



October 29, 2021

Good Afternoon HPS Families and Staff,

While COVID-19 has dominated much of the news your teachers and I have shared with you in recent months, teaching and learning have not taken a back seat.

Today I want to share a glimpse some of the exciting work taking place on the academic front across the district.

This week, a teacher from each grade level at each elementary school joined their peers from around the district for grade-level meetings. The biannual sessions allow teachers to share instructional strategies, progress reports, grading tips and other resources with their colleagues. Instructional coaches and administrators also joined the half-day sessions to provide support. These meetings are an important opportunity for our K-5 teachers to learn from one another and share what's working across the district.

At the high school level, the HPS Board of Trustees met at Capital High for their monthly work session. The evening included a presentation by CHS Science Teacher Tom Caffrey on his work with the innovative [Jobs for Montana's Graduates \(JMG\)](#) program. JMG goes beyond standard, grade-level academics to give students the soft skills they need to be competitive in today's job market – everything from interpersonal communication skills and dressing for success to how to hold one's silverware during a business lunch. Thank you to Mr. Caffrey for preparing our students for career and personal success.

Assistant Principal Walt Chancy shared an update on the school's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support program (MTSS), which has cut student discipline referrals to the principal's office by more than half since the program was introduced in the 2011-2012 school year. MTSS combines behavioral support, such as mentoring and home visits, with increased academic support to foster student success.

Finally, Principal Brett Zanto shared Capital's recent accreditation report, which recognizes the school's strong sense of community, positive culture of respect, focus on college and career readiness, and student-centered learning.

All of this underscores the incredible work our teachers, staff, students, and families are doing under very challenging circumstances. I feel grateful to work in a district with such dedicated staff and supportive families, all of whom are keeping our positive momentum going this fall.

While our county remains in [high COVID-19 transmission status](#) and our mask requirements remain in effect for grades K-8, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Transmission rates are declining elsewhere in the nation and we're now just a few weeks away from parents having the opportunity to vaccinate children ages K-5.

Hang in there, stay safe, and enjoy the festivities with your families this weekend. I'm hopeful that better times are around the corner.

Respectfully,

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

Rex Weltz  
Superintendent, Helena Public Schools