



Moscow School District 281

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE:

It's about Transparency and Communication

"We are planning two projects.... First: developing a new 5-year Strategic Plan..... Second: discuss the concerns with and possible replacement of two of our facilities."

This is a new feature we are presenting to keep our community informed of what is happening in the Moscow School District. Throughout the pandemic communication between our families and the school district has been key in helping in our battle against the impact of COVID.

- Our Board of Trustees has increased their transparency and communication by making monthly school board meetings available on YouTube. This allows community members easier access to the meetings should they choose not to attend in person.
- The school administrators have strived to communicate with families through weekly informational emails.

At the district level, as superintendent, I have provided the following:

- Monthly Zoom meetings called, "Community Chat with the Superintendent" where patrons can get updates on what is happening in our district and ask questions.
- Weekly Zoom meetings called "Coffee Chat with the Superintendent" is provided for district staff on Wednesday morning to get updates on issues that impact the district and ask questions.
- Monthly meetings with the leaders of the Parent and Teacher Associations (P.A.T.) to share what they are doing and what is occurring in the district.
- Participation in regularly scheduled meetings with other community leadership teams such as Moscow Chamber of Commerce, University of Idaho, City of Moscow, Latah County Commissioners, and various health professionals and organizations. This has been especially helpful throughout the time we have been dealing with the COVID pandemic.
- Ongoing communication with our three Idaho legislators, Senator Nelson, Representative Nilsson-Troy, and Representative Mitchell. We have a good working relationship and I appreciate their willingness to reach out when they need to know how certain bills being presented during a legislative session will impact our schools.

In the upcoming months, we are planning two projects. First, the Board and a Leadership Team will be developing a new 5-year Strategic Plan for our district. This plan will have tasks to be completed each year and reviewed quarterly. We will be asking our community to help with this process through surveys and in-person activities. Second, we will be setting up meetings to discuss the concerns with and possible replacement of two of our facilities, Russell Elementary School and Moscow High School. A committee of staff and community members will be asked to assist in this project.

On behalf of the Moscow School District, I would like to thank the patrons of Moscow for their ongoing support of our students and staff, especially during the past two years. It is great to be a part of such a wonderful community.

LENA WHITMORE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: P.A.T. Completes Major Goal

"This fall our P.A.T. was finally able to purchase and install an ADA-friendly playground."

Our Lena Whitmore Elementary School Family is comprised of forty dedicated staff members, an amazingly supportive Parent Advisory Team (P.A.T.), and 250 fabulous kindergarten through fifth grade students!

After four years of fundraising, this fall our P.A.T. was finally able to purchase and install an ADA-friendly playground. Not only did the P.A.T. purchase equipment that is specially designed for students with mobility challenges, they also invested in the rubber ground filling, which makes it easier for student access. Our Wolverines were quite excited to have new equipment to play on!

This winter in P.E. all our students are participating in "Marathon Kids," a mileage tracking software program that promotes physical activity, lifelong health, and goal setting. Students have set the goal of walking/running one marathon throughout the school year. Each grade level is also competing to see who can hypothetically walk/run over 1,000 miles from Moscow, Idaho to Disneyland! The "Marathon Kids" program has a tracking system where each student has a unique QR code to scan after running a certain distance. Visit our Lena Whitmore P.A.T. Facebook page for updates! Go Wolverines!



CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT DEPARTMENT: Providing the Curriculum Needed for Excellence

"Provides students with current, research-based curriculum."

The Curriculum and Assessment Department provides guidance and resources to both teachers and students for supporting student learning in the classroom. This fall, teachers participated in professional development on the following topics:

- Social and Emotional Learning, an integral part of both human development and education in which students develop the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills vital for school, work, and life success.
- Effective collaboration to better meet the needs of at-risk students in the classroom.
- Response to Intervention, a data-driven approach to identifying and supporting students with learning and behavioral needs.
- Strategies for improving writing skills at the elementary level.

The Curriculum and Assessment Department also assures students are provided with current, research-based curriculum. In August, a committee of teachers began the process of reviewing curricula in the content areas of Mathematics grades 6-12, Music, Art, Foreign Language, Computer Science, and Career and Technical Education, with the goal to complete their review by March.

One additional critical support managed through the Curriculum Department is the Federal McKinney-Vento program which ensures equal educational opportunities to all homeless children in the district. In 2019, the district joined a non-profit organization (managed through an online app) called Purposity. Purposity "connects the physical needs of [students]...with local people who want to help through just a few clicks." This year, the Moscow School District,

with support from the Moscow community, has helped 22 homeless students and their families. If you would like to help support students in need, you can download the Purposity app through Apple or Android.

MCDONALD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: Once a Duck, always a Duck!

"Our school maintains a prolific school garden with help from the University of Idaho and community volunteers."

Home of the Ducks, with more than 360 students, we have classes in kindergarten through fifth grade and house the district's developmental preschool program. We have many wonderful school activities that help solidify student learning and bring students, families, and the community together.

Our school maintains a prolific school garden with help from the University of Idaho and community volunteers. We grow vegetables to serve in our cafeteria and to donate to the community. It allows students hands-on experiences connecting academic learning in the areas of science, math, and writing while problem-solving with their peers.



Both before and throughout this pandemic, our students consistently perform much higher on required testing than the state average. This academic proficiency is achieved from incredible family support, student grit, teacher expertise and drive, staff collaboration, thoroughly researched curriculums, and great connections with the community. In addition to traditional academic subjects taught in the classroom, students also are educated in subjects that include STEAM, Art, and Social/Emotional skills which focus on emotion management, proactive social interactions, and problem-solving skills.

We are proud of the culture of McDonald Elementary School. Staff is happy to come to work each day and truly care about the students we serve. Students feel that support and respond by learning not only about academics but also about solving problems, getting along with others, and being kind human beings. Our sense of belonging is one of our greatest assets, "Once a Duck, always a Duck!"

OPERATIONS: Behind the Scenes, but Very Important

"We have also embarked on the following major projects this past year."

Moscow School District Operations provides support and oversight of the following areas within the district: Building and Grounds, Student Transportation, Student Nutrition, and Technology.

These employees maintain our eight facilities and grounds equipment; provide transportation; and prepare and serve an average of 1,100 breakfasts and lunches daily. The Technology Department manages and supports our network infrastructure as well as troubleshooting problems with student and staff computers, iPads, printers, projectors, and a wide variety of other devices.

In addition to the day-to-day tasks required in each of these areas, we have also embarked on the following major projects this school year:

- Continued upgrade of District security and access control through the addition and replacement of security cameras and other improvements to physical security. Two such projects are the complete replacement of the intercom/paging/bell systems at both Moscow Middle School and Lena Whitmore Elementary School. This will include updated digital clocks, displays, IP speakers, and exterior audio and visual indicators of emergency situations. The replacement of these systems started at the end of January.
- Moving from a "lab and classroom" based technology footing onto a "one-to-one" device footing. As of the start of this school year, every MSD student had a device (Chromebook or iPad) assigned specifically to them.
- Complete replacement of the current steam heating system at McDonald Elementary School with an updated HVAC system. The work will begin this summer.
- Planning for the systematic continuation of these projects at each of our other schools in the future as funding allows.

PARADISE CREEK REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL: Innovation Leading Toward Success

"The staff has been invited to present this student support model at the 2022 Idaho Department of Education Prevention & Support Conference."

The students at PCRHS have been busy this school year! With one of the largest student populations to start the year, they have been highly engaged in many interactive and hands-on learning opportunities. This includes creating fireworks in Chemistry, delving into a wide array of texts in English, as well as preparing meals in Academic Strategies with the University of Idaho Eat Smart program.

The students have also engaged in several social/emotional learning and building activities such as a full day of team challenges at ENGAGE at Paradise Ridge as well as designing, preparing, and enjoying a large Thanksgiving meal as a school family at the Moscow Moose Lodge. Student engagement has been strong resulting in great attendance and high levels of credit attainment. Awesome work, students!

The staff has been continuing to innovate ways to best support all students. This includes attending and designing multiple professional development opportunities focused on secondary intervention programs and individual student learning. These plans are dedicated to best supporting each student as he/she works toward graduation and post-secondary goals. The staff has been invited to present this student support model at the 2022 Idaho Department of Education Prevention & Support Conference.

We are incredibly proud of the work that occurs daily at Paradise Creek Regional High School. If the families of local sophomores, juniors, or seniors are interested in learning more about this program, please visit the PCRHS website (<https://pcrhs.msd281.org/>) or call 208-882-3687 for more information.



Community Connections



MOSCOW HIGH SCHOOL: Pride of the North

"We were able to provide online credit recovery classes and teacher support through grants obtained by one of our amazing MHS parents."

It's been a difficult couple of years for students, families, and staff. After remote learning and hybrid schedules, it has been wonderful to get back to full-time in-person classes. Our Homecoming Parade at the beginning of the year was a big hit and having Youth Empowerment for our new freshmen really helps them bond and feel like a part of the school. Our ASB executives have done a fantastic job of bringing the fun, sponsoring scavenger hunts, morning trivia, door decorating competitions, and much more.

While taking care of students' social and emotional needs is very important, MHS is still all about academics. We've been working hard to help support students impacted by the pandemic. Last summer we were able to provide online credit recovery classes and teacher support through grants obtained by one of our amazing MHS parents. This spring we'll be offering additional credit recovery classes and study skills courses to help keep students on track for graduation and success after high school.

The number of students taking dual credit courses dropped significantly during the pandemic, but those numbers are on the increase. Our PSAT (Preliminary SAT) scores for sophomores have continued to be impressive even during the pandemic, with our average scores nearly 200 points above the state average. Even better, our sophomores have outscored the state's juniors three years in a row.

MHS has also been busy with activities. Throughout the past year, MHS has competed at a high level against some of the best competition in the state. Our programs have not only won several regional titles but have also been recognized by the Idaho High School Athletic Association and The North Idaho Athletic Hall of Fame committee. Both our girls cross country and boys soccer programs were academic state champions and our volleyball team won the sportsmanship award at the state tournament. Our swim teams continued to excel and produced multiple state champions this fall. Currently, our basketball, wrestling, and cheer teams are heading toward districts and our spring athletes are looking forward to the snow melting.

None of our success would be possible without our wonderful students, amazing staff, and the unwavering support of our families and community. Thank you to everyone who helps make MHS the Pride of the North. Go Bears!



SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SUPPORTS: Supporting Students in Need

"Developmental preschool staff chose to get involved in this collaborative project because research has shown that the more socially skilled children are, the more likely they are to succeed in school!"

During the pandemic, spanning parts of the past three school years, our administration, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and therapists have worked diligently with families to support and serve our students with disabilities. Services have been provided in creative ways including summer programming, teletherapy, unique school schedules that allow more direct contact with teachers, lessons on CANVAS, remote consultation with related service providers, and synchronous lessons with teachers. Moscow School District looks forward to continued partnerships between staff and families to support our students' educational progress.

This school year the Moscow School District's developmental preschool program joined the Idaho Pyramid Model Collaborative, a multi-year technical assistance and professional development project focused on increasing social and emotional outcomes for young children ages 3 to 5. Our developmental preschool staff chose to get involved in this collaborative project because research has shown that the more socially skilled children are, the more likely they are to succeed in school!

The Moscow School District is grateful to all the nurses in our community who stepped forward to work as a substitute school nurse during the past two months until we were able to hire a full time nurse.

MOSCOW MIDDLE SCHOOL: PRIDE - More Than Just a Word

"Students and teachers are working very hard to display the characteristics of Cub PRIDE in all that they do."

If you walk the halls of Moscow Middle School, you will see the acronym PRIDE displayed in many places. PRIDE was coined by MMS Associated Student Body (ASB) officers and when expanded, reads Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, Excellence. One of the greatest achievements of this year is the vast majority who display Cub PRIDE every day at Moscow Middle School!

- Perseverance is defined as persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.
- Respect (for self and others) is critically important, demonstrated by accepting that there are a wide variety of points of view and respecting the property, health, safety, and effort of others.
- Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles, and we see numerous examples every day!
- Dedication is the commitment that is required to be perseverant.
- Excellence means doing the best we can, being a good example to others, and representing family, school, and community positively.



Our students and teachers are working very hard to display the characteristics of Cub PRIDE in all that they do. The past couple of years have been quite difficult for a variety of reasons, but a commitment to the aspects of PRIDE has helped us all get through it as well as possible. We are very fortunate to work in this community with terrific families and kids.

RUSSELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: You'll Never Walk Alone

"Student learning has skyrocketed this year as our third through fifth grade students got back into the groove of full-time in-person instruction."

Entering our school with the lyrics of "You'll Never Walk Alone" echoing through the halls and our National Blue Ribbon banner reminding us of a tradition of excellence dating back ninety-four years, students at Russell are warmly greeted every morning to their home away from home. Each day, students at our school are strengthened in the character traits of being respectful, responsible, and ready to learn. We also focus on ambitious goals, creative thinking, and courageous learning.

Our students are having an amazing experience through a remarkable year. Student learning has skyrocketed this year as our third through fifth grade students got back into the groove of full-time in-person instruction. We have worked hard to push students in each of their core classes, emphasizing reading and math fluency, while reinforcing the habits of deeper analysis and critical thinking. As foundational skills in math, reading, science, and social studies have grown, students have ventured into more enrichment and extension activities.

January marks our second year participating in the Great Kindness Challenge. Students and staff at Russell are sending messages of encouragement and hope to share throughout the Moscow Community.

Last year, the University of Idaho College of Engineering reached out to us for help with their NASA Citizen Science program. After working with our students and running experiments throughout school, many of us watched as the University's project was launched into space last month.

Thanks to our incredibly supportive parents and community, our students continue to thrive learning in-person. At Russell Elementary School, you'll never walk alone!



WEST PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: Teaming Up for Success

"Seeking ways to best support all learners by implementing various intervention strategies and groupings to meet unique student learning needs"

We are so proud of our little Wildcats at West Park Elementary School! The students have been working incredibly hard this school year on all Kindergarten - second grade subjects. This includes multiple hands-on and unique learning tasks that allow students to fully embrace the learning process. Having one-to-one iPads and Chromebooks for all students has added an exciting level of new technology-driven learning opportunities!

Assessments are showing strong and steady growth as students embrace a wide range of learning opportunities that introduce new skills and challenge critical thinking. These have included first graders utilizing a trip to the Spring Valley Tree Farm to gather pumpkins and use them for countless science, math, and reading activities with the support of volunteers from the University of Idaho Greek system; a walking and commuter safety unit traveling to local parks in P.E. class; and utilizing unique coding skills to control robots in STEAM! Our students have also been working hard on social/emotional learning through our Cat PAWS program in which students earn weekly prizes for demonstrating positivity, achieving success, working together, and being safe and in control. This program is supported by monthly virtue lessons and end of the month celebrations!

The staff has done an incredible job continually seeking ways to best support all learners by implementing various intervention strategies and groupings to meet unique student learning needs; and creating exciting learning opportunities with special guests from the Moscow Fire Department, Moscow Police Department, and even an FBI agent! The entire staff created a Read Aloud Project in which a large library of books were read aloud by staff members to create a digital library. This was provided to families to have access to more text being read aloud in the homes of all our students as well as model to families a great way to utilize reading aloud to encourage reading and new learning.

Go, Wildcats!

FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT: Transparency in Our Financial Management

"Awarded an influx of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, better known as CARES Act, funds."

Moscow School District's budget is comprised of local, state, and federal dollars. Per Idaho State Code, an original budget is set each July. Moscow School District takes a conservative approach to budgeting being mindful of both our revenues and expenditures. Being fiscally responsible has allowed the district to maintain the buying power of each of our supplemental levy amounts in the range of 5-7 years before having to determine another increase to the ongoing supplemental levy. Transparency, accuracy, and education about district finances are key components for Moscow School District. In 2020-2021, we were awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association. We take great pride in maintaining a high standard of excellence in financial reporting.

This year has continued to be challenging. For the second year in a row, Moscow School District has been awarded an influx of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, better known as CARES Act, funds. These dollars are intended to provide economic assistance to address the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States and are one-time only funds with specific restrictions, timelines, and uses. With supply chain shortfalls and delayed shipping of supplies, it has created unforeseen challenges in the way we spend the funds. These funds have allowed our district to retain employees, provide one-to-one devices for all students and staff, and implement the necessary safety precautions for our schools brought on by COVID.

