

# 2026 Decision Days Toolkit

*Celebrating Every Path  
After High School*



**MUS**  
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SYSTEM



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# *Welcome to Your 2026 Decision Days Toolkit*

Decision Days is the final event in the academic year as part of the College Access Arc of Events through the Montana University System and Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

These events are designed to help students graduate with tools and skills for success in postsecondary education, career, and life. Collectively, the events encourage students to APPLY, AID, and ACT.

Decision Days celebrate students' plans for postsecondary education, military service, or career. For the students who have applied to college and secured financial aid, they still need to act. Decision Days recognizes the act of signing college acceptance letters and committing to postsecondary pursuits. Decision Days are a time in which schools celebrate all students who made it to graduation and are going to college, starting a career, serving their country, or pursuing apprenticeship or other training.

We know planning a spring event can be challenging, so we encourage you to personalize Decision Days to match your school's needs.

If you need ideas or have questions, please contact Madie Moore (MMoore@montana.edu) or Dawes Elwood (DElwood@montana.edu) at the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.



# How to Make Decision Days Happen in Your School

If you haven't put on Decision Days events before or aren't sure how to incorporate events into your school, consider adding them to existing items in the spring schedule (e.g., assemblies, banquets, extra-curriculars).

You might opt for a single event or series of events/activities.

Although Decision Days recognize seniors, they're a great opportunity to engage with younger students as well. Involving other high school students is a great way to increase college-going culture in your school, but don't hesitate to make Decision Days reach K-12.

Another consideration is the scope of your Decision Days. Will events involve just 12<sup>th</sup> graders? The whole school? The whole district? Will families attend? Will community members and/or business be there?

Here are some of our favorite ideas:

## **A. Visual & Schoolwide Displays**

- “Where Are You Going?” map
- College / Career wall
- Banner or pledge signing
- Door decorating

## **B. Student Recognition & Celebration**

- Signing day events (college, career, military)
- Certificates of recognition
- Dress-the-part days
- Slideshow in-school displays or school website

## **C. Interactive & Student Voice Activities**

- Photo booths
- Short video reflections
- “Advice to Juniors (or younger students)” wall
- Letter to future self

## **D. Workforce & Military-Focused Ideas**

- Career signing boards
- Tool/trade-themed props
- Military branch recognition
- Apprenticeship and certification shout-outs

## **E. Community Involvement**

- Partnering with local news media
- Local business recognition
- Community care packages for seniors

## **G. Real-World Readiness Connections (Making Decision Days actionable)**

- Reminders to complete applications for college admission, financial aid, housing, and other student services
- Schedule end-of-year / summer appointments for seniors who haven't decided on their next steps
- Orientation, placement, and next-step checklists
- Financial literacy or career readiness mini-sessions (utilize MCIS and Level All)

# Sample Announcements & Messaging

**Friday before:** "Starting next week we will be celebrating our senior class and highlighting their future plans. We are proud of our graduating class."

**Monday:** "This week, we are celebrating our senior class and what they will be doing after high school. Here are some opportunities you can join as part of our celebration: [List of activities]"

**Tuesday:** "As we continue to celebrate our senior class and their post-graduation plans, we would like to mention the following students who are going to college: [Student Name; College Name]"

**Wednesday:** "This week we are celebrating our senior class and what they will be doing after high school. Today, we recognize those who are going into the military: [Student Name; Military Branch]"

**Thursday:** "This week, we are celebrating our senior class and what they will be doing after high school. Today, we recognize those who are going to start a career, get on the job training, or pursue other opportunities: [Student Name; Plans]"

**Friday:** "This week, we were celebrating our senior class and what they will be doing after high school. Today, we would like to encourage all students to begin thinking of your future. If you hope to go to college, please talk with your advisor to make sure you take the right classes and know how to afford it. Congratulations to our senior class!"

"As part of our celebration of our senior class, we would like to ask that tomorrow you wear clothing to represent your future plans. For example, if you are thinking about attending college, wear something that shows the college you want to attend. "

"Our senior class is signing a banner to show their future plans. Seniors, please stop by and add your plans. The banner is located [identify where]. We hope you will take a minute to stop and check out the next step for our seniors. Congratulate them when you see them in the halls."

"Our college-bound seniors worked hard to meet graduation requirements, apply for college, and apply for financial aid, and today they are going to sign their college acceptance letters. Please join us [Location, Time] to watch them take this exciting step."

"As we celebrate our seniors' decisions to go to college, we've asked our teachers to wear clothing that represents their colleges. We encourage you to ask teachers about their college experiences."

"We are celebrating our senior class and what they are doing after graduation. If you are unsure of what you want to do, reach out to your counselor and explore options through MCIS and Level All."

# Sample Social Media

## **Before Decision Days Events:**

- Learn what our seniors are doing after graduation... #MTDecisionDays May 2026.
- You watched them grow; find out where they're going next May 2026.
- #CollegeSigningDay APPLIED? Accepted. FAFSA? Done. SIGNED
- College? Enlistment? Workforce? Let us know! #iDecidedMT

## **After Decision Days Events:**

- Thank you to all the students who participated! #MTDecisionDays
- To all the parents, families, loved ones of this year's graduates - thank you for the support! #iDecidedMT
- Thank you to the volunteers who helped make our #DecisionDays a success!

## **During Decision Days Events:**

- Learn what our seniors are doing after graduation... #MTDecisionDays
- See what the future holds for this year's graduates. #CollegeSigningDay
- These students worked hard to get here. Let's celebrate! #MTDecisionDays
- A special shout out to our seniors who are signing their college acceptance letters this week. #MTDecisionDays
- Congratulations to our seniors who will be starting military service. #iDecidedMT
- Today we celebrate our graduating class and all the different paths they will take after graduation. #iDecidedMT

## **Suggested Hashtags:**

#iDecidedMT #CollegeSigningDay #DecisionDays #MTDecisionDay

Tag MUS College Access on Facebook, X, and Instagram to share events.

# Contact Us

For more printable/shareable resources and templates or for general help with increasing college access in your school, please contact Madie ([mmoore@montana.edu](mailto:mmoore@montana.edu)), Dawes ([delwood@montana.edu](mailto:delwood@montana.edu)), or the team ([collegeaccess@montana.edu](mailto:collegeaccess@montana.edu)).

This toolkit and other resources for the College Access Arc of Events are available at [mus.edu/college-access](https://mus.edu/college-access).

