Susan Sweeney has served as principal of Broadwater Elementary School for nine years. She is the Montessori Administrator for Helena School District, overseeing programs for three schools, and has previously served as a middle grades administrator and K-12 Testing Coordinator. Sweeney has played a fundamental role in shifting instruction at Broadwater toward data-driven practices focused on grade-level critical competencies, leading to significant improvement over the course of her tenure. Math proficiency, for example, has risen to an average of 85 to 90 percent compared to just 50 percent when she took leadership. A strong believer in the importance of a positive and supportive school culture, Sweeney has implemented Broadwater’s four universals — “Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe, and Be a Learner” — expectations represented by staff committees tasked with creating lesson plans to address areas of concern in the school. She has also driven the implementation of “Hello Teams,” small groups assigned to all staff for the entirety of students’ time at Broadwater focused on long-term mentorship and understanding student perceptions of the school. Teachers call Sweeney’s transformative impact “nothing short of magical.” She has studied in Tokyo and Okinawa, Japan as a 2014 Fulbright Memorial Teacher Fund recipient, and holds an M.Ed. in Educational Leadership from the University of Montana as well as a B.A. in Elementary Education from Montana State University.