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## *School Administrators of Montana*

# **BULLETIN**

*Visionary leaders united in providing, advocating, and creating education excellence for Montana students!*

**Volume XLII**

**February 2021**

**No. 304**



### **Playing The Hand We Were Dealt**

*by Casey Klasna, MASS President*

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## **Upcoming Conferences, Meetings, & Events**

**March 22, 2021: MT-PEC Virtual Day of Advocacy**

**[March 22-23, 2021: METAtchED](#)**

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*

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## **"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 67<sup>th</sup> 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

## **SAM Legislative Update 2-1-21**

SAM advocacy during the 67<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session in 2021 is underway. All information regarding the Session and SAM's advocacy work is on the [SAM 2021 Legislative Session](#) webpage, giving all SAM members ongoing access to key information.

Here is a brief update as of the beginning of February ...

At the end of January, Week 4 the 2021 legislative session saw fireworks on the House floor while debating bills on abortion and transgender. The first weeks of the session have been mostly focused on moral and cultural issues, and Week 5 may bring

**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 67<sup>th</sup> 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 1-29-21](#) 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

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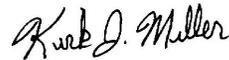
Coordinator

### **MCASE**

**Michelle Halberg**

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 METatechED Virtual Conference**

**March 22-23, 2021**

***ABC's of Student Safety***

information will be coming soon. Please mark your calendar for this Virtual event!

## **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

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Executive Director

**Gary Wagner**  
Director of Operations,  
Membership &  
Finances

**Kim Scofield**  
Director of Member  
Services & Professional  
Learning

**SAVE THE DATE**  
March 22-23 2021

KEYNOTE  
ABCs of Student Safety & Cyber Security  
Ryan Cloutier, CISSP  
SecurityStudio

Session Sneak Peeks

- Gsuite Administration
- Interactive Panels, Doc Cameras, & Remote Learning - TRIX & Neuline
- Review of Cyber Actors Document - High Point Networks
- Interoperability - OPI & IMS Global
- Improve Student Safety on Campus with School Surveillance - Pine Cove Consulting
- Implementing the ABCs - Ryan Cloutier

And MANY MORE!  
ALL SESSIONS WILL BE RECORDED  
Vendor Hall & Raffle Prizes

META TechED  
Virtual Conference 2021

## 2021 MASS Virtual Spring Conference

**Tuesday, March 23, 2021**

**2021 MASS Virtual Spring Conference**  
Tuesday, March 23rd, 7:30AM to 12:00PM

**MOVING FORWARD STRONGER**

Registration coming soon!

**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**



## 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 leading 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 - Jenaë 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!**

and focus of the February webinar, broadcast live at 3:00 MT, is *Strategic Technology Planning and Investment: Priorities, Coast and Impacts in Today's Learning Environments*. In this edWebinar, Dr. Doug Brubaker, Superintendent of Texarkana ISD, TX, Dr. M. Ann Levett, Superintendent of Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools, GA and Dr. Kristi Wilson, Superintendent of Buckeye Elementary School District, AZ and current President of AASA, join in an interactive conversation to share how they lead their districts in creating successful and impactful technology plans. Each superintendent explains the strategies they use to bring together a wide range of needs, interests, and district priorities to create technology plans that address the total cost of ownership, impacts on teaching and learning, and the value of those technology investments.

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>

questions school leaders need to consider around Total Cost of Ownership and Return on Investment.

The [SMART IT web page](#) features a link for CoSN members to download a toolkit created in collaboration with the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO). the CoSN/ASBO resource, *Working Together for Student Success: A Guide for SBOs and CTOs* describes strategies for school districts/ business and technology departments to successfully work together.

### **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](mailto: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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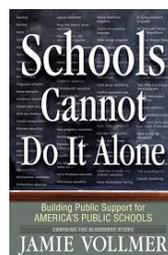
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[December 2020 Bulletin](#)

[November 2020 Bulletin](#)

[October 2020 Bulletin](#)

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