

2025-6 Annual Report of the Principal Mohawk Trail Regional School

Culture building

Peer relationships and student-staff relationships continue to strengthen through our daily advisory program in grades 7-12, as well as regular student-led whole school assemblies on Wednesday mornings. Additionally, our focus on providing opportunities for student voice and students to authentically lead their own learning is apparent through our prioritizing student-led conferences and standards-based teaching and learning, and a concentration on the mastery and application of curricular skills beyond MTRS.

We continue to emphasize student autonomy through the three main pillars, which greet everyone in our main lobby:

- I am part of this community
- I can contribute in a positive way
- I will be accountable for my words and actions

This past year, thanks to our ongoing relationship with Suffolk Centre for Restorative Practices, 28 unit A staff received tier 1 RJ training. Building administrators and counselors received tier 2 training.

A new Assistant Principal was hired at the end of the 24-25 school year, and they will continue to work with the building and district restorative initiatives in the 25-26 school year.

Schedule changes

Unit A staff worked with building and district staff to plan and implement a new schedule to be implemented at the start of the 25-26 school year. This marks a move away from a block schedule, more typically used in a larger school, to a daily schedule and trimesters rather than semester-long classes. The intention was to provide more options and opportunities for students and a more equitable distribution of class sizes from 7 to 12. As well as providing more opportunities for ELA and Math interventions and support, this new schedule design has provided opportunities for teachers to engage with students in all grade levels, rather than a traditional MS or HS setting. Additionally, through the Flex block, there are opportunities for students to continue to participate in clubs as well as take advantage of academic support blocks during the day.

Feedback and Communication

A key part of culture building is that transparent communication continues to be important to MTRS. There are numerous ways for the community to provide continuous feedback to MTRS as a way of improving the student and family experience. These include bimonthly drop-in hours, a student advisory group, and an annual "How are we doing?" Surveys to students,

families, and staff. These ongoing structures continue to provide opportunities for community members to give immediate feedback on what goes on at MTRS. In addition, the Local Educational Committee continues to provide input into both the school and district improvement plans.

Barr funding and Innovation

In January of 2024 MTRS received the first of two annual \$450,000 grants from the Barr Foundation to support phase two of our unique Trailblazer model. This payment will allow us to continue implementing new initiatives and curricular programs to redesign the school experience for all students. This will provide students, staff, and community members with the opportunity to engage in professional development, working groups, and site visits in order to continue to implement and refine our Trailblazer Model.

The second phase of the Trailblazer Model continues to build on the existing key focus areas: high-quality instruction through a shift to standards-based teaching and learning; advisory and social-emotional learning; restorative practices; equitable educational experiences for all students; communications and community outreach; distributed leadership; and student-led conferences.

Working with a variety of nationally recognized organizations, students, families, and staff will be supported in developing and refining a unique transformational school experience which includes:

- Internships and work study opportunities, on campus and off
- Social Emotional Learning supports, including: EL Advisory model for all grades 7-12, site-based therapeutic services, and college and career planning
- Pedagogical supports for staff as the school shifts towards competency-based education through a standards-based teaching and learning approach
- Building a portfolio of student work and student-led conferences
- Senior Capstone project culminating with a site-based internship
- Continued community outreach, including a Trailblazer Community Group comprised of staff, parents, students, and community members that meets several times a year
- Opportunities for teacher leadership in continuing to develop elements of our Trailblazer model

Distributed leadership and District-Wide structures

A number of staffing changes have been made in the service of continuing to promote and support the Trailblazer model of distributed leadership, opportunities for student voice, and increased Social and Emotional Learning. Lead teachers continue to work with EL in order to provide leadership for staff and support with rolling out Standards-Based Teaching and Learning

(SBTL) in grades 7-12. The District Athletic Director also continues to focus on the growth and promotion of sports in the district, as well as helping retain students at the end of grades 6 and 8.

Distributed leadership continues to be evident through the work of the teacher-based Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and their work in designing and delivering staff PD on Standards-Based Teaching and Learning development, as well as our successful adaptation of twice yearly Student-led Conferences.

Finally, the district literacy and numeracy coaches have helped create and support data-driven grade-level numeracy and literacy teams in grades 7 and 8 to help strengthen the student learning experience.

College and Career supports

MTRS continues to focus on supporting students in taking their learning beyond the classroom. In addition to providing opportunities for students to participate in Dual Enrolment classes at GCC, the guidance team has focused on providing grade 12 students with the opportunity, as part of their schedule, to extend their Capstone projects into work-based learning and Internship opportunities with businesses and organizations in the community.

Our guidance team continues to define Pathways and early college/ dual enrollment opportunities beyond MTRS for all of our students. Additionally, the team is working with Masshire and other partners to look at ways to provide students with the opportunity to obtain certification for CPR, First Aid, ServeSafe, and Driver's Ed.

College preparedness and student retention

The guidance team held a second annual alumni college conversation with students in December. This is a great opportunity for returning students to talk to current MTRS students about life and college experience beyond Mohawk Trail.

In addition to the alumni event, the guidance team helped provide grade 8 students with an information morning as well as the opportunity to experience a day in high school. Admin will visit grade 6 classes later in the winter/spring to talk with students about life and opportunities at MTRS.

Field Trips

We have been incredibly lucky to have been able to utilize the two new district mini-buses for local trips as we continue to innovate in providing students with learning experiences outside of the classroom. To date this year, teachers have led field trips to the following locations: Smith College, GCC, UMASS Amherst, Springfield College, Amherst Art Museum, Boston Aquarium, Clarke Museum, Shelburne Falls, and numerous other locations are linked to classroom activities.

Community Involvement

We continue to be thankful to parents and care providers for their active involvement in MTRS life through the Local Education Committee (LEC)

Other community-wide opportunities, such as Open House, the Celebration of Learning, and the Mohawk Trail Athletic Association (MTAA), organized Spring Fling, continue to imbibe MTRS with positive community spirit. Additionally, Graduation took place indoors in the MTRS auditorium in May of 2025, and we are planning for this to be the venue for a combined graduation and scholarship event for the Class of '26 on Friday, 29th May, 2025.

Communications and Outreach

Communications and Outreach Coordinator Carol Foote continues to support all schools in the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts through internal and external coverage of school- and community-related news and events.

She serves as a resource and point of contact for and to: district staff, students, caregivers, community members, The Mary Lyon Foundation, school- and town-based newsletter editors, reporters from the Greenfield Recorder, town officials and legislators, organizations, and businesses. Her design and writing work may be seen around our buildings and towns, as well as on our websites and on social media.

Communications and outreach are also part of the planning, creating, and implementing work of the communications subcommittee of the MTRSD school committee and the 2 Districts 8 Towns sustainability study. Budget season keeps this office particularly busy as we strive for transparency for the taxpayers in presenting the numbers and process.

Music and Theatre

We are really pleased with the continued resurgence of music and drama at MTRS in the past year. As well as a spring musical in 2024, *Charlie Brown*, a winter play, *And then there was one*, took place in early January 2025. Our annual Winter Concert took place on December 18th, and our Spring school concert and district concerts are scheduled for later in 2026.

Athletics

2025 was another incredible year for Mohawk Trail athletics! While continuing to offer programming for grades K-12, our athletic department benefited from record-breaking participation numbers in every athletic season. All told, over HALF of Mohawk Trail students

participate in Mohawk Trail athletics EVERY season. Well above both the State and National averages. Also, to quickly shine a light on some notable news in the Mohawk Trail Athletics world, we are proud to share that after a 5-year hiatus, Boys Varsity Basketball is back! In addition to this, for the first time in nearly a decade, our boys' basketball program is able to field a team at all three levels: middle school, junior varsity, and varsity! To conclude, we wouldn't want to forget to mention that for the third time in four years, our girls' alpine ski team was able to bring home a State Championship! A truly dynastic run by our flagship program!

Youth Athletics

Similar to years past, Mohawk Trail has continued to work closely with West County Baseball, West County Soccer, and the Hilltown Basketball League to offer seasonal athletic opportunities to our district students in grades K-6. In addition to these programs, summer offerings through the Mohawk Trail Athletic Department include both the Summer Track Series and youth field hockey clinics. Both are held weekly throughout the summer months! All of these programs are run by community volunteers, as well as Mohawk Trail coaches and athletes. We cannot thank these contributors enough for all of the hard work and dedication they have put into ensuring the sustainability of our district's athletic programs.

Middle School Athletics

Mohawk Trail continues to have incredibly high participation rates amongst our 7th and 8th-grade students. More than 77% of our Mohawk Trail middle school students participate in at least one athletic season, while many participate in as many as three! Middle school students have the ability to choose from 14 different athletic offerings, spread out over three seasons. Middle school students account for nearly half of the total athletes in grades 7-12, and continue to play a huge role in the success and sustainability of our varsity programs.

Cooperative Programs

In order to ensure the continued success and sustainability of athletic programs in rural areas, the MIAA (Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association) has continued to allow smaller schools in rural areas to join forces in order to field teams that they would not be able to field on their own. Currently, the Mohawk Trail Regional School District is involved in eight separate cooperative programs. They include...

Varsity Golf - Host School (w/ Greenfield High School)

Wrestling - Host School (w/ Greenfield High School)

Football - Guest School (w/ Greenfield High School)

Boys and Girls High School Soccer - Guest School (w/ Greenfield High School)
High School Baseball - Guest School (w/ Greenfield High School)
Nordic Skiing - Host School (w/ Hampshire Regional)
Hockey - Guest School (w/ Greenfield High School)
Boys Tennis - Guest School (w/ Greenfield High School)

Our district has developed great working relationships with both the Greenfield Public School System and Hampshire Regional. By the start of FY27, Mohawk Trail should be able to offer as many athletic opportunities to its students as a much larger school that is three or four times our size. With enrollment essentially stagnant and budgets becoming tighter, we in the Mohawk Trail Athletic Department will continue to prioritize giving our students every opportunity to compete in the sport of their choice, at the absolute highest level. Go Warriors!

Get Involved!

Curious as to how you can help facilitate the success of the Mohawk Trail Athletic Department? Please reach out to District Athletic Director Greg Lilly at glillyAD@mtrsd.org or Mohawk Trail Athletic Association President Jenn Pease at jpease@admin.umass.edu to see how you can lend a helping hand!

Student numbers

At the December mid-point of the 2025-2026 school year, student enrollment in grades 7-12 is 297. Current enrollment numbers for middle school include approximately 73 students in seventh grade and 74 students in eighth grade. Enrollment for ninth grade is 36 students; 10th grade has 41 students; 44 members of the Junior class, and 29 MTRS seniors. We have 1 student enrolled in our post-graduate program.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Buckland

Principal