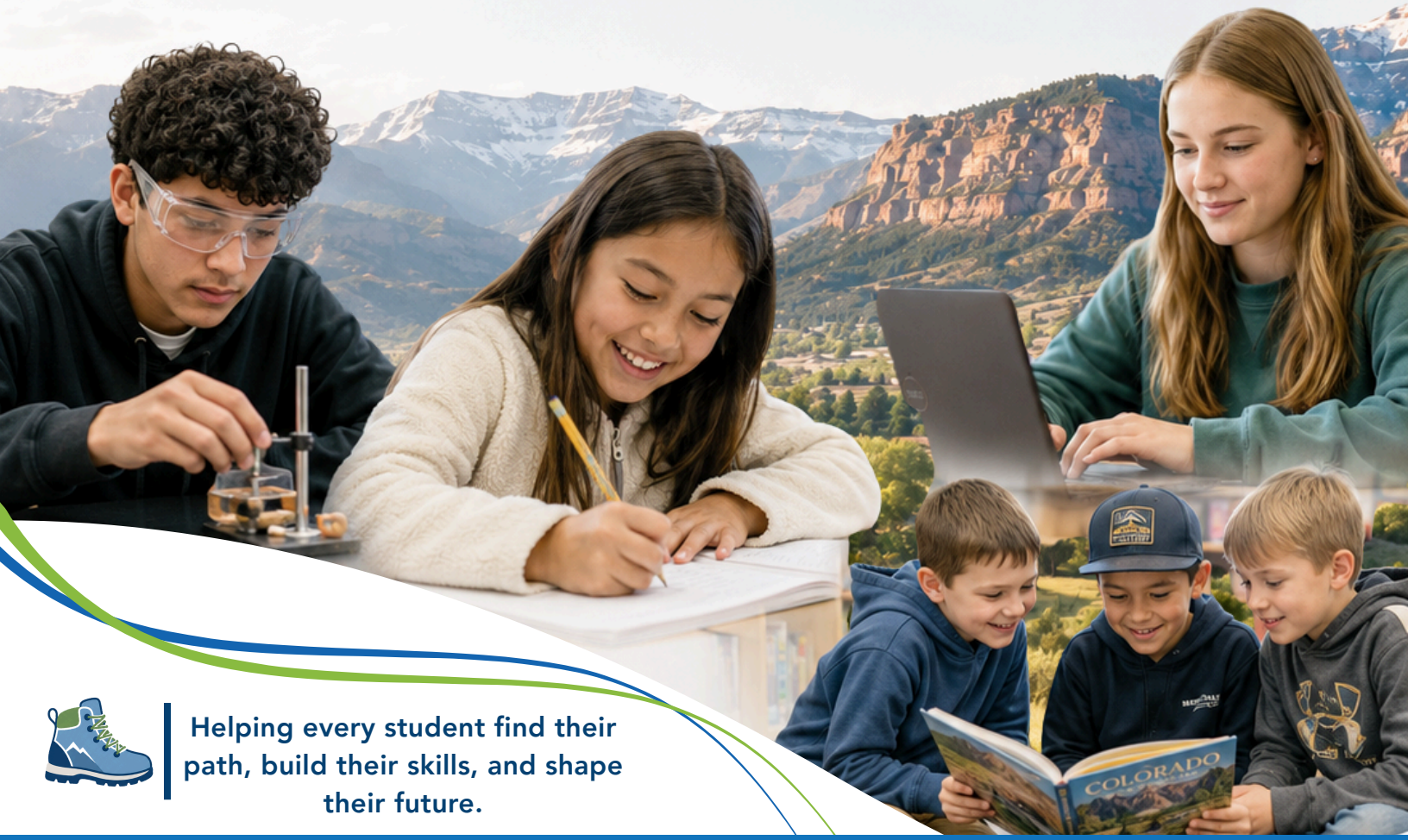
MONTROSE COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Steady Path Forward

Strategic Plan 2026-2030



Helping every student find their path, build their skills, and shape their future.

mcsd.org

OUR SHARED COMMITMENT

Helping every student find their path, build their skills, and shape their future.

This Strategic Plan reflects Montrose County School District's commitment to strong learning, meaningful opportunities, and the community partnerships that help students prepare for life beyond graduation.

Welcome

Dear Students, Families, Staff, and Community Members,

At Montrose County School District, we share a commitment to preparing every student for a successful future. We want our graduates to leave our schools with strong academic skills, confidence in who they are, and a sense of direction for what comes next. A Steady Path Forward, our 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, reflects that commitment and the work we believe matters most for our students.

This plan is the result of months of thoughtful work and a shared belief in what our schools can accomplish. A committee of dedicated community members worked alongside district staff and school leaders to identify the priorities that will guide us in the years ahead. Students also shared their experiences and perspectives throughout the process, helping us better understand what matters to them and how we can support their success. We are grateful for the care and thought that went into shaping this plan.

There is much to be proud of across MCSD. We see it in the growth of our students and the dedication of our staff. We also know there is room to grow. This plan gives us a way to build on the good work already happening in our schools, strengthen areas where we can improve, and stay focused on making a meaningful difference for every student. It is a commitment to doing the important work well and seeing it through.

As the District Leadership Team, we are proud to help carry this work forward. The vision behind this plan is one we share across our district and community, and its success will depend on all of us. We want students to continue sharing their experiences, families to feel connected to their schools, and staff and community members to know their ideas and contributions matter.

We invite you to explore this plan and see the direction we are working toward together. We will continue to share our progress, listen to feedback, and learn as we go. There will be challenges along the way, but we believe in our students, our schools, and the people who make MCSD such a special place.

We are proud of how far we have come and excited about what lies ahead. We look forward to continuing this work with you.

Sincerely,
Montrose County School District Leadership Team

A message from the Former Superintendent

Written during the development of the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan



Dr. Carrie Stephenson

FORMER SUPERINTENDENT

> ***At the center of this plan is a simple question: What do we want for every MCSD graduate?***

With gratitude for the students, staff, families, and community partners who helped shape this plan.

Dear Montrose County School District Students, Families, Staff, and Community Partners,

I am proud to introduce A Steady Path Forward, our 2026–2030 Strategic Plan. This plan reflects the voices of students, families, staff, and community members who helped define what matters most for the future of our schools.

At the center of this plan is our shared commitment to preparing every student for what comes next. We want MCSD graduates to leave our schools with strong academic skills, a clear sense of who they are and where they are going, and the confidence to keep learning, solve problems, and contribute to their community.

The next five years will not be about adding a long list of new initiatives. Instead, we will focus on strengthening the work already underway and ensuring it is implemented with consistency, depth, and follow-through across every MCSD school.

Public schools are strongest when the community stands behind them. Thank you for the trust you place in our schools and for your continued partnership in helping every student find their path, build their skills, and shape their future.

With appreciation,

Carrie

Dr. Carrie Stephenson
Former Superintendent

GRADUATE PROFILE

The promise we make to every MCSD student.

The Graduate Profile describes what we want every student to know, do, and become. The strategic plan describes how we will make that promise real in every classroom, every school, and every student experience.

1 KNOW THE PATH

"I build skills to prepare me for my future."

Essential Skills

- Reading, Writing, Math
- Science & History
- Technology Literacy
- Information Literacy

2 NAVIGATE THE LANDSCAPE

"I know myself, and I am accountable for my actions."

Essential Skills

- Self- Awareness
- Self-Direction
- Life Skills
- Accountability

3 CULTIVATE CONNECTIONS

"I am an active and ethical member of my community, and I learn about the world around me."

Essential Skills

- Civic Engagement
- Global/Cultural Awareness
- Character & Work Ethic

4 ENVISION THE FUTURE

"I prepare for my future as a responsible community member."

Essential Skills

- Professional Skills
- Career Awareness
- Entreprenurial Skills
- Financial Literacy

5 DISCOVER NEW ROUTES

"I navigate challenges with creative solutions."

Essential Skills

- Problem Solving
- Creativity
- Risk-Taking

6 STAY STEADY ON THE TRAIL

"I work hard when things get tough and use the resources around me to succeed."

Essential Skills

- Resilience/Perseverance
- Collaboration & Teamwork
- Communication

Strategic Plan Snapshot

The Profile is the promise. The plan is the path.

This plan is organized around four connected sections that describe the skills students will build, what they should experience every day, how adults will support their success, and how the community can help bring the plan to life.

1 | What We Want for Every Graduate

Students leave MCSD prepared for life beyond high school.

Focus: Academic Skills • Direction and Purpose • Postsecondary Readiness

2 | What Students Will Experience Every Day

Students experience learning that is clear, engaging, supportive, and connected to their future.

Focus: Strong Instruction • Belonging and Safety • Meaningful Opportunities

3 | How Adults Support Student Success

Adults work together to create the conditions students need to thrive.

Focus: Consistent Practices • Collaboration • Responsive Support

4 | Our Shared Responsibility to the Community

MCSD strengthens trust through communication, transparency, and partnership.

Focus: Clear Information • Community Engagement• Shared Ownership

Together, these four sections turn the graduate profile into daily practice.

SECTION ONE:

What We Want for Every Graduate

Our goal is not simply graduation but preparation.



Every student who leaves Montrose County School District should leave with strong academic skills, a sense of direction and purpose, and the ability to work with others and contribute to their community. Success looks different for different students, but the expectation that every student is prepared for life after high school is shared.

This means students graduate with:

- Strong reading, writing, math, and critical thinking skills
- An understanding of their strengths, interests, and next steps
- Experience applying learning in real-world, collaborative settings

GOALS

1	By June 2030, 100% of schools will be rated as "Performance" on their School Performance Framework. (rating based on CMAS, PSAT, SAT, and workforce readiness)
2	By June 2030, student subgroups (students who are free and reduced lunch eligible, students with disabilities, multilingual learners, minority students, and others) will be above the state average in growth in English Language Arts (ELA) and math according to CMAS data.
3	By June 2029, 100% of graduates will have achieved at least one of the following: earned a quality, in-demand non-degree credential, earned 12 college credits that count toward a post-secondary credential, participated in one high-quality, work-based learning opportunity (internship, apprenticeship, or work experience.

TACTICS

Students Learning and Demonstrating the Graduate Profile Skills

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-27	SCHOOL YEAR 2027-28	SCHOOL YEAR 2028-29	SCHOOL YEAR 2029-30
Publish and promote the graduate profile in schools and the community. Develop learning progressions aligned with graduate profile skills and competencies in the areas of academic and life skills, and begin aligning those skills to students' ICAP development, Career Pathway experiences, and readiness to earn at least one of the Big Three.	Pilot systems and supports that help students earn at least one of the Big Three (12 college credits, an industry-recognized credential, and/or a high-quality work-based learning experience) aligned to each student's ICAP and Career Pathway, and evaluate the processes, access, and student supports needed for successful implementation.	Expand pathway-aligned Big Three opportunities for students in targeted pathways by increasing access to college credit, industry-recognized credentials, and high-quality work-based learning experiences, ensuring those opportunities are aligned to students' ICAP postsecondary goals and Career Pathway selections.	100% of graduates will earn at least one of the Big Three (at least 12 college credits an industry-recognized credential, and/or a high-quality work-based learning experience) in alignment with their ICAP post-secondary goals and Career Pathway selection.

Career Connections, Exploration, and Pathways in Kindergarten Through Graduation

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-27	SCHOOL YEAR 2027-28	SCHOOL YEAR 2028-29	SCHOOL YEAR 2029-30
Assess the current state of student access to career pathways at the high school level and identify opportunities for pathway expansion.	Develop and implement middle school exploration opportunities, including individual career and academic planning aligned to the high school pathways, skills and aptitudes exploration, and application in daily learning.	Develop and implement career exposure experiences at the elementary level, including: » Career cluster integration into learning. » Guest speakers. » Career-connected projects.	Assess student experience, access, and learning outcomes from new programming and adjust as needed.

Rigorous Mastery Learning for All Students

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-27	SCHOOL YEAR 2027-28	SCHOOL YEAR 2028-29	SCHOOL YEAR 2029-30
Finalize learning progressions for all core content areas across grade levels and integrate these progressions in student data folders. Implement special program action plans to support improved outcomes for students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students reading well below grade level.	Develop student support structures for understanding learning progressions and how they guide student learning. Continue the implementation of special program action plans and collect and analyze data on program effectiveness.	Expand how students demonstrate mastery by offering varied assessment formats (projects, presentations, written work, and portfolios). Adjust special program action plans, interventions, and support based on outcome and implementation assessments.	Launch personalized learning plans that students update throughout their journey, tracking mastered skills and identifying growth areas. Refresh special program action plans based on current state analysis of implementation and student experience data.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR PROGRESS IN THIS SECTION?

We will measure our progress on the goals defined in Section One by monitoring the implementation of key practices across initiatives, CMAS, SAT/PSAT data, local assessments, graduation rates, and student feedback.

SECTION TWO:

What Students Will Experience Every Day

Students thrive when they are engaged, supported, and connected to their future.



Strong Teaching and Learning

Students experience clear, engaging instruction grounded in high-quality materials, with consistent attention to strong reading, writing, and math learning. They understand what they are learning, why it matters, and how to improve. Mastery-based learning helps students build skills at the right pace and depth.

Belonging, Safety, and Support

Students are known by adults, feel physically and emotionally safe, and have access to support when they need it. Schools attend to both academic and mental health needs so students can focus on learning.

Engagement and Real Options

Students are engaged in learning that connects to their lives and future goals. They have access to career pathways, college credit, credentials, and work-based learning. School choice options help families find the learning environment that best meets the needs of their child.

When the district is successful in these areas, students are present, engaged, supported, and preparing for life beyond school.

GOALS

These goals are intended to ensure that students experience safe, engaging schools where they are supported, present, and able to learn.

4 **Montrose County School District will achieve a year-over-year reduction in the number of students exhibiting/experiencing three or more at-risk indicators, including threatening behaviors, grades below the C range, low attendance rates, and substance abuse.**

5 **By June 2030, Montrose County School District will decrease chronic absenteeism to 14% from 32% in the 2024-2025 school year.**

TACTICS

Challenging, Self-Directed Learning

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-27	SCHOOL YEAR 2027-28	SCHOOL YEAR 2028-29	SCHOOL YEAR 2029-30
The district will implement self-assessment routines in which students evaluate their own work against mastery criteria, identify specific gaps in their understanding, and select appropriate supportive resources.	Develop a student-driven reassessment process to support self-directed learning and responsibility for academic success.	The district will design assessments and learning experiences where students tackle problems in unfamiliar contexts, determine which skills to apply, and combine challenging learning exercises.	The district will develop processes to foster student choice for how learning is demonstrated and partner with students to take responsibility for their learning outcomes.

Attendance and Absenteeism

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-27	SCHOOL YEAR 2027-28	SCHOOL YEAR 2028-29	SCHOOL YEAR 2029-30
Implement an early warning absence process with fidelity from the beginning of the school year, ensuring intentional and targeted family communication. Assess the roles of the student attendance review board (SARB) to support and guide families for re-engagement and identify areas for improvement.	Develop attendance intervention processes into the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) process. Develop communications to clarify the importance of school attendance and the SARB process.	Refine the MTSS attendance support with a focus on the needs of students who are experiencing houselessness, who have immigrant status, and/or are in the foster care system. Explore partnerships with municipal courts and the district attorney to interrupt absenteeism rates.	Identify opportunities to integrate an attendance case worker role in schools to support the current social worker with their caseload.

Student Safety and Belonging

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-27			
Implement safety plan protocols with fidelity for all students whom the district requires threat assessments and suicide assessments, including consistent monitoring plans and adjustment procedures.	Develop and train safety teams in standardized pathways for deploying targeted interventions for students identified as at-risk. Assess the impact and effectiveness of safety plans and risk management strategies through data review and stakeholder feedback.	Analyze intervention impact data to identify and leverage the most effective targeted and intensive strategies across all school sites. Expand safety team capacity to support an increased volume of interventions with consistency and fidelity.	Demonstrate measurable reduction in the number of threat assessments through strengthened preventive systems and early intervention. Scale evidence-based interventions district-wide based on proven effectiveness and student outcomes.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR PROGRESS IN THIS SECTION?

We will measure our progress by monitoring the implementation of key practices across initiatives, attendance trends and chronic absenteeism rates, behavior referrals, safety reports, and data collected through the Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRs), instructional walkthroughs, and RANDA.

SECTION THREE:

How Adults Support Student Success

Student success depends on adults working together with clarity, consistency, and shared responsibility.



Purposeful Instructional Practice

Adults design learning that builds students' independence, thinking, and engagement. Instruction prioritizes clear learning goals, meaningful feedback, and opportunities for students to think, problem-solve, and learn from productive struggle. Mastery-based teaching supports clarity around expectations and proficiency.

Supportive and Responsive Practices

School staff use assessment, behavior, and engagement information as insight, not judgment, to better understand student needs and improve practice. They continuously reflect on and adjust their approaches with a focus on improving the student experience rather than enforcing compliance.

Shared Responsibility and Professional Trust

Teachers, principals, and district staff share responsibility for making this work successful. Adults collaborate across roles, use common high-quality instructional materials, and support one another through the "hard middle" of change. This plan assumes professional trust, shared ownership, and continuous learning.

GOALS

These goals reflect whether the conditions exist for educators to do their best work and remain in the district.

6	**By June 2030, 90% of Montrose County School District teachers will respond positively to the statement, "I would recommend this school as a good place to work," according to the Teaching and Learning Conditions Colorado (TLCC) survey.**
7	**By June 2030, 90% of Montrose County School District teachers will respond positively to the statement, "The school provides opportunities for me to learn from other teachers," according to the TLCC survey.**
8	**By June 2030, all schools will consistently implement high-quality mastery-based learning practices, evidenced by the use of proficiency scales, aligned assessments, instructional adjustments based on student learning, and a measurable reduction in Ds and Fs across all schools.**

TACTICS

Instructional Practices and Instructional Materials

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-27	SCHOOL YEAR 2027-28	SCHOOL YEAR 2028-29	SCHOOL YEAR 2029-30
Collaboratively develop a district toolkit of foundational instructional strategies aligned with learning progressions, with an initial emphasis on strengthening reading, writing, and math instruction. and complete learning progression development for all content areas. Refresh the instructional resource adoption cycle to align with district goals and needs. Complete the common assessment development process in partnership with mastery learning committees.	Provide professional learning on responsive teaching strategies, intentional differentiation, and effective use of instructional materials in reading, writing, and math. Pilot common assessments across grade levels and content areas.	Identify and develop teacher leaders who can model and mentor peers in effective reading, writing, and math instruction, and launch scaled use of common assessments. across grade levels and content areas.	Implement professional learning to support combining and adapting multiple strategies for maximum student engagement and rigor. Monitor implementation quality in reading, writing, and math, using common assessment data, walkthroughs, and coaching to strengthen instruction and student outcomes.

Safety Teams and Behavioral Support

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-27	SCHOOL YEAR 2027-28	SCHOOL YEAR 2028-29	SCHOOL YEAR 2029-30
Develop educator capacity to address behavioral needs within the classroom through professional development in foundational instructional strategies and classroom management techniques. Establish school-level systems to provide differentiated support for diverse student needs and create pathways for timely intervention. Build staff understanding of available support systems and resources for students requiring additional behavioral and academic assistance.	Implement professional learning focused on engaging core instruction that meets students' academic and behavioral needs to reduce behavior escalation. Train principals in monitoring classroom environments and identifying common causes that lead to student removal or intervention referrals. Pilot classroom environment strategies that support students to remain in their primary learning environment more consistently.	Expand the teacher toolkit of responsive instructional strategies that address student confusion, disengagement, and behavioral manifestations rooted in academic needs. Analyze data on classroom-level interventions to identify effective practices that prevent escalation and support student success.	Scale evidence-based classroom environments and instructional practices that demonstrably keep students engaged in their learning environments district-wide. Establish collaborative structures for educators to share effective strategies for meeting the multiple facets of student experiences in student-centered classrooms.

Collaborative Planning Processes

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-27	SCHOOL YEAR 2027-28	SCHOOL YEAR 2028-29	SCHOOL YEAR 2029-30
Establish coordinated, collaborative planning time and structure across schools (grade level, special program providers, and general education) in the district and develop shared expectations and approaches within the district leadership team.	Leverage collaborative planning time to align instructional practices for mastery learning, data use, and differentiation across grade levels and content areas.	Pilot common assessment use in common planning structures and formalize new structures based on learnings from the pilot in targeted grade levels and courses.	Build teacher capacity to use common assessment data and learning progressions to make real-time instructional decisions and targeted interventions.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR PROGRESS IN THIS SECTION?

We will measure our progress by monitoring the implementation of key practices across initiatives, CMAS, SAT/PSAT, local assessments, graduation rates, safety team reports, and student feedback.

SECTION FOUR:

Our Shared Responsibility to the Community

Montrose County School District exists because of its community. Our schools reflect community values and rely on community trust and support.



What the Community Can Expect from Us

- Clear access to information about how schools are doing.
- Transparency about progress and challenges.
- Respect for local values and perspectives.
- Visible and meaningful use of community partnerships.
- Regular communications that show student learning and growth

How Families and Community Members Can Engage

- Participate in conversations about learning, pathways, and school experiences.
- Partner with schools through volunteering, mentorship, and collaboration.
- Provide feedback that helps the district improve.
- Support long-term solutions that strengthen educational quality.
- Strong schools are built through shared ownership and ongoing collaboration.

GOALS

These goals reflect whether the conditions exist for educators to do their best work and remain in the district.

9 **By June 2030, Montrose County School District will improve community understanding of district programs and student learning, as evidenced by year-over-year growth in survey results and engagement with district communications, including website visits, newsletter open rates, and event participation compared to 2025–26 baselines.**

TACTICS

Communication

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-27	SCHOOL YEAR 2027-28	SCHOOL YEAR 2028-29	SCHOOL YEAR 2029-30
Develop a district and school communication plan that identifies key audiences, messages, tools, timelines, and expectations for sharing student learning, programs, celebrations, and progress.	Establish consistent school and district communication expectations so families receive clear, timely, and predictable information about learning, progress, programs, and opportunities.	Expand communication methods to include newsletters, TalkingPoints, websites, social media, local media, podcasts, radio, video messages, and community presentations.	Evaluate communication efforts using engagement data and feedback, then adjust district and school practices to improve clarity, consistency, reach, and community understanding.

Family Partnership

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-27	SCHOOL YEAR 2027-28	SCHOOL YEAR 2028-29	SCHOOL YEAR 2029-30
Review family engagement practices using Colorado's Family School Community Partnership (FSCP) framework, focusing on inclusive culture, trusting relationships, two-way communication, and understanding student learning.	Schools collaborate to design and launch a family satisfaction and partnership survey to gather feedback on communication, student learning, school experience, barriers, and engagement needs.	Use survey results and family feedback to strengthen school-level practices that help families understand what students are learning, how they are doing, and how to support learning.	Review family partnership trend data and refine practices to strengthen two-way communication, trust, participation, and shared support for student learning.

Community Partnership

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-27	SCHOOL YEAR 2027-28	SCHOOL YEAR 2028-29	SCHOOL YEAR 2029-30
Design and launch an MCSD community leadership and ambassador cohort to build understanding of the strategic plan, student learning, district programs, and partnership opportunities.	Refine the cohort using participant feedback and expand participation with intentional outreach to families, partners, underrepresented communities, and schools with lower engagement.	Involve past cohort members, families, students, and community partners as ambassadors, panelists, or co-facilitators to share accurate information and strengthen trust.	Establish a sustainable ambassador structure that supports ongoing communication, community partnership, school engagement, and shared ownership of educational quality.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR PROGRESS IN THIS SECTION?

We will measure our progress by monitoring the implementation of key practices across initiatives, website and newsletter monitoring data, family survey data, community feedback, and student feedback.

MONTROSE COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Strategic Plan Pledge

Montrose County School District is excited to have the support of the community in bringing this strategic plan to life. You are an important part of the success of our work. You can use this page to think about how you can support our educators and students by making a commitment to one or more of the focus areas in this plan. We would love to hear from you about how you want to be a part of our work!

As a

_____ ,

(Parent, Student, Teacher, Community Member)

I will support Montrose County Schools to successfully implement

_____

(Focus area)

by

_____ .

(How you will help Montrose County Schools)