



Great People...Great Falls Public Schools

March 2026,

As we welcome the promise of spring in Great Falls, we are reminded once again that the true strength of our schools lies in the people who walk our halls and work in our buildings, in addition to those who surround and support them in our community. This past month has shown us, in powerful and humbling ways, what it means to come together as a community. From moments of challenge to celebrations of growth and opportunity, we continue to see “Building What Matters” come to life through the care, compassion, and commitment of so many. Welcome to the March edition of Highlights with Superintendent Hoyer.

Great Falls...

Heroes in Our Community – Caring for Lincoln Elementary

- In the wake of the recent wind event that impacted Lincoln Elementary, our community demonstrated what it truly means to show up for one another. We extend our deepest gratitude to the City of Great Falls and our first responders. Seventeen off-duty firefighters stepped in without hesitation, helping pack classrooms and move materials to ensure students could return to learning as quickly as possible. Their willingness to serve—on and off duty—speaks volumes about their dedication to our community. We are equally grateful to Dusty’s Sprinklers and Lawncare, who partnered with our GFPS JROTC students and High School House groups to care for the surrounding neighborhood—cleaning yards and restoring spaces impacted by the storm. This collaboration between local business and our students is a powerful example of service in action. We will continue to show care to our neighbors, as they showed to us, when the spring weather allows.

To our own GFPS family—staff members who gave their Sunday, adjusted their schedules, and stepped in throughout the week to support the move—we thank you. Your commitment ensured a smooth transition during a difficult time. Our gratitude also extends to the staff and students at Paris Gibson Education Center and Lewis and Clark Elementary. Paris Gibson graciously welcomed grades 5–6, while Lewis and Clark opened their doors to 4th grade students. Their flexibility, kindness, and hospitality made all the difference for our Lincoln students and staff. This is Great Falls at its best.

Here Comes Spring – New Seasons, New Opportunities

- As we close out a successful winter sports season, we eagerly turn our attention to spring athletics. There is a renewed sense of excitement across our schools as students prepare to compete, grow, and represent our community. This year brings a particularly special milestone: for the first time, baseball is stepping onto the field in our community. This opportunity did not happen by chance—it is the result of countless hours of dedication from community members who worked tirelessly to raise funds, build support, and bring this vision to life. Their efforts have created a new pathway for students and a new tradition for Great Falls. We encourage everyone to follow and support our

student-athletes throughout the season. You can find schedules and updates on the Great Falls Public Schools Activities Calendar, here <https://gfps.k12.mt.us/departments/athletics-sports-schedules/sports-schedules>

Highly Dedicated Employers and Employees – Lifelong learning is what we do

- One of the most inspiring events this month was our Secondary Life Skills celebration, where we honored students, employers, and the power of perseverance. We were privileged to hear from guest speakers Kevin and Jill Shaver. Kevin, a graduate of CMR, participated in the Secondary Life Skills program throughout his school career. Like many families, Jill shared that she initially felt apprehensive about Kevin entering the workforce and navigating public transportation independently. Today, Kevin has held the same job for four years and confidently rides city transit on his own. This is a powerful testament to growth, independence, and the impact of strong programming and support. We also proudly recognize the students nominated for this year's awards:

Patty Copper Memorial Award – Most Improved Employee

Honoring a legacy of individual growth and commitment to developing employability skills:

- CMR: Tiegán Janssen, Dakota Kennedy
- GFHS: Faydra Blackburn, Rachael Bollich
- Paris: Jaiden Grubb

Sid Nasby Memorial Award – Outstanding Employee

Recognizing exemplary work ethic and job performance:

- CMR: Braeden Wiener, Hagen McQuire
- GFHS: Maryellen Campbell, Jamal Garlington
- Paris: Brayden Kottke

Patty McHenry Memorial Award – Most Dependable Employee

Celebrating consistency, reliability, and dedication:

- Paris: Seth Mondragon

These students, along with the employers who mentor and support them, represent the very best of what workforce readiness looks like in action. Their success is a reflection of strong partnerships, high expectations, and belief in every student's potential.

Hometown Partners with a Purpose – Strengthening CTE Together

- Great Falls Public Schools is proud to partner with Great Falls College MSU in a shared vision to expand and elevate Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities for our students and our community. Together, we are creating seamless pathways that help students explore, develop, and ultimately refine their passions—connecting classroom learning to college programs and high-demand careers right here in Great Falls. This work is strengthened through meaningful collaboration with local industry partners, ensuring students gain relevant, hands-on experiences that prepare them for both employment and continued education. We invite students, families, and community members to join us for our first CTE Night on April 9th; 6:00-7:00 PM; at Heritage Hall on the campus of Great Falls College – MSU (2100 16th Avenue South), as we begin this important conversation and showcase the opportunities available. Join us for this **FREE** event as we explore:

The Ages and Stages of Career Technical Education, How Unique Partnerships Elevate Our Community, and The Importance of CTE to Our Community. Looking ahead, this event will serve as the launch of a year-long CTE series across our community. Beginning in fall 2026 at Great Falls College MSU, continuing in winter at Great Falls High School's Innovative Learning Center, and culminating in spring at CORE School, each event will focus on helping students refine, develop, and discover their passions. Together, we are building a connected system where education and industry align—ensuring every student has a pathway to success and every employer has a skilled and prepared workforce.

Harmony Is Best When Played Together – Music in Our Schools Month

- March is Music in Our Schools Month, and there is no better time to experience the incredible talent of our students and educators across Great Falls Public Schools. From our youngest learners to our high school performers, students are dedicating time, energy, and passion to their craft—guided by outstanding music educators who bring out the very best in them. Spring offers countless opportunities for our community to enjoy concerts and performances that showcase not only musical skill, but collaboration, discipline, and joy. We warmly invite you to visit our schools and celebrate the power of music in education. View the full Spring Concert Schedule here: <https://gfps.k12.mt.us/departments/fine-arts>

Heartfelt Commitment – Building What Matters (motto for 2025-2026)

- As the seasons change, one thing remains constant: our unwavering commitment to our students and this community. Whether responding in times of need, launching new opportunities like baseball, or celebrating the achievements of our students in life skills and beyond, we are continually reminded that education is a shared endeavor. Thank you for standing with us, supporting our schools, and helping us build what matters—together.

Warm regards,

Heather Hoyer
Superintendent, Great Falls Public Schools

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