

Thompson Falls Public Schools
Report Card for 2008-09 (done in 2009-10)
(High School and Elementary Districts)
(High School, Junior High, and K-6 Schools)
Integrated Effectiveness Report

*Thompson Falls
Community*

*District
Mission Statement*



Students Engaged and Learning

Introduction and Goals

On May 1, 2003, the Thompson Falls School District approved its Five Year Comprehensive Educational Plan (5YCEP). This plan was required under Montana School Accreditation Standards and Procedures 10.55.601. The purpose of the 5YCEP was to assist schools in achieving the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act.

The initial plan was developed with input from parents, staff, community members, and with final approval by the Board of Trustees. The district also provided release time during the school year for staff to work on meeting the goals of the 5YCEP plus paid it staff during the summer to utilize a consultant for further work on looking at data to help make the needed changes to the plan.

District Goals as Approved by Board of Trustees for 2009-10:

1. Students and staff will be prepared to meet the state standards at a quality level while using research based instructional strategies.
2. The district will:
 1. utilize the community, staff, and consultants in helping to show gains in reading and math for grades K-8 in 2009-10 compared to 2008-09 for both those students who receive free and reduced hot lunch and those who do not.
 2. score on or above the state averages on the reading and Math CRTs for both the demographic groups listed above.
 3. will continue to teach math and reading based upon effective learning strategies using the Learning/Engagement Cube as described by John Antonetti while integrating the concepts of the Professional Learning Communities (PLC).
3. The district will remember and support the fine arts and other vocational courses in its quest for learning. District graduates need to receive a balanced and quality education.

OPI academic goals for reading and math at the local elementary, junior high, and high schools are to have students obtain proficiency each year at a level determined by their office. The **expected proficiency scores at Thompson Falls Public Schools** in math and reading for **2009-10** though, will be as listed in District Goals #1 and #2 above. Goal setting experts state that goals should have high expectations but should be obtainable if they are to be achieved by those who strive for them. The NCLBA and Montana's AYP process is not realistic or obtainable so the district has established reachable goals that don't meet the proficiency levels of the state and national requirements.

Staff development goals will be structured to provide staff with the skills needed to teach research based instructional strategies that will enhance student learning. The nine teaching strategies, as outlined in the book by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, "Classroom Instruction that Works", will be used as the teaching model. The principles of "Love and Logic" as developed by Jim Fay Inc. will integrated the relationship skills needed to effectively instruct the nine teaching strategies of Robert Marzano. The Learning/Engagement Cube as described by John Antonetti will be the model used to better understand and implement the ideals of Marzano and Fay. The district will continue to provide staff support with its mentoring program and staff development that addresses the effective use of instruction to include technology.

2008-09 AYP and Other Data

Thompson Falls Public Schools DID NOT achieve AYP for the Thompson Falls Elementary School District to include both the elementary and junior high schools for 2008-09.

(68% of the students must be proficient in Math and 83% proficient in Reading in order to make AYP according to Montana standards. OPI used an AYP Confidence Interval Conversion Formula to convert the grade level proficiency scores listed below, to another value, in determining a final proficiency score for AYP.)

- Academic: CRT Grade 3 (All) - 72% were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 67% ; 84% were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 85%
- Academic: CRT Grade 3 (Economic) – 70% of the district students are on Free/Red hot lunch compared to 41% for Montana; 76% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 55% ; 81% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 75%
- Academic: CRT Grade 3 (Sex) – 69% of the males were proficient in Math compared to 68% for Montana; 75% of the females were proficient in Math compared to 66% for Montana; 82% of the males were proficient in Reading compared to 82% for Montana; 88% of the females were proficient in Reading compared to 87% for Montana.

- Academic: CRT Grade 4 (All) - 63% were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 67% ; 87% were proficient in Reading compared to state average of 81%.
- Academic: CRT Grade 4 (Economic) – 58% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 54% ; 90% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 70%.
- Academic: CRT Grade 4 (Sex) – 69% of the males were proficient in Math compared to 67% for Montana; 57% of the females were proficient in Math compared to 66% for Montana; 88% of the males were proficient in Reading compared to 78% for Montana; 86% of the females were proficient in Reading compared to 84% for Montana.

- Academic: CRT Grade 5 (All) 63% were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 67% ; 84% were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 84%.
- Academic: CRT Grade 5 (Economic) – 59% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 55% ; 75% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 74%.
- Academic: CRT Grade 5 (Sex) – 58% of the males were proficient in Math compared to 68% for Montana; 83% of the females were proficient in Math compared to 66% for Montana; 79% of the males were proficient in Reading compared to 82% for Montana; 100% of the females were proficient in Reading compared to 86% for Montana.

- Academic: **CRT Grade 6 (All)** - 47% were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 65% ; 89% were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 84%.
 - Academic: **CRT Grade 6 (Economic)** – 32% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 49% ; 86% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 74%.
 - Academic: **CRT Grade 6 (Sex)** – 50% of the males were proficient in Math compared to 65% for Montana; 39% of the females were proficient in Math compared to 65% for Montana; 80% of the males were proficient in Reading compared to 81% for Montana; 100% of the females were proficient in Reading compared to 88% for Montana.
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- Academic: **CRT Grade 7 (All)** - 59% were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 66% ; 69% were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 82%.
 - Academic: **CRT Grade 7 (Economic)** – 45% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 50% ; 55% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 72%.
 - Academic: **CRT Grade 7 (Sex)** – 50% of the males were proficient in Math compared to 67% for Montana; 69% of the females were proficient in Math compared to 65% for Montana; 63% of the males were proficient in Reading compared to 79% for Montana; 75% of the females were proficient in Reading compared to 86% for Montana.
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- Academic: **CRT Grade 8 (All)** - 63% were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 60%; 67% were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 81%.
 - Academic: **CRT Grade 8 (Economic)** – 57% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 44% ; 58% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 69%.
 - Academic: **CRT Grade 8 (Sex)** – 58% of the males were proficient in Math compared to 60% for Montana; 73% of the females were proficient in Math compared to 60% for Montana; 65% of the males were proficient in Reading compared to 77% for Montana; 63% of the females were proficient in Reading compared to 85% for Montana.
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- Academic: **CRT Grade 10 (All)** - 49% were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 54%; 75% were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 77%.
 - Academic: **CRT Grade 10 (Economic)** – 58% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Math compared to a state average of 37% ; 74% who were on Free/Red hot lunch were proficient in Reading compared to a state average of 63%.
 - Academic: **CRT Grade 10 (Sex)** – 50% of the males were proficient in Math compared to 54% for Montana; 48% of the females were proficient in Math compared to 54% for Montana; 82% of the males were proficient in Reading compared to 72% for Montana; 70% of the females were proficient in Reading compared to 82% for Montana.

- **Graduation Rate:** The district graduation rate was **88% for 2007-08** which is used to determine the 2008-09 AYP. The rates were 81.2% for 2000-01, 74.2% for 2001-02, 87.3% for 2002-03, 84% for 2003-04, 89% for 2004-05, 83% for 2005-06, and 76% for 2006-07. **(80% Graduation Rate for HS is needed to make AYP according to Montana standards.)**
- **Attendance Rate:** Student attendance was 93% for the high school, 94% for the junior high, and 92% for grades K-6. **(80% student attendance is needed to make AYP, according to Montana standards, for grades K-8)**

1. **AYP for CRTs (All Students):** Thompson Falls High School did meet the benchmarks for AYP under the Small School Accountability Process (SSAP). The Junior High School did meet the benchmarks for Math (71%; needed 68%) but did not for Reading (75%; needed 83%). The Elementary School did meet the benchmarks in Reading (90%) but did not in Math (67%).
2. **AYP for CRTs (Economic Factors):** Grades K-8 had about seventy percent of its students on free and reduced hot lunch for the 2008-09 school year. The results on the CRTs for 2008-09 for those students who are on free and reduced hot lunch are as follows and the % in () indicates how the score compares to the Montana benchmarks: Elementary - Reading 90%(+7%); Math 64%(-4%); JH - Reading 68%(-15%); Math 66%(-2%); HS - Reading 74%(-9%); Math 58% (-10%).
3. **AYP for CRTs (Based upon Sex):** For 2008-09, 42% of K-8 student and 41% of high school students were females. Females scored higher in four out of seven grades in both reading and math. Only 39% and 48% of the females were proficient in math at grades six and ten. The females had 100 proficient in reading at grades five and six.
4. **ITBS Results:** The district elected not to administer a comprehensive norm referenced achievement tests in grades two through eleven that had been done in past years. The amount of time given to the state CRTs and the cost of administering these tests helped to make this decision. Instead, only those subtests that would generate a Core Total were given at grades two through eight and grade nine. The results indicate very little differences between the tested areas, both within each grade level or between the different grade levels.

Grade	Reading	Language	Math	Core Total
2	76	65	65	69
3	60	53	65	59
4	59	49	51	53
5	52	51	54	52
6	58	50	51	52
7	58	55	58	56
8	53	50	59	53
9	59	57	66	65

5. **High School General Math/Pre-Algebra Non-Proficient Students: 1.)** The district in working with a consultant in June, 2005, discovered that every tenth grade student that did not make proficiency in math on the 2004-05 CRT assessment had taken General Math instead of Algebra during the first year of high school. Out of those tenth grade students that did not make proficiency in reading only two of them did not also come through the General Math curriculum. Also, every incoming freshman student who entered the Thompson Falls High School from a rural feeder school was placed in General Math for the 2005-06 school year. **2.)** For the 2005-06 CRT assessments, 73% of those tenth graders who did not score proficient in math came through General Math and 67% of those tenth graders who did not score proficient in reading came through General Math. **3.)** For the 2006-07 CRT assessments, only one General Math student scored at the proficient level on the math CRT. Forty-four percent of tenth graders did not score at the proficient level in math and 12% of tenth graders did not score at the proficient level in reading on the 2006-07 CRTs. This meant that about one half the students not scoring at the proficient level in math did not take General Math but came out of Algebra classes. **4.)** For the 2007-08 CRT assessments, four (4 out of 14) General Math students scored at the proficient level in math, twenty-eight (28 out of 36) Algebra students scored at the proficient level in math, and no (0 out of 4) special education and no (0 out of 5) non-resident students scored at the proficient level in math.

It appears that only fifty-four (32 out of 59) percent of tenth graders scored at the proficient level in math on the 2007-08 CRT. On the reading CRT for 2007-08, 9 out of the 13 General Math students scored at least proficient on the test and overall, eighty-four (40 out of 58) percent of tenth graders scored at least proficient on the test.

5.) **For the 2008-09 CRT assessments**, zero (0 out of 11) General Math/Pre-Algebra students scored at the proficient level in math, twenty-four (24 out of 38) or 63% of the Algebra students scored at the proficient level in math. Neither group as a whole was proficient in math on the Montana CRT assessment.

It appears that only (24 out of 49) or 49% of tenth graders scored at the proficient level in math on the 2008-09 CRT. On the reading CRT for 2008-09, seven out of the eleven General Math/Pre-Algebra students scored at least proficient on the reading test and overall, seventy-five (37 out of 49) percent of tenth graders scored at least proficient on the reading CRT.

6. **High School ACT Scores:** Fifty-nine percent of Montana graduates take the ACT compared to thirty-one percent taking the SAT. Therefore, the **composite scores** for Thompson Falls High School on the ACT will be used in this report. ACT scores for the past nine years are as follows:
 National/Montana/Thompson Falls **(2009) – 21.1/22.0/20.9;** (2008) - 21.1/22.0/**22.7;**
 (2007) - 21.2/21.9/**22.8;** (2006) – 21.1/21.9/**23.7;** (2005) – 20.9/21.8/**20.6;**
 (2004) – 20.9/21.7/**23.5;** (2003) – 20.8/21.7/**20.6;** (2002) – 21.0/21.7/**25.4;**
 (2001) – 21.0/21.7/**22.8.**

Analysis of Data

- a) The Thompson Falls Public Schools did not made AYP at the Thompson Falls Elementary School District, K-8, and at both the elementary and junior high schools. This was the second year in a row that the elementary district did not make AYP. This required the district to adhere to specific procedures from the Montana Office of Public Instruction to include letters sent home to all K-8 parents, offering tutoring to all students who receive free and reduced hot lunch, increased staff development, and a plan on how to meet AYP in the future. Our students in grades 3-6 have not met the state goals in math each of the last two years and the junior high students did not meet the requirements in reading in 2007-08 and 2008-09 plus in math in 2007-08.
- b) The Thompson Falls High School did make AYP in 2008-09 using the SSAP. The SSAP looks at more than just test scores and is dependent upon CRT scores meeting the required benchmarks after using a 99% confidence adjusted conversion score.
- c) **Montana** did not meet the required benchmarks in math at all grade levels and in reading four out of the seven tested grade levels. Montana students who receive free and reduced hot lunches did not meet the benchmarks at any grade level tested in both reading and math.
- d) The district was not proficient at any grade level in math and was proficient in reading at grades 3,4,5,6 and not proficient in reading at grades 7,8, and 10. This appears to be consistent with the scores received by Montana students.
- e) It appears that those students in Thompson Falls who receive free and reduced hot lunches scored better than the Montana comparable groups in 5 out of 7 tested grade levels in both reading and math for a cumulative of 10 out of 14. On the other hand, those students in Thompson Falls who pay for their lunches scored higher than the Montana comparable groups in 2 out of 7 tested grade levels in both reading and math for a cumulative of 4 out of 14. In looking at this data more closely, it appears that in grades 3-6, the district is having its students who take free and reduced hot lunches score above their statewide comparison group on the CRTs in all but just the 6th grade math, whereas those students at Thompson Falls in grades 3-6 who pay for their lunches did not score above their statewide comparison group at any grade level in either reading or math. The junior high appears to be doing a better job in reaching those student who pay for their lunches (3 out of 4) in relationship to statewide averages compared to those students who receive free and reduced hot lunches (1 out of 4). The high school appears to be reaching both groups as they score above state groups 3 out of 4 possibilities.
- f) Thompson Falls High School, on the average, scores higher than the state average on the ACT composite score and Montana always scores higher than the national averages. Thompson Falls typically scores higher than the national averages. Thompson Falls usually tests about 10 graduates on the ACT but this past year the high school tested 32. Did this significant increase in tested students cause the low score of a 20.9 on the Composite? More information needs to be obtained prior to making a decision as to the relationship of the increased number tested and the lower score.
- g) It appears that the high school has not been successful in addressing the math skills of those students who take General Math/Pre-Algebra. Not one student who took either General Math or Pre-Algebra scored proficient on the math CRT in 2009. At the same time, 7 out of 11 of this same group scored proficient on the reading CRT. More research needs to be done on how best to teach our General Math or Pre-Algebra students in relationship to the statewide math CRT.

General Math was replaced with Pre-Algebra in 2008-09. The decision to make this change was in an effort to better prepare our students for the statewide math CRT. In 2010, these students will be the first group to take the math CRT who had taken Pre-Algebra. This will help the district decide if this is a better option than having them take General Math.

Action Plans

The district is not sure that focusing on the No Child Left Behind Act to include the statewide Adequate Yearly Progress report is in the best interests of its students. This year, the Board adopted its yearly goals based upon what they felt was better to enhance the learning process for its students instead of primarily focusing on AYP. The three District Goals were listed under the Introduction. The Board believes that these goals are realistic for its staff and students. The Board does not believe that unrealistic goals aimed at the benchmarks established under the NCLBA and statewide AYP is what is best for its students and staff.

The Thompson Falls District Leadership Team strongly supported the Districts Goals and defined them in more detail below as to how they would be accomplished at its October 20th, 2009, all day meeting. The leadership team combined goals one and two and then included one goal on technology in relationship to preparing for the new Five Year Comprehensive Plan. Information from parents will be obtained with a parent survey during the November, 2009, parent-teacher conferences to help develop the Five Year Comprehensive Plan.

District Leadership Team's Draft Goals for 5 Year Comprehensive Plan:

1. Thompson Falls students will score above the state averages in 2010, and each successive year, on the Montana Reading and Math CRTs in grades 3-8, and 10 for both demographic groups of students who pay or receive free and reduced hot lunches. To help obtain this goal the district will provide...
 - a) a mentorship program for non-tenured and tenured staff as outlined within the district mentorship handbook. The mentorship coordinators with the approval of the District Leadership Team will organize and implement this program.
 - b) staff development as adopted by the District Leadership Team. Staff development will utilize the Teacher Development Days (6 a year), appropriate PIR days, and other times during the school year and summer vacation to implement quality staff development. The District Leadership Team and Board of Trustees have supported the Learning/Engagement Cube of John Antonetti which is based upon the effective instructional teaching strategies of Robert Marzano and the higher level thinking skills of Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy as the model for staff development. The principles of the Professional Learning Community (PLC) as outlined by John Antonetti and Jim Garver (will be here on March 1 and April 1, 2010, and several times in 2010-11) will help guide the staff on how best to use the classroom walks to set goals and improve instruction based upon peer input.
 - c) support for students in need through its Title 1 and Special Education programs, Alternative Learning Center at the high school, after school tutoring and class offering for students, summer school as funded under its Re-allocated Title 1, and by following its district's discipline plan that adheres to Love and Logic by Jim Fay.

2. Thompson Falls staff will implement the Montana Content Standards Integration Chart for Technology. In order to accomplish this goal, staff will be provided the needed training by either bringing consultants to the district, sending staff to training in technology, and/or using district technology coordinators or staff to train its teachers about technology. During the 2009-10 school year any teacher who wants an Interwrite and/or Mobi Board will be given one for the classroom. All K-8 classrooms will be provided a permanent speaker and sound system to improve the chances that students hear what is being said by the teacher. Training on how to utilize the technological aspects of the new math program and Success Maker will be provided to teachers. Flip cameras will be given to all District Leadership Team members and other teachers as the need arises for them to use appropriately.

The technology plan needs to be looked at again to make sure that it meets the current needs of the district. Balance is a key word with using technology in the district. Staff must be supported on how to use current technology. Technology content should relate to real world connections. The district should decide which programs are effective. Technology should not be taught at the expense of interpersonal communication skills. The district's technology coordinators should not be forgotten when it comes to staff development. An assessment of the type of technology that is used in the homes should be performed ASAP (emails, cell phones, texting, etc.).

3. The district will remember and support the fine arts and other vocational courses in its quest for learning. District graduates need to receive a balanced and quality education. Time will be provided for the fine arts and vocational teachers to reassess their curriculums in relationship to Montana Content Standards during the school year or with paid time during the summer.

Data based upon research gathered by the PLCs and at the district level will be used to help structure the plans listed above in more detail and with the development of the new Five Year Comprehensive Plan that is due by the end of December, 2009.

Professional Development

Professional development was scheduled using input from the District Leadership Team based upon information obtained from the state assessments, norm referenced tests, local discipline records, teacher/student/parent feedback, attendance at a national conference over the summer of 2009, and taking into consideration available funding. The District Leadership Team determined that staff development could best be met by supporting a very active and researched based approach focused on the Learning/Engagement Cube and the use of the Professional Learning Community.

With 69 percent of K-8 students on free and reduced hot lunch, with the needs required from state placed students in local residential homes, and with the high number of therapeutic students at the high school (8 program homes and 15% of the student body), coupled with the stress put upon the staff of the No Child Left Behind Act, the District Leadership Team decided that staff development was needed so that staff would know how to work with children, other staff, and parents. It was especially becoming important with the retirements of tenured and experienced teachers, that new teachers hired in the district be provided a trained mentor and given appropriate staff development. The district currently has 12 out of 45 teachers who do not have tenure. Eight new teachers were hired for the 2008-09 school year and three more new teachers for the 2009-10 school year. This means that staff development and a strong mentorship program are imperative if the district expects that students are provided research based instructional strategies.

The District Leadership Team recommended that we continue using the current school calendar. This calendar has 174 student days and 6 teacher development days instead of the traditional 180 student days. Both the classified and certified staffs supported this new calendar as approved by the Board of Trustees. This calendar was initiated with the 2005-06 school year and had been used through the 2009-10 school year. This approach to the school calendar makes it possible to provide more staff development for both classified and certified staffs. It is expected to continue with this calendar in the future although the district is looking at the four day week possibly as early as the 2010-11 school year.

Over the summer of 2009, most of the District Leadership Team attended one week training in Park City, Utah, on Effective Teaching Strategies, lead by John Antonetti. The leadership team is recommending that we send 10 more staff to this workshop each of the next two summers. The district also sent 12 staff to Colorado over the summer of 2009, to attend a week long conference on Love and Logic. The district will continue to make this trip available to staff who have a need for further training. The district has already trained two staff to work with parents about Love and Logic and is sending its high school counselor to Colorado, in November, 2009, to learn how to train staff about Love and Logic.

Curriculum Development

In its desire to comply with the NCLBA and make AYP, the district has focused almost entirely on two subjects over the past few years, Math and Communication Arts. Social studies has had the luxury of doing the best curriculum work since there is no state CRT and they have been able to utilize Indian Education for All funds with their curriculum alignment process. The district now has an excellent K-12 social studies curriculum meeting state standards to include the integration of the Essential Skills of Indian Education. Unfortunately, other subjects than Math, Communication Arts, and Social Studies have been **inadvertently ignored**. This has resulted in District Goal 3 by the Board: “The district will remember and support the fine arts and other vocational courses in its quest for learning. District graduates need to receive a balanced and quality education.” Time will be provided for all teachers to work on their subject areas in relationship to state content standards during the 2009-10 school year or over the summer.

Challenges for the Future

Important challenges facing the school district are: 1.) how to monitor the number of non-resident students at the high school; 2.) how to best use the alternative learning center at the high school; 3.) how to meet the **needs of poverty**, at-risk, and IDEA students; 4.) how to better understand the learning differences between males and females, 5.) how district students will meet the standards in math and reading on the state assessments, 6.) how to maintain academic gains in the middle grades, 7.) how to provide mentorship for new teachers in the district, 8.) how to obtain the necessary funding for a quality education when the district is decreasing in student enrollment which is the primary funding source for Montana schools, 9.) how to integrate technology within the subject areas based upon research of student learning, and 10) how to implement the PLCs based upon the Learning/Engagement Cube.

The high school currently has eight therapeutic homes within the district that send 57 students to the high school. These students along with other non-resident students account for 28 percent of the high school student body (2009-10). This diversity creates many unique needs in establishing a cohesive and consistent high school student body culture.

The high school alternative learning center, A.L.C., has become a very important part of the high school. The high school is mainly able to meet the state's graduation rate because of the A.L.C. and is able to support those students who have a difficult time meeting the state standards in math and reading. The number of staff that can work within the A.L.C. plus the logistic size of the classroom, along with the limited Title 1 dollars for the A.L.C. makes it very important that the purpose of the A.L.C. be more clearly defined in the future. With the availability of the Montana Virtual Academy for 2010-11, the district will have to see if changes will be made to the current format of the A.L.C.

Grades K-8 currently have a poverty level of 69% compared to 35% in 1994, and with the changing population base in Western Montana due to retirees moving into the region, it makes it even more difficult for those students who receive free and reduced hot lunch to maintain a positive self concept. Montana's recent decision to fund Title 1 based upon free and reduced hot lunch participation should allow the district to do a better job in providing services to these students. This degree of poverty on the K-8 campus, mixed with single parent families, make it a challenge to provide the best education for Thompson Falls students. At the current time, Sanders County has the highest unemployment rate in Montana.

Also, the percentage of students in 1989 in special education was 4.9%, in 1997 was 6%, in 2006 was 10.5%, in 2008 was 10.8%, and over 11% in 2009. With a student population in 1997 of 690 students there were 42 students in special education with no support from any district para-professionals. In December, of 2008, the student population was 508, and is currently 482 with 55 students in special education served by seven district employed para-professionals plus two COOP para-professionals. This decrease in student population means over one million dollars less in state and district funding even though the district has had to hire seven para-professionals to service the needs of 13 additional special education students. Fortunately, an experienced school board who supports excellent administrators and having quality teachers makes it possible for the district to maintain an excellent school district where in the past, 45% of its graduates receive a post secondary certificate. New data needs to be collected to determine the accuracy of past research about its graduates.

The school district has done quite well in meeting the initial requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act and the Montana requirements from the Board of Public Education for AYP. It appears though, that more educators across the state are questioning the validity of the state's CRTs. With Montana students scoring quite high compared to other states across the country on ACTs, SATs, and the NAEP, one questions how the same students have now failed the Montana CRTs. It does not make sense that students from failing states based upon the same national comparisons are performing quite well on their state tests. Montana leadership has no one to blame but itself for its poor showing on its state assessments. Therefore, in the future, Thompson Falls Public Schools will focus more on achieving quality student learning based upon research based instructional strategies, using Montana certified staff, instead of just trying to meet the Montana AYP report whose validity is questioned by the Thompson Falls Board of Trustees and staff.