**NEWS FROM: *Montana Small Schools Alliance***

**UPDATE: October 2024**

Message from the Director:

 Happy Fall!

 Colder weather, football and volleyball, falling leaves, pumpkins and scarecrows, all of these things remind me that yes, it is already fall! I am not sure where September went but it passed me by very quickly. I hope you have had a great first month of school and that you and your students are on the way to a year filled with learning, laughter, and the making of many important memories.

 You might think it is odd to add “laughter” as one of the words to describe your year. I however believe that if there is no laughter, no fun in our classrooms or schools, then there is probably not much joy, and probably not much learning. Joy, laughter, fun makes the days go quicker, the connections more meaningful, and learning more meaningful. How much easier it is to remember learning a concept, idea, or difficult task if the memory associated with it brings a smile or a pleasant thought to your mind. For me the joy of teaching is the connections made along the way. How about you? What makes learning easier for you? Bring that into your classroom and I guarantee learning will follow.

 Thanks to all of you that attended the OPI Boot camp workshops. There was a lot of information shared, sometimes an overwhelming amount, but the feedback was very positive, and the information necessary. The evaluations indicated that we should continue this process of having OPI at our fall workshops.

 November workshops will be here before you know it. Character Strong, which is a free (thanks to a grant) curriculum for all grade levels to support mental health, and the Cook Center with QPR Training (certification upon completion) and a virtual escape room experience. Sign up early as there are only two sessions available.

 Again, thank you for all you do every day. You are valued and appreciated!

Sincerely,

Janelle

**New Newsletter Feature**

 Beginning next month, I will be featuring 3-4 of our rural counties and the rural schools and teachers in them. Over the course of the year we will learn a little bit about each other and the schools that MSSA serves. If you have a special project or event coming up, let me know. I will reach out and we can feature your area of the State. Thanks in advance for all of your help in making this story idea work.

**Rural Readings starts October 14th**

 There is still time to sign up for our first ever MSSA Book Study!

Attached is a flier with all the information you need. The first meeting will be:

 **Tuesday, October 15, 2024 from 5:00-6:00 PM**

Sign up or just show up at the first meeting. Order your book. Read and be ready to discuss. See the attached flier for more information and the Zoom link.

**November Workshops**

Sign up on the website today!

November 8, 2024- Zoom

November 15, 2024- Zoom

Morning session- Cook Center with QPR Certification (suicide prevention) and Mental Health Virtual Escape Room

Participants will receive a QPR gatekeeper certificate for

suicide prevention. QPR is an emergency response to

someone in crisis and saves lives. This sessions covers

key components of Question, Persuade & Refer which are

the needs to know for helping someone who is having

suicidal thoughts or ideations. We will cover the common

causes of suicidal behavior and the warning signs of

suicide, along with additional resources for managing a

mental health crisis.

Afternoon session- Dr. Cindy Fouhy with Character Strong

Character Strong is an evidence based, multi-tier solution to whole child success. Elementary through secondary lessons that support life readiness and a sense of belonging, well-being and engagement. Curriculum and training that improve behavior, increase safety and support mental health. The Character Strong program and lessons are free (thanks to a grant) for all MSSA schools.

**Congratulations to the MSSA Scholarship Winners**

Trego School District- Samantha McCurry

Ryegate Public Schools- Toni Herman

Geyser Public Schools- Wendalyn Ulrich

**Math Standards Advisory Group**

 Are you interested in being part of the Math Standards Advisory Group? We are looking for 10-12 MSSA members who would like to help with the new Math Standards. Sonja Whitford will be leading this group through the process of taking OPI Standards and making them work for our small/rural/multi-grade classrooms and schools. If you are interested in being on the advisory group please email me at jbeers@mt-ssa.org. A stipend will be paid and work will begin January 2025.

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| **Congratulations to Dawn Sievers, Montana Teacher of the Year!****Governor's Third Annual Youth Hunting Story Contest**

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|  The third annual Governor’s Youth Hunting Story Contest is open to Montana youth and apprentice hunters ages 10 to 17. To enter the contest, hunters must submit a story of no more than 500 words and a photo from their hunt. Hunters must be a Montana resident and a licensed hunter or apprentice hunter between the ages of 10-17. Eligible entries include the harvest of any legal game, furbearer animals, or birds in Montana. The governor will select 10 hunters, five aged 10-13 and five aged 14-17, and announce the winners mid-December. Winners will be invited to the Capitol to receive prizes and celebrate with the governor in January of the new year. The deadline to enter the contest is Monday, December 2nd, 2024. |

**Parent Guidance Newsletter from the Cook Center**At the Cook Center for Human Connection, we understand the challenges of parenting in today’s world. In the September Newsletter ([English](https://d13whp04.na1.hubspotlinks.com/Ctc/5E%2B113/d13whP04/VW0TlV4Hwz_zW5PR97h2S-yZPW4PtzZh5kf25yN4-lLf-5nXHsW5BWr2F6lZ3kVW20pvJ95LGs7mW46G8vd3bpKYYVFbZ_0245DWMW2jkvR767nsbTW8MJkZs1nmxZ4W9kcYcv5rN-R7W49z4wZ3ZBbP0W3dfVQm1cYRgRW65Sdvg2L1MX0W15JkTQ1_ZNt7W76J74j98gw7KW5r_Qhf40CycRW5Bp5_8347N_ZW1B86PB6dGCwKW8m049687yV_SW8t6yxj5Rg_HRW3ZXMwF5zdBVfW2ykdd46XF-XrW1xHZLp3bR_zYW4JCyTP914G-lN4NNl3xgXzCRW2wtY0268ffkdW6qcW8k44r4NxW94b3vj7hT0mmV4lFgP8j6H5MW56yZQs3LQzBfW6_sS077t243DW257J368s8s0sW3DWYHB3dNjSDW2Hb_wB6dtvwKW7PqzBK39Q2zfW1Px-5z1FtX5WW4l_PH81C_bCTW1m1trf8z-8Khf8M7bZT04)/[Spanish](https://d13whp04.na1.hubspotlinks.com/Ctc/5E%2B113/d13whP04/VW0TlV4Hwz_zW5PR97h2S-yZPW4PtzZh5kf25yN4-lLgg5nXHsW69t95C6lZ3nCN3vj7yLdhTs0W4l5Nnv6Nkw6jW6LcZgk3R0fs-W6Jy3BM5BQ0GrW5H_M1C87PyRQW8Sb6Nn3md_XWVY51W73Zyr03MB66Jcl6208W3m0Gdg19MZdKW8xf1q67mjBdTW8qp7-K71_HyTW2nXmNx2-NPXjW3dX2b123Nq9GW2KSpNP6_0HqCW8w5Vz86jSBnmW141Pnr20v6YQW5PQKTM3mFRn9N2P0pbt-SlJ8W97cylD7CK-wcW8h1KYN3M9wWGW7Jlg_l8nXctvW7tmC9G3MPj-YW5ZsYPt5f42tDN11Tfh6RHp8xW3dtg9Q1dND5cVc_xKZ3p5grcW4H-MYB8Jp-HlW3z9jcW6SSrMdW3KRyWd4Cvsw0N93mVT5kTr80W7XcbHZ2M7WHCW6nnwlH1MzKCcN54kSBtC1gRSN8f5yPhwWwJVW4F-kxV4xdw74N3Lk11x5H98Nf3CZfVv04)), we’re focusing on an important issue every parent faces: peer pressure. In this newsletter, you’ll find practical advice and strategies to help your child confidently navigate peer pressure and make healthy, positive choices.

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