



April 29, 2022

Dear Helena Public Schools Families and Staff,

With one week to go until Vigilante Day, more than 50 floats are in the works and the weather forecast looks promising. It's shaping up to be a great parade! **Please remember that grades K-8 will be released at 11 a.m. on parade day – Friday, May 6 – and there is no school for grades 9-12.**

Please also be aware of street closures and parking restrictions on the [parade route](#). Beginning at 10:30 a.m. on the 6th, access **will be limited along Helena Avenue from the intersection with Neill Avenue northeast to at least Idaho Avenue as floats begin to stage.**

Speaking of weather, this morning's rain was cold and damp for people, but great for the trees planted at Capital High and Helena High in celebration of Arbor Day. A big thank you to Growing Friends of Helena for providing the 16 new shade trees that were planted along walkways at the two schools. These are in addition to trees planted in cooperation with Growing Friends at Bryant, Central, Hawthorne, and Jim Darcy elementary schools over the past three years.

And thank you to the hardy student and community volunteers who put the trees in the ground this morning. With time, they will provide shade alongside hot parking lot areas as well as greenery for all to enjoy. Like the trees, we see our partnership with Growing Friends lasting long into the future.

Before moving to our Student and Educator Recognitions, I'd like to acknowledge two teams whose hard work is coming to fruition for our students.

On April 12, the Board of Trustees approved the district's new Information Literacy/Library Media Curriculum for grades K-12. In addition to working to create lifelong readers, today's librarians deliver instruction that is focused on teaching students to analyze, validate, and organize information. In today's information-saturated world, these are vital skills that help ensure the personal, academic, and professional success of our students. Our librarians teach these critical skills, collaborating with classroom teachers to help students apply information literacy skills to math, science, language, social studies, and other disciplines. The new curriculum will serve as an updated roadmap for this important work. Thank you to all our K-12 librarians who spent several months completing this important work.

Similarly, the Board of Trustees will vote in May on an updated K-5 Music Curriculum. The proposed curriculum meets updated state standards, which are in turn modeled after national standards. Thank you to our K-5 music educators for developing a curriculum that emphasizes the joy and developmental benefits of making and experiencing music.

In addition to the foundations laid out in our arts curriculums, Helena Public Schools works with community partners to bring the arts to our students. The [Youth Electrum 2022](#) student showcase at the Holter Museum is an annual highlight.

More than 200 HPS students from kindergarten through high school have pieces in the long-standing gallery show, which runs through May 29. We're deeply grateful to the Holter Museum for giving young artists this opportunity to exhibit their work in a museum setting. The Holter eloquently describes the show as "illuminating the galleries with the talent of our community's emerging artists, and the dedication of their teachers." I highly recommend spending an afternoon in our beautiful downtown for a meal and a visit to the Holter to take it all in.

While you're at it, you can catch an evening performance by one or both of our HPS drama programs. The last performances of the Capital High Drama Program's spring production, "[The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940](#)" are tonight and tomorrow at the Capital High Auditorium. On May 12, the Helena High Drama Program will open its spring production, "God's Favorite." The show runs May 12-13 and May 19-20 at the Helena High School Little Theater. General admission seats are \$6.

We also have students taking center stage in academics again this week.

The Angel Fund, which has supported Helena Public Schools children for 31 years, has announced its [2022 scholarships recipients](#). The \$4,000 awards were given to nine deserving HPS seniors to defray freshman year tuition expenses at Montana colleges and universities. In addition to academic achievement, the award criteria include a commitment to give back to the community.

Congratulations to our 2022 Angel Fund scholars:

Helena High: Brenna Holgate, Alyvia Blotkamp, Maedyn Bogy, Hunter Pandis, Raelee Sampson

Capital High: Chloe Nelson, Slayden Rasmussen, Angel Jimenez, Ryan Yeske

And thank you to the Angel Fund and its donors for more than three decades of helping our students achieve their dreams.

We also are deeply grateful for the long-standing support of the Helena Education Foundation, which engages our community in so many ways to support and celebrate our students and teachers. This week the Foundation and its community business sponsors made surprise visits to our classrooms to award [Spark and Great Ideas grants to teachers](#).

These financial awards from our generous local businesses will support classroom projects ranging from "Disc Golf Newbies" to a "We Thrive With 'I Survived'" project focused on the popular children's novel series.

Thank you to HEF and its sponsors for making a difference in our classrooms throughout the year. See fun photos of the award presentations on [HEF's Facebook page](#).

Finally, I'd like to recognize two Helena High students who were winners in the Montana NCWIT (National Center for Women and Information Technology) Aspirations in Computing Contest. Hosted by

Northwestern Energy and Carroll College, the event encourages young women to pursue careers in technology.

HHS seniors Sierrah Paul and Laurel Maronick were among seven young women selected statewide by a national committee following a rigorous application process. The application challenged students to describe how they would fix a problem using technology.

Sierrah envisions a technology to alert drivers to the location of approaching emergency vehicles as cars get more soundproof. Laurel learned of a pressing communication need while working as a volunteer EMT with the Whitehall ambulance service last summer. She would like to develop an app that would create a more streamlined process for sharing patient information between ambulance crews and hospital-based staff during patient transport.

Congratulations to Sierrah, Laurel and faculty advisor Buffy Smith (Computer Sciences, HHS)!

Our Helena community has so much to be proud of in our young citizens. Wherever life takes them, I know they will represent us well.

Have a wonderful weekend and see you at the Vigilante Parade May 6!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex M. Weltz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rex" and last name "Weltz" clearly legible.

Rex M. Weltz
Superintendent, Helena Public Schools