

The Strategic Planning Process of the Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS)

APPROVED – SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

Part I: Planning Horizon: Timeless

Core Ideology¹ of MCPS

The Core Purpose of MCPS is to engage all students in a high quality education that empowers, inspires and prepares each student for their future.

Core Values of MCPS:

Student-Centered: We value an environment in which each student is engaged, inspired and challenged each and every day.

Equity: We value providing opportunities and a high quality, comprehensive education where each student has the necessary supports and resources to meet their needs and circumstances, including but not limited to, race, socio-economic status or other individual circumstances.

Innovation: We value a culture of creativity, curiosity, forward-thinking, leadership, and excellence for all.

Safety: We value a safe environment where our students and staff feel and are secure and valued.

¹ **Core Ideology** describes an association's consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. It consists of two elements - **Core Purpose** - the Association's reason for being - and **Core Values** - essential and enduring principles that guide an association. **Envisioned Future** conveys a concrete yet unrealized vision for the association. It consists of a **Big Audacious Goal** - a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort - and a **Vivid Description** - vibrant and engaging descriptions of what it will be like to achieve the big audacious goal.

Inclusion: We value a culture of respect that embraces diversity where individuals feel a strong sense of belonging.

Relationships: We value the trust, interdependence, support and collaboration we have with our staff, with families and with our communities.

Part II: Planning Horizon: 10-15 Years

Envisioned Future of MCPS

Big Audacious Goal:

To inspire locally and globally minded citizens through a culture of inclusion, equity, leadership and excellence.

A Vivid Description of the Desired Future:

MCPS will have successfully achieved its Envisioned Future when the following are commonly agreed to have become present realities:

Each student has been provided with enhanced learning opportunities.

- Students take ownership of their learning through shared decision-making with established clear outcomes for success.
- Students have ample art and music opportunities to choose from.
- Our programs and services are adaptable and flexible to meet the needs and attributes of students.
- Students have opportunities for learning through before, after and summer programs, recreational programs, community partnerships and engagement experiences, apprenticeships, and other work-based opportunities.
- Students have multiple pathways and are supported to meet graduation goals. As a result we have 100% graduation success.
- Our students are provided with a holistic, multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural and integrated curriculum.
- Our students are technology proficient and have the supports and tools to learn in any setting. At the same time, we teach students the importance of balance in their lives between technology and personal connections.
- Our students are provided with youth leadership opportunities.

Our school environment is inclusive, safe and where students, staff, families and visitors feel a sense of belonging.

- We have successfully implemented restorative and social justice strategies that support the needs of our students and their families.
- We have successfully transformed discipline issues into learning opportunities for our students, through conflict resolution and other strategies.
- We provide education and other supports to students and staff to make healthy decisions regarding their physical, mental, behavioral social and emotional well-being.
- We have successfully implemented trauma-informed strategies that support our students, families, and staff.

Our staff are valued and supported and are provided training to be highly effective in their positions.

- Our staff are well-versed and trained in our trauma-informed strategies and programming.
- We utilize knowledge and data to drive our decisions keeping students at the center of everything we do.
- We have a culturally diverse and inclusive staff that represent our dynamic and caring community.
- We support our staff through the provision of both tangible and intangible benefits and supports.
- We have increased the number of school counselors, social workers, special education and support staff to meet the on-going needs of our students.
- We have implemented a robust professional development/learning model for all staff that provides opportunities for leadership, professional growth and as a means of implement best practices
- We have improved our team-building and collaboration opportunities for staff.

Communications, connection to, and engagement with families and our communities are meaningful and effective.

- We have enhanced the community use and support of school facilities.
- We have succeeded in making our schools community centers for the neighborhoods they serve.
- We have greatly enhanced community and family engagement, partnerships and community programs and services.
- We have enriched the pride in our schools with our staff, students, families and community members. It shows in everything we do.
- We have enhanced the connectivity to and with our rural and urban areas.
- We have seamless, effective and meaningful communication between our District, families, students, and staff.
- In collaboration and through partnerships with our community, we have District-wide sustainable and responsible systems and operations that result in zero waste.

Part III: Planning Horizon: 3-5 Years

Outcome-Oriented Goals and Strategies

Goal Area 1: Enhanced Learning Opportunities

Statement of Intended Outcome: Each student has access to enhanced opportunities that will lead to individual student success now and into their future.

1-2 Year High Priority Strategies to Make Progress Towards this Goal:

NOTE: High priority strategists will be developed after getting additional input from all stakeholders.

Goal Area 2: Trusted and Valued Staff

Statement of Intended Outcome: MCPS values its greatest resource—our staff. We trust our staff with the important work they do every day. Our staff has the supports, training and resources needed for to be successful.

1-2 Year High Priority Strategies to Make Progress Towards this Goal:

NOTE: High priority strategists will be developed after getting additional input from all stakeholders.

Goal Area 3: Inclusion and Equity

Statement of Intended Outcome: We have the necessary supports and resources to focus on the individual needs and circumstances of each student and their families so that each student can succeed.

1-2 Year High Priority Strategies to Make Progress Towards this Goal:

NOTE: High priority strategists will be developed after getting additional input from all stakeholders.

Goal Area 4: Community Engagement

Statement of Intended Outcome: Our mutual engagement and relationship with our communities and families is vital to our success and the success of each student. We have robust relationships and a strong sense of community within our schools, and within and among our community organizations, community members and families.

1-2 Year High Priority Strategies to Make Progress Towards this Goal:

NOTE: High priority strategists will be developed after getting additional input from all stakeholders.

Appendices to Strategic Plan

Strategic Planning Process Tool:

Megatrend Analysis - Planning Horizon: 5-10 Year

Assumptions Regarding the Relevant Future for MCPS

In order to make progress toward our Envisioned Future, we must constantly anticipate the strategic factors likely to affect our ability to succeed and assess the implications of those factors. This process of building foresight about the future will help Montana's Public Schools innovate and adapt to succeed in the face of barriers to our success. Periodic review and update of these factors will help ensure the ongoing relevance of our Vision for the future and our efforts to achieve it.

Assumptions: The following have been collectively identified as *the most* (but not all) critical trends, challenges, or issues facing MCPS at this time that could affect our ability to achieve our Envisioned Future.

Demographics:

- We anticipate growing population in Missoula and communities that feed into MCPS.
- We anticipate continued diversity of our population and the students we serve.
- We anticipate continued economic disparity in our community and the students we serve.

Business and Economic Climate:

- We anticipate continuation of the strong community and business support.
- We anticipate a continued rise in the cost of living (wages v. cost).
- We anticipate our business community to continue thriving.

Legislation and Regulation:

- We anticipate a continued movement of using public resources for private education.
- We anticipate continued reliance on passage of local bonds and levies to support MCPS schools.
- We anticipate additional flexibilities for local control, flexibilities in teacher licensure and enhanced opportunities for students.

Technology and Science:

- We anticipate continued increasing costs of keeping up with technologies that support student learning,
- We anticipate that technology will continue to be a driving force to enabling our staff and students to connect and engage globally.
- We anticipate that ongoing climate changes and challenges will continue to impact us locally and globally.

Politics and Social Values:

- We anticipate continue polarization and the need for respect of viewpoints and opinions of others.
- We anticipate that politics and social values will continue to impact voting outcomes and funding for public education.
- We anticipate that it will be vital for our youth to be engaged in civics, politics and issues that will impact them during their lives.

Mega Issues that will impact the success of our students and the MCPS community:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Strategic Planning Process Tool:

Knowledge-Based Decision Making Questions

The Board will prioritize the above-referenced mega issues and decide which of these issues require immediate attention on the part of the Board. Once the identified mega-issues are prioritized, the Board will set aside time at scheduled meetings to analyze a particular mega-issue. At such meetings, the Board's primary focus will be on the mega-issue at hand. All other business (routine or otherwise) will be conducted at the end of the meeting once the dialogue and deliberation on the mega-issue has been concluded for that meeting. When analyzing mega-issues, the Board will utilize a knowledge-based decision making process. This will keep the focus of the Board on relevant factors to consider as it develops strategies to overcome particular impediments/barriers that may impact the Board's strategic direction. The Board will analyze mega-issues by answering the following questions, informed by background papers prepared by staff to support the quality of such dialogue:

- 1. What do we know about the wants, needs and preferences of our stakeholders that are relevant to this decision?**
- 2. What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics facing our stakeholders that is relevant to this decision?**
- 3. What do we know about the capacity/strategic position of MCPS that is relevant to this decision?**
- 4. What are the ethical implications of our choices?**