion, creativity, charisma, and a straight-forward teaching approach. Since its 2012 inception, MEF has recognized the following Exceptional Teachers: Mr. Kevin Cashman (Chief Charlo Elementary School); Mr. Greg Imhoff (Washington Middle School); Mr. Cameron Johnson (Big Sky High School); Ms. Allie McFarland (C.S. Porter Middle School); Mr. Tracy Stone (Seeley Swan High School); Ms. Karen Umbaugh (Sentinel High School); and Mr. Randy Zschaechner (Meadow Hill Middle School).

These teachers were asked, "What motivates you to so fully embrace your role as a teacher?" Their responses can be found throughout the Annual Report.

*On a daily basis I am motivated by the need to help prepare students for a world that is rapidly changing. The political, cultural, social, environmental and economic challenges of the 21st century demand critical thinking global citizens. As a teacher it is my responsibility to help students meet these challenges, and the consequences of not doing so are becoming more severe. I see myself as the "meddler in the middle" and this role, and the challenges associated with it, motivate me every day to give my best.*  
Cameron Johnson

## CHANGING THE CULTURE OF TECH SUPPORT

With an eye on efficiency and customer service, the MCPS tech team implemented several key changes in 2014-15, including reducing ticket response time from months to days. As part of this effort, the team noticed that the number-one help desk ticket was for printer support, and they began replacing out-of-date classroom printers with centralized high-yield laser models. Another goal was to replace the outdated computer imaging program. The new KACE system deploys computers to the classroom more efficiently and at tripled deployment speeds. This capability proved significant as the team worked toward another goal: replacing 1,000 Windows XP computers, which had become unsecured and no longer supported by Microsoft. Finally, to maximize the proactive approach, the tech team laid the groundwork for online Moodle training that would provide staff local admin rights to their computer once they earn enough completion badges.

By the end of the school year, MCPS's Information Systems Center had established a foundation that required a shift from a break fix-support model to one that was proactive and efficient. This would best ensure that teachers and students had the technology they needed to be successful.

"I could not be more proud of the growth the IT Department has made in the past year," said district Senior Systems Information Manager Russ Hendrickson. "They've come together as a team."





## BENCHMARKS

- 96% cohort graduation.
- 90% of students on grade level or above in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Response to Intervention (RTI) and Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI) systems in each school.
- K-12 International Baccalaureate Programme continuum in place.
- At least one thematic career academy implemented in each urban high school.
- Dual language immersion program implemented K-6.
- Science, technology, engineering and mathematics – known as STEM – education implemented K-12.
- Common Core curriculum and Next Generation Science Standards are embedded in instructional delivery.
- Community-based early childhood program.
- K-8 art programs enhanced through community partnerships.
- All students in grades 5, 8 and 12 complete capstone projects.
- Problem-based, interdisciplinary i3 learning experience implemented.



## STUDENT ENTHUSIASM FOR CODING IS SKY HIGH

In 2015, the nation's 38,175 computer science college graduates had over 500,000 computing jobs to choose from, according to [code.org](http://code.org). Such statistics bolstered Lewis and Clark parent Kathryn Grady's efforts when she worked as a development officer promoting STEM careers to underrepresented kids. "I saw how hard Google, Microsoft, and other companies had to work to find employees," she recalled.

With this in mind, Grady suggested to her second-grade daughter that they start a coding club at her school. Her daughter was interested, but said, "I don't think any of my friends will want to do it because they will think it's a boy thing."

Her daughter's comment inspired her to act, and in fall 2014, Grady launched the Girls' Coding Club at Lewis and Clark. Schoolwide interest in coding spread rapidly and, that school year, Grady added opportunities for girls and boys in grades 1-5, including an Hour of Code into a weeklong workshop and EAST program coding classes. These were all guided by lessons from [code.org](http://code.org) and [madewithcode.com](http://madewithcode.com).

All the classes filled up, leaving students eager for the 2015-16 school year, when additional sessions would be added to accommodate demand.

"The kids love the classes," said Grady. "When they come into the room, they want to go right to the computers. I have to hold them back while they eat their snacks and I take attendance. It's like holding back a revving engine!"



## GIFTED ED: ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL

In 2014-15, COMPASS/Gifted Education continued to grow along with MCPS's Student Achievement for All strategic plan. As part of this effort, the District created a cadre of 22 teachers who met regularly to discuss how to best teach students identified as gifted.

Additionally, COMPASS partnered with the University of Montana and Region 5 Western Montana Professional Learning Collaborative (WMPLC) to coordinate a visit from gifted-education expert Dr. Jim Delisle. Dr. Delisle conducted workshops with teachers and parents and delivered a keynote address attended by 100 parents and 35 teachers.

MCPS and the University of Montana collaborated again in spring of 2015, when the District's COMPASS/ELL specialist, Shirley Lindburg, joined the university's hiring committee for a gifted education professor, a new position endowed by Suzanne and David Peterson. Lindburg looks forward to continued collaborations with the university, particularly related to teacher-training.

"If you provide a gifted education program once a week, you're meeting some needs," explained Lindburg. "But if you meet the needs in the classroom, you're meeting them all the time. If we can support teachers in developing these skills, we can make that happen."

## SENTINEL COMPUTER SCIENCE TAKES MULTIPLE WINS

Junior computer scientists from Sentinel High School earned a host of awards in 2014-15, starting with a win at the regional Rocky Mountain Computer Science Competition in Helena. This qualified the team to attend the state round in Billings, where they earned another first-place win. The state champs then took on the UM Cyber Hackathon, competing against undergraduate college teams. Sentinel triumphed again, earning each team member a cash award and a \$1,000 donation to Sentinel's Computer Science Club. Sentinel rounded out the year with a practice round of Cyber Patriot (a national competition by the Air Force Association) with a plan to compete in 2015-16.

Sentinel's Computer Club helped students prepare for competitions, yet a more crucial component was the school's implementation of the Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Computer Science and Software Engineering course. The dual-credit course exposed students to multiple programming languages and software scripting uses on the web. "The curriculum challenged students and instructors with its depth," said teacher Dave Hamilton. "Student competitors are competing at higher levels because of the broad exposure of material they received in the course."





## SQORD FOR STUDENT FITNESS

Playgrounds are full of bodies in motion, but look more closely and you will notice that, by fifth grade, kids begin to move less. In spring of 2015, MCPS set these kids back in motion with the successful piloting of the Sqord Project, in which district 5th graders received free Sqords -- activity monitors worn on the wrists or shoes to track movement.

The Sqords were donated by Providence St. Patrick Hospital and Let's Move! Missoula, as part of efforts to combat childhood obesity. The Sqord project supported MCPS' efforts to keep students physically active for 60 minutes each school day. "Staying active helps with student health, mental health, and academic achievement," explained Carol Ewen, RTI specialist at MCPS.

"District response to the Sqord project has been positive," said Ewen. "Students love checking their data, and teachers and parents appreciate the kids are moving more."

One parent emailed to thank the District for the Sqord worn by his son, who had a physical disability. With the Sqord, his son was biking more and requesting his dad go with him, improving the fitness levels in both. The Sqords Project will continue in 2015-16.



## FOUR STATE MATHCOUNTS WINS

In March 2015, Washington Middle School's MathCounts team won its fourth consecutive state title while one student, Oliver Chinn, earned a place at the national competition. In addition to Chinn, the 2015 team included Theresa Liu, Finn Westenfelder, Wyatt Brown, and Coach Kari Boucher.

To prepare for the competition, weekly team practices began in October and increased to twice-weekly starting in January. "Practices were challenging but fun," said Chinn. "The most satisfying and joyful part was when we solved the most challenging problems. Also, our coaches always made learning math entertaining."

The Washington team has a long history of MathCounts success, advancing to the state competition for the past 16 years and sending at least one student to nationals for 12 of these.

Principal Craig Henkel believes the team's success reflects the environment of the school as a whole. "Not everyone is drawn to the art of mathematics, but they have passion, drive, and motivation to succeed in their area of interest and strength. MathCounts is another avenue we use to provide rigor and differentiated instruction for students."

## WILLARD TEEN WINS POETRY OUT LOUD STATE AWARD

When Willard High School senior Taylor Rodgers began reciting Walt Whitman's "A Noiseless Patient Spider" in English class, she did not expect what would follow: a state Poetry Out Loud win, a \$200 cash award, and a trip to Washington, D.C., for the national championships.

"Oh my gosh, this is so great," Rodgers told the *Missoulian* of her state win. "I started this in English class, and just kept going...I don't want to quit, but I never thought I'd be going to nationals."

The Poetry Out Loud competition evaluates participating students on factors that include articulation, physical presence, vocal qualities, and complexity and understanding of the poem. The organization is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation, and the Montana Arts Council.



## MCPS HELPS CELEBRATE SPECIAL OLYMPICS MONTANA

MCPS met all of its goals for the Special Olympics Montana (SMOT), held in Missoula in 2015:

1. Fill the opening ceremony stands with MCPS staff, students and families;
2. Provide traveling teams "hometown" fans through the "adopt-a-team" program;
3. Get "fans in the stands" through encouragement and transportation.

In addition, Big Sky High School DECA raised funds and awareness through a *Minutes that Matter* Campaign; Cold Springs Elementary students led the *Spread the Word to End the R-word* Campaign; and Paxson Elementary created the District's first Youth Athletes Program (K-1) and Project Unify (grades 2-5) bocce teams.

Kelly Chumrau, Paxson principal and SOMT Local Program Coordinator, viewed the mixed-abilities format of the teams as a great opportunity for students. "In the Games, you might partner with someone who has a very different physical ability than you. By partnering with that student, you begin to appreciate how challenging it might be for them to participate in what seems like normal, everyday things."





## BENCHMARKS

- All schools have a schoolwide intervention and enrichment model during the school day.
- Ensure new staff have a deep understanding of the key characteristics of professional learning communities.
- Each school site includes opportunities for student, staff and community leadership.
- Yearly focus groups at each school for students and teachers deepen understanding of My Voice Survey results.
- Annual climate survey data from parents, students and staff informs yearly operations benchmarks.
- Business and community representatives participate on district-level committees and task forces.
- Collaborate with UM on pre-K-20 initiatives.
- SHAPE P20 staff survey results guide future grant activities.
- A district communication plan supports two-way communication between students, families, staff, community and the District.
- Staff respect and refine individual communication styles that support collaboration and shared decision-making.



## ACTIVE RESISTANCE SHOOTER DRILL LAUNCHED

“The targeting of our children is something that brings a community to its knees,” said MCPS Safety and Security Officer Mark Puddy. “We have intervention methods in place, but unfortunately we have no magic ability to predict when a shooting will occur. It’s necessary to be prepared for the worst case scenario.” With prevention in mind, MCPS launched active-resistance training in 2015, teaching staff how to work as a team to effectively respond if an intruder entered a school.

As part of training, staff members participated in drills that mimicked actual intrusions, with an actor playing the role of a shooter. During each 20-minute drill, staff utilized the “Run, Lock, and Fight” strategy: Run first; Lock yourselves in a room if possible; Fight if necessary. Drills were followed by instructor-led debriefings.

Instructors have included professionals from local police forces (Missoula Police Department, Missoula County Sheriff, the University of Montana Police Department, and the National Institutes of Health Division of Police) and non-police personnel from the University, St. Patrick Hospital, and Missoula County Public Schools.

“It’s an amazing thing and our community should be proud,” added Puddy. “We have quality instructors from different professions working together for the common good of all.”

The goal is to train all MCPS staff by the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

## CEP REDUCES PAPERWORK AND FEEDS MORE CHILDREN

In 2014-15 MCPS adopted the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a nationwide provision providing free breakfast and lunch for all students in schools with high poverty rates. Eight MCPS schools qualified for CEP: Chief Charlo, Franklin, Hawthorne, Lowell, Meadow Hill, Paxson, C.S. Porter, and Russell. CEP has eliminated paperwork in these schools and provide families the help they need. “Sadly, there have been many families who qualified for only minimal meal benefits or no benefits at all, yet struggled to pay the cost of meals even at a reduced rate,” explained Stacey Rossmiller, MCPS Food and Nutrition Supervisor.

Research has indicated that students in participating schools are more likely to show up to school on time, are more focused, exhibit fewer behavior struggles, and even score higher on tests. According to Rossmiller, the response in MCPS has been positive, although some are unclear about what the provision means. “Just because a school participates in CEP, it doesn’t mean they get a lower quality or less food. They get the same meals and options as all other schools...With the CEP, paperwork is one less thing for parents to worry about.”

## MCPS AND GARDEN CITY HARVEST: A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST

*We use the act of growing food as a way to build a stronger, more cohesive community. We connect people who otherwise wouldn’t cross paths and deepen those connections through the act of growing food together. We believe that it’s not so much about food as it is about what happens when we grow food.*

This statement from Garden City Harvest (GCH) co-founder and PEAS Farm Director, Josh Slotnick, illuminates the asset GCH has been to Missoula and MCPS. The GCH programs that directly benefit our school district include Farm to School, which introduces concepts of sustainable farming and local food to thousands of MCPS students each year. “It’s an extension of the District’s schools, an outdoor classroom for students,” said GCH Executive Director Jean Zosel. In 2014, MCPS affirmed these sentiments by finalizing a 40-year lease with GCH’s PEAS Farm, a good deal for MCPS. As former Superintendent Alex Apostle told the *Missoulian*, the Farm-to-School program provides MCPS around \$50,000/year of agricultural services at no cost to the District.

Farm-to-School consists of three components: Field Trips, Farmer in the Classroom, and School Gardens. Each year, GCH buses in 2,500 kids and teachers for field trips to the PEAS Farm; sends farmer-educators to 35 second-grade classrooms; and manages 8 school gardens. In addition, GCH helped build 16 garden beds for the District’s Central Kitchen. Vegetables



from these beds supplement school menus and special-event meals, such as 100 pounds of kale chips for K-8 salad bars on National Kale Day.

GCH also provides Services to at-risk youth through its Youth Development Program. Each Year, the program employs teens referred by Youth Drug Court, Youth Homes, Willard Alternative High School, and others, teaching them job skills like farming, cooking and customer service. Participating teens complete tasks such as planting, weeding, and running mobile farm stands at senior-citizen and low-income housing facilities.

“A lot of them don’t want to do the work at first, but soon it becomes a safe place for them,” said Zosel. “One teen told me he used to be really disrespectful of other people’s property. After doing the Mobile Market and getting to know older people in the community, he said he couldn’t imagine doing that anymore. That was just one kid who turned the corner.”



**MUCH TO CELEBRATE AFTER 5 YEARS OF GRADUATION MATTERS MISSOULA**

In March 2015, MCPS celebrated five years of Graduation Matters Missoula (GMM) and four years of leading the state in the highest completion and lowest dropout rates. To mark the occasion, students, staff, and community members gathered for a GMM party at Sentinel High School, while Missoula Mayor John Engen signed a proclamation that declared March as Graduation Matters month.

Trevor Laboski, MCPS Region 1 Executive Director, expects the District's upward trend to continue. Pointing out that GMM's success is grounded in a focus on the whole child and on every student, Laboski noted two other components of the program's success: a proactive, creative approach to age-old problems and a commitment to relevant educational programs. Speaking at the GMM party at Sentinel, Laboski defined the program as all the individuals who make our schools meaningful, including students, teachers, counselors, principals, volunteers, social workers, custodians, bus drivers, and community organizations like United Way of Missoula County and National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI)



*Graduation Matters Missoula is a school counselor encouraging a student to take college prep classes even when no one in her family has ever attended...A social worker arriving at school with a carload of students she picked up at various locations that morning...The grandparent who comes to school and reads to a first-grade class...A principal who could very easily say no, but finds a way to say yes...A student who is inspired to reach for a goal no one in her family has ever achieved...It's about hope, creativity, and continuous improvement.*

*"I am motivated by student curiosity, excitement and enthusiasm! I look forward to each morning's new opportunity to cultivate a cooperative learning community within our classroom!"*  
Kevin Cashman

**MY STUDENT IN NEED: GIVING WITH DIGNITY**

During the 2014-15 school year, MCPS fulfilled 148 student needs through the *My Student in Need* program, which provides anonymous assistance to specific student needs. Requests are listed on the My Student in Need/Missoula website and, each week, the *Missoulian* lists current student needs in its We Care section. The needs fulfilled in 2014-15 included winter apparel, a futon to be used as a student's bed, camping gear for a student whose family was homeless, and financial donations allowing students to participate in extra-curricular activities.

One request was filled by Grammy-winning blues musician Arturo Sandoval, who, after reading the My Student in Need article in the *Missoulian*, had his manager send a student a trumpet to use for the school year.

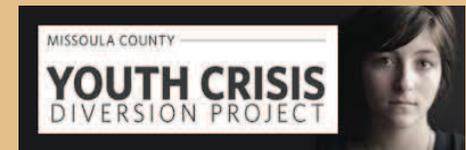
According to MCPS Families in Transition Liaison/Title I Federal Projects Coordinator Trish Kirschten, My Student in Need offers unique advantages: "Because the donations are filled anonymously, it allows the need to be filled with dignity. It allows Missoula to come together and help one another which builds a stronger community."



**YOUTH IN CRISIS WEBSITE GOES LIVE**

In 2014 MCPS implemented the use of the Youth in Crisis website as a significant resource for mental health. A result of a partnership between MCPS and the Youth Crisis Diversion Project (YCDP), the website provides steps of response for a range of mental-health concerns, including suicide, drug use, and aggression. "It's very user friendly," said Carol Ewen, RTI specialist at MCPS. "Usually we get lists of agencies and what they do. Now all you have to do is go to the behavior you are concerned about and find resources."

The MCPS-YCDP partnership is beneficial to both organizations: Missoula County Public Schools referrals help YCPD reach more at-risk students and MCPS families gain access to YCPD's additional support services, including family case management and shelter care for students. Speaking of the partnership, Ewen added, "It really is amazing the support our district gets from our community. We are so lucky!"



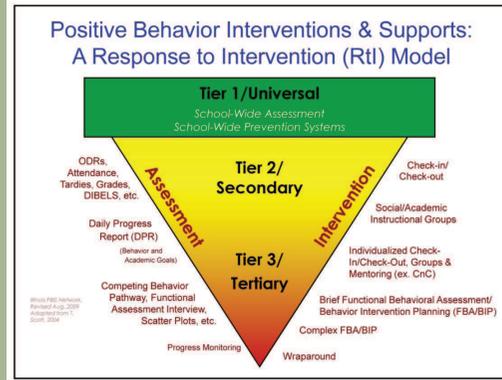
**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

To make a referral for services, call Providence St. Patrick's Urgent Mental Health Clinic at (406)327-3034, ext. 3. A professional will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For more information, please visit [www.missoulayouthcrisis.org](http://www.missoulayouthcrisis.org).



## BENCHMARKS

- Facilities long-range strategic plan complete.
- Major bond initiative to address instructional, facility, technology and safety / security needs.
- Robust wireless network in all schools.
- Support for a Bring Your Own Device or BYOD program across the District.
- Hardware and software installed to meet instructional needs across the District.
- Montana Behavioral Initiative in all schools.
- Autolocks on all school doors; all staff trained in active resistance; obvious and secure front entry to all school buildings.
- Budget aligned to support programs and priorities of the District.



## C.S. PORTER ACHIEVES PLATINUM

C.S. Porter Middle School reached Platinum in 2015, when it was recognized by the Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI) for its positive intervention model. "C.S. Porter was one of four Montana schools to reach MBI's top tier, an achievement made easier by the dedication of staff," said C.S. Porter principal Julie Robitaille. What also helped was the school's braided approach to academics and behavior, which aligns with MBI and the Response Intervention (RtI) model and positive school culture.

Under MBI tier 1, for instance, C.S. Porter incorporates attendance challenges and the Principal's 100 Club. For the latter, staff members (including teachers, librarians, custodians, and secretaries) identify students who exemplify target behaviors, such as mutual respect. Elected students sign a celebrity book, get their names placed on the Principal's 100 Club Board, and receive Cougar Coupons to be used at the school store.

"We're talking about systems here, but what it comes down to is an avenue to connect," said Robitaille, who noted that the key to success is empowering all staff members to play a role. "It's the ultimate teamwork. Each individual can make a significant difference in a student's life. It feels like we're making a difference and that feels good."

## SPARK

Movement and fun have long been linked, but did you know that movement also enhances learning? Students and staff at Russell Elementary School have experienced this firsthand, thanks to an arts integration workshop inspired by SPARK!, a national partnership between MCPS and the Kennedy Center's Any Given Child Initiative.

Held in April 2015, the SPARK! workshop taught staff creative movement activities to use in K-5 classrooms. Russell Principal Cindy Christensen said that any apprehension the staff started with soon wore off. "They quickly became engaged in the activities and were super excited to share them with their students." Teachers were surprised to learn how much creative dance reinforced academic content and boosted student engagement and retention.

Christensen noted that arts integration has particularly helped make the curriculum more meaningful to the school's most at-risk students, yet has benefited all Russell students. "I will be eternally grateful to the Kennedy Center and our SPARK! partnership," Christensen extolled. "We have witnessed students becoming more engaged and motivated to learn. They are developing critical-thinking skills and becoming more collaborative and creative."



*Having grown up in the Missoula community and had the chance to participate in the vibrant music program as a child, it's my goal to continue this excellent opportunity for the students of future generations. Each day I get to witness students accomplish truly amazing feats, understand the importance of perseverance and develop the ability to depend on and work with their classmates towards a cumulative goal. For me, excellence is the gift that keeps me coming back!*  
Randy Zschaechner



## NCBI TRAINS LEADERS IN HUMANITY

Due to efforts of staff and students, bullying is in a state of rapid decline. Some of the credit for this shift should be given to the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) of Missoula, a chapter of the international non-profit devoted to prejudice reduction, violence prevention, conflict resolution, and coalition building. One way NCBI Missoula accomplishes its goals is through its youth-leadership development program. In Missoula, 2014-15 leadership programs occurred at every MCPS elementary, middle, and high school, involving more than 110 individual sessions of peer-led leadership development to over 2,500 students.

"These trainings help connect students' social and academic lives and helps students to step into leadership roles in their school communities and beyond," said NCBI

Missoula Executive Director Heidi Wallace. The results include student-led school communities that foster diversity, acceptance, student voice, and academic success.

In addition to facilitating leadership development, Missoula's NCBI youth leaders administered after-school programs at all three district middle schools and at Lowell, Lewis and Clark, and Hawthorne Elementary Schools. They also led workshops for over 1,000 Montana youth, including Superintendent Denise Juneau's Student Advisory Board.

"We are incredibly honored to be a partner of MCPS," concluded Wallace. "It is such an immense joy to work with some of the most amazing youth in our state, to work alongside them as we strive to create a learning environment where every young person can succeed."

*As a working mom, I want my own children to grow and thrive in classrooms headed by passionate, dedicated teachers. Returning to 8th grade English and Social Studies after having my now three-year-old twins was the only profession I could imagine equally worthy of my time as parenting. Witnessing the incredible academic and character growth of my own students is convincing testimony to the importance of the powerful work we do in schools every day, for students of every age. I really believe it takes a village to raise our children, and am happy and proud to play my part in one middle school classroom in Missoula.*

Allie McFarland

## MISSOULA'S SMART SCHOOLS

Seeley Swan High School and Hellgate High School were deemed SMART by Lt. Gov. Angela McLean, who presented the schools with 2014-15 SMART (Saving Money and Resources Today) Schools Challenge Awards. The two MCPS schools were among thirteen in the state recognized by McLean, who presented them each \$1,000 for ongoing environmental efforts.

Seeley Swan won a SMART Energy Challenge for creating a long-term resource conservation and energy management plan. Hellgate was the recipient of the SMART

Green Challenge for acquiring an Earth Tub for composting and switching to a local recycler.

At Hellgate, environmental initiatives are supported by an active student organization, Student's Against Violating the Environment (S.A.V.E.). "Winning the award inspired us to not only educate others in our school, but to keep educating those of us in S.A.V.E.," explained Ian Knight, the organization's head of recycling. "We want to learn more about composting in the school and we hope it can help replace garbage."



## FACILITIES KEPT RUNNING LONG PAST LIFESPANS

Leaky roofs. Half-century-old boiler systems you can no longer buy parts for. Brittle piping that crumbles at the touch. Old wiring. Old plumbing. Asbestos. Lead-based paint. Every day, MCPS's operation and maintenance workers are reminded of the District's upgrade needs. "The average building is 58-years-old," explained MCPS Operations and Maintenance Supervisor, Burley McWilliams. "Our custodial staff and Trades and Crafts Department do a good job keeping our facilities clean and running way past their lifespans. But the challenges increase the older the buildings get."

The District's boiler systems are good examples of the challenges. When the boiler's heat exchanger went out at Rattlesnake Elementary School in recent years, classes were delayed until the discontinued part could be custom built and rush ordered. The process was costly.

An insurance inspection of Hellgate High School's boiler highlighted the system's failing floor, which had to be rebuilt. The District needed to hire an out of town welder with special certification to complete the job, another expensive process. "Our team's done such a good job making the buildings look nice and operational that all the general public sees are old buildings in good shape," said McWilliams. "What they don't see is how we continually band aid things that need to be replaced. The passing of the bond can fix most of that."

*I am motivated each and every day because I believe my role as a teacher truly makes a difference in the world. I want my students to not only be energized to come to school and learn, but to know that there is no limit to what they can accomplish. I aspire to inspire my students because you never know if one of them may grow up to cure cancer, become President, or just enjoy living life to the fullest*  
Greg Imhoff

# FINANCES

## FINANCES AT A GLANCE

MCPS is a unified school system that operates two separate districts — a K-8 elementary district and a 9-12 high school district. While unified, each district adopts its own budgets for nine separate funds: general, transportation, tuition, retirement, adult education, technology, flexibility, debt service and building reserve.

The general fund supports the primary operating expenditures of the District, including employee salaries and benefits, utilities, instructional materials and supplies, and student activities and athletics. *The general fund does not cover the cost of transportation to and from school, the adult education program, most technology purchases and most facility repairs.*

## GENERAL FUND

The budget for the general fund is based on a formula found in state law. That formula is built upon various components that together calculate the **Base Budget**, which is the minimum budget that all districts in Montana must adopt, and the **Maximum Budget**. The funding of the Base Budget is shared between the state and local taxpayers while the budget above the base to Maximum is funded almost exclusively by local taxpayers via voted levies. For FY15, both district's general fund budgets were at Maximum.

The calculation of the Base and Maximum Budget depends primarily upon the District's enrollment and inflationary increases to the school funding components. Declining enrollment means little to no budgetary increase even with the passage of levies. It is possible under Montana law to adopt a budget above Maximum, if the prior

year budget is greater than the calculation of the current year Maximum budget.

For fiscal year 2015, the combined general fund budgets grew by \$1,268,327 or 2.1%. This increase was primarily the result of an inflationary increase of 2.07% to the basic and per ANB entitlements. The ANB (enrollment) increased by 14 in the Elementary District, and decreased by 31 in the High School District. The general fund budget in the elementary increased by \$884,503 (2.66%) while the high school general fund budgets increased by \$383,824 (1.4%).

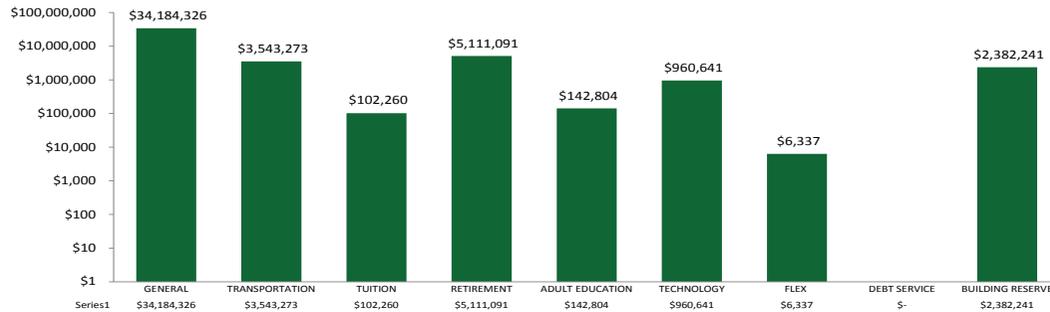
During the fiscal year 2015, the Elementary District applied for and received a budget amendment of \$250,000 due to an unanticipated increase in enrollment — enrollment increased by approximately 160 students in the fall of fiscal year 2015. The Elementary District utilized approximately \$208,000 from the budget amendment for teaching and learning materials, fees and severance.

For fiscal year 2015, the elementary budget for all budgeted funds totaled \$46,432,973. This represented an increase of \$1,434,619. Based upon District taxable values, the total mills for the Elementary District increased by 1.4 mills in 2015.

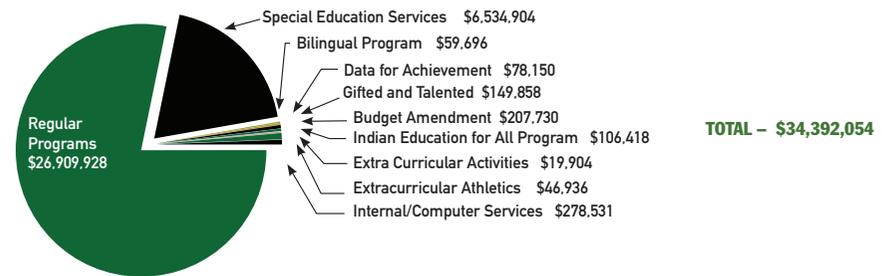
The high school budget for all budgeted funds totaled \$38,229,340 in fiscal year 2015. This represented an increase of \$622,497. Based upon District taxable values, the High School District mills increased by .58, resulting in an annual increase of \$.76 in property taxes to a home with a taxable market value of \$100,000, and an annual increase of \$1.52 in property taxes to a home with a taxable value of \$200,000.

Combined with the increase of .58 mills in the High School District, the total mills in the Elementary District increased by 1.98, or approximately \$2.59 on a home with a taxable market value of \$100,000, and \$5.18 on a home with a taxable market value of \$200,000.

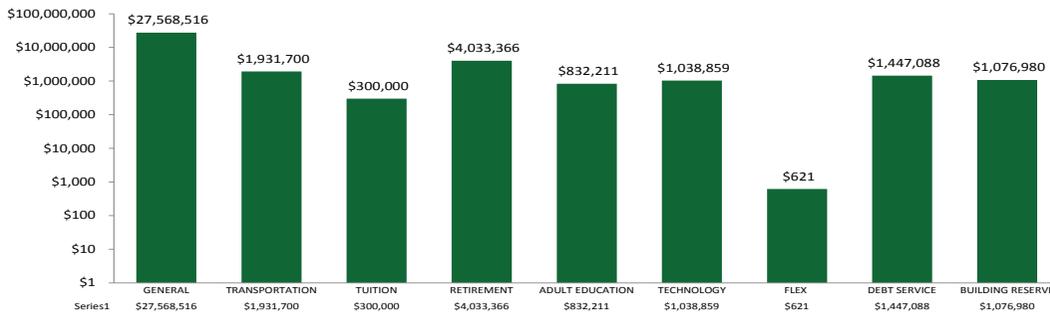
**ELEMENTARY BUDGETED FUNDS 2014-2015 \$46,432,973**



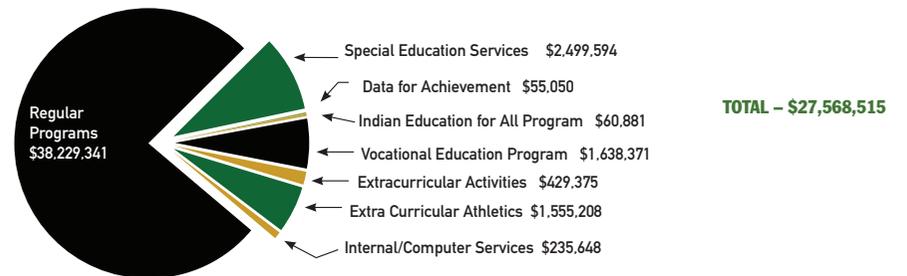
**ELEMENTARY GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES - BY PROGRAM**



**HIGH SCHOOL BUDGETED FUNDS 2014-2015 \$38,229,340**



**HIGH SCHOOL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES - BY PROGRAM**





**Forward Thinking, High Achieving.**

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