

Hamilton Public School District



2015 Annual Report

Adopted 12/9/2014

Introduction

This Annual Report of the Hamilton School District has been completed in accordance with District Policy 1015, *District Mission and Vision*. The report provides useful information to the community regarding the status of its public schools, including a facilities overview, student performance data, staff information, a budget review including spending and revenue, and major initiatives that are currently underway or that are being contemplated.

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Executive Summary

This report has been compiled to help keep citizens informed on the status of their public schools. It summarizes the Hamilton School District's operation over the last completed school year (2013-2014), provides an in-progress review of the school year 2014-2015, and identifies opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

The District sold its Grantsdale school property in March 2014, netting a little over \$155,000. This figure is lower than the District might have liked, but due to the school's condition and unique layout, only one serious buyer stepped forward despite the District's nation-wide marketing campaign. Money from the sale was spent last summer to offset the cost of replacing the middle school's gym floor and bleachers. The sale of Grantsdale school has improved the District's financial position by eliminating a major maintenance liability and producing an annual savings of over \$100,000 in operating costs.

The voters approved a \$485,000 general fund levy in May 2014. With this infusion of funds, the District is busy implementing items in the Action Plan described in last year's Annual Report, i.e., establishing vocation programs in manufacturing, health sciences, and information technology; revitalizing the performing arts program; maintaining the Keystone afterschool program; improving the facility rental program; and reducing pay-to-play fees for extracurricular activities.

The District is also taking action to strengthen its Basic Literacy programs. The high school mathematics program has been made more rigorous by requiring all students, starting with the Class of 2017, to complete Algebra I, Geometry, and a third year-long math course. (This exceeds Montana accreditation standards, which require only two unspecified courses in mathematics.) In addition, special lab periods have been scheduled to provide additional instruction to those high school students who struggle with English or mathematics.

In another move that goes beyond state accreditation standards, the District will require all students, starting with the Class of 2017, to complete a one-semester course in Personal Finance. The District believes that financial literacy is essential preparation for future citizens who wish to thrive in today's economy.

The Hamilton School District enjoys a very productive relationship with Bitterroot College. One joint initiative underway is to provide our high school students opportunities for dual-enrollment credits through the Montana University System. Students who are successful can save on college expenses when entering a Montana college by transferring credits earned in high school. The District has also joined with the Bitterroot College to hire a welding instructor to teach upper-level welding to high school students during the school day and to Bitterroot College students during the evenings at the Hamilton High School welding facility. These are just two examples of the many ways that the partnership between the Bitterroot College and the Hamilton School District serves members of our community in a cost effective manner.

This year the District's Board of Trustees decided to discontinue contracting with the Bitterroot Valley Education Cooperative (BVEC) for special education (SPED) services. This change goes into effect on July 1, 2015. The BVEC has provided excellent service to the District for over 20 years. But the District is in a position to replicate, and perhaps enhance, the service provided our students with special needs and to save \$15,000-\$45,000 per year while doing so. In addition, by taking direct control of its special education program, the District hopes to eventually reduce its SPED caseload by intensely managing SPED services provided during the early grades.

Teacher quality is the most important single contributor to the quality of a child's education. Hamilton's teachers are dedicated professionals who selflessly provide our students an excellent education. They are also the lowest paid teachers among the Western Division Class A schools. With many of our teachers nearing retirement, attracting and retaining a high-quality staff is becoming one of the critical challenges facing the District. Solving this problem will not be easy. The District's near-term strategy is to manage the staff's size to free funds for salary increases. If, or more likely when, this strategy no longer is effective, the District will need to go to the voters to request an increase in the general fund levy.

The Hamilton School District is blessed with hardworking students, a professional staff, engaged parents, and a supportive community. Working together, we can ensure that the next generation is ready and willing to be productive citizens of our great Nation.

District Mission and Vision

<p><u>District Mission</u></p> <p><i>Develop productive, well-rounded American citizens who are motivated, self-confident and ready to pursue mastery of their chosen vocations.</i></p>	<p><u>District Vision</u></p> <p><i>Promote a culture of educational excellence through an unwavering dedication to the individual development of each child every day, without exception.</i></p>
<p><u>Educational Goals</u></p>	<p><u>Operating Principles</u></p>
<p>1. Basic Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Students will graduate with a sound foundation and strong capabilities in reading, writing, and mathematics.</i> • <i>The District will build a sound foundation for literacy during each student's early years and will constantly build upon and reinforce that foundation throughout the student's educational experience.</i> <p>2. Strategic Thinking and Reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Students will demonstrate the capacity to solve complex problems by gathering, evaluating, and analyzing information and communicating solutions.</i> • <i>The District will connect learning to the real world through authentic and innovative experiences to increase student engagement, creative thinking, motivation, and investment in their learning.</i> <p>3. Preparation for American Citizenship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Students will recognize their roles and responsibilities as active, ethical, and informed American citizens.</i> • <i>The District will provide students, throughout their K-12 experience, an in-depth understanding of the American political, social, and economic systems, as well as the historical context from which they arose.</i> • <i>The District will familiarize students with political, social, and economic systems found elsewhere the world.</i> <p>4. Readiness for Future Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Students will develop the skills and aptitudes necessary for college, advanced technical training, or direct entry into the workforce.</i> • <i>The District will provide a well-rounded educational experience including a challenging curriculum and varied extra-curricular opportunities.</i> • <i>Students will establish post-graduation goals, identify the education and training needed to reach these goals, and understand the potential risks, rewards, and limitations associated with the goals one selects.</i> • <i>The District will provide pathways specifically designed to prepare students for college, advanced technical training, or direct entry into the workforce.</i> 	<p>1. Hire the best and make them better.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The District will recruit, evaluate, retain and continually develop high quality personnel to maximize student achievement.</i> <p>2. Enhance and customize learning environments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The District will continue to transform schools into dynamic learning environments supported through emerging technologies, flexible planning and scheduling, repurposed facilities, and community collaboration.</i> <p>3. Actively engage the community as an educational partner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The District will cultivate and enhance staff, student, parent, business and community involvement and fully recognize the community as an important partner providing necessary services, resources, and opportunities for our students.</i> • <i>The District will maintain an open environment that promotes dialog both with the community and within the District and will strive to provide the public timely and accurate information on the status of its schools.</i> <p>4. Promote community ownership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The District will strive to exercise, preserve, and when appropriate increase our community's local control over the operation of its schools.</i> <p>5. Consistently ensure safe, civil, and productive learning environments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The District will provide a safe learning environment for staff and students.</i> • <i>The District will insist on civil behavior, which does not require conformity or the compromise of one's principles but does demand that one respects another's basic human dignity and refrains from abusive conduct.</i> <p>6. Confront challenges together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The District expects all members of the team—trustees, administrators, and staff—to share accountability for achieving the District's goals.</i>

Facilities

The District operates on five campuses where it not only accomplishes its educational mission but also provides services to the community. Facility operation and maintenance expenses are paid for out of the General Fund. When possible, the District seeks outside grants to fund major facility upgrades and brepairs.

In March 2014, the District sold its Grantsdale school property for \$175,000, out of which the District netted \$155,163 after paying realtor, survey, appraisal, and legal fees. The proceeds of this sale covered a substantial portion of the cost of replacing the middle school's gym floor and bleachers.

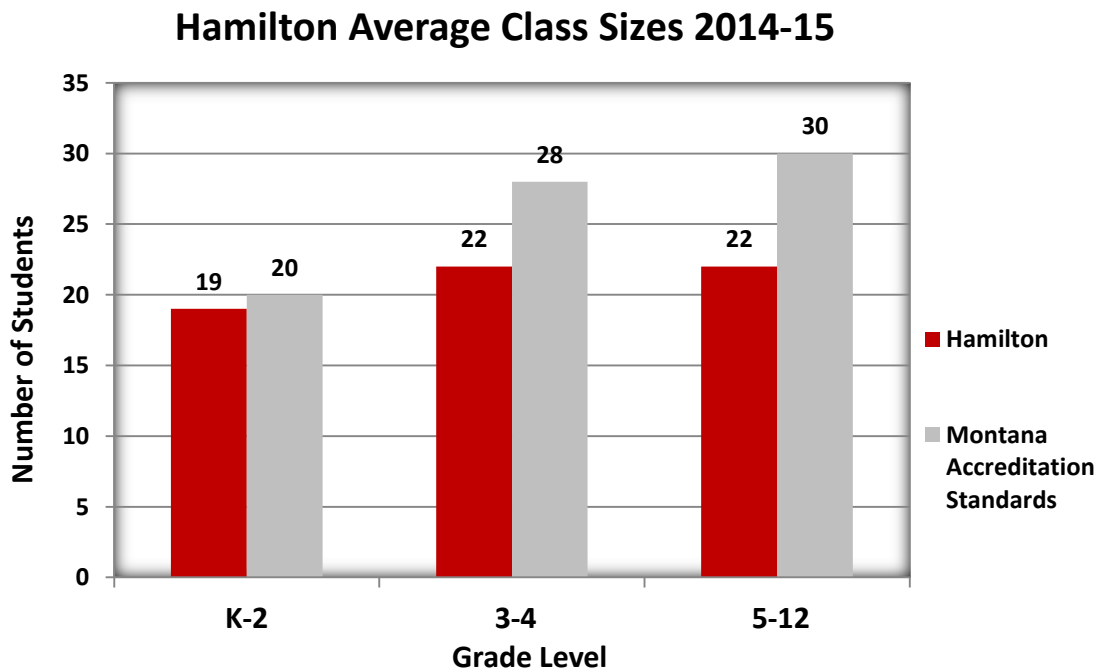
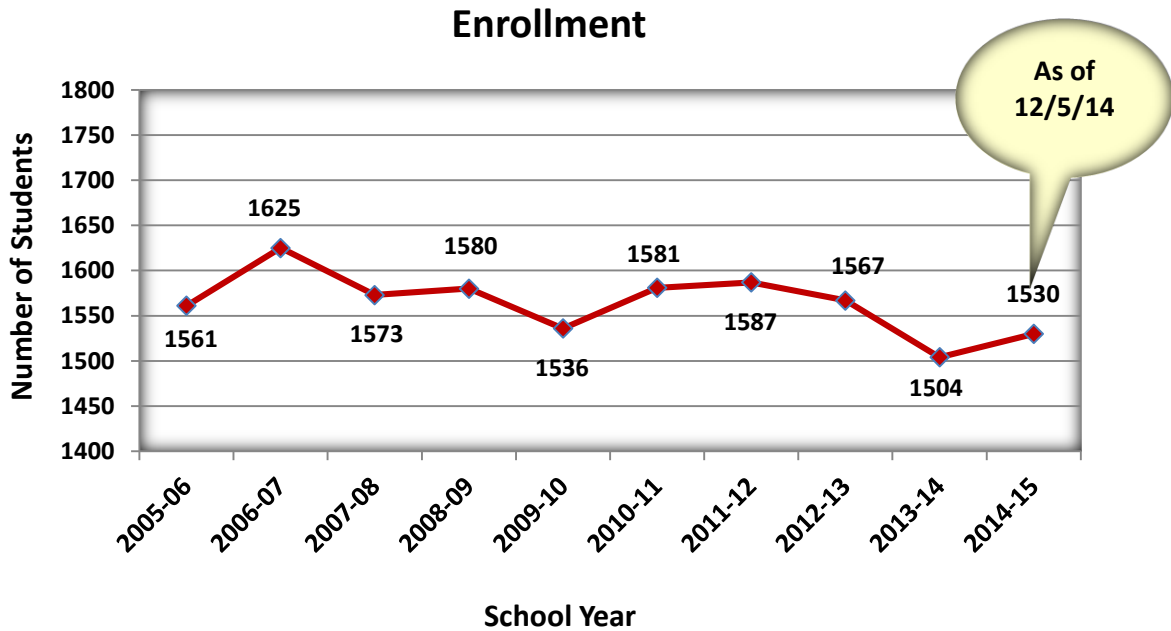
The District's facilities have adequate capacity to support educating our children. However, the cost of maintaining facilities increases as our buildings age, which can place a strain on the District's budget.

	Washington	Westview	Daly	Middle School	High School
Date Constructed	1949	1963	1969	1929	1999
Building Sq Ft	23,870	23,700	42,000	106,272	168,000
Gym Sq Ft	2,448	3,960	4,702	15,000	Tournament sized
Acreage	2	12.63	20.5	3	36
Ancillary Facilities	Playground	Football Field Practice Field Track Tennis Courts	Soccer Fields Playground District Office T-Ball Field		Performing Arts Center Soccer Field Football Practice Field Softball Fields Bitterroot Aquatic Center Head Start Office
Current Use	Kindergarten 1 st grade	Alternative High School	2 nd - 5 th grades	6 th - 8 th grades Preschool	9 th - 12 th grades
Max. Capacity	250	270	500	450	650
Enrollment					
Community Services	Keystone	Head Start Youth Sports Boy Scouts Quilting Club Keystone	Adult Ed Youth Sports Boy Scouts	Adult Ed GED Youth Sports Bountiful Baskets	Adult Ed Performing Arts Series Local Dance, Theatre, and Vocal Organizations Tournaments
Major Repairs/Upgrades	roof repair electronic doors		fire-panel upgrade electronic doors	boiler replacement gym floor and bleachers replacement POD HVAC upgrade electronic doors	locker room floor repair fire-panel upgrade electronic doors

Students

Enrollment and Class Size

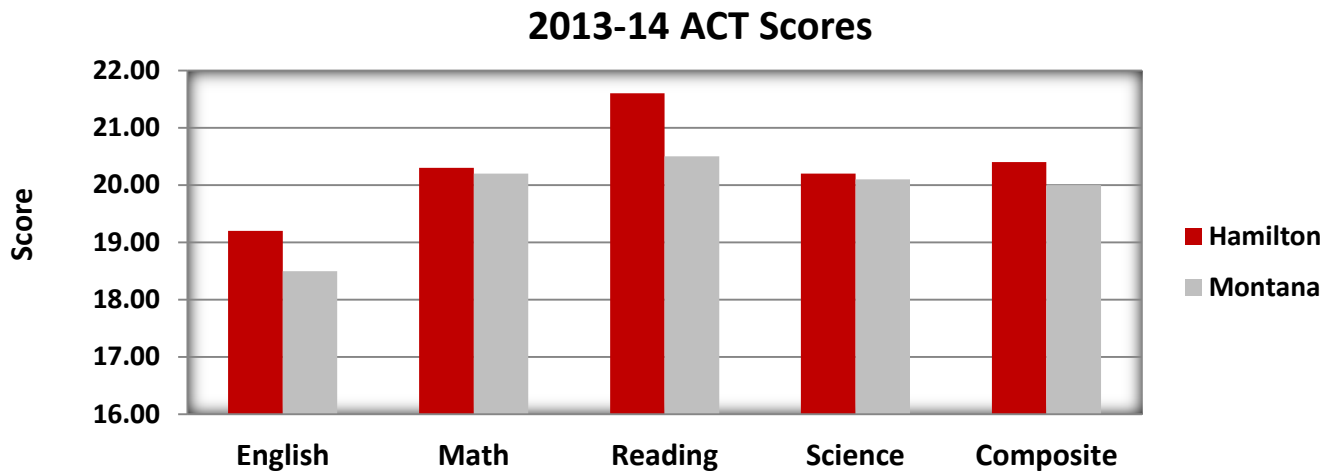
District enrollment is showing an increase in 2014-2015 after having experienced a marked decline over the previous two years. This is a welcome development because the level of state funding is tied to enrollment. Although the District has reduced its staffing level over the past few years, both in response to declining enrollment and to allow more effective internal allocation of resources, class sizes continue to meet state accreditation standards.



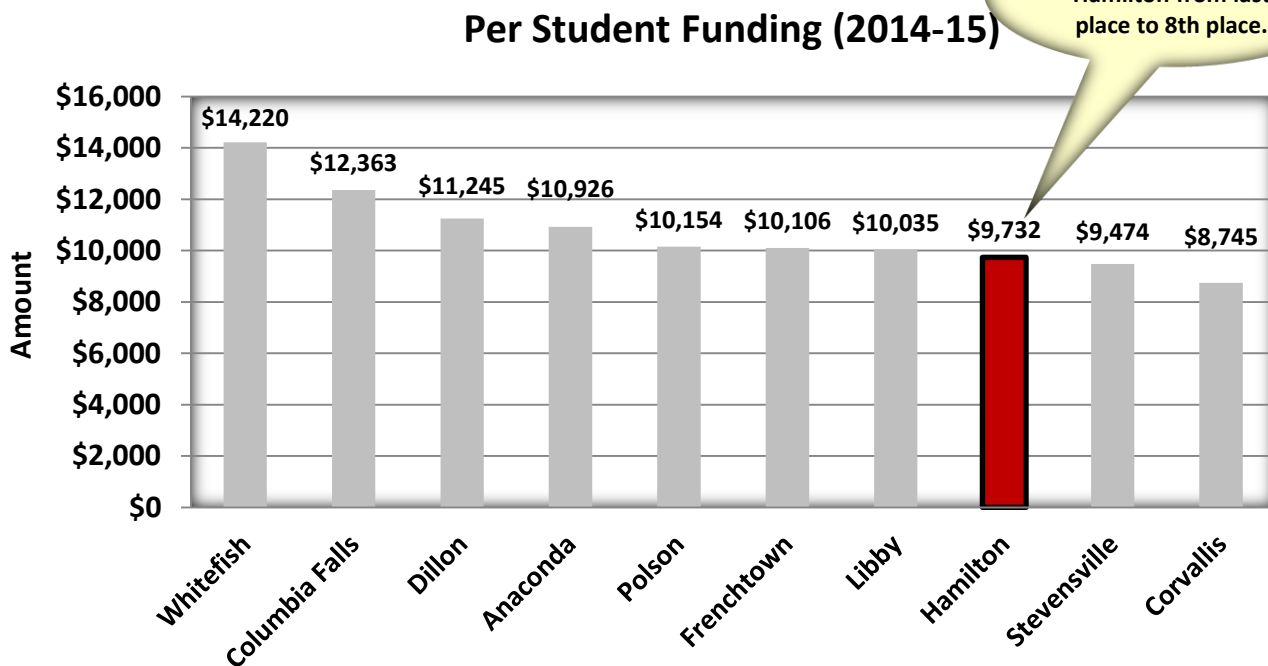
Students

Achievement and Funding per Student

In 2014 Hamilton elected to use a state grant to administer the ACT College Readiness test to all 11th graders, including those with learning disabilities. As can be seen below, the District exceeded the state average in every subject area and was particularly strong in the English and reading.



The District's funding per student, as tabulated by the state Office of Public Instruction, increased this year due in large part to the voters' recent approval of an increase in the District Tax Levy. This has improved the District's position relative to other Western Division Class A districts.



Students

Curricular Initiatives

Basic Literacy

Materials and Technology: In 2013-2014 the District internally reorganized funds to establish a budget line for educational materials and for technology replacement and upgrades. Grades Kindergarten through 8th grade updated math materials, and a number of teacher computers and student computer labs throughout the District were also upgraded.

Technology Literacy: The 2nd through 5th grade staff at Daly recognized that students were not equally technologically literate. The District responded to this situation by internally reorganizing funding to support the hiring of a 2nd through 5th grade technology teacher. All Daly students are working with tablets and laptops on a rotating basis throughout the week to become more familiar with a variety of technology platforms.

Math and English: The high school mathematics program has been made more rigorous by requiring all students, starting with the Class of 2017, to complete Algebra I, Geometry, and a third year-long math course. (This exceeds Montana accreditation standards, which require only two unspecified math courses.) In addition, English and math labs have been established to provide an additional period of content instruction to support those high school students who struggle with English or mathematics. By raising expectations for student performance while providing the support needed to reach them, our plan is to increase proficiency in these important core subjects.

Preparation for American Citizenship

Personal Finance: It is difficult to thrive in today's economy without an understanding of personal finance. Therefore, all students, starting with the Class of 2017, will be required to complete a one-semester course in Personal Finance. The District believes financial literacy is imperative for all future citizens.

Advanced Placement English and US History: The AP English Language and Composition and AP US History courses have been combined to create an AP American Humanities course, which is being piloted this year. A pilot group of 42 high-achieving students meet daily for the course, which is

team-taught by Jen Carmody and Don Faris. Students who demonstrate mastery on the advanced placement tests in both English and US History will earn six university credits.

Middle School Civics Program: To effectively meet the goal of Preparation for American Citizenship, all 7th and 8th grade students are required to take a nine-week course in Civics. The photo below is a group of middle school students listening to Ravalli County Commissioner candidates debate several topics. The Civics class is focused on teaching fundamentals of American citizenship by bringing real world events to the students.



Veterans Day Celebrations: The District is highly supportive of local veterans and appreciates all of their sacrifices for our country. The District also firmly believes that students of Hamilton Public Schools should be provided opportunities to better understand and recognize how these brave men and women have made our great country as successful as it is today. Below is the 2013-2014 Veterans Day assembly at the High School.



Students

Curricular Initiatives

Preparation for Future Opportunities

Dual Enrollment: To expand opportunities for our students, Hamilton High School has worked closely with Bitterroot College to provide dual-enrollment credits through the Montana University System, as well as industry recognized credentials. Students who are successful enter the Montana University System with a significant cost savings by transferring credits earned in high school to the college setting. Students who focus on career and technical fields and earn industry-recognized credentials will be poised for immediate employment in high-demand, high-paying fields or will be positioned to significantly reduce the amount of post-secondary education required to meet their goals.



Welding: Hamilton High School has partnered with the Bitterroot College to hire a part-time welding instructor to teach upper-level welding to high school students during the school day and to Bitterroot College students during the evenings at the HHS welding facility. Adding this part-time teacher has allowed the school to reinstitute the Industrial Technology Exploratory class, in which students are exposed to focused sessions of welding, woodworking, and computer aided design and manufacturing.



The Industrial Technology Exploratory exposes students to all three disciplines in the field and allows them to specialize as they progress through the curriculum. Upper-level welding students can earn a total of six Montana University System credits to be applied toward a Certificate of Applied Science in welding and have the ability to take the remaining Bitterroot College welding courses during the evening at HHS.



Computer Aided Design and Manufacturing (CAD/CAM): Hamilton High School is developing a two-pronged approach to increase the college and career readiness of our upper-level CAD/CAM students. The first part is a dual-credit arrangement through Flathead Valley Community College (since Bitterroot College does not have a comparable program at this time) for courses in computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing. The second part is to provide fourth-year students the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials, such as Solidworks Associate Certification and MasterCam Associate Certification. In addition to these certifications, successful students can earn up to five Montana University System credits.

Students

Curricular Initiatives

Information Technology and Computer Science: The addition of an IT and computer science curriculum will better prepare our graduates for college or for other career goals. Students can choose from offerings including integrated web design, computer tools and applications, and programming. HHS is working with Bitterroot College to develop dual credit opportunities that will allow students the opportunity to earn a Computer Support Certificate of Applied Science. This coursework is aligned with a careful study of industry demands for specific skills in areas such as Java and C++ programming languages.



Health Science: Another career field in which numerous jobs in Montana abound is health services. Hamilton High School has added a career pathway in health sciences, which includes introduction to health careers, anatomy and physiology, biotechnology, and forensic science. There are many opportunities to develop partnerships with the local



medical community. For example, HHS health science students recently worked with Rocky Mountain Lab director, Dr. Marshall Bloom, to research and present on the Ebola virus.



Theater Arts: The passage of last spring's levy allowed the school district to hire a full-time theater arts teacher and PAC manager, who have brought a grades 6-12 theater program to our middle and high school.



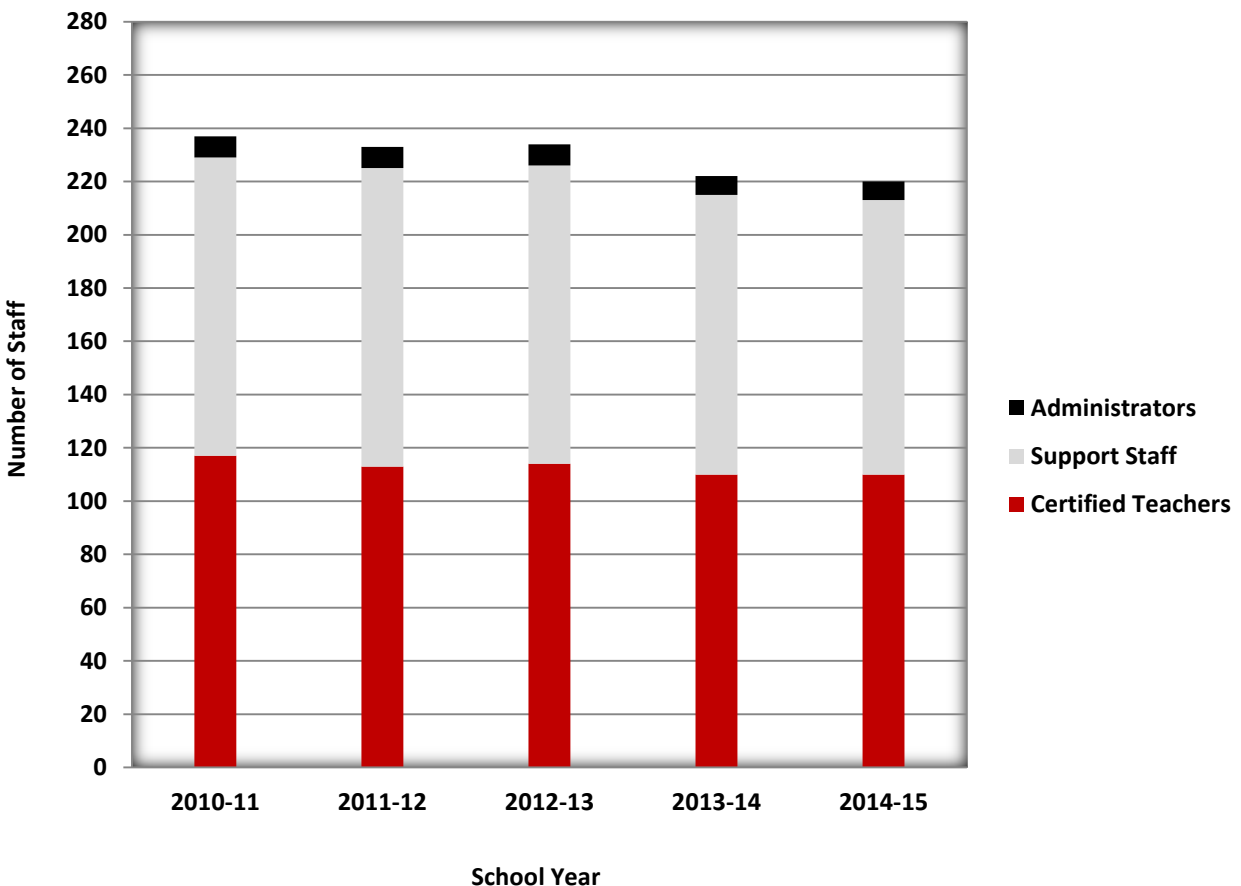
Staff *Staffing Level*

The District continuously seeks efficiencies to reduce operating costs while maintaining a high-quality education for its students. Because salaries comprise the majority of the District's operating budget, the District's staffing structure receives constant scrutiny. Over the past five years, staffing levels have been trending downward, freeing up funds for other District priorities.

This year the Board of Trustees decided to discontinue contracting with the Bitterroot Valley Education Cooperative (BVEC) for special education (SPED) services, which include educational psychology, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and program management services. This change will go into effect on July 1, 2015. The BVEC has provided excellent service to the District for over 20 years. But the District is in a position to replicate, and perhaps enhance, the service provided our students with special needs and save \$15,000-\$45,000 per year while doing so. In addition, by taking direct control of its special education program, the District hopes to eventually reduce its SPED caseload by intensely managing SPED services provided in the early grades.

As a consequence of its decision to operate its own special education program, the District will be hiring a special education director and will be increasing the size of its support staff by adding an educational psychologist, a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, and two speech pathologists. But as was stated above, net saving to the District should be in the range of \$15,000-\$45,000 per year.

Five-Year Staffing History



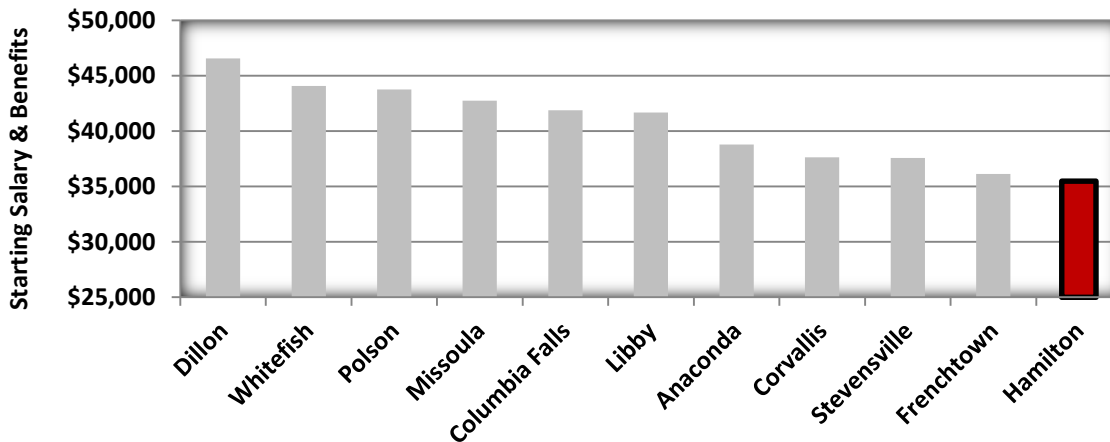
Staff

Salaries and Benefits

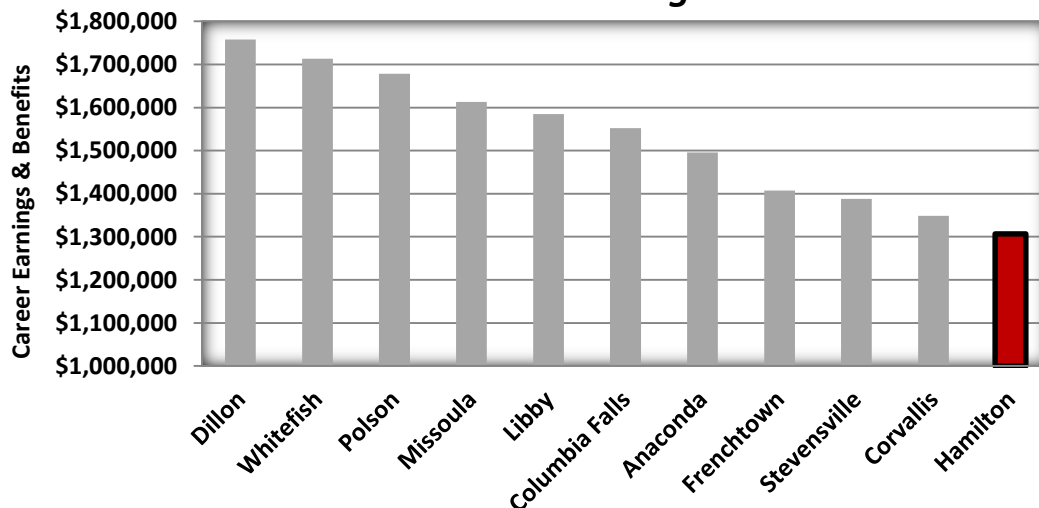
Although the compensation of the District's administrators and support staff is generally on par with our competitors, Hamilton's teachers do not fare well compared to their peers in other Western Class A districts or in Missoula. As shown in the charts below, Hamilton is at the bottom both in terms of compensation of incoming teachers and in terms of career earning potential, i.e., aggregate salary plus benefits over a standard 26-year career.

Teacher quality is the most important single contributor to the quality of a child's education. Hamilton's teachers are dedicated professionals who selflessly provide our students an excellent education. But with many of our teachers nearing retirement, attracting and retaining a high-quality staff is becoming one of the critical challenges facing the District. Solving this problem will not be easy. The District's near-term strategy is to manage the staff's size to free funds for salary increases. If, or more likely when, this strategy is no longer effective, the District will need to go to the voters to request an increase in the general fund levy.

Teacher Starting Salary and Benefits



Teacher Career Earning Potential

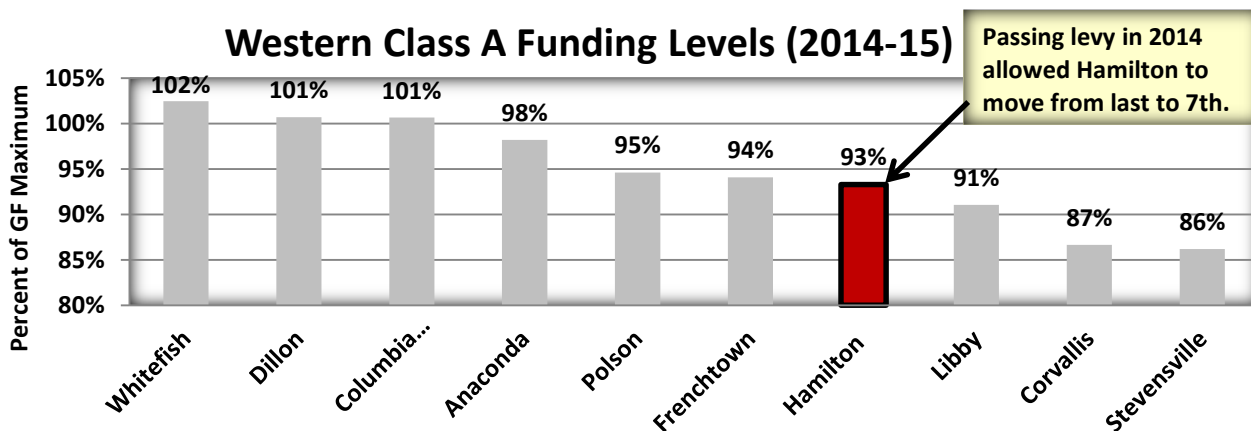


Budget Comparative Funding Levels

The graph below compares the level of support provided to General Fund budgets for Western Class A school systems in 2014-2015. (The General Fund is the primary source of a district's operating funds.)

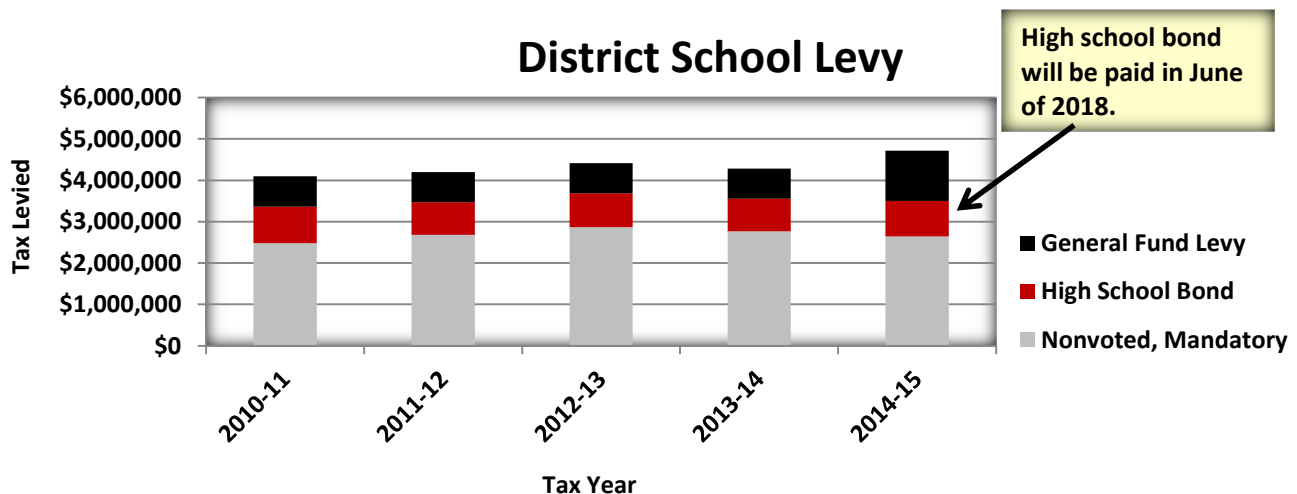
To meet state-wide equalization requirements, the state of Montana sets the maximum size of each district's General Fund; this is called 100% funding. All districts must be funded to at least 80% of the state-determined 100% level. Through a voter-approved levy a district may adopt a budget that exceeds the 80% minimum. The amount by which the funding level exceeds 80% is a measure of local support of a district's schools. Districts are allowed to temporarily exceed the 100% level.

In May of 2014, voters approved a \$485,000 General Fund Levy. This levy increased the total voter approved support to the General Fund to a total of \$1,213,000. Presently, the District's General Fund is at 93% of the state-determined maximum. This has moved Hamilton from last to the current status depicted by the graph.



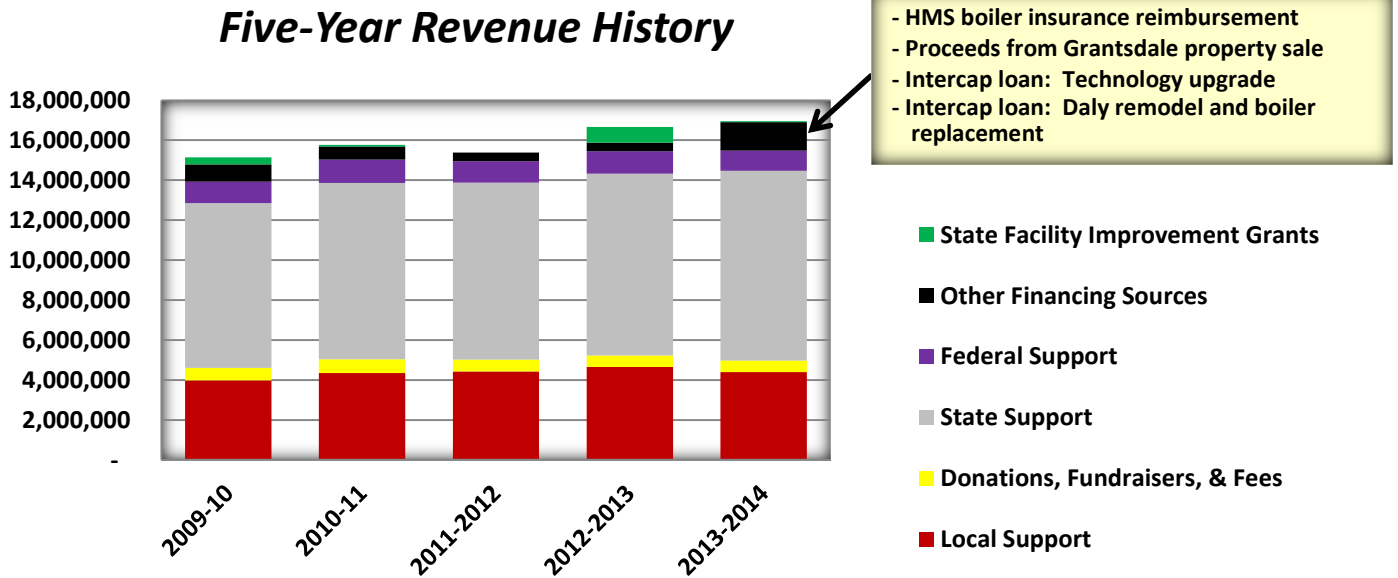
District School Levy

About 25% of the District's spending is supported by local property taxes, which refers to the "District School Levy" on a person's tax bill. Below is a chart showing the levy over the past five years (not adjusted for inflation). Much of the District School Levy is set by state law, but District voters can augment this amount by approving additional levies or bonds. Note that the bond for the high school will be paid off in 2018.



Budget Revenue

Public schools are supported by local taxes, various user fees, state funding, federal funding, and competitive grants. The table below shows Hamilton School District's revenues over the past five completed school years. (These figures are not adjusted for inflation.)

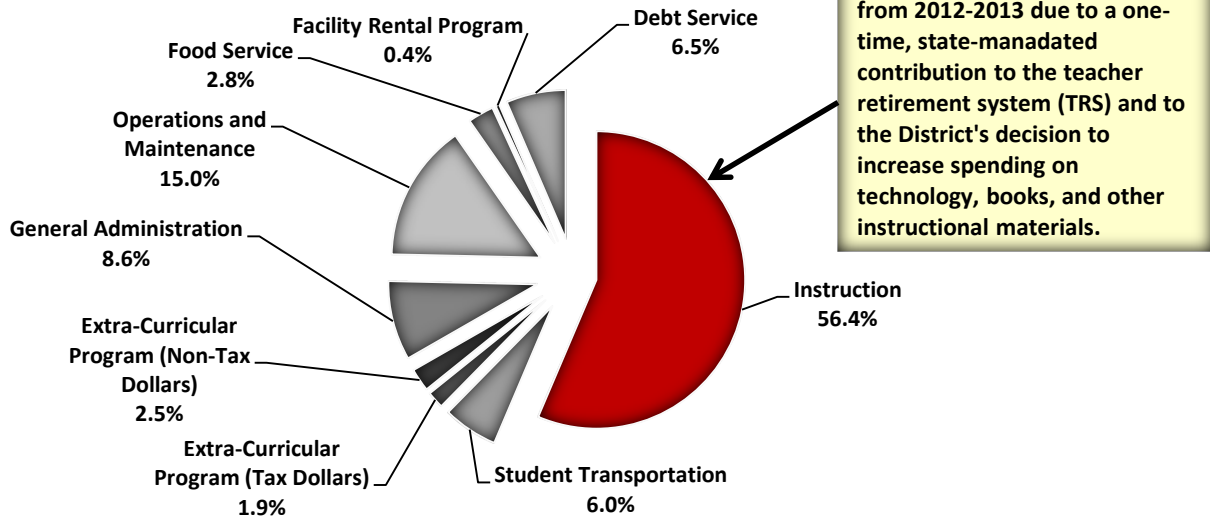


Revenue Source	Description	2013-2014 Percent	Amount
State Facility Improvement Grants	one time money gained through a state competitive grant for the Daly bathroom remodel in 2013-2014	0.24%	\$ 41,494
Other Financing Sources	sale of bonds, disposal of school property, operating transfers, resources transferred to other districts or cooperatives, and funds carried over from the previous school year	8.45%	\$ 1,431,702
Federal Support	revenues received directly from the federal government, primarily special education, Title I, and food service	5.93%	\$ 1,004,886
State Support	revenues distributed by the county and the state to the school district primarily driven by student enrollment	56.01%	\$ 9,492,097
Donations, Fundraisers & Fees	revenues raised locally from donations, fundraisers, student activity fees, ticket sales, and pay-to-play fees	3.47%	\$ 587,894
Local Support	revenues gained primarily from local property taxes but also including rental fees, interest earnings, proceeds from food service sales, adult education class fees, etc.	25.89%	\$ 4,387,898
Total Revenue (2013-2014)		100%	\$16,945,970

Budget Expenditures

The chart below shows how revenue was expended during 2013-14, the last completed school year.

2013-14 Expenditures



Expenditure	Description	Percent	Amount
Instruction	classroom teachers, counselors, librarians, school nurse, paraprofessionals, technology, and instructional materials (an approximate)	56.4%	\$ 9,333,475
Student Transportation	contracted bus services, bus drivers, extra-curricular travel, and field trips	6.0%	\$ 986,237
Extra curricular Program (Tax Dollars)	extra-curricular activities paid for by tax payer dollars	1.9%	\$ 307,100
Extra-curricular Program (Non-Tax Dollars)	extra-curricular activities paid for by pay-to-play fees, fundraisers, and other donations	2.5%	\$ 413,533
General Administration	superintendent, principals, assistant principals, business office staff, secretaries, auditing services, legal services, and office supplies	8.6%	\$ 1,428,708
Operations and Maintenance	maintenance staff, custodians, contracted services, utilities, and supplies	15.0%	\$ 2,476,400
Food Service	kitchen staff, food, and supplies (breakfast and lunch)	2.8%	\$ 465,086
Facility Rental Program	staff directly related to processing and supervising community facility usage	0.4%	\$ 67,168
Debt Service	long-term debt obligations in excess of one year (High School Bond and Kurtz Lane SID)	6.5%	\$ 1,070,353
Total Expenditures			\$16,548,060

Note: Expenditures do not exactly equal revenue due to carryovers from one fiscal year to another.

Action Plan Implemented

In last year's Annual Report, the District laid out this plan for 2014-2015, which has been implemented in its entirety due in large part to the voters' approval of a mill levy in May 2014.

Action Plan 2014-15 - Implemented			
Objective	Initiative	Resource Requirement	Funding Source
Kindergarten Ready	preschool expansion: increase total enrollment from 40 to 60 students and offer program five days instead of 4 days per week	classroom materials & playground expansion (\$5,000)	internal reorganization of funds no new hires
Improve Academic Achievement	transitional kindergarten: provide an opportunity for an additional year of pre-kindergarten experience for students of need	K-8 teacher (\$45,000)	internal reorganization of funds no new hires
	middle school Title I program staffed with certified teachers	1 full-time teacher (\$45,000)	internal reorganization of funds no new hires
American Citizen Ready	combine AP US History and AP American Literature as a potential model for all US History and American Literature course requirements	currently staffed	none required
Educational Materials & Technology	computer, textbooks and materials replacement schedule	annual line item (\$200,000)	internal reorganization of funds none required
Career Pathways	health-science program manufacturing program information technology program	3 teachers materials and supplies (\$175,000)	funded by May 2014 levy
Performing Arts	theater program	1 teacher (\$45,000)	funded by May 2014 levy
Extended School Day	augment Keystone program	½ teacher (\$25,000)	funded by May 2014 levy
Facility Rentals	improve community access and quality of facilities	annual line item (\$40,000)	funded by May 2014 levy
Reduce Pay-to-Play Fees	reduce pay-to-play fees	annual line item (\$40,000)	funded by May 2014 levy

Action Plan *In Progress*

Below are major initiatives that are currently underway. Work on many of these will extend into next year and beyond.

Action Plan 2014-15 In Progress			
Objective	Initiative	Resource Requirement	Funding Source
Basic Literacy	Transition from contracted services for special education to direct oversight by the District of administrative and certified staff and provide efficient and effective programming for students of need.	Director of Special Ed and a team of specialists	none required (expect an annual savings of \$15,000 to \$45,000)
Basic Literacy	Strengthen the high school mathematics program by requiring all students (starting with the Class of 2017) to complete Algebra I, Geometry, and a third year-long math course. This requirement exceeds Montana accreditation standards, which only require two unspecified years of math.	none required	none required
Preparation for American Citizenship	Add completion of a personal finance course as a graduation requirement, starting with the Class of 2017. This requirement exceeds Montana accreditation standards.	none required	none required
Preparation for American Citizenship	Strengthen the tie between middle school civics courses and the high school curriculum.	none required	none required
Readiness for Future Opportunities	Continue partnering with Bitterroot College to increase dual enrollment opportunities and to seek out opportunities to share current facilities.	no requirement identified at this time; possibility of annual savings or increased revenue	none required
Readiness for Future Opportunities	Complete implementation of vocational programs in Health Science and Information Technology by the start of school year 2015-2016.	additional faculty specialized instructional materials	funded by May 2014 levy
Attract and Retain a High-Quality Teaching Staff	Increase teacher compensation from the lowest in Western Class A to at least the Western Class A average.	price tag is being determined	internal reorganization future mill levy