



MASS Board Leadership Web Meeting DRAFT Minutes

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

9:00 – 10:00 am

Purpose: To increase effective communication with MASS leadership to support regional meeting discussion of contemporary education issues

In attendance: Casey Klasna, Alex Ator, Darin Hannum, Elliott Crump, Laurie Barron, Tobin Novasio, Rick Duncan, Godfrey Saunders, Nick Schumacher, Dr. Mike Perry, Kirk Miller, Kim Scofield

Not in attendance: Dan Schmidt, Dr. Greg Dern, Brad Moore, Scott Kinney

President Klasna called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

Items for Discussion - *MASS President Casey Klasna, Presiding*

1. Consideration of [MASS Board Leadership Web Meeting DRAFT Minutes 11-10-20](#) [Action]

Elliott Crump made a motion to approve the minutes; Godfrey Saunders seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Preparation for [2021 Legislative Session](#) – *Kirk Miller & Rick Duncan*

Kirk reviewed the 2021 Legislative Session webpage on the SAM website. He asked that region presidents share the information at their region meetings. The webpage can also be accessed through the 2021 Legislative Session Quick Link. Kirk reviewed the list of legislators by school district. He stated that the schedule of legislative events can be found under “[Watch and Listen](#)” on the [Montana Legislative Session](#) website. Kirk demonstrated how to use the [Bill Lookup](#) area of the website.

Kirk reviewed the SAM Advocacy Priorities 2021 Legislative Session that have been revised by the SAM Delegate Assembly Steering Committee and the rationale for the revisions ([SAM Advocacy Priorities 2021 Legislative Session 12.4.20](#) and [SAM Advocacy Priorities 2021 Legislative Session w Rationale 12.4.20](#)). Kirk reviewed the elements of the 5 SAM advocacy priority areas, describing each of the items. Kirk stressed that attaining present law adjustments to the school funding formula including inflation applied as a key funding goal for the session. He also mentioned the retention of district flexibility for permissive and voted levies, and Special Ed Allowable costs added to the funding formula with inflation applied as components of the funding goals for the legislative session. Kirk stated that he recommends SAM does not support any preschool bills that could open the door for privatization with public funds, but instead continue to implement the exceptional circumstances rule to incorporate preschool in districts. He stated that it will be important to protect the exceptional circumstances rule. Kirk stated that there is a current draft bill that would incentivize districts to increase teacher salaries by receiving an extra quality educator payment to those districts who meet the criteria. The bill will help rural schools, but will not be discriminatory to schools in more populated areas. Additionally, stressed addressing the impact of health insurance costs by seeking and supporting legislation in this area. Finally, we may have an opportunity to address digital equity issues during this session, so we will pay attention to and support bills related to broadband access, Erate, and technology tools to deliver remote education services to the benefit of all communities in Montana. Rick stated that the makeup of the legislative leadership and the education committees is favorable for education. He stressed the importance and uniqueness of the MT-PEC affiliates working with a shared vision.

Kirk reviewed the SAM Legislative Network 2021 (SAMLN21) registration list. He asked region presidents to encourage MASS members in their region to participate. He stated that a training for all SAMLN21 members will be scheduled for December 29th. The training will be recorded and accessible on-demand.

Kirk reviewed the [SAM Bills 2021](#) and the process planned for organizing these bills by SAM Advocacy Priority. A weekly update and podcast will be sent to SAM members during the Legislative Session. Zoom meetings will also be scheduled. Kirk urged MASS board members to utilize SAM as their go-to organization for knowing what is happening during the session.

Matt asked that Kirk elaborate about the SAM's partnership with MFPE, MTSBA, etc. and describe if these relationships harm SAM's ability to advocate for administrators. Kirk stated that SAM's relationship with these entities is not a blind partnership. With a newly elected MFPE president, dialogue has taken place that limits SAM's support of the entire MFPE advocacy package or anything else that would cause harm to SAM member's ability to implement programming in their schools. Matt stated that he recognizes that compromises need to take place occasionally but he is concerned that some of these relationships may limit MT-PEC partners' ability to call-out some inappropriate field representatives on the union side or the second place that administrators took in the MOAs MTSBA and MFPE put forward to provide advice to districts on employee leave and actions during COVID. Kirk stated that he values Matt's input and asked that SAM members trust that he will continue to strongly support SAM's advocacy priorities with MT-PEC and do the best he can to weave the complicated compromises that lead to successful movement for education in the legislative session.

3. [COVID-19 Information for Schools](#) Update – *Kirk Miller*

Kirk reviewed the COVID-19 Information for Schools resources on the SAM website. He stated that he is serving on the Montana COVID-19 Vaccination Plan Coordination Team and has been pleased with the organization of the team. He reviewed the [COVID-19 Vaccination Plan Interim Montana 11.19.20](#) stating that critical populations, including educators, will be included in the first round of vaccinations. Montana will be receiving 9700 Pfizer doses soon (December 15 according to the Governor's press call earlier this week). He believes it will take until Montana receives approximately 100,000 doses of vaccination until educators receive it. Children under 18 years of age will not be receiving the vaccine until later next year. Kirk encouraged board members to send questions and concerns to Dan Schmidt and Hannah Nieskens who are serving on the Governor-Elect's COVID-19 Implementation Taskforce.

Tobin stated that he is concerned that if the mask mandate is removed for schools, teachers and staff may opt-out in order to protect their health. He asked if it would be possible to work to keep the mask mandate in schools. Kirk has spoken to Hannah about this issue and she and Dan are communicating this type of information to the taskforce. Some Northwest MASS members recently sent a letter to the Governor-Elect's Coronavirus Task Force. Alex encouraged others to use the same type of language if they plan to send a letter to the taskforce.

Tobin asked about collecting data about the opening status of Montana school districts. Kirk stated that he doesn't believe that it serves SAM well to collect data on school opening plans, hybrid models, online models. He feels that collecting this data should be the responsibility of OPI. Matt stated that he would be happy to collect this data from the Northwest region but would like to add the positivity rate and infection rate/100,000 for school districts. SAM will not keep this data but it could be shared with MASS members. Kirk stated that comparing districts based on class size does not make sense

because each COVID spread demographic varies. Therefore, he is concerned about the data being misconstrued. Laurie stated that she does not want data created that would harm a school's plan to safely remain open. Tobin stated that he does not want the data to be made public but to be used by MASS members. Alex questions the ability to ensure accurate data. Tobin stated that he would like to keep the survey questions fairly broad to assist in collecting accurate data.

4. Region President Updates (Include COVID related Info for your Region) – *Region Presidents*

Northwest: Matt reported that some of the region members signed on to a letter to the Governor-Elect's Coronavirus Task Force. Matt asked how other districts are approaching winter sports. He has heard that MHSAA is considering implementing quarantine guidelines. Tobin stated that he has heard of parents who do not want their children to be tested so an entire team will not be quarantined. Matt is beginning to see a change in the elementary-aged students where parents want their children to be tested so they are not subject to future quarantines if they test positive.

Northcentral: Elliott stated that he appreciates the Legislative Session information and reported that he plans to send the info to his region members so they can begin building relationships with their legislators. He asked if districts are using the school administered Binax tests. He stated that the region members have discussed the following language changes: physical distancing instead of social distancing, remote learning instead of school closure, hazard pay instead of stipend or bonus.

Southcentral: Alex stated that he has been using the Binax test as an approved center and has been able to get ahead of the contact tracing. He stated that he disagrees with the term physical distancing instead of social distancing because COVID is spread during social settings. He stated that SC MASS is drafting a letter to the Governor-Elect's Coronavirus Task Force. Weldon and Associates is scheduled to present at the next meeting.

Southeast: Nick reported that the region members have decided to take a break from meeting for a few weeks in December since they have been meeting every week or two since March. Many of the districts in the region have implemented remote learning at some point. The region members have been discussing how to lead the trustees through the public pressure they are receiving for implementing the remote learning plans that have been established. They have also been discussing the lead in water testing, what happens when the Families First Coronavirus Response Act funds come to an end on December 31st, winter sports, and a board of trustees that voted to reduce the quarantine time recommended by the county health department.

Hi-Line: Darin reported that they had a discussion about e-rate at the last meeting with Nicole Jones presenting. Winter sports were also discussed. They have attempted to create district-wide plans for athletics but have struggled in part due to the fact that the Native American districts need to follow tribal health guidelines as well as county health department guidelines. Many of these districts have not had on-site learning yet this year. Some districts are being pressured to continue with winter sports even though school is remote.

4-Rivers: Godfrey reported that Hannah Nieskens will be presenting at the next meeting as well as Allison Harmon on behalf of the Deans of Education. Rick gave a legislative report at the last meeting with Godfrey expressing gratitude that he is in the 4 Rivers region, and requests that he reports to the 4R MASS at meetings into the future. Godfrey stated that AA schools are considering extending the season or postponing the first few weeks of games for winter sports. He stated that Belgrade is holding widespread testing events for staff. Belgrade has an MOA with the county health department so the

district can complete the contact tracing. He stated that even though parents are not being honest about test results, many students are.

- Information for Regions – [MASS Regional Information](#) webpage

5. [SAM Update](#) – *Kirk Miller*

The written report link was highlighted with reference to the MASS board reviewing at their leisure. Kirk indicated that there were no applicants for the NCE Incentive Award and this led to a discussion of promoting the application process with a new deadline of January 8. Kirk also emphasized the 2021 Montana Virtual Principals Conference on January 25-26. At the request of MASSP and MAEMSP he requested the support of superintendents for their principals to attend the 2 half day sessions and that they may want to consider attending as well -- great PD for all.

6. AASA Governing Board Updates – *Tobin Novasio, Laurie Barron, Mike Perry*

Laurie reported that AASA signed on to a letter on behalf of education associations emphasizing the importance of educators having a priority in receiving the vaccination. (Laurie added the following to the chat: “The undersigned organizations, with a combined membership of 10 million parents, families and educators, represent the pre-K-12 education community, write to emphasize the importance of fully re-opening our school buildings, safely, for in-person instruction. We believe that giving adults in the school system priority access to vaccinations is critical to meet that goal and the goal of generating trust in the vaccination program.”)

Tobin reported that AASA has sent a list of recommendations to President-Elect Biden including full funding of IDEA and to offset the U.S. Department of Education’s website indicating that schools did not need the CARES Act funds. He encouraged members to complete the AASA Salary and Benefit survey.

7. Future Meeting Dates - [Board Meetings 2020-21 & Conferences 2020-21](#)

8. What’s on Your Mind ...

- [MASS AASA Convention Incentive Award](#) - Nomination/Application Deadline Extended to December 1, 2020

Casey stated that the deadline was extended until December 1st, but no applications have been submitted. It was decided that the deadline will be extended to January 8th.

Kirk stated that the 2021 Montana Virtual Principals Conference is scheduled for January 25-26 and will be held from 7:30 - 11:30 each day. He encouraged superintendents to urge their principals to attend and consider attending themselves.

Darin Hannum made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Nick Schumacher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 AM

Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly Scofield
Director of Member Services and Professional Learning

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