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# School Administrators of Montana

# BULLETIN

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

Volume XLIV

May 2023

No. 328



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## **Mental Health Resources Available for Montana Students**

*by Erin Lipkind, MACSS President*

It is no surprise to educators that our students are facing a mental health crisis. Daily, we read about young people around the country taking their lives, and our students in Montana are no exception. Devastatingly, several of my dearest colleagues have recently experienced completed or near completed suicides in their school community. The 2021 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey shared that in a one-year time frame, 23.4% of students seriously considered attempting suicide and 41.4% of students felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some of their usual activities. While suicidal ideation is both an urban and rural concern, our rural areas have significantly fewer local resources for crisis care and crisis management—and I think we would all agree that prevention of rather than reaction to a crisis is what we should all strive for.

To address this gap in services and resources, Montana Professional Learning Collaborative/Region V RESA (WM-PLC), in partnership with the Montana Small Schools Alliance (MSSA), has been awarded a Stop School Violence Grant from the Department of Justice. This grant aims to increase the equity of student services for rural, tribal, and frontier schools across the state of Montana. Through a contract with [Stopit Solutions](#), WMPLC and MSSA have created the [Montana CARES](#) App to meet the unseen needs of school communities by providing access and linkages to resources for basic needs, mental health, and family resilience while ensuring the privacy and dignity all people deserve. This service is available **free of charge** to ALL Montana schools for the remainder of the 2.5 years of the grant.

## 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](#)\*\*

**Montana Cares can be made available for your students before summer vacation.** The Montana Cares App includes three buttons—Resources, Crisis Text Line, and Ask for Help.

- The **Resources** tab is a self-help tool loaded with resources that can be fully customized to your town or county and will also provide state and federal resources. Examples include information where to find the nearest food bank, churches or civic organizations that have hot meals or clothing and household assistance, domestic violence shelters, and hotlines.
- The **Crisis Text Line** allows the user to text with a fully trained crisis counselor 24/7/365. The crisis counselor is trained to help users move from a hot to a cool place. According to data collected across the United States by our partners at Stopit, 65% of texters who engage in conversations with Crisis Text Line counselors are sharing something for the very first time. Additionally, there were 15,676 conversations last year in which a texter mentioned they had a suicidal thoughts, a plan, and wanted to make a suicide attempt within 48 hours.
- The **Ask for Help** function allows users to reach out to a designated school official for help of varying types, from reporting a social media threat to asking for help for themselves or a peer. This platform is monitored 24/7/365 by the Stopit Help Center so that anytime a concern is raised that indicates the potential for immediate harm to self or others, the center engages pre-defined emergency teams or 911 as needed. This function can be turned off and rolled out at the start of the next school year.

To schedule an initial meeting to learn more about Montana Cares, you can book a time to talk with Matthew Toth, VP of Partnerships with Stopit Solutions. [Click Here](#) or call 609-793-8419. Matt is happy to zoom into a board meeting, a staff meeting, and/or 1:1 with the school administrator.

Additional services are available through this grant **at no cost** to any district that is located on an Indian Reservation and any district that is a member of [MSSA](#) in any program (library and counseling standards, consortium/PD, or MAP testing) or who qualifies to join and does so for FY24. MSSA Director Janelle Beers can answer membership questions and can be reached at [jbears@mt-ssa.org](mailto:jbears@mt-ssa.org). The following services are offered by our Mental Health Resource Navigator, [Kelsey McGill](#). Contact Kelsey at [kmcgill@wmpic.org](mailto:kmcgill@wmpic.org) to schedule a conversation about your district's needs.

What is offered **at no cost** to member school districts and districts located on an Indian Reservation:

- MANDT Training: Relational and Technical Skills Trainings for school personnel.
- E-Therapy: E-therapy is an online-based form of therapy using face-to-face video chat that is widely available for individuals who either live remotely or prefer virtual therapy. By providing e-therapy, this creates more accessibility and convenience to receive mental health services particularly for folks living in rural locations.
- Group Counseling and Virtual School Counseling Lessons: Virtual group counseling and/or classroom lessons provided by a licensed school counselor and/or clinical mental health therapist to provide psychoeducation. Group Counseling topic can include Social skills; Anger management; Working with anxiety; Conflict resolution; Relational aggression; Emotional regulation; Personal boundaries; and other lessons the school seems fit for arising student needs. Virtual School Counseling Lessons can include Emotion regulation (coping tools for anger, fear, sadness, etc.); Empathy building; Self-esteem and self-awareness; Time management/ Organization skills; Communication skills; Peer pressure; Problem-solving; Perseverance/ Resiliency skills; Study/Organizational skills; Decision-making skills; Goal-setting; Peer relationships/Social skills; Bullying prevention/ Intervention; Coping with stress; Personal boundaries; and other lessons the school seems fit for arising student needs

**Thank you to  
this month's  
featured  
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• Consultation for School Staff: Consultation can be utilized as needed with a licensed school counselor and/or clinical mental health therapist to provide support and interventions school staff as challenging behaviors arise.

If you have further questions, please reach out to [WMPLC](mailto:director@wmpplc.org) at [director@wmpplc.org](mailto:director@wmpplc.org). Please let WMPLC, MSSA, and Stopit Solutions help you put preventative measures in place prior to an incident of school violence or self-harm occurring in your district.

*Erin Lipkind*  
*MACSS President*

## **Resilient Leaders, Healthy Schools**

**Everyone in your school community benefits when YOU invest in YOU!**

*by Dr. Rob Watson, SAM Executive Director*

In our education circles, resiliency has gotten a “bad rap” in recent years. Resilient people were once revered as those who succeeded, despite difficult circumstances. During the recent COVID pandemic, when faced with tremendous obstacles and educator exhaustion, we were told to focus on building resilient skills. The unintended message was “when faced with adversity, just fix yourself!”

What do we know about resiliency? It is critical for educational leaders to effectively manage the many challenges that come with their roles. Leaders who possess this trait are better able to handle difficult situations with grace and come up with creative solutions to complex problems. They are also better equipped to maintain a positive attitude in the face of adversity, which can help to inspire and motivate their teams.

How can SAM support you in this work? Perhaps the greatest benefit of our organization is the power of collective learning. Through conferences, regional meetings and webinars, SAM provides the foundation and platform. We believe that our MT leaders benefit the most when they have a chance to collaborate and generate shared understanding in a safe environment.

It is with this in mind that we are excited to share with everyone a new opportunity to build resilience in your leadership skills; [The SAM Social/Emotional Learning, Professional Learning Cohort](#). This unique opportunity will provide a venue for MT leaders to explore SEL concepts through a collaborative learning model led by national experts. This cohort is only open to MT leaders as we believe that provides the best context for our learning. Our goal is to recruit 25 leaders, from all areas of the state and all SAM affiliates, to participate in this inaugural SAM PLC.

The cohort begins in August 2023, so don't wait to get signed up for this unique opportunity. Don't forget - everyone in your school community benefits when YOU invest in YOU!

**Rob**

# Save the Date: SAM Administrators Institute 2023

## *Resilient Leaders, Healthy Schools*

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We're excited to announce this year's SAM Administrators Institute 2023, *Resilient Leaders, Healthy Schools*, July 24 - 26 at the Best Western Great Northern in Helena. This event will focus on the importance of resilient leadership in creating and maintaining strong and successful schools.

Resilient leaders play a crucial role in building and maintaining healthy schools. When leaders are able to model and promote resilience, it can have a positive impact on the entire school community. By prioritizing self-care and fostering a culture of resilience, leaders can help teachers, staff, and students navigate challenges and setbacks, and ultimately, create a more supportive and successful learning environment.

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 keynote and 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.

Assemble your leadership team, aspiring administrators, and teacher teams. SAM Administrators Institute 2023 will provide professional learning opportunities for all. Stay tuned for registration and full conference schedule details.

Mark your calendar to join us on July 24 - 26!

**You are invited to attend  
the May SAM  
Professional Learning  
Webinar: *School-Based***

**Registration is Open  
for the SAM Leaders  
Professional Learning  
Program 2023**



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## Mental Health Programs

All SAM members are invited to attend a [Zoom](#) webinar on **Thursday, May 11, 2023 from 10:00-11:00 AM**. The webinar is part of the one-hour monthly professional learning webinar series. This month's topic is **School-Based Mental Health Programs**. Meghan Peel from DPHHS and Kelsey Gummer from MT Health Care Foundation will be joining us to discuss this important topic with our members. As we all know, schools have a tremendous need for school-based mental health services for students. While we lack resources and staffing in MT, there are still a variety of ways to provide services for your students. Some of the following topics will be discussed: types of school-based services, transition of CSCT, student identification process, school-based health centers, telehealth, funding sources, and staffing for services. Thanks for your participation in this important SAM Webinar.

**Join SAM Webinar:** <https://zoom.us/j/3923446729>

## Registration is Open for the 2023 DaRud Golf Scramble



All SAM members are invited to register to participate in the 2023 DaRud Golf Scramble on Wednesday, June 7 at Bill Roberts Golf Course in Helena. The golf tournament marks the beginning of the annual SAM Week of Excellence.

- June 7, 2023:
  - DaRud Cup Golf Scramble

The SAM Leaders Professional Learning Program (LPLP) is a unique and innovative approach to professional learning designed specifically for Montana education leaders. The program provides administrators with personalized professional learning opportunities that are responsive to the challenges and issues they face every day.

One of the key components of SAM LPLP is providing one-on-one coaching/mentoring with a provider - an experienced Montana administrator. This approach allows participants to receive personalized support and guidance as they work to address the specific challenges they encounter in their roles as education leaders.

The primary goal of the SAM LPLP is to provide intentional and personalized professional learning to Montana educators, using research-based strategies that improve job satisfaction and administrator longevity, ultimately leading to increased student achievement and quality of instruction. SAM LPLP aims to positively impact the education of students across Montana by empowering and supporting education leaders to enhance their skills, knowledge, and effectiveness as they work to support the education and success of their students.

If you are looking for a professional learning program that provides personalized support and guidance during the upcoming school year, consider registering for SAM LPLP. Visit the [SAM LPLP webpage](#) to learn more about the program and how to register.

- 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

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



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 broadcast series – sponsored by ClassLink -- is now in its fifth season. Each monthly broadcast is co-hosted by CoSN, AASA and edWeb.net. Participants can earn continuing education (CE) credits after viewing the live or recorded broadcasts. To learn more about CE credits please visit this <https://home.edweb.net/edweb-tips/>.

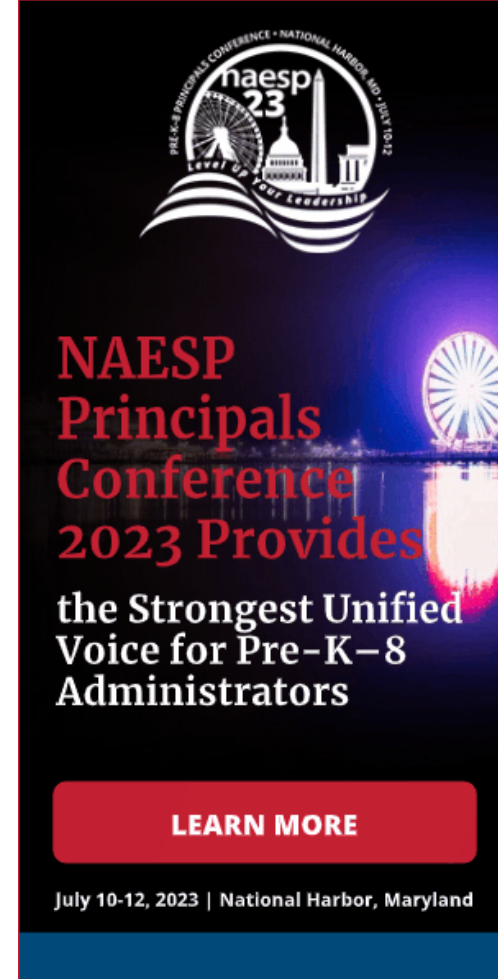
### **Succeeding with Digital Equity: CoSN’s 2023 Award Winning District#39’s Leadership Strategies**

The next episode of the CoSN EmpowerED Superintendent edLeader Panel series titled, “Succeeding with Digital Equity: CoSN’s 2023 Award Winning District#39’s Leadership Strategies” will be broadcast on Thursday, May 11, 2023, at 1:00 pm Mountain Time.

Digital equity is a constant and challenging issue of our times. 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

is the recipient of CoSN’s 2023 Community Leadership Award for Digital Equity.

On this edLeader Panel broadcast the Superintendent of Corpus Christi ISD, Dr. Roland Hernandez, is joined



by the district's Director of Instructional Technology, Ms. Cary Perales, and the district's Director of Technology Services, Ms. Marilyn Doughty, as featured guest panelists. The district leaders will share the strategies they use to lead their work across their district to assure a safe and effective digital landscape for all their students. The district's "Tech2Teach" conference and digital magazine, which are used to showcase truly transformative learning, are two of the multiple approaches for leveraging technology innovation that will be shared. Dr. Jill Brown, CoSN Director of Professional Learning, also joins the panel to share CoSN professional learning resources and recommendations for addressing Digital Equity.

Free registration for the May 11, 2023, CoSN edLeader Panel broadcast is available at <https://home.edweb.net/supers>

If you cannot join the May 11, 2023, live broadcast you can also register for the recording or podcast edition a few days after the live broadcast, as well as access video recordings, podcasts and articles from previous monthly edLeader Panel broadcasts at <https://home.edweb.net/supers>

#### **CoSN Resources:**

##### **1) Defining Digital Equity 2022**

Creating a shared understanding of what digital equity is and what district leaders can do to realize digital equity for the students that they serve is more important than ever.

Available at <https://cosn.org/digitalequity>

##### **2) CoSN Student Home Internet Connectivity Study**

CoSN has published a study on students' at-home internet connectivity which provides guidelines on bandwidth, devices, and other remote learning needs. Read an overview or download the complete report at <https://cosn.org/digitalequity>

#### **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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