

# School Connections

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## Superintendent's Message: Grade Level Configuration

Dale Kleinert, Superintendent



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*School Connections* is published electronically by the Moscow School District three times a year to keep parents, faculty, staff and the general public informed of District happenings.

### Configuration History

The Moscow School District has been in a nearly constant state of configuration review and research during the last fifty years. Trustee Merle Stubbs was quoted in the "Idahonian" on February 17, 1958 at a regular MSD Board meeting. He stated, "A junior high usually has grades 7 through 9 inclusive while the present Whitworth takes care of grades 5 through 8 inclusive". This discussion occurred while the MSD Board of Trustees were planning to purchase 17.5 acres northeast of town, bordered by "D" and "F" streets and the county road. This property is now known affectionately as the home of Moscow Junior High School.

In 2002, upon failure of a Maintenance and Operations levy election, a configuration change was implemented when the Russell and West Park School split occurred. In 2004 and 2005, an extensive configuration study occurred when the district attempted to gain community support to build a new high school. The study was presented to the Board of Trustees by Superintendent Candis Donicht. She reported, "On the matter of configuration, we have looked at research, surveyed our staffs and parents, and held public meetings. If we add new construction, then I recommend a move to a K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 pattern".

### What has changed in the Moscow School District since the 2005 study to bring a configuration study to the table once again?

- Staffing and enrollment has dropped to a point that we are able to consider the current site of Moscow High School as a

facility that has room for students in grades 9-12.

- MHS and MJHS are aligning bell schedules that now have considerable conflict due to shared staffing and differences in Idaho State required hours.
- MHS moved to a new seven credit opportunity at the beginning of the 2011-12 school year, and the Master Schedule added approximately 30 sections to their Master Schedule. This means that some of the added sections could be identified as ninth grade courses.
- The State of Idaho has adopted new high school graduation requirements with the implementation of its high school redesign program which affects all students in grades 9-12 beginning with the class of 2013.
- Tenth grade students now take a high stakes graduation test. Having ninth grade in the same building would provide a more comprehensive selection of course options from remediation to accelerated courses leading up to the test, and they would not be hit with the test soon after they walk through the door.

Sixth grade students can benefit directly from a true middle level model. For example, sixth grade students would still be served in a separate classroom

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# Elementary Schools Ready for Students!

**By: Kendra McMillan, Lena Whitmore Principal**

Lena Whitmore welcomed 310 kindergarten through sixth graders back to school! Over 40 of those students are new to our school. We had a great Open House with 85% of our students' parents in attendance! Thank you for coming and meeting with teachers and dropping off school supplies. It was great to meet all the students and parents. Thank you for the warm welcome! I am quickly learning what an amazing school this is in every way and am thankful to be a part of it.



We had a few changes in our staff over the course of the summer: Emilie Jacobus joins us on the fifth grade team; Vicki Waring is our new intermediate level special education teacher; and Nina Staszko and Brenda Howard are new paraprofessionals in our Title I program. Tasha Gehring welcomed baby Taia to her family this summer and will be home enjoying her through the month of December. Long term substitute Becky Burke will be teaching third grade until Tasha's return.

Once again, welcome back for another great school year!

**By: Cindy Bechinski, McDonald Principal**

McDonald Elementary School is thrilled to have welcomed 425 Ducks into our classrooms! We had a fantastic and jam-packed Back-to-School Picnic and Open House despite the uncooperative weather! We are up and running with a wonderful new roof that should last for a few decades. Many thanks to our neighbors who were awakened each morning by "new roof construction" sounds. We appreciate your patience!



We hope our community will join us for the many concerts and special events we have scheduled, as well as our talent show this year. Some important events scheduled for the fall include: Picture Day, Monster Mash, Burley Crew Concert for grades 4 and

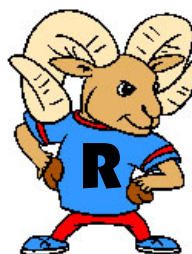
5, Turkey Trot, and a Winter Concert featuring grades 1, 2 and 3.

As the new Principal of McDonald Elementary School, I am thrilled to return to the home of the DUCKS where I taught for eleven years! It will be a great year!



**By: Ed Norman, Russell Principal**

It has been an awesome start to the new school year! The teachers and staff were all excited to get the year going and the students were giddy with excitement. Well, most of the students were but some of the new fourth graders had some apprehension of starting a new school with the "big" kids. Parents were grinning from ear to ear as they dropped their students off or walked them in to class. If you ask me, they might have been glad to see them out of the house!



After three weeks with it being very quiet in the building before school started, I too, was "giddy with excitement" for this wonderful educational setting to be filled with those wanting to grow. We are looking forward to a great year and welcome anyone who wishes to visit our building to come share in some great educational experiences.



**By: Bill Marineau, West Park Principal**

Thirty University of Idaho Freshman showed up at West Park Elementary School, Saturday, August 21 to ready the building and grounds for the soon arriving young elementary students.

Under the direction of Principal Bill Marineau and upperclassman site leader Katie Tribley the group accomplished many tasks such as painting, staining, repairing and washing windows.

Ms. Tribley said the purpose of the day was to help the new U of I students feel connected to the community.

Mr. Marineau appreciated all the time and energy donated to the school.



# Junior High Off to a Great Start

by Kevin Hill, Principal, Moscow Junior High School

The school year at Moscow Junior High School is off to a great start. One of our favorite days of the year is when students return to school. The energy that they bring to the building is exciting and invigorating. This year was no different and seeing all of the smiling faces of students eager to be back is what this profession is all about. We would like to thank all of the parents who attended the Back-To-School Night. We enjoyed the opportunity to meet parents of new students and see parents who have students returning to MJHS.



## Middle Level Credit

As many of you have heard and read, middle level students are required to meet new state requirements for middle level credits. The following is an excerpt from the MJHS Student Handbook: Beginning with the 2010-11 school year all Idaho schools are required to adopt a middle level policy whereby all students in grades seven and eight will earn one middle level credit per semester for each passed course with a grade of D or above. Algebra I, Advanced Algebra, Geometry, and Foreign Language credits will count toward high school graduation as elective credits. **Students in grades seven and eight must pass 80% of their classes each year to progress to the next grade level.**

In addition, if a student fails two semesters of the same course in Math, Science, Social Studies, or English, the course will need to be repeated. If student is in jeopardy of not meeting the promotion requirements, a Panel Review will take place. The Panel will include the student's teacher team, counselor, and administrator. The Panel shall specify a Remediation Plan for school success. Students who are required to complete a Remediation Plan must submit their completed plan to the MJHS Principal at least thirty days before the start of the next school year to be

considered for promotion. If a student successfully completes the Remediation Plan, they will be promoted. If the plan is not successfully completed, the student will be retained. A chart is posted on the MJHS website that shows the procedure that will be used. This chart is a "pathway" that gives different examples of remediation plans that could be used for students who are not being successful. To view the Middle Level Pathways chart, please visit the following link, <http://www.sd281.k12.id.us/jrhigh/MJHSMainandAlternateRoutes.pdf>

Starting in October, MJHS Staff will start Panel Reviews with students and parents. We will develop remediation plans which will assist students and parents to successfully meet the requirement. One of the quickest and easiest ways to avoid falling behind is to access PowerSchool. All teachers have updated students grades so please take the time to make progress checks. If you need assistance to access the program, please contact the office at 882-3577.

## R & R Activity

The eighth grade students of MJHS participated in a fantastic activity called "Respect and Responsibility" or R & R, on September 24 at the Joseph Street Playing Fields. This experience was filled with hands-on activities designed to build trust, teamwork, and respect for each individual.

Charlie Gerke, Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinator, played a major role in the R & R activity. He and a team of volunteers from the community, university, and Moscow School District led groups of eighth graders in trust falls, progressing to team-based problem solving activities like the human knot and beyond.

The goals of R & R are to allow students to demonstrate, practice and reinforce empathy, communication and conflict resolution concepts through physical activities. The R & R activity strives to reinforce the concept that students play a central role in creating and maintaining a learning environment that is safe and conducive to learning for everyone. The unity created through this experience helps to promote the prevention of relational aggression and bullying at MJHS. Teachers also participated in the groups throughout the day, allowing opportunities for shared experiences and common vocabulary that assist in continuing the lessons learned through the day-long R & R activity for the remainder of the students' time at MJHS.

# Academic Honor Code

by Erik Perryman, Assistant Principal, Moscow High School

For the 2010-2011 school year and beyond, Moscow High School has adopted an academic honor code focusing on our core values of Respect, Compassion, Courage, Responsibility, and Honesty. The Moscow High School community holds the pursuit of knowledge in high regard, and we believe that the academic honor code will support this pursuit. The academic honor code outlines expectations for students, teachers, staff members, administrators, and parents and guardians in the areas of academic honesty and student conduct.

In addition to listing expectations for members of the school community, the academic honor code clearly defines violations (cheating, lying, and stealing) as well as consequences for violating the code.

To make the academic honor code a big part of the school year we have posted the code's "crest" (shown below) in all classrooms and throughout the building. In addition, we even made it the cover of this year's Moscow High School Student Agenda.

It is our hope that by focusing a great deal of attention on the positive values of Respect, Compassion, Courage, Responsibility, and Honesty that students of Moscow High School will graduate even more prepared for working in a highly competitive world. The complete code can be found in the student handbook and online at [www.ms281.org/highschool](http://www.ms281.org/highschool) in the Parent and Student Info area. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 882-2591 or email me at [perryman@msd281.org](mailto:perryman@msd281.org) if you have any comments or questions.



## Curriculum Corner

by Sarah Hanchey, Ed. S., Curriculum Director

It is a great pleasure and an honor to have been selected as the new Curriculum Director for the Moscow School District! I am highly grateful to my predecessor, Dr. Cindy Bechinski, who has made my transition very smooth.

In my role as Curriculum Director, I will be overseeing instructional programs and the curriculum (K-12), analyzing student assessment data, planning professional development opportunities for Moscow School District staff, and managing the Title I and Limited English Proficiency programs, to name a few responsibilities. I am very excited to serve in the Moscow School District and am enjoying life in the wonderful community of Moscow!



## Welcome to Another Year at PCRHS

by Ed Norman, Principal, Paradise Creek Regional High

Paradise Creek Regional High School is off to another great start for the 2010-2011 school year. We have started with an increased number of full-time students this fall and some students are on a waiting list to enter specific classes. Our environment is one which changes to meet the needs of our students.

The goal of PCRHS this year is to carry on as usual, learn to the BEST of the students' abilities, and to participate with the community in any way to help make Moscow an even better place to live.

As we are a smaller community of people, the staff and students become like a family at PCRHS. We invite you to come see us, take a tour of our building and to participate in the learning process that happens in a non-traditional way. It is a great place to be involved.



The image to the left is the artwork logo which was designed by student Melanie Bell for PCRHS.

Students and staff, after discussing the need for a "mascot" for the school, decided that the phoenix bird symbolizes what many of the students feel as they make

their way toward high school graduation at PCRHS. Please come and visit us, soon!!

## Special Programs in the District

by Kevin McDonough, Special Services Director

The District provides special education services to approximately 275 students. We are required to locate, evaluate and identify students who are in need of special education services, but have yet to be identified as eligible (see page 6).

The first step in that effort is referral. Referral processes are available in each school building and at our developmental preschool for anyone who suspects that a school age child (ages 3 to 21) has a disability and is in need of services. Please let the child's classroom teacher or building office know of your concern. If the child is ages 3 to 5, please call McDonald school and ask to be transferred to the Preschool. For children who are birth to 2 yrs. of age, please call the regional developmental disabilities office at the Department of Health and Welfare.

Also available for students in the district are gifted/talented services. For more information please talk with your child's classroom teacher and/or the G/T facilitator assigned to that building.

Several other "special" programs are also available in the Moscow School District. The Adventure Club is a terrific after school and summer program. Please call David Garnett at 892-3998 to learn more about your child's participation.

Our Safe and Drug Free Schools and mentor coordinator positions have been restored, thanks to the new "Jobs Bill". If you wish to know more about the terrific activities available for students under these programs, please call Charlie Gerke at 892-1119.

### *Superintendent's Message - continued from front page*

wing in their own intermediate style learning environments, but receive the benefits of a very robust elective program including more advanced music courses such as band and orchestra, vocational-technical programming, foreign language, etc.

- More and more families are interested in the district's K-Plus program. Moving the sixth grade to a middle level school provides more space for such programs at our current elementary schools.
- Our elementary schools are crowded with some teachers serving students in areas not designed for instruction. A total of seven to eight classrooms would become available for programming that is currently offered in rooms concurrently with other programming.

The super-majority required to pass building bonds in the State of Idaho has proven to be an almost insurmountable barrier. The Moscow School District received a 43.9% approval rating during the 2005 bond election to construct a new high school. We see no

change to this super-majority requirement, yet the State of Idaho uses a four year high school configuration to determine graduation requirements, curricular mandates and scope and sequence.

I have made it no secret to all MSD staff members that we will review our district-wide grade configuration to determine the best student grade level placement for success. I've asked administrators to look at the big picture regarding configuration within the district from grades K-12.

We know this is a big project and we also know that any change would affect every employee, student, and parent of our school community. By the time we're done with this review, there will be no stone left unturned and any recommendations made will be thoroughly examined and reviewed. We will look at best practice, school safety, and educational benefits as our priorities. When completed later this fall, a recommendation either way will come to the Board of Trustees based on the best interest of our students, staff, safety, and program effectiveness.

## Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - Informational Notice

Section 504 is an Act which prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. The Act defines a person with a disability as anyone who:

- *Has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activity (such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working);*
- *Has a record of such impairment;*
- *Is regarded as having such an impairment.*

In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, the Moscow School District recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices in the school system.

The school district has specific responsibilities under the Act, which include the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and if the child is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to appropriate educational services.

If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school district, he/she has the right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) also specifies rights related to educational records. The Act gives the parent or guardian the right to:

- *Inspect and review his/her school age child's educational records;*
- *Make copies of these records;*
- *Receive a list of all individuals having access to those records;*
- *Ask for an explanation of any item in the records;*
- *Ask for an amendment to any report on the grounds that it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's rights;*
- *A hearing on the issue if the school refuses to make the amendment.*

Please feel free to contact Kevin McDonough, Section 504 Compliance Coordinator, 208-892-1113 with any questions.

### Child Find Announcement

The Moscow School District, in cooperation with parents and nonpublic school agencies, engages in Child Find services throughout the school year. Child Find activities are conducted, (1) to create public awareness of special education programs, (2) to advise the public of the rights of students and (3) to alert community residents of the need for identifying and serving children with disabilities from the age of 3 through the semester in which they turn 21.

These children may have difficulty walking, talking, hearing, or learning or may display behaviors that appear different from other children their age.

If you know of a child who is 3 through 21 years of age who may have individual needs that result from disabilities or developmental delays and who is not enrolled in a school program or you are part of a community agency or civic group that would like more information about educating children with disabilities, please Kevin McDonough, Director of Special Services for the Moscow School District, at 208-892-1113.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Moscow School District #281 hereby notifies students and/or parents of students who attended Moscow School District prior to 2005 that the special education records that have been kept on file are no longer needed to provide educational services. Therefore, in compliance with the local school board approved Special Education Policy Manual, these records may be destroyed after December 15, 2010. Destruction of these records is the best protection against improper and unauthorized disclosure.

Please be aware that these records may be needed in the future for social security benefits or other purposes. If you desire to review your file or those of your dependent child/children or keep the file for your own records, please direct your request to the office of Special Services located at the administration office (650 North Cleveland, Moscow ID 83843) before December 15, 2010. After that time these records may be destroyed.



by Deb Adair, Business Manager

Moscow School District's excellent transportation department provides students with safe, friendly and reliable pupil-to-school and activities busing. Here are some fun facts about student transportation:

### History

- In 1869 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed the first legislation in the United States allowing the use of public funds for transporting school children. By 1919, with the passage of legislation in Delaware and Wyoming, forty-eight states had enacted similar laws.
- The standard means of transporting children to and from school in the nineteenth century was the school wagon, a modified farm wagon converted to carry pupils from the rural areas to the consolidated schools. By World War I motorized trucks began to replace the farm wagons.
- School bus yellow is a color which was especially formulated for use on United States school buses in 1939. The color is now officially known in the U.S. as National School Bus Glossy Yellow.

### Safety

- There is no safer way to transport a child than in a school bus. Yellow school buses have a safety record that is unequalled in the transportation industry. Consider these comparisons per 100,000,000 passenger miles:
 

◇ Passenger Cars	0.94 Deaths
◇ Scheduled Airlines	0.06 Deaths
◇ Passenger Trains	0.04 Deaths
◇ School Buses	0.01 Deaths

### Mass Transit

- School buses are the largest mass transit program in the U.S. They provide approximately 10 billion student trips per year – 8.8 billion “to-and-from school” trips and an estimated 1.2 billion activity trips.
- Idaho school districts and charter schools employ over 2,600 school bus drivers, 150 school bus technicians, and 2,700 school buses to transport more than 100,000 students to and from school and school related activities over 28,000,000 miles annually.
- Moscow School District buses traveled 172,002 miles in 2008-09.

### School Bus Drivers

- School bus drivers are an integral part of the safe transportation of school children. They operate with a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and have received special school bus driver training. Drivers must pass drug and alcohol screening and law enforcement background checks.
- Moscow School District employs 15 - 20 school bus drivers and substitutes. We are always looking for reliable substitute drivers and we provide training. If you want to join in on the fun, contact Greg Harris, Transportation Supervisor at 882-3933.

