

# 509-J Schools in Action!

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## Leadership Corner

A Message from Rick Molitor  
Superintendent



As we prepare to wrap up the school year, I'd like to share some exciting news. Our school district is exploring a new approach to teaching and learning that has been highly successful at a number of schools throughout the United States. This approach, called **Personalized Mastery**, is a student-centered learning system that is very different from our traditional teacher-driven instruction methods.

Personalized Mastery is designed to:

- empower students to take control of their education;
- engage them in learning;
- honor their unique differences; and
- prepare a strong pathway toward individual career and college readiness and success in life.

Personalized Mastery is based on research supporting the idea that:

- all children can learn;
- all children learn at different paces; and
- schools have, within their control, the factors needed to ensure that students master required content.

Recently, teams of JCSD administrators, teachers and board members had the opportunity to visit four communities that have shifted their entire learning model to embrace Personalized Mastery. Three of the communities are in California and one is in Anchorage, Alaska. Our teams came back with a new perspective on what schools look like with Personalized Mastery as the foundation. This team is now asking what it might look like if we were to adopt Personalized Mastery in our Jefferson County schools.

Over the next several months, teams will be meeting with their peers as well as parents and community members to share their Personalized Mastery school site visit experiences and insights and to ask for feedback on a possible shift in our local approach to education.

In order to move forward with a Personalized Mastery system (see article below), JCSD needs the confidence and support of our teachers, staff, families and community members. At some point, you may be asked to provide your input in exploring this major shift in our education system. We will also be asking if you think our district is ready to make these changes.

This is an important decision for our district and we can't make it without your input. Please know that we value your opinions and ideas and we look forward to having these conversations with you.

Please don't hesitate to call me, or your child's principal, with questions about Personalized Mastery or our process moving forward. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rick Molitor, Superintendent

## Leadership Starts Early at JCMS

Students in the JCMS leadership class are learning how to give back to their school and community.

"We get to do projects that help make our school a better place and help the community," said Robert Ball, grade 6.

According to JCMS Principal Simon White, students in this year's leadership classes are taking community service to a new level.

"They are making the connection that they are part of a community beyond themselves," said White. "We're really seeing an increase in the student ownership piece."



Robert Ball, grade 6, in JCMS leadership class.

## First Place Award for Oregon History Day



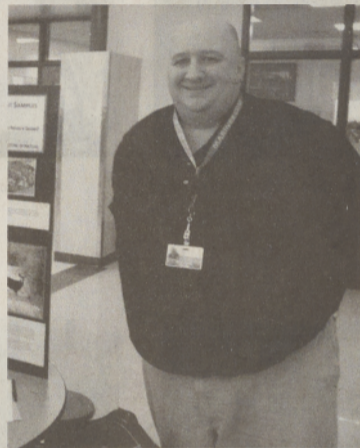
Carly Breach (left), grade 8, with her award-winning Oregon History Day Exhibit and JCSD TAG Specialist Courtney Lupton-Turner.

Eighth grade JCMS student, **Carly Breach**, took first place in the Oregon state contest for National History Day Competition in the Junior Individual Exhibit category this month. Breach, who thrives on extra academic challenge, has participated in the local Oregon History Day competition for the past two years. This year she opted for a greater challenge and will represent the state of Oregon in the national level of competition for NHD at the University of Maryland June 9-13.

"She put in a lot of time and effort outside of her regular school day," said **Courtney Lupton-Turner**, Talent & Gifted Specialist for JCSD.

"I like to challenge myself and this is a good way to do it," said Breach who selected labor laws as the topic for her presentation and display. "I was shocked to find the conditions people were working in and that there were people my age working there."

## New JCSD teachers shine



Rick Wells, Teacher, MHS and WS Annex.

New teachers have been participating in a JCSD New Teacher Induction Program to help them meet their peers and share research on effective teaching strategies. This month, the talented crew presented their research findings to colleagues and school board members.

"I've been pleasantly surprised and refreshed," said MHS, WS Annex Teacher **Rick Wells** about the New Teacher Induction Program. "And this project gave me great data to support what I'm doing in the classroom."

## JCMS welcomes 5th graders and families

Grillin' & Chillin' schoolyard BBQ

JCMS is hosting a BBQ for 5th grade students and their families on **Wednesday, June 12 from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.** Enjoy free dinner for the family while you learn about summer programs for kids! This event is funded by Title 1A.

**MHS Graduation is June 8 at 2 p.m.**



JCMS students decked out for Morp.

## Morp = Prom spelled backwards!

JCMS students recently enjoyed a fun spin on high school prom week with a semi-formal afternoon dance of their own. "MORP" (prom spelled backwards) gave students a chance to get decked out in their best threads.

## The four areas of Personalized Mastery

### Individualization & Flexibility.

With Personalized Mastery, every student has the opportunity to move at their own pace in every subject -- as fast or as slow as needed. For example, a student may be at level eight in math, level nine in science, and level six in English. By allowing students to move at their own pace, this approach focuses on learning, rather than time.

### High Standards & Student Responsibility.

Personalized Mastery sets a high bar for advancement for every child, who must demonstrate evidence of proficiency or better, the equivalent of 80%, or grade B or above, before they can advance to the next level in a content area.

### A Transparent Curriculum

The standards students must learn as they progress through developmental levels to high school graduation are published and available to everyone with

Personalized Mastery. Individual student progress is monitored, measured, and reported, providing data that helps improve and adjust instruction. Before instruction begins, students are told which standards and assessment type(s) they will be learning.

### Student Ownership & Leadership

The most important pieces of Personalized Mastery are:

- student engagement
- motivation
- ownership
- leadership
- responsibility

This approach ensures that students are aware of the standards they must learn through high school graduation and take responsibility for learning them. Students are not only allowed to co-lead their learning journey, they are encouraged and empowered to take the lead in every phase of learning including goal setting, the tracking process, and assessment.

## Collaboration helps students succeed

Teachers at JCMS are working together to change the culture at JCMS and their efforts are paying off. The goal is to provide extra support to students during the transitional middle school years.

"Our teachers are working in small groups to provide emotional and academic care and support to individual students," said JCMS Assistant Principal **Trevor Flaherty**. "We are noticing a change in student behavior and academic performance."

According to Flaherty, disciplinary referrals have dropped by approximately 60% since the new system has been in place.

"We still have work to do, but we're encouraged by the progress and the overall change in culture here," said Flaherty. "Teachers and students seem happier."

Teacher **Maria Crowley** sees a difference in the classroom.

"The kids seem to be more ready and willing to learn," said Crowley. "I get answers in complete sentences and that's something I wasn't seeing before."



JCMS Teacher Maria Crowley (second from right) shares a fun moment with her students.