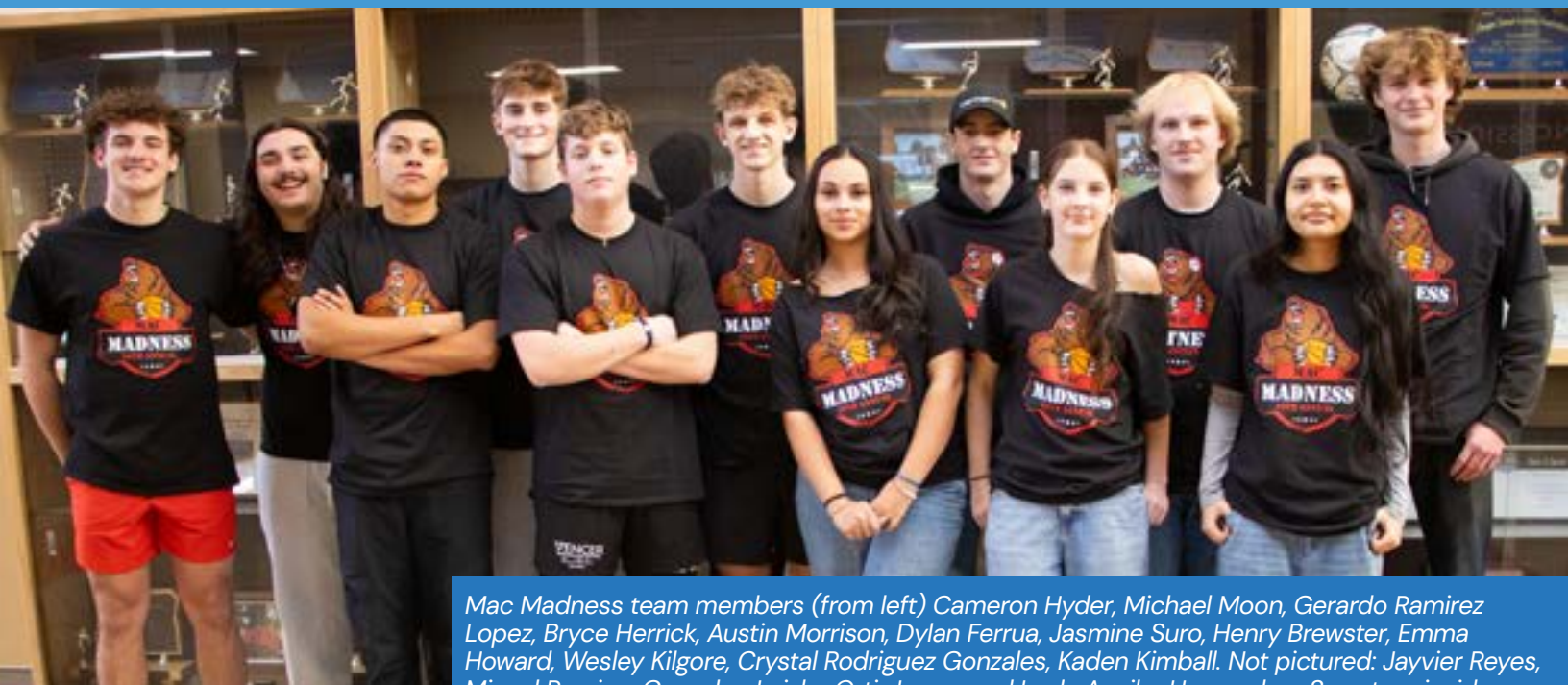




MCMINNVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMUNITY NEWS | SPRING 2025



Mac Madness team members (from left) Cameron Hyder, Michael Moon, Gerardo Ramirez Lopez, Bryce Herrick, Austin Morrison, Dylan Ferrua, Jasmine Suro, Henry Brewster, Emma Howard, Wesley Kilgore, Crystal Rodriguez Gonzales, Kaden Kimball. Not pictured: Jayvier Reyes, Miguel Ramirez Gonzalez, Laisha Ortiz Lopez and Lesly Aguilar Hernandez. See story inside.

Looking for 4- and 5-year olds!

Do you have (or know of) a child who will be four- or five-years-old by September 1? Registration day for pre-kindergarten (pre-K) and kindergarten for the 2025-26 school year is Thursday, May 1, from 3 – 6 p.m. at neighborhood elementary schools.

All district schools have full-day kindergarten, which runs on the elementary school schedule, and five MSD elementary schools run free pre-K programs, in both morning and afternoon sessions.

Kindergarten students must attend their neighborhood school, but pre-K students may attend any of the five schools that offer the program.

Our pre-K programs are full of hands-on, engaging activities that can help children get ready to read and learn about numbers. The children can also

settle into school routines, mixed in with indoor and outdoor play, and have lots of time to interact with other children.



The first day of kindergarten is Tuesday, Sept. 2; pre-K begins Wednesday, Sept. 3.

MSD's kindergarten focuses on literacy development, math/number sense development and social skills. Kindergarten also includes PE, music, library and Science Experiences.

Science Experiences, funded by the McMinnville Education Foundation, provide science-based field trips for students in kindergarten through fifth

grade at all MSD schools.

For registration info, [visit our website](#) or call 503.565.4000 to get started.

Mac Madness Celebrates 10th Year

Over the past decade, Mac Madness has turned Mac High's finals-week basketball games into a rowdy, high-energy spectacle. Before a 2016 bond funded the high school's renovation, the event was known as Fuel the Furnace, a nod to the school's old, steaming-hot gym, The Furnace.

Now held in the newer main gym, Mac Madness is a hands-on lesson in sports marketing that has grown into a full-scale extravaganza. The event is the culminating project for the fall semester of the Sports Marketing class that's part of the high school's Career Pathway in Business. "This is their final," said MHS teacher Sarah Breyer. Their mission? Pack the stands for the boys' and girls' games and create a fun-filled evening for the community. The challenge is to get enough sponsorships to secure funding to make all of their ideas come to life.

"We start planning at the beginning of the year," said junior Michael Moon. "First, we learn the basics. Then, in October and November, we start going out and talking to businesses." Part of the class is learning about sponsorships, so students sharpen their sales skills by crafting pitches and fanning out across the local business community to deliver them.



Part of the fun is handing out big photos of the team to the crowd. This year, the photos were baby pictures.

"It was such a rush when they said yes," Moon said. "For me, actually talking to business owners was the best learning experience."

Before signing up for Sports Marketing, students must first take Principles of Marketing. Sports Marketing builds on the fundamentals and covers how marketing concepts are applied in sports and entertainment. Students split into four teams focused on communications, fan experience, digital marketing and print marketing.

"I'm on the fan experience team," said junior Jasmine Suro. Her team ran the "Bear Cave" photo booth, organized in-game contests, captured event photos, and managed the VIP room for community partners (see list of sponsors in the superintendent's letter opposite).

"We had games between quarters," said Suro. "A human burrito wrapping race; a shooting contest with a three-pointer, layup and free throw; and the 'Dirtiest Car' competition—where the dirtiest car in the lot wins a free wash." There was also a magician (a contestant on "America's Got Talent") who performed during both halftimes as well as the traditional tossing of hundreds of shirts and rally towels into the crowd.

This year, the event expanded to wrestling with "Mac Matness," which included a wrestling adaptation of the Mac Madness logo. "We're trying to involve more sports," Suro said. She also said that, for the first time, the event included a fundraiser. Proceeds from a silent auction benefited Mac High's implementation of "Sources of Strength," a mental wellness program that involves peer leaders.

For some, Mac Madness is more than a school event—it's a tradition. "I remember coming as a kid to watch members of my family play," said one of the team members. Breyer notes that she's reminded of the event all year long. "Even now, I still see old Fuel the Furnace shirts around town," she said. "That's fun."



The Octopus game includes four teams of four who race across the gym with their arms locked.

Students Dig into Hands-On Learning

Students at Willamette Elementary are getting their hands dirty—literally—through a hands-on gardening initiative that integrates science, sustainability and teamwork.

Funded by an Oregon Farm to School grant and the leadership of Willamette staffers Megan Whitaker and Tami Lindsley, students have helped build raised beds, made and spread compost, and nurtured seedlings while learning valuable lessons about science and food production.

From the ground up, students have shaped their garden learning space. Students used original blueprints of the school to map out the garden perimeter and learn a lesson about scale. They collected fall leaves for composting and layered them over existing garden beds to protect the soil. So far, they have shoveled

and wheelbarrowed two truckloads of material, sourcing compost layers from both the local forest and the school's own cafeteria waste.

The raised beds, now filled with nutrient-rich compost, are already producing food. Greenhouse-germinated lettuce and kale have been successfully transplanted, and peas are sprouting in four beds. Carrots have also begun to emerge, and the greenhouse is hosting a new round of seedlings, with Brussels sprouts already coming up.

Looking ahead, there are plans to install archways for climbing vegetables, prepare a pre-K digging space and a kindergarten pumpkin patch, and expand their spring vegetable and fruit crops.

For now, students enjoy watching for the garden's resident praying mantis and the occasional hummingbird. As the garden continues to grow, it promises to be a dynamic outdoor classroom.



Students raked leaves and made rich soil in a rotating composter, which students turn as they walk past on their way to recess.

Superintendent's Corner

As we approach the next biennium of state school funding, we face uncertainty. Despite more than 15 years of clean audits and financial awards for responsible fiscal management, our district is expecting a budget shortfall for the upcoming school year. Along with most other school districts across the state, McMinnville School District grapples with rising costs and shrinking enrollment. Our team is working hard to identify ways to cut expenses without compromising the excellence we expect in our classrooms.

One way we try to extend our scarce dollars is through partnerships that enhance the educational experiences of our children. For example, it's heartening to see the support that local businesses offer the high school's Mac Madness project (see story opposite page). This year's sponsors included Hyder Family Dentistry, Wark Dental Group, Les Schwab, Hagan Hamilton Insurance, Chemeketa Community College, Andrew Physical Therapy, Lum's GMC, First Federal, Two Dogs Taphouse, Vortex Records, Citizens Bank, Express Employment, Alpine Crossing, Grain Station and Nash & Nichol. Even more businesses generously donated auction items to benefit our new suicide prevention program, Sources of Strength, at the high school.

The district is also partnering with a number of local agencies to provide mental health and other student support services. March's [Wellness Summit](#) featured a panel of representatives from various youth-serving organizations that are working with us to strengthen our pool of resources that can remove barriers to learning.

One partnership project in particular, Raising Resilience, aims to unite families in tackling the challenges of raising healthy kids in the technology age. Inspired by the book, "The Anxious Generation," the project includes a grant-funded collaboration with the McMinnville Public Library to get the book into the hands of community members; a presentation by Linfield professor Dr. Jennifer Linder with research on the potential harm of unrestricted smartphone and internet access; and a parent group, Resilient Mac, to build community connections. Click to find out more about the [Raising Resilience](#) project and how to host or join a conversation.

Despite the challenges ahead, I feel optimistic. Our schools will stay strong, and this community will continue to be a vibrant place for our children to thrive.

Debbie Brockitt



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Stylish New Career Path

Mac High's brand-new cosmetology lab will be open to the community for a preview during the high school's Spring Showcase. The Showcase highlights various Career Technical programs at the high school, including its Engineering, Fabrication, Visual Arts, Marketing programs and more. The event is Tuesday, May 20, from 3:30 - 7 p.m., followed by a choir concert in the auditorium beginning at 7 p.m.

The new lab, located on the Adams Campus at 13th and Cowl streets, will house the high



Cosmetology was the most requested program in a student survey about possible new course offerings.

school's

new Cosmetology Career Pathway. The pathway was made possible by funding from an Oregon Career and Technical Education (CTE) Revitalization grant, and courses will begin in Fall 2025.

The program starts with a year-long intro course covering hair care, nails, and esthetics, followed by three levels of lab courses that let students specialize or explore different skills. Students can also earn hours that would allow them to sit for the state licensure exams. The final step? A real-world internship.

Eventually, the plan is to open an on-campus salon for students.

Welding in the Spotlight

Mac High was the only school in Oregon chosen for a visit by the Blue Collar Tour. The 60-city tour celebrates the trades with a focus on encouraging more young people to train as welders. In a day filled with demonstrations, competitions and free gear, the visit was an eye-opening, exciting experience for many of the high school students.



¿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.