



MCMINNVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMUNITY NEWS | FALL 2025



2025–26 Superintendent

With great enthusiasm, I write to you as the newly appointed superintendent for the school year. I am honored to serve the students, families, and staff in our communities of McMinnville and Lafayette.

I am excited to lead a district that commits to high expectations and provides incredible opportunities to support our students' success.

This truly feels like a full-circle moment for me. I grew up right here in our community and attended Cook and Memorial elementaries, Patton Middle School, and McMinnville High School.

As a proud Mac High graduate, I know firsthand the power of a strong community-supported education that believes in its schools and invests in its kids. For the past 18 years, I've had the joy of serving in MSD as a teacher, instructional coach, principal at Wascher Elementary, and as the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. I'm also a parent in the

district, watching my own children discover their passions and purpose in our programs.

What makes our schools so special isn't just the buildings, it's the people. It's our curious and capable students, our supportive and engaged families, our caring and committed staff, our hard-working school board, and a community that deeply values what education can do. At MSD, we believe in the power of education to open doors and create opportunities for every student. Our mission is to honor, empower, and prepare our students to thrive and contribute in a changing world.



Dr. Kourtney Ferrua, D.Ed.

Whether or not you are part of our school community, we cannot do this important work without you. Join us, volunteer with us, attend a high school musical, cheer on a sports event, or attend the McMinnville Education Foundation dinner-auction in February. Your partnership, support, and advocacy are vital to our success.

Hands-On Learning in the Field

High school students in Mac High's Education pathway don't just learn about education theory, they get hands-on experience. Through classroom visits, field trips, and helping with the district's Survival Swim program for third graders, these students get a real look at what it's like to work as a teacher.

"It's a win-win," says Education teacher Adam Howard, who organizes the pathway students' participation with the elementary schools. "The field trips give the older students a chance to see how they like working with kids and also helps the teachers by having the high schoolers help at each learning station."

In the fall, second grade students head up to Miller Woods to learn about living things in their natural habitats and fourth graders travel to Metsker Park to explore how the Earth's surface changes over time.



Mya Doolittle works the pond station at Miller Woods, helping second graders identify the scooped up critters.



At Metsker Park, Hannah Thompson demonstrates how to dislodge the water critters from the net.

The elementary field trips are not for just one class or even only one school. The trips are part of the annual Science Experiences, which are grade-level outings for every school in the district. Over a period of about a week and a half, each school sends two classes at a time for a fun science adventure that was created to meet the curriculum standards for each grade level.

Some of the high school students realize right away that they want to be teachers. Junior Hannah Thompson is earning her pathway endorsement and planning to enter the field. Hannah also works with Unified Sports, an offshoot of the Special Olympics, and thinks she might want to work in special education. Junior Mya Doolittle remembers being

inspired by her elementary school teachers to enter education, but she's also thinking about the cosmetology pathway. Younger students like Ruby Rojas and Liam Brandon are exploring several pathways and still considering which program might fit them best.

The Science Experiences are made possible by the McMinnville Education Foundation (MEF), which has supported learning across the district since 1998. MEF began by offering teacher mini-grants to fund things like classroom materials, field trips, or books that fall outside regular budgets. About 10 years later, the foundation launched Science Experiences for second graders at Miller Woods — a program that has since expanded to every elementary grade across the district.

MEF funds an artist-in-residence program for fourth and fifth graders in all elementary schools, giving students a chance to learn about art from a professional. The foundation also buys each school the Oregon Battle of the Books titles every year so elementary through high school students can choose to take part.

The foundation raises the funds with an annual fall fun run/walk, Runtoberfest, and a Valentine-themed wine-pairing dinner and auction in February. Join in! [Click here](#) to reserve tickets for the dinner, make a donation, volunteer, or find out more about the foundation.

The Science of Reading

Learning to read is a critical milestone in a child's life because it opens the door to every other school subject and future opportunity. The science of reading is based on how a child's brain learns to read and offers research-based teaching methods so we can teach in ways that work for each student.

When we ground our instruction in this research, we're not just teaching children to read, we're helping them build confidence, curiosity, and a lifelong love of learning.

MSD has partnered with Stand for Children and Dr. Nell K. Duke from the University of Michigan's early



Memorial students in Kim Mansfield's first-grade class rotate between small group time, Amira, and other literacy learning stations.

literacy demonstration network. Schools in this network are leading the way when it comes to reading instruction by putting the science of reading research into practice.

Our schools are using strategies like high-dose tutoring for students who need additional support; online supports like Amira, a reading practice and assessment tool that uses artificial intelligence to tailor instruction to each student; and instructional coaches for classrooms to help teachers implement the instructional practices.

[Click here](#) to see a video that highlights what's being done in our district and across the state.

Investing in Our Community

McMinnville School District is exploring the idea of mounting a school bond measure in the next two years. The measure would replace the 2006 bond that funded the construction of Buel Elementary School. Bonds are an important part of protecting our schools and ensuring that our facilities are being used in the most efficient and productive ways. Bonds also help us improve safety and security in our buildings.

The first step of the bond process is to create a long-term facility plan. This plan is partly based on detailed assessments of the condition of our buildings, which are done by the Oregon Department of Education.



Armed with a map of the school and a list of issues described by staff and students, the architect and designer team start envisioning and listing possible changes.

Next, an architect and commercial designer visit each building and collect input from school staff and students to understand the needs of each school and how the building can better meet those needs. Using this feedback, the team tours the school to inspect the issues that were raised and consider how those issues could be addressed.

Some needs are behind the scenes — such as replacing a roof before it leaks and causes damage. Others are more apparent — like adding air conditioning to older schools where hotter days make it hard to focus and learn.

Task forces are currently being formed with school and district staff, parents, and community members to focus on specific issues, including student services and ADA compliance; safety, security and technology; athletic facility improvements; and playground improvements.

Once all the assessments and feedback are gathered, the Long-Range Facility Planning Committee will meet to review the collected data, set priorities, and develop recommendations and options for the next 10 years. The committee will also consider enrollment trends and future program needs. In the spring, the district will begin sharing these findings with the community and asking for feedback.



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Local Partnership

When Carsten Lewin (pictured) started high school, he thought he wanted to be an engineer. But after learning how to edit during an introductory filmmaking class at Mac High, he was hooked. He entered the Visual Communications pathway and has taken several classes to prepare for a career in broadcasting. He's part of the crew of the weekly, student-produced news show, the Bear Claw Broadcast.

Carsten also went through the internship program at McMinnville Community Media (MCM-11) and participated in their Saturday Film Club. MCM-11 partners with Mac High to film graduation and sporting events throughout the year and offers internships that can give students hands-on experience in live event broadcasting.

The Visual Communications pathway is one of 16 career



exploration programs available at Mac High, ranging from trades to professions. Students who complete the required coursework earn a pathway endorsement. Carsten expects to receive his endorsement by graduation next June — with a future plan for film school.

Welcome!

On Oct. 13, the MSD School Board appointed Jasmin Juarez to the board seat vacated by Doris Towery. She will serve the remainder of the position 7 term, which expires in 2027.

Honoring Veterans

MSD middle schools invite veterans, families of veterans, and interested community members to attend honor assemblies at their school. Please call the school before the event so seating is arranged.

- Patton, Friday, Nov. 7 @ 8:45 a.m. 503.565.4500
- Duniway, Monday, Nov. 10 @ 8:40 a.m. 503.565.4400

December @ MHS

Join us for a slate of events coming up just before the holidays, including the rollicking musical "Mamma Mia," choir and band concerts, and a Holiday Bazaar. The bazaar is a showcase of works and items for sale, which are produced by students in various Career Pathways, including art, ceramics, metalworks and more. [Click here](#) for details or call 503.565.4200.



¿Prefiere leer este boletín en español? Escanee el código QR con su teléfono o escriba esta dirección en su buscador: bit.ly/MSDnewsletter

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