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School Administrators of Montana

BULLETIN

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

Volume XLV

February 2024

No. 336



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No one does it better than you

by Dale Olinger, MASS President

Public school leaders play a pivotal role in shaping the minds of future generations. Our choices can transform classrooms, schools, and districts into centers of inspiration, growth, and success. With a new accreditation process, bad actors lurking behind the curtain of the internet, and new laws that directly impact the way we do business, growth opportunities are more bountiful than ever. Keeping a positive outlook can be tough, but we stand much more to gain than lose.

Great leaders view challenges as opportunities for growth and transformation. I have sincere admiration for the many SAM members who live and breathe this ideal. They encourage our students and staff to see obstacles as stepping stones in the journey for constant improvement. By fostering a mindset that embraces challenges, we can inspire resilience, creativity, and a proactive approach to problem-solving. Let this guide our thinking as we forge ahead through the new accreditation process. We always have something positive to gain through honest analysis of where we are and where we could be.

As public school leaders, we understand that adversity can be a powerful teacher. By recognizing challenges as opportunities for growth, we can guide our school communities toward resilience, perseverance, and self-improvement. For every threat, however baseless or real, we learn valuable lessons in school safety. Despite the enormous commitment of resources required each time, we learn how to work with our partner agencies and families in more effective ways. As regrettable as these situations are,

5. [Ameresco/Renew America Schools Grants](#)
6. [New SAM Business Partner](#)
7. [CoSN EmpowerED Superintendent Series](#)

Upcoming Conferences, Meetings, & Events

**Spring Legal &
Technology Conference**
March 11-12
Great Northern, Helena

**SAM Administrators
Institute**
July 22-24, 2024
Helena

** [View the full SAM
Calendar](#) **

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month's featured
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and exacerbated by the increase in frequency, they serve as real-time drills that will sharpen our responses and ultimately make us better prepared to keep schools safe.

In a rapidly changing world, Montana's public school leaders recognize the importance of being flexible and adaptable. Expectations of society, and the megaphone offered by social media, create dynamic environments that can zig and zag with break-neck speed. Even so, we flood our communities with positivity. Persistent promotion of the great work happening in our classrooms, hallways, gyms, and stages is critical for maintaining social and political traction. Make no mistake, it is not possible to saturate this market. Keep telling our story, or someone else will.

Dale Olinger
MASS President


SAM Webinar Series

Thursday, February 22, 10:00 AM


Implementing HB203 (Open Enrollment) and HB890 (Recording Board Meetings)

SAM MONTHLY

WEBINAR SERIES




THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 22




TIME
10:00 - 11:00 AM

Discussing HB203 (Open Enrollment) &
HB890 (Recording Board Meetings)



USE QR CODE TO
CONNECT TO SAM ZOOM
[HTTPS://US06WEB.ZOOM.US/J/3923446729](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3923446729)



Due to schedule conflicts the next SAM webinar is scheduled for **Thursday, February 22 at 10:00 AM**. Join us for the upcoming SAM Webinar where we will be discussing the implementation of HB203 (Open Enrollment) & HB890 (Recording Board Meetings). Bring your questions and be part of the conversation around implementing these bills.

Join us on **Thursday, February 22, at 10:00 AM**.

SAM Webinars are scheduled for the 2nd Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM. Recordings and resources from past webinars can be found on the [SAM Member Landing](#)

[Page.](#)

Join SAM Zoom
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3923446729>



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Registration is open for the 2024 Spring Legal & Technology Conference

Register now for the 2024 Spring Legal & Technology Conference sponsored by MASS, META, and MCASE. The conference is scheduled for March 11-12 at the Great Northern in Helena.

The conference begins with breakfast at 7:00am Monday, March 11, and ends Tuesday around noon. Watch for a full agenda coming soon.

Contact one of the following hotels to book your hotel reservation for the Spring Conference.

- Great Northern Hotel (**Spring Conference facility**) (406-457-5500) or by visit [Spring Conference booking link](#), \$165-\$185 per night
- DoubleTree (406-443-2200), \$140 per night
- Residence Inn by Marriott Helena, please visit [Spring Conference booking link](#), \$129 per night
- Delta Hotel (406-443-2100, \$129 per night

Click here to register for the 2024 Spring Legal & Technology Conference

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March 11, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. in the Great Northern Conference Room

Congratulations to the MAEMSP and MASSP Award Winners!

MAEMSP and MASSP Awards were presented on Monday, January 22 during the Montana Principals Conference. Congratulations to all award winners.

MAEMSP Awards

- **MAEMSP/NAESP National Distinguished Principal:**
Stacy Lemelin, Meadowlark Elementary, Billings Public Schools
- **MAEMSP Friends in Education**

MCASE and META Awards are Open for Nomination

MCASE and META are accepting nominations until **Friday, February 23**, for the awards below. Follow the links for more information about each award and to submit a nomination form.

- **MCASE Awards: (Deadline Friday, February 23, 2024)**
 - [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](#)
 - [Early Career Special Education Administrator Award Nomination](#)
- **META Awards: (Deadline Friday, February 23, 2024)**

- Award:** Stephanie Esch, Stevensville Schools
- **MAEMSP Appreciation Award:** Jane S. Heman Foundation, Nominated by Lolo Schools
- **MAEMSP Aspiring Principal Scholarship Award:** Jennifer Graham, LCPC

MASSP Awards

- **MASSP/NASSP National Principal of the Year:** Shelli Strouf, Billings Senior High School
- **MASSP/NASSP Assistant Principal of the Year:** Kathy Kidder, Helenea Capital High School
- **MASSP Future Administrator Scholarship:** Becky Schrade, Marion School
- **MASSP Community Partner in Education:** Golden Sunlight Mine, Whitehall

Members were also recognized for the MAEMSP and MASSP Years of Membership and well as for SAM Years of Service. Congratulations to all!

SAM Youth Endowment Open for Nominations

Nominations are open until Friday, March 1, 2024, for the 2023-24 SAM Youth Endowment. The

- [META Technologist of the Year](#)
- [META Empowered Superintendent of the Year](#)

Ameresco Helps MT School Districts Secure Renew America's Schools Grants



In 2023 the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) launched the [Renew America's Schools](#) grant program, a \$500 million initiative promoting infrastructure upgrades in K-12 public schools nationwide, with a focus on high-need and rural communities. Financial support from this grant contributes to the improvement of structures, enhancement of building systems, and promotion of the well-being of students and staff who learn, work, and play within these school facilities. During the first application period two Montana school districts were selected for grants and Ameresco is excited to help Montana schools secure more of these funds during the next application period, expected in April 2024.

Ameresco specializes in helping schools solve their infrastructure challenges and can provide grant assistance to help eliminate financial barriers that hamper critical facilities improvement projects. By working with Ameresco schools can receive facility needs assessments, concept paper development, assistance throughout the entire grant application process, and implementation of projects aimed at enhancing the comfort and energy efficiency of your school's facilities.

Numerous opportunities for facility enhancement are covered by the Renew America's Schools grant, including HVAC improvements, LED lighting, building envelope improvements, renewable energy, and more. For further details or inquiries about the grant and how Ameresco can help enhance your

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 throughout the year.

Additional information, nomination guidelines, and access to the [2023-24 SAM Youth Endowment Nomination Form](#) can be found [HERE](#).

Please note: Nominations must be made by a current SAM member.


facilities, please contact Matt Thompson at mthompson@ameresco.com. You can also explore an example of Ameresco's work with Charlo School District and their successful Renew America's Schools application in the webinar linked below:


[Federal Dollars for Montana Schools](#)

This webinar includes great information on several Federal funding opportunities, discussion of the Renew America's Schools grant and Charlo School District's experience working with Ameresco begins around the 21:00 mark.

SAM Welcomes New Business Partners


The SAM Board of Directors voted to accept three new SAM business partners at the January 21 Board meeting. SAM welcomes Discovery Education, Flow Forms, and ParentSquare to the roster of valued business partners. Visit the websites for more information:

- 

[Discovery Education](#)'s award-winning products engage students with real-world content and multi-modal instruction and support teachers with intuitive teaching tools to ensure high-quality instruction across all subject areas. Discovery Education delivers a unified classroom experience that prepares learners for tomorrow. Our ready-to-use activities, Quiz features, Studio collaboration tool, virtual field trips, instructional strategies and embedded accessibility tools save teachers time and provide all students with dynamic, real world and relevant learning experiences. Discovery Education supports administrators with the tools, resources and professional learning experiences they need to build educators' confidence and capacity to motivate and inspire students through best in practice instruction.
- 

[Flow Forms](#) improves community engagement by easing communication between parents and schools, keeping everyone informed. By automating labor-intensive tasks, Flow Forms allows schools to redirect their energies from tedious operational processes to their core mission. This not only frees

up time but also enhances operational efficiency. Teachers, liberated from excessive administrative duties, can focus more on students, promoting better learning outcomes and fostering overall student growth. With Flow Forms, SAM members can easily simplify complex tasks, no matter if they are at the District Office or in schools. It makes work more efficient and lets members focus on their main responsibilities.

-  **ParentSquare** [ParentSquare](https://www.parentsquare.com) is the leading provider of modern family and community engagement solutions for K-12 schools. Millions of educators and families in 49 states rely on the multipurpose unified platform that includes mass notifications, classroom communications, school websites, and other communication-based services, all supported by visual dashboards. ParentSquare's technology platform features comprehensive integrations with school administrative systems, translation to more than 100 languages, and app, email, text, voice, and web portal access for equitable communication. Founded in 2011, the company is headquartered in Santa Barbara, CA. Learn more at <https://www.parentsquare.com>



LEADING EDUCATION INNOVATION

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.

Data Privacy Week – January 21-27, 2024

As we continue our journey into 2024, CoSN is placing a special emphasis on the critical need to assure that data privacy is a priority in all K-12 schools across the nation. Data Privacy Week, which runs from January 21 through January 27, 2024, provides an opportunity for school leaders to turn their attention to the issue of protecting students' personal information. CoSN is pleased to offer multiple resources including blogs, toolkits, workshops, courses, and a special webinar to support school districts' efforts regarding data privacy, not only during Data Privacy Week, but throughout the year. You are invited to access these free resources on student data privacy at <https://www.cosn.org/student-data-privacy/>. Some specific examples of the resources found on the CoSN Student Data Privacy website include:

- Student Data Privacy Video Series: Why Privacy Matters
- Updated Data Privacy Toolkit, focused on Transparency & Trust
- Resource: Making the Case for Privacy

Trusted Learning Environment Seal

The CoSN Trusted Learning Environment (TLE) Seal program is a unique privacy framework designed to support school system leaders in building effective privacy policies and programs within a culture of trust and transparency.

The TLE website can be accessed at <https://www.cosn.org/trusted-learning-environment/> and provides school leaders with a wide variety of materials to support their leadership work regarding student data privacy including:

- Preview the CoSN TLE Seal Application

- Building a Trusted Learning Environment: Understanding the Leadership Practice
- Webinar Recording: Leadership Strategies to Assure Student Data Privacy

EmpowerED Superintendent edLeader Panel Series

CoSN, AASA, and edWeb.net co-host an online edLeader Panel broadcast series, sponsored by ClassLink, to help superintendents connect and collaborate. Registration is free and participants can join the live event or view recordings and podcast versions starting a day or two after the live broadcast.

The upcoming February 12, 2024 (5:00 pm Eastern Time) edLeader Panel broadcast on the topic of *Leading Learning That Truly Meets the Needs of Each Student*. In this edLeader Panel Dr. Jill Louters, Superintendent, New Rockford-Sheyenne School District, ND, Mr. Randy Squier, Superintendent, Coxsackie-Athens Central School District, NY, and Dr. Jason Van Heukelum, Superintendent, Winchester Public Schools, VA, share the strategies their districts implement to assure that the teachers and staff have the knowledge and skills to leverage what technology can provide to enable each student to be a successful learner. Learn more about the upcoming broadcast and access the free registration link at:

<https://home.edweb.net/webinar/supers20240212/>

If you missed the January 8, 2024, edLeader Panel broadcast on of *Proactive Leadership Regarding Cybersecurity in School Systems* which featured Dr. Peter Aiken, Superintendent Central York School District, Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent of Schools, Beaverton, Oregon, and Dr. Mark Benigni, Superintendent Meriden Public Schools, Connecticut, you are welcome to access the video recording and/or the podcast version at <https://home.edweb.net/webinar/supers20240108/>.

CoSN 2024 Annual Conference, “Leading for Innovation: At Warp Speed”

Registration is now open for the CoSN 2024 Annual Conference, scheduled for April 8-10, 2024, in Miami, Florida. For conference and hotel information and registration links, see <https://www.cosn.org/cosn2024/>.

CoSN Membership: If you, your school or district would like more information about joining CoSN or getting more involved with CoSN, please contact membership@cosn.org.

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Please take time to visit their websites.

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2023-24 SAM Bulletins

- [January 2024 Bulletin](#)
- [December 2023 Bulletin](#)
- [November 2023 Bulletin](#)
- [October 2023 Bulletin](#)
- [September 2023 Bulletin](#)
- [July/August 2023 Bulletin](#)

[SAM Bulletins from Previous Years](#)

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