



MCMINNVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMUNITY NEWS | FALL 2024



Mac High Health Services pathway students (from left) Saray Raya Castro, Amaraya Saucedo, Muezzina Rizwan, Stella Gyenes, Alexis Gibson, Gianella Contreras, Isaac Gudino, Nora Larsson, Arely Fabela-Chavez, Aila Blackburn, Jacey Cootey, Desmond Nichols and Lydia Barton in a WVMC operating room. See story inside.

JOY in MSD Schools

MSD schools are building a strings program through the Junior Orchestra of Yamhill County (JOY), which is a project of the Yamhill Enrichment Society (YES). The program launched two years ago at Buel and Newby elementary schools with kindergarten students learning how to play the violin in their in-school music classes.

Last year, the students continued with violin through first grade and Grandhaven and Wascher started their kindergartners on violins.

This fall, all six schools have students learning violin while the original kindergarten students are branching out into violas and cellos and playing in a combined school orchestra in a fee-based after-school program. This model will continue through all the schools with the goal of adding orchestra classes to the middle schools (and later high school) by the time these students reach sixth grade.

The notion that music enhances academic and social skills has an impressive body of research to back it up. Studies show that music has a powerful connection to language skills, reading and memory because learning music reinforces the complicated brain processes necessary to learn to read.



About 850 students in MSD schools are learning to play a string instrument.

"The mission of YES is to enrich the lives of Yamhill County children through literacy and music," said Alyssa Johnson, executive director of YES. "The JOY program is designed to include every child in grades K-1 and is free to the school district through funding provided by private donations, grants, community support and corporate sponsors."

YES provides scholarships for students who can't afford the after-school program fees. Visit yamhillenrichmentsociety.org to find out more about YES and how you can help.

The Future of Healthcare

About 60 students from Mac High's Health Services Career Pathway had a hands-on surgical experience recently at the Willamette Valley Medical Center (WVMC). Part of a field trip that focused on career prospects in the medical field, the students stepped into an operating room to perform a simulated laparoscopic surgery.

Hospital staff from various departments gave tours and talked about the different careers available in each area. They covered job specifics, required training, advancement possibilities and salary ranges.

Isaac Gudino, a junior, is eyeing a future in surgery after undergoing multiple knee and shoulder operations that were partly due to athletic injuries. Gudino said he found the simulated surgery "intriguing" and "made me feel as if my goals were genuinely achievable."

Senior Lydia Barton chose the Health Services pathway early in her high school years because she says she is drawn to

"helping" careers. She is currently in the hospital's internship program that rotates students through departments that can include short-stay surgery, birthing center, imaging, therapy services, senior behavioral health, the laboratory, ICU, medical-surgical nursing floor, orthopedics, cancer center, pharmacy and emergency management. "I was surprised by how much the different departments work together," said Barton.

Bringing students into the hospital on field trips and hosting internships is a strategic partnership between Mac High, Chemeketa and WVMC. The 16 Career Pathways at the high school are designed to help students explore future career options and help them understand what training and education are required for the kind of job they want.

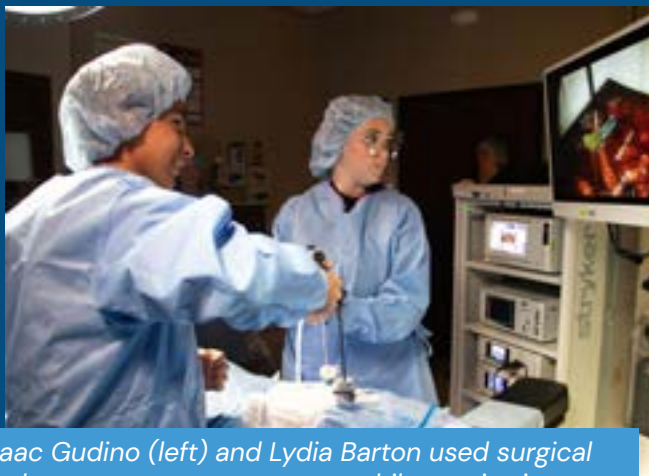
"Workforce development is crucial at every stage of life," said Anna Hiltz, WVMC's Workforce Development and Education Manager. "We take pride in offering students the chance to explore various medical careers and specialties through hands-on activities, and we're excited to continue creating more opportunities."

According to Mac High's Health Services pathway teacher Brynna Harlow, about 35 students each year intern at the hospital or local clinics. Interns must be seniors who have taken key prerequisites like anatomy and physiology. "The internship allows them to choose four healthcare occupations or departments at WVMC that they are most interested in," said Harlow. "I do my best to place them in locations where they will complete 8 hours of a job shadow at each location. This gives them a total of 32 hours of shadowing for the semester."

As someone who came to teaching from working as a certified athletic trainer, Harlow understands the appeal of a hands-on career. "Students see how these classes are relevant to what they want to do after high school," she said. "They are curious and motivated."



Anna Hiltz (center), of the Willamette Valley Medical Center, shows students the turning technique, the process of putting on a sterile surgical gown.



Isaac Gudino (left) and Lydia Barton used surgical tools to grasp a gummy worm while monitoring a screen that simulates the abdominal cavity.

Mac High STEM Teacher Honored

For the second year in a row, an MSD teacher has been named Oregon Regional Teacher of the Year. Dave Clauson, a Mac High teacher in the Engineering & Aerospace Sciences Academy (EASA) pathway and after-school robotics coach was surprised with the news at the high school's all-school welcome back assembly in September.

Clauson started teaching elementary school in the district in 2007. He soon moved to the middle school level where he built the STEM programs at both Patton and Duniway and launched the middle school FTC Robotics programs. In 2016, he became EASA's Engineering Projects teacher and began mentoring the high school robotics team. Clauson also created the third-grade robotics project, a

district-wide Science Experiences curriculum that allows students in every district school to program and race a robot at a culminating jamboree.

To keep his Engineering classes fresh and relevant, Clauson has collaborated with a number of current and retired engineers, built working relationships with several local manufacturing and engineering firms, interned with a manufacturing company and worked on construction sites to see engineering and architecture designs in action.

This year, his Engineering 4 class is building a cottage home as part of a partnership with Team Oregon Build (TOB). TOB is a joint effort among schools, industry and the state to address building needs in communities affected by wildfires and housing shortages.



Students form a gauntlet to celebrate teacher Dave Clauson as he comes forward to accept a \$1,000 check from the Oregon Lottery.



Superintendent's Corner

Technology is a constant presence in our lives, and as educators, it's our job to strike a balance. We want to help students disconnect from screens when needed while preparing them for a tech-driven future. One of the biggest opportunities—and challenges—we face is how to harness the power of artificial intelligence (AI) in education. How can we use AI to enhance learning and critical thinking without undermining the authentic learning process?

To help guide our approach, our leadership team has been studying *Brave New Words* by Salman Khan, the founder of Khan Academy. The book provides valuable insights into how AI can support personalized learning and improve educational outcomes. It's important to note that embracing AI doesn't mean our classrooms are becoming fully digital. Instead, we see AI as a tool to support teachers by handling routine tasks, giving them more time to focus on meaningful, student-centered instruction. For example, this fall, our high school implemented a policy to keep cell phones out of classrooms to encourage students to engage more deeply with their learning and their peers.

In addition, I've established an "Innovation Team" made up of teachers and staff to explore how we can thoughtfully integrate AI into our teaching practices while staying mindful of our budget constraints. Our goal is to make AI a powerful resource that enhances learning and prepares students for success in the modern world.

Lastly, I'm excited to introduce Christine Bader, our newest School Board member. Christine brings extensive experience from her work in the corporate, education, and government sectors. She's also a published author, a business professor at Linfield University, and the coach of the Valley Panther high school girls rugby team. Christine is stepping into the role previously held by Carson Benner, who dedicated 20 years to our district through his service on various committees, including the school board. We are deeply grateful to Carson for his commitment to our students, and we warmly welcome Christine to the team!

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to prepare our students for the future.

Debbie Brockett



McMinnville
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Fiscal Responsibility

For the 15th year in a row, the McMinnville School District has been awarded the "gold standard" Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its most recent annual comprehensive financial report.

Learning by Doing

Last spring, Duniway Middle School was awarded a sizable "Farm to Child" grant to build a gardening program. Infrastructure work is underway to create an outdoor learning space that includes a garden, greenhouse and gathering area that will be accessible to all students.



Both middle schools participated in the "Crunch @ Once," a simultaneous, school-wide bite of Oregon apples.

Return of the Crab Feed

A long-standing community tradition, the annual MAC Club Crab Feed, was back this fall and better than ever. The popular event benefits high school athletics. (Pictured) School Board chair Jason Bizon is served by a student athlete.



Photo by Marcus Larson

The school launched a hands-on gardening elective this year to help students start learning about horticulture and where their food comes from. Working in the dirt can be therapeutic according to one of the program's facilitators Anna Barsotti. Experience in the garden program could also help spark student interest that could be expanded into the high school's horticulture classes in the Natural Resources pathway.

To raise awareness among other students, the group staged a "Crunch @ Once" event featuring Mountain Rose apples from Hood River. "The whole idea is to bring the bounty that is Oregon agriculture back to our classroom and community," said Duniway staffer Brent Cartier, who is leading the school gardening program with Barsotti.



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McMinnville School District will honor, empower and prepare each individual to thrive and contribute.