



MONTANA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK CONNECTIONS

January 2010

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**Montana Department
of Labor and Industry**



**MONTANA CAREER
RESOURCE NETWORK**

www.ourfactsyourfuture.org

MCRN's High School Course Planning Tools

Have you ever noticed how much less stressful things are when you have a plan? Even if the plan ends up changing, having one is always better than going in blind. Many students don't realize what it takes to graduate from high school, let alone what classes would best prepare them for what comes after (the world of work or post-secondary education). Too often, students give the matter little thought until their counselor calls them in to talk about how they are going to squeeze in all the classes they will need during their senior year. Making a four-year high school plan can prevent major headaches when it comes to graduation, not to mention helping students understand the importance of what they are learning.

MCRN offers several resources to help students plan for high school and beyond: **MCIS Junior**, **What to Pack**, and **MCIS**. Each resource takes students step-by-step through the sometimes daunting process of career planning, and can equally benefit the counselors, teachers, and parents helping to guide students through the process.

MCIS Junior has a complete section on "Planning for High School" that includes vocabulary, graduation requirements, college admissions information, electives and how to use them, extracurricular activities and their impact on the future, and creating a high school course plan. **MCIS Junior** also has the Course Planner functionality (MCIS MAP) that helps students develop, document, and store their high school course plans. These plans are fully transferrable for continued use in high school.

What to Pack is a career resource publication created for 7th and 8th graders that focuses on the importance of planning, not only for high school, but for a future career. **What to Pack** includes high school graduation requirements as well as college entry requirements, education vs. earnings information, a budgeting activity, planning activities that involve self-awareness, exploration, and research developed around the Holland codes, and finally the development of their four-year high school plan.

MCIS has a wealth of information for students and teachers, too much to address all of it here. However, in the portfolio there are two important features students and teachers should check out: **My Career Plan** and **My Course Plan**.

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Planning for High School (continued)

My Career Plan is a three-level process that walks the user through each step of career development, helping them formulate their own plan for the future. The three levels are:

- Getting Started - Activities for you to use to begin your plan.
- Looking Deeper - Activities to help you expand and update your plan as you explore your dreams.
- Preparing for Next Steps - Activities that focus on getting ready for your life and learning after high school.

The first level starts out with general career exploration. By the time students reach the third level, they are getting specific information about the knowledge and skills they will need to attain for individual careers, as recommended by the National Career Development Guidelines.

The other great resource in **MCIS** is **My Course Plan**, which lets users electronically document their personalized course plan, and to edit or refer to it at any time. Once the MCIS MAP is released, users will be able to see recommended high school course options based on the 16 career clusters and educational attainment goals. They will also be able to find out what courses are required at the state's post-secondary schools for the degree option in which they are interested.

Planning is key to helping students see the relevance of what they are studying in high school. With the addition of MCIS MAP, students will be able to see which classes show up in their post-secondary education requirements, which will help them understand why it is important to take certain classes. While it is best to begin planning early, even sophomores and juniors will benefit from putting their past, current, and future courses into a plan. They will see what they have accomplished, what is left to accomplish, and how to get where they want to go.

Course Planner Update

MCRN, the Office of Public Instruction, and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education continue to work with IntoCareers of the University of Oregon to improve MCIS's course planner functionality. Specifically, the partnership is working to display recommended courses by educational attainment goal level for each of the 16 career clusters (Pathways), and to display course requirements for the various degree options of the state's COTs, community colleges, and tribal colleges. The MCIS Montana Achievement Plan (MAP) for the Big Sky Pathways will provide students with the information and encouragement to achieve their educational and career goals. Our goal is for every student in Montana to have a MAP for their chosen Big Sky Pathway.

The default set of Pathways have been mapped and sent to IntoCareers, and most of the schools' data have been completed. MCRN continues to complete the tribal college data compilation and formatting for the new system, while testing and working with IntoCareers to perfect the system for testing by schools. The goal was to have the site ready by the first of the year, but programming delays have set the timeline back to this spring. We continue to hope that the project will be ready to use by all sites by Fall 2010.

Thanks to the following schools that have agreed to pilot the MCIS MAP system and have already uploaded their school's courses and created Pathways for their students:

- Frenchtown High School – Vanessa Gibson
- Glasgow High School – Bob Rennick
- Baker High School – Cindy Baker
- Jefferson High School – Shane Dempsey
- Columbia Falls High School – Doug Cordier
- Glacier High School – Cindy Jones
- Bainville High School – Cheryl Graham
- Shepherd High School – Janel Wiese

PEP Talk Update

In our last newsletter we announced a new program called PEP Talk that was created through a joint effort between the Department of Labor and Industry, Adult Basic Education of the Office of Public Instruction and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. We are happy to announce that PEP Talk was successfully launched in November and all of the materials are now available for download at www.smartaboutcollege.org.

On this website you'll find the following:

- PEP Talk Blueprint (workbook)
- Skills Cards, Skills Worksheets
- Life Inventory
- Goal Setting Templates
- e-learning training modules

For staff specific training modules go to www.smartaboutcollege.org/peptalk which has training modules on portfolios and administration tools.

Using the PEP Talk Blueprint and MCIS you can easily have your students or customers complete a personalized employment plan complete with any

training or education necessary to achieve their personal employment goals. PEP Talk simplifies the career development process into 3 simple steps and is a great tool for teaching a class or unit on career development. For more information or questions on PEP Talk contact Shaunda Hildebrand at 1-800-541-3904.



Career Heroes Teacher's Guide

When we released the Career Heroes Workbook in 2008, the response from teachers was tremendous, but everyone seemed to have the same question: Where can we get the Career Heroes Trading Cards that are shown in the book? At the time, we hadn't considered making actual cards, but the idea seemed to be on everyone's mind, so we created 20 new Career Heroes characters, designed trading cards for these (as well as the 12 original characters), and came up with some fun classroom activities in which students can collect, trade, and learn facts about each occupation from the cards.

The Teacher's Guide provides an answer key for the exercises in the original Career Heroes workbook, but the real fun lies in the trading card activities. The activities were designed for a classroom size of 24 to 28 students, but can be adapted to fit the needs of any size classroom. To make the activities as fun and engaging as possible, they were designed as learning games that award students by giving them access to additional cards, which they can choose to keep or trade in for different cards. When the activities are finished, the kids can keep the cards they've collected.

While the original Career Heroes characters were based on the 6 Holland work interest categories (realistic, investigative, creative, social, enterprising, and conventional), the new characters were chosen to conform to the 16 career clusters defined by the U.S. Department of Education. The new occupations include Librarian, Chef, Home Health Aide, Industrial Machinery Mechanic, Computer Programmer, Judge, Cosmetologist, Registered Nurse, Police Officer, Mining Machine Operator, Civil Engineer, and more.

One teacher has said, "I have had several kids in my office looking over the career flash cards. They are asking where the dentist, doctor, astronaut, pilot, environmental engineer, teacher, farmer, vet, fisherman, banker, and service personnel ones are." While we regret having to leave out some of kids' favorite jobs, we are thrilled that the cards are getting kids to think about the different types of careers, and introducing them to some new ones. One activity even asks students to list occupations that were not included in the cards, as they collaborate to create a virtual city in which all their Career Heroes will live and work.

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Career Heroes Teacher's Guide (continued)

The Career Heroes Teacher's Guide and trading cards were completed in December, and are currently being classroom tested by a number of teachers throughout the state. Special thanks to Sheri Johnson, Carol Idland, Ty Cotton, Leslie Etapa, Kristy Savaria, Tedi Bishop, Mary Machart, and Carol Bruderer for the time and

thought they have put into evaluating both the Career Heroes Workbook and the Teacher's Guide.

Barring any major revisions, the Career Heroes Teacher's Guide will be ready for release this spring. For any questions, or to pre-order Teacher's Guides and card sets, please contact Donetta Clark at 444-7019.



Did You Know?

Did you know that MCIS has a wonderful set of **tools for teachers** and counselors? If you are not using the Administrative Tools section in MCIS, you are missing out on some great features.

Did you know, for instance, that you can **upload courses** so that students can create a four-year plan?

Did you know that you can **upload portfolios**? This feature will save you classroom time. By uploading the student's portfolios, you cut out all the time it takes students to come up with a username and password.

Did you know that you can **put your students into groups**? This will help you monitor students in different ways. Try grouping your students by grade, graduating class, or by different teachers or counselors.

Did you know that you can **create staff accounts** for individual teachers or counselors? Larger schools with many counselors generally separate students alphabetically. Creating staff accounts and grouping the students allows counselors to run shorter reports to check what the student has accomplished in MCIS.

Did you know that you can **transfer a student's portfolio** to another school? Transferring portfolios is quick and easy in administrative tools. This works nicely for those students transferring to another school and middle school students moving on to high school. High school students going on to colleges that use MCIS can also transfer their portfolios.

Did you know that there is a **message feature**? If you would like your students to take an assessment, for instance, you can send a message telling them to take the IDEAS Assessment and save your results to your

portfolio. The next time the student logs in, they will be notified that they have a message. This is a one way message and students don't have the option of replying.

Did you know that there are several **report features** in the administrative tools? You can run a report on site usage to see the number of logins for a specific time period and get a summary of portfolio usage. The Site and Group Report gives you a detailed report of several selections, such as course plans, IDEAS, Occupation sort, etc. The Individual Portfolio Report allows you to view all content for an individual portfolio and retrieve portfolio user names and passwords.

Did you know that there is a **tutorial section** at the bottom of the administrative tools page? The tutorial link will give you a detailed tutorial on each and every section under administrative tools.

Finally, **did you know** that there is a **link** at the bottom of the page that says "Go to CIS"? By clicking on this link, you will be directed away from the Administrative site and taken directly to your school or business's MCIS main page. From there, you will also have a link back to the Administrative Tools page.

We would love your feedback! Please let us know which parts of MCIS you'd like to see featured in our upcoming newsletters. We strive to make MCIS the best possible tool for career information, and we welcome all suggestions on how to make it better. We would love to hear from students, as well as teachers and counselors.

You can contact Donetta Clark toll-free at 1-800-541-3904, directly at 406-444-7019, or by email at doclark@mt.gov.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

KNOW HOW 2 GO WEEK WILL HELP STUDENTS, FAMILIES

Student Assistance Foundation is pleased to announce grant awards funding four Know How 2 Go Week events starting in January. Thompson Falls, Dillon, Helena, and Kalispell will host the inaugural round of Know How 2 Go Week events. Two additional events will be hosted by GEAR UP communities this year, and additional Know How 2 Go Week sites will be added next year.

Know How 2 Go Week, funded with support from the Lumina Foundation for Education, provides programs and activities for students of all ages and their families in the four general steps to go to college:

1. Be A Pain – In a Good Way
2. Push Yourself
3. Find the Right Fit
4. Get Your Hands on Some Cash

Three of the four Know How 2 Go Week events will be held in conjunction with College Goal Sunday, starting January 31 and running through February 4, 2010. Thompson Falls will hold their event earlier in January, from the 3rd through the 7th.

Site coordinators for each event are:

- **Thompson Falls** – Jodi Morgan, Thompson Falls High School, and Ruthanne Shope, Montana Tech Upward Bound
- **Dillon** – Ilene Cohen, UM Western Upward Bound, and Ruthanne Shope, Montana Tech Upward Bound
- **Helena** – Michelle Christianson, Montana Tech Educational Talent Search
- **Kalispell** – Jeremy Fritz, Kalispell Education Foundation

For more information on the Know How 2 Go Campaign, visit www.knowhow2gomontana.org.

Top MCIS Users

Congratulations to Glacier High School for having the highest number of MCIS logins per enrollment for a high school and to Melstone Middle School for having the highest number of MCIS logins per enrollment for a middle school.

Top 5 High Schools

Glacier High School
Valier High School
Fairfield High School
Shelby High School
Shields Valley High School

Top 5 Middle Schools

Melstone Middle School
Jordan Middle School
Belt Middle School
Marion Middle School
Shelby Middle School





How MCIS Works for Us...

We would like to feature a few stories about how MCIS works for you in each of our newsletters. Please send any stories or testimonials to Donetta Clark at doclark@mt.gov. These stories will also be posted on the web site.

The Montana Career Information System has been an invaluable tool for my high school students. I have used it to get students thinking about careers in general, but in rural Northeastern Montana, it has proven a powerful tool to introduce students to the huge variety of career opportunities. Our students often think of farming, small business ownership banking, medical, service careers, and education as the only career possibilities because those are the predominant careers that are available in this area.

MCIS is especially useful after students take the ASVAB test as well because students then link their career interests and skills to actual jobs, career outlooks and educational requirements. This, in turn, helps students determine whether or not they want to pursue a particular pathway.

The ability for students to open up MCIS at home and share the website with parents is a major step toward getting parents involved in the post secondary process as well. Once this dialogue is opened, parents often are willing to talk to the school counselor about the next steps the student must take to achieve his/her goals.

Principal Kathleen Waller, Medicine Lake School

This year begins my twentieth year as a K-12 school counselor. During that time, Montana Career Information System has been an invaluable tool. It is my first "go to" source when a student asks for information about a career or school.

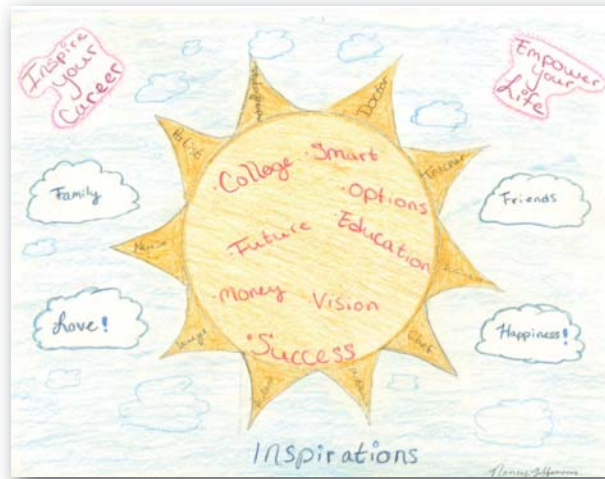
Although I had used MCIS primarily with junior high and high school students for years for career exploration, I now also utilize it for fifth and sixth graders after completing the "Jacob and Emily" career program. They absolutely love taking the inventory geared for middle schoolers to see what careers end up on their list. The user-friendly format makes it easy for them to research those careers that show up. Of course, the first thing they look at is the salary/wage section! It is so rewarding to see them get excited about what their future possibilities could be.

I simply cannot give enough kudos to the folks who have worked to develop and improve this program over the years. They are constantly making changes to keep the sight interesting and up to date for students, parents and teachers. Keep up the good work, and many thanks!

Linda Konesky, Centerville School

MCRN 2009 Poster/Poetry Contest Winners!

Every November the National Career Development Association (NCDA) Sponsors an annual Poetry and Poster Contest. Montana Career Resource Network sponsors the Montana Poetry and Poster Contest and those 1st through 3rd place winners in the State are then sent on to the national contest. The winning posters can also be found at www.careers.mt.gov under MCRN 2009 Poetry/Poster Contest. We hope to see more entries for our November 2010 Contest.



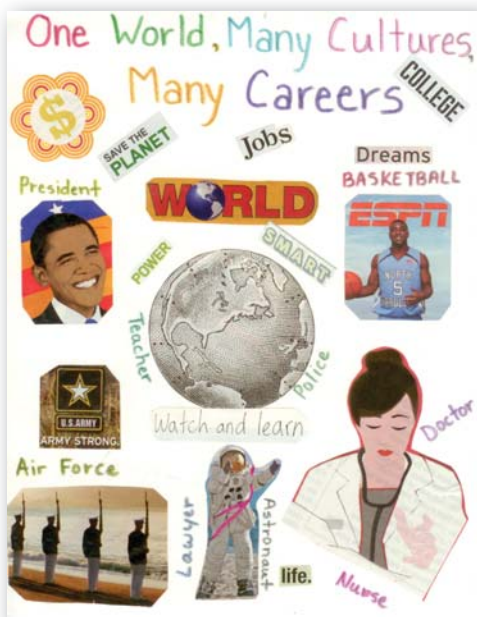
1st place Nancy Jefferson Senior C1 Division
 2nd place Dustin Nanto Senior C1 Division
 3rd place Shelley Ybarra Senior C1 Division



1st place Clarissa Matheny Middle C1 Division
 2nd place Calvin Nomee Middle C1 Division
 3rd place David Castro Middle C1 Division



1st place Rachel Male Bear-Stone Senior C2 Div.
 2nd place Sheena Nomee Senior C2 Division
 3rd place Tanisha Nomee Senior C2 Division



1st place Shantel Bear Ground Middle C2 Division
 2nd place Whitney Bulltail Middle C2 Division
 3rd place Alex Nast Middle C2 Division

1st place
 Cliff Singer
 Adult
 Student
 Division



Coming Soon!

- **Jacob & Emily Skip School** artwork will be redesigned in 2010 with a goal to release the redesigned publication in the fall of 2010. MCRN would like to thank the following people for helping with reviewing and providing feedback so this redesign will meet the needs of teachers, counselors and students: Kristy Savaria, Pam Warner, Vicki Smith, Chad Kinnett, and Barbara Cooper. Without their help we would not be able to provide top quality career resources.
- **Veteran's publication** - We have been collaborating with Brad Nelson, the Veteran Program Manager at the Department of Labor and Industry, and Shak Emly at the Helena Workforce Center to create an employment publication that specifically targets veterans. We are currently in the research phase of the project, gathering information and resources that will be useful to veterans who are planning careers.



**1st draft cover design*

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