



Graduation Matters Missoula

We all can make a difference in students' lives! That is a core belief of Graduation Matters Missoula (GMM), a school/community partnership launched in January 2010 between Missoula County Public Schools and several Missoula businesses, nonprofit and service organizations. Graduation Matters Missoula has developed into a successful community-wide initiative that is focused on implementing innovative strategies that will significantly increase the graduation rate and reduce the dropout rate in MCPS schools and ensure all students graduate. Graduation Matters Missoula specifically addresses one of the District's five main goals - that all students can achieve, regardless of abilities or circumstances - and also a key program in the framework of the District's 21st Century Model of Education and Achievement For All Plan.

Vision

Graduation Matters Missoula's vision is graduation for all students, regardless of their circumstances or abilities.

Mission

Graduation Matters Missoula endeavors to support a lasting community-wide campaign to encourage students to successfully complete course work, culminating in graduation. The initiative is a broad-based effort to rally every sector of the community to remove barriers to graduation, address specific challenges that impede student success, and create an environment that enhances student learning. It is essential that each member of the community play a role in helping students graduate.

Strategic Goals

Graduation Matters Missoula is led by a stakeholder group that represents broad sectors of the Missoula community. The initiative is coordinated by an Executive Committee that meets monthly. There are four focus areas that direct the initiative's efforts and strategic goals. Sub-committees associated with each focus area are made up of a cross-section of stakeholders.

Focus Areas

- * *Improve Attendance*
- * *Engage Families and Community*
- * *Enhance Student Wellness*
- * *Increase Kindergarten Readiness*



Forward Thinking, High Achieving.

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Looking Ahead

Achievement for All Five-Year Goals:

- **21st Century Learning Objective:** Learning (Quadrant), Increase Student Engagement (21st Century Change Element)
- **District Goal:** Student Achievement for All, Achievement and graduation for all students regardless of their circumstances and abilities.
- **Program/Priority to Watch:** Graduation Matters Missoula
- **June 2019 Benchmarks:** 96% cohort graduation
- **Your Role:** Volunteer in the classroom. Encourage learning and discovery outside of the classroom. Hold students accountable. Encourage students to find programs that excite them. Support programs through public funding by voting and speaking to state legislators.

Who's at risk?

Every student is at risk for dropping out of high school. Missoula dropouts come from a variety of backgrounds, including different genders, ethnicity, living situations, and family and educational backgrounds.

- 77% failed one or more semester courses in 9th grade
- 61% missed more than 20 days of school in the year they dropped out
- Chronic Absence in the 9th grade was significantly higher among dropouts (60%) than non-dropouts (44%)
- 10% had been suspended at least once during the two-year period 2005-07
- Native Americans make up 10% of enrollment in high school, yet account for 27% of dropouts.
(Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2014)
- By 6th grade, missing 20% of school (2 months), is a critical warning sign of potential dropout.

GMM Strategic Goal:

Benchmark Graduation Rates

- a. 2015 - 90%
- b. 2016 - 92%
- c. 2017 - 94%
- d. 2018 - 95%
- e. 2019 - 96%

Sub-Committee Goals:

- **Improve Attendance** - overall district attendance rate increase, building level bench marks
- **Engage Families and Community** - volunteer numbers, apprenticeships, internships, co-ops, job shadows, etc.
- **Enhance Student Wellness** - MBI SET scores, BMI data, reduction in offenses
- **Increase Kindergarten Readiness** - define, academic, social/emotional

Support Graduation Matters Missoula

All stakeholders are encouraged to get involved in Graduation Matters Missoula. *Become informed and stay involved!*

- Mentor a student.** Share your special skills; provide an internship or job-shadow opportunity.
- Support local schools.** Volunteer your time; adopt a classroom; tutor students.



To become a volunteer, please contact Brittany Gross, (406)728-2400 ext. 1030.

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