

# The Monti Navigator

Be Greater than the Average



Tammy Mangus, Superintendent of Schools

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TEACH [INTEGRITY](#), TEACH HOPE

*Disingenuous (adj.): Insincere, dishonest, false or mendacious.*

The people I dislike most are those who fail to publicly represent who they actually are. These folks consistently:

- Speak one truth and then behave according to another.
- Hide behind the guise of electronic alter-egos or avatars.

Indeed, I am capable of interacting and, often, respecting those whose ideals are directionally opposed to mine. I often find that these relationships and my interactions with these people are filled with opportunities ripe for debate. Many times, the passion, evidence and integrity brought forward in my interactions with these folks often prompts:

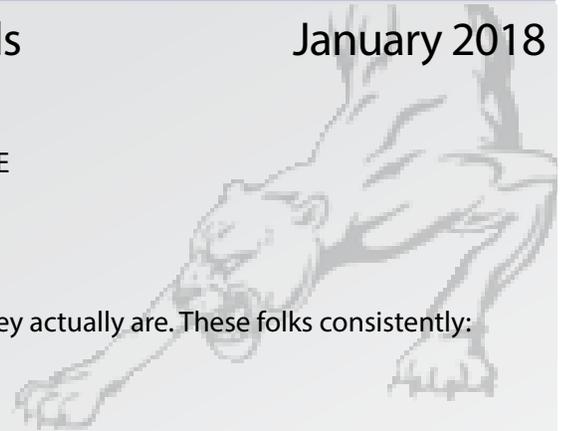
- a challenge to assumptions.
- further research and reflection.
- a shift in mindset, when the evidence brought forward is presented in an especially powerful and pragmatic way.

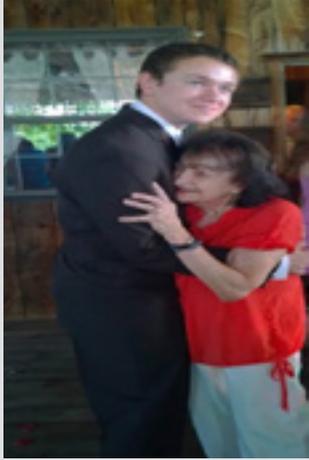
My husband's grandmother, Terry, has a lot of [INTEGRITY](#). She is a frightening matriarch who stands at approximately 4 feet, 5 inches tall. Her small stature guided by precise forthrightness makes her the most powerful person I've ever met in my life.

While I was pregnant with my youngest child, we wound up staying with her for a brief period of time while we waited to close on a home. When I tell you that it wasn't easy as a young wife and mother to live with your husband's grandmother and grandfather I am not exaggerating. It is even more difficult when your husband is the eldest grandchild. As far as I was concerned, I had an epic amount of short comings, and I expected that his grandparents would be lurking in the corners of the house ready to point them out at every possible turn. I was wrong. In the four months I spent living in her home, I learned important life-lessons on the importance of [INTEGRITY](#) from the best role model I've ever met on the subject.

How did Grandma Mangus model [INTEGRITY](#)?

•She never said a bad word about anyone, unless she was speaking directly to them. I remember being frustrated with my husband about something and venting to her as we were cooking in the kitchen. She interjected while continuing to peel her onions that I was speaking to the wrong person. I let her know that I was merely "venting" so that I wouldn't be upset with him when he came home. Again, she told me that I was speaking to the wrong person and explained that if I was upset enough about the situation to be talking to her about it, I should talk to him about it, not her. She expounded that long after I had forgiven him for whatever upset he may have caused





me, she would not remember the events leading up to the moment or the forgiveness to follow. Rather, she would only remember the upset. This sort of shoddy opinion-influencing behavior was downright dangerous. People should speak directly and forthrightly with the person they take issue with, rather than spread myopic grievances.

•She answered every grievance directed at her with grace, dignity and reflection. When folks were upset with her for some reason, and they shared it directly with her (as she had clearly shown was the expectation as listed above), she would not bite back. She would consider where the individual was coming from and thank them for their input in the quietest, gentlest grandma voice you can possibly summon in your imagination. Despite her years of experience, she'd stay humble, mull it around and if the grievance was appropriately guided and evidence-backed, she'd use it to shift slightly and become even more graceful and refined.

I must say that I've never been more afraid of anyone in my life. I could not imagine letting her down--ever. Human nature leads most people to make excuses, deflect and shift blame when we're confronted with this sort of thing. It takes vulnerability to hear criticism and vulnerability can feel terrifying. But, as folks develop integrity and maturity, they begin to react to these situations differently. Instead of feeling attacked, or feeling vulnerable, people with integrity see these situations as opportunities to grow and learn. Grandma Mangus made it easier for me to find, identify and learn from integrity-driven people like her.

These days, I find myself surrounded by too few of these types of folks. I miss them.

This month's focus is **INTEGRITY**.

This trait asks folks to be:

- Sincere.
- Whole and undivided in their principles.
- Coherent in their aim.

Folks with **INTEGRITY** do not need to falsely represent their viewpoint or hide behind any guise. They are coherent in their aim and speak directly using facts and evidence in their claims. Additionally, they speak as close to the source of their contention as possible instead of dabbling in "think sos", gossip or rumors tossed out with reckless abandon.

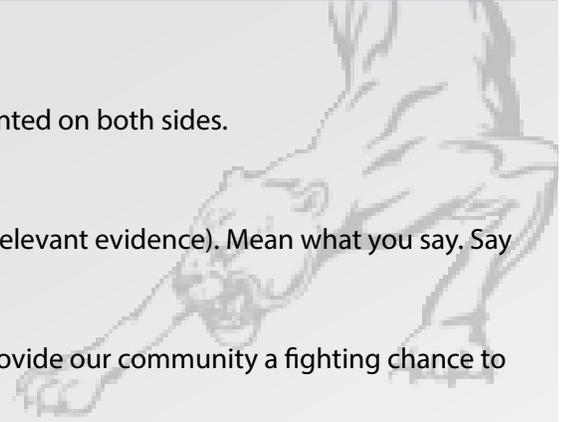
In my early administrative days, a dear mentor told me that I needed a better poker face in order to be successful. Several bosses, colleagues and mentors have reminded me of this in the years since -- the fact of the matter is that I don't want a poker face. I find no joy in hidden agendas. Folks may not always like or agree with what I have to say, but they will always know where I stand.

This month we focus on the grace, reflection, clarity and forthrightness celebrated in true **INTEGRITY**. This year, may you all be direct and forthright, stand by your beliefs and make sure that in all things you surround yourself with evidence in support of your claims — and for goodness sake, if you should find yourself with some burden aggrivating you, speak as closely to the source as possible.

- Challenge assumptions.
- Further research and reflect the ideals presented on both sides.
  - Shift mindset.

In short: say what you really mean (based on genuine beliefs, facts and relevant evidence). Mean what you say. Say it with grace, dignity, reflection — with **INTEGRITY**.

Please also teach our children to behave in this manner as well. It will provide our community a fighting chance to improve our current standing.



## MARCHING TOWARDS OUR GOALS

**MCS**D believes that attendance of students and staff matters to our success. Our goal is a student absentee rate of less than 5% and a staff absentee rate of less than 3%.

Our current attendance rate for September - December is:

- Staff: 5% absentee rate
- Students: 8% absentee rate

Do you believe that we must improve? Where do you stand in this? Please feel free to share your ideals and values concerning this call to action with me at [tmangus@k12mcsd.net](mailto:tmangus@k12mcsd.net).

**MCS**D believes that student outcomes matter. Our goal is an 87% graduation rate by 2020 and a proficiency rate of 65%, with an additional 30% of our kiddos approaching proficiency by 2020. Mid-term benchmarks occur this month. A status update is headed your way in February. For now, every member of this community must care as much about this goal.

We must each ask, “**Are my children proficient or approaching proficiency?**” If the answer is no, we must ask what we will do about it — and then take immediate action. This applies to everyone!!

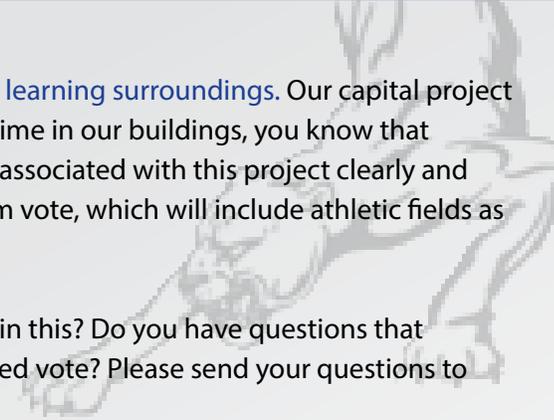
**Parents** must ask, give answer and respond.

**Teachers** must ask, give answer and respond.

**Administrators** must ask, give answer and respond.

**Community partners** must ask, give answer and respond.

To do otherwise is to set our children and our community up for failure in the future. Do you believe this? Where do you stand? Please feel free to share your ideals and values concerning this call to action with me at [tmangus@k12mcsd.net](mailto:tmangus@k12mcsd.net).



MCS D believes that our students deserve safe, updated and functional learning surroundings. Our capital project was voted down by a mere 30 votes. If you have spent any amount of time in our buildings, you know that this project was NECESSARY, not frivolous. We need to share the WHYs associated with this project clearly and forthrightly with our community as we prepare for our new referendum vote, which will include athletic fields as well as the previously requested updates, in March.

Do you believe that this project was appropriate? Where do you stand in this? Do you have questions that you need answered to better understand the project to cast an educated vote? Please send your questions to [communications@k12mcsd.net](mailto:communications@k12mcsd.net).

Be Well,  
Tammy Mangus