



Great Falls Public Schools 2013-2014 Accomplishments



August, 2014

Dear Trustees,

In June, I asked the GFPS Leadership Team to look back over the 2013-2014 school year before we embarked on our planning journey into the 2014-2015 school year. I believe that in order to plan our future wisely, it is necessary that we understand and appreciate our past. To do that, I asked the 50 or so participants to list their points of pride, highlights, learning experiences, accomplishments, fait accompli, moments in time...anything they felt was worth memorializing. It was nice to take a moment to reflect and to hear their pride and excitement as they discussed the great work that had been done.

The next step was for Cabinet to review the responses. Cabinet members are often aware of activity within individual departments, but it is difficult to keep track of all departments. A review and categorization of the lists provided Cabinet members an opportunity to join in the celebration.

The lists below are a culmination of these two activities. These lists are not all inclusive. It is certain that not every big and little victory has been listed, but I think it provides a sense of some of the accomplishments that happened during the 2013-2014 school year. I can hardly wait to see next year's list!

Sincerely,
Tammy



Our Kids

Graduation

- Graduation Matters initiative is robust and community-based
- Graduations: CMR 302; GFH 294; Paris 121
- Cut the drop-out rate in half in the last three years



Program Highlights

- 17 Healthier US Challenge Award winners
- The Early Learning Family Center/Preschool at Skyline
- Grant funded summer school opportunities for students at West, Whittier and Longfellow
- Wrestling State Champions



Professional Development for Instruction

- To support implementation of the Montana Content Standards (MCS) in math and English language arts (ELA)
- Continued use of the coaching model: using GFPS master teachers to support instruction
- Building leaders focus on support for teachers and learning through meaningful professional learning community time (PLCT) and other professional development opportunities
- 125 separate sessions of PIR staff development training was held.
- 3 years of new teacher training continues to be offered.



Data

- Adoption of Mile Posts as our data warehouse
- Smarter Balance trial went well...our high schools had the highest participation rate in the SBAC field test of any of the AA high schools. GFHS was 94% and CMR was 96%.
- Continued work around informing instruction through assessment

Culture

- Attendance incentives and plans at all levels
- My Voice survey given



- Olweus class meetings happened and allowed students to be heard
- Student Advisory Councils were successfully deployed
- Student Councils are working hard in many schools developing citizenship and community involvement
- High school dances (proms, formals, etc.) – better turn-outs; appropriate dancing and fun
- Successful middle school clubs engage students in different ways on a variety of subjects
- GFHS Bison Beastro created and deployed



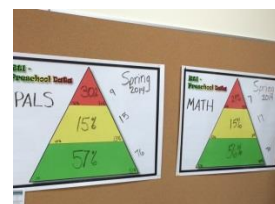
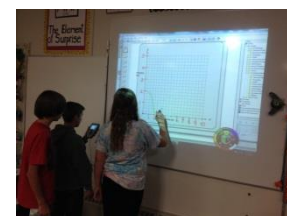
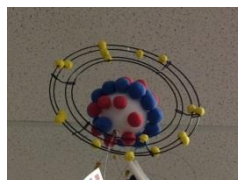
Taking care of our own

- Transportation for homeless students has become seamless
- Food pantries are supporting students and families throughout Great Falls
- 1st Annual Fight Childhood Hunger Week held
- GFHS Make-A-Wish fundraiser
- My Student in Need collaboration
- Giving Trees
- A spirit of care and concern for others in need is pervasive
- Summer food service program



Academic Achievement

- Academic Bowl Science Olympiad
- Credit Recovery Blitz as a much improved process
- Principal Cup
- Pre-ACT study groups
- Response to Intervention and the resultant Customized Learning Plans (CLPs)
- CLPs show students making both academic and behavior growth
- The number of dual credits are on the rise
- Striving Readers Grant = more instructional technology; continued another year
- Use of MAP assessment for planning and instruction
- Student honors, scholarships and achievements continue
- More project based learning:
 - War Fair, March 27, 2014
 - STEAM Expo, March 29, 2014:
- The Indicators of Progress (ISIP--Striving Readers Data) reading scores increased in middle schools



Performance Arts Achievement

- District Music Festival winners
- All State Music winners
- NW NAFME audition by NMS Orchestra
- 1st ever Middle School Solo Festival was held
- Toastmasters Scholarships were awarded
- GFHS Theatre group state winners and qualified for the National Thespian Festival
- Great Falls named Top 100 Best Communities for Music Education 2014



Career and Technical Education Achievement

- Bison Wear
- Grizz Biz
- MSUGF Carpentry Cohort
- 2 High School House completed
- 50 CNA students graduated
- 12 students earned welding certification with 2 known to be working at ADF
- Big Sky Pathways on an upward trajectory
- State and National Conventions: FFA, HOSA, FCCLA, BPA, DECA, SKILLS, JMI



Visual Arts Achievement

- Artist in Residence Program in All Schools
- Colors of the Fall Art Exhibit
- All City Art Show



- Western Masters Art Program
- Art installation in the Aspen Conference Room

Other

- Increased enrollment
- Valley View winner of National Distinguished School Award



Our Community

Partnerships

- GFPS Foundation merged with the Great Falls Scholarship Foundation to include \$4 million in scholarship dollars
- Early Childhood Coalition continues to work for our youngest citizens
- 450 Job Shadows performed by students in partner with local businesses
- Food Pantries and local groups worked together to reduce food insecurity
- Internships provided for students by local businesses
- Collaboration with the youth courts and probation to better support this special population of students
- Leadership High School Great Falls...another year of success
- "Cop" Corner
- Graduation Matters...all four quadrants: parents, community, business and school
- Lots of agency and community partnerships: United Way, Schultes, GF Christian Center, Malmstrom, My Student in Need, Plum Creek Lumber, First Interstate Bank, GF Chapter of Flyfishers Association, Walleyes Unlimited, Elizabeth Wicks Estate, Delta Kappa Gamma, Great Falls Optimists, Great Falls Rotary, Lions Clubs, the Wilderness Association, General Mills, Torgersons, Benefis, Big Bear Sports, Scheels, Target, Walmart, Big Horn Wilderness, Neighborworks, Falls Construction, Bison Ford, Alliance for Youth, Great Falls College-MSU, etc.
- Lots of private donors: Bell, Faccenda, Leitheiser, McFarland, Trent, Wheatley, and others.
- My Student in Need
- Great Falls Police Department in many collaborative efforts and with the School Resource Officer program
- 1 MT Business Partnership
- The successful GFPS Foundation Truck Raffle that raised over \$100,000 to support education
- Drive-One event
- Art Department – working with CM Russell and Paris Gibson Square Museums
- Music Department – working with the Great Falls Symphony
- Lions Club – eyewear and eye exam donation program
- Optimists – instrument donation program
- Public use of building facilities
- MAFB
- Office of Public Instruction
 - TEAMS & TOE – data collection efforts
- Great relationship with the Governor's Office
- More collaborative work with Parents, Let's Unite for Kids (PLUK) and better relationships with parents
- Superintendent's Community Advisory Panel and Parent Advisory Panel
- A Board of Trustees that believe in public education



Communication

- Positive and informative School Board meetings
- Community Budget Meetings
- A Strategic Plan that makes sense and is a working document
- Powerschool upgrade = e-mails to parents
- Edulink attendance notification and upcoming expansion



Innovation

- Summer Read 6
- CMR Senior Projects
- Welding certification – ADF



Super Summer Read

Research shows children who read at least 6 books over the summer have a better chance to maintain current reading skills. However, children who don't read or do not have access to books they want to read can lose as much as 3 months of reading skills over the summer.



- War Fair
- Expanded Dual Credit
- Grizz Biz, Lynx Graphics, Bison Wear Embroidery
- Online learning
- 8th Grade Career Fair
- Beginning Instrumental Music Market
- STEAM Event
- Discovery Grants
- Virtual Academy
- Digital Academy
- Preschool



Support Plus

- Drug and alcohol counseling
- Home visits
- Indian Ed Youth Development Specialists
- Giving trees
- Addition of another Homeless Coordinator



Our Future

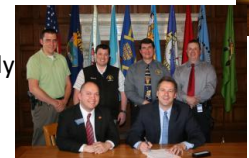
Facilities

- All buildings had a facility review via walk-throughs and assessments
- Improved traffic flow and improved parking and lighting at NMS
- More cameras added in several schools
- Buildings and grounds department upgrading and improving building maintenance and safety
- Completion of the Bison Beastro



Safety

- The District Safety Plan was completed by the July 1 deadline
- Regular safety committee meetings are held at each site with resultant action
- Continued strong relationships with SROs and the GFPD to include teaming on safety
- Fine tuning of safety drills and protocols so students, staff and parents can deploy effectively
- Successful releases with care, evacuations and lockdowns throughout the year
- Improved policy and practices regarding weather related issues
- The high quality work done by Buildings & Grounds to include safety items, water main break, etc.
- A safety mindset was furthered this year throughout the district and evidenced by workers comp claims being way down
- The use of social networks for communication in safety situations
- Edulink auto attendance calling system at both high schools



Health/Wellness

- Increased student access to mental health options: CSCT, Aware, etc.
- Health plans are better coordinated with the district nurse, mental health support/focus and others as necessary.
- The Student Wellness Program continues to make strides as we address food insecurity, new nutrition guidelines and childhood obesity.
- The Employee Wellness Program is well functioning and purposeful
- The Employee Assistance Program provides an important function
- The District continues to focus on bully prevention and respect for all.
- Reduction in crime stats as per SRO report
- Students, parents and the community have wholeheartedly supported food pantries in our schools



Graduation Matters

- Data shows that the attendance incentive programs at the high schools have positively impacted the number of students at school.
- The dropout rate was cut in half in three years!

Miscellaneous

- The success of the GFPS Foundation and its support for public education
- The TROOPS grant provided much needed support for military students. The grant has ended but left behind some replicable activities.
- The District's participation in implementing Montana's Military Compact to include Superintendent Lacey being appointed by the Governor to the Commission.
- The Governor's attention towards Early Edge and on our early childhood programming
- Three GFPS teachers received National Board Certification
- Levy passage – rebuilding credibility
- GFPS received the Impact Award from the Office of Public Instruction.



MIC3 Military Interstate
Children's Compact Commission



This list of accomplishments is not all inclusive. This is a sampling only.

**Get ready 2014-2015,
here we come!**

