

School Administrators of Montana

BULLETIN

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

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Upcoming Conferences and Meetings

Feb. 28 - March 2: MCEC Conference - Missoula

March 19 - 20: MASS Spring Conference - Helena

March 19 - 21: METatechED Conference - Helena

April 4 - 6: MAEMSP/MASSP Spring Conference - Fairmont

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

Thank you to this month's featured Business Partners!



Thanksgiving...A Time for Reflection

by Karen Underwood, MCASE President

Happy Thanksgiving! With our first major holiday just around the corner, I am reminded of the value of taking time for reflection. We have a great deal to be thankful for in the state of Montana. Despite our challenges and sometimes because of these same challenges, we offer a solid education to *all* our students. Moving to a more specialized area of education several years ago, I am ever more grateful for the dedication our colleagues demonstrate; the support, trust, and active involvement shown by the parents of our students; and the work ethic exercised by our students.

As we move through our school year, I invite you to meet the challenges of our profession while truly appreciating the dedication of those around you and appreciating the process involved in making progress. Most recently, we need to be impressed and bolstered by the collaborative efforts shown during this past legislature. Recall just a few years ago when educational entities were competing with each other and forwarding separate agendas.

As we all know, the needs of our students are growing. More is required of us in order to address their needs, talents, and future roles. We have underserved gifted students, unfunded mandates for special education students, and understaffed classrooms. Obviously, we need financial support and we are compelled to be creative with all our resources including time, facilities, money, and personnel. Nonetheless, we see districts approaching their receptive communities with building projects and following a principled path of commitment.

Facing our challenges, we need to develop the professionals and be thankful for those who have selected education as a career. We need to look at not only recruitment but also development and retention of those individuals who have selected this career path. We are fortunate to have professional development tools like SAM, CSPD, OPI, our universities, etc., for developing the staffs within our schools including our support staffs and particularly our paraprofessionals. We likewise have the advantages technology affords our delivery of professional support so that we are no longer tied to specific times, places, or limited topics.

We are in an exciting time to support our teachers. It is easier for us to seek opportunities for them and to be responsive to their professional needs. Along these lines, we are also obligated to address their everyday responsibilities like being cognizant of class sizes or caseloads, additional non-teaching responsibilities, and overall demands.

An additional and difficult responsibility we have is to recruit and train successful special education substitutes for both our teacher and paraprofessional positions. Many of our substitutes shy away from assignments in special education classrooms simply because they are not aware of the roles which they will be asked to perform. We can strip away these inhibitions if we are more deliberate in our training and role delineations. Thankfully, there are resources available.

As yet another way to support, we need to address our own professional growth and how it influences teachers' work and, in turn, student success. Our professional development in becoming more knowledgeable of functional behavior assessments, being active members in developing behavior plans, and being "process leaders," where we use our roles to complement our service providers, is ever more important. We jeopardize our effectiveness and our teachers' efforts if we do not engage actively in the processes associated with our roles and most especially the special education process.

I am grateful too that we have already laid the necessary foundation for effective progress monitoring within our schools. These activities benefit all our educational efforts and definitely support the development of special education plans. Given the Andrew F. Supreme Court decision at the beginning of the year, we are reminded to do our jobs well in documenting student progress to ensure "meaningful educational benefit," creating defensible IEP's, and engaging parents actively in our processes. We need solid, reliable and frequent data to accomplish these tasks. Our current and future expanded efforts in this direction will serve all well.

And last but not least, I am grateful for the skill set administrators possess. We actively listen and we can provide our audiences with our full attention. Our direct contact with people is all the more critical in these technological times. As you well know, we have many competing responsibilities as school leaders and ever-fluctuating priorities, but we compromise all our efforts if we fail to step back and listen well.



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And of course, we can reflect. Give yourself some quiet time once in a while and reflect upon the valuable and complex role you provide in educating the youth of Montana. Personally, I want to thank you for what you do. I commend you for the time and expertise you bring to your careers. I am grateful for what you provide the youth of our state. So as I look to Thanksgiving, I will be thinking of each of you and, humbly, I thank you.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Karen Underwood, MCASE President

Focus on Students...Keeping the Main Thing Clear

by Kirk Miller, SAM Executive Director



Thanks for your leadership, SAM members! Two months into the 2017-18 school year is a good time to check in with you to see if you are focusing your energy and attention on the students and community you serve. With all of the state and federal attention on

budgets and taxes and the like, it is hard for those who lead our schools to keep a clear focus on the main thing, the students and your great work to provide them with the very best education while nurturing the support of your community. The partnership between schools, parents, and community has created a great public education system in Montana. Now would be a fine time for you to enhance your focus on what you are doing in your schools, with the help of your community, in providing an outstanding education for your students. Review your goals related to students and make a list of accomplishments achieved already this school year. Keep that list close by and share it every chance you get when interacting with community members. I have found that this is helpful in keeping the main thing clear while commotion and tumult swirl around attempting to divert your attention. Here are a few tools to help you keep the main thing clear ...

GREAT V 2017

The Great Work of Montana's Public Schools, Volume 5 was released at MCEL 2017. This publication is intended to be a resource for you (Montana school administrators) for supporting the great progress and the work accomplished by our public schools. The data from the survey clearly shows that Montanans support their public schools and want opportunities for great education for their children in their community. A hard copy of this publication is being mailed to each SAM member, and also school board members and business officials this week so that you will have it available for your use. If you would like more copies to share with your community, just contact our office and we will get some to you. You can access a digital copy that is downloadable by following this [LINK](#).

SAM Leaders Professional Learning Program 2017-18

The SAM Leaders Professional Learning Program (LPLP) is off to a great start in 2017-18. Sixty-six Montana administrators have joined the SAM LPLP professional learning delivery system that personalizes learning for each member, and we anticipate several more will join. Those involved benefit from access to a coach, the SAM LPLP Resource Center, and Collegial Learning Networks (CLN). The 66 members are participating in six

Lots of Award and Recognition Opportunities Coming Up - Please Nominate/Apply!

by Pat Audet, SAM Associate Director

There are a few awards that are available now and will be coming available soon for nomination and application. Please check the [SAM website](#) and your SAM e-list email for the call for nominations and applications for the following awards:

The following MAEMSP awards are now open for application and/or nomination:

MAEMSP – Friends of Education (Due Feb. 9) *This award is given to any person in the community who has gone above and beyond with duties that support and promote public education. The recipient of this award must be a private citizen that is outside the professional educational field.*

MAEMSP – Adrian Langstaff Award (Due Feb. 9) *This award is one of the highest recognitions that the Montana Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals can be awarded to a deserving member. The award is in the name and memory of Adrian Langstaff. Adrian was an outstanding elementary principal who was a very recognized leader in his school, community and state. His life was cut short in a tragic accident.*

MAEMSP – Aspiring Principal Scholarship Award (Due Feb. 9) *MAEMSP provides an annual Scholarship/Incentive Grant of \$800 to a student successfully applying to or currently enrolled in an approved course of study for the Master of Education Degree in Elementary School Education. The applicant must have completed three years of successful teaching in elementary or middle school education (K-8) and hold a current Montana Class II teaching certificate.*

MAEMSP – Appreciation Award (Due Feb. 9) *This award is given to an individual, organization, or business that has provided outstanding support to any of the members of the Montana Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals.*

MAEMSP – 2018 National Conference Incentive Scholarship Award (Due Feb. 9) *MAEMSP National Convention Scholarship will provide the opportunity for one of its members to attend the National Association of Elementary School Principals Convention for professional the following:*

- Paid registration to the NAESP Convention;
- Roundtrip airfare to the site of the convention;

(and growing) CLN's working together on key educational topics – e.g. Personalized Learning, Social Emotional Learning, Information Security (Trusted Learning Environments), GEAR UP Schools, University Cohorts, New Special Ed Directors, and EPAS Principal Evaluation. The CLN's work will help the individuals with implementation plans for their schools and also coordinate collaborative sharing of best practices while learning from each other. Great stuff! You can still become a part of this personalized learning if you wish. To learn more, follow this [LINK](#). To register, follow this [LINK](#). Join other Montana school administrators who are using this professional learning to focus on the main thing!

Advocacy

We are continuing to monitor and pay attention to the status of state revenues, potential proposed MCA 17-7-140 statewide cuts, and even the potential of a Special Legislative Session. As information comes available, we will post it on the [SAM Advocacy Issues 2017-18](#) webpage. We are updating information on [Federal Issues](#) impacting Montana education under the 'Advocacy' tab on the SAM website. SAM members approved the [SAM Advocacy Priorities, Positions and Resolutions](#) at the SAM Annual Business Meeting at MCEL on October 19, 2017. Our goal is to make it easy for you to check out what is going on in advocacy without having it divert your attention from the main thing.

Your effort to keep student learning in focus is one of the reasons why our Montana students do so well. Thanks for your leadership of our Montana schools! I hope you have a great November!



Changes to Your Affiliate E-List

You may have noticed changes to your affiliate e-list. Each affiliate president voted at the October 19th SAM Board meeting to change the response structure of the affiliate e-list from "Reply to Author" to "Reply to Entire List". Many members have communicated that they want to see the responses to emails that are sent through their affiliate e-list. However, if you do not want your affiliate's e-list communication being sent to your email inbox, you have the ability to modify your notification settings. You have the option to receive e-list messages through your email or to view the messages through your SAM profile on the website.

To modify your e-list email notification settings, follow these steps:

1. Go to the [SAM website](#) and click on "Member Login" at the top of the page. Login to your SAM profile with your Username (your email address) and your Password.
2. Click on "My Profile" in the Quick Links menu.
3. Hover over "My Features" and click on "E-Lists".
4. Keep the email delivery to ON if you prefer to receive e-list messages through your email, or turn the email delivery to OFF if you prefer to view messages from your

- A letter to the recipient's superintendent from MAEMSP President encouraging him/her to grant adequate release time and financial support for meals and room in the Montana room block.

MAEMSP – National Distinguished Principal (Due Feb. 9) This prestigious award recognizes elementary and middle-level principals who set the bar high for all aspects of excellence in student achievement, instruction, and climate within their school district and community.

MCASE – Distinguished Service Awards – Open Now for Nomination (Due Jan. 12) Each year, these awards are given a special education director, a regular educator, and a special educator. Special education is a very trying but rewarding field. The Montana Council of Administrators of Special Education would like to annually award those special education leaders, special educators, and classroom teachers that excel at their positions and deserve to be recognized for their efforts.

MASSP – NASSP Principal of the Year (Opening in January) This award is given to a deserving individual who demonstrates outstanding leadership in providing high-quality education within their building. These principals are recognized by their peers for the contributions they have made to their students, staff, and community in implementing educational excellence.

MASSP – Community Partner in Education Award (Opening in January) The CPE Award is given to an individual who provides great support to public education and is always there to help out in any way possible for the good of the school and the students. The candidate must be a private citizen outside the professional educational field.

MASSP – Future Administrators Scholarship (Opening in January) This award comes in the form of a \$1100 scholarship provided to a graduate student who is in at least their 2nd semester of an approved course of study for the Master of Education Degree in Secondary School Administration. The candidate cannot be financially supported by a school district and cannot be a double recipient of the MAEMSP and MASSP scholarships. Finally, the candidate must also intend to keep working in Montana.

META – Technologist of the Year Award (Opening Soon) This award is established to recognize the fine achievements and successes of a Montana K-12 School Technologist (Tech Coordinator, Tech Director, Tech Specialist, etc) at the State level. Eligible candidates for this award must be 2017-18 META members.

School Administrators of Montana, as well as the leadership of these affiliates, would hope that nominations of deserving individuals will be made for each one of the above awards. Again, please go to the [SAM website](#) – and click on any one of these affiliates to go to their perspective awards or links to award applications and read more about each award and qualifications. Notifications will be provided through the SAM e-list emails also.



Save the Date!

profile on the SAM website. Note: If you have turned your email delivery off, return to the E-List page on your SAM profile and click on the e-list to view and respond to messages that have been sent to your affiliate e-list.

All responses sent to an e-list message, either from your email inbox or your SAM profile, will be delivered to the entire e-list. If you would like to respond to the author only, you will need to compose a new email addressed only to that member.

If you are having difficulties accessing your SAM profile or have other questions concerning e-lists, please call or email Kim at the SAM office: (406)442-2510 or samks@sammt.org.

Click on the link to view an [E-List Instructional Video](#).

Did You Know?

School leaders who are SAM members can sign up for a free CoSN membership under their district META membership!

Want to know more about [CoSN](#) and [CoSN membership](#)? Click on the links, talk to your district's technology director, or call the SAM office!



***Happy Thanksgiving from
the SAM Team!***



Thank you to SAM's Business Partners!

Please take time to visit their websites.

[Montana Big Sky Sponsors](#)

**MAEMSP and MASSP will
join forces for our annual
conference!**

**April 4-6, 2018 at Fairmont
Hot Springs**

**Bridging the Gap: From
Theory to Practice**



Wednesday, April 4 Preconference:

John Perricone - *Zen and the Art of Teaching*

Thursday, April 5 & Friday, April 6

Dr. Tony Sinanis and Dr. Joe Sanfelippo - *Hacking Leadership*

Check out Joe and Tony's article from the NAESP Website by clicking [HERE](#).

Mitch Craft - *Leadership with PLC's*

Gerry Brooks - *Communication*

In attendance will be:

**NAESP President Dan Kelley and
NAESP President Brian Partin**

Registration coming soon!



Health Insurance
P O Box 4579 - Helena, MT 59601
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Phone: 406-457-4400



Technology Innovation
1309 NW Bypass - Great Falls, MT 59404
Email: bruce.wallace@vision.net
Phone: 406-727-5994



Professional Learning Organization
1031 N. Academic Way, Ste. 242
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814
Email: hrogers@ncce.org
Phone: 208-292-2529



Rigorous Learning For All Students
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Rigorous Learning For All Students
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Email: STraub@leadered.com
Phone: 518-399-2776



Mileposts™ cloud-based achievement
data management
408 E. Parkcenter Blvd., Ste.300
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Technology Services Partner
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