



**Graduation Matters Livingston**  
**Park High School**  
**Livingston, Montana**

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## **Graduation Matters Livingston: Graduation and Beyond Coalition Partners**

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**Dear Community Members, State and Local Agencies,**

**This Graduation Matters Livingston: Graduation and Beyond Coalition report reflects collaboration between Park High School and various community partners. It is funded through the Graduation Matters Montana Challenge Fund and local support. This document provides a starting point to guide choices made by service providers, schools, funders, community groups and policymakers to improve the lives of youth and their families.**

**This report focuses on both input-based and outcome-based strategies to document and record indicators, community mapping of current activities and next steps identified with possible future opportunities to attain improvement on the Graduation Matters Livingston goals.**

**These results are based on the practices of the ABC Model, Attendance Works and locally developed programs. The ABC Model refers to analyzing a student's attendance, behavior referrals and grades in the core subjects. The Strive Partnership and Pathways Mapping Initiative were used to establish evidence-based approaches.**

**The report highlights efforts in Park County to increase collaboration, information sharing and excellence in aligning resources to improve education and community outcomes. The goals of Graduation Matters Livingston focus on key aspects that promote educational success and preparedness for life after high school; ultimately contributing to the vitality of our community. Research indicates that early intervention and establishing healthy learning habits provide the foundation for successful completion of high school. Deepening collaboration and coordination of the many services our county offers helps to prevent duplication of services and streamlines resources. While it is a priority to work with all children, emphasizing support for those who live in poverty ensures they are prepared for school and have the tools necessary to prosper in future years.**

**The "Action Inventory" sections of the report focus on needs assessments, collaboration, evaluation and progress in the stated goal area. The "Next Steps" sections focus on identified areas of additional information gathering and community planning. It is critical that we recognize the numerous partners and abundant services in Park County. This report demonstrates that our emphasis is on acting strategically across systems, disciplines and jurisdictions to increase the number of young people who make a successful transition into young adulthood.**

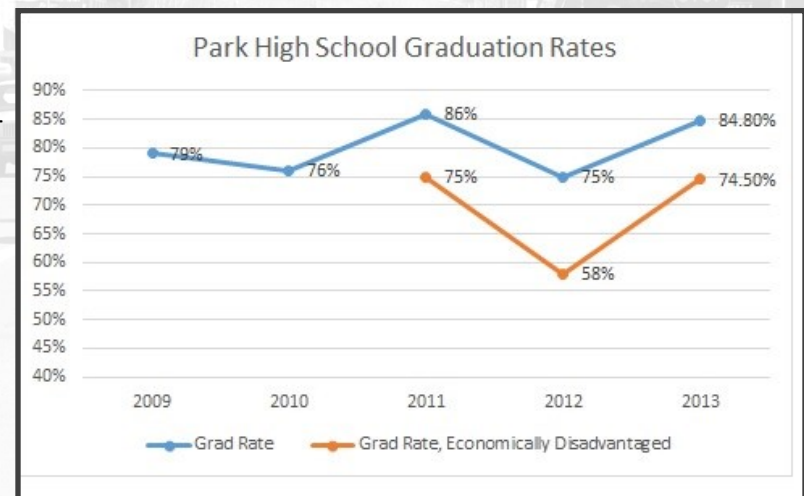
## Livingston, Montana Profile

Livingston, as of the 2011 census, has a population of 7,044 which accounts for 45.5% of Park County's population. Livingston is the county seat of Park County. Park High School (PHS) serves approximately 550 students. Most students served are Livingston residents but PHS also serves small populations from the rural areas in Park County. Since 2000, the population aged 0-17 has decreased by 20% from 3,800 to 2,980 in 2011.

In April 2014, the unemployment rate for Park County was 5.3% as compared to the state average of 4.5%. Park County's economic base includes ranching, tourism and industry associated with Yellowstone National Park in the southern portion of the county. There is also a small manufacturing base of goods and food products. In 2012, the average annual household income for Park County was \$42,332, which ranks in the lower half among Montana Counties.

Park High School's 2013 graduation was 84.8%, which is slightly above the state average. However, the graduation rate of economically disadvantaged students was 74.5%. A goal of the education community of Livingston and Park County is to close the gap between these graduation rates by addressing the many indicators that contribute to dropping out. There are many indicators that contribute to a student dropping out. Attendance, as early as Kindergarten, failure in core classes, transiency, socioeconomic status and behavior referrals are some indicators through which a student's risk of dropping out is currently assessed.

Consequences of dropping out include increased chances of being in poverty, unemployed, on public assistance, in prison or on death row, being divorced, or being a single parent according to a 2006 study funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation called *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*. On average, high school dropouts earn \$9,200 less per year than high school graduates, and about one million dollars less over a lifetime than college graduates. In 2004, students who dropped out of high school were three times more likely to be unemployed as well as receive government assistance. People who do not obtain a high school diploma can cost tax payers as much as \$292,000 over a lifetime because they require more support and may need to access social services more frequently. With this knowledge, Park County schools strive to prepare students to lead successful and fulfilling lives beyond graduation.



# Livingston Graduation Matters Community Coalition

## INDICATORS

- Youth Involvement in Activities
- Student Experience

- Early Warning System
- Attendance
- Grade 10 Credit Deficiency
- Prevention Intervention Team
- Student Support Team

- Increase College Awareness
- Career Internships
- ACT Scores

## GOALS

### Goal 1

Youth have increased prospects of thriving, belonging & engaging.

### Goal 2

High risk youth receive effective services and supports.

### Goal 3

Youth are prepared for higher education and employment.

## OUTCOME

All students graduate from high school prepared for successful futures.



# Goal 1: Youth have increased prospects of thriving, belonging and engaging.

According to the Pathways Mapping Initiative, “Experiences in adolescence that include access to safe places, opportunities to master challenges, chances to gain age-appropriate skills and knowledge, and the development of close trusting relationships with caring people on a daily basis provide young people with an appreciation of themselves as individuals with inherent and unique value and help them to acquire the competencies necessary for healthy and productive adulthood.” (Roth et al., 2000; Connell and Gambone 2002)

During adolescence, youth need opportunities to grow both as individuals and to feel a sense of belonging and connection to their community. It is vital for youth to have healthy relationships with their peers, families, and supportive adults through extra and co-curricular activities. Transitioning from middle school to high school can be both an exciting and challenging time for all students. Park



High School recognizes this important time of transition and how a difficult transition can lead to an increase in student drop out. “As young adolescents make the transition into high school, many experience a decline in grades and attendance; they view themselves more negatively and experience an increased need for friendships; and by the end of 10th grade, upon reaching the age of 16, 6% or more drop out of school. For middle school students, including those who have been labeled ‘gifted or high-achieving,’ the transition in high school can be an unpleasant experience” (Mizelle 1999). Transiency contribute to a sense of alienation in high school also. All students need to feel valued and have a sense of belonging during all fours years of high school.

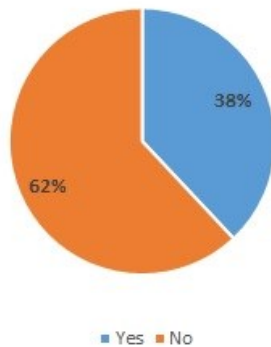
# Goal 1: Youth have increased prospects of thriving, belonging and engaging.

## Youth are involved in school-sponsored activities

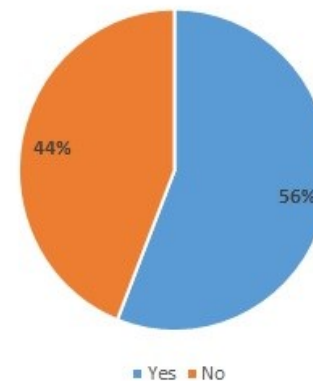
### *Why is this important?*

Youth who are involved in extra- and co-curricular activities are more likely to be physically, socially and emotionally healthy throughout their lives. Activities provide youth with opportunities to spend productive time with their peers and with supportive adults. Students are able to build positive relationships with adults through bonding, the development of mutual trust and commitment. Youth gain necessary life skills, including how to interact with peers, solve problems, and communicate effectively, while gaining confidence through new experiences. By providing an environment that is both fun and challenging, school sponsored activities strengthen student engagement in an academic setting (Feldman & Matjasko 2005). Furthermore, studies show that students who participate in school-based activities are less likely to drop out than those who are not involved (McNeil, Jr. 1995).

Students Involved in PHS Activities



Students Involved In PHS Sports



# Goal 1: Youth have increased prospects of thriving, belonging and engaging.

## Student Experience: Overall, I feel good about being in this school.

### *Why is this important?*

Students who are comfortable and confident in their school are more likely to engage and become a part of the community. A student who has a positive relationship with the school community, which includes teachers, other students, the structure of the day, the curriculum, and school-sponsored activities, is more likely to actively engage academically and earn higher grades (Yazzie-Mintz 2007).

	2010	2011	2012	
	%	%	# of Students	%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	9.45	6.53	18	4.2
<b>Disagree</b>	19.1	11.19	43	10.0
<b>Agree</b>	65.09	69.0	273	63.8
<b>Strongly agree</b>	6.37	13.29	94	22.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## Student Experience: I feel supported by other students.

	2010	2011	2012	
	%	%	# of Students	%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	6.32	3.27	16	3.8
<b>Disagree</b>	16.63	16.59	65	15.3
<b>Agree</b>	59.79	62.38	267	63.0
<b>Strongly agree</b>	17.26	17.76	76	17.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### *Why is this important?*

Youth who feel supported by their peers and who feel their opinions are respected are more likely to succeed and engage in their education. Those in emotionally supportive classrooms “report greater interest, enjoyment, and engagement (Reyes et al. 2012)”.



# Goal 1: Youth have increased prospects of thriving, belonging and engaging.

## Student Experience: My opinions are respected in this school.

*Why is this important?*

Class participation is a sign of student engagement. Students who are not engaged in this manner “report being bored, anxious, or even angry about being in the classroom (Reyes et al. 2012).” Students who feel their opinions are respected are more likely to contribute and feel comfortable in an academic setting. Supportive feedback from teachers and peers raises adolescent self-esteem and encourages students to mature into confident adults.

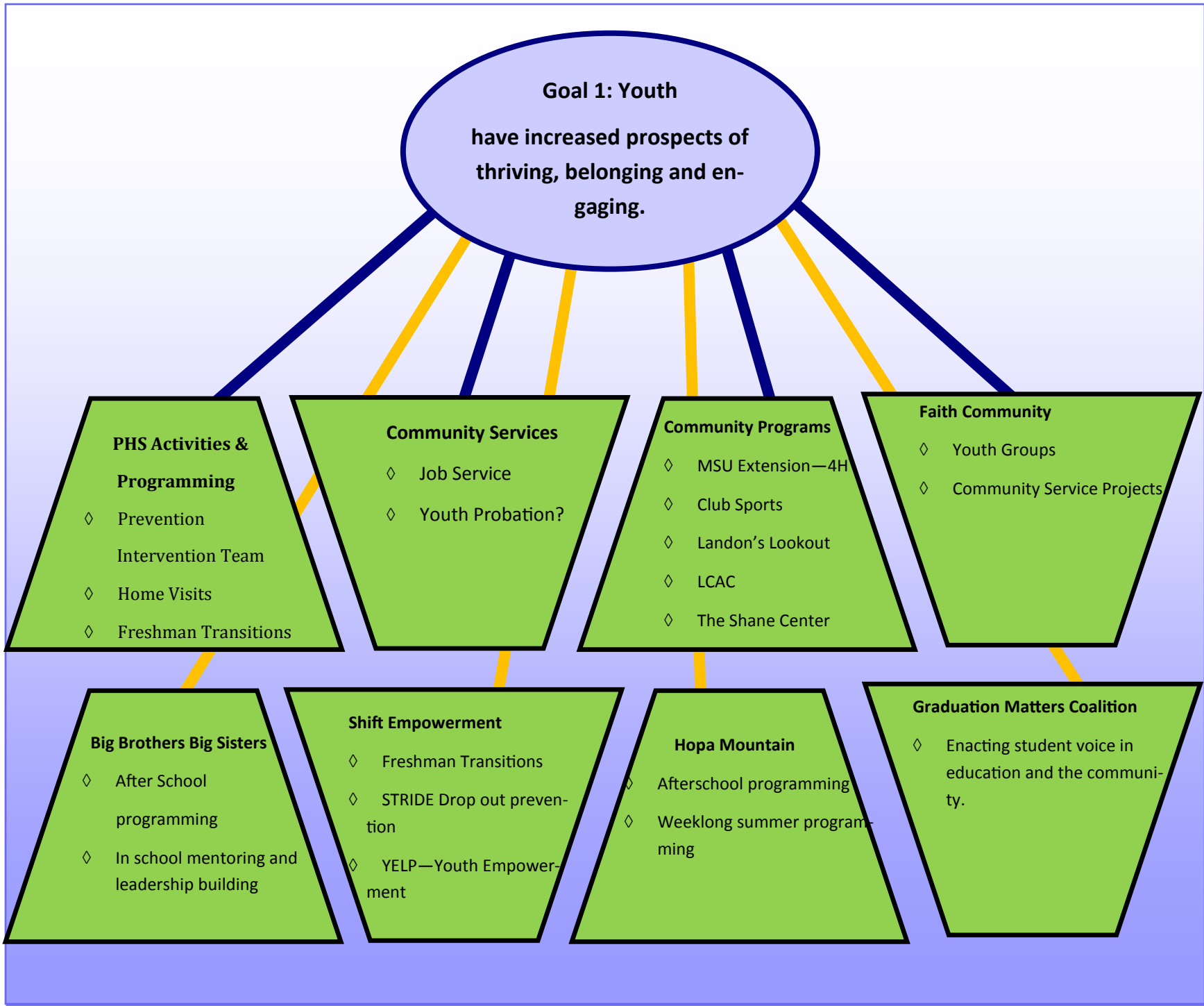
	2010	2011	2012	
	%	%	# of Students	%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	11.23	7.6	27	6.3
<b>Disagree</b>	32.85	30.4	110	25.6
<b>Agree</b>	49.9	52.02	255	59.4
<b>Strongly agree</b>	6.03	9.98	37	8.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## Student Experience: I feel supported by teachers.

	2010	2011	2012	
	%	%	# of Students	%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	2.71	2.38	10	2.4
<b>Disagree</b>	13.75	8.79	35	8.3
<b>Agree</b>	73.54	71.97	304	72.2
<b>Strongly agree</b>	10	16.86	72	17.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>100</b>

*Why is this important?*

Teachers play significant roles in providing emotional support to students. Educators who acknowledge student perspectives and encourage positive interactions in the classroom create comfortable classroom emotional climates and form stronger bonds with students. In these environments, students are more likely to engage academically and perform better in school (Reyes et al. 2012).



# Goal 1: Youth have increased prospects of thriving, belonging and engaging.

## ACTION INVENTORY

### **More youth involved in a variety of activities, both school sponsored and in the community.**

Livingston offers a multitude of opportunities for youth to compete in athletics and activities, participate in the arts and drama and volunteer. Fifty-six percent of our students reported being involved in PHS sports and 38% reported being involved in non-sports activities in the 2013-2014 MyVoice supplement survey administered in the Spring of 2014. As part of enacting the student voice in Redesign, all students participated in a school-wide input session and were asked to reflect on a time when they felt successful. Participant responses showed that an overwhelming majority identified a time they were teaching others and showcasing mastery. Many of these teaching experiences were out of the classroom and in situations like coaching basketball and soccer for younger children, being an officer in Business Professionals of America (BPA) and mentoring with Big Brothers Big Sisters.

### **Positive Student Experience**

In partnership with Sleeping Giant Middle School, Park High School has implemented strategies to ease the transition into high school by making sure all incoming 8th graders have contact with one of the guidance counselors and Shadow Day tour of the school before the end of their 8th grade year during which student receive a tour of the school and meet many important people, such as the Principal and Student Resource Officer.

## HOME VISITING PROGRAM

At Park High School, we want the positive student experience to begin the moment our students walk through the front doors. We know that feelings about school and learning start can be solidified long before a student's first day of his or her freshman year. We are addressing challenges that face our new Rangers in a few different ways. In conjunction with Graduation Matters Livingston, Lynnette Evanson, Park High School English Teacher, has developed a small home visiting program for her freshman Language Arts class. This is an opportunity for Ms. Evanson to familiarize herself with her students and their families; deepening her understanding of them as individuals and finding a way to develop meaningful relationships. She adds, "This is just one more way to hold onto students. For some, holding onto them means keeping them in school until graduation and for all, it means holding them in the context of a nurturing relationship. After three years, my experience has been gratifying and has made a palpable difference in how connected I feel to my students."

## FRESHMAN CONNECT PROGRAM

Another way Park High School supports the transition from middle school to high school, is through a partnership with Shift Empowerment Programs. Shift offers the Connect program on the first day of school, creating a space for new students to explore their preconceptions about high school and how they can choose to participate in making Park High School a better place. In this process, students create new relationships with each other and teachers they might not have otherwise and are asked to examine ideas such as the cost of labeling someone they do not know, connection through shared experiences, and safety at school. Laurie Bishop, Executive Director, reflects, "The Connect program was designed to help build trust and understanding in the school community. By working closely with Park High, we've been able to tailor the program so that it not only improves the experience of incoming 9th graders, but also helps sustain a welcoming, supportive environment for all students." Another important theme was the need for connection and acceptance. A student shares, "I value how much support I had from peers and teachers." Shift operates a year-long dropout prevention program called Stride at Park High School also. Stride launches each year with a five-day summer camp component and goes on to provide socio-emotional support throughout the year as well as weekly, in-school academic support. Shift's Stride program serves 15-25 students annually.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT SHADOW DAY & PARENT NIGHT

To further aid in a smooth freshman transition, PHS has partnered with Sleeping Giant Middle School on an 8th grade Shadow Day. The rising ninth graders visit during the school day and are given a tour and introduced to important people such as the principals, secretaries, and student ambassadors. While we focus on giving most of the support to the students, support for

# Goal 1: Youth have increased prospects of thriving, belonging and engaging.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT SHADOW DAY & PARENT NIGHT (CONTINUED)**

the parents can be just as important. The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) hosts a Parent to Parent Night where parents can receive peer support and ask each other the questions they might want to ask the school administration. Parent to Parent Night has happened in 2012 and 2013 and has been successful both times. There are plans to have a 2014 Parent Night which is anticipated to be equally successful and helpful for parents.

## **PREVENTION INTERVENTION TEAM (PIT)**

The Prevention Intervention Team was established to foster academic and personal growth and success for students in their experience at Park High School (PHS). The process entails identified students being paired with adult mentors at PHS who are able to provide a needed and meaningful connection. Students can be referred by any adult in their life, and once in the program, are asked to identify at least one adult with whom he/she feels the most comfortable. The Prevention Intervention Team, comprised of guidance counselors, principals and approximately six teachers and staff, assigns the student to the teacher(s) deemed most suitable for that particular students' needs. Prevention Intervention Team Coordinator, Lois Huntzicker, adds, "I was pleased when our school implemented this proactive program a few years ago. It's an important issue. Our school and its administration has been very supportive. I am very proud to be involved and to see the success and growth that many students have experienced with this support from our amazing staff at Park High School. This Prevention Intervention Team has helped many students become more engaged in their education and this has increased their chances of graduation."

## **GRADUATION MATTERS**

Graduation Matters is a statewide initiative put into place to increase graduation rate and decrease drop out rate in Montana. Graduation Matters Montana provides the support for community across Montana to design and implement intervention locally; addressing the unique needs and challenges that face our community. As part of Graduation Matters Livingston, Park High

School has worked with students to understand what gets in the way of graduating successfully. In 2012, Graduation Matters Livingston student initiative launched with focus groups. Topics were about student engagement, support of students and how students see their futures. What did students think needed to increase to contribute to an increase in student success. An Ameri-Corps VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America) volunteer position began in January of 2013 and is dedicated solely to building capacity for Graduation Matters so that it can be a sustainable support system to help students stay in school in Park County.



## Future Steps:

- Increase communication with business community and other stakeholder groups to inform the community about student activities and how they benefit our community as a whole.
- Continue to enact student voice by creating opportunities for student to participate in decision-making processes thereby increasing positive student experience.
- Increase collaboration between school and community and strengthen the network of community entities striving toward common goals.
- Strengthen our way of tracking transiency rates so that we can intervene earlier and support more effectively.



## Goal 2: High-risk youth receive effective supports and services.

The term at-risk, or high-risk, youth usually implies a future with less than optimal outcomes. Youth are considered high-risk for a number of reasons. These might include but are not limited to:

- Homelessness or transiency
- Substance abuse
- Sexual, physical, or emotional abuse and/or neglect
- Mental illness
- Lack of social or emotional supports
- Chaotic family environment

Many of these young people lack connections to permanent family supports and must rely on public and private services for assistance.

Physical and mental health are key elements of youth development. If basic physical and mental health needs go unmet, it is difficult for young people to develop the necessary skills to launch into a successful adulthood. Young people with multiple needs often find it difficult to get the help they need from multiple public and private agencies, each with its own organizational structure and eligibility requirements for services. Communication and coordination among service providers can bridge gaps among agencies and programs, make more effective use of limited resources, and improve the quality of services to Park County youth.



## Goal 2: High-risk youth receive effective services and supports.

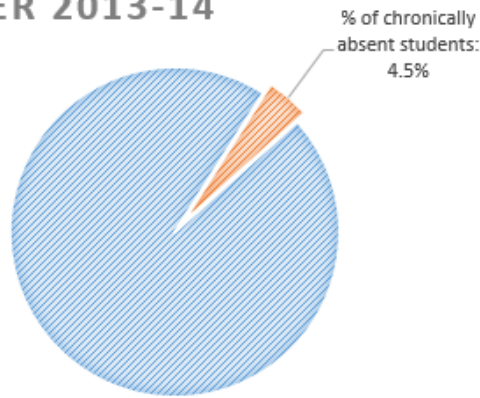
### Increased Student Attendance

#### CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

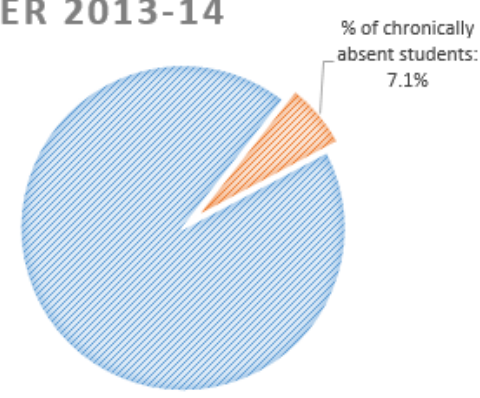
##### *Why is this important?*

Studies have found that chronically absent students earn lower grades, perform lower on learning assessments and are more likely to drop out of high school than students with better attendance records (Belfanz & Byrnes 2013). At the University of Chicago, the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) found that ninth graders had four times as many unexcused absences as eighth graders.

#### CHRONIC ABSENCES 1ST SEMESTER 2013-14



#### CHRONIC ABSENCES 2ND SEMESTER 2013-14



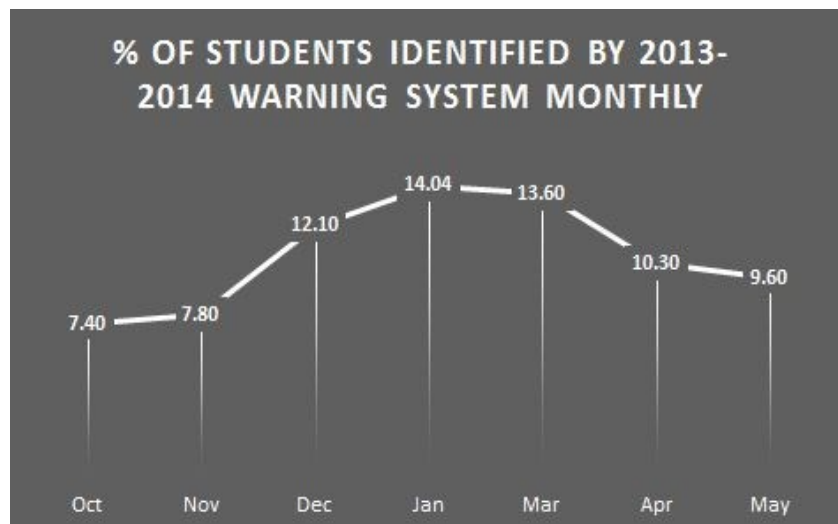
## Goal 2: High-risk youth receive effective services and supports.

### Early Warning System

**Decrease the percentage of students who are at risk of leaving school before graduation.**

*Why is this important?*

Montana's Office of Public Instruction has created a way to track a student's risk of dropping out of high school as early as sixth grade. With this information, educators are able to intervene much earlier than waiting to observe later warning signs, such as failing grades and behavior referrals. Dropping out is not an event, it is a process and it is a K-12 issue.

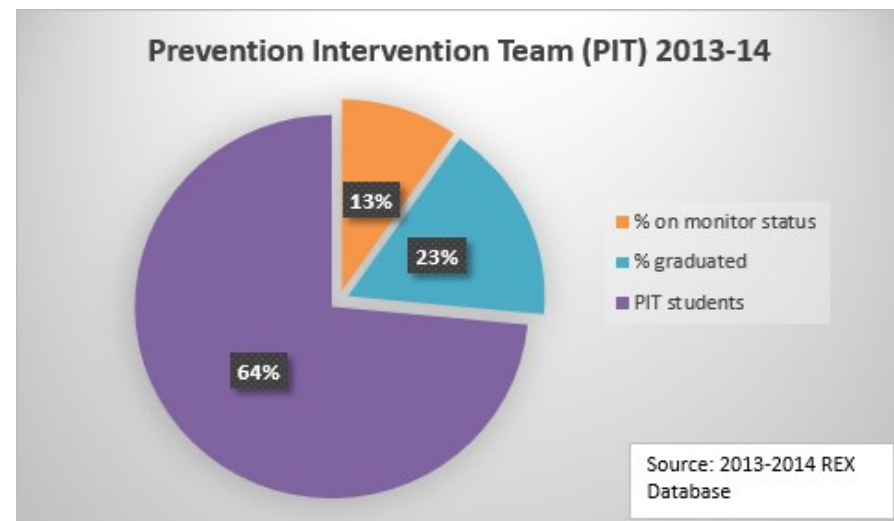


### Prevention Intervention Team

**Create meaningful connections between teachers and students.**

*Why is this important?*

The Prevention Intervention Team (PIT) creates an important network of connection for students, especially those who may not have supportive relationships in their family environment. This additional support allows students to focus on learning while at school. In the 2013-14 school year, PIT had a total of 61 students, 23% of whom successfully graduated, 13% who moved to monitor status, and 64% who remain engaged with PIT.



## Goal 2: High-risk youth receive effective services and supports.

### Student Support Team

**Provides support students who are struggling or need a more personalized approach to education.**

*Why is this important?*

The Student Support Team (SST) process ensures that students are receiving the necessary supports to achieve a high degree of academic, personal, and social success. SST is important because it is designed to personalize education and to better meet the individual needs of students.

Student Support Team (SST)				
Grade	%	% 1st SST Meeting	% 2nd SST Meeting	3rd % SST Meeting
6th	1.96	100.0		
8th	1.96	100.0		
9th	21.56	100.0	18.18	9.09
10th	19.61	100.0	50.0	10.0
11th	19.61	100.0	10.0	
12th	35.3	100.0	44.44	11.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>31.37</b>	<b>7.8</b>

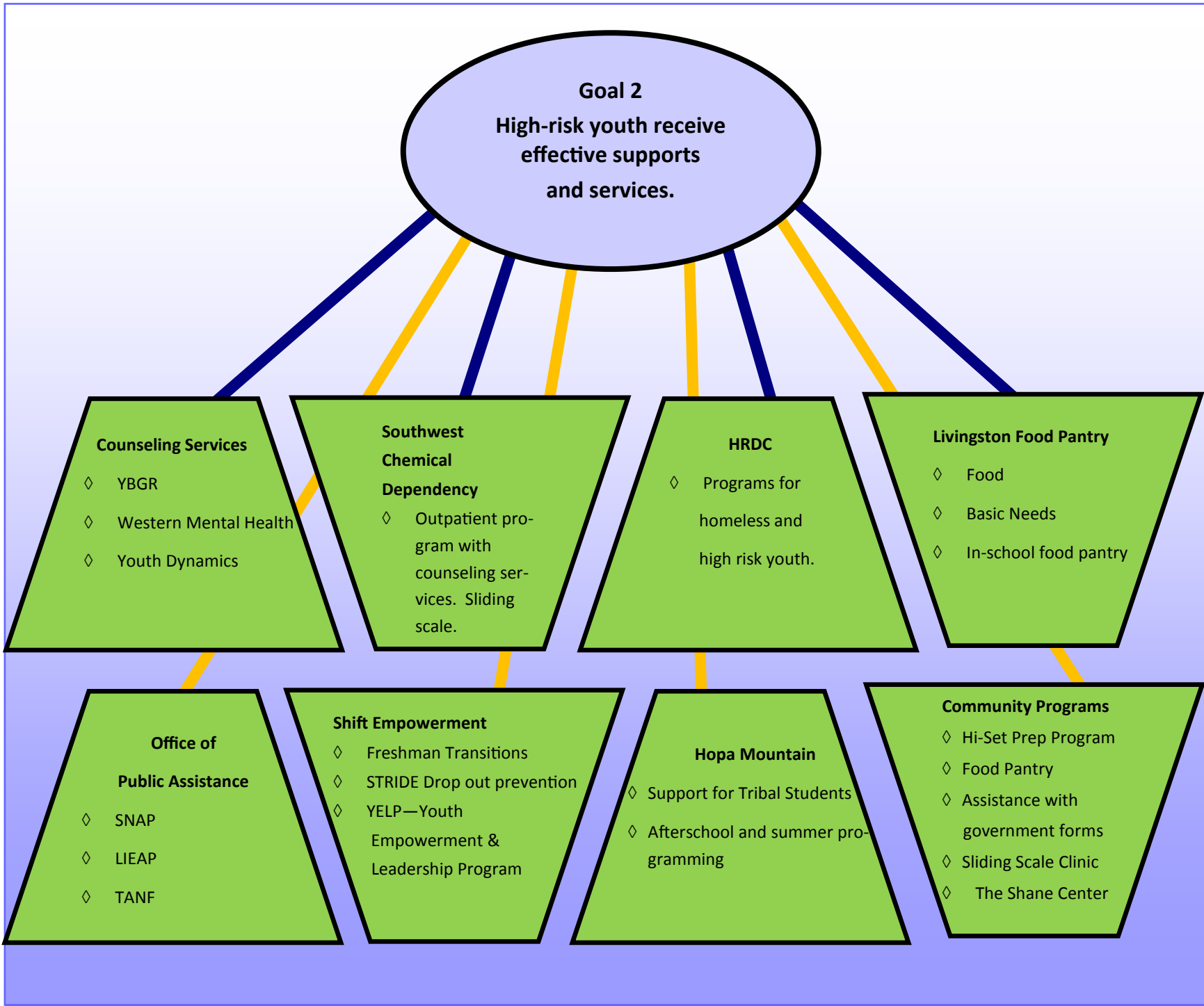
### Credit Deficiency in Grade 10

**Analyzing credit deficiency data early helps students stay on track to graduation.**

*Why is this important?*

Ninth grade is a pivotal time in a student's high school career, as the Consortium on Chicago School Research found that ninth graders who finished the year with enough credits to move onto the tenth grade were four times as likely to graduate from high school than those who did not (Roderick et al. 2014). Park High School's credit deficiency data is emerging. **At the end of Grade 10, 12.59% of the 2016 cohort was credit deficient.** Credit deficiency is defined as having less than or equal to ten credits.





## Goal 2: High-risk youth receive effective services and supports.

### ACTION INVENTORY

#### Increased Attendance

As a recipient of the Graduation Matters Challenge Fund, Livingston's elementary and middle schools have launched incentive programs to promote better school attendance. Most recently, Graduation Matters Livingston has partnered with Graduation Matters Greater Gallatin (Bozeman & Belgrade) and many other community agencies. This partnership has yielded a year-long initiative to address attendance: Attendance Matters. In September 2014, Park High School launched its first Attendance Matters social media campaign facilitated by student leaders. In 2013, Park High School reevaluated its attendance policy and procedures to address chronic absences. PHS defines 'chronic absence' as missing 10% of the school year which would translate to about 18 days per academic year. The policy states that a student is to lose credit on his or her tenth absence. Although a last resort, a contract to regain credit is a tool used to help a student remain on track with credit accrual. PHS has seen an approximate 71% success rate with these contracts and the students who did not regain credit either withdrew from Park High School or violated the terms of their contract with additional absences. Our average daily attendance rate is approximately 95%, however, this figure does not take the students who are chronically absent into account.



## Goal 2: High-risk youth receive effective services and supports.

### ACTION INVENTORY

**Creation of a multi-entry, multi-tiered intervention pathway system to establish effective supports and collaborations between community services and Park High School.**

#### **STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM**

In 2013, Park High School implemented the Student Support Team (SST) process to solve problems systematically and track the effectiveness of instructional and behavioral interventions. Eighty-eight percent of seniors who had a SST meeting graduated!

#### **SHIFT EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS**

Shift Empowerment Programs offers a year-long drop out prevention program called Stride. Modeled after the “Check and Connect” model, Stride begins in the summer with a five day camp and continues throughout the school year with weekly academic and emotional support. Oftentimes, the students who participate in Stride are at a higher risk for leaving school before graduation but students also participate to be a part of the community, build friendships and learn about themselves.



#### **RALLY TEAM**

In 2013, PHS piloted Rally Team which is a forum for confidential, collaborative problem solving. Rally Team brings community partners and school entities together to intervene when the needs of a student fall outside the purview of the school solely.

## Goal 2: High-risk youth receive effective services and supports.

### ACTION INVENTORY

#### HiSET OPTIONS PROGRAM

In 2013, PHS was one of five pilot schools for the HiSET Options program, formerly known as the General Equivalency Diploma (GED). HiSET Options program is for credit deficient seniors who would not be able to receive a Park High School diploma otherwise. Students maintain full-time status and prepare for the battery of tests with guidance from the HiSET coordinator and faculty facilitator. The HiSET Options program increased collaboration between the Livingston Job Service, Southwest Chemical Dependency, SHIFT Empowerment Programs and PHS.



#### Early Warning Systems throughout school district 6-12 grades.

Park High School was also a pilot school for the Office of Public Instruction's Early Warning System (EWS) in 2013. EWS begins to collect data on students as early as sixth grade. Using a variety of risk factors, a percentage is assigned to each student illustrating their risk of dropping out. This percentage is updated monthly by the Office of Public Instruction. This data informs daily best practices at Park High School and Sleeping Giant Middle School. Having access to these numbers increases communication between the middle school and high school and led to early planning for a successful transition to high school and appropriate academic support upon arrival to PHS. Park High School created a database with which to track Early Warning System data and other important information about high-risk students.

## Future Steps:

- **Continue establishing the Rally Team and cultivate the effective partnerships that were formed in the 2013-2014 academic year.**
- **Create opportunities to participate in Graduation Matters for the elementary and middle schools. This participation will help the Coalition grow and serve more students throughout the district.**
- **During the school year 2014-2015, Graduation Matters Livingston will be assisting Sleeping Giant Middle School in the use of their Early Warning System data and helping to create a “Rex”-like database specific to SGMS students.**
- **Implement Comprehensive School and Community Treatment (CSCT) services, in-school therapist and behavior specialist, during academic year 2014-2015.**
- **Establish a system through which to analyze and maintain the integrity of credit deficiency data.**





## Goal 3: Youth are prepared for higher education and employment.



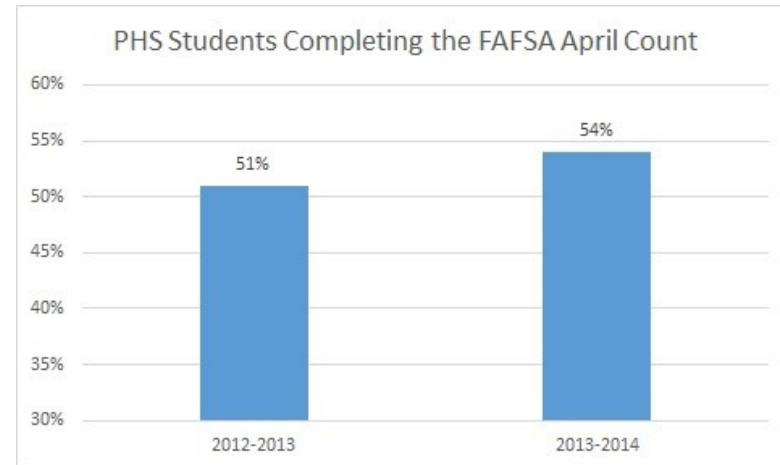
Student academic success is the one of the core objectives at Park High School. Education partners from early childhood through college are committed to establishing high standards for all students and providing a rigorous curriculum that challenges students and prepares them with the skills and knowledge to succeed. Completing high school is a key element of the transition to successful young adulthood. Young people who are high school graduates are more likely to be employed, have higher earnings and are less likely to engage in risk-taking activities. The consequences of the achievement gap threaten the country's economic and social future. The skills needed for work and those required for post secondary education are increasing and today's labor market provides fewer entry-level, career-oriented jobs for young workers. Employers often indicate a preference for hiring young people who have had hands-on training and developed skills for the workplace through high school or vocational training.

# Goal 3: Youth are prepared for higher education and employment.

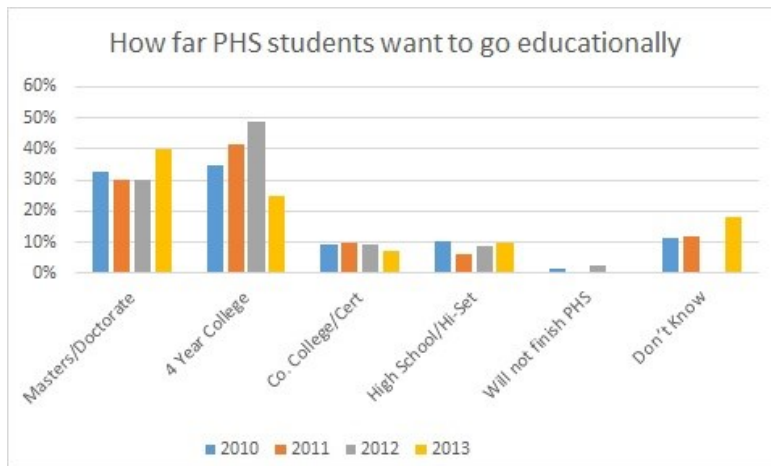
## Increase College Awareness: FAFSA Completion Rate

*Why is this important?*

The FAFSA is the key to receiving financial aid for college. Completing this is the single-most important action a student and their family can take to propel them toward a successful post-high school transition (US Dept. of Education 2014).



## Increase College Awareness: Student Education Aspirations



*Why is this important?*

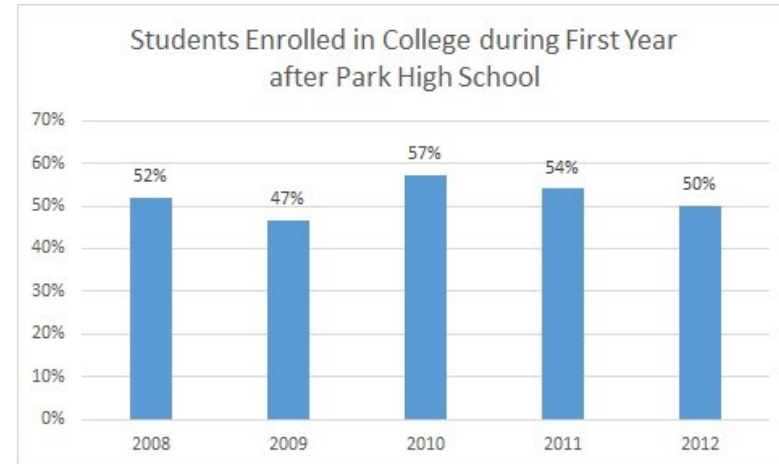
Creating the space for students to craft a vision for their future is the most effective way to instill risk avoidant behaviors and healthy decision making.

## Goal 3: Youth are prepared for higher education and employment.

### Increase College Awareness: Students Enrolled in College

#### *Why is this important?*

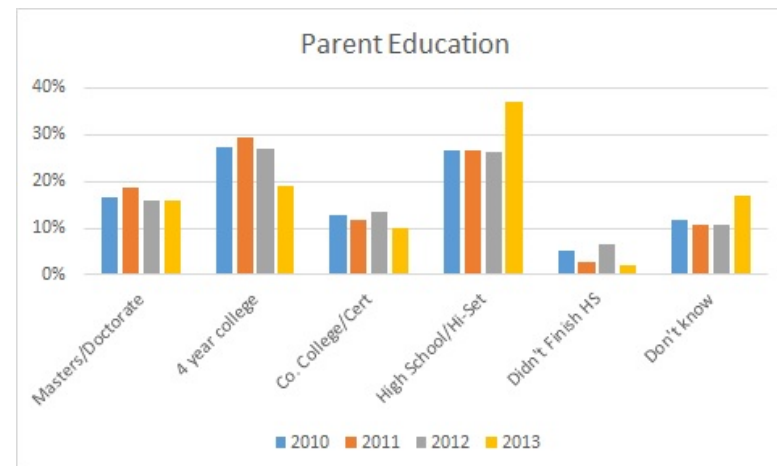
Immediate enrollment is strongly associated with subsequent successful completion of post-secondary education. Student who delay college enrollment are less likely to persist and graduate (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation 2013). As compared to the national average, Montana trails the country by 2% with a college going rate of 60.2%.

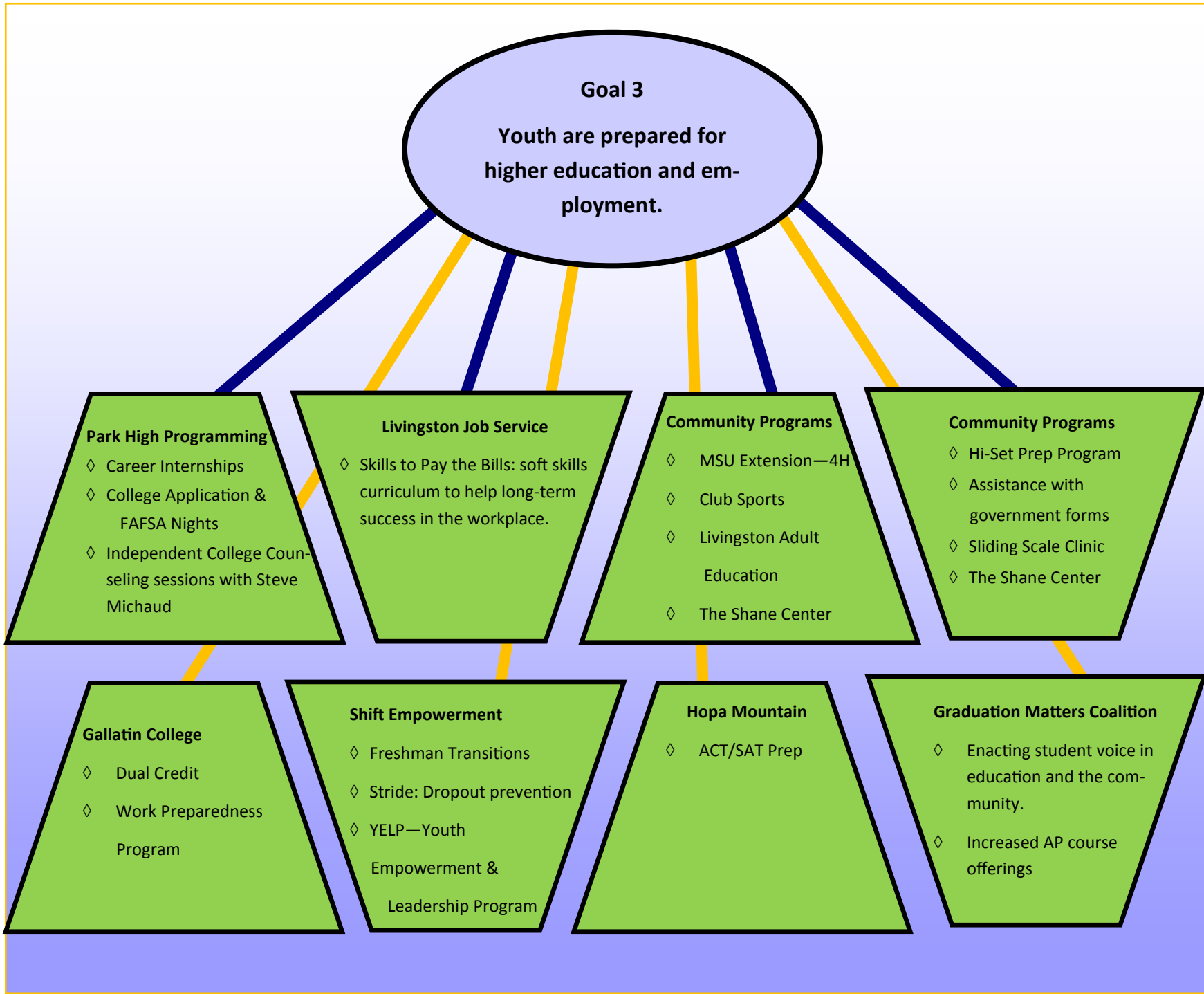


### Increase College Awareness: Students Enrolled in College

#### *Why is this important?*

Approximately 39% of students report that they are first-time, college-going students. It is important to support this group of students because it aids in closing the gap between socio-economic strata in our community.





# Goal 3: Youth are prepared for higher education and employment.

## ACTION INVENTORY

### **Youth have access to college preparedness information and support surrounding post-secondary life plans.**

- College Goal Montana efforts in Fall 2013 resulted in more seniors applying for college, community college, training and apprenticeship programs. Through participation in this week-long event, student had their application fees waived and Park High School saw a dramatic increase in the number of student who applied to college.
- Park High added several new course offerings including a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) course, Advanced Placement (AP) courses and Dual Credit CAD and Welding. Park High increased the number of students who are eligible to receive college credit before graduation through AP tests and dual credit enrollment with Gallatin College. Park High School entered a partnership with Printing For Less to support STEM course startup costs.
- Park High School partnered with a private foundation to provide independent college counseling services available to all interested students. The college counselor advised families and students in how to plan ahead, choose the right college and apply. In addition, Hopa Mountain has been a valued partner for the support they provide in preparation for the ACT/SAT tests. College tours began in middle school to increase college awareness throughout the district.
- PHS partnered with two private foundations to staff a PHS Learning Lab for credit recovery and original credit opportunities for high-risk and accelerated students.

# Goal 3: Youth are prepared for higher education and employment

## ACTION INVENTORY

### **Parents have access to support about college.**

- Student and parent focus groups were conducted to understand obstacles in accessing post-secondary education. The Student Assistance Foundation and the PHS Counseling Department offered many information sessions to parents about college financial aid.
- The Graduation Matters and the Student Assistance Foundation grant allowed more families to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in 2014.

### **Youth learned necessary skills to be productive employees.**

- Park High School partnered with the Livingston Job Service to implement “Skills to Pay the Bills” curriculum, job shadowing, and career exploration.
- Park High expanded career internship opportunities within the Livingston business community. Fifty students took advantage of a career internships during 2013-2014 academic year.
- Seventy-five percent of Park High Students self reported that they have held either a part time or summer job during their high school career.



## Future Steps:

- Continue to raise awareness about the process of going to college for both parents and students, including dispel myths about applying for and receiving financial aid.
- Increase the number of students accessing career internships.
- Continue to increase course offerings that reflect what is relevant to our students and the plans they have for their futures.
- Strengthen the relationship Park High School has to career readiness and first-time, college-going student data; while looking at how to close the gap between our “All Students” and “Economically Disadvantaged” populations.
- Increase the number of students who see post-secondary education as an option and have a clear plan that fits for them.
- Increase the number of students who apply to college.

