



## *Montana Small School Alliance*

220 North Montana St. – Dillon, MT 59725

Phone 988 - 0164 – Fax 998 - 0148

Email –mssa710@gmail.com

Website – www.mt-ssa.org

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### **DRAFT MINUTES**

**Montana Small Schools Alliance**

**September 25 2024, 11:00 A.M.**

**11:00 A.M.-1:30 P.M.**

**MSU- Health Sciences Bldg.- Conference Room 107A  
Bozeman, Montana**

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**Members present:** Carolyn Hall, Chairman; Jayne Downey, Vice-Chairman; Katrina Chaney, Katrina Kennett, Krystal Zentner, Laura Straus- out-going member, Janelle Beers.

- 11:09 a.m.**      **1. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Carolyn Hall called the meeting to order at 11:06 A.M. New Board Members were welcomed, Katrina Kennett, WMU and Krystal Zentner, MTSBA.
- 11:10 a.m.**      **2. Approval of Minutes for June 21, 2024**  
There was one change to the minutes in the future work of out-going board member Laura Straus. Katrina Chaney moved and Katrina Kennett seconded acceptance of the minutes with the noted change.  
**Motion carried.**
- 1:11 a.m.**      **3. CHANGES/ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA (Action)**  
There were no changes to the agenda.  
Krystal moved and Katrina Chaney seconded.  
**Motion carried.**
- 11:20 a.m.**      **4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion & Action items)**
- A. Standards Workshops Report- Review**  
Janelle reported on the great set of Standards Workshops in August. Largest attendance to date, in four locations, Miles City, Big Timber, Kalispell and Helena. Erin and Laurie did a great job and the feedback was wonderful. We will review the locations and dates to get the most benefit for our membership. Janelle also noted that an iPad was given away at each session, donated by our grant partner STOP It Solutions.  
Discussion on ideas for getting evaluations from membership  
**No action required.**

**B. DOJ Stop Grant Report**

Janelle reported on the current grant programs and progress in bringing schools on board. Cindy Fouhy and other grant employees were at each of the Standards Workshops and the September sessions. This was very productive and many schools moved forward with adding programs. The Board had questions about the cost to us and if we are being fairly compensated for MSSA time in grant work. Janelle noted she felt we were but would check on this for the Board. Janelle also noted that both her and Erin Lipkind will be doing a session on the grant work at the National Rural Education Conference.

**No action required.**

**C. Jules Waber Travel Award Report-**

Janelle gave the information on the award winners. Suzy Rios, County Superintendent from Lincoln County and Jami Burns, teacher at Pioneer School. The fees for the second award winner will be reimbursed from NREA, per Allen Pratt's donation. Each of the winners will submit a written report at our next meeting.

**D. County Superintendent Conference Report-**

Katrina Chaney, Carolyn Hall and Jayne Downey reported on the 2024 Conference, which just ended. The conference was not as well attended as in the past but it was a rich conference. Because of the combined conference with SAM, Superintendents from other schools attended and valuable information was shared. Jayne shared information on a database she is working to compile for small/one room schools. She asked the group how to expand her information/list, including home school data. Discussion followed. The Spring County Superintendent Conference will be March 4-6, 2025, in Helena.

**E. Membership Report for 2024-2025**

The Board received the updated membership numbers for the year.

139 Schools in some program

105 Consortium

71 MAPS

134 Standards

More schools are coming on Board weekly, so these numbers will change some over the next few months

The Board discussed the numbers, new schools, any schools we had lost.

Questions on our organizations ability to meet the needs of our schools. All comments were positive. The Board feels that MSSA is meeting the needs of the member schools.

**No action required.**

11:47 a.m.

5. **NEW BUSINESS (Discussion & Action items)**

A. **NREA Conference, Savannah, Georgia**

Janelle asked the Board who was attending the National Conference this year. She plans to attend along with our scholarship recipients. Janelle and Erin Lipkind will be doing a presentation as will Jayne Downey. Janelle will procure the auction item from MSSA for the NREA Foundation event. The Board will expect reports at our next meeting.

**No Action Required.**

B. **Office Manager Salary and Benefits**

Janelle had previously sent the Board a copy of Linda's evaluation for review.

Janelle introduced the office manager salary and benefits with information on the current contract, and cost of living adjustments. She recommended that we keep the raise in line with the COLA. Insurance stipend to stay the same as previous years at \$150 per month. Linda had asked for an additional day of vacation and sick leave. The contract runs January 1-December 30.

Recommendation:

An additional day of vacation for a total of 9 days. That way she could take a full two weeks off if she wanted to.

Salary \$33,280 for 1040 hours or \$32 per hour.

The Board agreed to Janelle's recommendations, and praised the work that Linda does to keep the office and work with our schools running smoothly. Jayne moved and Katrina Chaney seconded.

**Motion carried. (With the additional note to let Linda know how much she is appreciated.)**

C. **Release of Rural Education Scholarship for 2024-2025**

Janelle presented information on the annual Rural Education Scholarship applications. Board discussion.

The Board approved awarding scholarships to:

Geyser Public Schools, Ryegate Public Schools, Trego School District.

Janelle will contact the winners with their awards and timeline.

Krystal moved and Jayne seconded.

**Motion carried.**

D. **Election of Vice Chair**

Because Laura Straus has retired and was Vice-Chair, a new Vice-Chair needs to be elected. Katrina Chaney nominated Jayne Downey.

Discussion followed.

Katrina moved and Carolyn seconded.

**Motion carried.**

12:55 p.m.

6. **MSSA Reports-** summaries

Executive Director- Janelle reported that much of her information was shared during the meeting. She has been appointed to the OPI Negotiated Rule Making Committee for ELA with meetings to start after the first of the year. Her book study will begin in October, currently 10 teachers signed up.

MSSA Office- Linda- No additional report.

MACCS- Katrina and Carolyn- No additional report.

MSU- Jayne shared her data base information for her rural school's study. Discussion on what more is needed and what the information the results will give.

Western- Katrina reported on the Rural Experiences Authentic Learning project that will target Para's in the schools. Providing course offerings instead of just taking a test. There is a curriculum proposal for an online program for SPED K-12, with courses at the 500 level.

Western is also hosting the Japan Cultural Ambassador with cultural outreach in rural Montana. It is a one-year program.

MTSBA- Krystal reported on her work with the MREA Board. She also reported on her trip to DC to meet with Legislators, including discussion on public education. She said that MTSBA needs Eastern representation, and with their 20 Directors there is no small school representation. She said she was happy to join the MSSA Board.

1:30 p.m.

7. **ADJOURN:** The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 P.M.

Jayne moved and Katrina Chaney seconded.

**Motion carried.**

**The next Regular Board Meeting will be our Quarterly Meeting via Zoom, January 24, 2024 from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.**

***Changed to February 13, 2025 at 11:00 AM.***