

# The Great Work of Montana's Public Schools

Volume III October 2015

••It is the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person. Equality of educational opportunity is guaranteed to each person of the state. ••

*Article X, Section 1, Montana Constitution*

A joint publication of the following education advocacy groups

MASBO

Montana Association of  
School Business Officials

MEA-MFT

Public Schools, Public Service

MQEC

Montana Quality  
Education Coalition

MREA

Montana Rural  
Education Association

MTSBA

Montana School Boards  
Association

SAM

School Administrators  
of Montana



**DENISE WILLIAMS**  
 Executive Director  
 Montana Association  
 of School Business Officials  
 dwilliams@masbo.com  
 (406) 461-3659



**KIRK MILLER**  
 Executive Director  
 School Administrators of Montana  
 samkm@sammmt.org  
 (406) 442-2510



**LANCE MELTON**  
 Executive Director  
 Montana School Boards Association  
 lmelton@mtsba.org  
 (406) 442-2180



**ERIC FEAVER**  
 President  
 MEA-MFT  
 efeaver@mea-mft.org  
 (406) 442-4250



**DIANNE BURKE**  
 Executive Director  
 Montana Quality Education  
 Association  
 dburke@mqec.org  
 (406) 449-4594



**DAVE PUYEAR**  
 Executive Director  
 Montana Rural Education Association  
 dpuyear@mrea-mt.org  
 (406) 443-2626

We are  
 united by  
 our **shared**  
**interests** in  
 the **best**  
**interests**  
 of students.

This information has been presented  
 for the use of parents, state policymakers,  
 our members and the public at large.

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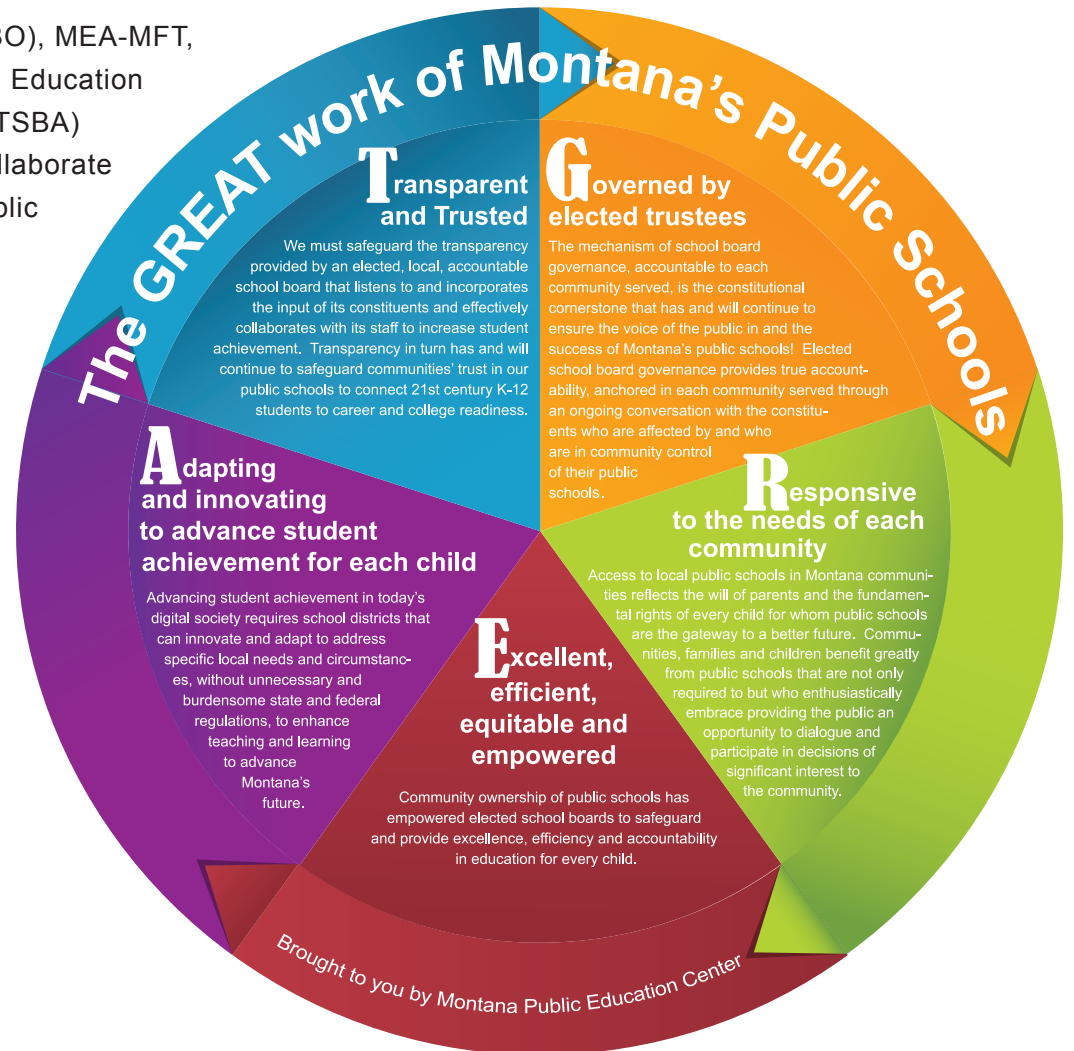
# Introduction and Executive Summary

The Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO), MEA-MFT, Montana Quality Education Coalition (MQEC), Montana Rural Education Association (MREA), Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) and School Administrators of Montana (SAM) are proud to collaborate in spreading the word about the Great Work of Montana's Public Schools.

Through careful stewardship, engagement of communities and inspiration provided through the Montana Constitution, Montana's Public Schools have evolved over the last 150 years into community owned centers of excellence, life-readiness and opportunity. Along the way, our public schools have earned a well-deserved reputation as places where tradition is treasured and communities are connected, futures are readied and potentials are realized, children are cherished and kindness is kindled, students are stimulated and inspired, and where excellence is encouraged.

We invite you to join us in the important and inspiring work of ensuring individualized excellence for each child educated in Montana's Public Schools.

Learn more at [mt-pec.org](http://mt-pec.org).



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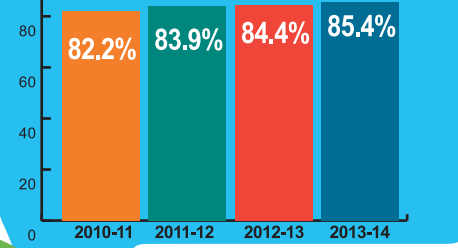
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# Montana's Public Schools are designed for excellence

According to calculations made by the *Alliance for Excellent Education*, Montana is likely to see significant economic gains as a result of increases

## Montana's graduation rates on the rise



in its high school graduation rate over the period of 2009 to 2014, which resulted in 520 additional high school graduates. The Alliance estimates Montana will see a \$5.9 million annual boost to the state's economy going forward and an increase of \$12.3 million in spending on homes and a \$700,000 increase in automobile sales. Collectively, the additional graduates will likely earn an additional **\$95 million** over

the course of their lifetimes, compared to if they had not graduated from high school. Additional earning equals additional tax revenues and less reliance on public assistance programs. This benefits all citizens.

**\$5.9**  
million annual  
boost to  
Montana's  
economy

**\$12.3**  
million  
home sales

**\$700,000**  
automobile  
sales

## Assessment/Test Scores

Test Scores	2012		2013		2014	
	MT	Natl	MT	Natl	MT	Natl
SAT*						
VERBAL	536	496	538	491	555	497
MATH	536	514	541	503	552	513
WRITING	511	488	513	480	530	487



\* Scholastic Aptitude Test-- High Score 800. In 2014, 17 percent of Montana graduating seniors took the SAT. Nationally, 43 percent of graduating seniors took the SAT.

Montana's public school students were found to be the **4th best in the world in science** and **6th best in the world in math**\*

Montana's average 8th grade science score is 163, ranked 1st in the nation

Montana's average 8th grade reading score is 272, ranked 6th in the nation

Montana Public Schools had the second best (lowest) white/Hispanic achievement gap in the nation

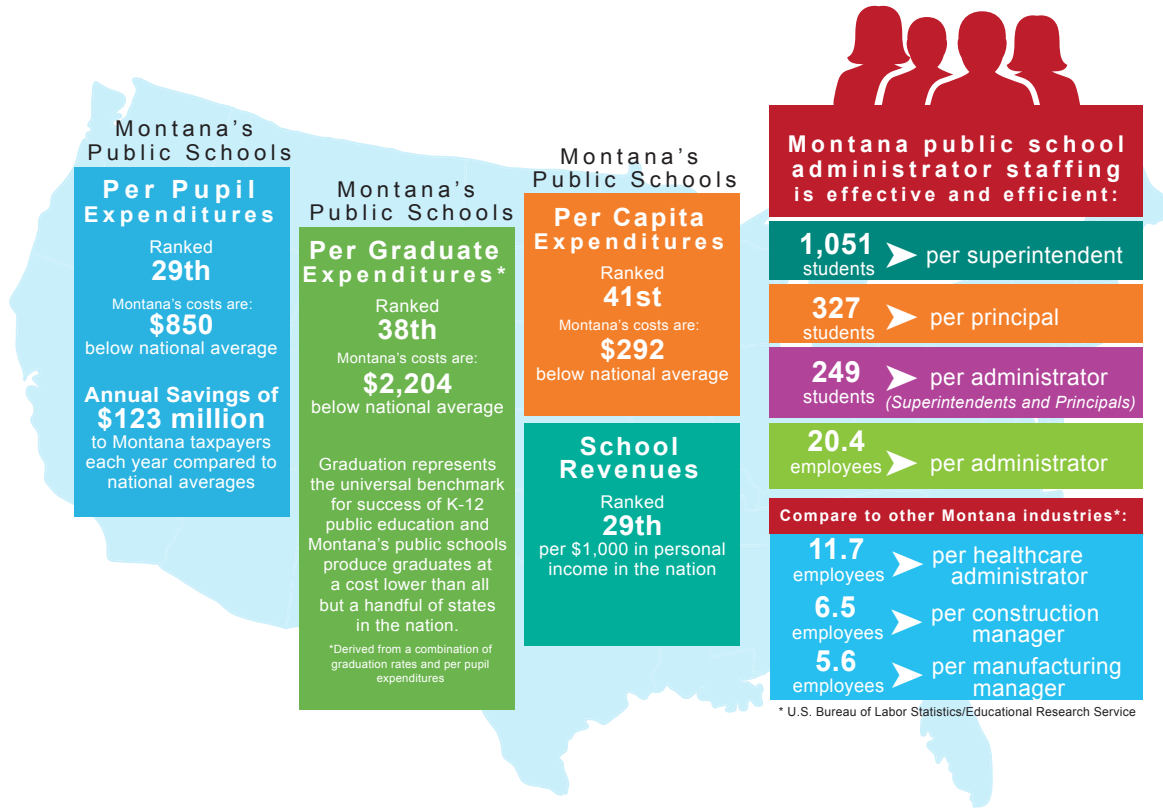
\*Recent NAEP-TIMSS linking study



“ Education is what makes a difference in our society. I believe in the game changer, the door opener, the opportunity maker...The enterprise that we call public education...”

— Tammy Lacey, Superintendent, Great Falls Public Schools

# Montana's Public Schools are **efficient**



**Licensed K-12 Staff (Full-Time Equivalent) 2014-15**

Teachers-Classroom, Title I, Special Ed.....	10,364
Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents .....	158
Principals and Assistant Principals .....	505
Other Administrative Staff .....	91
Education Specialists (Library, Guidance Counselors).....	939
Licensed Professional (Noneducator).....	390
<b>Total Licensed Staff FTE .....</b>	<b>12,447</b>
Paraprofessionals.....	2,445
<b>Total Licensed and Paraprofessional Staff .....</b>	<b>14,892</b>

**Student/Teacher Ratio 2010-11 2011 -12 2012 -13**

Montana average	13.8	14	14
National average	15.7	16	16

*Data from Common Core of Data, U.S. Department of Education*



“I became an educator for the simple opportunity that it allows me the focus to be able to touch the future ... it's my way of being able to know I can make a positive impact in those individuals lives as they make their choices for their education.”

— Andrew Holmlund, Superintendent, Ronan Public Schools

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# Montana's Public Schools **adapt** and innovate to ensure student success



“... we have to teach much more than just the academics, ... I've been fostering growth mindsets, perseverance, and developing grit...”

— Anne Keith, 2010 Montana Teacher of the Year

“...before school ever starts, I go on home visits with all of my students. I have a chance to meet them and their families on their home turf. We just have a connection and relationship from the beginning of school... That's a pretty innovative program and I'm very happy to be a part of that... I try new and different things each year.”

— Jane Shawn, First Grade Teacher

- Four day school weeks in many communities throughout the state that have embraced the concept in collaboration with parents and others in the community
- Distance learning options through the Montana Digital Academy that fully integrate technology and learning and which provide an expansive breadth of curriculum in all participating public schools while retaining community ownership and local control
- Proficiency-based learning opportunities free from seat time restrictions where high level learning is the constant and time is the variable
- Advanced Placement
- Dual High School/College Credit
- Vocational, computer and business classes in addition to college prep classes
- Part time enrollment options for home school students
- Credit recovery options for students who have fallen behind



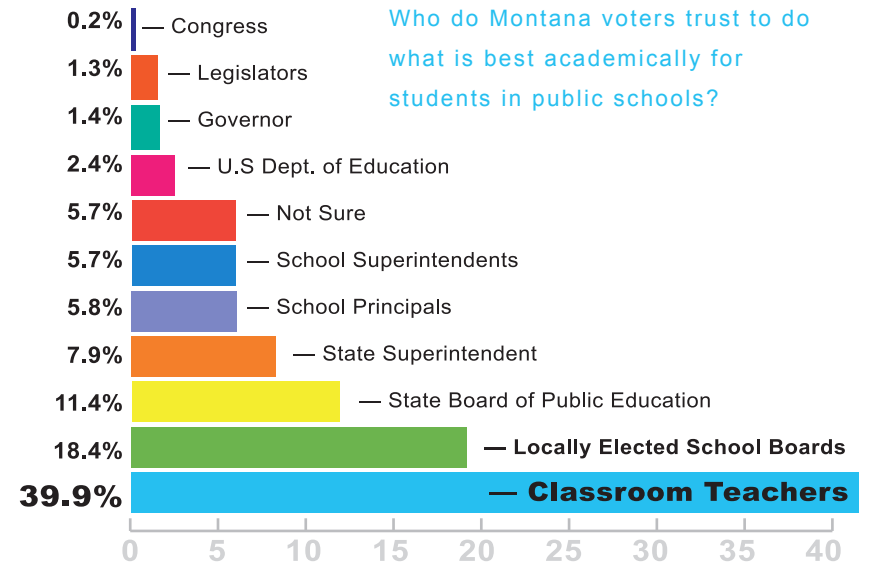
# Montana's Public Schools earn **trust** through **transparency**

Montana voters trust local educators the most when it comes to doing what is right academically for children in our public schools. That trust should come as no surprise as it has been hard earned and preserved through the transparency of Montana's Public Schools. Public meetings, public comments, and the right for public participation on each voted item, help make Montana's public schools transparent, but our public schools do much more than that!

Our schools are governed and operated in a manner that not only upholds Montana constitutional guarantees of openness and public participation but which also actively engages communities in fully developing the potential of each student. Montana's Public Schools are committed to working hand in hand with and in their communities in creating a bright future for Montana's children.

“Even as a young school district... we've already had the modern issues that school districts face that can be quite difficult ... **transparency and trust** has remained with the school and with the community, as a result of Montana open meeting laws... the most powerful statement we can make to our constituents is that, if they care enough, they can be a part of every meeting and therefore every decision that happens in the district...”

— Loren Bough, Big Sky Public Schools Trustee



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