Playing The Hand We Were Dealt

by Casey Klasna, MASS President
It is hard to believe that almost a year has gone by since COVID lifted its ugly head and changed how we operate our public school districts. While in the Educational Leadership Program at Montana State, I don’t remember any courses about operating a school during a pandemic! School administrators are tough people, we have to be. Like anything in life, we reap what we sow and through hard work and perseverance, the cream will eventually rise to the top. What we have accomplished in our public schools has been incredible and clearly visible in our communities and throughout Montana.

I believe we can all agree that the hand dealt to all of us last March was a very skeptical hand. The shock, surprise, and magnitude were almost surreal, at least for me. As school leaders, we are problem solvers, we get things thrown at us, and we are faced with handling each situation. Through our own personal experiences and leaning on our network of colleagues and professional organizations, the poor hand we were dealt has gotten much better and will continue to get better. We need to continue to stay the course and make improving our hand a priority.

No matter how tough things are, to me every day is a bonus. We wake up every morning, the sun comes up, and we arrive at a job where we make a positive difference in the lives of our staff and students. I am proud to be a school administrator and to be part of such an excellent network of professionals. The support we have received from SAM and MT-PEC has been incredible.

I cannot express my appreciation enough for what you do for the profession. Keep leaning on each other, keep involved in the SAM organization and take advantage of what they have to offer. We are all in this together and the hand we were dealt will only continue to get better!

Casey Klasna
MASS President

"Righting the Ship" - SAM Advocacy and Professional Learning!

by Kirk Miller, SAM Executive Director

The attention of SAM is heavily weighted on advocacy at the current time because the 67th legislative session is underway. As we engage in this advocacy work I am pleasantly reminded that it is the work on the goals of the strategic plan (listed below) that provides SAM with the ability to be deeply involved in the advocacy for each child’s education. It is the work of our SAM members to be involved in decisions that impact education (having a seat at the table for all discussions that impact our students) and the professional learning that our SAM
March 23, 2021:
MASS Spring Conference

** View the full SAM Calendar**

Thank you to this month's featured Business Partners!

members engage in that really set the tone for what we
advocate for during this heightened time for legislative
advocacy. Then it is our SAM Legislative Network that
makes sure our voice is heard on the many issues of
advocacy. What a great process and strategy.

At this point of the session (week 5), the tumultuous feel
of the ship that has swayed left is being pushed by strong
waves to the right. So much so, that the ship may begin
taking on water. When it comes to the education of our
children, SAM's advocacy work is to “right the ship”. Our
children and communities deserve a high quality system
of public schools to provide equitable, quality education
to each child, every day! Politics aside, we must focus on
the ship sailing smoothly in heavy waves. That effort
requires close attention to attempts of the legislature to
overreach into the policy making arena, a responsibility
of the Board of Public Education (per Montana’s
Constitution), when it comes to our system of public
schools. Know that the SAM process as outlined above
provides us the best opportunity to “right the ship” as it
continues to sway mightily through the remaining weeks
of the 67th legislative session. Thank you to all SAM
members for being ready for an “all hands on deck” call
in the coming weeks.

The impact of COVID-19 on our lives, schools and
communities has created challenges and far too many
opportunities for our administrators to learn all it takes
to keep your children, staff, school, and community
moving in a positive education direction. I want to thank
every SAM member for the strong effort, perseverance,
expertise, passion and compassion that I observe daily as
you care for your school community. Your efforts are
“righting the ship” for your entire community. Montana
is fortunate to have outstanding school leaders serving
our children during these challenging times.

The SAM board of directors met virtually on January 20
and used their meeting time to discuss the impact of the
pandemic, and focused their thoughts on what school
will need to look like after the pandemic. This rich
dialogue from Montana education leaders provided our
SAM association with key insight into future professional
learning opportunities and supports for our members
going forward. This is an effort to “right the ship” and
focus on what is most important for professional learning
opportunities. Thank you SAM board members for your
the first look at the fiscal status of the state.
SAM/MT-PEC provided testimony on 4 bills
this week, described in the highlights of the
week. The SAM Testimony Log 2021
Legislative Session shows that SAM has
provided testimony 26 times on 25 different
bills at this point in the session.

The legislature has now produced 3335 bill
drafts with 485 introduced bills. SAM
advocacy is tracking 373 bill drafts with 89
of those bills introduced. SAM Followed
Bills 1.29.21 and SAM Followed Bills
Prioritized Introduced 1.29.21 are updated
and uploaded to the SAM Bills
2021 webpage.

The SAMLN21 Legislative Update 5 1-20-21
and Podcast 5 along with SAMLN21
Schedule Week 5 Feb 1-5 Revised 1-30-
21 are there to keep you in the know on all
progress during the 2021 Legislative
session.

Please join us on Mondays at noon for the
SAMLN21 Lunch & Legislate zoom
call to
discuss legislation and strategies moving
forward. This LINK will get you into the
zoom if you choose to join the SAM
Legislative Network on this call.

The SAM 2021 Legislative Session
webpage
will be updated daily. I hope you will use
this resource to go as deep as you wish in
keeping up with SAM advocacy during the
2021 legislative session.

Upcoming Legislative Events for
Education

MT-PEC Virtual Day of Advocacy is being
planned for Monday, March 22, 2021. In
our joint efforts of advocacy for our public
schools and students, we will be virtually
delivering a half-day session on advocacy to
the collective memberships of the MT-PEC
organizations. The MT-PEC partners are
working on a great agenda and registration
valuable contributions to the leadership of education in Montana.

As February gets underway, know that our SAM association is working powerfully together to “right the ship” in advocacy and to create professional learning opportunities for the future. I’m so thankful for our SAM members’ effort and role in making huge progress for the education of our children!

SAM Strategic Plan Goals

Leadership Involved in Decisions that Impact Education: SAM affiliate members modeling and promoting the highest levels of professionalism, integrity and leadership actively engage in impactful discussions on education.

Advocacy: SAM members will be equipped with accurate information and prepared to use it to advocate for public education.

Professional Learning and Services: SAM will extend and expand the professional learning delivery system using the expertise of the SAM affiliate’s, as well as other service providers through professional development, mentorship, and other member services.

2021 METAttechED Virtual Conference
March 22-23, 2021

ABC's of Student Safety

Current Award Opportunities

The following awards are open for nomination:

META (Deadline March 1st)
- 2021 META Technologist of the Year
- 2021 META Empowered Superintendent of the Year

MACSS: (Deadline March 15th)
- 2021 MACSS County Superintendent of the Year Application
- 2021 Montana Rural Teacher of the Year Application

MCASE:
- MCASE Outstanding Administrator of Special Education Award
- MCASE Special Education Teacher Award
- MCASE General Education Teacher Award
- Lori Ruffier Legacy Award
- MCASE Nomination for CASE Awards
  - Harrie M. Selznick CASE Distinguished Service Award
President
MACSS
Cathy Maloney
President

META
Everett Holm
President

SAM Office
Kirk Miller
Executive Director

Gary Wagner
Director of Operations,
Membership & Finances

Kim Scofield
Director of Member Services & Professional Learning

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**2021 MASS Virtual Spring Conference**

**Tuesday, March 23, 2021**

**Registration opening soon!**

**Congratulations to the Recent MAEMSP & MASSP Award Recipients**

- CASE Outstanding Administrator of Special Education
- Outstanding Service to CASE
- **CASE Early Career Special Education Administrator Award Nomination**

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**Strategic Technology Planning and Investment**

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) and its Montana state affiliate chapter, Montana Educational Technologists Association (META) are pleased to continue to support the work of current and aspiring superintendents and district leadership teams in lading all aspects of digital learning transformations.

The Empowered Superintendent edWebinar Series - Monday, February 8, 2021, 3:00 MT "Strategic Technology Planning and Investment: Priorities, Cost and Impacts in Today's Learning Environments"

The upcoming episode of the monthly EmpowerED Superintendent Webinar series, co-hosted by CoSN, AASA and edWeb.net, and sponsored by ClassLink, airs on Monday, February 8, 2021. The title
The 2021 Montana Virtual Principals Conference was held January 25-26. Over 200 attendees had the opportunity to listen to national speakers, engage in valuable professional learning, and honor several outstanding educators and friends of education.

The following awards were presented:

**MAEMSP:**
- National Distinguished Principal - Pam Meier, Arrowhead Elementary, Billings Public Schools
- MAEMSP Friends of Education Award - Tamalee Robinson, Kalispell
- MAEMSP Aspiring Principal Scholarship Award - Jenae Bagby, Bonner Elementary School District
- MAEMSP Appreciation Award - Hawthorne Elementary Parent Advisory Council, Bozeman
- MAEMSP Conference Incentive Scholarship Award - Chris Whiteman, Missoula County Public Schools

**MASSP:**
- MASSP Principal of the Year - Jake Haynes, Frenchtown High School
- MASSP Assistant Principal of the Year - Tyson Tucker - Corvallis High School
- MASSP Community Partner in Education Award - Kristin Taylor, Bozeman

**Congratulations to all of the award winners and honorees!**

The current crises that have come out of the COVID-19 pandemic have shown the world how critical technology is to continue teaching and learning along with multiple other aspects of school operations. The three superintendents share the technology strategies they have used over the past year to assure that their schools continue to function for the benefit of all students and families.

Free registration for the February 8, 2021 webinar is now available [HERE](#). Webinars in this series are also freely available as recordings [HERE](#) and via podcast [HERE](#) a day or two after the initial live broadcast.

**Strategic Technology Planning & Investment - CoSN Resources**

A one-page document, [Strategic Technology Planning & Investment](#) provides leaders with three essential focal points for SmartIT decisions. Additionally CoSN provides a multi-page [Smart IT Guide](#) that delves into...
SAM Welcomes Reach Higher Montana as a New Business Partner

Reach Higher Montana is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to help students strategically pursue education after high school. Services are provided free of charge for schools and students and include information on postsecondary educational opportunities, programs and funding for youth in foster care, access to scholarships and outreach on finding and applying for scholarships, and intermediary services for youth apprenticeships.

Reach Higher Montana helps students explore postsecondary educational opportunities, find and apply for scholarships, and explore career interests and opportunities. Reach Higher Montana also provides educator scholarships to fund advanced education requirements to provide dual enrollment opportunities, and provides community grant funding to support educational attainment through locally-designed initiatives. Youth apprenticeships provide students ages 16-19 to pursue career and education interests simultaneously, which shortens their time to degree, saves money, and helps meet workforce needs.

For more information, visit the Reach Higher Montana website at https://www.reachhighermontana.org/about-reach-higher-montana

CoSN 2021

The 2021 Annual CoSN Conference, scheduled for March 2-4, features interactive breakout sessions, LIVE keynotes, unique networking opportunities, and more. Learn more and register for CoSN 2021 at https://cosnconference.org.

If your school or district would like more information about joining CoSN or getting more involved with CoSN, please contact Biran Calvary, CAE, CoSN Director of Membership and Chapters, at bcalvary@cosn.org.

SAM Youth Endowment Nominations Close March 2nd

Nominations are open until March 2nd for the 2020-21 SAM Youth Endowment. The purpose of the School Administrators of Montana Youth Endowment is to make a
positive impact on the youth of Montana by providing financial assistance to benefit children’s health, welfare, and/or education.

Awards to nominated recipients are given in April of each year and announced in the May SAM Bulletin. Emergency requests will be accepted and presented to the board on an as-requested basis made throughout the year.

Additional information, nomination guidelines, and access to the 2020-21 SAM Youth Endowment Nomination Form can be found HERE. Please note that only SAM members can make the actual nomination.

Thank you to SAM's Business Partners!

Please take time to visit their websites.

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**Schools Cannot Do It Alone**
The Great Conversation Series
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jamie@jamievollmer.com
641-472-1558

**Reach Higher Montana**
Reach Higher Montana
Jason Butcher
Outreach Director
406-366-0777
406-422-1275 Ext. 801
jbutcher@reachhighermontana.org

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For more information, please visit the Montana Mountain Sponsors website.
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2020-21 SAM Bulletins

January 2021 Bulletin
December 2020 Bulletin
November 2020 Bulletin
October 2020 Bulletin
September 2020 Bulletin
July-August 2020 Bulletin