The Role and Responsibilities of County Superintendent of Schools

The office of the County Superintendent of Schools is a four-year elected position. The last election was held on November 5, 2002. On that date, Mary Ellen Fitzgerald, was elected to a four-year term.

In brief, this position serves as administrative support, information and organization for the schools and communities of Gallatin County. Projects, programs, and services are provided to promote learning that will continue throughout a lifetime.

The position of County Superintendent has changed since Stephan Allen was elected in 1867. Originally the superintendent visited all 77 school districts and personally gave every 8th grader a written examination. If a student passed this exam, which for the 1800's was quite comprehensive, a diploma was granted. Until 1975, the county superintendent was in charge of collecting the school census.

In 2002, the responsibilities of this office are as diverse as the schools and communities served. This ever-expanding position is outlined below:

Administrative

- Carry out duties prescribed by the legislature, Board of Public Education and State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- As a county school officer, provide general supervision of public schools in the county
- In the five small schools, assist trustees with school supervision
- In the five small schools, advise and help teachers with instruction, pupil discipline and other duties
- Visit schools at the request of the trustees
- Consult with the trustees
- Administer oaths of office to trustees
- Provide other services to districts that fall within the scope of state statutes
- Promote educational growth and improvement

Legal

- Hear and decide all matters of controversy arising as a result of decisions of the trustees of a district in the county
- Conduct hearings concerning requests for land transfers between school districts

Finance

- As Chief County School Financial Officer, calculate budgets and levies for the following:

  General Fund, Transportation Fund, Retirement Fund, Tuition Fund, Bus Depreciation, Adult Education, Building Reserve
- Certify district ANB
- Compile annual financial report
- Distribute County Equalization revenues

Recordkeeping

- Record all official acts:
  - School district organization
  - School district alteration
  - School district abandonment
  - Establishment of nominating districts
  - Distribution of federal and state revenue
  - Distribution of private revenue
  - Teacher supervision and evaluation
  - School controversies/hearings
  - County Transportation Committee acts
- Record and preserve records:
  - Attendance agreements
  - Transportation contracts
  - Student enrollment/attendance records
  - Fall and spring reports
  - Election data
  - Student records (Home Educators - voluntary)
  - Preliminary/final budgets
  - Trustee annual reports
  - School district audits
  - Personnel records for the five small schools
  - Home school notification
- Register:
  - Professional certificates
  - Bus driver certificates
  - Bus inspections certificates
  - Clerk appointments
  - Trustee's certificate of election
  - Trustee's oath of office

Other Duties

- Chairperson of the County Transportation Committee
- Attendance officer for a district under prescribed conditions
- Organize county and rural annual spelling see, declamation contest and rural 8th grade graduation
- Supply and coordinate standardized testing for 7 of the rural schools
- Board member of Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative
- Attend Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Child Study Team (CST) Meetings at the 5 small schools, acting as an administrator
- Provide inservice and support for the teachers of the 5 small schools
- Prepare press releases and promote other public relations activities for the schools of the county
- Coordinate efforts and funds to write grants cooperatively among rural schools
- Answer questions and provide information for school board members, concerned tax payers and the general public
- Provide boundary information for parents and realtors
- Director of county school elections (laws and procedures being very different from the regular political elections)