Community News

School Facilities Open House

This year, the McMinnville School District welcomed nearly 6,800 students into our schools. All district facilities have improved learning environments due to the Phase I facilities bond work that occurred this summer.

On September 23rd from 10:00am - 1:00 pm, the district is hosting a facilities open house so that community members can see the improvements made to date that have resulted from the bond work. The inside of this newsletter provides more information about the open house.

One of the facilities to be toured on Sept. 23rd is the new Career Technical Center on the McMinnville High School (MHS) campus. The Career Technical Center was designed with the purpose of preparing students for high-wage careers that are in high-demand in the mid-valley; careers such as welding, fabrication, building trades, engineering, and others.

Career Technical Education (CTE) provides students with the academic, technical skills, knowledge, and training necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners. In total, about 12.5 million high school and college students are enrolled in CTE across the nation.

CTE prepares these learners for the world of work by introducing them to workplace competencies.

> As soon as I took the first intro class, I was hooked. I yearned to learn more. I needed to learn more.
> —Fire and Emergency Services student

CTE makes academic content accessible to students by providing it in a hands-on context. In fact, the high school graduation rate for students engaged in one or more CTE programs of study is about 90%—15 percentage points higher than the national average. In McMinnville, the 2016 graduation rate for CTE "concentrators" was 95.34%.

In addition to the support of voters, it's a proven fact that leveraging community resources and local partnerships can better support high-quality academic and enrichment opportunities for students by broadening the experiences offered.

Better aligning and utilizing community-based resources can also help the district identify and access low-cost services to support learning opportunities on and off school sites. Pulling in local resources such as health and human services agencies, departments of public safety, parks and recreation, community colleges, businesses, service clubs, community-based organizations, and other entities can more effectively maximize opportunities for students.

The district partners with public and private organizations to enrich the educational experiences of students in Pre-K-12th grade. Partnerships are particularly important to the Career Pathway program at McMinnville High School.

For example, last year, the Fire and Emergency Services Pathway strand and the Criminal Justice Pathway strand (collectively known as Protective Services) partnered with over 30 community-based entities to offer more robust learning experiences for the 750 MHS students taking Protective Services coursework. Forty-eight (48) students completed community- and industry-based internships—of approximately 55 hours in length—last year. Additionally, Protective Services students earned 215 Career-Technical Education certificates, and 1,289 college credits were earned in Protective Services coursework.

> I always knew that I wanted to do something within Criminal Justice, but this Pathway allowed me to make a lot of connections with people in the community that I otherwise wouldn't have connected with.
> —Criminal Justice student

At the other end of the K-12 spectrum, the district partners with the Yamhill County Community Care Organization (YCCO) and local service clubs on early learning initiatives such as Ready for Kindergarten and Kindergarten Transition Camps.

We partner with the YCCO, Head Start, local shelters and food banks, a variety of public and private organizations, and local service clubs to address the needs of homeless students. Typically, each year, the district serves around 180 students who are homeless, "couch surfing," or who otherwise have unstable living environments that significantly interfere with their ability to attend school and to come to school ready to learn.

The district is currently partnering with Spirit Mountain Community Fund on the McMinnville Robotics Alliance, which enables secondary students to compete in First Tech Challenge, while also building sustainability in our afterschool robotics program.

The McMinnville Education Foundation is the district's partner on a variety of programs, including elementary science experiences, artist-in-residence, music enrichment, and teacher mini-grants. These are just a few examples of partnerships that enrich the educational experiences of district students.

Meeting the needs of children and youth requires marshalling resources that go well beyond what we typically think of as 'the work of schools.' We are extremely thankful for our community partners. Their generosity and spirit of collaboration has and will continue to improve learning and life outcomes for the students of McMinnville School District and, thereby, strengthen our community.

The vibrancy of a community is intrinsically linked to the health and well-being of its youth. In fact, the greatest factor in the 'livability' of a community is the quality of its schools. We are fortunate to live in a community that values education and that believes in the power of partnerships to improve the lives of our youth.

If you're interested in partnering with the district through your business, organization, or service club, please contact the district office at 503.565.4000. We look forward to another exciting and successful school year!

Maryalice Russell

Helping Students Master 21st Century Skills: What parents, Families, Friends, and Community Members Can Do to Support the Work of Schools

Researchers have developed a list of seven skill-sets that employers from a broad range of industries—both white collar and blue collar careers and public and private enterprises—have identified as essential for success in the workplace. Below are ideas for ways that adults involved in the lives of children and youth, outside of the school environment, can help students develop these 21st Century skills.

1. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving - The workplace is more complicated than ever. Students need to become comfortable with complexity, to look past the present, think about the future, and connect the dots. Home- and community-based activities that can foster this skill-set include:

- ❑ Have a student help you assemble a household item, fix a broken light socket, research a summer vacation, plan a family dinner or party, etc.
- ❑ When a student encounters an obstacle, resist giving the solution. Instead, help find ways to collaboratively analyze the problem and develop solutions.
- ❑ When a teacher assigns a project, resist the urge to over-help. Struggling helps a student develop confidence in their problem solving abilities.

2. Leadership and Collaboration - In today's workplace, employees are expected to be involved with multiple team players from various divisions of the enterprise. Students need to learn how to present good ideas to a variety of people, listen to and provide feedback on the ideas of others, and collaborate with people from multiple disciplines in order to find solutions. What you can do to help students develop this skill-set:

- ❑ Encourage students to join a team or organization and to volunteer on community-based projects, such as Habitat for Humanity, the food bank, the soup kitchen, and others.
- ❑ When a student has a problem with a teacher, coach, or a friend, help them practice what they want to say and let them take care of it independently. Children and youth can't learn to advocate for themselves if the adults in their lives speak for them all the time.

3. Agility and Adaptability - In the rapidly changing workplace, there is no perfect answer, or if there is one, it may only be perfect for a second. To survive, employees need to be flexible, adaptable, and lifelong learners. How you can help a student develop these skills:

- ❑ Model flexibility. When you encounter a change in plans, don't get upset. Instead, use it as an opportunity to model/teach the student how to think on their feet.
- ❑ If you get lost, ask a student to use the map or to ask someone for directions.
- ❑ If something breaks or goes wrong, collaborate with the student to brainstorm alternative solutions. By modeling that the world doesn't end when plans change, you can instill a can-do attitude in your student.

4. Initiative, Innovation, and Entrepreneurialism - Corporations have changed dramatically in the past twenty years. The corporate structure is no longer top-down, but has 'flattened.' Bosses don't command. Instead, employees are expected to figure things out and to innovate when needed. Parents and families can help students develop these skills by:

- ❑ Let students develop and follow their own interests. Resist the urge to force a student into activities that you choose.
- ❑ Once the student becomes involved in activities they are passionate about, encourage them to show initiative by taking the activity to the next level, such as taking on a leadership role, managing a fundraiser, recruiting members.
- ❑ When students engage in activities and become involved in community-based causes they are passionate about, intrinsic motivation kicks in.

5. Effective Oral and Written Conversation - Many students have difficulty in communication: verbal, written, and presentation skills. They have difficulty being clear and concise. To help students develop communications skills:

❑ Whenever possible, eat dinner as a family and do not allow devices at the dinner table.
❑ Bring up hot topics and have debates.
❑ Have the student write thank-you notes.
❑ Encourage the student to keep a journal/diary.
❑ Read student essays written for school and tell them about sections or aspects of their writing that is effective and engaging to the reader.

6. Accessing and Analyzing Data - In the work world, data and the sheer amount of it can be overwhelming. Computers and smart phones are sources of tremendous information, but they require people to learn to separate the gems from the garbage. To help students develop this skill-set:

❑ When a student asks you a question, don't just give them the answer. Go to the computer together and look things up.
❑ Talk about the resources you find online, how to know if you can trust the source, whether the source is genuine and reliable. Discuss the characteristics of good information.

7. Curiosity and Imagination - The number one thing employers look for is the ability to ask good questions. It's the way that bright, inquisitive people show their ability to think fast and keep up in our ever-changing world. To help students develop this skill:

❑ Encourage questions, no matter how tired you are.
❑ Offer to explore ideas and projects the student is curious about, and let the student lead the way.
❑ Encourage students to pursue topics and activities they are passionate about. Help them to do research, get the necessary supplies, go places where they can explore the topic, etc.

Parent- and Educator-Recommended Apps and Websites to Support Academic Success

There are many free apps on the market and websites that educators and parents have tested and approved that can help students master a variety of academic content and skills. Groups such as the PTA, National Education Association, and others recommend one or more of the following:

❑ **Bedtime Math** - This website and app offers math problems in the form of a story, usually based on a situation or fact from the real world. Each problem is available at three skill levels. *The app is free and is for students in K-3rd.*

❑ **Learn with Homer** - This app will get kids pumped about reading with skill-building exercises and supportive materials. Learn with Homer includes phonics, stories, songs, creative play, and a safe social element called "Pigeon Post." *The app is free with in-app purchases and is for students in K-2nd.*

❑ **Starfall.com** - This website is a great starting place when kids are gearing up to read. It introduces the basics by teaching letter recognition, skill repetition, and beginner-level ebooks. *The website is designed for students in K-2nd.*

❑ **Get the Math** - This site aims to prove that algebraic thinking pays off in real-world tasks. With a combination of videos and real-life problems, the site helps kids practice mathematical concepts with solving real-world problems. *The resource is free and designed for students in 7th-10th.*

❑ **Bookopolis** - This site lets kids log their reading, rate books, and earn rewards for reading. It's great for reluctant readers who might trust another student's endorsement about a book. *Website content is free and is designed for students in 1st-9th grade (content is divided by age group).*

❑ **Fact Monster** - This website has resources for a variety of academic subjects, with biographies, an atlas, and other reference materials. It is an

informative site that also has education games. *The resource is free and is appropriate for elementary and middle school students.*

❑ **Khan Academy** - Instructional videos help students learn new concepts, review old ones, or hear something explained in a different way. As an app and a site, the service lets kids find experts explaining and showing how to tackle lots of academic content, though the main focus is math. *The app and site are free and designed for middle and high school students.*

❑ **Vocabulary.com** - Great for teens who want their vocabulary lessons gamified. As students play the game and answer the questions, the difficulty adjusts to their level and rewards them with point. *The site is free and appropriate for middle and high school students.*

❑ **Shmoop** - Study help and test prep with a twist, this humorous, teen-speak website makes novel summaries and SAT prep fun. *The site is free and designed for middle and high school students.*

❑ **Google Scholar** - Google Scholar search engine helps students weed out the noise and serve up search results students can actually use. *The search engine is free and appropriate for middle and high school students.*

Thanks to the following local contractors for their work on facility bond projects.		
Terracalc Land Surveying, Inc.	Sawtooth Caulking, Inc.	Haworth, Inc.
Farnham Electric	C&D Landscape	Washington Roofing
Gormley Plumbing and Mechanical	S&S Electrical Contractors	Innovative Technology Solutions
Express Employment	AC & Sons Construction	Renne construction
Mac Welding	Rencon Enterprises	Town & Country Fence and Deck
DND Security & Communication	Roots Building, LLC	

McMinnville School District

Facilities Bond

Community Open House

Saturday, Sept. 23rd
10 AM - 1 PM

<u>Drop in at Any Site in Any Order</u>

❑ McMinnville High School - 615 NE 15th St., McMinnville
❑ Newby Elementary - 1125 NW 2nd St., McMinnville
❑ Columbus Elementary - 1600 SW Fellows, McMinnville
❑ Grandhaven Elementary - 3200 NE McDonald Ln., McMinnville
❑ Wascher Elementary - 86 7th St. Extension, Lafayette
❑ Patton Middle School - 1175 NE 19th St., McMinnville
❑ Duniway Middle School - 575 NW Michelbook, McMinnville
❑ District Office - 800 NE Lafayette Ave., McMinnville
❑ Facilities Building - 1150 NE Lafayette Ave., McMinnville

Thank you to the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee for their facility bond work:
❑ Kevin Chambers
❑ Dr. Paul Haddeland
❑ Steve Macy

Additional thanks to Cornerstone Management and Project Managers:
Casey Cunningham, Cheryl Pin, Craig Markus, Emil Hameed, John Abel, and Rick Rainone

McMinnville School District
Achieving Excellence in Education
800 NE Lafayette Ave.
McMinnville, OR 91728

***********ECRWSS****
Postal Patrons

Shining Stars

At this year's Welcome Back to MSD staff, Dr. Russell recognized many of the Shining Stars that comprise the MSD staff. She talked about this summer's eclipse, a few minutes in time when we all paused to appreciate the brightness of the star that is our sun and the experience of darkness overtaking light.

Dr. Russell noted, "Though the eclipse obscured the sun in the Path of Totality, it also revealed something that most of us have never seen: the ring of fire around the sun, those intense rays of energy that required us all to wear eclipse glasses in order to safely view.

There are many things in the lives of our students—poverty, native language, disability, family situations, etc.—that often seem to obscure their light, their brightness. Sometimes it takes the 'special glasses' of a dedicated educator to reveal the brightness shining within a student. Ultimately, the purpose of education is to enable all of us to shine our own bright lights."