

Graduation Matters Montana

School-Business Partnership Toolkit

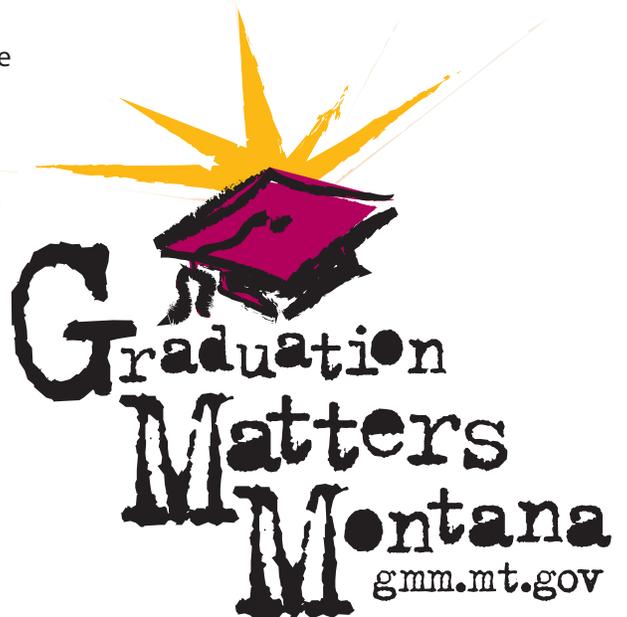
A Toolkit for **Community Leaders, Business Owners, and Educators across Montana**

Superintendent Denise Juneau has set an expectation for every child in Montana to graduate from high school. In today's global economy, a quality education is the key to economic prosperity for our young people. More than 2,000 Montana students drop out of school each year – an average of five every day.

We can do better.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT **YOU** CAN DO,
PLEASE VISIT THE **GRADUATION MATTERS
MONTANA** WEBSITE:

<http://graduationmatters.mt.gov>



MONTANA STATE UNI




Graduation
Matters
Montana
gmm.mt.gov

Letter from Superintendent Denise Juneau



Dear School-Business Partner,

In today's economy, a quality public education is the key to economic prosperity for our young people. As parents, taxpayers, business owners and educators, we cannot ignore the long-term economic consequences of students not graduating from high school. Montana business leaders tell me they are looking for workers with not only academic skills but also with critical thinking and communication skills, creativity, adaptability, resilience and the ability to work in teams.

I believe in confronting our challenges. Each year, approximately 2,000 students drop out of high school in Montana – that's about five every day. We can do better.

In response to our dropout challenge, I launched Graduation Matters Montana, a multi-pronged, statewide effort to ensure Montana's public schools are meeting the goal of graduating students prepared for college and the workforce. Since starting the program in spring 2010, 26 communities have joined Graduation Matters. Sixty-five percent of high school students currently attend Graduation Matters schools, and nearly 4,000 students have pledged to graduate through community events and our online system. Our high school dropout rate has also declined from 5.1 percent in 2009 to 4.3 percent in 2011. This is all great news and a credit to communities and schools working together at the local level.

Graduation Matters has been vastly aided by key Montana employers, including a grant from the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation for \$450,000 so more communities can work to lower their dropout rates over the next three years, a grant from State Farm Insurance to produce this toolkit, support from Optimum Cable, First Interstate Bank, United Way and the Student Assistance Foundation. These critical business partnerships are helping local Graduation Matters initiatives garner local business partnerships to help students access the critical thinking and hands-on experiences they need to succeed in the 21st Century economy.

The Graduation Matters Montana School-Business Partnership Toolkit is designed to help local schools and businesses create effective partnerships to increase the graduation rate in your community. The toolkit provides helpful tips, links to resources, research-based best practices and Montana-based examples of effective school-business partnerships.

Today's students are your future customers, employees, tax payers, board members, parents and community leaders. If we don't provide them with a quality education, opportunities to explore careers and seek out mentors, and encourage them to go on to college or skills-training programs, we won't have the bright future that all of us want for our state.

I hope you will use this toolkit to enhance Graduation Matters school-business partnerships in your community. Please let us know about your efforts, and we will publicize your work as part of the statewide initiative.

Should you need assistance planning your initiative, please don't hesitate to contact my staff at graduationmatters@mt.gov.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Juneau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Denise Juneau, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Letter from Daniel Losk, State Farm Insurance

Why does graduation really matter? Our children are our future. State Farm believes communities are the foundation of society and we are committed to help maintain the vibrancy and culture of our neighborhoods. We demonstrate this commitment by supporting programs that focus on affordable housing, first-time homeowners, community revitalization, economic development and education.



State Farm supports efforts to provide all children with an education that will allow them to reach their greatest potential and prepare them to participate in a nation and economy that continues as a global leader. Our support goes to programs that provide students the instruction, resources, and support they need to succeed and graduate.

"We believe the success of the future lies in the youth of today." State Farm CEO Edward B. Rust.

The single economic impact of a student dropping out of school can be enormous. Getting a quality high school education has never been more important for Montana's economy. State Farm has partnered locally with the Montana Office of Public Instruction to provide grant funding to create this comprehensive toolkit that supports local Graduation Matters efforts in your community.

State Farm is honored to assist the OPI's efforts of implementing locally designed Graduation Matters initiatives to engage schools, communities, businesses and families in a focused effort to increase the number of students who graduate prepared for college and careers. We are impressed with the twenty-six Montana communities and the potential many more that will join the Graduation Matters program to impact Montana dropout rates.

Thank you for your commitment to this program, and the support network you will create in your community to see students have the best chance to achieve success.

Regards,

Daniel Losk

State Farm Insurance

Table of Contents

What Communities/Businesses Can Do

What is Graduation Matters Montana?

Introduction _____ 3

Snap Shot: Graduation Matters Billings & Big Sky Pathways _____ 6

Profile: Graduation Matters Hardin _____ 7

Profile: Graduation Matters Havre _____ 8

Profile: Graduation Matters Great Falls _____ 10

Profile: Graduation Matters Anaconda _____ 11

A Checklist for Starting a School-Business Partnership _____ 12

Worksheet 1: Form a school-business partnership working group _____ 13

Worksheet 2: Inventory and assess current school-business partnerships _____ 14

Worksheet 3: Explore opportunities for new or enriched partnerships _____ 15

Worksheet 4: Focus Your Efforts _____ 17

Worksheet 5: Summarize your progress to share with the entire GMM Team _____ 19

Worksheet 6: Design or enhance new school-business partnerships _____ 20

Appendix A _____ 21

 Student Needs Survey

 Havre Graduation Survey

Appendix B _____ 24

 Business Partner Resource Questionnaire

Appendix C _____ 25

 School and Business Partnership Roles and Responsibilities

Resource List _____ 27

What **YOU** Can Do— Communities/ Businesses

GET INVOLVED IN **GRADUATION MATTERS MONTANA**

1 START OR JOIN LOCAL GRADUATION MATTERS MONTANA EFFORTS

- Create or join a taskforce of local businesses, parents, caregivers, students and community leaders to focus on graduation.
- Encourage your Chamber of Commerce to take an active role in supporting K-12 education.
- Display Graduation Matters Montana materials in your workplace.

2 INVEST YOUR TIME AND RESOURCES

- Volunteer time to a local school district's Graduation Matters Montana efforts.
- Offer student discounts or set up scholarships for students graduating from high school or receiving their GED.
- Adopt a local classroom or school.
- Fund a classroom project of interest to your business or community group.
- Join a Career and Technical Education Advisory Council.

3 PROMOTE SCHOOL & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Connect employees with volunteer opportunities at local schools.
- Establish a workplace mentoring program for local youth.
- Run a book or supplies drive for a local school.

4 PROVIDE CAREER READINESS OPPORTUNITIES

- Offer internships, externships or job shadowing.
- Collaborate with teachers and career counselors to create service-learning and other real world learning opportunities.
- Participate in a career fair or host an industry field trip.

5 SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US

- If you're engaged in partnerships with your local school, tell us how your work is helping your community, your workplace and students.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT **YOU** CAN DO, PLEASE VISIT THE **GRADUATION MATTERS MONTANA** WEBSITE.

graduationmattersmontana.mt.gov





Superintendent Juneau launched a statewide effort in the spring of 2010 to ensure Montana's public schools graduate more students prepared for college and careers.

What is Graduation Matter Montana?

Local Graduation Matters Initiatives

Superintendent Juneau supports the implementation of locally-designed Graduation Matters initiatives that engage schools, communities, businesses and families in a focused effort to increase the number of students who graduate prepared for college and careers.

Twenty-six communities have joined Graduation Matters, including all AA schools, smaller, more rural schools, and schools on or near our state's Indian Reservations. Sixty-five percent of high school students attend Graduation Matters schools, and nearly 4,000 students have taken the pledge to graduate.

In March of 2012, the Office of Public Instruction received a three-year grant from the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation for \$450,000 to allow more communities to work to lower their dropout rates. Communities that applied for the challenge fund received up to \$10,000 to implement successful dropout prevention strategies. The twenty-two communities that received the challenge fund have set high goals, and if these communities are successful in reaching their goals, Graduation Matters will be able to cut the statewide dropout rate in half by 2014.

Student-Centered Policies

Oftentimes, adults plan and discuss educational policy, but rarely talk to the people who will be most directly affected by those plans and discussions: the students. To include student ideas and voices in state-level policies, Superintendent Juneau created the Superintendent's Student Advisory Board.

Twice each year, forty students gather to discuss ways to improve educational opportunities for all students, raise the graduation rate and encourage more students to pursue education and training after graduation. The Student Advisory Board consistently reports that they seek relevant coursework and real-world experiences, clear and consistent rules, a positive school climate and meaningful relationships at their schools. There have now been four Student Advisory Board Summits. To see reports from each Summit, visit our website: graduationmatters.mt.gov.

Policy Changes

Superintendent Juneau proposed covering the cost of the **ACT for every high school junior** in the Office of Public Instruction's budget at the 2011 Legislature. Funding to cover the cost of the ACT for every junior has been secured through a seven-year grant under the Commissioner of Higher Education's GEAR UP program. Superintendent Juneau recommended adoption of the **Common Core State Standards in English**



Objectives of Graduation Matters Montana:

1. Increase the rate of Montana students graduating from high school college- and career-ready.
2. Establish a support network between schools, businesses and community organizations for student success.
3. Create school-based and community-based opportunities for student success.

Language Arts and Math to the Board of Public Education (BPE), and the BPE adopted these standards in November of 2011. The Montana Common Core Standards are higher and clearer than current state standards and will prepare our students for college and to compete in today's global economy. She also convened a task force to review Montana's **accreditation** standards to make them more performance-based and to provide school districts needed flexibility to focus on results.

During the 2011 Legislative Session, Superintendent Juneau championed bills to raise the **legal drop out age** from "age 16" to "age 18 or upon graduation" and to establish common definitions and procedures for **anti-bullying policies** for all school districts. Superintendent Juneau will continue to support legislation and administrative policies that set high expectations for students and create safe school climates.

Relevant Coursework and Career Preparation

In Montana, all high school students take at least one career and technical education course, and over half take three or more. Discussions with students make it clear they desire classes that relate to real-world experiences, career preparation and include hands-on learning. Superintendent Juneau supports the expansion of **Big Sky Pathways**, a partnership with the Montana University System that links students to career coursework paths so they earn college credits and explore careers while they are in high school.

Workforce projections by the U.S. Department of Labor show that by 2018, nine of the 10 fastest-growing occupations that require at least a bachelor's degree will also require significant scientific or mathematical training. Superintendent Juneau is convening education stakeholders and business partners to create a pipeline for students to be prepared for careers in **Science, Technology, Engineering and Math** through OPI's statewide STEM initiative.



Business and Community Partnerships

Montana employers want an educated and innovative workforce, and schools understand they need to develop new strategies to achieve the goal of preparing educated, work-ready graduates. Superintendent Juneau and local Graduation Matters initiatives are working with statewide and local business partners to engage business and community leaders who are committed to helping students graduate prepared for college and careers and to ensuring Montana communities thrive in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. To assist in these efforts, the OPI has developed a business and school partnership toolkit which can be found on the Graduation Matters website.

I Pledge to Graduate Campaign

Research shows that students are more likely to reach a goal if they identify their own motivations when committing to meet it. Superintendent Juneau, in partnership with local school districts and the Student Advisory Board, launched an "I Pledge to Graduate" initiative in the 2011-2012 school year and more than 4,000 students took the pledge.

Students pledge to a significant adult that they will graduate and identify specific reasons why graduation is important to them. This high-profile campaign focuses statewide attention on Graduation Matters Montana, engages community and business partners, involves social networking and highlights student voices and ideas.

For more information on Graduation Matters Montana email graduationmatters@mt.gov or call 406-444-5643.



GRADUATION MATTERS MONTANA SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP TOOLKIT

Introduction

Business and education leaders across Montana and the nation are looking to build stronger partnerships. The reasons are varied, from local business leaders wanting a skilled and educated workforce, to schools understanding that they need to form new strategies to achieve the goal of preparing educated, work-ready graduates. This toolkit, prepared by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), provides examples of effective partnerships and a series of worksheets to assist Montana schools and businesses in forging effective Graduation Matters Montana school-business partnerships.



Superintendent Juneau with the Business Leaders Roundtable at the 2012 GMM Summer Summit. From l to r, Mike Miller *State Farm Insurance*, Katie Boedecker *PRO Outfitters*, Superintendent Denise Juneau, Sheila Callahan *Mountain Broadcasting*, Scott Levandowski *First Interstate Bank*, and Gov. Bob Wise *Alliance for Excellent Education*.

Graduation Matters Montana

Graduation Matters Montana (GMM) is a statewide effort to ensure Montana's public schools graduate more students prepared for college and careers. State Superintendent Denise Juneau launched GMM in 2010 in partnership with local communities, schools, employers and civic organizations. The objectives of GMM are to: (1) Increase the rate of Montana students graduating from high school college- and career-ready; (2) Establish a support network between schools, businesses and community organizations for student success; and (3) Create school-based opportunities for student success.

Central to the strategy of GMM is to engage the local business community in school partnerships to support the goals of GMM. To date, through generous support from the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, 26 communities have joined Graduation Matters, including the state's largest school districts, rural schools and schools on or near our state's Indian Reservations.

Sixty-five percent of high school students attend a Graduation Matters school, and nearly 4,000 students have taken a pledge to graduate. The OPI has a robust website (<http://gmm.mt.gov>) that includes a GMM toolkit, this toolkit, and additional resources and information to support the initiative's success.

This toolkit advises communities on how to form school-business partnerships through a local Graduation Matters Montana Team. GMM Teams consist of school personnel, students, community members and organizations, local employers, local community foundation staff, local governmental program staff, and others who share an interest in helping students graduate prepared for college and/or careers. It is not necessary to have an established GMM Team before beginning this process, but it is a helpful way to begin the work if a GMM Team exists.

Why School-Business Partnerships?

Getting a quality high school education has never been more important for Montana's economy. Current economic projections show that 62 percent of all jobs in Montana will require some postsecondary training beyond high school in 2018.¹ In addition, research suggests that the average high school graduate is not work-ready or college-ready (i.e., they lack employability skills such as teamwork, professionalism, work ethics, communication skills, etc.) and that school-business partnerships can help to improve their readiness.²

There are many benefits to school-business partnerships. Business leaders find that partnerships provide leadership development opportunities for their employees and can increase overall morale and sense of job-worth. Partnerships provide an opportunity for businesses to interact with students, exposing students to the requirements, satisfactions, concerns and expectations of the business world, and giving businesses a chance to interact with their future work force.

Schools find that these partnerships offer an opportunity for students and teachers to deepen their understanding of the ever-evolving world of work. School-business partnerships also provide students with role models who have expertise that otherwise may not be available in the classroom and can thereby increase students' understanding of how classes are relevant to future work life.

Montana high school students serving on Superintendent Juneau's Student Advisory Board (SAB) consistently request opportunities to have more real world experiences and coursework to prepare them for their next steps in life. The SAB members emphasize that they want to see what jobs are "actually like" along with more "real life classes" allowing them to explore career options and to gain financial literacy skills. SAB members recommend providing students with opportunities to develop applied skills such as writing and verbal communication skills to prepare them for employment (i.e., job interviews, job applications).

"We have a culture that believes that some people make it, and some people don't, and that's okay. We need to change it so we see every child make it in their own way. Businesses can play a huge role in helping us help each student find his or her own way."

Superintendent Dr. Alex Apostle, Missoula County Public Schools

Please see Appendix D for the survey

"Employers are frequently surprised by the positive effects of working with young people on morale and supervisory skills."³

"In order to ensure that our curriculum is keeping pace with the changing needs of our community, we are a part of the Flathead Business Education Council which is comprised of K-12 and college educators and local business leaders. This group meets quarterly and is focused upon improving the strength and relevance of our community's school/business partnerships."

Assistant Superintendent Dan Zorn, Ed.D., Kalispell Public Schools

¹The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (2010). Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018. www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/FullReport.pdf

² Consortium of The Conference Board, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, Corporate Voices for Working Families, and the Society for Human Resource Management, May 2006

³ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management: Policy Report, Fall 2001

School-Business Partnerships That Work

Successful school-business partnerships focus on developing students' specific skills and experiences.

Research shows that employers are most concerned that high school graduates develop the following applied skills³:

- ◇ Professionalism/Work Ethic
- ◇ Oral and Written Communication
- ◇ Teamwork/Collaboration
- ◇ Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
- ◇ Creativity and Innovation

Montana communities are working to develop partnerships that enable students to learn these applied skills as well as give students access to opportunities otherwise unavailable in the classroom. Throughout this toolkit, there are examples of ways in which schools and businesses are partnering to support the shared goal of graduating high school students prepared for college and careers.

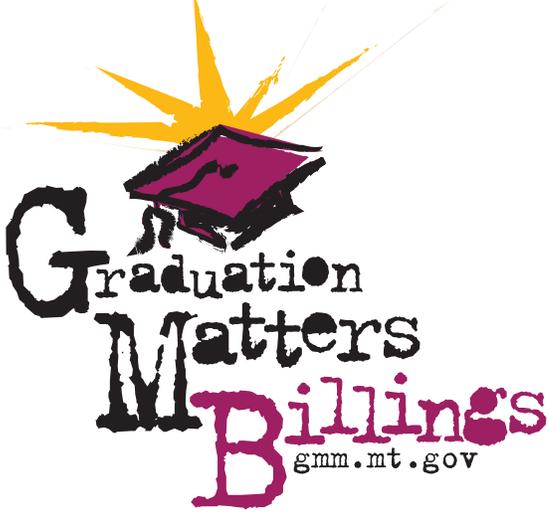
Montana businesses are currently participating in local GMM initiatives in several concrete, exciting ways. These include:

- For statewide employers such as **First Interstate Bank**, the **Montana Credit Union Network** and **State Farm Insurance**, employers regularly share updates on GMM activities and encourage local branch officials to join local GMM Teams.
- **Graduation Matters Stevensville** businesses are placing GMM posters in local shop windows to reinforce their support that everyone can graduate.
- The **Havre Chamber of Commerce** partnered with the local school district to survey the community on public perception of Havre High School graduates' applied skills.
- **Graduation Matters Missoula** is partnering with their two hospitals to launch a health sciences academy at Big Sky High School in fall 2012, including providing teachers "externships" to give teachers a firsthand glimpse of current workforce practices.
- **Graduation Matters Hamilton** works with the local Job Service office to provide mini-lessons on job hunting and employer expectations.
- **Graduation Matters Hardin** counts among its partners the local radio station, which airs student-developed GMM-themed PSAs.
- **Graduation Matters Townsend** and **Graduation Matters Miles City** collected gift certificates from local businesses as incentives for their I Pledge to Graduate events.

Increasingly, the private sector is shifting from a charity-based model of community support to a partnership model where there is an investment of funds and/or people in results-driven initiatives.¹

³ Consortium of The Conference Board, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, Corporate Voices for Working Families, and the Society for Human Resource Management, May 2006

¹ Building a Grad Nation, March 2012, p. 66



Snap Shot: Billings Education Foundation hosts an annual “Educator for a Day” event to give business and community leaders the opportunity to learn more

about the schools and to experience the decisions and responsibilities educators face each day. “Educator for a Day” is a half-day event where guest “educators” visit with teachers and students, participate in class activities and meetings, tour the school, and learn about the school district’s improvement plan. Following the morning visits the principals, guests, and other community members gather for a luncheon and debrief. Community members, who haven’t stepped inside the door of a school for years, have the chance to meet staff, visit classrooms, and learn first-hand what it takes to run a school in the 21st century. This event helps to build a better community understanding of students, staff, achievements and needs.

“We are fortunate to have a strong partnership with Benefis Healthcare Systems, which provides opportunities for our students to explore their interest in a healthcare career via job shadowing and internships. Benefis is also generously providing the instructor for interested students to attain their Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certifications. A high percentage of students are working as CNAs or pursuing higher education in the healthcare field, which is a significant benefit to Benefis given the impending shortage of healthcare workers.”

*Assistant Superintendent—
Secondary Education Tom Moore,
Great Falls Public Schools*

Snap Shot: Big Sky Pathways is a partnership between OPI and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education designed to assist students in successfully transitioning from high school to college and to prepare them for careers in Montana. With respect to businesses and careers, Big Sky Pathways helps to increase student awareness of career opportunities, supports students as they plan for their careers and aligns training with employer needs. The Big Sky Pathways Initiative is shaped by local Advisory Councils which are often in need of business representatives to help develop curriculum to reflect needed workplace skills. For more information, contact your local school and ask to speak to the career and technical education teacher or visit: mus.edu/BigSkyPathways.



PROFILE: GRADUATION MATTERS HARDIN

Business Partner: Local Businesses, Fort Custer General Store

Program: Window Display Marketing

Contact: Cindy Farmer, Hardin High School Marketing Teacher



What does it take to catch your eye when you're walking past the windows of retail shops? Ever stop and take a second look, or better yet, decide to enter the store because the window display was so appealing? Well, if you happen to be shopping in Hardin you just might have that extra impulse to buy, because the junior and senior marketing students at Hardin High School have been hard at work designing and implementing very effective window displays.

Cindy Farmer is the marketing instructor and leads the program which has been running for seven years. During the spring semester, students in her marketing class have the opportunity to partner with businesses to design and implement window displays to showcase the products of the respective business and draw customers into the store.

Are these displays any good, you wonder? For starters, there's never a shortage of businesses requesting to be selected to partner with a student. Furthermore, the program has gathered a momentum of its own due to the competition that exists—when the window displays are completed, a panel of judges, comprised of community members, determines which ones are the best, using an evaluation tool created by Farmer. It's a real badge of honor and a source of pride to win first place, and marketing students gear up for the window display unit each year.

Charlene Warren, owner of the Fort Custer General Store, welcomes the opportunity to work with students each year, and says that even though she has a challenging window to work with, the students always surprise her with their creativity. And Kadie Chavez was one of those creative students who worked on the General Store's window, winning first place last year as a senior in the marketing class. Kadie admits that she was originally doubtful that window displays even mattered, but after learning what makes a good display and applying her knowledge on behalf of the Fort Custer General Store, she believes it can make a huge difference.

According to Farmer, students choose a business to work with and then approach the owner to discuss the possibilities. Students practice outreach and communication skills (especially interviewing and listening), and then formulate a design for the selected window space. Designs must use contents from the store, and rarely result in additional expenditures. Once the design is approved, students then follow through by implementing their plan and transforming the window space into first class curb appeal.

Farmer explained that students spend class time working on the project, often leaving the school to conduct interviews with the business owner and other store representatives. "Students love it because they see the book theory placed into practice, and they get to see the project through from conception to completion—it's all up to them to make the contact and make it happen. And businesses welcome the program and are always pleased with the results, with window displays often lasting months. It truly is a win/win," says Farmer. "Some students have even been offered summer and post-graduation jobs," Farmer added, "because they develop relationships during this project and demonstrate their skills.



PROFILE: GRADUATION MATTERS HAVRE

Business Partner: Havre Chamber of Commerce

Program: Leadership High School

Contact: Debbie Vandeberg, Havre Chamber President

If you ask Havre Chamber of Commerce President Debbie Vandeberg to tell you about the Chamber's Leadership High School program, be ready for a burst of energy and enthusiasm—and for good reason. The program has been offered annually to incoming high school juniors for more than a decade, and the results and impacts are the types of outcomes that any community would desire: students returning from college to assume a position they discovered during the program; high school graduates entering the work force via a network connection made through the program; program graduates taking up leadership positions within businesses because they developed an appreciation for the necessary skills through this program.

Brittany Christopherson graduated from the program in 2003, and after a decade of pursuing her career in social work, she looks back and describes the biggest benefit of the program as being: "Learning what Havre had to offer because of Leadership High School, so I could return from college and pursue a specific job that I would have never known about without having gone through the program."

A more recent graduate of the program, Shawna Cary, says the program helped her understand that to get where you want to get, a person needs to work hard, stay focused, and not give up.

The program is modeled after community leadership development programs, and it is tailored for the high school junior, offering a learning experience to help develop community awareness and leadership skills among the participants. The program is designed to expose potential young leaders to the various elements that interact to form a strong and dynamic community.

According to the Havre Chamber's website, "The Chamber's sponsorship and involvement in the program sends a message about our commitment to our youth by providing them with a solid background in civic engagement and increasing their knowledge about all the many facets of life in Havre from social services to life skills." The cornerstone philosophy of the program is to establish a "sense of community and enthusiastic leadership" among participants, and to engage their youth to become Havre's future leaders.

The program includes six components that span the junior year of high school including: 1) a retreat to kick off the experience in October; 2) a discussion of Havre challenges and opportunities in November; 3) community service in December; 4) exposure to government, justice and protection in January; 5) focus on life skills in February; and 6) two job shadowing opportunities in March and April. The program wraps up with a recognition luncheon.

Stephanie Larson, a 2003 graduate of the program, liked the Community Service component, "Because it put things in perspective: I realized that life did not revolve around me. The program opened my eyes to being part of a community and how to be a leader in the community."

Another graduate, Brett Patrick, said he liked the speakers and guests because they, “Provided firsthand insights that helped me understand exactly what it took to lead a business or an organization.”

Havre Public Schools Superintendent Andy Carlson complimented the Chamber’s program efforts and explained how they were taking the program a step further into the middle school: “With assistance from the Chamber of Commerce, the high school has designed and implemented a Leadership Program that reaches out to the eighth grade students to help them prepare for the transition to high school. Students speaking to students—this is a powerful way to communicate the importance of education and graduation, and the result has been that eighth graders overwhelmingly sign the Graduation Matters Montana pledge. The Chamber deserves special credit for working with students to design and lead this program.”



Havre Leadership High School Graduates



PROFILE: GRADUATION MATTERS GREAT FALLS

Business Partner: NeighborWorks

Program: High School House

Contact: Sheila Rice, Executive Director of NeighborWorks

There's been a lot of building going on in Great Falls—house building and student building. Student building? What else would you call it when you take high school students out of the classroom, put tools in their hands, place them under the mentoring leadership of construction professionals, and allow them to build trade skills, self-confidence, and life-long project skills? That's what the High School House Program does in Great Falls, where NeighborWorks partners with the two public high schools to provide such an opportunity.

And talk about sustainability—the High School House Program is entering its 16th year, and has resulted in more than 30 houses being built around Great Falls. The new homes are designed for first-time home buyers, and are located in older neighborhoods where they typically inspire neighbors to refurbish their own homes. Everyone wins. Sheila Rice, Executive Director of NeighborWorks which sponsors and coordinates the program, comments on the positive ripple effect, "We're building better neighborhoods, not just new homes."

So who'd want to live in a home built by teenagers? Well, given the close supervision and high quality of construction management provided by professionals, the fact is that these homes always return a high inspection rating, and the demand for them is just as high. Furthermore, not just any student can get on the work crew. According to Tom Kotynski, Supervisor of Career and Technical Education for Great Falls Public Schools, students need to complete prerequisite work, take a construction class, and be accepted by the teacher who coordinates the class (the teacher, by the way, is an experienced home builder). The daily class spans two class periods and lasts the entire school year. In total, an average of 40 students from each of the two high schools take the house building class each year, resulting in two completed homes per year. Sometimes the houses are even next door to each other.

NeighborWorks specializes in, among other things, providing affordable housing to first-time home buyers. With the High School House program, NeighborWorks is able to acquire property and turn it around into a new home that is affordable. By selling it at market value, NeighborWorks can use the proceeds to help fund the next new home, or at least break even.

Another interesting outcome is that contractors have benefitted by being able to identify interested and talented students who have a passion for the construction trade; so in essence, this program has become a talent source for the building trade industry.

Beginning with a ground breaking celebration and ending with an open house showing of the finished home, this program provides students an opportunity to see a project through from inception to completion, with their effort being the driving force of success. New, affordable homes, contractors pleased with new talent, happy first-time home buyers, reinvigorated neighborhoods... and most of all, students with news skills, confidence, and a pretty impressive project under their belts—what's not to love about this program?





PROFILE: GRADUATION MATTERS ANACONDA

Business Partner: Local Businesses and Organizations

Program: Career Opportunities and Relevant Experience (CORE) Program

Contact: Rose Kellegher, Program Coordinator

What's the question most often asked of college students? What's your major? or, What are you going to do when you graduate? More often than not, college students have a tough time answering these questions because the fact is, they haven't had enough experience in the proverbial "real world" to help them discern what type of career they want to pursue.

Anaconda High School took this into consideration as it designed its Career Opportunities and Relevant Experience (CORE) Program. The program provides opportunities for high school seniors (and approved juniors) to job shadow professionals in the students' field of interest. To what end? The student gains relevant experience to help him/her decide whether or not to get serious about that type of job, or that field of work.

Just ask recent high school graduate Danika Fabich who said, "I was able to job shadow two different physical therapists, because that was something I was interested in. After seeing what they do on a daily basis, and listening to them explain how they treat different injuries, I was able to decide that I do want to be a physical therapist. It gave me focus for college, and that's what I'm pursuing, now."

High school graduates who do not want to pursue postsecondary education also benefit from the program because it helps them explore what they may like to do, and the experience often results in job placement after high school graduation due to the relationships the student forms. It's also impressive during an interview to showcase a year-long job shadow experience with evidence of tangible skill-building.

The CORE Program offers off-campus daily job shadowing, and that can be a logistical challenge. Rose Kellegher, Program Coordinator, explained the accountability measures that are in place to both manage the student's experience, and to ensure the success of the job shadow. Students leave school for back-to-back periods, and report to their job shadow location which is a place of business that matches their interests. Students have a contract with their employers which outlines the expectations of the student and the employer. Additionally, employers sign daily time sheets for each student, and the time sheets are reviewed weekly by a teacher. Students keep a daily journal and write quarterly summaries of their experience, as well as semester reports, and receive pass/fail credit. Employers provide evaluations, too—it really is like the real world! Finally, students remain under school insurance, and a policy form relieves businesses of potential workers' compensation claims. It's a well-conceived and structured program, and Kellegher has created the forms to support, manage and control the program. She is happy to share those forms—just send her an e-mail at kellegherr@sd10.org to request them.

The CORE Program has been running for more than ten years, and under Kellegher's leadership, it has become more formalized and manageable in the past five years. Local businesses are hearing good things and are signing up to participate, allowing an average of 30 students to participate each year. Kellegher also commented on the diversity of the businesses that are involved and whose relationships are getting stronger with the CORE Program, "We've got a great working relationship with the hospital, a metal fabrication shop, some mechanics shops, and auto dealers. The local businesses are supportive, and students can explore just about whatever they're interested in, and gain great experience."

A Checklist for Starting a School-Business Partnership

As a Graduation Matters Team, use the following worksheets to help you determine your school-business partnerships

- Form a school-business partnership working group (Worksheet 1)
- Inventory and assess current school-business partnerships (Worksheet 2)
- Explore opportunities for new or enriched partnerships (Worksheet 3)
- Focus your efforts (Worksheet 4)
- Summarize your progress to share with the full Graduation Matters Team (Worksheet 5)
- Design or enhance new school-business partnerships (Worksheet 6)
- Celebrate and promote the partnership; reflect on its successes and plan for the next steps



Worksheet 1: Form a school-business partnership working group

Use this worksheet during a Graduation Matters Team meeting to jump-start a school-business working group in your community.

Suggested steps include:

1. Briefly discuss how your school and local businesses have collaborated in the past, and what more could be achieved by establishing a school-business partnership working group.
2. Determine that the Graduation Matters Team will create a school-business partnership working group to explore, define and help to implement a school-business partnership working group.
3. Identify members of the Graduation Matters Team to serve on the school-business partnership working group and who will be the Chairperson of the working group (responsible for reporting back to the Graduation Matters Team*).
4. Suggest people from the school and the community to be invited to join the school-business partnership working group and identify who will invite each person. Potential members include:
 - School staff, administration and trustees
 - Teachers (Career & Technical Education, technology, science, Big Sky Pathways contact)
 - Career or guidance counselor
 - Parent(s)
 - Student(s)
 - Local businesspeople working at local stores (radio stations, printing shops, etc.)
 - Local businesspeople working for statewide or national employers (State Farm, First Interstate, local Federal Credit Union, etc.)
 - Nonprofit and governmental businesspeople (Job Service, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, etc.)
 - Local Chamber of Commerce representative(s)
 - Local college or higher education representatives (expert in related fields)
 - Local community foundation representatives
 - Tribal Council members and local community leaders
 - Others?
5. Identify the target date for the first meeting of the school-business partnership working group

* The Next Steps of the Chairperson:

1. Make sure that people are invited to join the school-business partnership working group;
2. Provide a copy of this toolkit to each of the working group members to review before the first meeting and give them an overview of your Graduation Matters initiative;
3. Organize and conduct the first meeting; and
4. Ensure that Worksheet 2 is completed prior to the first school-business partnership working group meeting, or decide to complete it at the first meeting.

Worksheet 2: Inventory and assess current school-business partnerships

Use this worksheet with Graduation Matters Montana Team members or the school-business partnership working group to identify current activities.

It is likely that the school and local business community already partners on a wide variety of activities, from career fairs to presentations in classes, to sponsoring events and activities. Take a few moments to list the most recent school-business partnership activities that have occurred in the local community. Use the "21st Century Learning Skills Key," to identify which skills were developed as a result of the activity.

21st Century Learning Skills Key

1. Professionalism/Work Ethic
2. Oral and Written Communication
3. Teamwork/Collaboration
4. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
5. Creativity and Innovation

	Recent school-business activity	Active dates	Key partners	21 st Century Skills Developed (use key above)	Key insights/notes
1	<i>Example: Students interested in the construction trade are interning at the local hardware store and learning about tools and interacting with contractors.</i>	<i>2011-2012, both semesters; planned for 2012-2013, both semesters</i>	<i>High school math teacher Owner of Browns Hardware</i>	<i>1, 2, 4</i>	<i>6 students completed the spring 2012 semester internship; 5 are signed up for fall 2013 Can we expand to another local business?</i>
2					
3					

Based on the above chart, what key insights do you have? Can any of the partnerships be expanded/improved to address more 21st Century Learning skills? What other types of partnerships can be created? Are there activities that do not fit that should no longer be a priority?



Worksheet 3: Explore opportunities for new or enriched partnerships

Use this worksheet with the school-business partnership working group to identify priority needs and opportunities for new partnerships.

Understand Your Needs

Research states that the average high school graduate is not work-ready or college-ready.⁴

In a group, talk about the following:

What skills are your community’s high school graduates needing the most (from the perspective of students, school personnel and employers)? _____

What talents and experiences do local employers look for when hiring new employees? _____

The school may have student-related data. Students may be surveyed in career and business classes or may take the Montana Career Information Survey (MCIS) to identify career interests. The school may have a “Jobs for Montana’s Graduates” class that can provide insight into student needs. Be sure to ask your Graduation Matters Team if information is already available. Similarly, the local business community – through a local Chamber of Commerce, college, or other organization – may have local information that can be helpful.

⁴ Consortium of The Conference Board, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, Corporate Voices for Working Families, and the Society for Human Resource Management, May 2006

Worksheet 4: Focus Your Efforts

Use this worksheet with the school-business partnership working group to identify activities that best meet local needs and priorities.

There are many activities that can enhance students' learning experiences and give businesses a meaningful role to play in helping communities graduate successful students. Here is a list of common activities. Check the ones that are most aligned with the needs and goals of the school and community.

Sharing Expertise

- Conduct presentations on all forms of seeking and keeping a job, e.g., résumé writing, filling out a job application, interviewing skills, the necessary skills to hold a job
- Act as mentors or tutors for any subject at any grade level
- Provide students with opportunities to use technology that is utilized in your business
- Provide on-the-job training or mentorships for students
- Provide speakers on topics such as solving problems that occur at work, effective public relations, or skills necessary to be successful in this particular business
- Commit at least one hour per week for your employees to come into school on a pre-arranged basis to help on pre-assigned topics, e.g. reading to younger students
- Offer field trips to your business and allow students to shadow employees in order to get a sense of the job, what requirements jobs have in common, etc.
- Make class presentations on special subjects/projects
- Help prepare for or judge a science fair or participate in a career fair
- Provide expertise as consultants to students in operating school-based enterprises
- Other ideas?

Program Planning Support

- Participate in local Big Sky Pathways Advisory Councils
- Assist in curriculum development to make curriculum relevant to life after high school
- Help plan computer technology and Internet workshops for staff or students
- Assist with the Back to School Program at the beginning of school or the Open House in the first month of school
- Assist with student recognition

Worksheet 5: Summarize your progress to share with the entire GMM Team

Use this worksheet to summarize your progress and report to the entire GMM Team on proposed next steps. Use it to share and refine goals; discuss and refine the specific activities the working group recommends for implementation; ask the Graduation Matters Montana Team for ideas about additional business partners and to identify key school contacts for each activity.

Working Group	Graduation Matters School-Business Partnerships	
Group Members		
Meeting Date(s)		
	Working Group Input	Graduation Matters Team Input
Summary of Local School and Business Needs	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Goals & Targeted Skills	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Target Activity	Suggested Business Partners	Suggested School Contacts Including Students
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Worksheet 6: Design or enhance new school-business partnerships

Use this worksheet to begin the outreach and planning for specific activities.

Once the working group has identified priority activities with input from the GMM Team, new business people can be invited into planning based on their experience and content knowledge. Use the following worksheet to begin to identify possible businesses that would be a good fit for the specific activities chosen that are identified on Worksheet 5. See Appendix C for sample school and business Roles and Responsibilities when planning new partnerships.

The working group may find that it needs to expand its recruitment effort. Appendix B is a Business Partner Resource Questionnaire which can help business owners and school-business working group members find new ways to tap existing local business talents.

Overview of proposed partnership activity	(Describe the activity; identify the 21 st Century Learning Skill(s) that will be gained)
School-business partnership working group liaison	(Name and contact information)
School and school-based point of contact	(School name, contact information for point of contact)
Proposed student focus	(School name, grade, class, semester, specific students if applicable)
Key business contacts	(Business/Organization, contact information)
Goals and targeted skills (Worksheet 5)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
Location and Schedule	(Where will the activities take place, and on what days and at what times?)
Start Date and Timeline	(Explain when this partnership will begin and end)
Special Note	(Are there any special considerations, such as transportation, that need to be considered?)



Appendix A: Student Needs Survey

Use this survey to assess the needs of students. Ask students, school staff and teachers to complete to provide a cross-section of the school community.

From your perspective, to what extent do high school graduates in your community demonstrate the following work-ready skills?

Ranking values: 1 (Low), 2, 3 (Average), 4, or 5 (High).

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| ___ Interpersonal | ___ Basic software | ___ Foreign language |
| ___ Phone | ___ Work ethic | ___ Teamwork |
| ___ Written communication | ___ Overall maturity level | ___ Basic math |
| ___ Critical thinking | ___ Sense of responsibility | ___ Self-starter |
| ___ Problem solving | ___ Level of trustworthiness | ___ Systems thinker |

Havre Graduation Survey

The first five questions will gather demographic information to ensure that the important stakeholder groups are properly segmented in the survey results.

1. What is your current age?

2. What is your current employment status?

3. Where do you currently reside?

4. What is or was your involvement in the Havre Public School system?

- Parent of Current/Former student
- Current Student
- Former Student/Graduate
- Former Student/Did Not Graduate
- Teacher
- Administrator
- Community Member
- Other _____

5. Where did you complete High School?

- Havre
- Other _____

The following questions ask about your experiences with Havre High School Graduates. On a scale of 1 - 10, with 1 being not at all proficient, 6 being average, and 10 being exemplary, please rate the following:

1. How would you rate a Havre High School Graduate's ability to think critically? _____
2. How would you rate a Havre High School Graduate's ability to communicate effectively? _____
3. How would you rate a Havre High School Graduate's ability to work in a team? _____
4. How would you rate a Havre High School Graduate's overall business and career readiness? _____
5. How would you rate a Havre High School Graduate's overall business and career readiness compared to graduates from other places? _____

As the primary consumer and beneficiary of education, the Havre business community is invested in the continued improvement and collaboration between area businesses and education. The following questions will ask you about the opportunities to further grow this collaboration.

What are Havre schools doing best to prepare graduates for careers? Please rank 1 - 6 (with 1 being the BEST) according to what the schools do BEST.

<input type="checkbox"/>	College Readiness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Effective Communication Skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interpersonal Skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Basic Skills (Reading, Writing, and Math)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical Skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial/Practical Skills

What area do Havre Public Schools need the most improvement to prepare graduates for careers? Please rank the following from 1 - 6 (with 1 being the MOST IMPROVED) according to which area needs the MOST IMPROVEMENT.

<input type="checkbox"/>	College Readiness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Effective Communication Skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interpersonal Skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Basic Skills (Reading, Writing, and Math)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical Skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial/Life Skills



Appendix B: Business Partner Resource Questionnaire

Any business that is interested in partnering with a local Graduation Matters Montana initiative can complete the Business Partner Resource Questionnaire to help generate ideas of what expertise businesses can offer and what types of partnering would be a good fit for their business.

- What kind of training or expertise do our employees have that could be shared with the school?

Computers	Creative writing
Crafts and hobbies	Construction
Athletic coaching	Engineering
Safety, Health issues	Mentoring
Public speaking	Internships
Graphic Arts, Printing	Job preparation
Photography	Business site visits

- Are we willing to provide release time from work for employees to take part in school activities?
- What resources are available for providing incentive awards?
- What resources are available for providing career awareness programs?
- Are we interested in working on or co-sponsoring community service projects?
- Would we sponsor a student club or athletic team?
- Do we have employees who are willing to make presentations to students about their profession?
- Are we able to teach mini-courses?
- Would we be willing to develop a recognition program for outstanding students or staff members?
- What can the school do to assist us? What are our needs?



Appendix C: School and Business Partnership Roles and Responsibilities

It can be helpful to discuss school and business roles and responsibilities when entering into a new or expanded partnership. Use the following examples to come to agreement on your own roles and responsibilities.

School Partner Roles and Responsibilities

The following guidelines are suggested to assist the school partner in the development of the partnership:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to the program.
2. Designate a school coordinator with approved on-the-job time for the program.
3. The principal/coordinator and staff meet to determine the educational program needs of the school and the resources which the school can offer to partners.
4. The principal/coordinator meets with the business to discuss mutual services and match resources and needs.
5. Identify a Partnership Committee to develop an overall plan and activities.
6. The principal/coordinator shares the overall plan and activities with school staff and encourages them to be positively involved.
7. The principal/coordinator maintains regular communication with the school staff and the business coordinator.
8. The coordinator maintains records that will reflect the business involvement and be able to readily share that information in the School Business Partnership evaluation process.
9. The principal will introduce the business to the staff and parent organization as the school's new education partner.
10. The principal will provide leadership and regular positive recognition of the business partner.

Business Partner Roles and Responsibilities

The following guidelines are suggested to assist the business partner in the development of the partnership:

1. Upper management should have an understanding of and commitment to the program.
2. The Business designates a coordinator with approved on-the-job time for the program. If feasible, a Partnership Committee should also be created.
3. The coordinator and other working partners should identify possible resources and needs of the business.

4. The coordinator meets with the school coordinator to discuss mutual support services and match resources and needs.
5. The coordinator meets with the Partnership Committee to develop an overall plan and activities.
6. Upper management and the coordinator share the overall plan and activities with employees and encourage them to be positively involved.
7. The coordinator maintains regular communication with the school and the schools' coordinator.
8. The coordinator maintains records that will reflect the business involvement and be able to readily share that information in the School Business Partnership evaluation process.

We have discussed these partner roles and responsibilities, and agree to use them to guide our partnership.

School Representative _____ Date _____

Business Representative _____ Date _____



Resources List The following resources were reviewed in preparation of this Tool Kit.

"School Business Partnerships: What Works? 7 Strategies for Success." The Daniels Fund, 2006.

"Are They Really Ready To Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce." Consortium of The Conference Board, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, Corporate Voices for Working Families, and the Society for Human Resource Management, May 2006.

David T. Conley, Ph. D., Director of the Center for Educational Policy Research at the University of Oregon, 2011

Kirstin Larson, "Reporting on Policy Issues in K-12 Educational Management." Policy Report, Number 2, Fall 2001. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. Professor and Director: Philip K. Piele. Editorial Director: Stuart C. Smith.

"School-Business Partnerships: Making a Difference for Kids." Anchorage, Alaska School District and Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, Volume 112, August 2006.

"Business-School Partnership: Adopt A School." State of Minnesota, inspired by the Bloomington Public Schools and the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce "Prepare Bloomington" model.

Robert Balfanz, John M. Bridgeland, Mary Bruce, Joanna Hornig Fox. "Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic", America's Promise Alliance. Annual Update, 2012.

"High School Graduation Initiative: Current Strategies and Recommended Approaches" <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/dropout/index.html>

"Moving Forward: Ideas for Research on School, Family, and Community Partnerships." Joyce L. Epstein and Steven B. Sheldon. Johns Hopkins University, Center on School, Family, and Community Partnership. National Network of Partnership Schools.

"Partnership is a Two-Way Street: What It Takes for Business to Help Drive School Reform." Frederick M. Hess and Whitney Downs. Institute for a Competitive Workforce and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, June 2011.

"Dropout Prevention." Institute of Education Sciences Practice Guide. NCEE 2008-4025, U.S. Department of Education, September 2008.

Ken Kay, CEO and Founder of e-luminate group, "Partnership for 21st Century Skills."

"School-Business Toolkit: Framework and Instruments for Community Engagement." A Project of Leadership Fresno, Class of XXII, 2005/2006.

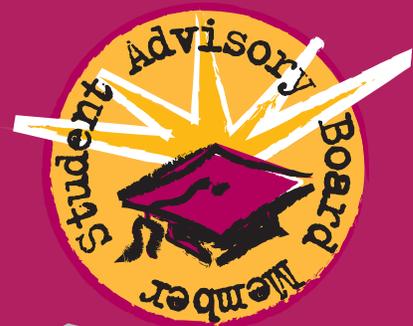
"A How-To Guide for School-Business Partnerships." The Council for School & Business Partnerships.





School-Business
Partnership
Toolkit

Like us on facebook



2012 2013
Superintendent Denise Juneau



opi.mt.gov

The Office of Public Instruction is committed to equal employment opportunity and nondiscriminatory access to all our programs and services, and will take necessary and appropriate steps to insure that the workplace and OPI programs and services are free of discrimination and sexual harassment.

For information or to file a complaint, contact OPI Title IX/EEO Coordinator at (406) 444-3161 or opipersonnel@mt.gov. Copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$. per copy, for a total cost of \$.00, which includes \$.00 for printing and \$0.00 for distribution.