

Community News

Achieving Excellence in Education Through High Standards of Teaching and Learning

McMinnville School District in the News



As many of you likely heard and read, McMinnville School District—and McMinnville High School in particular—was featured in local and state media this fall for having: 1) A graduation rate that is significantly above state average, 2) Student proficiency rates on

state assessments that are above state average, and 3) A higher than average daily attendance rate.

In early October, the district was contacted by the office of the federal Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, to arrange a site visit for the Secretary. On October 11th, DeVos observed classes and embedded professional development and she conversed with students and staff at MHS. Following the MHS visit, DeVos and her team joined district leadership and invited teachers, classified staff, union representatives, and community stakeholders for dinner at Evergreen Space Museum, the site of the district’s Engineering and Aerospace Sciences Academy.

The Secretary’s visit provided a high-visibility opportunity to showcase the achievements of our students and staff and to demonstrate the value of public education. As superintendent, I could not have been prouder of how MHS students and staff conducted themselves during the high-security visit.

MHS Principal Tony Vicknair and the MHS team deserve praise for pulling off such a logistically complex visit on such short notice and doing a flawless job of it! I also wish to express thanks to Mac Police, Yamhill County Sherriff’s Office, Federal Marshalls, and district security for ensuring the safety of students, staff, protestors, local, state, and national media, and the officials from Washington D.C.

In this holiday season, we are especially thankful for the support the community and our many business, industry, and community partners provide to the district. Secretary DeVos’ visit didn’t merely highlight the district and high school; it highlighted a strong and vibrant community coming together in support of our public schools.

Wishing you a happy holiday season,



Superintendent Russell and MHS Asst. Principal Amy Fast discuss education issues with Secretary DeVos

McMinnville High School among State Leaders in Graduation Rate and College Credit Earnings

As reported in the Oregonian, McMinnville High School’s graduation rate rose just over two points to 86.85 percent, which is a little over 12 points above the state average. The Oregonian described MHS as one of three “super-star high schools ... in a league above the rest [that] once again led the way on helping nearly all students earn diplomas in four years.”

“We’ve steadily improved our graduation rates over the years, which is a testament to the work of teachers and administrators at every level,” said Superintendent Maryalice Russell. “From the youngest grades through high school, our staff is working to raise the achievement of all our students. These efforts are all reflected in these results, and staff across the district deserve credit for contributing to the success of these students.”

For the first time, the state also released data measuring the impact of Career Technical Education (CTE) coursework. Statewide, students who took just one CTE class graduated at a rate 11 points higher than state average.

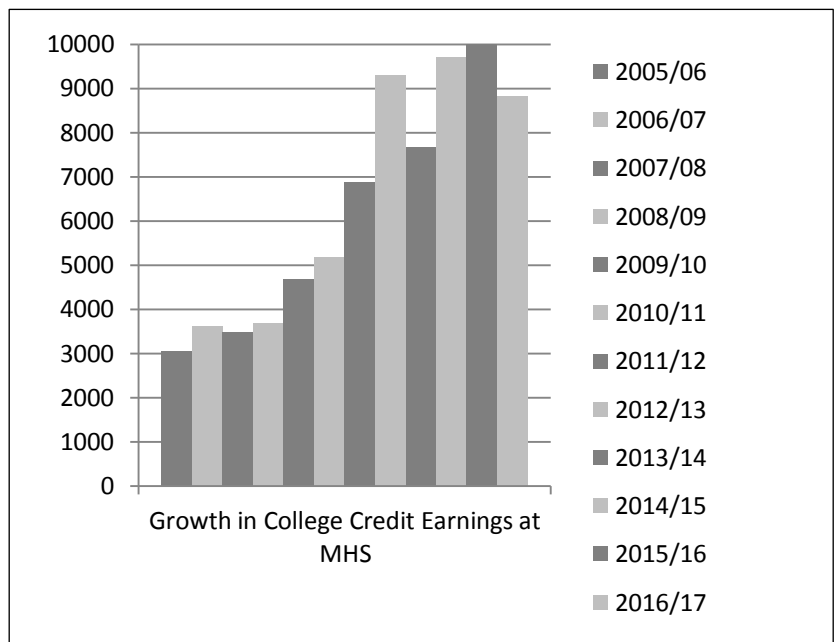
“More than half our graduating class took two or more Career Pathway classes,” said MHS Principal Tony Vicknair. “The graduation rate for those students was 95 percent. This affirms what we have long believed – that students who earn credits in any of our 18 Career Pathways are better engaged and more likely to graduate.”

Graduation Rate	2016		
	MHS	Oregon	Difference
Students			
All Students	86.85%	74.83%	+12.02%
Hispanic Students	88.76%	69.44%	+19.32%
English Learners	73.81%	52.90%	+20.91%
Ever English Learner	88.72%	71.11%	+17.61%
Students w/Disabilities	68.97%	55.50%	+13.47%

MHS Graduation



- McMinnville High School students earned 8,800 college credits last year in dual high school/college credit coursework taught by dually accredited MHS teachers on the MHS campus.
- For over seven years, McMinnville High School has been a state leader in early college programs and college credit earnings.



Community Turns Out for Facilities Tour

On September 23rd, the community turned out to see the first phase of work funded by the voter-approved facilities bond. Several hundred community members attended the facilities tour. Featured on the tour were:

- McMinnville High School renovations and cafeteria extension
- The MHS Career Technical Center, featured in the photo below



- The new District Office located in the renovated, historic Cook School
- The new Facilities Building located on Lafayette Ave
- Renovations and energy upgrades at Newby, Washer, Columbus, Grandhaven, Duniway, and Patton schools

Educators from Across the State Visit the District

In mid-November, about 50 educators from districts across the state visited McMinnville School District and, specifically, Wascher Elementary, Grandhaven Elementary, Duniway Middle, and McMinnville High School. The objective of the full day visit was to learn about district initiatives that have led to increased student achievement and engagement.

The History of Public Education in Oregon

America's forefathers believed in public education. In 1785, John Adams wrote, *"The whole people must take upon themselves the education of the whole people and be willing to bear the expenses of it. There should not be*

a district of one mile square without a school in it, not founded by a charitable individual, but maintained at the public expense of the people themselves."

In the 1800s, when our country took in more immigrants and it became more diverse, education reformers saw public education as a means of creating productive citizens, ending poverty and crime and unifying an increasingly diverse population. Those societal goals are as relevant today as they were then.

Fifty-eight years after John Adams persuaded the founders of the value of public education, in 1843, the first public school in Oregon opened in Oregon City. Rev. George Atkinson, often called the "Father of Oregon schools," prepared the first public school law in Oregon in 1849.

In 1869, Oregon's first public high school opened in Portland, and within that decade, the Oregon University System began to develop. Seven years later, in 1876, McMinnville School District was formed and a tax was levied to build a public school house. By 1885, there were nearly 50,000 students enrolled in Oregon's 1,371 public school districts. At the end of the century, that number had grown to over 97,000 students being served in 2,094 public school districts across the state. Today, after consolidation, there are 220 school districts in Oregon.

In 1904, a minimum school term was set at four months, though compulsory education was not yet the law of the land. By 1919, teacher certification requirements had been developed, requiring a high school education plus 12 weeks of professional training. Oregon's Compulsory Education Law was passed in 1922. Three years later, the average school term was set at a minimum of 174 days, which is equivalent to current-day law.

The average teacher salary in Oregon in the 1930's was \$867.15 per year. In fact, Oregon ranked 48th out of 49 states, including the District of Columbia, in public school funding. Today, Oregon doesn't rank much better in school funding, coming in 30th out of 51 (Governing, 2016). During the 1930's, community colleges began to form, most with a focus on Vocational/Technical education. By the 1950's, state sales tax and other tax measures to support public schools were consistently defeated by voters, and many

districts in Oregon had to close school early due to a lack of funding.

Jumping ahead to the 1980's, the national average teacher salary was \$18,162 per year, whereas the average postal carrier earned \$25,000 per year. The Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century passed the legislature in 1989, but it did not provide any funding for the massive changes demanded by the new law.

Prior to the 1990's, school funding in Oregon relied mostly on local property tax. However, in 1990, the source and structure of public school funding changed with the passage of Measure 5, the first property tax limitation measure. A year later, the legislature enacted a law requiring all school districts to provide a K-12 education. By the end of the decade, the state share of public school funding reached 80%.

Now, as we enter 2018, the issue of school funding in Oregon is still unresolved. However, the role of public education in our nation, state, and community is arguably more critical today than it has ever been in our nation's history. Public schools:

- Provide universal access to education
- Guarantee of equal opportunities for all children
- Unify a diverse population
- Prepare people for citizenship in a democratic society
- Prepare people to be economically self-sufficient
- Improve social outcomes, benefiting all citizens

Just as America's forefathers predicted over two-hundred-forty years ago, *public education is essential to our common good.*

(Website sources: "History." Oregon Education Association. Strauss, Valerie. "Why Public Education Must be Preserved." Washington Post. 2011. Hammond, Betsy. "Oregon Schools Must Make up Lost School Days or Get a Waiver." Oregon Live. Updated Jan. 2017.)

Educational Technology Trends

Communications, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity—the four C's of education—are at the core of educational technology coming in 2018 and beyond.

Technology that lends itself to collaborative learning is particularly at the forefront of next generation tools. Technology can be the driver of student-centered learning by emphasizing interacting, working in groups, developing solutions to real-world problems, and communicating globally. Such skills are demanded in the 21st century workplace.

The "maker mindset" movement, which focuses on innovation, is increasingly becoming mainstream in K-12 education. Maker mindset technologies enable students to engage in intellectual play and to practice and develop their "maker muscles." Maker mindset activities require that students reflect often, be accountable, cultivate an appreciation for failure, and use role models as inspiration. Computational thinking, coding, and robotics are interconnected with maker mindset. MSD has established programs in all three of these domains. Current initiatives in the district are aimed at growing existing programs and ensuring all students have multiple opportunities to learn coding. In fact, coding is expected to become as essential as reading, writing, and math in the world of work that our students are entering.



The increasing role of technology in education requires developing expertise in technology-rich teaching and learning. Often, teachers are expected to be experts in technologies that didn't even exist when they were in school or college. This makes the role of Instructional Technology coaching and ongoing professional development critical. The district provides teachers with job-embedded instructional technology coaching and multiple opportunities throughout the school year for professional development focused on educational technology.

(Website sources: "11 Hot Edtech Trends to Watch." International Society for Technology in Education. Jan. 2017. "Developing a Maker Mindset." EdSurge. June, 2016)

The Impact of Chronic Absenteeism

A recent report, “Absences Add Up,” from Attendance Works, documents what many know from common sense: At every age, in every demographic group, and in every state and city tested, students with poor attendance scored significantly lower on standardized tests. This translates into weaker reading and math skills, failing grades, and higher dropout rates.

Poor attendance can be turned around when schools and families work together to monitor students at risk for poor attendance, nurture a habit of regular attendance, and identify and address the challenges that prevent students from getting to school. The key is using data to identify and intervene early, before students have missed so much school they can't catch up. It's clear that improved attendance results in substantial gains in academic performance. Here are some facts about the impact of poor attendance that every parent should be aware of:

- Missing two days a month means a student misses 10% of the school year, which is the definition of ‘chronic absenteeism.’
- Students who miss fewer than two days in September, at the start of the school year, typically have good attendance rates for the entire year.
- Children who are 15 minutes late every day will miss two weeks of learning each year.
- 50% of students who miss 2-4 days of school in September will go on to miss nearly a month of school by the end of the school year.
- Only 20% of students who miss 20 days of school per year have a chance of graduating.
- In Oregon, 20.7% of kindergarteners and 16.6% of first graders are chronically absent. Poor attendance influences whether children read proficiently by the end of third grade.
- By 6th grade, chronic absenteeism is the leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.

Please ensure your student attends school on-time and daily. Excused absences are as academically harmful as unexcused absences.

McMinnville Education Foundation Awards Teacher Mini-Grants

The McMinnville Education Foundation was created in 1998 to provide learning enrichment opportunities for students in the McMinnville School District. The foundation is a volunteer-driven, nonprofit organization that has made its mark by funneling money directly into classrooms and promoting educational excellence for all students.

In November, the McMinnville Education Foundation awarded over \$25,000 in teacher mini-grants to support innovations in teaching and learning, putting the total of mini-grants awarded over the last 15 years at more than \$300,000.

In addition to the mini-grant program, the foundation funds K-5th grade community-based STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) activities (photo below), an artist in residence program at all elementary schools, Living History Day, and Battle of the Books.

The mission of the foundation is to expand the range of educational opportunities available to students in the district and to encourage excellence, innovation, and creativity in McMinnville's education system.

To join or donate to the McMinnville Education Foundation or to learn more, visit their website at: www.mac40kids.org



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McMinnville School District Awarded a Career/Technical Education (CTE) Revitalization Grant to Support Construction Trades Teaching and Learning

The Oregon Department of Education recently awarded the district a \$284,000 grant for a construction trades project. This is the third CTE Revitalization grant the district has received. The previous grant projects were focused on STEM and on Protective Services (Fire & Emergency Services and Criminal Justice). The new grant will fund the CTE Seminar Project. The project will engage 6th-9th grade students in hands-on learning focused on the construction trades: electrical, plumbing and mechanical, HVAC, metalwork and fabrication, engineering and design, construction and carpentry. In addition to experiential learning, students will explore societal issues related to affordable housing, sustainable building, green energy, and related topics. The construction trades provide high-wage careers that are in high-demand in the mid-valley, due to an aging workforce in which 61% of tradespeople in Yamhill County are fifty-five plus years of age (Oregon.gov, 2017).

The CTE Seminar Project is designed to expand and grow three existing Career Pathways at McMinnville High School—construction, fabrication, and engineering—while developing a more diverse pipeline of students prepared to enter the construction trades. The project will feature school-day coursework and afterschool and summer school seminars. By giving students access to high-quality, occupation-directed training, the project will improve academic performance, attendance, and engagement, while increasing student interest in pursuing construction trades careers.

The district is seeking to develop more partnerships with local businesses, tradespeople, and craftspeople that have expertise in the construction trades to serve as project advisors, provide skill demonstrations, serve as guest speakers/instructors, and provide curriculum support and technical assistance. Interested parties should contact Jill Long at 503.565.4030 or email jlong@msd.k12.or.us