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# School Administrators of Montana

# BULLETIN

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

Volume XLIV

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## **Year End Reflection**

*by Sara Novak, MCASE President/SAM President Elect*

Just like that, the school year is over and my favorite season is drawing near. As I look forward to some summer work in preparation for the next year, I reflect on this year in hopes to make things better. This reflection brings gratitude for my family and friends and especially for my employees. We had to say goodbye to some and we welcome others. Colleagues everywhere are in a similar mode, while others are moving along. Whatever your status is, I wish you well.

As I reflect on my professional work, I also reflect on my organizational work. I am winding down my time as MCASE President. While I have learned so much over the past 2-year term, I have also gained so much appreciation for all the many hats so many folks wear. When I was asked to step up and consider the President-Elect position, I recall the leaders at that time saying “You will gain so much more than you give.” I quickly saw what they were talking about. I am thankful to those whom I have met along the way and the friendships that have been forged.

Little did I know that shortly after accepting their advice, running for the position, and getting elected, the President would find himself needing to step back from things beyond his workday. My path to be the President became very short. However, my fellow Special Ed Directors and MCASE members gave much grace. I am so blessed to be part of the larger MCASE team. While miles spread us apart across the state, I feel we are a tight group and I am proud to be part of it. I am very grateful for Taylor Salmi and her willingness to be the President Elect the past 2 years. She is a strong advocate and will be a great MCASE President as well as a great addition to the SAM Board of Directors.

## Upcoming Conferences, Meetings, & Events

### SAM Week of Excellence

#### June 7, 2023:

- DaRud Cup Golf Scramble

#### June 8, 2023:

- SAM Board Meeting, 8:00am - 2:00pm
- SAM Delegate Assembly Caucuses, 2:00pm - 4:00pm
- SAM Evening of Excellence, 5:30pm - 9:00pm

#### June 9, 2023:

- SAM Delegate Assembly, 8:00am - 12:00pm

### SAM Administrators Institute 2023

- **July 24-26**, Great Northern, Helena

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

Last year in my role as the MCASE President, I had the opportunity to run for leadership on the SAM Board. I was encouraged to do so and after giving it some consideration I jumped in. Thanks to my fellow board members having faith in me, I will be switching that leadership role to the SAM Board of Directors as of July 1st as your new President. I am honored to follow in Shelley's footsteps and continue with the great work being done. Rob, Kim and Marcus are top notch and work tirelessly and make sure things are seamless in all we do.

I tell my story in hopes that you will see leadership values within yourself. Rob's message last week was similar in terms of letting others know what opportunities there are within SAM and our individual State affiliates and our regional groups. There are many opportunities for involvement. We are in some tough times for public education and specifically as educational leaders. The support of your professional organization makes a positive difference. I hope that I can inspire others to become involved. Together we can accomplish so much. I challenge you to reach out, to step up and/or to encourage someone to get involved.

Hopefully I will get to see many of you in the coming weeks in Helena for the Delegate Assembly and/or the SAM Administrators Institute. Most importantly, I hope you all have a wonderful and relaxing summer.

*Sara Novak*  
*MCASE President*  
*SAM President Elect*

## Education Policy in the 2023 Montana Legislature

*by Dr. Rob Watson, SAM Executive Director*

Education policy was a key issue and here are some of the hot-button topics and contentious debates that took center stage during the 2023 Montana Legislature regarding education policy. As with any legislative session, passionate discussions surrounding education policies played a pivotal role in shaping the future of Montana's educational landscape. Let's take a closer look at some of the key controversial issues that sparked intense deliberations.

1. Education Savings Accounts: One of the most contentious topics debated during the legislative session was the proposal to implement education savings accounts (ESAs) for special education students. Proponents argued that these programs would provide parents with more educational choices, including private schools, by redirecting public funds. However, critics expressed concerns about the potential negative impact on public school funding and the potential for increased inequality and lack of accountability in the education system.

2. Charter School Expansion: Another divisive issue revolved around the expansion of charter schools in Montana. Supporters of charter schools advocated for increased options and autonomy in education, citing the potential to drive innovation and address the specific needs of students. However, opponents raised concerns about the potential diversion of resources from traditional public schools, lack of oversight and transparency, and the potential for increased segregation and inequity.

3. Sex Education Curriculum: The Legislature engaged in intense debates over the development and implementation of sex education curriculum in Montana schools. Discussions revolved around the content of the curriculum, including topics such as gender identity, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and comprehensive sexual health education. Supporters emphasized the importance of providing accurate and inclusive information to students, while opponents expressed concerns about age-appropriate content and differing values within communities.

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4. Indigenous Education: Another point of discussion was accountability related to Indigenous education (IEFA) within the curriculum. Advocates stressed the importance of incorporating accurate Native American history, culture, and contributions into the education system to promote cultural understanding and respect. Bills were introduced to hold schools accountable for IEFA implementation, including new reporting requirements for all school districts.

5. Parents Rights: Many bills were introduced related to the inclusion of parents in educational decisions. Advocates spoke to the importance of involving, notifying, and allowing parents to opt in and opt out of controversial education issues. Opponents expressed concerns about the implementation of confusing processes, the rights of minors under Montana's constitution, and the top-down legislative approach that would remove power from local control, a right that is expressly provided to elected trustees.

These controversial issues highlighted the diverse perspectives and values within Montana's education system, reflecting the complexity of creating policies that meet the needs of all students. While the Legislature engaged robust discussions, it is important to note that not all issues were resolved during this session, and ongoing dialogue will continue to shape the future of education in the state.

As engaged members of our community, it is crucial to stay informed, voice our concerns, and actively participate in shaping education policies. By remaining engaged and fostering respectful dialogue, we can contribute to finding balanced solutions that prioritize the well-being and success of Montana's students.

Rob

## Upcoming SAM Professional Learning Opportunities: SAM Administrators Institute 2023: *Resilient Leaders, Healthy Schools*



The Conference is **July 24-26, 2023** in-person at the **Best Western Premier Helena Great Northern Hotel** in **Helena**. This event will focus on the importance of resilient leadership in creating and maintaining strong and successful schools.

We have a lineup of outstanding speakers including

- [Pete Hall](#), author of *Relationship, Responsibility, and Regulation: Trauma-Invested Practices for Fostering Resilient Learners*, who will be providing the pre-conference workshop hosted by MTASCD that will focus on instructional planning as a team. This would be a great opportunity to bring your



## SAM Leadership

*SAM*  
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President  
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President

instructional team for some collaborative time together! Pete Hall will also provide the opening conference keynote presentation as well as breakout presentations.

- James Bailey, co-author of [The Daily SEL Leader](#), will deliver a keynote presentation and breakout session highlighting the significance of leaders cultivating resilience within themselves before they can foster resilience in others. By reducing workplace stress and burnout, leaders can improve retention rates. The presentation will emphasize the importance of developing resilience, building relationships, maintaining positive communication, and implementing effective collaborative practices. By doing so, leaders can enhance school cultures that prioritize effective learning and well-being.
- We have partnered with MTASCD again to bring back several instruction related sessions. This would be a great opportunity to bring your instructional team for some collaborative time together!

You can expect additional keynote presentations and many breakout sessions focused on **Leadership, Behavioral Health, Curriculum and Assessment** throughout the conference including hot button topics like **ChatGPT/AI, The Graduate Profile, & Behavioral Health**. SAM AI is a great opportunity for education leaders to network with other leaders and gain inspiration for the school year ahead.

To learn more about the event and for room block information, please visit the [SAM Administrators Institute webpage](#) or register directly by submitting the [SAM Administrators Institute Registration Form](#).

## SAM SEL for Education Leaders PLC

Take time to focus on yourself and your own resiliency skills. We are recruiting 25 leaders from across the state to participate in SAM's first ever PLC. This cohort will be 100% virtual. It will be led by two national experts in leadership and resiliency. As a typical PLC, you will have an opportunity to share and collaborate with other MTASCD leaders, while building your own skills in the area of SEL Leadership. Space is only open to the first 25 who register, so please do not delay. Info and Registration here: [SAM SEL Leaders, Professional Learning Cohort](#)

## Mentoring/Coaching: SAM LPLP

SAM will continue the long standing tradition of providing a low cost 1-1 coaching/mentoring model with the Leaders Professional Learning Program. If you are new to your position OR if you would benefit from a mentor this is the right program for you. LPLP provides each person with an experienced mentor that will provide support through 1-1 conversations and check-ins throughout the school year. Remember that leadership can be a lonely job. The LPLP provider can be a great resource for quick guidance or a confidential ear to provide a sounding board in difficult situations. Register here: [SAM LPLP: 1-1 Leadership Coaching & Mentoring, 2023-24 school year](#).

## SAM Week of Excellence: June 8-10



It's not too late to register for the 2023 DaRud Golf Scramble on Wednesday, June 7 at Bill Roberts Golf

## Reminder: Renew Your SAM Membership for Next Year

As you close out the school year, please check with your district clerk to see if your SAM membership dues have been paid and that you are renewed for FY24. For most of

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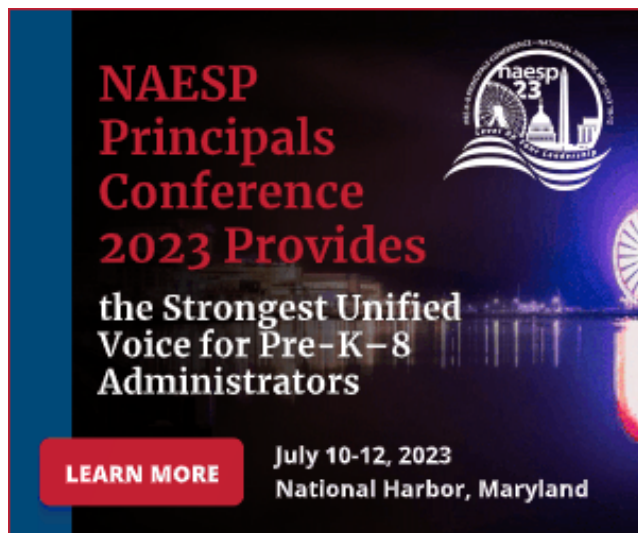
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Course in Helena. The golf tournament marks the beginning the annual SAM Week of Excellence.

- June 7, 2023:
  - DaRud Cup Golf Scramble
- June 8, 2023:
  - SAM Board Meeting, 8:00am - 2:00pm
  - SAM Delegate Assembly Caucuses, 2:00pm - 4:00pm
  - SAM Evenig of Excellence, 5:30pm - 9:00pm
- June 9, 2023:
  - SAM Delegate Assembly, 8:00am - 12:00pm

For more information, including hotel room blocks for the events, visit the [SAM Week of Excellence webpage](#).



you, your district clerk is the key contact who can renew your membership online. Members not associated with a school district must renew their own memberships. You will want to update your membership soon to ensure that your benefits remain active.

Please share membership information with administrators new to your district or region. We want to get them connected to the many resources offered by SAM as soon as possible. All questions can be directed to the SAM office.

## Montana Digital Academy/EdReady Montana Symposium

The inaugural [Innovation Runs Through It](#) symposium July 11-13, 2023, at the Phyllis J. Washington College of Education on the University of Montana campus in Missoula is an opportunity for you to invest in the professional development of your educators and help them drive innovation in their schools and classrooms.

The symposium will delve into timely focus areas, such as proficiency-based education, embracing artificial intelligence in education, adopting the best practices for online and blended learning in every classroom, and the revolutionary power of EdReady to help students fill gaps achieve.

For more information and registration details, please visit the event website: <https://innovationrunsthroughit.com/>



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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.

### ***EmpowerED Superintendents edLeader Panel Series***

The EmpowerED Superintendents edLeader Panel monthly broadcast series, co-hosted by CoSN, AASA and edWeb.net and sponsored by ClassLink, just wrapped up its fifth season with the May 11 broadcast on Succeeding with Digital Equity: CoSN's 2023 Award Winning District's Leadership Strategies. CoSN annually awards a school district with the association's Community Leadership Award for Digital Equity to honor and recognize those districts that are working to eliminate inequities and narrow the gap when it comes to digital access. Corpus Christi ISD in Texas was the recipient of CoSN's 2023 Community Leadership Award for Digital Equity. The May 11 edLeader Panel broadcast featured the Superintendent of Corpus Christi ISD, AASA member, Dr. Roland Hernandez, who was joined by the district's Director of Instructional Technology, Ms.

Cary Perales, and the district's Director of Technology Services, Ms. Marilyn Doughty. Dr. Jill Brown, CoSN's Director of Professional Learning, also joined the broadcast panel.

If you were not able to attend the live broadcast you are welcome to view the recording or access the podcast version by visiting The EmpowerED Superintendent edLeader Panel web page at <https://home.edweb.net/supers> where you can also access recordings of multiple other broadcasts in this series that were featured over the past 18 months.

A few of the titles featured in recent broadcasts include:

- Leading and Implementing Educational Technology Innovations: Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers
- Addressing Technology's Diversity and Equity Through District Policies, Practices, and Personnel
- Leveraging Technology Tools to Provide Equitable Learning Opportunities for ALL Students
- Planning and Sustaining Technology Innovations: Aligning Priorities, Costs, and Outcomes
- Leadership Challenges and Solutions Regarding Data Privacy in Technology-Enriched Learning Environments

### Continuing Education Credits

Participants in edWeb.net's edWebinars and edLeader Panels broadcasts may earn continuing education (CE) credits after viewing the live or recorded broadcasts. The edWeb CE credits also meet the qualifications for several professional associations for license, membership, and certification renewal, including CoSN's CETL re-certification program. To learn more about earning edWeb.net's CE credits please visit <https://home.edweb.net/edweb-tips/>.

### CoSN Membership:

If you, your school or district would like more information about joining CoSN, please contact [membership@cosn.org](mailto:membership@cosn.org).

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**Please take time to visit their websites.**

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900 N. Montana Ave., Suite A-4 Helena, MT 59601

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