

The Great Work of Montana's Public Schools

Volume VIII October 2020

Inspiring Montana Students to Reach Their Full Potential

A joint publication of the following education advocacy groups

MASBO | MFPE | MQEC | MREA | MTSBA | SAM
Montana Association of School Business Officials | Montana Federation of Public Employees | Montana Quality Education Coalition | Montana Rural Education Association | Montana School Boards Association | School Administrators of Montana

A VISION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION IN MONTANA



WHO IS THE K-12 VISION GROUP?

The K-12 Vision Group was first formed by key education advocacy groups (MASBO, MFPE, MQEC, MREA, MTSBA and SAM) in 2011 with a charge of developing a comprehensive vision for the future success of public education in Montana and establishing a clear road map to achieve that vision.

Comprised of teachers, elected trustees, superintendents, principals and school business officials nominated by their peers from across the state of Montana, the K-12 Vision Group has developed and annually updated an inspiring vision, aligned with the guarantees afforded Montana citizens under our Constitution, that holds great promise for the future of Montana.

The members contributing to the work of the K-12 Vision Group over the last decade have come from a wide variety of school districts, large and small, east and west, urban and rural, and includes districts from the State's seven reservations. The trustees who have served come from all walks of life, including farmers and ranchers, successful business people, retirees and early career professionals. Each member has come to share a focus on ensuring effective advocacy for each child in every public school.

The work of the K-12 Vision Group creates a clear path to a successful future and remains critical to fulfilling the vision of our Montana Constitutional Framers for a system of free quality public schools that fully develops the educational potential of each person.

Introduction

The Montana Public Education Center (MT-PEC) is a coalition of public education advocates focused on fulfilling the guarantee of Article X of the Montana Constitution, "to develop the full educational potential of each person."

To better communicate this mission, the partners of MT-PEC administer an annual public opinion poll (through Zogby Analytics*) to better understand Montana voters' perspectives on K-12 public education issues. Since its inception in 2011 the results from this poll remain consistent: Montanans support our public schools.

The work of MT-PEC is informed by the Strategic Plan produced by the K-12 Vision Group, the results of the Zogby poll, and the input of stakeholders, teachers, school staff, administrators, and trustees.

The MT-PEC coalition consists of MASBO, MFPE, MQEC, MREA, MTSBA and SAM. Visit MT-PEC.org to see the publications and initiatives undertaken by the coalition.

** Zogby Analytics is a highly respected, international polling and research company using industry-standard methodologies with a margin of error of +/-4.5%*

**K-12 VISION
GROUP CORE
PURPOSE**

A system of public education which will develop the full educational potential of each person.
*Article X, Section 1,
Montana Constitution, 1972*

CORE VALUES

Montana's public school districts share the authority and responsibility with the Legislature, Governor, Board of Public Education and State Superintendent to provide a system of public education that affords children, their families and Montana's citizens each of the guarantees of Article X of the Montana Constitution.

**OUR ENVISIONED
FUTURE**

Montana's K-12 public schools work collaboratively with each other, with state policymakers, and with their communities to successfully develop the full potential of each person, through a system that is flexible, adequately and rationally funded, and community-owned.

Vivid Descriptions of our Envisioned Future:

Policymakers at all levels:

- Consistently recognize, honor and support the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person and use that goal to drive policy making decisions;
- Consistently support each community's ownership of its public schools and each district's ability to develop the full potential of each child through supervision and control by locally elected school boards;
- Adequately and rationally provide the resources needed by Montana's public schools; and
- Support the budgetary and other flexibilities needed by Montana's public schools to be responsive to community and student needs.

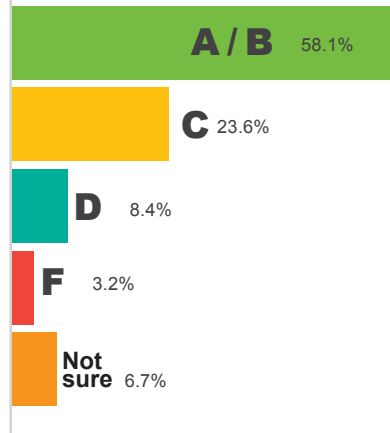
Montana's public school districts are student centered, focused, adaptable, innovative, engaging, safe and secure, and driven to:

- Ensure that public school students' knowledge and skills match contemporary needs including college, workforce and career readiness;
- Use innovation and technology to link each student to the world in which they will learn and succeed;
- Operate in well-designed, modern and updated facilities that further learning;
- Engage families, the community, and each other to develop the full potential of each child;
- Empower and engage students to actively participate in their education and set high expectations for themselves;
- Design and use effective data systems to support and improve each student's success; and
- Increase academic excellence through equitable availability of the full spectrum of educational resources and opportunities.

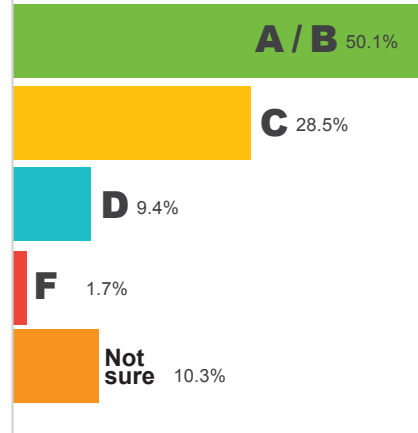
As a result of the support of policymakers and the leadership of Montana's public school districts, Montana's public school students:

- Appreciate the value of their education and are inspired to ensure the success of public education as stewards of the future;
- Succeed despite the circumstances of life that could otherwise interfere in achievement of their full potential; and
- Use the knowledge and skills they develop in Montana's public schools to think critically, engage, and succeed as productive members of society.

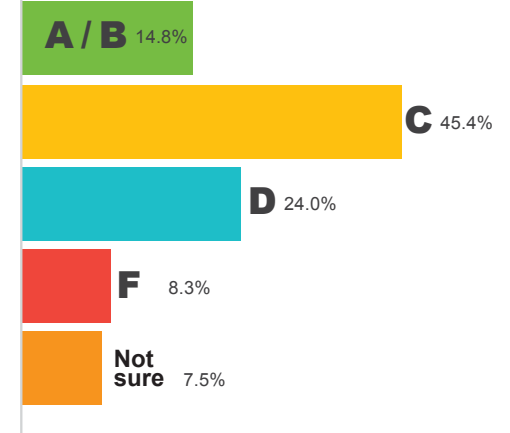
What grade, A through F, would you give public schools in **your community**?



What grade, A through F, would you give public schools in the **state of Montana**?



What grade, A through F, would you give public schools in the **nation**?



K-12 VISION GROUP - FIVE YEAR GOALS - UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2020

We have set our goals based on an understanding of our capacity for instituting change. These are areas focused on the intersection of our passion, our abilities and what children need to reach their full potential in Montana's public schools.

We establish these intended outcomes at the half-way point between today and our 2030 Envisioned Future in order to ensure that we will have made the progress needed by 2025 to get approximately 50 percent of the way toward achievement of our ultimate goal. **If our Envisioned Future is Mount Everest, then our five-year goals represent the base camp objective we hope to reach by 2025 to put ourselves on a path of success.**

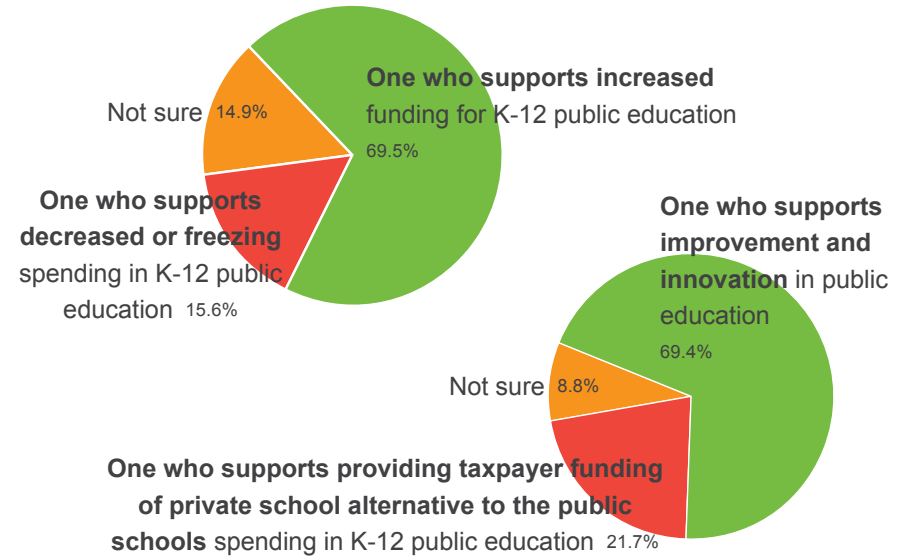
Student Success: Statement of Intended Success, 2025

Continued growth in student success in Montana's public schools is evident through multiple measures, including but not limited to:

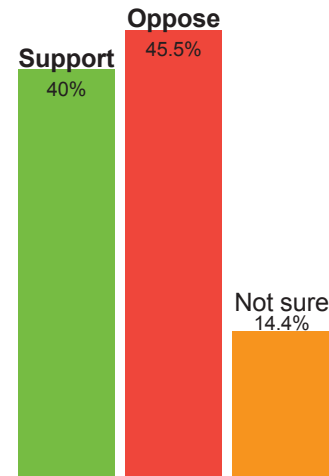
- 100% of Montana's students exit the public education system career and college ready, having experienced a rigorous curriculum and explored career pathways relevant to the interests of each child and greatest likelihood of personal and professional success;
- 100% of Montana graduates are contributing members of society and well-prepared for the office of citizen;
- A continued increase in students graduating with postsecondary credits and/or trade certifications through expanded high quality opportunities for dual enrollment and earlier career pathway knowledge;
- Continued improvement and greater focus in narrowing achievement gaps through targeted intervention and other strategies with an emphasis on early childhood education for at-risk children;
- Use all available options and measures to assess and evaluate individual student learning and growth;
- Fostering growth mindsets, passion for learning, and interpersonal and soft skills including perseverance and social and emotional intelligence and preparedness to be part of a dynamic workforce that is unpredictable and evolving; and
- Access to and use of the elements of a well-rounded education in the contemporary sense of the word, with regular consideration of what is needed for success in the world of today and tomorrow, including:
 - Early childhood education
 - Full time kindergarten
 - Gifted and talented education
 - Music and art
 - Physical Education
 - Technology
 - Career and technical education/certifications
 - Advanced Placement and Dual Credit Courses

As a result of these achievements, students in Montana's Public Schools complete their K-12 education ready for a lifetime of post-secondary success as productive and engaged citizens, pursuing the full spectrum of college and career options.

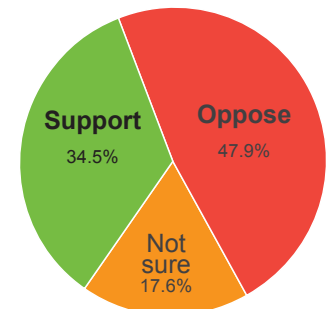
Please tell us which type of elected official you most support?



Do you support or oppose tax benefits (e.g., vouchers, tax credits) for religious education?



Would you support or oppose tax benefits (e.g., vouchers, tax credits) for religious education if you knew that some tax benefits would be used to pay for education expenses other than Christianity (e.g., Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism)?



Teaching and Learning: Statement of Intended Success, 2025

Supported by the widely held trust in educators and strong local control, Montana's public school educators and students thrive. Montana's public schools have the resources they need to focus on students and maximize student success while empowering teachers and administrators to continually avail themselves of the latest research, innovative uses of technology, multiple pathways of teaching delivery, and other evolving teaching and learning strategies to better provide personalized instruction for each child. Montana public schools prioritize systems of support for educators' personal wellbeing and mental health to ensure they experience professional fulfillment and are able to best support student success. Using these resources, educators facilitate the development of the full educational potential of each child. Montana's higher education system fully prepares exceptional teachers to meet the needs of schools and students while Montana public school districts attract and retain quality educators.

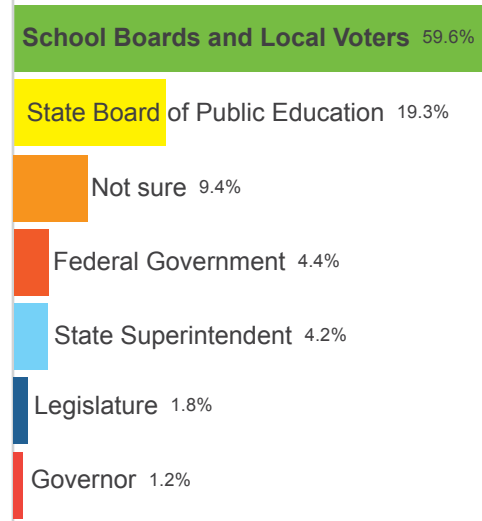
Sufficient numbers of teachers exist to fill roles in districts throughout Montana and systems exist to support and encourage students to take a career path in education. Additional opportunities exist for people in the trades to share their knowledge and skills with students in the classroom while encouraging those people to become certified teachers if they so desire.

Governance, Leadership and Accountability: Statement of Intended Success, 2025

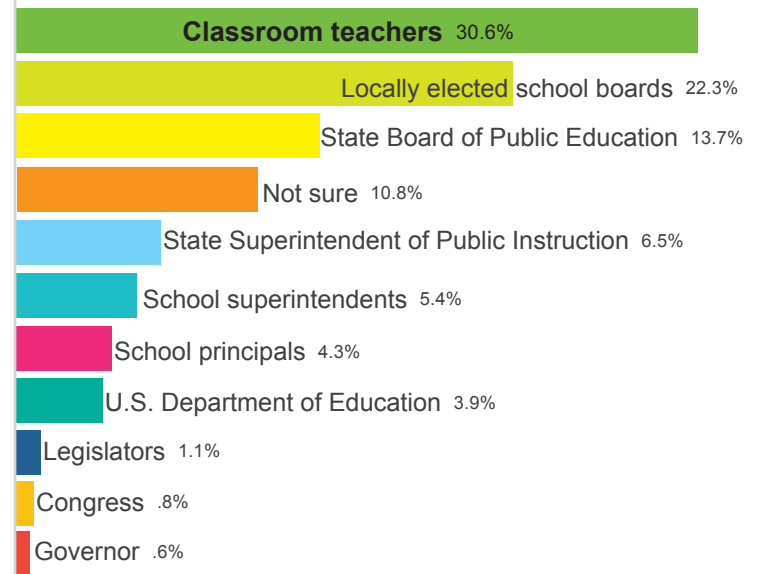
Locally elected school boards, administrative leaders, teachers, staff, local communities and student leaders collaboratively focus on the interests of each (whole) child educated in our public schools. This collaboration and focus is also reflected in the relationships among the statewide public education advocacy groups representing teachers, trustees, administrators, and school business officials. The Legislature, Governor, Board of Public Education, and Superintendent of Public Instruction all actively support and collaborate to continually improve and honor the guarantees of the Montana Constitution. As a result, this chain of advocacy causes Montana schools to be nationally recognized for excellence.

Governance and leadership systems support nimble, contemporary and innovative educational platforms that meet the diverse learning needs of all students that empower them to take ownership for their own educational goals and center the development of student social, emotional and behavioral learning.

Which of the following do you think should have the most authority to determine how public schools are operated?



Who among the following public employees and officials do you trust the most when it comes to deciding what is best academically for students in Montana's public schools?



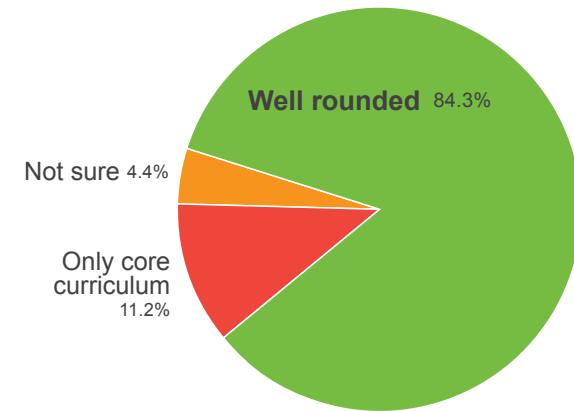
Culture, Climate and Social Values: Statement of Intended Success, 2025

Montanans recognize their public schools as the key to the state's future successes. As such, the independent spirit, unique values, respect for all, and strong work ethic of Montanans are well recognized and reflected in each of Montana's public schools. Through our collective dedication to maximizing our resources for excellence, our commitments to quality public education in each community, recognizing the diversity of our state, including the preservation of our American Indian culture, and transformational learning environments, all students, regardless of personal circumstance or ability, feel empowered and fully prepared for a successful future. By recognizing the individual needs of each child within the context of each community, each student in Montana's public schools feels safe, supported, respected and loved. Students will be equipped with a high degree of social and emotional intelligence and personal mental wellness. This includes student centered learning that develops independent and critical thinkers who know how to evaluate information and make educated decisions about that information.

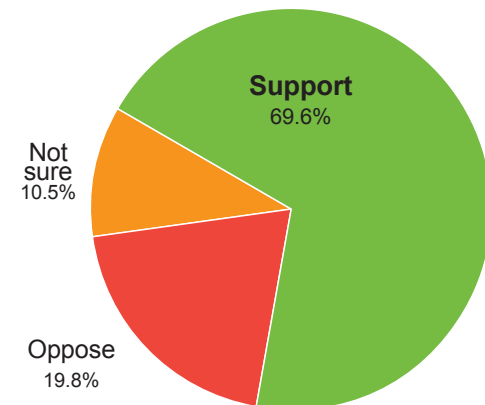
Community Engagement: Statement of Intended Success, 2025

Montana's communities understand the generational gift public education provides and the importance of taking pride and ownership in their local public schools, setting high standards, being an integral part of the solution and sharing in the successes of our students and local public schools. Both the community and schools place emphasis on a shared narrative, ongoing collaboration, resource sharing and communication. Publicly celebrating the work of Montana's public schools and telling the stories of students, teachers, staff and administrators has resulted in community engagement and support to ensure the success and safety of each child. Montana's public schools and communities have collaborated to energize and effectively individualize public education to increase social, emotional and academic success for each child in Montana. Meaningful community engagement provides opportunities for mutual understanding of the needs of the community and the school, while working jointly towards a robust participatory and informed relationship.

In your opinion, should public schools provide a well-rounded education to all children, including items such as all-day kindergarten, gifted and talented, music, art, physical education, technology, and advanced placement courses or should public schools provide only core curriculum (math, English, science, social studies)?



Do you support or oppose state-funded public pre-school?

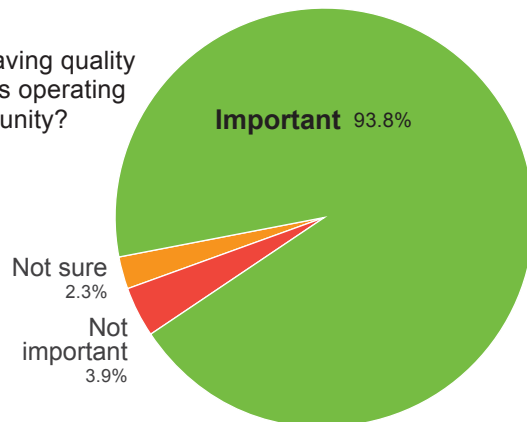


Legislative Priorities for the 2021 Legislative Session

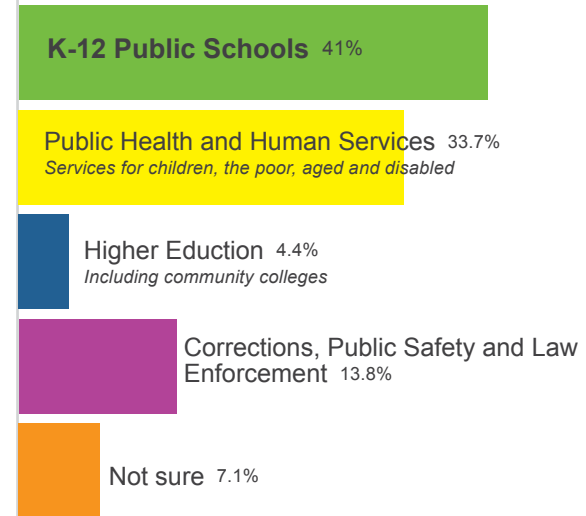
The K-12 Vision Group validates and supports the intersecting legislative priorities of the advocacy organizations partnering in the Montana Public Education Center addressing the following critical issues:

- Support initiatives and proposals that advance the interests of public schools and students as described in our vision and goals;
- Provide adequate and equitable resources and support to meet the needs of special education students;
- Enhance and ensure continued progress of closing the gap to fully fund public education through the established funding formula and support to schools, including but not limited to, inflation application to K-12 base aid and infrastructure support;
- Advocate that all pre-k models proposed ensure the implementation of formula-based early childhood education;
- Expand opportunities to meet the needs of at-risk students;
- Support recruitment and retention of excellent educators and staff;
- Ensure the health and safety of students in every Montana school;
- Properly support high quality school conditions and infrastructure;
- Fulfill the constitutional promise of a quality education to ensure opportunity for every child in Montana; and
- Oppose any proposal that diverts limited state general fund revenues to private education while failing to provide the funding support of public education needed to preserve the constitutional rights of each child to access a basic system of free quality schools that fulfills the educational potential of each person.

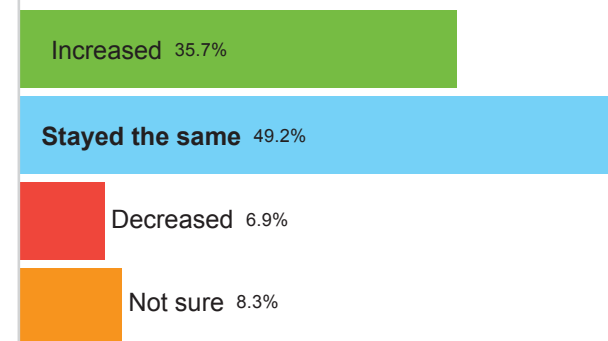
How important is having quality K-12 public schools operating in your community?



When it comes to how state government spends your tax dollars, which of the following areas do you think should be the highest priority?



Thinking about how important K-12 public schools are to your community, have your experiences over the last year increased or decreased your perception regarding the importance of having quality K-12 public schools operating in your community?





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

Montana Public Education Center

The Great Work of Montana's Public Schools

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Montana's public schools are **governed** by elected school trustees and are **responsive** to the needs of each community. Montana's public schools are **excellent, efficient** and **adapt** and **innovate** to ensure student success. Montana's public schools are **trusted** as a result of **transparency**.

The Montana Constitution Guarantees:

The preservation of a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools throughout Montana that is capable of developing the full educational potential of each person;
Article X, Section 1

Quality and equality of educational opportunity for each person;
Article X, Section 1

The preservation of the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians;
Article X, Section 1

Prohibits direct or indirect aid to parochial education;
Article X, Section 6

Prohibits discrimination on account of sex, race, creed, religion, political beliefs, or national origin in Montana's public schools;
Article X, Section 7

Each community's ownership of its publicly funded schools, with the support and engagement of school staff and the community exercised through supervision and control by elected trustees;
Article X, Section 8

General supervision of Montana's public schools by an appointed Board of Public Education
Article X, Section 9

The proper and exclusive use of state land revenues for Montana's public schools.
Article X, Section 2,3,4 and 5