It’s A Marathon, Not A Sprint!

by Michelle Halberg, MCASE President

If leading during COVID-19 is like a marathon, then I want to know who the heck signed me up for this stupid race? Oh, that’s right…I did. Since I committed to run it, I will. This whole idea of leading during the COVID-19 marathon, got me thinking about how I’ll feel at the end of this race.

If you were to look at me, you would agree that there is no way I am built for marathon running. In addition, it wouldn’t take you long to realize I have no experience with running whatsoever! I imagined myself with the T.V. reporter’s mic shoved in my sweaty, red, face while I explained how I got to the finish line against all odds. I’ve got “grit”, I’d say. You see, I know what my brain needs to be healthy and marathons are really more about the mental challenge. I get 8 hours of sleep, eat brain food, drink lots of water, exercise and apply my breathing techniques to remain focused, calm, and efficient during times of high stress. Just like all of these other marathon runners, I have developed a support network. Completing the race is because of this teamwork, cheering, encouragement, and the knowledge that if I stumble or fall they will be there for me. There is no doubt there are some pretty funny things that happen on the day of the marathon. I get a real high from laughing out loud!

The challenge of running a marathon has actually improved my thinking. I break down the distance, pace myself, and solve problems that come up along the route more efficiently and effectively. During the run, I reflect on what I’ve learned about myself and others and feel grateful for this experience. When I focus on the others with me in this race, encourage them, and show my appreciation of them I feel less anxious. You see, everyone here has a reason they signed up for the marathon – an intention, a cause, a person. We all know our “why” for running and when it is hard and we want to quit we remind ourselves about this.

I guess if leading during a COVID-19 is like a marathon, then I’ve got what it takes after all! I’ll be kind to myself when I miss training or eat a whole pizza by myself, or when I get frustrated and take it out on the other runners. I’ll strive to focus on the positives when my worries creep in and tell me that I’m not built to be a marathon runner, that I won’t be able to finish the race, or will embarrass myself during the race. I’ll look around and see YOU and feel the comfort that I am not running alone. Thank you for committing to run this marathon with me. I’ll see you at the finish line!


Michelle Halberg
MCASE President

Key to Advocacy Success is Building Trust with Your Community in 2020-21!

MAEMSP & MASSP Awards Open for Nominations

The following MASSP and MAEMSP award nominations/applications are now open. Please consider nominating someone you would like to recognize for their outstanding service to
Advocacy for the future of our schools is on my mind with election day upon us, and as we are thinking about the upcoming 2021 Legislative Session. The impact of the COVID pandemic on our way of life must be included in our thoughts about advocacy going forward. A key question is “how do we get the voices of our education leaders heard on advocacy issues?” I reviewed some previous thoughts about effective advocacy for educators, brushed up those ideas, and am sharing for you 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 2020 (released by MT-PEC at MCEL 2020) 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 newly developed “Schools Cannot Do It Alone Network” found at https://www.jamievollmer.com/. You may even want to consider joining the Montana Chapter (info at https://www.jamievollmer.com/video-series/).
- Building trust with your community, for what you do and provide for students, is the 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 ‘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 SAM LN21 so that you can participate deeply during the 2021 Montana Educator Legislative Network (SAMLN) Session. The impact of the COVID pandemic on our way of life must be included in our thoughts about advocacy going forward. A key question is “how do we get the voices of our education leaders heard on advocacy issues?” I reviewed some previous thoughts about effective advocacy for educators, brushed up those ideas, and am sharing for you to contemplate.

**SAM Leadership**

**SAM**
- Dale Olinger: President
- Cal Ketchum: President Elect
- Peter Hamilton: Past President

**MASSP**
- Justin Helvik: President
- Shawn Hendrickson: President Elect
- KJ Poepping: Vice President
- Jake Haynes: Past President

**MAEMSP**
- Shelley Andres: President
- Nicole Trahan: President Elect
- Ted Miller: Vice President
- Craig Crawford: Past President
- Marlin Lewis: Vice President
- Barb Droessler: SAM Representatives

**MASS**
- Casey Klasna: President

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

**MASSP Awards**
- MASSP National Principal of the Year
- NASSP Conference Incentive Award
- MASSP Community Partner in Education
- MASSP Future Administrator Scholarship

**SAM Awards Presented at Annual Business Meeting**

SAM is proud to announce the award recipients who were recognized during the SAM Virtual Business Meeting on October 14th. SAM congratulates all award winners!

- **2020 G.V. Erickson Award** - Tobin Novasio: Tobin is the Superintendent at Lockwood Public Schools. Click HERE for more information about Tobin and the G.V. Erickson Award.
- **MASS Superintendent of the Year** - Dr. Laurie Barron: Laurie is the Superintendent at Evergreen School District. She is eligible for the National Superintendent of the Year Award. AASA will announce the National Superintendent of the Year in February 2021. Click HERE to learn more.
- **MASS Honor School Boards of the Year** - School boards from Lockwood and St. Ignatius were recognized as recipients of the Montana Association of School Superintendent (MASS) Honor School Boards of the Year. Click HERE for more information about the outstanding work of these school boards.
- **Jay Erdie Memorial Scholarship** - Nicole Hanson, Superintendent at Lavina Schools. Click HERE to learn more about Nicole and this scholarship.

**CoSN - Technology Professional Learning For All Educators**

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) in partnership with School Administrators of Montana and CoSN’s Montana state affiliate chapter, Montana Educational Technologists
Call to Join the SAM Legislative Network 2021

Calling all SAM Members to Join the SAM Legislative Network 2021 (SAMLN21)!

Are you interested in helping SAM promote our Advocacy Priorities in the 2021 Legislative Session? How about joining the team of SAM members who are committed to communicate 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 SAMLN21. 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 SAMLN21 click HERE!

Please sign up to so we can ensure that education leaders’ voice is clearly heard in the 2021 Legislative session.

Once you sign up, the SAMLN21 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.

SAM Youth Endowment Now Open for Nominations

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.

Release of GREAT 2020

The MT-PME partners have worked together to prepare GREAT 2020 - The Great Work of Montana's Public Schools, Volume VIII, released during MCER
in October. Please use the link to download and print copies for your use. 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!

planning for and evaluating professional learning opportunities for all educators.

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

Thank you to SAM's Business Partners!
Please take time to visit their websites.

Montana Big Sky Sponsors

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406-234-7470

Systems and applications to reduce the financial burden of federal student loans
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