



February 18, 2022

Dear Helena Public Schools Families and Staff,

Thank you for another great school week! Please help me close it out by celebrating more great news from our students and staff:

- Project for Alternative Learning (PAL) Teacher Ryan Cooney has been named the “2022 Global Educator of the Year” by the [Montana World Affairs Council](#). Mr. Cooney will receive \$500 for classroom supplies and will receive his award Feb. 28 at the Academic WorldQuest (AWQ) event at the University of Montana. AWQ is a three-day global education conference that ends in a 100-question global trivia competition. The winning team will represent Montana at the national competition in Washington DC.

Congratulations, Mr. Cooney, and best of luck at the AWQ competition!

- Capital High School Senior Jesse Hruska is the Montana winner of the 2021 Congressional App Challenge. An official initiative of the U.S. House of Representatives, the contest encourages middle-and high-school students to learn to code and pursue computer science careers.

Jesse designed an app to educate young drivers about the dangers of distracted driving. U.S. Rep. Matt Rosendale selected Montana’s winning app and invited Jesse to present his work to House members at the annual #HouseofCode festival in April via Zoom. [Watch Jesse’s video](#) on his award-winning app, or give it a try at [An Evening Drive Safety App](#).

Congratulations to Jesse and CHS Computer Science Teacher Jamie Toivonen!

- Capital High Senior Brennan Jensen has qualified for the [2022 National Speech & Debate](#) Tournament in Louisville, Kentucky, June 12-17. Well done Brennan and Capital High Speech and Debate Coach John McClintic!
- Capital High’s Talon Marsh earned the State Champion title Feb. 12 at the state wrestling meet in Billings. And two Helena High swimmers captured state champion titles at the state meet in Great Falls: Freshman Teagan Boysen won the Girls 200-yard IM and Sophomore Garrett Krattiger won the Boys 500-yard Freestyle. Thanks to all of our fantastic athletes and coaches for representing Helena Public Schools!

As we head into a three-day weekend, a couple quick reminders:

Elementary and middle school families will soon receive information from your child's teacher about parent/teacher conferences coming up in March. Please take time to review the student assessments you recently received via email so you can make the most of your time with your student's teacher. If you did not receive your child's assessment data, please contact your student's teacher.

And don't forget to buy your tickets for Tuesday evening's "Night to Shine" showcase at the Helena Civic Center. Some of Helena's most talented teens will take the stage in 19 acts with concert-quality sound and lighting. Now in its 29th year, "Night to Shine" is produced by the Capital and Helena High DECA chapters. Students work behind the scenes as stagehands, emcees, and in marketing and publicity, with all proceeds going toward DECA programs and event. Attendees are encouraged to buy tickets in advance at Capital or Helena High.

It is truly a joy to see our students excel on the stage, at the podium, and on the playing field. These student enrichment activities go hand-in-hand with socio-emotional health and academic success. The lessons learned and experiences gained in extra-curricular activities serve our young people for a lifetime.

I hope you will take time to fit some family fun into the three-day weekend, which is so well-deserved by our students and staff.

Enjoy!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex M. Weltz". The signature is stylized with a large, looping flourish at the end.

Rex M. Weltz
Superintendent, Helena Public Schools