

NEWS FROM: *Montana Small Schools Alliance*

UPDATE: February 2023

Message from the Director:

♥Happy Valentine's Day!

I have a confession to make. I am not feeling prepared for February. I am here, and I am working, but often my mind is elsewhere. I will call this my real life time!

What does a “real life” time mean? For me it means the time in my life where life, outside work, takes precedence. My sister lost her husband to cancer in December, and for the month of January I was out in Oregon trying to help her navigate life. All the changes, all the unknowns, and all of the ups and downs that I am sure will continue to happen. I was able to work remotely so that all worked out well.

But, now I am back and I find myself thinking about her, and oh so quickly going down the rabbit hole of worrying about her. I am sure you all have your own “rabbit hole”. Your real life!

I am telling you this because I think as educators we often do not give ourselves permission to concentrate on our “real life”. Our families, our children, our significant others, our parents, our finances, our health- the list can go on and on. Please do not ignore your real life. If you do, it will eventually catch up with you and often it shows up in you being unhealthy, stressed, or maybe a little grouchy! Has that ever happened to you?

So, if you need to have a new years resolution- make it one to take care of yourself. Acknowledge and deal with your real life. I am not saying move to a tropical island (wouldn't that be nice), or to take a month off, I am saying to learn to know the balance you need between work and life. Learn how you can make it work, and learn your limitations.

I know that for the next few months, even years, I will worry about my sister. I know I can help her but I can't always be with her. So, I have to figure out how to make it work for me so that I can continue to do the work I love, and still be there for those I love. It isn't easy, but half the battle is knowing what you can and can't do, and then how to make that happen. I am a work in progress.

There are lots of sayings about how fast time goes, how fast life goes by- it really does. Embrace your real life and take care of yourself!

Have a great month,

Janelle ♥

Montana Cares Help App Now Available for Sign Up

Are you interested in becoming an early adopter for the Montana Cares App?

In partnership with Western Montana Professional Learning Collaborate (WMPLC) and STOPit Solutions, MSSA is making available the Montana Cares App for many of its members beginning this spring. The program will focus on connecting students, staff & parents to basic needs and community resources. It will also feature 24/7 immediate crisis support, and a direct to school communication platform accessible through the Mobile App, Chromebooks or Web, and Phone. The program is powered and delivered by STOPit Solutions through its 24/7/365 Help Center who monitor the program and escalate any life-threatening or imminent threat situations immediately. The program is funded through a 3-year STOP School Violence Act Grant awarded to WMPLC and is made available without cost to MSSA member districts.

If you are interested contact Matthew Toth at mtoty@stopitsolutions.com or www.stopitsolutions.com/montanacares or contact me directly at jbeers@mt-ssa.org.

“Without Valentine’s Day, February would be...well, January.” Jim Gaffigan

Congratulations Teacher and District Scholarships Recipients

The MSSA Board approved the following scholarships at their January Board Meeting:

Instructor Scholarship- Elissa Zelner, Turner

District Scholarship- Creston School District,

Harrison K-12

Woodman Elementary School

MAPS Training

The date for the 2023 MAPS training has been set.

August 7, 2023 via Zoom

Add this to your calendar now!

April Workshops In Person and Zoom Dates

Register Now!

The format for the April workshops has changed to include one Zoom option, and three in person sessions.

Mathematics Instruction

April 14, 2023- Miles City (Miles Community College)

April 17, 2023- Big Timber (Ambulance Station)

April 18, 2023- Zoom

April 20, 2023- Butte (Copper King Hotel and Convention Center)

Standards Workshops for 2023-2024

Dates for next year's Standards Trainings are below.

Make sure you put these on the calendar, and make sure if you are part of the Library or Counseling Standards Program that a licensed teacher from your school attends. There will be no make-up sessions next year.

August 9, 2023- Miles City

August 11, 2023- Big Timber

August 14, 2023- Kalispell

August 16, 2023- Helena

Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp

Summer educational opportunity for youth 14-18 years old.

This camp has been for 37 years and gives youth the opportunity to study in an outdoor classroom. If you have students interested please go to the following website- <https://www.montana.edu/extension/forestry/mnryc/index.html>

The camp has many scholarships available for camp fees and/or transportation costs.

“All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn’t hurt.”

Charles M. Schulz