

# Forward Thinking, High Achieving Missoula County Public Schools

Missoula County Public Schools are partnering with educators, students, parents, businesses and community to develop schools that inspire and challenge students to learn, and provide them with the skills they need to become lifelong learners, skilled employees and active contributors to a global society.

## 21st Century Schools Initiative: A New Education Model

It's no secret that the world is changing – and quickly. Globalization. Automation. Outsourcing. Mobile technology. Today's students will compete for jobs that don't yet exist. *So what do students need to know to be successful in the 21st century?* Today's forward thinking educators have identified four critical skills:

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

MCPS is in the process of developing a master plan that will fully integrate these 21st century skills into students' experiences by transforming instructional methods, redefining performance standards, integrating technology and web-based learning, providing relevant professional development for teachers, updating facilities to support new teaching methods, and developing new programs that will provide alternative learning options. This 21st century model will be "seamless" as students move from elementary to middle to high school, and then into post-graduate training. The master plan will be completed in July 2011. [www.mcpscentury21.org](http://www.mcpscentury21.org).



## Graduation Matters Missoula - Keeping Students in School

*We all make a difference in students' lives!* That's one of the main themes of Graduation Matters Missoula (GMM), a District and community partnership launched in January 2010. This initiative is a community-wide effort focused on reducing the drop out rate and keeping all students in school through graduation. GMM has been a force in and outside of schools - and efforts are paying off. In the 2008-2009 school year, MCPS schools reported 162 drop outs to the

Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI); one year later, the District reported 88 students dropping out - a reduction of 47 percent. GMM's efforts are community-wide. Special committees were formed at each school to identify students with unique needs who are at risk to not graduate. These committees interface with students and families, working tirelessly to reduce the barriers that impede each student's graduation. A unique website and other events promote GMM's philosophy that *everyone* can support high school graduation. [www.graduationmattersmissoula.org](http://www.graduationmattersmissoula.org).

## Achievement Opportunites for all Students

Enhancing and increasing rigorous course offerings such as the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, Advanced Placement Courses, dual-credit opportunities, Montana Digital Academy, Arabic and Chinese languages – supported by upgraded science and math curriculum K-12 – provide enriched and accelerated opportunities for all students. Focused professional development for staff ensures that existing courses are organized with rigor and relevancy. [www.mcps.k12.mt.us](http://www.mcps.k12.mt.us)



### To learn more:

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