

SAM Bulletin - September 2020

1 message

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*School Administrators of Montana***BULLETIN***Visionary leaders united in providing, advocating, and creating education excellence for Montana students!***Volume XLIII****September 2020****No. 299*****In This Issue...***

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**Upcoming
Conferences,
Meetings, & Events**

September 21-22:
MASS/MCASE Virtual Fall Conference

October 14, 2020, 9:00-11:00 AM: SAM Virtual Board Meeting

October 14, 2020, 1:00 - 3:00 PM: SAM Virtual Business/Membership Meeting

Embracing Our Challenge*by Dale Olinger, SAM President*

"Back to School" has long been the mantra of August and is most commonly associated with bargain binders and shiny new lunchboxes. Never before has this joyful phrase come with so much global media coverage, politicization, and controversy. I cannot help but reflect on all the years when school began with pure enthusiasm and excitement. Though it seems difficult sometimes, I believe we should move forward into these uncharted waters with the same ambitious spirit of years past. Think of the grin on a child's face when she meets her new favorite teacher ever. It is in moments like these that the health crisis fades away, and the joy of a child reigns supreme.

You might be familiar with the speech JFK gave at Rice University some 58 years ago. He discusses that the U.S. chooses "...to go to the Moon this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard..." He mentions accomplishing the mission by using "...metal alloys, some of which have not yet been invented, capable of standing heat and stresses several times more than have ever been experienced..." The task was ambitious to say the least. Nevertheless, we made it to the moon.

JFK's words from 1962 resonate with the challenges before us today. In leading our state's public schools into the unknown, we will leverage new and sophisticated ways of teaching and learning. We will endure pressure and scrutiny the likes of which would bring an average person to tears. We do this because of our collective commitment to the greater good and delivering on the promise of doing what is best for Montana's kids. We will model resiliency and adaptability. Those who depend on our leadership will reflect these qualities in response. Just as we made it to the moon, we will make it through the pandemic. Just like the space race, we will emerge with new knowledge and strength we had not yet realized.

This year, students and teachers will be learning and teaching from classrooms and the dining room table. Regardless of location and method, Montana can rest assured that SAM members, school staff, and our education partners across the state are working in new ways, reshaping normal, and sticking to it *because it is hard* and because rising to meet a challenge is what we do best.

Take care of your students, your staff, and yourself this year!

Dale Olinger
SAM President

Montana Administrators Leading with Heart and Mind for a Successful 2020-21 School Year!

by Kirk Miller, SAM Executive Director

This Executive Director Article is a reflection on my thoughts about the current landscape for our schools, communities, state, and nation. The effort to educate our children nationwide, and most specifically here

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in Montana, has been led and shaped, by our quality Montana school administrators, East to West and large to small. I will tell you, never have I been more proud to be an educator and associated with our Montana education leaders. Our Montana education leaders' work over the past 6 months is the epitome of leading with heart and mind.

My observations of the end of 2019-20 school year were underscored by high-level implementation of plans during school closure in order to meet the educational needs of our children. Locally developed and fiercely attended to, the close of the 2019-20 school year will be one all of us remember. Most importantly, your work for our children emphasized just how important our schools are to the community they serve, and how our communities understood the value of their public school. My thanks to each and every district and school administrator for setting a leadership tone, collaborative atmosphere, and tenacity to take care of the educational needs of our children during the pandemic – leading with heart and mind.

This summer, what I observed is the extreme effort, enthusiasm and ability of our administrators to plan for the unknown. Developing multiple-leveled reopening plans that met locally established educational needs during the pandemic and its ever-changing impact on our society and our lives adhered to developing a culture of collaboration and relationship building. Administrators building relationships with health officials and town and city officials to work together to plan for the safety and well-being of children, their education and the entire community. Once again, Montana education leaders vividly displayed the ability to lead with heart and mind.

As the fall is here, I have observed signs of serenity and purpose from administrators expressing their appreciation that implementation time is here. Having planned for multiple-leveled reopening, the implementation of plans is what our administrators statewide are really great at accomplishing (you have always been great at building collaboration and alliances that allow implementation of plans with fidelity to the core values of what needs to be accomplished), and those opening days of implementation have been met with a positive, future-focused attitude. Montana education leaders leading with heart and mind.

In conversations with many, many administrators this early fall, they have accepted with vigor the charge to be the minister of education in their community. Simply put, it is the administrator's passion, caring, and ability to communicate with their community, staff and students, that will make the difference in successfully reopening our schools. Please don't miss an opportunity to share with your community how important what you and your team do for children, is to the success of your community (safety, health and well-being) and every community across the state (magnified more during a time of health pandemic). Great leaders (ministers), tuned in to their team and community are what makes a difference – leading with heart and mind!

These reflections on your past efforts and, based on what I've observed, your successful work ahead are the key to our success to rise above the pandemic, focus on our children and make the 2020-21 school year an outstanding, positive experience for all. What I know is you will do this with heart and mind. So, as we embark on the 2020-21 school year let me just simply say THANK YOU for choosing education leader as your profession, and for the perseverance, tenacity and growth mindset you bring to your school and community. If SAM can support you in any way, please reach out and let me know.

All the Best,

Kurt D. Miller

MASS/MCASE Virtual Fall Conference



2020 MASS/MCASE Virtual Fall Conference

*We Lead On -
Grounded In Our Mission*

September 21st & 22nd

[Click here to REGISTER!](#)

Great professional learning and networking are planned for the 2020 MASS/MCASE Virtual Fall Conference. Check this out and register to join your fellow administrators in these learning opportunities!

**SAM LPLP 2020-21
Registration: It's Not Too Late!**

Current Award Opportunities

The following award nominations/applications are now open. Please consider nominating someone you would like to recognize for their outstanding service to the education of Montana's children.

- **MASS AASA Convention Incentive Award** - Nominations close September 14, 2020: The Montana Association of School Superintendents Incentive Award Program is intended to provide an opportunity for two administrators to attend the VIRTUAL AASA National Conference on Education (NCE) in San Diego February 18-19, 2021. Nominees must be members of MASS and AASA and must not have previously attended an AASA NCE. Because this conference will be held virtually, recipients of the

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It's not too late to join the 60 new and experienced administrators who have registered for SAM LPLP 2020-21!

We are looking forward to a terrific year by continuing with tried and true best practices in addition to including new and exciting content to the program as we move forward. You are invited to join us! [Follow this link for more information and to register.](#)

The following Collegial Learning Networks (CLNs) are beginning to set goals for the 2020-21 program year: COVID Implementation, New Superintendents, New Principals, Social-Emotional Learning/TierII/Tier III Behavior Project, Transformational Learning, AASA/SAM Aspiring Superintendent, Special Education Directors, ESSA Comprehensive Support.



On August 13th the SAM LPLP held the first Huddle virtual sharing session intended to bring the LPLP members together to discuss the calendar of upcoming events, the resources available to support their work and to focus on a contemporary topic/issue. **The SAM LPLP Huddle for our LPLP members, will continue monthly on the 2nd Thursday from 10:00 - 11:00 am.**

The members of Montana Association of School Superintendents (MASS) believe so strongly in the SAM LPLP that they have agreed to pay the registration fee for all Montana superintendents new to their position. When completing the registration form, just indicate that you are a new superintendent. For more information, contact the SAM office.

Register for SAM LPLP 2020-21!

Montana Schools Recruitment Project - Helping with Your Special Education Personnel Needs

SAM, MCASE and OPI have a long standing commitment to recruiting highly qualified special education personnel. With increasing difficulty in recruiting special education staff, a committee was formed in 2005 to systemically recruit special education personnel to Montana. This committee, headed by Lori Ruffier, School Psychologist and former Special Education Director, became known as the Montana Schools Recruitment Project (MSRP). For the past 15 years, MSRP recruiters have recruited certified Special Education Teachers, SLPs, School Psychologists, OTs, PTs, Sign Language Interpreters and any other personnel necessary to accommodate children with special needs in Montana Public Schools.

This past June, Lori retired from her position as Project Director of the MSRP. Her hard work and dedication built relationships with colleges and universities, special ed organizations, and most importantly brought many new faces to our districts and cooperatives to fill open positions. Over the years, she became known as "The Montana Lady"

incidental award may apply of the award again in the future when the conference is held in-person.

- **G.V. Erickson Award** - Nominations close October 1, 2020: The G.V. Erickson Award is given to a member of the School Administrators of Montana who has made the greatest contribution to the betterment of education in Montana; something that G.V. did throughout his career. This is the most honored award a school administrator of Montana can receive.
- **Erdie Memorial Scholarship - Applications** close October 1, 2020: A Dr. Jay Erdie Memorial Mentor Scholarship in the amount of \$1000 will be awarded annually to a deserving educator. The purpose of the scholarship is to "train and mentor" new Montana school administrators. The scholarship will be awarded to a school administration candidate who plans to begin and/or complete his/her administrative credentials and intends to work in a Montana school district. Once the candidate has secured a position and notified the SAM office, a trained mentor will be provided through SAM's Mentor Program to assist during his/her first year on the job.
- **MASS School Board of the Year - Nominations** close October 1, 2020: The purpose of the award is to recognize and focus attention on the dedicated and ethical service rendered by school boards to the children of Montana. Nominations for the MASS School Board of the Year may be submitted by any Montana Superintendent of Schools. A committee reviews the applications and selects up to two (2) Outstanding School Boards in Montana. The winners are announced during the annual SAM Business Meeting in October.
- **MASSP/NASSP Assistant Principal of the Year Award** - Nominations/Applications close October 4, 2020: The National Assistant Principal of the Year program recognizes outstanding school leaders who have succeeded in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students. These assistant principals are acknowledged by their peers for the exemplary contributions they have made to the profession. The program honors high school assistant principals who have demonstrated excellence in the areas addressed by the selection criteria

EmpowerED Superintendent Webinar Series, Diversity in IT

because of her strong presence at numerous recruitment shows and events across the country. Most recently, Lori was thrilled to accept her greatest role as “Memere” to her first grandchild born this spring. SAM thanks Lori for her many years of service to the state of Montana.

The role of Project Director is now filled by Kaitlin Sonderer. Kaitlin is a Speech-Language Pathologist who received her Master’s Degree from the University of Montana in 2013 and worked as an SLP for the Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative. Having relocated to Montana in 2006 from Buffalo, New York, she knows first-hand about the benefits of living and working in Big Sky Country. Kaitlin lives in Ennis with her husband, and young daughter. She has been working with the MSRP Committee since 2016 and is excited to take on this new role.

The MSRP is aware that COVID-19 brings new challenges for education across our state and is prepared to continue altering recruiting efforts as needed to meet the needs of our schools. Our long-standing goal is to find candidates to fill open special education positions and that will not change. This 2020-2021 school year carries new experiences for all and we are planning more virtual events and updated marketing strategies.

School districts and cooperatives can enroll with the MSRP on a yearly basis for a fee based on student enrollment. For more information about the Montana Schools Recruitment Project and to join, please visit our website: <https://www.sammt.org/mcase-recruitment-project>

MCEL 2020: October 15-16, 2020 is Virtual



Registration is open for MCEL 2020! Visit the following links for more information:

- [Registration](#)
- [Schedule at a Glance](#)
- [2020 MCEL Sessions](#)

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

EmpowerED Superintendent Webinar Series - Season 3

Launch On Monday, September 14, 2020, at 5:00 pm Eastern Time the EmpowerED Superintendent Webinar Series, co[hosted by CoSN, AASA and edWeb.net and sponsored by ClassLink begins its third season. The initial broadcast for Season 3 is titled "*School Leadership 2020-21: Unprecedented Challenges in a COVID-10 World*". Guest panelists include Dr. Dan Domenech, Executive Director, AASA, Keith Krueger, CEO of CoSN and Dr. David Schuler, Superintendent Township High School District 214, IL and Chair of the CoSN superintendent Advisory Panel. Ann McMullan, CoSN EmpowerED Superintendent Initiative Project Director, returns as the host/moderator for the series. Free registration for the September 14 webinar is available [HERE](#).

The free recording of the July 13 webinar broadcast on *Smart Education Networks by Design: The CoSN SEND Initiative* which featured a lively discussion with Dr. Mark Benigni, Superintendent, Meriden Public Schools, Dr. John Marcus, Superintendent, Stoughton Public Schools, MA and Matthew Miller, Superintendent Lakota Local Schools, OH can be accessed [HERE](#). The complete list of free recordings of all previously broadcast EmpowerED Superintendent webinars is also available [HERE](#). In addition to the free access to live and recorded webinars, the EmpowerED Superintendent webinars are now also available via podcast. Learn more [HERE](#).

Super Power of Techni-Color in IT

If you missed this session during the CoSN 2020 Virtual Conference, you can now view the recording of this wonderfully engaging and timely panel conversation about diversity in the IT sector [HERE](#).

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.

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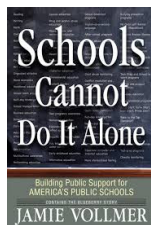
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