

SAM Bulletin November 2019

1 message

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School Administrators of Montana

BULLETIN

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

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Upcoming Conferences, Meetings, & Events

January 26-28: Montana Principals Conference - Fairmont

February 19-21: MCEC Conference - Missoula

March 23-24: MASS/METAtechEd Conference - Helena

June 11-12: SAM Board Meeting and Delegate Assembly (Note date change) - Helena

July 27-29, 2020: SAM Administrators Institute

Words Matter

by Michelle Halberg, MCASE President

Recently my husband and I attended a community event in which the presenter was discussing his dislike of the word *wilderness*. From his perspective, the term implied the need to *tame, conform* or *manage*. He wondered aloud about the impact of exchanging the word *nature* for *wilderness*. He shared his hope that the word *nature* would bring about thoughts of *awe, appreciation, reverence, respect*. As he spoke the image I held with the word *wilderness* changed, my heart rate slowed and I felt *peaceful*.

Driving home, I began thinking about the words *student*— and *special education student* in particular. “Do these words also conjure thoughts of *conformity, management* and the need to *tame*?” I wondered, would exchanging the word *child* for *student* give us permission to let go of the limitations of our roles as teacher and student? Could we then instead be *amazed* at the *diversity* of these *learners, explorers, and creators*? If I were to say *Autistic child* versus a *child with Autism*, would it keep the emphasis on the *child*? I’d like to think that this simple change of word choice could help us influence our school environments and support a culture of *acceptance, amazement, joy* and maybe even a *love* of school.

Thank heavens it was a short ride home, as I could have continued to spin out of control! What if I said *colleague* instead of *parent, administrator, or teacher*? Could this influence how we approach decision making during special education meetings? Would everyone have a seat at the table and an equal voice no matter the role? What if...

In our roles as educational leaders, there are many things we can’t seem to *predict, control, or plan*. But we can *choose* our words—and words matter.

Michelle Halberg
MCASE President

"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless." -Mother Teresa

Engage in Effective Communication ... Help Your Community Understand the Value of Your School

by Kirk Miller, SAM Executive Director

While working to develop meaningful opportunities for professional development for education leaders for supporting their work to educate our children, I keep returning to a

Awards Open for Nominations

Please consider nominating someone you would like to recognize for their outstanding service to the education of Montana's children. **MAEMSP**: The following 2020 MAEMSP awards are now open for nominations. Nomination forms must be completed by **December 20, 2019**. Find out more about each award and nominate/apply by clicking [2020 MAEMSP Awards](#).

**** View the full SAM Calendar****

Thank you to this month's featured Business Partners!



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common strategy that appears to be absolutely critical to the success of all endeavors ... effective community engagement to be sure your community understands the value of its schools! The strategies involved in effective communication with your

community are necessary in order to build the trust of your community. We need to be persistent in telling the story that you are the educators, the experts for providing educational services, that meet the needs of the students in your community. This trust, once built and established over time, will develop the partnership for learning that great schools have with their community, parents, businesses, interested individuals, retirees, nay-sayers, and the whole crew!

As you are aware, our society has become used to customization of products and services that meet individual needs. The use of technology has expanded this ability to communicate and customize for individuals. The expectations of individuals (community members and our kids) are that all products and services can be delivered with the essence of customization. Our schools across the nation were not built and developed to customize each individual situation, but rather to provide our children with the ability to think, evaluate, problem solve, and create a successful life for themselves and be a life-long learner (these are my bold assumptions of our system) in accomplishing this. Our educators, have not until recently, focused on the training required for a world requiring customization. Our public schools have been tremendously successful in developing an educated citizenry in the United States, but our new challenge is to transform the system of education to meet the expectations of customization. In Montana, we are well underway in creating this transformation, and all of us working together are recognizing the need for new training and strategies for personalizing learning, where the standards for achievement are held constant and the former constants – time, place, delivery – are variables. This system transformation and training of educators will be key to the success of our public school system into the future. The “why” of making this transformation is the driving force in developing the “how” to make it happen. I believe Montana is in an outstanding place to be able to make this happen.

The first step in making that happen (the “How”), in my mind, is to vividly describe for your community, all that you provide for the children in your schools. Part of that description must include how incredibly valuable the education of our children is to the future success of our community, state and nation, is not be left to the expertise of anyone other than those in your very school who work day in and day out to make this happen. To do this you must enlist the energy, enthusiasm, and expertise of your entire school team. I suggest, that as school leaders, you can influence this transformation and gain the trust of your community by making sure that everyone who works in your environment (everyone – board members, administrators, teachers, paras, custodians, food service workers, bus drivers, and all support volunteers), knows the “bold story” of what your team is accomplishing for students. Then, charge your team (all of them) with making sure they can tell this bold story to anyone they encounter – friends, neighbors, in the grocery check-out line, in the hardware store and coffee shop. In my experience in five Montana school districts of varying size, from east to west, this

- **National Distinguished Principal Award**
- **Adrian Langstaff Award**
- **Friends of Education Award**
- **Aspiring Principal Scholarship Award**
- **NAESP Conference Incentive Scholarship Award Appreciation Award**

MASSP: The following 2020 MASSP awards are now open for nominations. Nomination forms must be completed by **December 20, 2019**. Find out more about each award and nominate/apply by clicking [2020 MASSP Awards](#).

- **Future Administrators Scholarship**
- **Community Partner**
- **Principal of the Year**
- **Conference Incentive Award**

MCASE: The following 2020 MCASE awards are now open for nominations. Nomination forms must be completed by **January 10, 2020**. Find out more about each award and nominate/apply by clicking [2020 MCASE Awards](#).

- **Special Education Director**
- **Special Education Teacher**
- **Regular Education Teacher**

SAM Awards Presented at MCEL

SAM is proud to announce the award recipients who were recognized at the MCEL Opening Ceremony on October 17th in Billings. SAM congratulates all award winners!

- **2019 G.V. Erickson Award** - Dr. Darlene Schottle: Dr. Schottle is the Chairperson of the Montana Board of Public Ed and serves as a provider for SAM LPLP. Click [HERE](#) for more information about Dr. Schottle and the G.V. Erickson Award.
- **MASS Superintendent of the Year** - Les Meyer: Les is the superintendent of Fairfield Public Schools. He is eligible for the National Superintendent of the Year Award and will be honored at the AASA National Conference on Education in San Diego in February 2020. Click [HERE](#) to learn more.
- **MASS Honor School Boards of the Year** - School boards from Libby and St. Regis were recognized as recipients of the Montana Association of School Superintendent (MASS) Honor School Boards of the Year. Click [HERE](#) for more information about the outstanding work of these school boards.
- **Jay Erdie Memorial Scholarship** - Jeanine Fillinger, K-5 Principal at Colstrip Public Schools. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about this scholarship.



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concept of your team educating the community about your schools' successes and challenges, does in fact build trust with your community.

Please use the resources available to you to assist in implementing the thoughts I have outlined. Recently **GREAT 2019** (Great Work of Montana's Public Schools, volume VII), describing a comprehensive vision for the future success of Montana's public schools and establishing a clear road map to achieve this vision, was released (by the MT-PEC partners) for your use as a template you can use to tell your school story. Those who attended MCEL and heard keynote speaker and award-winning champion of public education, Jamie Vollmer, learned about strategies for engaging your community and telling the great story about your school. Expect to see more information about your access to those strategies in the coming month. Please use these resources as you plan your future community engagement strategies.

The MT-PEC partners collaborated to develop a **unified professional development series** for school district governance teams on key topics related to funding, flexibility, efficiency, safety and security, community ownership and local control. The goal is to ensure a broad and common understanding of the full extent of the obligations and authority granted to Montana's public schools and to contribute to a body of knowledge that will enhance our ability to develop the full potential of each child in every public school in Montana. Please use these resources as you tell your story in your community.

Thanks for your work to help engage your community in the great work you are doing in your schools! You can see from my perspective, your success in gaining the trust of your community is the real difference maker in accomplishing what you intend to make happen in educating the students in your community. Best to you in the days ahead!

Kirk J. Miller

Montana Principals Conference 2020

January 26-28

Fairmont Hot Springs Resort

Sunday, January 26:

- Keynote: **Ryan Sheehy** - *Be the One for Kids*

Monday, January 27:

- Keynote: **Adam Welcome** - *Kids Deserve It*
- MAEMSP and MASSP Business Meetings
- Breakout Sessions
- Leader to Leader Event
- Cornhole Tournament
- Awards Banquet with Ugly Sweater Contest
- Live Music by Intermission

Tuesday, January 28:

Cybersecurity

The **Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)** and its state affiliate chapter, **Montana Educational Technologists Association (META)** are pleased to continue to support the work of current and aspiring superintendents and district leadership teams in leading all aspects of digital learning transformations.

Last month we focused on **five critical guidelines for ensuring student data privacy** when leveraging technology to maximize student learning. This month we turn our attention to the larger and even more encompassing issue of cybersecurity.

In today's world it seems there is not a week that goes by without a news story related to some sort of breach in security for one organization or another. As school districts rely more and more on digital tools for data records, instruction, and many other facets of school or district operations, it is incumbent upon school leaders to understand the issues around cybersecurity and take appropriate actions to prevent any sort of breach within school data systems. CoSN is pleased to support school leaders in communicating the urgency around cybersecurity by providing a **brief overview of the top five reasons why schools and districts must make cybersecurity a priority**.

CoSN, in partnership with edWeb.net, hosts *The Empowered Superintendent* monthly webinar series on topics that are essential for all educators engaged in leading digital transformations. School superintendents serve as panelists on each webinar and share their stories and expertise. The focus of the November 11, 2019, webinar (3:00 pm MT) is on cybersecurity. Learn more and register for this free webinar as well as access recordings of previously broadcast webinars at <https://home.edweb.net/supers/>.

If your school or district would like more information about joining CoSN or getting more involved with CoSN, please contact Brian Calvary, CAE, CoSN Director of Membership and Chapters, at bcalvary@cosn.org.

SAM Welcomes New Business Partners



QuEst Services Corp: We are a Professional Preconstruction & Construction Manager. We assist Owners in Representing them during Capital Construction Campaigns to maximize the amount of Construction Work for the District's dollars. We make sure the General Contractors and the Architect do what they have promised, without cutting any corners, all the while making sure there is open and fair competition for construction services. We are sticklers for construction team members being accountable to the District for the Services they contracted for. Everyone will be held accountable for their respective discipline so the Districts aren't paying the

- Breakout Sessions
- Closing Speaker: **Dr. Andy Jacks**
- *Refusing to Fail*

Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Register [HERE!](#)

Release of GREAT 2019

The MT-PEC partners have worked together to prepare [GREAT 2019](#) - The Great Work of Montana's Public Schools, Volume VII, released at MCEL in October. School board members and school superintendents will be receiving a hard copy of this great tool in the mail in the near future. You can always print a usable copy from the link provided. Our hope is that you will use this publication to engage your community in the story about the great opportunities your schools provide for the students in your community. Now is a great time to tell your story of the rich and engaging environment your school provides for your community!



Thank you to SAM's Business Partners!

Please take time to visit their websites.

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price when something that should have been included in a project, gets left out. We realize that this sounds a little bit too direct to some.... we just want all parties to do what they say they are going to do.



GotZoom: As you may already know, student loan debt can be a terrific financial burden. To help alleviate this burden, SAM-School Administrators of Montana, would like to introduce you to our newest member benefit. GotZoom. They specialize in securing student loan subsidies for their clients as well as successfully enrolling them in loan forgiveness programs. During the past 7 years, GotZoom's expertise has reduced the monthly student loan payments for their clients by an average of 65% as well as the total payout over the life of the loan by 75%. This is a tool that could be used to enhance your recruiting and retention efforts.

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