Time to Take Action

by Karen Underwood, MCASE President
Greetings from MCASE! As we open November, we see politics dominating the scene. We are in an interesting time, to say the least. As an educator and a voter, I ask you to carefully exercise your civic responsibilities regarding not only your opportunity to vote but also your advocacy in the upcoming months. Whatever your political inclination, take time to study the issues and consider how what you do will influence not only your work environment but the educational learning environment of those you serve.

I invite you to consider the policy recommendations held by MCASE’s affiliated national organization Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Their work mirrors many of the components of our own SAM legislative agenda. I find the similarities between the two remarkable. The principles behind both our positions appear rooted in strong beliefs on the power of public education, the uniqueness of our learners, the impact of education, and the need for equity that is rooted in our democracy. Without meaning to oversimplify our resolutions and action agenda in SAM, I offer the following paraphrased comparisons which highlight our need for advocacy at both the state and national level.

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<th>SAM urges the state legislature to ---</th>
<th>CEC urges Congress to ---</th>
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<td>• Increase the monetary investment for mandated special education services by applying additional state funding without reducing payments for the Instructional Services Block Grant, Related Services Block Grant, and the Disproportionate Cost Reimbursement.</td>
<td>• Support education and early intervention funding that matches the needs of children and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents, their families, and the professionals who work on their behalf by providing increased federal investments to the:</td>
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<td>• Fund IDEA at its originally intended levels and allow flexibility in maintenance of effort requirements.</td>
<td>○ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.</td>
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<td>• Ensure educational infrastructure that is equitably and adequately funded across all Montana administrative units.</td>
<td>○ National Center for Special Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.</td>
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<td>• Support the MDA to guarantee equitable access to educational curricula.</td>
<td>○ Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act.</td>
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<td>• Oppose any legislation or initiatives, which would allow for vouchers, tuition tax credits, tax savings accounts, or any other</td>
<td>○ Strengthen the accountability of non-public schools and home schools in Montana.</td>
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**Upcoming Conferences and Meetings**

- **January 27-29:** Montana Principals Conference - Helena  
  - [Register](#)

- **February 14-16:** AASA National Conference on Education - Los Angeles
### Funding Plans for Any Non-Public and Home PK-12 Schools

- Oppose the use of public funds for families to access private education through private school vouchers, tuition tax credits, direct tuition payments, taxpayer savings accounts, scholarships, and portability of public funds to private education entities for all students, including students with disabilities, as they are contrary to the best interests of students and their families, the public school system, local communities, and taxpayers.

### Support New State Funding for a Continuum of Mental Health Services for Students

- Support new state funding for a continuum of mental health services for students in addition to existing state and federal programs without reducing dollars from the state education general fund.

- Support facilities and technology thereby ensuring opportunities for students.

- Support new state funding for Montana residential/educational services for children with mental health needs.

- Support and provide funding for school based mental health services.

- Support the implementation of a unified recruitment and retention program designed to address current personnel shortages in both general and special education.

### Ensure Teachers and Providers Are Prepared to Implement Evidence-Based Practices

- Ensure teachers and providers are prepared to implement evidence-based practices.

- Focus on the positive and productive culture and climate in public schools and early childhood programs.

- Ensure safe and respectful learning environments for all children and youth.

- Remedy the national lack of access to mental health services.

- Require an interdisciplinary approach reinforcing partnerships.

- Strengthen the recruitment, preparation and retention of education and early childhood personnel. Diversify the teacher workforce.

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By no means are these comparisons comprehensive of either organization’s full advocacy agenda. In sharing them I hope to highlight our common themes and invite more energetic advocacy at both the state and national level. Perhaps you like me to need to act more upon our inclinations for taking a stronger advocacy role. A good place to begin is through our School Administrators of Montana.
Key to Advocacy Success is Building Trust with Your Community!

by Kirk Miller, SAM Executive Director

This week a great question was raised by principals in the Eastern region MAEMSP asking, “how can principals get their advocacy voice heard?” This may be on the mind of all educators and administrators as we are thinking about the upcoming 2019 Legislative Session. So, here are some thoughts about effective advocacy for educators to contemplate.

A tiered system will work best for getting educator voices heard – think ... Universal, Targeted, and Comprehensive as the tiers (similar to the systemic design of MTSS, MBI and even the Montana ESSA plan).

Universal – All schools

- Develop and tell ‘your story’ for educating students in your school, including the value your school brings to the community. You can use the template of GREAT 2018 (released by MT-PEC at MCEL 2018) to tailor this info for your school.

- Develop a strategy to tell ‘your story’ widely in your community and include legislators in that distribution. Consider the strategic approach developed and promoted by Jamie Vollmer in “The Great Conversation” found at https://www.jamievollmer.com/.

- Building trust with your community, for what you do and provide for students, is the

Three Affiliates Have Now Opened Nominations/Applications for Awards!

by Pat Audet, SAM Associate Director

MAEMSP

The following 2019 awards are still open for nomination/application:

- Adrian Langstaff Award
- Friends of Education Award
- Aspiring Principal Scholarship Award
- NAESP Conference Incentive Scholarship Award
- Appreciation Award
- National Distinguished Principal Award

- You can read more about each award plus nominate or apply by clicking 2019 MAEMSP AWARDS. Nominations/applications are due by December 14. These awards will be announced on January 28 at the conference.

- If you are a current MAEMSP member and you are planning on retiring at the end of this year, please contact MAEMSP Past President, Lance Boyd at lance_boyd@gfps.k12.mt.us or give him a quick call at 406-268-7232. The MAEMSP Board of Directors would like to honor retirees at the Montana Principals Conference on January 28 in Helena.
single most significant element for helping create a culture of support for schools.

Targeted – Schools who realize the importance of advocating for educating our students as critical to future success

- Invite your community to visit your schools so they can see the outstanding atmosphere that you provide for student learning and student well-being.
- Work with the school district leadership and formally invite all legislators (Senators and Representatives) to attend an event(s) at your school. Make them feel welcome when they are there so they can feel the great culture established.
- Build a relationship with the legislators who serve your school so they feel welcome and will want to seek your advice on education related issues.

Comprehensive – Schools who believe strongly in insuring legislators learn about the value of their school to the community and the children served

- Work with your school district leadership to formally invite the legislators that represent your school to a formal tour of your school. Show them (use the, tell ‘your story’ as a guide) your successes and challenges first hand, as well as your goals for the future of your school. Let them know how their support can help.
- Sign up for the SAMLN19 so that you can participate deeply during the 2019 legislative session. See the article in this Bulletin to sign up to help SAM work with legislators to help them learn about the issues important to the future success of schools all across the state.

I hope you will contemplate these ideas when developing your advocacy strategies for the 2018-19 school year. We are here at SAM to assist you

The following 2019 awards are now available for application or nomination:

- **Future Administrators Scholarship**
- **Community Partner**
- **Principal of the Year**
- **Conference Incentive Award**
  - You can read more about each award plus nominate or apply by clicking [2019 MASSP AWARDS](#).
  - Nominations/applications are due by December 14. These awards will be announced on January 28 at the conference.
  - If you are a current MASSP member and you are planning on retiring at the end of this year, MASSP Vice President, Justin Helvik, needs to hear from you soon! Please contact Justin at jhelvik@threeforks.k12.mt.us or give him a quick call at 406-285-3224. The MASSP Board of Directors would like to honor retirees at the Montana Principals Conference on January 28 in Helena.

**MCASE**

The following 2019 distinguished service awards are now available for application or nomination:

- **Special Education Director**
- **Special Education Teacher**
- **Regular Education Teacher**
  - You can read more about the awards plus nominate or apply by clicking [2019 MCASE AWARDS](#).
  - Nominations/applications are due by January 11, 2019.
  - These awards will be announced at the MCEC Conference February 20-22, 2019 in Helena.
  - To read more about the MCEC Conference on February 20-22, 2019, please click [MCEC CONFERENCE 2019](#).
Montana Principals Conference 2019

Sunday, January 27:

Keynote - Jimmy Casas - "Live Your Excellence Starting Today!"

Monday, January 28:

Keynote - Dave Weber - "Sticks & Stones Exposed"

Shaun Clark - Restorative Session

Breakout Session 1 - “I’m Spread So Thin You Can See Through Me” (Time Management & Organization)

Breakout Session 2 - “I Am NOT Stressed Out!” (Stress Management)

Hospitality Hour - Sponsored by Lifetouch

Awards Banquet - EDUCATIONAL SUPERHEROS

In attendance will be:
NASSP President Christine Handy & Executive Director JoAnn Bartoletti
NAESP Executive Director Earl Franks

Tuesday, January 29:

Hot Breakfast
EdCamp Breakout Sessions
Closing Keynote Speaker

Call for the SAM Legislative Network 2019

Calling all SAM Members to Join the SAM Legislative Network 2019 (SAMLN19)!

Are you interested in helping SAM promote our Advocacy Priorities in the 2019 Legislative Session? How about joining the team of SAM members who are committed to communicating effectively about SAM legislative issues/bills and collecting input from your colleagues in your region to let your legislators know about appropriate stances on issues/bills during the session? Click HERE to see the description and responsibilities of the SAMLN19. We need you to help with this important part of advocating for the students served in our schools!

For a SAM member to join the SAMLN19 click HERE!

Please sign up so we can insure that education leaders’ voice is clearly heard in the 2019 Legislative session.

Once you sign up, the SAMLN19 will be formed and we will train together to make this a pleasant experience for you using the tools SAM is creating to communicate effectively during the Legislative session.

Kirk

The Importance of Cyber Security

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) is pleased to continue to support the work of current and aspiring superintendents and district leadership teams in leading all aspects of digital
Register HERE!

Release of GREAT 2018

The MT-PEC partners have worked together to prepare GREAT 2018 - The Great Work of Montana’s Public Schools, Volume VI, released at MCEL on 10-18-18, see the Press Release. School board members and school superintendents will be receiving a hard copy of this great tool in the mail next week. You can always print a usable copy from the link provided. Our hope is that you will use this publication to engage your community in the story about the great opportunities your schools provide for the students in your community. Now is a great time to tell your story of the rich and engaging environment your school provides for your community!

CoSN has partnered with edWeb to provide a series of monthly webinars on topics essential for leading digital transformations. School superintendents serve as panelists on each webinar and share their stories and expertise. The focus of the November 12, 2018 webinar (3:00 pm MST) is on cybersecurity and features Steve Bradshaw, Superintendent at Columbia Falls Schools as one of the presenters. Learn more and register for this free webinar at

https://home.edweb.net/webinar/supers20181112/

If your school or district would like more information about joining CoSN or getting more involved with CoSN, please contact Brian Calvary,