

# School Administrators of Montana

**SAM Delegate Assembly 2023 Recommendations  
Approved by the SAM Membership on October 20,  
2023**

## **SAM Advocacy Positions and Resolutions**





## **POSITION STATEMENTS Approved by SAM Membership on 10-20-23**

It is the role of the Delegate Assembly to bring before the membership timely and important resolutions which will, upon adoption, serve as the platform for action.

Any reference to ‘non-public schools’ throughout the document also includes home schools.

### **POSITIONS PREAMBLE**

SAM (The School Administrators of Montana) is an organization that is student centered, constantly looking for ways to improve the educational climate within the state. SAM has put a great deal of thought and discussion into various issues that affect the students and education in general in this great state. Public schools are endeavoring to provide the best education possible for all students; to this degree the organization has taken a stand on certain issues. The positions and resolutions relative to many concerns are listed on the following pages.

**Part I. BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM develop and adopt a position that will carry forward year to year through the Legislative Session, specifying the process to be followed and the topics to be addressed by the K-12 Vision Project.

**Part II. BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Delegate Assembly Steering Committee recommends that the resolutions be carried over for further review and discussion through the next year in preparation for the Delegate Assembly, assign a designation and undertake the actions called for under such Positions and Resolutions. In no case should these resolutions be seen as SAM priorities that are segregated from the considerations in Part I.

**Part III. BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM establish new Resolutions adopted by the membership, assign a designation and undertake the actions called for under such Resolutions in the same manner and subject to the same limitations as recommended for resolutions approved by the membership under Part II above.

### **STUDENT ISSUES**

#### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

SAM supports efforts designed to: (a) educate school district personnel in recognizing and reporting symptoms of child abuse and neglect and (b) enable school districts and other community agencies to integrate services in carrying out their legal responsibility for these children in a school setting.

Designation: Support

#### **CULTURAL STUDIES**

SAM supports curriculum pertaining to diversity and cultural studies as well as the establishment of local policies concerning curriculum development, which would enhance the education of all Montana students.

Designation: Support



## **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS OF MONTANA**

### **SAM 2023 Advocacy Priorities, Positions, Resolutions**

**Approved by SAM Membership at the SAM Business Meeting 10-20-23**

#### **FOCUS ON THE WHOLE CHILD**

SAM believes that the child is the focal point of the educational process and the primary focus should be on student learning and academic rigor. It is the responsibility of the school administrators to facilitate the direction of available skills and resources toward helping each child develop a positive self image and to strengthen feelings of self-worth through academic rigor and social emotional learning.

SAM urges all groups involved in the educational process of children to work in unity for the total development of the child and providing opportunities by which each child may realize his/her fullest potential.

Designation: Support

#### **SAFE, SECURE, RESPECTFUL, DRUG FREE, AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS**

SAM supports and promotes legislation (including IDEA reform) and funding that addresses violence, discipline, respect and security in public schools as well as funding for such IDEA mandates as alternative interim educational settings. SAM further supports programs such as MTSS- Multi Tiered System of Supports, school based mental health and day treatment services as integral components of the continuum for safe and healthy schools. SAM supports and promotes safe, respectful, drug free, healthy schools and the continuation of federal and any additional funding for such programs.

Designation: Support

#### **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

SAM supports compulsory education and daily attendance of all school age children. SAM supports legislation to strengthen truancy laws by increasing parent and student accountability and by establishing clear enforcement procedures by appropriate officials (ie: CPS, county attorney, sheriff).

Designation: Support

#### **STUDENT DATA PRIVACY**

SAM supports and believes in the essence of 20-7-1326, MCA a law mandating Montana pupil online personal information protection. SAM also recognizes and identifies challenges to the implementation of the law including, but not limited to, management oversight at the local and state level; legal ramifications and consequences of non-compliance and vendor violations; and further views this law as an unfunded mandate obligating local school districts to perform legal requirements without a suitable funding mechanism.

Designation: Action

#### **STATEWIDE ISSUES**

##### **ACCREDITATION STANDARDS**

SAM supports the implementation and maintenance of strong educationally sound accreditation standards and supports the position that the State Board of Public Education decisions be made with input from all sectors concerned with education. No action should be taken that will affect schools until all concerned are given notice and are provided with the opportunity to be heard through public hearings.



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**Approved by SAM Membership at the SAM Business Meeting 10-20-23**

Changes affecting fiscal responsibility should not take effect until adequate resources are provided to the school districts.

Designation: Support

#### **CONTINUITY OF LEADERSHIP**

SAM believes and research has confirmed that continuity of school and district leadership is essential for the continuous improvement of educational quality. SAM supports legislation and practice which will require multi-year superintendent contracts after the initial year of service, provide for longer multi-year contracts for superintendents, link superintendent evaluations to the accomplishment of district goals, and institute a mediation system to help solve problems between a board and its superintendent.

Designation: Support

#### **COOPERATION IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

Education costs are a continuing concern. SAM urges the state to continue to encourage the use of cost effective and educationally effective cooperative efforts, programs and services among educational institutions and state agencies which serve children.

Designation: Support

#### **DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM**

SAM supports the board of public education ongoing development of model curriculum, materials, and assessments aligned to National and State adopted Content, Program and Performance Standards. This development will be done collaboratively with national content area organizations and state education leadership associations.

Designation: Support

#### **EDUCATION OF COMMUNITIES AND LEGISLATORS**

SAM supports an ongoing community forum to inform and educate all stakeholders, including legislators, about PK-12 education in our local communities.

Designation: Support

#### **LICENSURE**

SAM believes that it is the responsibility of the State Board of Public Education to determine the rules and regulations for the consistency of licensing of teachers and administrators. The Office of Public Instruction shall administer and continuously review the licensing of teachers and administrators and not permit any endorsement issued to be eliminated. SAM reviews and remains involved in the regulation of related service providers licensed through the Department of Labor and Industry. Licensure of professional educators is required to offer services in Montana schools.

Designation: Support

#### **MONTANA DIGITAL ACADEMY**

SAM supports the Montana Digital Academy and restoration of full funding by the state to guarantee equitable access to educational curriculum.



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**Approved by SAM Membership at the SAM Business Meeting 10-20-23**

Designation: Support

#### **MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**

SAM supports the Montana High School Association concept and opposes the Montana High School Association becoming a part of the Office of Public Instruction or an agency of the State Legislature.

Designation: Support

#### **NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND HOME SCHOOLS**

SAM supports legislation that strengthens the accountability of non-public schools and home schools in Montana. Specifically focusing on repealing and/or challenging the constitutionality of HB 393 (Legislative Session 2023), AKA the special education savings account bill.

Designation: Actions

#### **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

SAM recognizes and encourages efforts to support school improvement and acknowledges that several models can be viable approaches to educational improvement. SAM believes that such efforts must not detract from the educational quality, equity, and funding available to the other students in the state. Furthermore, SAM strongly opposes the arbitrary removal of the school administrator(s) as a means of school improvement.

Designation: Support

#### **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE RULE MAKING**

SAM supports state administrative rules for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that do not exceed the requirements in the federal laws and rules.

Designation: Support

#### **STUDENT CAREER PREPARATION**

SAM recognizes the importance of the development of career/technical skills and strong work ethics in all students. SAM supports the formation of career preparation and school-to-work programs in partnership with other agencies, post-secondary institutions, and business. SAM expects that public schools will be fully involved in all planning and implementation of these programs.

Designation: Support

#### **DATABASE SYSTEMS**

SAM supports the use of a secure statewide data warehouse that the Office of Public Instruction uses for the maintenance of student academic records and longitudinal data. SAM further supports the completion of the State Database Modernization project undertaken by the OPI beginning in 2021.

Designation: Support



## **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS OF MONTANA**

### **SAM 2023 Advocacy Priorities, Positions, Resolutions**

**Approved by SAM Membership at the SAM Business Meeting 10-20-23**

#### **EDUCATOR AND EDUCATION STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

SAM affirms that teacher and administrator retention and recruitment are keys to quality education. It supports efforts to support mentoring and to fund incentives for recruitment and retention of staff. Districts are faced with an increasing need to compete with other states for a shrinking pool of qualified candidates. The legislature must address current laws, administrative rules, and funding support to provide districts the flexibility to retain personnel and to compete for new candidates. SAM further affirms that staff supporting the education of Montana's children are critical to maintaining and sustaining high quality education programs. SAM supports incentivizing strategies for recruitment and retention efforts of all school personnel.

Designation: Action

#### **TEACHER EDUCATION**

SAM recognizes the growing level of diverse educational needs of students. SAM urges Montana's teacher education programs to better prepare teachers to competently address the diverse educational needs of all students.

Designation: Support

#### **PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE**

SAM will seek legislative changes to find a method for relief to health insurance costs and support the development of a representative stakeholder health insurance committee to assist in the implementation of HB332 (2023 Session, Health Insurance Trust bill).

Designation: Action

#### **REGIONAL SERVICE AGENCY STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE DEFINED IN LAW**

SAM will work in collaboration with other public education advocacy groups in developing necessary guidelines, policies, structures and other resources to assist school districts in establishing/structuring/implementing regional service center areas to maximize efficiencies and optimize resources under existing law.

Designation: Support

#### **SUPPORT OF TRAINING FOR FEDERAL TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES REIMBURSEMENT**

SAM will support a model for training for federal funding reimbursement applications and submittal for technology and facilities to leverage expertise to ensure every district in Montana is taking advantage of the Federal funding (Example: E-Rate).

Designation: Support

#### **LOCAL CONTROL ISSUES**

##### **CENSORSHIP**

SAM reaffirms its position to oppose any legislative action that removes local control of written, printed, and/or electronically transmitted publications by students.



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### **SAM 2023 Advocacy Priorities, Positions, Resolutions**

**Approved by SAM Membership at the SAM Business Meeting 10-20-23**

Designation: Support

#### **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

SAM supports the position that the direction of collective bargaining should be retained at state and local levels in a manner that does not mitigate the policy-making authority of local boards of trustees. Collective bargaining should be limited to salary, hours, fringe benefits, and directly related financial conditions of employment and grievance procedures. Arbitration should be limited to matters of contract interpretation and should not be used to settle a negotiation impasse. Collective bargaining legislation and/or contracts should include adequate provisions for the resolution of unfair practices and provide for adequate protection of employer and employee rights.

Designation: Support

#### **COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS**

SAM affirms that counties should have a qualified county superintendent.

Designation: Support

#### **LEAD TEACHER/COMMITTEE OF TEACHERS**

SAM believes that all teachers should have the benefit of working with effective administrators. SAM opposes the concepts of a lead teacher or a committee of teachers as a substitute for the school administrator. Small rural schools with nine or fewer FTE licensed staff and without a licensed superintendent as per 10.55.705(1) fall under the office of the county superintendent to provide administrative services.

Designation: Support

#### **PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS**

SAM will endeavor to work cooperatively with staff and educational associations on issues of common concern. Through a joint, cooperative effort the organization will continue striving to improve education in the state of Montana.

Designation: Support

#### **SCHOOL BOARD RELATIONS**

SAM believes that school administrators and their school trustees share a commitment and a responsibility to work cooperatively toward a common goal of developing effective educational programs for Montana youth. To achieve this goal, it is imperative that trustees and administrators foster and nurture a sense of trust and respect individually and collectively for each other. Full and open communication is essential between them if their common goal is to be attained. If trustees and administrators are to succeed in their efforts to provide the best educational opportunity for students, they must strive to understand and appreciate their respective leadership roles.

Designation: Support

#### **EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**





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### **SAM 2023 Advocacy Priorities, Positions, Resolutions**

**Approved by SAM Membership at the SAM Business Meeting 10-20-23**

SAM believes that local control is vital to a local educational agency's (LEA) ability to maintain and direct the educational wellbeing of our schools at the local level in Montana. Local control is essential to ensure continuity of services in our communities for all publicly educated students in Montana, especially in emergency situations, such as a pandemic.

Designation: Support

### **FUNDING ISSUES**

#### **FEDERAL PROGRAMS**

Federally funded programs should be written in language that ensures easy understanding, minimum paperwork, maximum student-to-teacher contact and interaction, and which allows for local districts to expend allocated funds on eligible students in a manner which they, the local districts, feel most beneficial. It is incumbent on local boards and their administrators to ensure that the intent of federal programs is properly implemented and that programs are managed with fiscal and educational integrity.

To enable Montana schools to benefit from various sources of federal funding, SAM supports legislative efforts to pool applications and reporting requirements for receipt of these federal funds.

To ensure equitable funding to all Montana students, SAM supports formula grants instead of competitive grants. SAM will encourage our federal and state legislators to work to this end.

Designation: Support

#### **FUNDING OF PK-12**

SAM believes that educational opportunities should continue to be based on equal opportunity, equity and adequacy in funding and therefore supports the following:

- state funding for schools should be 100% of the BASE budget for the school district general fund budget;
- all federal and state programs be fully funded (no unfunded mandates);
- all components of state funding be increased on a yearly basis to reflect the effect of inflation;
- funding of public alternative educational programs;
- maintaining, stabilizing and/or increasing state and federal funding for existing PK-12 programs.
- the state general fund will not be supplanted with educationally targeted federal funds.

Designation: Support

#### **NON-PUBLIC AND HOME SCHOOL FUNDING (PK-12)**

SAM opposes any legislation or initiatives which would allow for vouchers, tuition tax credits, tax savings accounts, or any other funding plans for any non-public and home PK-12 schools. Any school receiving public funding shall be held accountable to all accreditation standards.

Designation: Action

#### **RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

SAM supports efforts to protect the integrity of current retirement systems. SAM supports efforts to make the system more equitable for career administrators, hard to fill positions and to provide creative ways to retain senior administrators without benefit reduction.

Designation: Support





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#### **TAXES**

SAM supports the position that the Legislature should enact a balanced taxing system for the state of Montana. The financial investment in public education should be based upon equitable and appropriate taxes, and opposes funding formulas shifting the burden onto the local taxpayers.

Designation: Support

#### **TECHNOLOGY**

SAM believes technology is now and will forever be an integral part of our culture and presents ever changing challenges and opportunities for our students. Schools throughout Montana struggle to finance critical technology infrastructure. Educational services requiring technology are not available to all Montana Students. Due to increased cybersecurity incidents, increased costs associated with insurance, subscription costs, and more limited life cycles of equipment, state appropriated base technology funding needs to be provided.

Therefore, SAM will support:

- Administrative, operational and learning process change at the federal, state, district and school levels must be addressed strategically where goals, resources and timing for improvement are managed cohesively.
- Baseline funding for supportive technology infrastructure should be addressed by a variety of methods that include; mechanisms that account for life cycle cost of ownership, technology that is driven by changes in classroom and/or curricular needs, and operational technology related to business function necessary to run a school district (i.e. State reporting, security systems, telecommunications, etc). Districts would be encouraged to fund any additional infrastructure and capabilities as demanded by their individual environments.
- Technology education for administrators, staff, technologists and students is timely, relevant, and compulsory.
- The management of technology requires a baseline of understanding and education. School administrators and leaders need support in specific process and technology implementation management.
- Technology planning, implementation and support functions, requiring specialized skills and knowledge, are accomplished by professional staff or contracted consultants according to specific district business models.

Designation: Action

#### **UNFUNDED MANDATES**

SAM opposes any legislation that mandates services, programs, or processes without providing full funding.

Designation: Support

#### **CERTIFIED TAXABLE VALUATION**

SAM supports efforts to strengthen notification and accountability for all state and county agencies involved in establishing taxable valuation of school district taxing jurisdictions. Once taxable valuation of the taxing jurisdiction is certified, all stakeholders must be notified.



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#### Approved by SAM Membership at the SAM Business Meeting 10-20-23

SAM supports requiring that if there is a change to a county taxable valuation after the certification is approved, the Montana Department of Revenue shall notify all affected school districts within seven (7) days of the change.

SAM supports efforts to strengthen accountability for entities responsible for errors in reporting taxable value changes made past the certification date.

Designation: Support

### K-12 Vision Project

#### **SAM specifies the following ongoing process for convening the K-12 Vision Project, 2013-2027**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM take the following position with regard to school the K-12 Vision Project and funding of Montana's schools:

1. SAM will continue to participate in the K-12 Vision Project on an ongoing basis through the 2023 Legislative Session to provide continuing guidance and recommendations aligned with the "Vision for Public Education in Montana" developed by the K-12 Vision Project in 2012. The work of the K-12 Vision Project shall be designed to culminate with consensus recommendations regarding the definition of the basic system of free quality schools that is scheduled to be reviewed by the Legislature during the 2021 Legislative Session pursuant to 20-9-309, MCA.
2. The membership of the K-12 Vision Project will continue to include trustees, business managers, teachers and administrators representing all MTSBA caucus groups and shall be annually revised and/or renewed prior to November 1, to incorporate nominations from the School Administrators of Montana (SAM), Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA), Montana Rural Education Association (MREA), Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE), Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO), and Montana Quality Education Coalition (MQEC).
3. SAM shall extend the opportunity for full collaborative partnerships in facilitating the ongoing work of the K-12 Vision Project to MTSBA, MFPE, MREA, MQEC and MASBO.
4. SAM supports that MTSBA shall facilitate the K-12 Vision Project work using knowledge-based decision making processes, emphasizing careful, deliberate and comprehensive analysis of issues, the use of open dialogue (the purpose of which is to inform) prior to deliberation (the purpose of which is to decide), pursuit of insight regarding what the involved groups' members want, need and prefer, and consideration of the ethical implications of our choices and mitigation of disadvantage to certain aspects of the respective groups' members that might be caused by recommendations made by the K-12 Vision Project.
5. SAM and Affiliate Associations shall seek to collaborate with and inform legislators from both political parties as well as key representatives of the offices of the Governor, the Board of Public Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the progress and ongoing work of the K-12 Vision Project to ensure open communications and the availability of legislative and executive branch perspectives regarding such work.
6. SAM and Affiliate Associations shall start to engage other external stakeholders outside of public education circles to increase awareness of the work of the K-12 Vision Project and to identify common interests and goals and opportunities for collaboration. There should be no static identification of "outside interest" groups but rather a process for highlighting broad public awareness of the work of the K-12 Vision Project and emphasizing an open invitation for the public to weigh in on such work. This might be accomplished, for example, through a combination of public opinion polling, facilitated community dialogue, outreach to business, higher education and other community leaders and public awareness campaigns. The key will be to ensure that we generate broad public support for the recommendations of the K-12 Vision Project over time.



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7. The work of the K-12 Vision Project shall be focused on the following:
  - a. A global look at the current funding formula for schools with an eye toward determining how the formula could be simplified, made more responsive to need, equitable and adequate to allow schools throughout the state to provide the basic system of free quality schools as that term is defined in 20-9-309, MCA. Specifics to be reviewed as part of the global look at the formula shall include:
    - i. Whether the formula sufficiently promotes local control. If not, recommendations should be developed regarding how the formula could be improved to better vest authority in the elected trustees to make financial decisions.
    - ii. Review of weighting adjustments in current formula and identification of possible enhancements. This inquiry shall include analysis of what other states do to account for economies of scale and address needs of school systems in different circumstances.
    - iii. Whether the current formula is sufficiently responsive to the educationally-relevant factors identified in 20-9-309, MCA, including:
      1. the number of students in a district;
      2. the needs of isolated schools with low population density;
      3. the needs of urban schools with high population density;
      4. the needs of students with special needs, such as a child with a disability, an at-risk student, a student with limited English proficiency, a child who is qualified for services under 29 U.S.C. 794, and gifted and talented children;
      5. the needs of American Indian students; and
      6. the ability of school districts to attract and retain qualified educators and other personnel.
    - iv. Recommendations regarding how the varying challenges experienced by different school districts throughout the state of Montana can be met to ensure that the needs of every child can be met.
    - v. Whether there is a practical way to better predict and incorporate relevant inflation into the formula that is based on the predominant expenditures of school districts.
  - b. As part of its work in identifying a simple, adequate, equitable and rational funding formula, the K-12 Vision Project shall undertake the following:
    - i. Review of the differential that exists between current funding and funding necessary to meet the definition of the basic system of free quality schools under 20-9-309, MCA.
    - ii. Revenue necessary to eliminate the differential;
    - iii. A long range plan to eliminate the differential; and
    - iv. A communications plan to create the political will to accomplish the elimination of the differential.

Designation: Support

### Funding Issues

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE AND SCHOOL FACILITIES**

SAM recognizes the importance of our public schools as the hub of many Montana communities. SAM supports Federal and State legislative action that would provide Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with the monetary means to support and maintain state of the art schools and school facilities to ensure all Montana students are equipped with the skills and knowledge to be college and career ready.

Designation: Support

## **RESOLUTIONS Approved by SAM Membership on 10-20-23**

(From this point forward School Administrators of Montana shall be referred to as SAM)

(Understanding Resolution nomenclature: #99/03/08/10/18-01 is a system of numbering that indicates this resolution was first considered by the SAM Delegate Assembly in 1999 as the 1<sup>st</sup> new resolution that year (99/xx/-01), and that the resolution was revised in 2003, 2008, 2010, and 2018 (xx/03/08/10/18-xx))

### **Resolution #99/03/08/10/18/21/22-01 - REQUIRED ATTENDANCE**

**WHEREAS**, school laws of Montana do not adequately address attendance accountability for students; and

**WHEREAS**, student non-attendance adversely affects student learning, impedes adequate yearly progress, and jeopardizes future academic success; and

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports legislative action ensuring consistent statewide guidelines be established concerning excessive student absences, beginning with school enrollment through a student's graduation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports clear enforcement through partnering with all appropriate agencies and officials to locate and enroll students not previously enrolled and those with excessive absences; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports enhanced flexibility for enrolled students' engagement and participation; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that SAM supports initiatives aimed at keeping students engaged and enrolled through graduation.

**Designation: Support**

### **Resolution #99/12-02 – FINGERPRINTING, BACKGROUND AND REFERENCE CHECKS**

**WHEREAS**, the safety of our students is of paramount importance; and

**WHEREAS**, school districts across the nation are seeing increased incidents of violent behavior and abuse;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports the development of an effective state-funded program for consistent, timely and comprehensive background and reference checks and fingerprinting of school employees and volunteers who have unsupervised contact with students.

**Designation: Support**

### **Resolution #99/02/06/07/16/17/22-08 – SCHOOL BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

**WHEREAS**, disruptive, dangerous, and aggressive behaviors to self and others are occurring at increasing rates in our school communities due to a variety of factors; and



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**WHEREAS**, economic conditions of families and society where adequate mental health services are not provided, families are not eligible for adequate insurance coverage, or determined ineligible for mental health services under existing state guidelines obligate school districts to provide greater attention and resources to students with mental health needs; and

**WHEREAS**, mental health services remain unfunded within communities and school districts, school districts are using educational resources to provide minimal health services to students with identified needs; and

**WHEREAS**, there has been a history of inadequate state funding for mental health programs for students with mental health needs in community and school based programs; and

**WHEREAS**, there exists a significant need for comprehensive services, including community and interagency coordination to meet the needs of children with mental health needs within the school setting; and

**WHEREAS**, there exists a significant need for a continuum of services including community support, outpatient day and residential treatment, and acute care services with transition support between schools and mental health agencies to meet the mental health needs of children within the state;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports new state funding for Montana residential/educational services for children with mental health needs; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM urges the State of Montana to support and provide funding for school based mental health services; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that SAM supports new state funding for mental health services for students in addition to existing state and federal programs without reducing dollars from the state education general fund.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #00/15/16/18/19/21/23-09 – BOARD/ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

**WHEREAS**, schools, like all institutions, need continuous renewal to fulfill their mission of educating all children to high levels of achievement; and

**WHEREAS**, SAM strongly supports and recommends high-quality, state funded instruction each year for the school board/administrative team; and

**WHEREAS**, SAM believes that the board/administrative team will become more effective when board members and the administrative team participate together in leadership renewal;



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**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports board/administrative teams professional learning through SAM/CAMPS or equivalent training opportunities.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #00/03/05/14/15/16/18/21-10- ANB FUNDING FOR 19 YEAR OLDS**

**WHEREAS**, the state does not provide funding to support high school services for students who turn 19 years of age on or before September 10<sup>th</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, children often do not enter school until they are older than the present minimum age requirement, therefore attaining their 19th birthday on or before September 10th even though they have progressed 1 grade each year; and

**WHEREAS**, exchange students from other countries are funded; and

**WHEREAS**, HB 233 (2021) provided ANB funding for students 19 years or older but under 21 on or before September 10 with IDEA identified developmental disabilities, have not graduated, and have a transition plan developed; and

**WHEREAS**, delay in student's progression through school may be a result of illness, accident, participation in foreign exchange program, academic difficulties, disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, research shows that all students learn at varying rates;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports funding for all 19-year-old students as determined by the ANB formula, only if adequate additional funding is provided beyond the services already allocated to support schools.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #01/03/06/08/09/10/14/16/19/23-01 – FUNDING**

**WHEREAS**, Montana continues to seek avenues for equitable and adequate revenue distribution for PK-12 education; and

**WHEREAS**, schools need to set levies, hold elections, hire staff, set academic schedules and make numerous educational decisions in the early spring; and

**WHEREAS**, the ability to carry over unencumbered funds would eliminate minuscule levy elections conducted by districts to maintain prior year budgeting authority;

**WHEREAS**, SAM believes that cost of living varies widely across Montana communities;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports school funding be on two year cycles corresponding to the off years of the regular legislative session; and





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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports the development of a statewide economic plan to generate and distribute revenue needed to provide adequate and equitable funding levels for PK-12 education; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports requiring the legislature to allocate at a minimum the amount budgeted for PK-12 education in the prior session or special session; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports legislation to allow districts to carryover unencumbered prior year funds without affecting budget maximums; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM believes that the MTDA (Montana Digital Academy) funding sources shall come from the state legislature and not from the individual district; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports funding of state special education allowable costs as a part of the school funding formula, with the additional allocation adjusted to meet the needs of special education cooperatives and inflationary increases applied to this component of the funding formula; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports continued funding of full time kindergarten.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports overcapped levies for Districts in high cost of living areas.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that SAM supports additional and continued funding for early childhood education programs.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #01/03/14-02 – RETIREMENT**

**WHEREAS**, school administrators and teachers are leaving Montana education after 25 years of enrollment in the TRS system to take jobs in other occupations and states, allowing them to collect full retirement from Montana TRS and at the same time collect another salary; and

**WHEREAS**, Montana faces a serious shortage of administrators, teachers and related service providers; and

**WHEREAS**, an ever-increasing percentage of administrators, teachers and related service providers are eligible to retire and leave education in Montana;

**WHEREAS**, districts having Retirement Reserves cut from 35% to 20% has caused issues for systems facing a large number of retirees and caused cash balance issues for many districts;





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**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports the return of Retirement Reserves percentages to the pre-2013 levels;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports changes in TRS – (1) For the legislature to create an actuarially sound system, (2) to grant a change from 1.67% to 2% per year rates for retirement occurring after 30 years of creditable service with appropriate funding sources, (3) to establish an additional funding mechanism to grant retirees the ability to reenter education at up to a full salary without loss of benefits.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #01/18/20-04 – PERMISSIVE FUNDING FOR HIGH IMPACT COSTS**

**WHEREAS**, Montana school districts continue to experience high impact fixed operating costs, such as pandemic(s), utilities, fuel costs, technology, and health insurance, which in recent years have increased dramatically; and

**WHEREAS**, school districts are required to pay for these costly expenditures through the general fund budget which negatively impacts educational opportunity for students; and

**WHEREAS**, school districts have little or no way to control such costs or even budget for them without cutting or eliminating educational programs;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports the creation of separate funds or inclusion into existing funds, outside the General Fund Budget supported through permissive levies, to fund high impact fixed costs and protect the ability of the GFB to support the educational needs of students.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #01/03/05/12/14/15/16/17-07 –STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND ASSESSMENT**

**WHEREAS**, SAM believes there is no single measurement evaluating the quality of education between students and schools; and

**WHEREAS**, SAM believes any mandated programs of testing must be fully funded and include fully funded research-based intervention programs that help students reach benchmarks; and

**WHEREAS**, SAM believes that the current concept of high stakes testing does not help schools meet the needs of its students or its community;

**WHEREAS**, SAM believes that federal and state mandated testing and reporting are excessive and the time required for testing needs to be balanced with time for student instruction;



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**WHEREAS**, SAM believes that using computer adaptive testing is valuable and technology should work appropriately to ensure students have the best opportunity to reflect what they know and are able to do during testing in order to have reliable and valid results;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports use of multiple measures of school assessment in local school improvement projects; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports the use of a growth based model of student achievement which includes multiple measures of student performance; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that if the state funds interim assessments that the use of that funding and the choice of assessment used will remain under the control of local school districts;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, SAM supports full state and federal funding of mandated assessments and subsequent intervention programs;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, SAM supports grade band testing at grade levels determined and approved in Montana, with minimum reporting to the federal government;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, SAM supports establishing levels of performance (cut scores) that are reviewed and approved by Montana educators following baseline results on the assessment;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, SAM supports no sanctions to schools or students in Montana as a result of testing that may affect reliability and validity of results.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that local school administrators are responsible for communicating the value of student testing, and also the limitations of the results received, with their local community, state and federal officials. The best interests of students and their learning is the goal and we support and recognize the importance of receiving timely assessment results to inform instruction and monitor student progress.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #02/12/14-03 – VOUCHERS, TUITION TAX CREDITS, TAX SAVINGS  
ACCOUNTS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS (OTHER THAN AS DEFINED IN ARM  
10-55-604)**

**WHEREAS**, vouchers, tuition tax credits and charter schools detract from the goal of comprehensive improvement of public schools, do not enhance public and non-public school competition, and do not significantly impact student achievement levels; and

**WHEREAS**, voucher programs do not cover the full tuition costs of many schools, thus preventing true choice for many parents and students; and



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**WHEREAS**, the acceptance or use of public funds by private and parochial institutions would threaten the unique mission of these schools by requiring every recipient of public funds to abide by the same laws, rules, and regulations as public schools; and

**WHEREAS**, non-public schools ultimately determine which students will be admitted and/or removed from their rolls therefore increasing discrimination; and

**WHEREAS**, vouchers, tuition tax credits and charter schools are prohibitively expensive, require taxpayers to finance the tuition costs of students attending private and parochial schools, and remove funds from public schools;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM will oppose the use of vouchers, tuition tax credits, tax savings accounts and charter schools not supported by local control.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #03/15/22/23-01 - SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING**

**WHEREAS**, the percentage of state support for earmarked special education general fund expenditures has declined at a rate significantly greater than has the rate of state support for the total general fund budget which creates a significant gap in funding between regular education and special education funding; and

**WHEREAS**, the original intent of Congress was to fund special education at the 40% level of the national average for pupil expenditure; and

**WHEREAS**, the lack of state fiscal support for mandated special education services has been wholly inadequate and has effectively decreased the amount of general funds available to support general education programming and places a disproportionate financial burden upon local tax-payers; and

**WHEREAS**, inadequate State funding of mandated special education services negatively impacts the education of all students by effectively decreasing the amount of general funds available to support general education programming;

**BE IT RESOLVED**; that SAM urges the legislature and state officials to avoid state appropriations that may suggest discriminatory funding practices between special education and regular education; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports full state and federal funding for mandated special education services for students with disabilities with parallel increases to ANB funding based on the current formula;



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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports full state and federal technology funding for any and all equipment and software necessary to support special education needs listed in the student's IEP's.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports legislation to allow school districts to increase their budget caps to provide for the disproportionate costs associated with educating students with special needs; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM will support legislative action to increase the monetary investment for such mandated special education services by applying additional state funding without reducing payments for the Instructional Services Block Grant, Related Services Block Grant, Administrative Travel Block Grant, and the Disproportionate Cost Reimbursement.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that SAM supports efforts to fully fund IDEA at its originally intended levels and to allow flexibility in maintenance of effort requirements.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #03/04/06/14-03 – INSTRUCTIONAL TIME AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS**

**WHEREAS**, quality instruction is best provided by regularly assigned classroom teachers; and

**WHEREAS**, school improvement demands coordinated efforts amongst numerous professional staff members; and

**WHEREAS**, current efforts for school improvement require staff members to be removed from primary teaching or administrative duties; and

**WHEREAS**, the absence of regularly assigned, certified staff results in a loss of continuity in classroom academic progress, as well as, building and district leadership; and

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM promotes additional pupil instruction related (PIR) hours fully funded by the state be added to the school calendar for the purpose of school improvement.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #03/05/06/10/16-05 - COOPERATING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

**WHEREAS**, quality new professional teachers and related service professionals are in high demand; and



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**WHEREAS**, teachers and related service professionals who work in the role of the cooperating or supervisory teacher and related service professionals for a student teacher and related pre-service professionals are currently without specific cooperative professional learning; and

**WHEREAS**, individuals pursuing an education career are deserving of a strong student teaching and related pre-service experience;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM encourages Montana teacher and related service professional education programs to involve specific professional learning and/or pre-requisite study and adequate compensation and/or college credit for cooperating or supervisory teachers and related service professionals.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #03/05/15/23-06 – HOME SCHOOLS**

**WHEREAS**, SAM believes a free public education is the cornerstone of American democracy; and

**WHEREAS**, alternative options such as home schooling have been authorized by state legislation; and

**WHEREAS**, Montana has a very liberal law concerning home schooling. This creates situations that are not consistent with a quality education as defined by the State Constitution; and

**WHEREAS**, the law enables families to avoid the schooling of the child or provide only minimal schooling; and

**WHEREAS**, it is difficult to place home school students at the proper level in the public system;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports legislation that strengthens the accountability of home schools in Montana; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**: Resources and authority should be provided to make certain that those who exercise these options are held strictly accountable for the academic achievement of children on a quarterly basis.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #03/05/14-08 – FEDERAL PROGRAM RETIREMENT FUNDING**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports legislation allowing retirement costs for those district and cooperative employees paid through federal funds to be paid from the district's retirement fund.



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**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #04/14/16/19/22-02 – EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS**

**WHEREAS**, high quality early childhood programs contribute to later academic and social success;  
and

**WHEREAS**, many of Montana students do not have access to quality early childhood programs;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports the development of additional and continued fully funded public early childhood programs in Montana; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports the development of high standards for both early childhood programs and early childhood teacher quality.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #04/14/16/22-03 – SUMMER AND/OR AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

**WHEREAS**, many schools are offering summer school programs and/or after school programs to provide more learning time for students; and

**WHEREAS**, research has shown that extended learning time increases achievement;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports additional state and/or federal funding to schools that offer summer and/or after school programming to its students; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports additional state and county funding for student transportation and school nutrition programs for schools that offer summer and/or after school programs.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #05/09-03 – CARL PERKINS AND HIGH SCHOOL CAREER AND TECHNICAL REFORM FUNDING**

**WHEREAS**, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act is an essential component of funding for quality career and technical education in Montana high schools;  
and

**WHEREAS**, the administration and Congress are looking at ways of involving the federal government in reforming the nation's high schools by moving the ESEA model into high schools; and



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**WHEREAS**, current ESEA funding for Title programs in secondary schools is at inadequate and proportionately low levels; and

**WHEREAS**, SAM is fully supportive of, and committed to, high school improvement;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM opposes efforts to eliminate or reduce funding Carl Perkins programs for Montana Schools; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports significant federal and state resources for the development of long-term strategies and systemic improvement of high school career and technical reform efforts.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #06-02 – PARENT INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTERS**

**WHEREAS**, there exists a significant need to provide parents with information resources to help their children be successful in school; and

**WHEREAS**, some households within our communities may lack the awareness, knowledge and/or confidence to support effectively students' social-emotional, academic and physical needs at times; and

**WHEREAS**, school districts from across the state would benefit from the ability to provide ongoing and consistent parent resources/information such as conflict management, health and nutrition information, homework/study skills strategies, and time management;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM urges the State of Montana to support and restore funding for Parent Information Resource Centers that would provide parents with effective strategies in meeting the emotional, academic and physical needs of their children.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #08/12-01 – EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR DETAINED STUDENTS**

**WHEREAS**, there are students detained in detention/treatment centers that may or may not be enrolled in a school district; and

**WHEREAS**, the school district in which the student or his or her parents reside is responsible for educational expenses;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports state financial responsibility for educational services of detained students in detention/treatment centers.

**Designation: Support**





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**Resolution #10/16/19-01 – UNIFIED RECRUITMENT & RETENTION**

**WHEREAS**, Montana has significant difficulty in recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers and related service professionals in general and special education; and

**WHEREAS**, Montana has historically experienced difficulty in the recruitment and retention of low incidence professional positions, such as speech pathologists, school psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, sign language interpreters and other professional staff necessary for the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); and

**WHEREAS**, Montana has historically experienced difficulty in the recruitment and retention of general education professional positions necessary to provide instructional service which meet accreditation standards; and

**WHEREAS**, school districts currently spend a significant amount of resources including time and money on the recruitment and retention of low incidence personnel; and

**WHEREAS**, a unified collaborative effort towards statewide recruitment and retention would be more cost effective and efficient; and

**WHEREAS**, recruitment and retention of highly qualified/low incidence positions is difficult due to the geographic isolation of many communities of Montana; and

**WHEREAS**, Office of Public Instruction has worked collaboratively with Montana Council of Administrators of Special Education on the recruitment and retention of highly qualified/low incidence personnel; and

**WHEREAS**, Montana continues to have chronic shortages;

**BE IT RESOLVED**: That SAM supports the implementation of a unified recruitment and retention program designed to address current personnel shortages in both general and special education.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #10/16/19/22-03 – MARIJUANA REGULATIONS**

**WHEREAS**, SAM has always supported safe, secure, drug free school efforts;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports drug free schools and drug-free work place policies that prohibit the use of marijuana on school grounds, at school events, or any activity involving schools or students.



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**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #11/14-01– ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATION**

**WHEREAS**, school administrators are an important factor in a quality education; and

**WHEREAS**, each school is unique; and

**WHEREAS**, administrative evaluation is a valuable piece of professional growth;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports an evaluation process that is adopted at the local level based on multiple measures.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM does not support the use of state-wide student assessment scores in administrator evaluation.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #12/13/15-01 – PRINCIPAL/ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL ASSIGNMENT**

**WHEREAS**, SAM believes and research has confirmed that continuity of school level leadership is essential for the continuous improvement of educational quality;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports legislation and practice which will recognize a principal/assistant principal's years of service in regard to maintaining salary and cost of living raises and benefits; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, in the event of reassignment without cause; service, salary and benefits will remain the same and progress as cost of living increases rise.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #12/13/16-03 – SCHOOL PRIVATIZATION WITH PUBLIC FUNDS  
LEGISLATION**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM take the following positions with regard to school privatization legislation of any kind by the Legislature; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM work to ensure that elected school boards in member school districts are empowered to innovate and adapt public school offerings to best meet the needs of students and to fully develop the educational potential of each student in the public schools as envisioned by the Constitutional framers in writing Article X, Section 1 of the Montana Constitution; and



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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM work to ensure continued supervision and control of all publicly funded PK-12 education in Montana by existing school boards in current member districts who are subject to popular election to ensure that publicly-funded PK-12 education remains accountable to citizens in each community through oversight by volunteer elected trustees; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM oppose any attempts to fund private PK-12 education, including sectarian and non-sectarian private schools and home schools through public means and that SAM interpret “public means” to include but not necessarily be limited to any appropriation, tax credit, tax deduction, voucher or any other financial incentive or construct mandated or allowed by law or proposed in any bill or initiative. Guidance on SAM’s position and efforts are to be derived from but not limited to the language of Article X, Section 6 (Aid prohibited to sectarian schools) and applicable interpretations of this provision by the Montana Supreme Court and other courts interpreting similar language in their respective state constitutions; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM work to ensure that any school choice legislation be limited only to public schools and comply with and afford every student in every public school with all constitutional rights specified in Article X of the Montana Constitution and access to a public education that complies with the definition of the basic system of free quality schools adopted by the Legislature in 20-9-309, MCA;

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that SAM actively and vigorously opposes any legislation failing to meet the standards set forth above and pursue enforcement of the constitutional provisions referenced in this resolution through any lawful means.

**Constitutional References:**

*Section 1. Educational goals and duties. (1) It is the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person. Equality of educational opportunity is guaranteed to each person of the state.*

*Section 6. Aid prohibited to sectarian schools. (1) The legislature, counties, cities, towns, school districts, and public corporations shall not make any direct or indirect appropriation or payment from any public fund or monies, or any grant of lands or other property for any sectarian purpose or to aid any church, school, academy, seminary, college, university, or other literary or scientific institution, controlled in whole or in part by any church, sect, or denomination.*

*Section 8. School district trustees. The supervision and control of schools in each school district shall be vested in a board of trustees to be elected as provided by law.*

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #13/15/21/23-01 – CAPITAL FACILITY NEEDS**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM pursue continued and expanded state funding for capital facility needs in districts across the state of Montana to match and leverage local support for maintaining quality, safe, healthy, and educationally appropriate school facilities that meet



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the needs of the modern classroom. The resolution should include support for technology costs within the definition of capital facility needs. The resolution should encourage energy efficiency, quality materials, and the general concept of sustainability. In addition, we encourage state support to match local building reserves so that school districts will be able to maintain facilities.

We encourage state support maintaining local control, and ensuring full funding for programs such as the state Facility Guaranteed Mill per ANB funding, as well as new initiatives that might be developed in the future.

We believe that this resolution is important to the needs of students in districts across the state of Montana.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #13/14/18-02 – ALIGNMENT OF ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AND FUNDING**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM work to regularly monitor changes in accreditation standards and work to ensure appropriate alignment between the accreditation standards adopted by the Board of Public Education and funding appropriated by the Montana Legislature to assist school districts in implementing such standards. SAM shall pursue such alignment either through opposition to unfunded or underfunded changes or through pursuit of funding necessary to allow school districts to comply with such standards.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM collaborate with the Office of Public Instruction and the Board of Public Education to develop a Small Schools Process by which Student Performance Standard Level of Accreditation is determined that takes into consideration the unique nature of Montana’s smallest schools and protects a student’s right to privacy.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #13/14/15-03 – MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

**WHEREAS**, school districts have learned from experience that there are many areas of statute and rule that do not allow for flexibility or in-efficient operations at the local level. School elections, student discipline, and open meeting laws are examples of areas of policy that have been reviewed and improved for the benefit of school districts, and

**WHEREAS**, as a matter of equity, school districts who contract for transportation services should be treated the same as districts who own their buses and are exempt from state fuel taxes, and

**WHEREAS**, School districts should be able to utilize the best available technology and use cost-effective means in meeting the requirement to store records, but currently operate under restrictions imposed by statute and by the Local Government Records Committee, and



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**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM, in the interest of more efficient and effective governance, the optimization of resources, as well as enhancements to and revival of local control, call on SAM membership to engage in discussions at the local board table related to efficiencies, optimization of resources efforts, and identification of implementation barriers to create efficiencies, and bring them to the attention of SAM, the Coalition of Advocate for Montana Public Schools (CAMPS) and the legislature for the establishment of appropriate laws to allow districts to become as efficient and effective as possible.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #13/14/17/19/22/23-04 – FEDERAL ISSUES IMPORTANT TO MONTANA**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM will work with the Montana Congressional Delegation in support of full federal funding of special education (IDEA) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM will work with the Montana Congressional Delegation to ensure that the USAC E-rate and other technology and facility programs that are federally funded, stay fully funded to ensure equitable and adequate bandwidth and access to every student; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports national efforts to fund cybersecurity and antivirus programs via E-rate or any other federally funded programs.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports Net Neutrality; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM will communicate with the Montana Congressional Delegation regarding our continued opposition to school vouchers in any form; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM will work with the Montana Congressional Delegation during the reauthorization of any education legislation in support of adequate funding and to ensure that the implementation of the federal legislation is reasonable for Montana school districts; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM support a stronger voice for rural education at the federal level that includes the establishment of an Office of Rural Education Policy within the U.S. Department of Education to recognize the unique challenges facing rural schools and that federal policies should balance the needs of urban and rural school districts; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM will communicate with the Montana Congressional Delegation regarding the concern of Montana school districts over a drop in federal funding for important programs such as Title I and other Title programs, Carl Perkins, Impact Aid, and Medicaid Reimbursement, and the impact these reductions could have on local and state funding of current education priorities; and



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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM will advocate for maintenance of local supervision and control over federal funds allocated to Montana’s public schools and oppose provisions in federal/national legislation, regulation or other standards that would denigrate local control of Montana’s public schools; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports formula funding and opposes competitive grant programs at the federal level; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that SAM will support additional federal resources for capital or operational programs only to the extent that these programs are not unfunded mandates or under-funded programs.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #13/16/17-07 – PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

**WHEREAS**, the Montana Board of Public Education has adopted Montana Content Standards; and

**WHEREAS**, funding for implementation of the Montana Content Standards is inadequate; and

**WHEREAS**, mandatory state assessments are in place; and

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 55 Accreditation Standards require teacher and principal evaluation systems;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports additional state funding for the training of teachers and administrators for the implementation of the Montana Content Standards, state assessments, and the Montana Educator Performance Appraisal System (EPAS) State Models for Teacher and Administrator Evaluation.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #14/23-04 – FUNDING SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

**WHEREAS**, a large majority of school districts, 81%, participate in special education cooperatives owing in a large part to a very sparsely distributed population with disproportionate populations of students since boundary lines were drawn 50 years ago; and

**WHEREAS**, increasing frequency, intensity, and investments of special education services require a robust cooperative infrastructure necessary to assure our students in rural schools equal access to special education services and quality education; and

**WHEREAS**, school laws of Montana do not adequately address funding the basic entitlement of Cooperatives in order to establish the appropriate infrastructure necessary for rural students to have equal access to special education services and quality education;





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**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports legislative action ensuring the development of the full educational potential of each person;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports legislative action to increase the monetary investment in Cooperative infrastructure including means to recruit and retain highly qualified personnel in rural areas; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that SAM supports legislative action to ensure educational infrastructure is equitably and adequately funded across all Montana administrative units, including but not limited to a reconsideration of the current cooperative boundary lines in order to alleviate overextension and disproportionality amongst cooperatives.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #15-08 – KINDERGARTEN AS PART OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION**

**WHEREAS**, kindergarten is a very important building block in a child's education;

**WHEREAS**, kindergarten has a more educational focus with specific content standards;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that students should begin their compulsory education with attendance in kindergarten;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports that kindergarten is part of a child's compulsory education in the State of Montana.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #16-02 – STATE TRANSPORTATION REIMBURSEMENT FOR ACADEMIC SUMMER SCHOOL**

**WHEREAS**, the challenges of academic improvement are not limited to a 180 day school year; and

**WHEREAS**, current law allows provision of education throughout the year, computed on the basis of minimum aggregate hours of instruction, without any limitation to the number of days on which such instruction is provided; and

**WHEREAS**, significant research exists supporting the value of expanded and year round learning opportunities in addressing achievement gaps and preventing summer learning loss; and

**WHEREAS**, the needs of students in poverty to have access to quality classroom instruction are further limited by the current 180 day limit on state transportation reimbursement under MCA 20-10-145; and

**WHEREAS**, the current organization of schools statewide is limited by geography, and





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**WHEREAS**, the education system in Montana is constantly adapting to the changing demographics of the student population in our state; and

**WHEREAS**, the use of State Transportation reimbursement is expressly prohibited by the criteria set forth in MCA 20-10-145; and

**WHEREAS**, Montana school districts use all possible resources to be able to offer extended learning opportunities to their students, and

**WHEREAS**, communities should have the right to determine how, when, and upon what terms education is provided through their public schools; and

**WHEREAS**, current law penalizes communities that choose to organize their school calendar over the summer months by prohibiting state transportation reimbursement;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that academic summer programs would be approved by the local trustees under the policy for student enrollment for exceptional circumstances before requesting reimbursement.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that any additional county transportation reimbursement be approved by the county transportation committee;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that state transportation reimbursement should be aligned with any and all viable pupil instruction, including non-aggregate hour calculations for summer school instruction; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the SAM supports academic improvement through extended learning opportunities for all Montana’s publicly educated students that would remove the 180 day limit on state transportation reimbursement as cited in MCA 20-10-145.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #16-05 – CHANGE COMPULSORY ENROLLMENT AGE FROM 7 TO 6 YEARS OLD**

**WHEREAS**, it is well-documented that students who are provided a formal education at an earlier age have greater successes throughout their schooling; and

**WHEREAS**, several initiatives have been put forth in an effort to get students into schools at an early age, Montana law currently only requires compulsory enrollment at the age of 7; and

**WHEREAS**, this makes it difficult for schools to ensure that students are attending school. Moreover, as Montana law caps funding for students at the age of 19, compulsory enrollment beginning at 7 creates situations where students may “age out” of school, causing the potential for dropouts;



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**BE IT RESOLVED**, that Montana Code Section 20-5-102, be amended to change the compulsory enrollment age from 7 to 6 years.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #16/17/21-06 – ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR CAREER AND VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**WHEREAS**, funding for Career and Vocational/Technical Education (CTE) in Montana is well below the funding levels for programs in neighboring and other western states; and

**WHEREAS**, state funding for career and technical education is distributed using the Carl Perkins formula, these funds are earmarked for high school programs only and no mechanism is currently available in law to fund middle school programs; and

**WHEREAS**, career and technical education prepares students for a wide range of careers and post-secondary education programs; and

**WHEREAS**, career and technical education courses provide students with life and employment skills to make them highly desirable employees in today's modern workforce; and

**WHEREAS**, the majority of jobs in the U.S. labor market now require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree; and

**WHEREAS**, career and technical education directly benefits not only our students, but also employers and local economies; and

**WHEREAS**, enrollment in career and technical education courses has been identified as a path that increases student engagement and high school graduation rates; and

**WHEREAS**, it is widely recognized that the foundation for these high school programs should be established in middle school; and

**WHEREAS**, as funding increases at the high school level it creates a larger gap between those programs and middle school options; and

**WHEREAS**, establishing an ongoing funding mechanism for middle school career and technical education makes minimal resources available for middle school level career and technical education offerings; and

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM will primarily support legislative action targeting additional funding for HS CTE programs including inflationary increases; and



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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM will support legislative action to create a funding mechanism to provide career and technical education opportunities for students in accredited middle schools that supplements but does not supplant high school funding.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #16/17/19/21/23-08 – ANB ALLOCATION FOR TECHNOLOGY HARDWARE UPGRADES**

**WHEREAS**, every school district in Montana strives to provide a quality education for every student that culminates in college and career readiness; and

**WHEREAS**, every school district in Montana is united in the belief that all students deserve to be successful; and

**WHEREAS**, every school district in Montana is striving to provide modern classroom learning opportunities and needed skills; and

**WHEREAS**, every school district in Montana is funded through a variety of sources, but primarily by the average number of students in attendance or ANB, and

**WHEREAS**, technology touches all aspects of education including the business operations, curriculum resources and assessments. Together these have become a significant burden on technology budgets; and

**WHEREAS**, schools are having difficulties in funding for technology and funding is not equitable across the state for upgrading, maintaining, and supporting technology hardware in schools; and

**WHEREAS**, a basic allocation per student, (e.g. Data Achievement (MCA 20-9-325)), would bring a constant revenue that school districts would support refreshing technology hardware on at least an industry standard life cycle; and

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the SAM hereby requests increased state funding for technology by appropriating per student funding each year for technology hardware, software, and support.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM supports an increase in funding beyond the services already allocated to support schools.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #16/17/20/22/23-09 – SUPPORT OF ADEQUATE BANDWIDTH FOR SCHOOLS**

**WHEREAS**, blended classrooms that integrate technology and rich media resources have become essential in the modern classroom; and



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**WHEREAS**, U.S. Department of Education and State Education Technology Directors Association recommendations require 1Mbps per student to ensure a media rich learning environment; and

**WHEREAS**, many rural schools in the state cannot meet basic bandwidth requirements for state mandated online testing; and

**WHEREAS**, Montana represents one of the largest sectors of entrepreneurial activity in the country, demonstrating that our students will need access to digital resources to compete globally in careers and college upon graduation; and

**WHEREAS**, decisions on appropriate bandwidth speeds and service are best made by the administration and trustees of local school districts;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, the legislators will work with the Governor's office, META, and SAM ensure a minimum of 1 mbs per student for all Montana public education students.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, SAM and the State of Montana will explore supporting PK-20 connectivity consortiums to allow schools to tie into the State University systems for connectivity to University classrooms and other educational resources.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #16/20/23-11 – REMOVING THE LIMIT DURATION ON TECHNOLOGY LEVY FUNDING**

**WHEREAS**, technology is an ever evolving and necessary tool in every Montana educational facility including all support staff facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, school districts rely on technology levies to fund the network, student and staff devices, curricular and operational software purchases, as well as training, repairs and support; and

**WHEREAS**, in many budget years, the general fund has to cover a significant number of those costs; and

**WHEREAS**, General Fund budgets in many districts are limited to the base budget given local taxpayer's avoidance of operational levies that allow districts to adopt maximum budgets, leaving District's basic operational resources too tight to meet the needs of modern classrooms;



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**WHEREAS**, limiting a technology levy’s duration to 10 years, as well as District’s risking a previously approved perpetual technology levy may restrict a district’s ability to ensure ongoing educational integrity and student safety;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, section 6 will strike the 10 year maximum limitation and section 8 will be deleted from MCA 20-9-533.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #18/21/22-03 – DAYLIGHT SAVINGS**

**WHEREAS**, many school activities and other local youth programs take place after school and many school facilities do not have outdoor lighting; and

**WHEREAS**, it gets dark early during the fall season;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports keeping daylight savings as is or permanently implementing daylight savings time.

**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #19/20/22-01 – ALLOWING THE USE OF VIDEO EVIDENCE TO ENFORCE SCHOOL BUS STOP ARM VIOLATIONS**

**WHEREAS**, Montana law requires drivers overtaking a school bus from either direction to stop while the school bus is operating visual flashing red signals as specified in [61-9-402 MCA](#), and the driver may not proceed until the children have entered the school bus or have alighted and reached the side of the highway or street, and until the school bus ceases operation of its visual flashing red signal; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) notes stop arm laws are particularly challenging to enforce because violations occur randomly, as opposed to at certain times or locations, and typically must be witnessed by a law enforcement officer in order for a ticket to be issued; and

**WHEREAS**, Montana school buses travel millions of miles per year on roads, highways, and streets not heavily monitored by law enforcement at all times; and

**WHEREAS**, Montana schools leverage technology in many ways to ensure our students safety while they are in the schools’ care;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM will support legislative action authorizing the use of stop arm camera technology to substantiate the reporting of stop arm violations. The implementation of such technology will remain at the discretion of local trustees, not mandatory, and the cost of implementation can come from any applicable fund allowed by law including but not limited to Transportation, Bus Depreciation, and/or School Safety funds.



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**Designation: Support**

**Resolution #20/22/23-01 SPECIAL EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY FUNDING**

**WHEREAS**, because LEAs are receiving inadequate increases in special education revenue, the effect on districts includes reducing services to special education children, placing districts at risk of failing to provide FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education), places special education in the position of “competing” for local funding with general education, extra-curricular, and other activities; and

**WHEREAS**, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law ensuring a free and appropriate public education to children with disabilities ages 3-21; and as enacted (1975), is supposed to provide for 40% full funding. The federal allocation, however, has historically never exceed 16% funding for students with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, most Montana school districts limit attendance to age 19, mandated special education services in the State typically address the needs of children with disabilities ages 3-19; and

**WHEREAS**, SB 191, 2013 Montana Legislative Session passed the right of a district to levy in its tuition fund without a vote to pay for any costs of IDEA that are in excess of state and federal funding streams provided to the district (20-5-324; 20-7-401, MCA); and

**WHEREAS**, SB 191 funds are not available to all school districts or communities based on an insufficient or non-existent tax base, including but not limited to small rural communities, districts that reside within federal lands, and communities dependent on specific revenue streams such as oil, coal, etc.

**WHEREAS**, SB 307, 2017 Montana Legislative Session, required trustees to adopt a resolution of intent to increase non-voted levies no later than March 31 of each fiscal year (20-9-116, MCA); and

**WHEREAS**, the trustees of a district must adopt a final budget for the district and determine the amounts to be raised by tax levies for the district not later than August 25 (209-131, MCA); and

**WHEREAS**, exceptional students with significant needs transfer between districts after March 31 and prior to August 25, districts are financially obligated to meet the needs of those students, nonetheless, without fiscal planning to be in compliance with IDEA; and

**WHEREAS**, the tuition fund does not provide for reserves; and

**WHEREAS**, cooperative member districts are prohibited from using tuition funds, under 20-5-324 and 20-7-401, MCA, for assessment fee expenditures.





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**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM will work with their educational partners to ensure that districts will be enabled to annually reserve tuition funds to overcome potential budgetary shortfalls in the event of a transferring significant needs student into their district. SAM would further advocate that the permissive tuition fund be able to be utilized for paying cooperative assessment fees.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, LEAs, including cooperative member districts, may budget and utilize tuition funds for the purpose of disbursing it for cooperative assessment fees.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM will support legislative action for statutory language that includes the special education appropriation in the group of education appropriations subject to the mandatory inflationary increase; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM will support legislative action to increase monetary investment in Cooperative infrastructure without reducing payments for the Instructional Services Block Grant, Related Services Block Grant, Administrative Travel Block Grant, and the Disproportionate Cost Reimbursement; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that SAM recognizes proposals for new program entitlements for students outside the current age-range of State-funded educational programs may negatively impact funding consideration for mandated special education services; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that SAM will support legislative action for inflationary increases for special education and increased monetary investment in Cooperative infrastructure above advocacy efforts for new program entitlements for students outside the current age-range of State funded educational programs.

**Designation: Action**

**Resolution #22-01 - STUDENT DATA PRIVACY**

**WHEREAS**, the state of Montana has implemented 20-7-1326 Pupil Records – online privacy protections, MCA a law mandating Montana pupil online personal information protection; and

**WHEREAS**, SAM supports and believes in the essence of this law; and

**WHEREAS** the implementation of the MPOIPA (Montana Pupil Online Personal Identity Protection Act) law as an unfunded mandate creates significant challenges for schools to implement the law; and

**WHEREAS** this law obligates local school districts to perform legal requirements without suitable staffing and funding mechanisms; and





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**WHEREAS**, there is now a National Data Privacy Agreement that schools could ascribe to; and

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that SAM supports the rewording of 20-7-1326 MCA so that the State of Montana recognizes the National Data Privacy Agreement as one that protects the online privacy of the students throughout the state and that schools may enter into a contract with a third party vendor who ascribe to the NDPA or continue using the Montana DPA.

**Designated: Action**

**Resolution #23-01 - PARENTAL RIGHTS**

**WHEREAS**, Parents are their children's first and most important educators, which is why effective family engagement at the local level is one of the key determinants of student and school success; and

**WHEREAS**, SAM respects parents' autonomy and ultimate responsibility for their children's upbringing and education; and

**WHEREAS**, Montanans have long embraced local control and community partnership; it is critical that every child and family who walks through our doors on a daily basis feels welcome and supported in our buildings and classrooms; and

**WHEREAS**, each Montana school and community has its' own unique culture, strengths, and challenges; and

**WHEREAS**, every community in Montana has local trustees, elected by the community, who are responsible and responsive to their constituents, especially the parents and families of enrolled students; and

**WHEREAS**, educators serve at the pleasure of school boards selected by parents, families and community members; and

**WHEREAS**, we know an educational environment which connects and engages families will ensure greater success for all students; and

**WHEREAS**, SAM believes every family should have the opportunity to be an active participant in their child's educational experience and connect directly with their child's professional educators, while working in concert with, school staff and administrators at the local level to maximize their child's success

**BE IT RESOLVED**, SAM believes greater family engagement is best practice; we also believe these efforts must be local decisions collectively made between elected trustees,



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professional educators, and parents rather than dictated top-down by state law.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** SAM will oppose any legislation which removes control of the decision-making processes from our locally elected trustees.

**Designation:** Support