



## Montana Small Schools Alliance

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### Unofficial Minutes Montana Small Schools Alliance QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING 11:30 A.M. Wednesday, January 22, 2020 MSSA Office, 710 South Atlantic Street Dillon, MT 59725

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**Members and guests present:** Jayne Downey, Jan Cahill, Linda Marsh, Laura Straus, Carolyn Hall, Linda Sunderlin, Dan Rask.

#### AGENDA CHANGES

11:30 a.m.      1. CALL TO ORDER – Chair

11:32 a.m.      2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: September 19, 2019 Board Meeting

- Linda moved and Jan seconded approval of the minutes as presented. **Motion carried.**

11:35 a.m.      3. CHANGES/ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA (action)

- Jan moved and Linda seconded the agenda with the addition of Linda Sunderlin to the report section of the agenda. **Motion carried.**

11:40 a.m.      4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (action items)

A. Standards Discussion (continued)

- Laura moved and Linda seconded having Dan develop a template for a waiver of the standards for schools above 126 and below 176 to use MSSA's Standards program for three years while demonstrating efforts to fill the vacancy and work toward regular accreditation in either Counseling or Library or both. The template will be presented to OPI for review before our April meeting. **Motion carried.**

12:10 p.m.      5. NEW BUSINESS (information/action items)

A. Rural Excellence Scholarship Selection for 2020.

- Linda moved and Jan seconded awarding West Glacier Elementary the "District Rural Excellence Award for 2020.
- Jan moved and Linda seconded awarding Macey McClendon of Arrowhead Elementary the "Instructor Rural Excellence Award for 2020. The Board also wanted Dan to add the requirement for a "budget" in the application process and to encourage those schools who did not win an award to continue to apply. **Motion carried.**

B. Update Rural Policy Manual

- Dan presented a summary of 16 policy updates for 2020. He will place the full policies online for review and we will have a second reading on those in April. Laura moved and Jan seconded approval of the updates on first reading. **Motion carried.**

C. 2020 Workshop Dates and Sites

- Linda moved and Jan seconded the submitted dates and sites for all conferences for 2020-2021 with the following changes to April 2021:

#### APRIL

- Butte - Wednesday, April 7 - (Copper King Hotel and Convention Center, 4655 Harrison Avenue, Butte, MT 59701).
- Havre - Friday - April 9 - (Great Northern Hotel, 1345 1st Street, Havre, Montana, 59501, Conference Room).
- Miles City - Monday, April 12 - (Miles Community College, 2715 Dickinson St., Miles City, MT 59301).
- Big Timber - Tuesday, April 13 - (Ambulance Station, 210 West First Avenue, Big Timber, MT).

D. Possible New Office Site

- Linda moved and Jan seconded approval of the new office site at 220 North Montana in Dillon beginning February 1, 2020. **Motion carried.**

1:00 p.m.

6. MSSA REPORTS

A. NREA/NREAC - Dan

- Dan presented the NREA and NREAC reports in writing previous to the meeting. He also indicated that the NREAC Agenda Setting Conference for 2020 is in DC on March 30, 31, April 1, 2020. Cathy Maloney will attend along with Dan this year.

B. MACSS - Linda

- The MACSS Executive Board will hold a conference call next Tuesday, January 28. The site of the State Spelling Bee, which has always been held in Billings, has been moved to the campus of MSU in Bozeman this year. The Spring Conference and Rural Teacher of the Year Banquet will be in Sidney, Montana April 21, 22 with the Award Banquet on the evening of the 22nd. A trip to Fort Union is in the plans. NREA Executive Director, Allen Pratt will be in attendance as well as MSSA Chair Jayne Downey.

C. MSU - Jayne

- MSU/UM has received a grant to prepare counselors for rural schools in exchange for a commitment to remain in the rural setting for a period of time. MSU also has received a grant to train rural educators. The grant received a match of 6.2 million from the federal government. That match involved 6.2 million committed by Montana schools and organizations such as the MSSA.

D. Western - Laura

- U of M Western is debating the re-introduction of an IA/Tech program on campus after discontinuing it at the campus and having it in conjunction with Helena College. They are considering teaming with the Highlands College in Butte as a more convenient and effective program. Currently, MSU - Bozeman has the only program in state.

E. MTSBA - Jan

- Jan indicated that the MTSBA Board did not meet in January but will hold a conference call on Thursday, January 23, 2020. MTSBA and MQEC have representation in DC regarding the Espinoza case. That case is before the Supreme Court determining the constitutionality of Montana's program to allow tax deductible contributions to private schools. It has been ruled unconstitutional by the Montana Constitution and is being challenged.

F. Office Manager - Linda Sunderlin

- Linda provided all financial data for the Board indicating that we continue to be on solid footing at MSSA. She also indicated that we have 99 school districts in our Consortium program, 102 Library Standards Districts, and 110 Counseling Standards Districts. We serve 1637 students in the Measured Academic Progress Testing Program and have 21 individual and 7 Institutional memberships in the NREA. She continues to work on the Rural Financial Data Survey with 75 schools. We will work with a new accounting firm this year, Mardel Scott and have a three year informal audit completed by the end of the calendar year.

G. Professional Development - Dean

- Dean summarized our training for February which will be focused on mental health for students and staff. He indicated that we have secured Craig Falcon for April's conferences and the focus is on IEFA. The history of Montana tribes through tribal eyes, Native American Cultural Awareness and Native American Games will also be a focus during the day. Potential topics for 2020-2021 will include NGSS Science Standards, Digital Citizenship, STEAM and STEM in the classroom and writing strategies could also be addressed.

Next meeting time, date and location.

**Thursday, April 30, 2020 @2 p.m. in Helena at a site to be determined.**

1:45 p.m. 7. ADJOURN

