

# From the Board.....

In this report from your school trustees we would like to update you on school enrollment, the budget outlook, and school facility planning. Most of the report, however, will be devoted to the topic of school safety. We hope to provide you with an overview of all the many ways your school district works to provide a safe environment for students.

## ENROLLMENT

### 2017-18 ENROLLMENT

Below are enrollment figures for the school district as recorded on the two officially designated count days for this school year. This year those days were October 2 and February 5.

	<u>October</u>	<u>February</u>
Primary School (K-4)	459	461
Middle School (5-8)	431	429
High School (9-12)	<u>503</u>	<u>495</u>
	1,393	1,385

### ENROLLMENT TRENDS

For five years in a row the school district has seen an increase in student numbers, gaining 151 students in total. The figures below are the average enrollment for each of those years.

<u>2013-14</u>	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2017-18</u>
1,238	1,257	1,299	1,335	1,389

## THE IMPACT OF ENROLLMENT INCREASES

### BUDGET IMPACT

The general fund budget is determined by three factors: the number of students, the level of school funding approved by the legislature, and any general fund levies approved by local voters. Greater student numbers mean that the budget for the 2018-19 school year, as well as the amount of state funding for the budget, will increase. The 2017 Montana Legislature chose to allocate an inflationary increase for schools in such a way that the majority of the increase comes in the second year of the biennium, which will enhance funding for next school year. The district did not ask voters for a general fund operating levy this spring.

### FACILITIES IMPACT

While increased enrollment is very helpful for the school's operating budget, the growing student population continues to place a strain on district facilities. The district's ongoing facility planning is more important than ever as student numbers increase.

## **SAFETY IN CORVALLIS SCHOOLS**

The core purpose of the Corvallis School District is *“to achieve excellence in educating the whole child in a **safe** environment so that students are prepared to succeed in life and become productive members of society”*. Concern for student safety is part and parcel of the culture of the school district. Safety is a broad topic that includes not only the physical safety, but also the emotional safety and mental health of the student body. Here are some of the many ways the district strives to keep students safe.

### **ROUTINE SAFETY INTERVENTIONS**

Safety in our schools today encompasses much more than the fire drills people are familiar with from decades ago. Safety starts with the District Safety Committee and extends to building specific policies. Each building principal develops disaster drills, such as fire, tornado and earthquake drills, which are practiced regularly.

But safety is more than a set of drills; it is a part of the day-to-day culture. Administrators, teachers and other staff spend time every day out of the classroom, in the halls, on the playgrounds and on the campus grounds, interacting with students on a personal level. Students become more comfortable talking with staff and the staff has a chance to see how students are coping with the stresses of school and life.

Our district employs a full-time School Resource Officer, who is a Ravalli County Sheriff's Department deputy. The SRO is not only available for intervention in serious incidents, but is busy every day interacting with students in a way that that will help them become better citizens. For example, during the month of April, the SRO spoke with students who had been reported for reckless driving, met with a student and family about behavior that could be seen as harassment, and met with a student about unexcused absences. Most importantly, this position allows students to form a healthy relationship with a law enforcement officer. The SRO also fingerprints new employees and volunteers, an essential part of student safety.

The SRO works with the entire staff on anti-bullying efforts. Our district utilizes educational programs to help recognize bullying and to respond to it when it occurs. The technology curriculum includes education on digital citizenship, which promotes safe and responsible technology use. Support for emotional health is a first line intervention for keeping students safe. The district employs 5 counselors who work in all three schools. In addition, the district contracts with Altacare, a Comprehensive School and Community Treatment Program, that allows the on-site treatment of children with behavioral or emotional problems.

Lastly, when students are physically healthy, their mental health improves. The district plays a role in keeping children physically healthy. There is a full-time school nurse who does everything from assessing sick students and their fitness for remaining in the classroom to monitoring blood sugar levels for students with insulin dependent diabetes. Our food service staff is committed to a menu rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables and other healthy options. The district works to maximize opportunities for physical education and physical activity. An example of this is the Middle School blue bike program. Students ride a set of purchased and donated bikes to areas such as the Teller Refuge as part of science and outdoor learning programs.

## **FACILITY SAFETY**

Keeping district buildings and grounds in excellent condition is also part of our safety plan. The district has an ongoing facility planning process that looks at needed upgrades in a variety of areas. Cameras have been installed to better monitor the entire campus and provide a record of activity on the grounds after hours, providing reassurance to students and parents when vehicles are parked on campus overnight or on weekends while students travel to school sanctioned events. The district's fleet of buses is being constantly improved to provide students with the safest transportation, as well as to improve fuel efficiency. The technology department upgrades software and hardware protection on a regular basis, so that students and staff can utilize the power of the Internet without fear that data or personal information will be exposed to hackers.

The acquisition of the Ravalli Electric Cooperative property will enable the district to plan for the anticipated continued growth in enrollment. The district is engaged in planning to ensure that there are adequate and safe facilities for that growing population. Among the issues that have been identified are: the need to improve the safety and efficiency of student pick-up and drop-off areas; bus route reconfiguration to increase efficiency and safety; improvements to heating and cooling systems in buildings; and the installation of remote locking doors.

## **EXTERNAL THREAT PREPARATION**

Despite their prominence in news reports, school shootings are rare events. However, the loss of student life at a school where parents have entrusted their children is something that no one wants to contemplate. It is the board's hope that efforts to foster happy and healthy students will minimize the chance of such an occurrence in our district. However, the chance of a violent act can never be reduced to zero. The district has long believed that training staff to handle such a situation as safely and quickly as possible is the best hope for limiting the impact to our students and staff.

The entire district staff has participated in training on the Emergency Response to an Active Threat. The administrative staff has had additional training to become trainers for this program. These trainings have been done in conjunction with the Ravalli County Sheriff's Office), Rocky Mountain Labs, the Hamilton Police Department, and the Stevensville Police Department. Again this August, the district will be hosting trainings for current and new staff, as well as for other valley school personnel. Superintendent Tim Johnson explains that the benefits of these trainings is that staff will be more confident should they be faced with an active threat. Older training focused on turning the lights off, locking the door, and waiting for law enforcement to arrive, while newer training aims to train staff to have a more active mindset. Trainees are taught to consider a variety of scenarios and practice a variety of responses to be better prepared for an actual threat. We thank our law enforcement partners for their assistance with this safety training.

## **Corvallis School Trustees**

*Tonia Bloom   Dan Wolsky   Jennifer Channer   Ginny Hoffman*  
*Kathi Harder-Brouwer   Becky Anderson   Todd Wyche*

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CORVALLIS, MT 59828

## **UPDATE ON FACILITIES AND PROPERTY PURCHASE**

The voter-approved purchase of the Ravalli Electric Co-op property by the Corvallis School District is on schedule to close on June 22. From that point forward, until REC's move to its new facilities in late summer or early fall 2019, the Co-op will lease the portion of the property and buildings it currently uses for operations from the school district.

In the meantime, the school district is proceeding with long-term facility planning. This has begun with planning for use of the buildings that will become available for occupancy by the school district in 2019. The next step includes updating the district's current facility needs assessment in light of continued enrollment growth and beginning the creation of an overall plan for the entire expanded property. As options are developed we will keep the community updated and provide opportunities for your review and input.

We welcome your attendance at all school board meetings. The board meets regularly at 7:00 pm on the second Tuesday of the month in the Corvallis High School Library. The business meeting is generally preceded by a work session from 6-7:00 pm. Meetings and agendas for regular and special board meeting are posted on the district website.

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Primary School: 961-3261 Middle School: 961-3007 High School: 961-3201  
District Office: 961-4211 [www.corvallis.k12.mt.us](http://www.corvallis.k12.mt.us)