

Community News

Achieving Excellence in Education

Nurturing creativity in students



I admit it; I am old enough to remember reading the Dick Tracy comic strip and wishing I had a two-way

communication wristwatch like he wore.

The inventor, Al Gross, developed the walkie-talkie when he was just out of high school. Later, he invented the two-way radio, a ground-to-air radio system that has saved millions of soldiers' lives, and much, much more.

His teen-aged imagination, fascination, and innovation, way back then, is what enabled today's smart phone and the 21st Century version of the Dick Tracy device, the Apple Watch.

Like Mr. Gross, the impact of young creative minds, such as those of the students in our schools, can ripple through the centuries, impacting our lives in ways we can't yet envision or imagine.

Maryalice Russell, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Full-day kindergarten starts in September

Longer school day is part of state effort to improve school readiness and provide academic boost to young students.

When school starts in the fall, kindergarteners will spend more time learning academics and social skills in a longer school day.

McMinnville schools will offer a full-day kindergarten program. Currently, kindergarten students attend for a half-day session in the morning or afternoon.

The longer school day for the youngest students is part of a statewide effort to prepare students for the more rigorous learning that is required to meet Common Core State Standards.

Expanding the kindergarten program requires additional funding for teachers and school staff, classroom furnishings, technology and equipment, and curriculum and materials.

Some funding for the expanded kindergarten program has been included in the \$7.255 billion appropriation that the legislature has proposed for the K-12 State School Fund. However, a State School Fund appropriation of \$7.5 billion is closer to the amount needed for districts to sustain current programs and implement full-day kindergarten beginning in the 2015-16 school year.



MSD full-day kindergarten

Kindergarten enrollment in all McMinnville elementary schools will be a full-day program starting in fall 2015.

- All students will receive breakfast, snack and lunch through a federal school meal program known as the Community Eligibility Provision.
- Academic subjects will include literacy, math, vocabulary, science, social studies and art.
- Students will participate in P.E., music, library and technology instruction.
- Students will develop social skills through structured play and recess.

Lea este boletín informativo en español en el sitio web del distrito, www.msd.k12.or.us/es/news/community-newsletter.

Visit www.msd.k12.or.us or contact your neighborhood school for more information.

College and career readiness classes at MHS

MHS Career Pathways: Business Finance and Marketing, Computer Science, Construction, Criminal Justice, Culinary Arts, Early Childhood Education, Education, Engineering and Aerospace Sciences (EASA), Fabrication and Welding, Fire and Emergency Services, Health Services, Horticulture, Natural Resource Management, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Visual Communications (SOAR)

The goal at McMinnville High School is to help students learn skills they will need to pursue a career. Classes are designed for college and career preparation leading to college, a job after graduation, or additional training for vocational work.

In addition to the required coursework for graduation, students participate in the career pathway program where they have access to 17 programs that put them in the workplace for hands-on mentorship and training in fields such as healthcare and horticulture.

These pathways show students how to apply academic knowledge, such as algebra, in jobs such as construction and welding.

“We wanted to begin tying career fields to the content areas that kids would be taking, to talk about how the math relates to your need to be successful as an engineer or how certain practices or protocols relate to emergency services or health services,” said Superintendent Maryalice Russell.

Students who take at least two and a half credits of a career-related course are eligible for a pathway endorsement on their diploma. In some cases, that makes them job-ready after graduation.



“It’s just a really awesome opportunity because a lot of high schoolers graduate without ever knowing what they want to do, and through the different pathways, I’ve been able to experience a little bit of a few ones [careers] and feel out what I want to do.”

—Melissa Campbell, Early Childhood Education



“Through the pathway program, we’ve been fortunate enough to run our own catering business in our beautiful professional grade kitchen. I have learned many different skills which have helped me shape my career and where I want to go in life.”

—Bailey Dreibelbis, Culinary Arts



“I’m learning different welding skills, and it’s all hands-on. That’s what I like to do. There’s a lot of mathematics that goes into it – learning different angles and different ways of using tools. I have a job lined up as a welder full-time.”

—Ben Newcomb, Welding



“Throughout this pathway, I’ve had a lot of good opportunities to job shadow. I went to the chiropractor, the dentist, and I’m going to the anesthesiologist. I’m really excited about that. But it’s also helped me realize what I don’t want to do, which I think is really important.”

—Amanda Ricker, Health Services

Watch a video about the Career Pathway program at MHS: <https://vimeo.com/118604132>



Do you know about the Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balanced assessments?

New rigorous educational standards have been adopted by 45 states, including Oregon. The Common Core State Standards outline common expectations for K-12 schools across the country and hold students to the same standards, regardless of where they live.

A new test to measure student achievement is also in place in states with Common Core. The Smarter Balanced test is a challenging standardized test that will provide benchmarks for measuring student progress. In Oregon, it replaces the OAKS assessment.

Like many new systems, Common Core has not been universally embraced, but a few key points may clear up confusion about the standards.

- **The standards focus on 21st century skills for 21st century jobs.** Common Core standards are designed to prepare students to compete in and contribute to the 21st century, global economy. These standards will help produce graduates ready for today's – and tomorrow's – jobs.

- **The standards are aligned with standards from the highest achieving countries to improve global competitiveness.** This means our students will be prepared to compete nationally and internationally.

- **The standards focus on real-world skills.** Common Core emphasizes reading informational and technical texts to prepare students for the demands of college and the workplace.



Long-Range Facilities Task Force considers options for improvements at MHS

A community-based committee has been reviewing district facility needs for more than a year. The Long Range Facilities Task Force will make a recommendation to the School Board this spring for a bond measure that voters will likely see in 2016.

The recommendation will address educational needs throughout the district and may include maintenance, technology, and safety projects at all schools, as well as addressing needs at McMinnville High School.

A large part of the focus of a possible bond is McMinnville High School. The oldest part of the school was built in 1956 with 10 renovations and additions through the years as enrollment grew and educational needs changed.

In 2006, voters approved phase one of a total remodel that would bring the school up to modern standards. In the first phase, a new cafeteria and kitchen were added and classrooms were added or renovated.

During that bond campaign, the District outlined a master plan for a multi-phase, multi-bond process for MHS. The next phases include classrooms and labs for career technical programs, new fitness facilities, new band and choir rooms, a new theater and library, and an expanded food court.

The committee is reviewing the master plan and the school needs. The task force recommendation could include a bond proposal to continue the MHS master plan work or a recommendation for a new school on property the district owns on Hill Road.

A final decision will weigh costs to taxpayers and programs needs for McMinnville students.

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Other districts want to know about successful programs for students in McMinnville schools

In January, more than 120 educators from 21 Oregon districts visited McMinnville School District to observe instruction and classroom practices at Buel and Grandhaven elementary schools, top performing "model" schools, and to learn about successful programs happening district wide.

It is the third year the District has had more than one school with academic achievement in the top five percent statewide.

The Model Schools Conference allowed visitors to speak to educators and observe classrooms. The goal was to share practices that could be adapted in other districts.

The District leads the state in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) instruction and opportunities for college credits at MHS.

Read more educational highlights at www.msd.k12.or.us/sites/default/files/2015-ModelSchoolTour.pdf.



For More Information

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