



Great Falls Public Schools

Good Apple Award Recipients

Steve Yates, Associate Principal, East Middle School, was recommended for Good Apple Award by, Trisha Hasselstrom, Library Media Assistant, East Middle School, because of the following: We have had a very rough month at East and Steve calmly led us through it. He kept us informed of situations as needed, checked on us to be sure we were doing okay, and gave words of encouragement and praise. It meant a lot to me that he took the extra time to come ask me if I was doing okay or if there was anything I needed. Thanks for being strong for all of us Steve, you are greatly appreciated.

Steve Yates, Associate Principal, East Middle School, was recommended for a Good Apple Award by Brenda Dockter, Attendance Secretary, East Middle School, because of the following: Steve became our ROCK at East during some extremely emotional and trying times. He remains strong for all of us as we navigate through what seems like a “storm” or a “bad dream”. Not only does he make sure each one of us is doing okay, he communicates with us and is always sure to keep us informed as needed. Steve clearly sees that our staff is a RAM family and reminds us to lean on each other, comfort each other and with that we will overcome. His words of encouragement strengthen us and his leadership is a blessing. We are beyond grateful to work with him at East Middle School.

Joe Vance, Data Center Computer Analyst, Debbie Davila, Data Center Students Systems Analyst, Katie Allen, Business Office Lead Payroll Technician and Susan Woyth, Human Resources Administrative Assistant, were recommended for Good Apple Awards by Lance Boyd, Director of Student Services, and Assistant Superintendents Ruth Uecker and Heather Hoyer, because of the following: Every fall, the District embarks on a data collection and verification process called the TEAMS report. This report, which is turned into OPI, verifies everything from student enrollment in CTE courses by gender, to the appropriate licensure of all teachers and counselors, to the qualification of teacher aides, to the aggregate hours we teach and train teachers, and much more. Accreditation hinges on this accurate data that shows we are at or above compliance with State of Montana standards. Joe Vance, Debbie Davila, Katie Allen, and Susan Woyth work tirelessly with District Leadership and OPI to code, pull and input data, and adjust upload errors to be sure that Great Falls Public Schools is accurately reflected to the State of Montana. One single mistyped number or letter can bring an effective halt to the process, impacting all the schools. Every year, these dedicated professionals spend days to be sure we are perfect in reporting. We couldn't do this hard work without their talents and dedication.

Bill Clark, Science Teacher, North Middle School, was recommended for a Good Apple by Kasi Thompson, English Teacher, Terri Halverson, Social Studies Teacher, April Wavra, Academic Intervention Teacher and Kurt Shepherd, Math Teacher, all North Middle School, because of the following: Bill Clark has been and continues to be the main reason that communication between parents and teachers on the TAG Team is so efficient. Bill sends our daily homework email and reminds parents of upcoming events.

He goes out of his way to make sure parents not only receive the communications from the team but he also will relay replies to his emails to the rest of the team so that parent questions can be addressed in a timely manner. Remote learning didn't keep Bill from fulfilling this duty. Bill made sure that parents received communication on what was happening and what changes we were making. One of his biggest contributions was coming up with the idea of how we would communicate with parents last spring on if their students had passed classes or if more work was needed. Bill realized that each teacher would be making over 100 phone calls and parents would be receiving at least seven phone calls. To streamline this communication Bill had the idea to pool our information and have each teacher fill out a shared spreadsheet of which students had passed their class. Then each teacher would call their Connections class and let parents know what classes the students needed to work on in order to pass. This saved teachers a large amount of time and prevented parents from being overwhelmed by phone calls. Bill does a ton of work welcoming students to our team. He took on the responsibility of helping students with how to log into the computers at the start of the year. He taught them how to find each class's Google Classroom, how to find their school email, and how to check their grades on PowerSchool. This was made even more difficult when our network was shut down due to a ransomware attack. Despite these obstacles, Bill managed to get our students signed up and ready to go. With that accomplished our two-week stint of remote learning was much easier. Bill is also our go-to person for introducing new students to our team. He welcomes them and gives them all the information they need to get started with how our team works. His outstanding organizational skills combined with how he naturally communicates with kids makes him perfect for this role. In addition to all of these extra roles Bill fills, he is an amazing science teacher and an even better colleague. Bill knows his subject matter and finds a way to make the kids enjoy coming to his class. He quickly builds relationships with his students and maintains those relationships to help mentor these students in academic and non-academic areas. He is always willing to talk to a student and find a way to make them feel valued, even when he is correcting their behavior. He can say in two sentences what takes the rest of us two paragraphs to say in a parent conference. He not only makes school fun for his students but he makes it fun for his colleagues too. He's always ready with a quick joke or comment that breaks the tension and makes us smile and laugh. While this is vital in a normal year, it is even more important this year with the added stresses that we are dealing with. We would be lost without his help and friendship.

