

# Community News

*Achieving Excellence in Education through High Standards of Teaching and Learning*



## ATTENDANCE MATTERS: ALL DAY, EVERY DAY

The McMinnville School District, in collaboration with community-based partners and businesses, is launching the **Attendance Matters: All Day, Every Day** campaign. The objective of the campaign is to raise awareness of

the impact of chronic absenteeism—whether the absences are excused or unexcused—on student achievement and life outcomes.

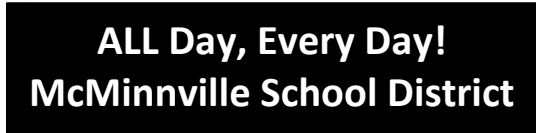
It is essential that students attend school ALL DAY, EVERY DAY in order to achieve their college and career aspirations. It is equally critical that parents, families, and other adults involved in the lives of children understand the consequences of poor school attendance:

The Oregon Dept. of Education is launching a new website and toolkit for educators and families aimed at providing information and other resources to help reduce chronic absenteeism in Oregon. The website, [www.every-day-matters.org](http://www.every-day-matters.org) is the core tool in the state campaign called Every Day Matters, highlighting the importance regular attendance plays in student outcomes.

- Being absent in the first month of school often is a predictor of poor attendance throughout the school year.
- One in ten kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students are chronically absent (defined as missing 10% or more of school, which is equivalent to missing about 1.7 days per month).

- Students who are chronically absent in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are less likely to read at grade level by the time they finish 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- By 6<sup>th</sup> grade, students who are chronically absent are significantly less likely to graduate from high school.
- By 9<sup>th</sup> grade, chronic absenteeism is a better indicator than 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores that a student will dropout of high school.
- The impact of absenteeism on academic achievement is the same regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused.
- A student who misses 20 days of school per year only has a 20% chance of ever graduating from high school.

As you travel throughout the community, you will notice signs that look similar to the one below.



The signs should serve as a reminder to students that **regular school attendance matters**. Additionally, for the community, the signs should be a reminder that sometimes, for some students, it takes a community effort to get students to attend school all day, every day. If you would like to display an 8 x 11” window sign at your business, laminated signs are available at the District Office (800 NE Lafayette Ave.) front desk.

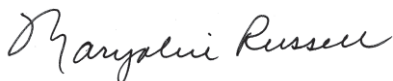
Regular school attendance is a predictor of outcomes after graduation, such as college completion and careers that earn a living family wage. McMinnville High School prepares students for success in college and career. Even so, some of our students who would like to

attend college do not enroll because they don't know how to successfully navigate the higher education system. It helps when family members can share their college experiences and provide support. However, the families of first-generation college goers often do not have that college-knowledge to impart.

Only 22% of adults (age 25 and up) in McMinnville and only 13% of adults in Lafayette have a college degree, whereas the state average is 31.5%. That means that approximately 80% of district students cannot rely on their families to provide college-knowledge or assist them in navigating the complex road to college (financial aid, scholarships, enrollment process, etc). As a result, several years ago, the district established a College and Career Center at MHS. Center staff are available to provide personalized support to students and families. You can contact the Center by calling 503.565.4200 and requesting the College and Career Center. The district also implemented the AVID program (Advancement Via Individual Determination) at MHS to provide more support and college preparation for first-generation college-goers.

The health of our local economy and the overall vibrancy of our community depends on students gaining employment in careers that earn a living family wage. Many of those careers require a college degree, so it is essential that we increase the number of students who enroll in and complete college or vocational/career training.

Achieving improved postsecondary outcomes for our students starts by raising awareness about the importance of regular school attendance beginning in kindergarten. **ATTENDANCE MATTERS: ALL DAY, EVERY DAY!** Please join us in this community-wide campaign to eliminate chronic absenteeism and promote regular school attendance.



## McMINNVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT FEATURED IN THE OREGONIAN

"As Oregon works to solve its math problem, one school district blazes a path," an article in the Sept. 23, 2018 edition of the Oregonian and picked up by the Associated Press, discusses how the District's laser-like

focus on research-based instructional practices and high-quality professional development for teachers is improving student outcomes. McMinnville School District students performed above state average in English/Language Arts, Math, and Science, as measured by statewide assessments taken last May and documented in the table below.

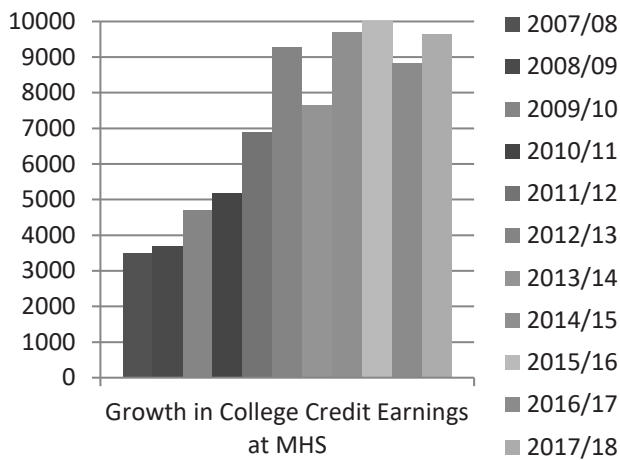
English/Language Arts (Composite of all Tested Grades)	
Student Subgroup	% MSD Students Performed ABOVE State Average
All Students	+3.4%
White	+4.3%
Latino	+7.6%
English Learners	+2.4%
Mathematics (Composite of all Tested Grades)	
Student Subgroup	% MSD Students Performed ABOVE State Average
All Students	+9.9%
White	+12.3%
Latino	+12.5%
English Learners	+7.1%
Science (Composite of All Tested Grades)	
Student Subgroup	% MSD Students Performed ABOVE State Average
All Students	+14.4%
White	+14.3%
Latino	+21.5%
English Learners	+8.8%

The MHS graduation rate was also above state average, as illustrated in the following table.

2017 Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate			
Students	MHS	Oregon	% MHS Is ABOVE State Avg.
All Students	87.55	76.65	+10.90
White	86.09	78.04	+8.05
Hispanic Students	89.25	72.54	+16.71
English Learners	63.41	54.88	+8.53
Ever English Learner	87.86	73.86	+14.00
Students w/Disabilities	62.69	58.81	+3.88
CTE Participants	93.40	86.33	+7.07
CTE Completers	96.59	91.66	+4.93

MHS remains a state leader in the number of college credits earned by high school students on a high school

campus, as illustrated in the following chart. In the 2017/18 school year, the MHS dual credit program saved students and families well over \$1.5 million in college tuition, based on the average cost per credit hour for Oregon community colleges and universities.



## STRENGTHENING EARLY LEARNING

The McMinnville School District offers a high-quality pre-kindergarten program for four-year-olds. The ½ day AM/PM preschools are located at Buel, Wascher, and Newby. Students do not have to live within the specific school’s attendance area to participate. Additionally, beginning this year, Yamhill County Head Start preschool programs are located at Buel and Grandhaven.

For parents of children age birth to five, the district also offers Ready for Kindergarten. The program, provided in three evening workshops—fall, winter, and spring—features the following components, all of which are provided free of charge to participating families:

- Healthy family meals
- Opportunities to network with other families
- Age-targeted (birth to one, one to two, two to three, etc.) child development workshops provided in English and Spanish
- Parent resources, including age-appropriate, high-quality toys and books designed to foster healthy child development and a parent manual featuring helpful tips on ways to stimulate child development
- Childcare during the workshops

Participating families are encouraged to attend all three sessions offered each year.

The children of parents who participate in the district’s Ready for Kindergarten program perform better on the Oregon Kindergarten Assessment than do children whose parents do not participate.

Longitudinal research conducted by the Stanford Institute on Economic Policy, Stanford University, and the Georgetown University Center for Research on Children in the U.S. has documented that high-quality public pre-kindergarten, combined with full-day kindergarten, results in the greatest achievement gains that persist over time. Further, achievement gains are greatest among disadvantaged children, especially those living in rural or ‘urban-fringe’ areas such as McMinnville and Lafayette.

The next Ready for Kindergarten Workshop will be held at Sue Buel Elementary on Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> from 5:45-7:45. To register, call Mary Dressel at 503.565.4004.

The more often a parent attends Ready for Kindergarten over the course of their child’s early life (birth to five), the better their child will perform on the Oregon



**Ready for Kindergarten**

Kindergarten Assessment. The assessment measures early literacy (letter numbers and sounds), early math (numbers and operations), self-regulating behaviors, and interpersonal skills. The assessment is a key indicator of later school success. For example, the more letters and letter sounds a child can identify in kindergarten, the more likely they are to read at or above grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The district also provides a summer Kindergarten Transition Camp to give students a solid start to their school experience.

## GRANT AWARDS ARE PROVIDING ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT AND EXTENDED DAY/YEAR SCHOOLING

This past summer, 139 district students in 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade participated in Construction Trades Summer Seminars. The Seminars engaged students in project-based, hands-on learning in construction, welding and fabrication, ceramics, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math). Construction Trades Seminars will be offered afterschool this year and again next summer. A \$284,000 Oregon Department of Education Career/Technical Education Revitalization grant is funding the project.

The Construction Trades grant project is aligned with the new afterschool and summer school project, STEAM Ahead, which is funded by a \$2.5 million, five-year 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers competitive grant. The afterschool grant project focuses on 'makerspaces.' The afterschool program will provide K-12<sup>th</sup> grade students with targeted academic tutoring, project-driven STEAM learning in a makerspace environment, and other academic enrichment.

MAKING IS FUNDAMENTAL TO WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN. WE MUST MAKE, CREATE, AND EXPRESS OURSELVES TO FEEL WHOLE. THERE IS SOMETHING UNIQUE ABOUT MAKING PHYSICAL THINGS. THESE THINGS ARE LIKE LITTLE PIECES OF US AND SEEM TO EMBODY PORTIONS OF OUR SOULS. —

MARK HATCH, THE MAKER MOVEMENT

Makerspaces promote hands-on learning and learning by making/doing. Simply put, makerspaces combine DIY (Do It Yourself) projects and education! A makerspace is more than the space itself. It is a mindset that can be taught and learned. Students are quite good at consuming technology with the swipe of an index finger. However, with makerspaces, the objective is to move beyond *consumption* to *creation*.

A makerspace is about turning knowledge into action and increasing the personalization of learning that occurs. School

makerspaces are a place where students have an opportunity to explore their own interest, learn to use tools and materials, both physical and virtual, work collaboratively with others, and develop and test creative projects. Most importantly, makerspaces are characterized by teaching and learning that focuses on student-centered inquiry and student collaboration. Makerspace learning is not the project done at the *end* of a unit of study, but the actual *vehicle and purpose* of the learning.

## THE ROLE OF DADS IN ADVANCING STUDENT SUCCESS

Fathers who get involved in their children's education have a significant impact on the health, academic success, and happiness of their sons and daughters.

One out of every three children in America grows up without a biological father in their life. Nationally, 24 million kids miss out on the many benefits of having a dad around. Children with a father present in their daily life are less likely to become involved in crime or substance abuse and are more likely to achieve academic success. According to a report by the Dept. of Education and Health and Human Services, research demonstrates that fathers, no matter their income or cultural background, can play a critical role in their children's education. When fathers are involved, their children learn more, perform better in school, and exhibit healthier behaviors. Even when fathers do not share a home with their children, their active involvement can make a lasting and positive impact.

According to research, fathers help children grow in specific ways. Children with involved fathers are more ready to succeed, academically, when they start school, and they tend to show more patience. As they mature, they have better verbal skills, intellectual functioning—including mental dexterity, problem-solving skills, and intellectual curiosity—and they achieve greater academic success (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2001).

Family engagement, with both mothers and fathers, affects many aspects of youth development, including resilience, academic learning and growth, social skills, caring, self-awareness, creativity, strategic thinking, and character development. All of these characteristics add up to what makes a student successful.

A national PTA summary report on fathers' involvement in the academic learning and school success of their children shows that, between 2000 and 2010, fathers have significantly increased their involvement with their children at school, as well as their interaction with teachers, school officials, and other parents. However, 39% of fathers surveyed reported that they have never read aloud to their child or read with their child, 32% have never visited their child's classroom, and 54% have never volunteered at their child's school.

Similarly, a National Center for Fathering survey of 900 men found that 40% of dad's reported they had never read to their child, 58% said they had never volunteered at their child's school, 77% had never had lunch with their child at school, and 37% had never visited their child's classroom.

If a child's father is not in the life of his child, other male family members—stepfathers, uncles, grandfathers, older brothers— can play an important role in supporting academic success. The absence of a biological father in the life of a child makes it all the more important for other male family members to step up and take a mentoring role.

## **QUICK TIPS FOR DADS TO SUPPORT ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

- Check your child's homework. Make sure to look at what was assigned, not just what was completed.
- Keep track of important due dates together.
- Schedule time for homework help every night.
- Set up a study station or an area dedicated to studying that is free of interference.
- Support your child's non-academic interests, such as sports and hobbies, and explore nature and recreation together.
- Join the PTA to show your child that you care about how he or she does in school.
- Talk regularly with your child's teachers, coaches, and club leaders.
- Get everyone in the family a library card and start visiting the library regularly.
- Establish a weekly reading schedule in which the entire family is off their screens/devices/video games.
- Take your child to school, attend class events, volunteer at school, and attend parent/teacher conferences.

## **EQUITY VERSUS EQUALITY**

In August, at the Welcome Back event for district staff, renewing the district's commitment to equity for students and staff took center stage.

The difference between equity and equality is important to understand, especially as it pertains to educational outcomes. Equity is giving every student what he or she needs to be successful. Equality is treating every student the same. Equality aims to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help. Students are not 'built' that way. They are unique individuals with differing needs.

As Superintendent Russell stated at the Welcome Back, "As we embark on a new school year, we must renew our commitment to respect, appreciate, and honor the lives and experiences of our students and our colleagues. Respect isn't enough, however. We must also seek to continuously assess our work with students and our relationships with our colleagues and the broader community using an equity lens and being aware of the human tendency toward implicit bias."

Recently, in Germany, a study was conducted to assess the impact of elementary teacher bias on grades, performance expectations, and academic outcomes. Teachers were given the same student essay, but the essay was attributed to two different students. One student had a native German surname and one had a Turkish surname. The essay attributed to the Turkish student was given a grade substantially below that of the German student (remember, teachers were reading the same exact essay). The teachers recommended the Turkish student pursue a vocationally-focused secondary school. The German student was given a much higher grade and was recommended to attend an academically rigorous secondary school.

In the U.S., a study by Tenenbaum and Ruck (2007), among others, found evidence that teachers have different expectations regarding the performance of pupils according to their ethnic background. For example, students of color tend to receive less favorable treatment in the classroom if their teacher is white. Specifically, they receive lower grades, significantly less praise, less feedback, and are called on less often.

\*\*\*\*\*ECRWSS\*\*\*\*\*

## Postal Patrons

Every time we make a decision or take an action, our social background, personal and cultural values, and life experiences influence our reasoning. This is beneficial for helping us make day-to-day choices that align with our goals, but it can also cause implicit bias. Biases are pervasive. Everyone possesses them. The implicit associations we hold do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.

Fortunately, biases are malleable. Our brains are incredibly complex, and the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned through a variety of de-biasing techniques. As individuals and, collectively, as a school district, we can improve our awareness of biases, discuss them, and take action to overcome them.

In addition to ensuring our students have the knowledge and skills they need to realize their greatest aspirations, educators must model the actions, attitudes, and behaviors that we want to foster in our students. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to

continuously examine our own implicit biases and overcome them.

The community can help too. Families, businesses, organizations, and community leaders can examine their implicit biases and discuss ways of creating a more inclusive culture and climate in our community, a culture that welcomes all people and treats everyone with respect.

In closing, Dr. Russell stated, “As we welcome each other back to school, excited to meet new students and staff and reconnect with colleagues, let each of us renew our commitment to examine our own implicit biases. Further, let each of us commit to working diligently to overcome them, so that we can build a stronger, more robust school community and, ultimately, a better community, nation, and world.”