

June 2019 Technology Report

SAM Delegate Assembly

The SAM (School Administrators of Montana) Delegate Assembly was held this past June 13 and 14th. SAM has a 40+ year history of various position statements and resolutions that guides the SAM office to seek action and provide support across a number of state level educational issues. Many of the successes and disappointments were shared as well as ways to seek funding for various programs, especially in the area of Pre-Kindergarten funding which did not pass this past legislature.

In the technology area the META group at the assembly advocated for bringing the area of technology funding from a support statement to an actionable item meaning that our SAM leadership will seek opportunities to both write legislation as well as seeking sponsors in the legislative bodies to bring the bills to the table. Montana had historically used timber sales to fund technology in schools however that funding no longer is available to school districts. What minimal timber sale monies that do exist are used at the state level to support some E-Rate education programs. Everyone recognizes the need to fund technology in our schools and the assembly is supporting putting forth legislative efforts to appropriate ANB funding without reducing other funding measures starting at \$50 per student.

Many of the resolutions in other areas included several to continue support for special education funding, continued opposition of vouchers and tuition tax credits for charter and private schools and continued support for our Early Childhood (pre-K) learners.

In light of pre-K funding not being funded this past legislature, SAM is looking to provide resources and training under the umbrella of Exceptional Circumstances. There was limited time to discuss the full issue during the assembly time but the take away appears to be that first and foremost, we cannot refer to the programs as Pre-K but rather Early Childhood programs. Secondly, if students meet one of five Exceptional Circumstances, then districts can pursue ANB funding to address these students. 3 of the 5 Exceptional Circumstances would potentially qualify many of our students for funding with those being students identified in need of special services under IDEA/ESSA, students who qualify for free and reduced lunches and students from Native American communities. More information will be forthcoming over the next year but the

SAM office does not expect to be ready for the 2020-21 school year. It will give an area for BPS to quickly research to see if we can seek benefit for the upcoming school year.

Student Privacy

The implementation of HB 745 is well under way. This is the bill requiring school districts and technology providers to have signed agreements in place ensuring that vendors who have access to students Personally Identifiable Information are held to the same standards and commitment to FERPA privacy laws the same as any staff member with the district. The state will be joining the Access 4 Learning Student Data Privacy Consortium and OPI has committed to paying the \$5,000 annual membership fee so that all Montana School Districts can benefit and access the nationwide database of various technology vendors and their status if they have signed agreements with school districts. We have vendors that BPS already works with such as Ellevation, Reinnsance Learning, Scholastic and McGraw Hill to name a few. We will also be pursuing agreements with app makers for apps that we have deployed on our iPads and chrome books as well.

OPI should have our membership check and entry processed by month end (June) so that districts can get agreements in place for our more widely used apps prior to the beginning of the 2019-20 school year.

We are hopeful that with the support of state law that most vendors will sign on to protect our students data and privacy. However, we may need to pull back some resources if those vendors will not commit to protecting our students privacy.