

SAM Advocacy Priorities 2021 Legislative Session

Revised by DASC Nov - Dec 2020 - Last Update 12.4.20



1. Support Adequate and Equitable School Funding

- a. Maintain present law adjustments including inflation adjustments to all components of the Montana School Funding Formula for K-12 base aid.
- b. Maintain the ability of funding school district needs through voted and permissive levies as currently allowed by law.
- c. Mitigate FY 22 budget shortfalls due to the impact of COVID-19 and avoid any effects that will create shortfalls into the future beyond the 2023 biennium.
- d. Include Special Education Allowable Costs as a component of the Montana K-12 School Formula with inflationary adjustment as applied to all other components of K-12 base aid.
- e. Ensure that Exceptional Circumstances Enrollment is retained in law to support the establishment of Public Preschool.

2. Oppose Privatization with Public Funds

- a. 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.

3. Support Recruitment and Retention of Quality Educators

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

4. Support School Based Mental Health Services

- a. SAM supports 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.

Recommend support only if School Funding Base Aid and Inflationary adjustment is approved, and a legislator in leadership is willing to carry a bill promoting this resolution.

5. Support Facility and Technology Infrastructure

- a. SAM supports efforts for digital equity and adequate, equitable access of our schools and communities to broadband sufficient to meet the educational needs of our students.