



May 13, 2022

Dear Helena Public Schools Families and Staff,

Next week we'll enjoy another of our District's favorite spring traditions, the Annual Grad Walk. Each of our 2022 grads will return to their elementary alma mater for a congratulatory walk down the hall, proudly donning cap and gown.

Elementary educators give their students flight, and it means the world to students and teachers alike to have this special opportunity to reconnect. Stories of some of those special bonds were shared at this week's Celebration of Excellence banquet, where student honorees described how a teacher made a difference in their life. Congratulations to our honorees and thank you to the Helena Education Foundation (HEF) for celebrating our remarkable students and educators at this annual event. [HEF has shared a few powerful stories from the honorees on YouTube](#), and they're well worth the time to watch.

I also would like to congratulate Capital High Science Teacher Christina Sieminski, a University of Montana-Western alumna, who is among five educators statewide to be inducted into Western's Educator Hall of Fame. Ms. Sieminski is deeply dedicated to helping students reach their full potential, having served as a club advisor and coach, as well as on multiple teams and committees.

In other Student and Educator Recognitions, Capital High was pleased to welcome its 2022-23 inductees to the [National Honor Society \(NHS\)](#) at a ceremony May 3. National Honor Society students commit to serve our community over the course of the coming year, an experience that will be both challenging and rewarding. Lists of CHS and HHS National Honor Society members, who were inducted last month, are available on our [Student & Educator Recognitions page](#).

We also have results in from the MHSA State Music Festival, hosted live at Helena High and Helena Middle School last weekend. Congratulations to our Bengal and Bruin musicians, who came away with a [long list of Superior and Excellent ratings](#).

Finally, I would like to congratulate Smith Elementary fifth-grader Mary Guzynski, who is the state winner in the National Missing Children's Poster Contest! Fifth-graders across Montana were challenged to create an original poster to raise awareness of the issue, with the words "Bringing our Missing Children Home." Students also were required to submit essays, which were judged on clarity, comprehension, and grammar. Mary's poster ([see Student & Educator Recognitions page](#)) will now be entered in the national contest, with the chance to win a trip to Washington D.C. In addition to a \$100 cash prize, Mary earned her fellow Smith fifth-graders a pizza party yesterday at the Montana Historical Society. Way to go, Mary!

I like to celebrate our student and staff achievements here each week, because they are at the heart of what we do. But I also aim to keep you well-informed of District business. As discussed at the April 13

Board of Trustees meeting, we are refocusing on one of our pre-COVID strategic priorities, which is addressing the District's projected budget shortfall.

This work will be a top priority for the District over the summer and into next year, and I'll share updates each month to keep you apprised of progress. I wish I could say this process will be easy, but it won't. What I can tell you is that it will be careful, thoughtful, and transparent, with an eye toward keeping you informed and doing what's best for our children, our schools, our staff, and our community over the long term.

Our District has a long history of excellence, and the Board and I are committed to continuing this legacy. I know that our staff and our community are, too. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to voters for the approval of our school levies.

We have difficult work ahead, but I'm confident that we will continue to operate one of Montana's finest school districts for our students, our staff, and our community.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Weltz". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "W" and a "Z" that extends downwards.

Rex Weltz  
Superintendent, Helena Public Schools