

ACT Results Correlated to District Benchmarking Assessments

Professional Learning Communities:
The Pathway to College and Career Readiness



The primary responsibility of a school system is to ensure high levels of learning for all students.

The Helena School District is proud to highlight the results of our students' achievement and identify people and programs that have helped our students achieve higher levels of academic success.



Greg Upham, M.Ed.
Assistant Superintendent

Over the course of the last three years, we have implemented professional learning communities, established curriculum aligned to standards, administered regular assessments to measure student growth, established a Core-Plus instructional model for Special Education, and developed a digital infrastructure and communication system. All of these combine to help us consistently answer the following four critical questions:

1. What do we want our students to know? (essential standards)
2. How do we know our students are learning? (team-developed common assessments)
3. What will we do when our students are not learning? (systematic interventions)
4. What will we do when our students are proficient? (extended learning)

Kent Kultgen, Ed.D. Superintendent, Helena Public Schools



The Helena School District is committed to ensuring all students are College / Career Ready. This initiative is an enormous undertaking as the Trustees, leadership and staff are turning this promise into reality. A firm vision based on "more students learning more" allowed us to prioritize resources resulting in substantial academic growth in the last three years. In this short time we have approved three major curriculums, purchased supporting materials, established benchmarking assessments, revolutionized our technology, and implemented professional development that is focused on our vision. Consistent assessments and progress monitoring are helping us meet the learning needs of each child. This is all done in an atmosphere that is child-centered, engaging and most importantly fun.

This is very hard work, but the rewards are invaluable. Our outstanding staff is the foundation for student learning. Their expertise and dedication, along with the support from administration and Trustees, are evident as student learning is improving every day.

Aidan Myhre Helena School Board Chairperson

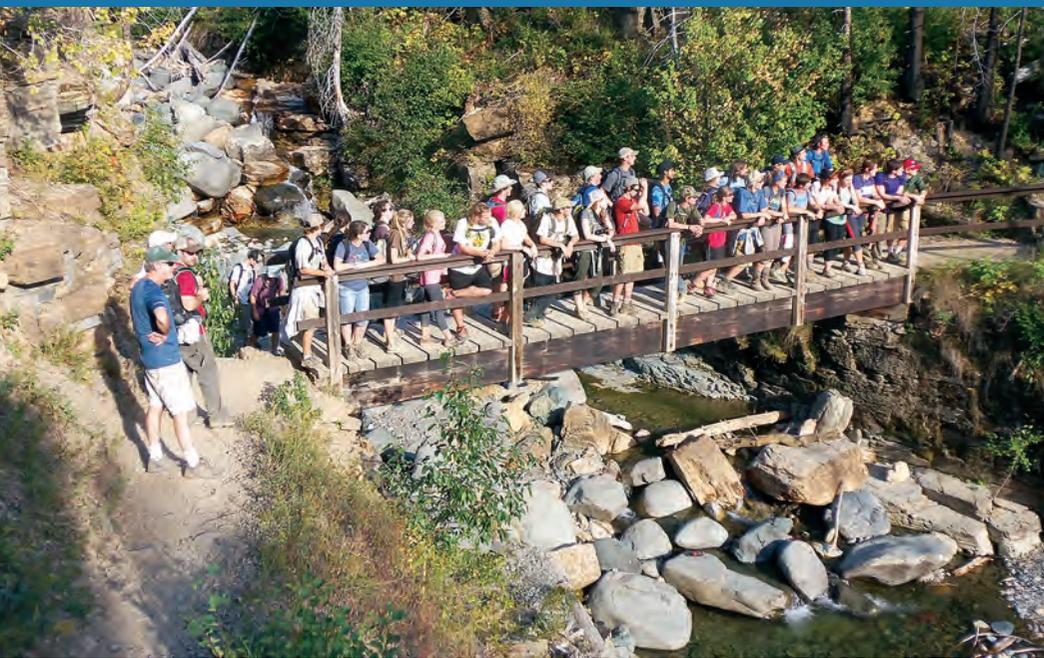


The Board of Trustees is committed to the academic systemic changes which ensure more students learning more. Through our actions and support we have approved three new curriculums and purchased the accompanying materials. This year we are contemplating raising graduation requirements knowing that we need to provide rigorous and relevant learning opportunities to all. By supporting our staff we know our students are receiving the best education possible.



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So– if we really meant it, what would it look like?

Every Monday students are released early so that all educators can participate in their grade level and content area PLC meetings. The PLC process has allowed teachers and support staff to plan and adjust instruction to meet the needs of each student.

Students now have a strong foundation in math and literacy from which to build. This groundwork enables the District to offer advanced courses of study and increase rigor. This strong foundation has lead the District forward to consider an increase in graduation requirements in the areas of math and science.

The District has established three major goals:

Our students will be:

- ▶ Engaged in their own learning.
- ▶ Challenged academically in all disciplines with a strong foundation in literacy and math.
- ▶ Graduates who are College / Career Ready.

The District is doing extensive work with student results in relationship to the ACT. The data shows a significant need to increase graduation requirements in math and science, as well as, prepare K-8 students to meet the level of rigor that will provide the opportunity to choose post-secondary options that are in their areas of interest.

The District is confident that a strong foundation in literacy and math will allow the Helena Public Schools to continue along an academic path which includes a standards-based curriculum and instruction, effective assessments, and a collaborative communication model that allows teachers to benefit from the best work of their colleagues.

“ The District initiatives are so significant, they have the power to affect change in the culture of our schools and community. As our beliefs change, so will our customs, capabilities and habits; hence a transformative shift. What an incredible time to be teaching and learning in the Helena schools.”

–Joan Meyer, Capital High School Librarian, Helena

Strong, positive collaboration in the form of Professional Learning Communities



- Barbara Ridgway, MLS/IT** Staff and Student Services Administrator
- ▶ Followed research proven strategies to build a systemic foundation for learning
 - ▶ Established consultant relationship with Janel Keating, Superintendent of White River School District
 - ▶ Implemented Professional Learning Communities at all levels & scheduled an early out every Monday so PLCs can meet
 - ▶ Identified Building Learning Coordinators at all schools
 - ▶ Organized Summer PLC Conferences with national presenters in 2014 & 2015

Curricular Resources Aligned to Standards



- Joslyn Davidson, M.Ed.** Curriculum & Instruction Administrator
- ▶ Updated core resource materials aligned to State Standards
 - ▶ Defined fidelity as it applies to the implementation of core curricular materials
 - ▶ Scoped, Sequenced and Paced instruction
 - ▶ Developed common units and assessments
 - ▶ Reviewed student achievement results (formative and summative)

Data to Determine Continuous Measurement of Student Growth



- Jilyn Oliveira, Ed.D.** Data and Assessment Administrator
- ▶ Established Districtwide Benchmarking for Math & Reading (Fall, Winter, Spring)
 - ▶ Implemented High School Writing Assessment (Fall & Spring)
 - ▶ Administered Statewide Junior ACT Assessment (Spring)
 - ▶ Administered Smarter Balanced Assessment (Spring)
- Note: After assessments are complete, data review meetings are held with all stakeholders to determine next steps to increase student achievement.*

Special Education / Core-Plus



- Lisa Lowney, M.Ed.** Special Education Administrator
- ▶ Implemented Core-Plus model to ensure all students interact with the standards
 - ▶ Individualized instruction for all students based on data

Infrastructure and Communication



- Pat Boles, B.S.** Technology Administrator
- ▶ Digital Instruction
 - ▶ Digital Communication
 - ▶ Digital Learning