



## SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS OF MONTANA *POSITION STATEMENTS*

Adopted by the SAM Delegate Assembly 6-16-17  
for Recommendation to the SAM Membership on 10-19-17

Proposed Positions are in font colors by Affiliate: **MASS**, **MASSP**, **MAEMSP**, **META**, **MACSS**, **MCASE**

It is the role of the Delegate Assembly to bring before the membership timely and important resolutions which will, upon adoption, serve as the platform for action.

Any reference to 'non-public schools' throughout the document also includes home schools.

### **POSITIONS PREAMBLE**

SAM (The School Administrators of Montana) is an organization that is student centered, constantly looking for ways to improve the educational climate within the state. SAM has put a great deal of thought and discussion into various issues that affect the students and education in general in this great state. Public schools are endeavoring to provide the best education possible for all students; to this degree the organization has taken a stand on certain issues. The positions and resolutions relative to many concerns are listed on the following pages.

**Part I. BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM develop and adopt a position that will carry forward year to year through the 2019 Legislative Session, specifying the process to be followed and the topics to be addressed by the K-12 Vision Group.

**Part II. BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Delegate Assembly Steering Committee recommends that the resolutions be carried over for further review and discussion through the next year in preparation for the 2018 Delegate Assembly, assign a designation and undertake the actions called for under such Positions and Resolutions. In no case should these resolutions be seen as SAM priorities that are segregated from the considerations in Part I.

**Part III. BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM establish new Resolutions adopted by the membership, assign a designation and undertake the actions called for under such Resolutions in the same manner and subject to the same limitations as recommended for resolutions approved by the membership under Part II above.

### **STUDENT ISSUES**

#### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

SAM supports efforts designed to: (a) educate school district personnel in recognizing and reporting symptoms of child abuse and neglect and (b) enable school districts and other community agencies to integrate services in carrying out their legal responsibility for these children in a school setting.

Designation: Support

#### **CULTURAL STUDIES**

SAM supports curriculum pertaining to diversity and cultural studies as well as the establishment of local policies concerning curriculum development, which would enhance the education of all Montana students.

Designation: Support



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#### **FOCUS ON THE WHOLE CHILD**

SAM believes that the child is the focal point of the educational process and the primary focus should be on student learning and academic rigor. It is the responsibility of the school administrators to facilitate the direction of available skills and resources toward helping each child develop a positive self image and to strengthen feelings of self-worth through academic rigor and social emotional learning.

SAM urges all groups involved in the educational process of children to work in unity for the total development of the child and providing opportunities by which each child may realize his/her fullest potential.

Designation: Support

#### **SAFE, RESPECTFUL, DRUG FREE, AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS**

SAM supports and promotes legislation (including IDEA reform) and funding that addresses violence, discipline, respect and security in public schools as well as funding for such IDEA mandates as alternative interim educational settings. SAM further supports programs such as Montana Behavior Initiative; school based mental health and day treatment services as integral components of the continuum for safe and healthy schools. SAM supports and promotes safe, respectful, drug free (including medical marijuana-free), healthy schools and the continuation of federal and any additional funding for such programs.

Designation: Support

#### **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

SAM supports compulsory education and daily attendance of all school age children. SAM supports legislation to strengthen truancy laws by increasing parent and student accountability and by establishing clear enforcement procedures.

Designation: Support

### **STATEWIDE ISSUES**

#### **ACCREDITATION STANDARDS**

SAM supports the implementation and maintenance of strong educationally sound accreditation standards and supports the position that the State Board of Public Education decisions be made with input from all sectors concerned with education. No action should be taken that will affect schools until all concerned are given notice and are provided with the opportunity to be heard through public hearings. Changes affecting fiscal responsibility should not take effect until adequate resources are provided to the school districts.

Designation: Support



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#### **CONTINUITY OF LEADERSHIP**

SAM believes and research has confirmed that continuity of school and district leadership is essential for the continuous improvement of educational quality. SAM supports legislation and practice which will require multi-year superintendent contracts after the initial year of service, provide for longer multi-year contracts for superintendents, link superintendent evaluations to the accomplishment of district goals, and institute a mediation system to help solve problems between a board and its superintendent.

Designation: Support

#### **COOPERATION IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

Education costs are a continuing concern. SAM urges the state to continue to encourage the use of cost effective and educationally effective cooperative efforts, programs and services among educational institutions and state agencies which serve children.

Designation: Support

#### **DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM**

SAM supports OPI's ongoing development of model curriculum, materials, and assessments aligned to National and State adopted Content, Program and Performance Standards. This development will be done collaboratively with national content area organizations and state education leadership associations.

Designation: Support

#### **EDUCATION OF COMMUNITIES AND LEGISLATORS**

SAM supports an ongoing community forum to inform and educate all stakeholders, including legislators, about PK-12 education in our local communities.

Designation: Support

#### **LICENSURE**

SAM believes that it is the responsibility of the State Board of Public Education to determine the rules and regulations for the consistency of licensing of teachers and administrators with the advice of the Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council (CSPAC). The Office of Public Instruction shall administer and continuously review the licensing of teachers and administrators and not permit any endorsement issued to be eliminated. SAM reviews and remains involved in the regulation of related service providers licensed through the Department of Labor and Industry. Licensure of professional educators is required to offer services in Montana schools.

Designation: Support



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#### **MONTANA DIGITAL ACADEMY**

SAM supports the Montana Digital Academy and continued full funding by the state to guarantee equitable access to educational curriculum.

Designation: Action

#### **MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**

SAM supports the Montana High School Association concept and opposes the Montana High School Association becoming a part of the Office of Public Instruction or an agency of the State Legislature.

Designation: Support

#### **NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND HOME SCHOOLS**

SAM supports legislation that strengthens the accountability of non-public schools and home schools in Montana.

Designation: Action

#### **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

SAM recognizes and encourages efforts to support school improvement and acknowledges that several models can be viable approaches to educational improvement. SAM believes that such efforts must not detract from the educational quality, equity, and funding available to the other students in the state. Furthermore, SAM strongly opposes the arbitrary removal of the school administrator(s) as a means of school improvement.

Designation: Support

#### **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE RULE MAKING**

SAM supports state administrative rules for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that do not exceed the requirements in the federal laws and rules.

Designation: Support

#### **STUDENT CAREER PREPARATION**

SAM recognizes the importance of the development of career/technical skills and strong work ethics in all students. SAM supports the formation of career preparation and school-to-work programs in



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partnership with other agencies, post-secondary institutions, and business. SAM expects that public schools will be fully involved in all planning and implementation of these programs.

Designation: Support

#### **STUDENT DATA WAREHOUSE**

SAM supports the use of a secure statewide data warehouse that the Office of Public Instruction uses for the maintenance of student academic records and longitudinal data.

Designation: Support

#### **TEACHER & ADMINISTRATOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

SAM affirms that teacher and administrator retention and recruitment are keys to quality education. It supports efforts to support mentoring and to fund incentives for recruitment and retention of staff. Districts are faced with an increasing need to compete with other states for a shrinking pool of qualified candidates. The legislature must address current laws, administrative rules, and funding support to provide districts the flexibility to retain personnel and to compete for new candidates.

Designation: Action

#### **TEACHER EDUCATION**

SAM recognizes the growing level of diverse educational needs of students. SAM urges Montana's teacher education programs to better prepare teachers to competently address the diverse educational needs of all students.

Designation: Support

#### **PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE**

SAM will seek legislative changes to find a method for relief to health insurance costs.

Designation: Action

#### **REGIONAL SERVICE AGENCY STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE DEFINED IN LAW**

SAM will work in collaboration with other public education advocacy groups in developing necessary guidelines, policies, structures and other resources to assist school districts in establishing/structuring/implementing regional service center areas to maximize efficiencies and optimize resources under existing law.

Designation: Support



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### **SUPPORT OF TRAINING FOR FEDERAL E-RATE REIMBURSEMENT**

SAM will support a model for training for E-Rate applications and submittal to leverage expertise to ensure every district in Montana is taking advantage of the Federal E-Rate funding.

Designation: Support

### **LOCAL CONTROL ISSUES**

#### **CENSORSHIP**

SAM reaffirms its position to oppose any legislative action that removes local control of written, printed, and/or electronically transmitted publications by students.

Designation: Support

#### **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

SAM supports the position that the direction of collective bargaining should be retained at state and local levels in a manner that does not mitigate the policy-making authority of local boards of trustees. Collective bargaining should be limited to salary, hours, fringe benefits, and directly related financial conditions of employment and grievance procedures. Arbitration should be limited to matters of contract interpretation and should not be used to settle a negotiation impasse. Collective bargaining legislation and/or contracts should include adequate provisions for the resolution of unfair practices and provide for adequate protection of employer and employee rights.

Designation: Support

#### **COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS**

SAM affirms that counties should have a qualified county superintendent.

Designation: Support

#### **LEAD TEACHER/COMMITTEE OF TEACHERS**

SAM believes that all teachers should have the benefit of working with effective administrators. SAM opposes the concepts of a lead teacher or a committee of teachers as a substitute for the school administrator. Small rural schools with nine or fewer FTE licensed staff and without a licensed superintendent as per 10.55.705(1) fall under the office of the county superintendent to provide administrative services.

Designation: Support



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#### **PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS**

SAM will endeavor to work cooperatively with staff and educational associations on issues of common concern. Through a joint, cooperative effort the organization will continue striving to improve education in the state of Montana.

Designation: Support

#### **SCHOOL BOARD RELATIONS**

SAM believes that school administrators and their school trustees share a commitment and a responsibility to work cooperatively toward a common goal of developing effective educational programs for Montana youth. To achieve this goal, it is imperative that trustees and administrators foster and nurture a sense of trust and respect individually and collectively for each other. Full and open communication is essential between them if their common goal is to be attained. If trustees and administrators are to succeed in their efforts to provide the best educational opportunity for students, they must strive to understand and appreciate their respective leadership roles.

Designation: Support

#### **FUNDING ISSUES**

##### **FEDERAL PROGRAMS**

Federally funded programs should be written in language that ensures easy understanding, minimum paperwork, maximum student-to-teacher contact and interaction, and which allows for local districts to expend allocated funds on eligible students in a manner which they, the local districts, feel most beneficial. It is incumbent on local boards and their administrators to insure that the intent of federal programs is properly implemented and that programs are managed with fiscal and educational integrity.

To enable Montana schools to benefit from various sources of federal funding, SAM supports legislative efforts to pool applications and reporting requirements for receipt of these federal funds.

To ensure equitable funding to all Montana students, SAM supports formula grants instead of competitive grants. SAM will encourage our federal and state legislators to work to this end.

Designation: Support

##### **FUNDING OF PK-12**

SAM believes that educational opportunities should continue to be based on equal opportunity, equity and adequacy in funding and therefore supports the following:





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- state funding for schools should be 100% of the BASE budget for the school district general fund budget;
- all federal and state programs be fully funded (no unfunded mandates);
- all components of state funding be increased on a yearly basis to reflect the effect of inflation;
- funding of public alternative educational programs;
- maintaining, stabilizing and/or increasing state and federal funding for existing PK-12 programs.
- the state general fund will not be supplanted with educationally targeted federal funds.

Designation: Support

### **NON-PUBLIC AND HOME SCHOOL FUNDING (PK-12)**

SAM opposes any legislation or initiatives, which would allow for vouchers, tuition tax credits, tax savings accounts, or any other funding plans for any non-public and home PK-12 schools.

Designation: Action

### **RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

SAM supports efforts to protect the integrity of current retirement systems. SAM supports efforts to make the system more equitable for career administrators, hard to fill positions and to provide creative ways to retain senior administrators without benefit reduction.

Designation: Support

### **TAXES**

SAM supports the position that the Legislature should enact a balanced taxing system for the state of Montana. The financial investment in public education should be based upon equitable and appropriate taxes, and opposes funding formulas shifting the burden onto the local taxpayers.

Designation: Support

### **TECHNOLOGY**

SAM believes technology is now and will forever be an integral part of our culture and presents ever changing challenges and opportunities for our students. Schools throughout Montana struggle to finance critical technology infrastructure. Educational services requiring technology are not available to all Montana Students. Therefore SAM will support:

- Administrative, operational and learning process change at the federal, state, district and school levels must be addressed strategically where goals, resources and timing for improvement are managed cohesively.





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- Baseline funding for supportive technology infrastructure should be addressed by a variety of methods that include; mechanisms that account for life cycle cost of ownership, technology that is driven by changes in classroom and/or curricular needs, and operational technology related to business function necessary to run a school district (i.e. State reporting, security systems, telecommunications, etc). Districts would be encouraged to fund additional infrastructure and capabilities as demanded by their environments.
- Technology education for administrators, staff and students is timely, relevant, and compulsory.
- The management of technology requires a baseline of understanding and education. School administrators and leaders need support in specific process and technology implementation management.
- Technology planning, implementation and support functions, requiring specialized skills and knowledge, are accomplished by professional staff or contracted consultants according to specific district business models.

Designation: Action

### **UNFUNDED MANDATES**

SAM opposes any legislation that mandates services, programs, or processes without providing full funding.

Designation: Support

### **CERTIFIED TAXABLE VALUATION**

SAM supports efforts to strengthen notification and accountability for all state and county agencies involved in establishing taxable valuation of school district taxing jurisdictions. Once taxable valuation of the taxing jurisdiction is certified, all stakeholders must be notified.

SAM supports requiring that if there is a change to a county taxable valuation after the certification is approved, the Montana Department of Revenue shall notify all effected school districts within seven (7) days of the change.

SAM supports efforts to strengthen accountability for entities responsible for errors in reporting taxable value changes made past the certification date.

Designation: Support



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### K-12 Vision Group

#### **SAM specifies the following ongoing process for convening the K-12 Vision Group, 2013-2019**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM take the following position with regard to school the K-12 Vision Group and funding of Montana's schools:

1. SAM will continue to participate in the K-12 Vision Group on an ongoing basis through the 2019 Legislative Session to provide continuing guidance and recommendations aligned with the "Vision for Public Education in Montana" developed by the K-12 Vision Group in 2012. The work of the K-12 Vision group shall be designed to culminate with consensus recommendations regarding the definition of the basic system of free quality schools that is scheduled to be reviewed by the Legislature during the 2019 Legislative Session pursuant to 20-9-309, MCA.
2. The membership of the K-12 Vision Group will continue to include trustees, business managers, teachers and administrators representing all MTSBA caucus groups and shall be annually revised and/or renewed prior to November 1, to incorporate nominations from the School Administrators of Montana (SAM), Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA), Montana Rural Education Association (MREA), MEA-MFT, Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO), and Montana Quality Education Coalition (MQEC).
3. SAM shall extend the opportunity for full collaborative partnerships in facilitating the ongoing work of the K-12 Vision Group to MTSBA, MEA-MFT, MREA, MQEC and MASBO.
4. SAM supports that MTSBA shall facilitate the K-12 Vision Group's work using knowledge-based decision making processes, emphasizing careful, deliberate and comprehensive analysis of issues, the use of open dialogue (the purpose of which is to inform) prior to deliberation (the purpose of which is to decide), pursuit of insight regarding what the involved groups' members want, need and prefer, and consideration of the ethical implications of our choices and mitigation of disadvantage to certain aspects of the respective groups' members that might be caused by recommendations made by the K-12 Vision Group.
5. SAM and Affiliate Associations shall seek to collaborate with and inform legislators from both political parties as well as key representatives of the offices of the Governor, the Board of Public Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the progress and ongoing work of the K-12 Vision Group to ensure open communications and the availability of legislative and executive branch perspectives regarding such work.
6. SAM and Affiliate Associations shall start to engage other external stakeholders outside of public education circles to increase awareness of the work of the K-12 Vision Group and to identify common interests and goals and opportunities for collaboration. There should be no static identification of "outside interest" groups but rather a process for highlighting broad public awareness of the work of the K-12 Vision Group and emphasizing an open invitation for the public to weigh in on such work. This might be accomplished, for example, through a combination of public opinion polling, facilitated community dialogue, outreach to business, higher education and other community leaders and public awareness campaigns. The key will be to ensure that we generate broad public support for the recommendations of the K-12 Vision Group over time.
7. The work of the K-12 Vision Group shall be focused on the following:



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- a. A global look at the current funding formula for schools with an eye toward determining how the formula could be simplified, made more responsive to need, equitable and adequate to allow schools throughout the state to provide the basic system of free quality schools as that term is defined in 20-9-309, MCA. Specifics to be reviewed as part of the global look at the formula shall include:
  - i. Whether the formula sufficiently promotes local control. If not, recommendations should be developed regarding how the formula could be improved to better vest authority in the elected trustees to make financial decisions.
  - ii. Review of weighting adjustments in current formula and identification of possible enhancements. This inquiry shall include analysis of what other states do to account for economies of scale and address needs of school systems in different circumstances.
  - iii. Whether the current formula is sufficiently responsive to the educationally-relevant factors identified in 20-9-309, MCA, including:
    1. the number of students in a district;
    2. the needs of isolated schools with low population density;
    3. the needs of urban schools with high population density;
    4. the needs of students with special needs, such as a child with a disability, an at-risk student, a student with limited English proficiency, a child who is qualified for services under 29 U.S.C. 794, and gifted and talented children;
    5. the needs of American Indian students; and
    6. the ability of school districts to attract and retain qualified educators and other personnel.
  - iv. Recommendations regarding how the varying challenges experienced by different school districts throughout the state of Montana can be met to ensure that the needs of every child can be met.
  - v. Whether there is a practical way to better predict and incorporate relevant inflation into the formula that is based on the predominant expenditures of school districts.
- b. As part of its work in identifying a simple, adequate, equitable and rational funding formula, the K-12 Vision Group shall undertake the following:
  - i. Review of the differential that exists between current funding and funding necessary to meet the definition of the basic system of free quality schools under 20-9-309, MCA.
  - ii. Revenue necessary to eliminate the differential;
  - iii. A long range plan to eliminate the differential; and
  - iv. A communications plan to create the political will to accomplish the elimination of the differential.

Designation: Support