Please note, there will not be a Wednesday Reader next week, March 29, as I will be out of the office for vacation beginning the afternoon of March 28 and returning April 4. Go Mariners!

MFEC Accepting Mini-Grant Applications Through April 15

The Montana Financial Education Coalition (MFEC) is proud to promote local efforts to expand financial education across Montana. The MFEC provides mini-grants which are intended to help support activities in local communities that are rooted in Financial Literacy Awareness.

Mini-grant applications are being accepted until April 15. The maximum amount of any mini-grant awarded is $750.

Mini-grant applications should be emailed to cromano@mt.gov or mailed to MFEC, P.O. Box 200546, Helena, MT 59620.

For additional information please visit the MFEC's mini-grant webpage.

Free & Virtual Summer Computer Science Course Offering from MSU

CSCI 581 Computer Science in the Classroom: Computational Thinking for Teachers is a two (2) credit course being offered this summer for FREE to Montana teachers.

This virtual (synchronous) course examines the computing field and how it impacts the human condition. Exciting ideas and influential people are introduced. A gentle introduction to computational thinking using the Python programming language is provided. The course also introduces participants to robotic platforms.

CSCI 581 will be offered virtually July 17-31, 2023, from 8:00 am-5:00 pm daily. The course will be taught by MSU Bozeman Computer Science Faculty, Hunter Lloyd.

Full tuition stipends are available for teachers in Montana who submit a letter of support from an administrator and a brief letter of intent.

Visit the MSU MSSE program website for registration, application and other information: montana.edu/msse or msse@montana.edu.

NOTE: you can take MSSE classes as a non-degree seeking student—you do not need to be admitted to the MSU Master of Science in Science Education (MSSE) program to take this course.

Register for RiseUp by March 31 to get a MT Chamber Foundation $500 $cholarship

Are you interested in attending the Empowered RiseUp Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah July 18-21? The Empowered RiseUp event is free once you arrive, and The Montana Chamber Foundation will be reimbursing your travel up to $500.

"The FREE activities, curriculum, and resources available through Empowered and the Montana Chamber Foundation are changing the lives of both students and teachers. Through the partnership between Empowered and the Montana Chamber Foundations, Montana CTE teachers have opportunities not available anywhere else in the country." ~Eric Swenson, Montana Business Education Specialist.

The Montana Chamber Foundation loves how the Empowered curriculum can be layered into your classroom and want to support you in going and learning more about it. Educators are Montana's rock stars, and the Montana Chamber Foundation wants to ensure this is an awesome and completely paid for learning event.

How??

1. [Register](#) on the Empowered Hub for the Salt Lake City, Utah, RiseUp, July 18-20
2. Empowered will pay for the hotel rooms; when registering, please select "yes" to all of the hotel "scholarship" questions.
3. ***Please register for the RiseUp event before March 31***
4. Reimbursement will be refunded upon attendance to the conference. Please keep all of your travel receipts, reimbursement will be up to $500 of travel.
5. Montana Chamber Foundation and Empowered will be sending you information to make hotel reservations on your own. Upon check in to the hotel, the reservation will be moved from your card to Empowered.
6. Make sure to wait to make your hotel reservation until you hear from the Chamber Foundation, hotel reservations will look different than anyone else coming from around the country.

Who: Any Montana Educator currently using Empowered or wanting to learn about Empowered and how they can apply it to their classroom. If you have already registered for SLC, you are good to go.

What: Montana Educators attend this Empowered professional development training absolutely FREE. After registering for the RiseUp event, Empowered pays for all of the programming and hotels once you arrive. The Montana Chamber Foundation will pay for your travel up to $500. The Chamber is adding one additional paid night for Montana educators and the Chamber Foundation requests you stay for in order to claim the $500 travel. During this time, the Chamber Foundation will build mentorships and relationships within the Montana network of teachers.

Why: If you are new to Empowered, there will be sessions for you to learn how to utilize the curriculum. If you are a veteran, there will be sessions for you to learn how to expand Empowered in your classroom. During the additional Montana time, time will be spent to network and share how the Chamber can support you and take time to celebrate and appreciate Montana Educators.

When: July 18-21`, Empowered RiseUp ends at 1pm, July 20, and the Chamber will pay for the additional night with the Montana educators and you can fly/drive home July 21.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to Montana Chamber Foundation Workforce Strategists Tiana Yates, tiana@montanachamber.com, or James Easton, james@montanachamber.com, with any questions. See you in Salt Lake.

Registration is Now Open for Empowered's FREE RisUp Professional Development

[RiseUp](#) events are the flagship of [Empowered's](#) in-person training and professional development program. These three-day, regional programs are designed to assemble 300+ educators (each) to share a truly unique professional development experience. Speakers, panels, sessions, and leave-to-learns are specifically designed to be hands-on and foster participation and exploration.

The western region [RiseUp](#) will be July 18-20, 2023, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Tracks will be available for current teachers and teachers new to Empowered's curriculum, as well as joint sessions.

Thanks to the generous support of Empowered's donors and financial partners, registration for RiseUp events is free. Meals and snacks are included as part of the program and hotel scholarships are available for those traveling to participate. Professional Development Certificates will be issued to all participants. Teachers attending RiseUp are responsible for their transportation costs and incidentals.

Need more information? Try the FAQ page or contact Empowered. If attending, be sure to work with your district/school to receive OPI Renewal Units for Professional Development (RUPDs) events.

Empowered, a non-profit organization, partners with and supports K-12 educators. The Empowered Community—with thousands of teachers nationwide—believes that every student deserves an education that helps them discover and develop their own, unique skills and truly prepares them for life ahead.

Empowered offers 140+ engaging learning activities, training and professional development (including RiseUp events), support, from our staff and teacher community, and a collection of tools and resources to help bring learning to life.

April 5 is Deadline for Personal Finance Challenge Team Competition; Register Today

What is the Personal Finance Challenge? Every year, the Montana Council for Economic Education (MCEE), with support from the National Council for Economic Education hosts the Montana Personal Finance Challenge. The challenge is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge of personal finance by connecting with other students from across the state in an online competition.

How does the challenge work? Teams of 3-4 students will have 35 minutes to complete a 30-question online exam covering the principles of personal finance including money management, credit, investing, and insurance. Testing must be completed by April 5, 2023. Sample tests are available in the program.

Students earn 10 points for every correct response and 0 points for each incorrect answer. Every question must be answered to move on, and students are not able to go back to previous questions.

There will be a cash prize for the top three teams in Montana:

--1st Place: $500 per team
--2nd Place: $250 per team
--3rd Place: $100 per team

Next Steps: 1) If you are new to the Montana Personal Finance Challenge, welcome. You will need to select "Teacher Registration" from the menu and create your teacher profile. Once you profile is created, you will be able to log in and begin creating your teams. 2) If you are a returning teacher, welcome back. Your profile information is saved from your previous participation, and you can log in to begin creating your teams for this year's challenge. 3) Teachers sign up their team(s). You may sign up multiple teams on your teacher admin page, after you log-in—no need to register more than once.

Teacher Drawing: For each registered team that completes the challenge, teachers will be entered into a drawing for a $100 cash prize.

Teachers can create as many student teams as they would like, and the Montana Council for Economic Education has generously provided all registration and participation fees.

In the event of a tie score, the team with the cumulative least amount of time testing will win.

For questions or for more information, please contact MCEE Executive Director Dax Schieffer at mailto:mcee@montana.edu.

Register Today for the Montana Economics Challenge 2023—Competition Ends April 5
Registration is now open for the Montana Economics Challenge. Teams have until April 5, 2023, to compete.

What is the Montana Economics Challenge? Every year, the Montana Council for Economic Education (MCEE), with support from the National Council for Economic Education, hosts the Economics Challenge Program. The Challenge is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge of Economic Literacy by competing with other students across the state in online examinations. Student participants receive cash prizes, awards, and accolades.

There are two divisions in the Economics Challenge:

--Adam Smith: For returning competitors, AP, IB, and honors students.
--David Ricardo: For first-time competitors with no more than one course in economics.

How does the challenge work? Teams of 3-4 students will have 35 minutes to complete a 30-question online exam covering a broad variety of economic principles. Students earn 10 points for every correct response and 0 points for each incorrect answer. Every question must be answered to move on, and students are not able to go back to previous questions.

There will be a cash prize for the top three teams in each division:

--1st Place: $500 per team
--2nd Place: $250 per team
--3rd Place: $100 per team

State Finals Awards: Winners from the state championships will represent Montana in the national competition.

Next Steps: If you are new to the Montana Economics Challenge, welcome. You will need to select "Teacher Registration" from the menu and create your teacher profile. Once you profile is created, you will be able to log in and begin creating your teams.

If you are a returning teacher, welcome back. Your profile information is saved from your previous participation, and you can log in to begin creating your teams for this year's challenge.

Teachers sign up their team(s). You may sign up multiple teams on your teacher admin page, after you log-in—no need to register more than once.

Teacher Drawing: For each registered team that completes the challenge, teachers will be entered into a drawing for a $100 cash prize**.**

Teachers can create as many student teams as they would like and the Montana Council on Economic Education has generously provided all registration and participation fees.

For questions, please contact Dax Schieffer, Montana Council for Economic Education Executive Director, at mcee@montana.edu.

Free Summer Virtual Professional Development from CYBER.org

CYBER.org is offering three (3) professional development events during the summer for teachers wanting to learn more about teaching cyber education and cybersecurity. The weeklong, five days, events will be offered virtually with both asynchronous and synchronous learning methods.

Cybersecurity Bootcamp will be offered June 26-30 and, again, July 24-28. This event is a full five-day professional development (8-10 am and 12-2 pm MDT) that includes a mixture of both asynchronous and synchronous learning. Attendees will use the new CYBER.ORG Range that is free to all K-12 Educators within the United States and hear from the range developers some tips for best practices. Participants will meet each morning to learn new cybersecurity content and run through a class from the student's perspective.

Attendees will work through challenging and technical labs with the CYBER.ORG staff while running through less challenging labs on their own. Attendees will also review selected Case Studies on their own and then discuss as a whole group. New to 2023, there will be a beginner track for those still getting used to using a cyber range and an advanced track for participants who are comfortable using a cyber range.

Intro to Cybersecurity Bootcamp will be held July 17-21, from 8-10 am and 12-2 pm MDT. This is a new course for 2023 and is at both middle schools and high schools who are trying to implement a cybersecurity course that is not as technical as CYBER.ORG's technical Cybersecurity course.

This course was created by New Jersey's Garden State Cyber, piloted by New Jersey teachers in the 2022-2023 school year, and obtained by CYBER.ORG to be used in all classrooms across the country. Using a mixture of both asynchronous and synchronous learning, participants will meet each morning to learn new cybersecurity content and run through a class from the student's perspective. Attendees will work through labs with the CYBER.ORG staff as well as work through labs and activities on their own.

Attendees will use the new CYBER.ORG Range that is free to all K-12 Educators within the United States and hear some tips from the range developers for best practices.

CYBER.org also hosts a series of hour-long professional development sessions throughout the year on various topics related to their free curriculum and resources. Please visit the CYBER.org Events page for details regarding all their free, virtual events and professional development opportunities.

AICPA's Start Here, Go Places Website is Moving—Enhancements Ahead

The Association of International Certified Professional Accountants (AICPA) is excited to let you know that accounting students and educators will soon have one consolidated website for accounting resources.

The AICPA's StartHereGoPlaces website (SHGP) will soon transition to the ThisWayToCPA website (TWTCPA). As you may know, many resources previously existed on both sites. To help users—students and educators especially—these resources will exist on the single site with easier access to an increased number of materials.

Here are the main things to know:

Those who have created educator accounts on StartHereGoPlaces.com will be able to login on ThisWayToCPA.com, accounts will simply redirect to the new site for a smooth login experience. Users may be asked to update their password at first login.

All classroom activities from SHGP will move to the [Academic Resource Database](#) on TWTCPA. This means that educators will be able to access more resources at multiple levels. Resources on the Academic Resource Database are searchable by type, topic, level, and technology skill. The new combined database will provide educators with over 400 curated resources.

AICPA high school student membership was officially rolled out last month and both high school and university students will now be able to use TWTCPA to sign up for AICPA's free student membership.

[BankOnIt](#), the popular online game, is a separate site which will remain as a resource for educators and students.

The SHGP site will be decommissioned on April 3. Leading up to that, educators are encouraged to login at TWTCPA. Beginning April 3, the site will re-direct to [TWTCPA](#).

CSTA Wyoming Invites Montana Members to Conference in August

The [Computer Science Teachers Association](#) (CSTA) [Wyoming chapter](#) invites Montana teachers to their Second Annual Conference in Sheridan, Wyoming, August 2-4, 2023.

The 2023 Wyoming Computer Science Education Conference will be held in-person at Sheridan College. If you would like to present, CTSA Wyoming invites you to submit a [Presenter Proposal form](#). The deadline to submit proposals is June 1, 2023.

Please visit the [CTSA Wyoming website](#) for more details about their conference, including registration and lodging options.

Foundation for Economics Education Conference in Las Vegas—Free Hotel & Registration

The [Foundation for Economics Education](#) (FEE) invites all teachers teaching, or interested in teaching, economics to Las Vegas, June 27-28. This two-day professional development event will equip you with the pedagogical tools and instructional resources to start you on the way to becoming a master Economics educator. This professional development includes a complimentary hotel stay the nights of June 27 and June 28 at [Red Rocks Resort & Spa](#).

A $49 deposit is required when [registering](#) to hold your place and will be refunded in full upon your attendance at this professional development. If you must cancel your registration, please do so 7 days in advance of the event to receive a full refund.

Please visit the [FEE website](#) for more information and/or to create a free account to access [conference details](#) and FEE materials.

New to Scratch? Join a Free Scratch Workshop.

This month, [Scratch](#) is introducing a new virtual workshop: [Getting Started with Scratch](#). If you are new to Scratch, or you know someone who is, this is a great opportunity to learn the fundamentals of Scratch.

[Getting Started with Scratch](#) Workshops invite educators and caregivers to learn more about the Scratch platform, online community, and ways Scratch is used by young people around the world.

Join ready to engage in a playful introduction to this free creative coding platform, and leave with resources to support the next steps in your Scratch journey.

The free workshop is on Wednesday, March 29, from 10:00-11 am (MDT). Join Scratch, and feel free to invite educators in your own community.

Applications Now Being Accepted for Montana Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program
Through HB 211, the 2019 Montana legislature renewed the quality educator loan assistance program as a recruitment and retention aid for rural schools. The OPI is responsible for administering the program.

Newly hired quality educators who teach or work in a subject that has been identified as a "critical quality educator shortage area" at an "impacted school" are eligible to receive state paid loan assistance for up to four years, so long as they remain a full time employee at an impacted school.

The Office of Public Instruction has updated the process for Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program applications. The application process opened February 13, 2023, and runs through April 14, 2023.

Use the application link to complete an application and upload required documents. Please note that approvals and payments will not be processed until the review process is complete for all applications. Expect payment to be sent out after June 1, 2023. Letters to applicants will be sent at the same time.

For information about Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program, email OPILoanAssistance@mt.gov.

"W2 – Do Your Taxes" Night with Students
The Montana Society of CPA's announces the opportunity to host a "W2- Do Your Taxes" night to help high school students learn about tax filing.

This is a great opportunity to get involved with promoting the accounting industry to high school students and for local professionals to give back to the community. During the event, possibly two-three local tax professionals would be present to answer student questions.

If interested in hosting a "W2- Do Your Taxes" night with students, or to learn more, please contact Erinn Donnell, the Montana Society of CPAs' Communications Manager at erinn@montana.cpa or by phone at 406.442.7301.

CYBER.ORG Offering Travel Grants for EdCon 2023 in Arizona
Do not let financial constraints keep you from CYBER.ORG's EdCon 23 at the Mesa Convention Center in Mesa, Arizona, June 20-22, 2023.

CYBER.ORG has a limited number of $500 travel grants available for eligible teachers. Recipients of travel grants will be able to use the funds to seek reimbursement for up to $500 of registration, airfare, and/or hotel costs.

All applicants will receive a response to their application within 14 days with an award decision. Please note: (A) in order to *accept* the travel grant, you must (1) register for EdCon 23; (B) in order to *receive funds*, you must (1) attend EdCon 23 and (2) submit receipts for the total for which you are seeking reimbursement. Complete instructions will be given to awardees in the email notifying them of the award decision.

Apply today.

CYBER.ORG Hosting CYBER.ORG EdCon 23 in June in Mesa

CYBER.ORG announces registration is now open for CYBER.ORG EdCon 23. CYBER.ORG EdCon 23 (formerly CEDF) is a national conference designed to inspire and empower novice and expert K-12cybersecurity educators alike.

Attendees will have the opportunity to:

--Learn ready-to-implement lessons from CYBER.ORG curriculum developers.
--Explore at-no-cost resources from industry experts.
--Gain firsthand knowledge from K-12 educators teaching foundational and technical cybersecurity.

CYBER.ORG EdCon 23 will be held June 20-23, 2023, at the Mesa Convention Center in Mesa, Arizona.

Early bird registration is $50 for K-12 Educators & Government, $100 for Higher Ed & Non-Profit, and $150 for Industry member and ends April 30, 2023.

Book Your Stay at the Delta Hotels Phoenix Mesa for $103 plus taxes per night. The rooming block ends May 19, 2023.

Scholarships Available for CTSA's 2023 Virtual Conference Registration

The Computer Science Teachers Association (CTSA) 2023 Virtual Conference will be July 11-13, 2023. CSTA is offering scholarships that subsidize 100% of the program cost. These scholarships are intended to support teachers whose limited financial resources may prevent them from attending.

CSTA will award as many scholarships as possible to help deserving teachers join this excellent learning opportunity and will give priority consideration to:

--First-time conference attendees
--Teachers of color
--Teachers who teach underrepresented students in Computer Science
--Active CSTA members and volunteers
--Conference presenters (and those who submitted proposals)

Chapter leaders who attend the Chapter Leadership Summit already receive complimentary conference registration and need not apply. Contact conference@csteachers.org with any questions.

To be eligible for scholarships to the 2023 CSTA Conference, you must:

--be a CSTA Basic* or CSTA+ member,
--directly teach computer science to K-12 students, and
--not have access to funding from your school or organization to cover conference registration fees.

If not a CSTA member, you can join as a member for free at csteachers.org/join. Applications close on April 28, 2023.

Montana Work-Based Learning Collaborative: 2023 Montana Teacher Externships

Educator Externships are a unique professional development opportunity where teachers are immersed in a company to learn about the skills and competencies needed to succeed in that industry or career path. The Montana Work-Based Learning Collaborative is offering 40 teachers a three-day externship.

The experience strengthens an educator's teaching abilities and brings relevant, real-world context into the classroom. Externships are often transformative for educators, students, and industry partners. Impacting just one teacher allows a company to reach between 20-150 students each year.

You must complete registration to be considered for the externship. Upon completion of the externship, you will be eligible to receive a stipend paid by the Montana Work-Based Learning Collaborative and up to 20 renewal units. Register here.

Applications Now Open in Montana for the Code.org Professional Learning Program

Applications are now open for Code.org's Professional Learning Program for middle and high school educators. If you are interested in teaching computer science for the 2023-2024 academic year, this is your time to explore the computer science curriculum and collaborate with educators of all experience levels to develop lesson plans and teaching strategies.

What is the Professional Learning Program? Hosted by highly trained facilitators, our professional development workshops will prepare you to confidently bring CS to your students as well as connect with an online and in-person community of peers. Most workshops have scholarship funding available.

Elementary teachers can sign-up for a one-day workshop near you. Applications are not required for Computer Science Fundamentals workshops and take place throughout the country, year-round.

Middle and High School teachers will begin with a five-day workshop on Computer Science Discoveries (CSD), Computer Science Principles (CSP), and/or Computer Science A (CSA) in the summer, with academic year workshops thereafter.

--Option 1: Virtual, July 24-28, 2023
--Option 2: University of Idaho–Coeur d'Alene Harbor Center, July 31-August 4, 2023
--Option 3: Raisbeck Aviation High School, Tukwila, Washington, August 7-11, 2023

The cost of CSD, CSP, or CSA is $1,500/person. This covers the tuition of both the summer and academic year workshops (nine total days of training). Any travel, lodging, or food costs for in-person trainings are separate. Scholarship opportunities are available to cover the costs of Code.org training tuition for qualified applicants.

If you have any questions, please contact Code.org.

Fun Facts & Trivia

The Little Mermaid is the animated tale of a beautiful young mermaid, Ariel, who is fascinated by the human world, to the dismay of her father, King Triton.

She spies Prince Eric and falls hopelessly in love.

Sebastian the crab is sent by the king to keep an eye on Ariel, though he cannot stop her from rescuing the prince during a storm.

Ursula the sea witch plots to grant Ariel's wish to be human, in exchange for her beautiful voice, and as part of a larger scheme to gain control of Triton's realm.

Eric finds himself falling for the now-human mermaid, but Ursula tricks him and Ariel, now mute, cannot warn him.

Finally, Ariel and Eric together foil Ursula's evil plans, save the undersea kingdom, and receive Triton's blessing.

The initial release of *The Little Mermaid* was on November 15, 1989, in Los Angeles and New York.

The general release on November 17, 1989.

Voices include Jodi Benson (Ariel), Pat Carroll (Ursula), Christopher Daniel Barnes (Eric), Buddy Hackett (Scuttle), Kenneth Mars (Triton), Samuel E. Wright (Sebastian), Ben Wright (Grimsby), and René Auberjonois (Louis).

The Little Mermaid was the first Disney animated feature based on a classic fairy tale in three decades; Sleeping Beauty was the last one.

The Little Mermaid is based on the famous story by Hans Christian Andersen.

Disney artists had considered an animated film of *The Little Mermaid* in the late 1930s, and illustrator Kay Nielsen prepared a number of striking story sketches in pastels and watercolors.

For *The Little Mermaid*, the artists received inspiration from the Nielsen story sketches that were brought out of the archives for them to study, and they gave Kay Nielsen a "visual development" credit on the film.

The Little Mermaid had more effects than probably any animated film since *Fantasia*; nearly 80 percent of the film required some kind of effects work—storms at sea, billowing sails, schools of fish, shadows, raging fire, explosions, magic pixie dust, surface reflections, underwater distortions, ripples, and bubbles.

The Little Mermaid was the Academy Award winner for best song for "Under the Sea" and best original score.

The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Undersea Adventure is a dark ride attraction that opened at Disney California Adventure on June 3, 2011.

This was actually the second Little Mermaid attraction to be located at Disney California Adventure, after King Triton's Carousel of the Sea.

Guests embark in a clam shell Omnimover for a visit to scenes from *The Little Mermaid* film.

The attraction is located in a new elegant Victorian Exposition-style building, featuring an ornate 86-foot-long hand-painted mural.

In Orlando, Ariel can be found at the Under the Sea: Journey of the Little Mermaid ride, in Fantasyland in the Walt Disney World Magic Kingdom, opening December 6, 2012.

During the ride, guests will encounter 183 different characters.

The Ariel, Ursula, and King Triton animatronics, by default, have a lot of skin exposed; therefore, Imagineers had to create and utilize skin technology to make their movements and appearance look more realistic.

Most other animatronics that have been created have either had fur or clothes on them, so the skin for the high movement areas wasn't as much of an issue.

For hidden Mickey stalkers, the Imagineers outdid themselves this time and created a hidden Mickey that you can only see at noon on Mickey Mouse's birthday, November 18.

At this moment, the sun is in just the right position for the light to create a hidden Mickey on the path in the ride queue for the attraction.

Issues of the Wednesday Reader are archived on the Montana Business Education Association (MBEA) website at www.mbea.info. The Wednesday Readers are under the Newsletter section and listed most recent first.

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Learning that works for Montana
CTE™

"You don't make decisions because they are easy; you don't make them because they are cheap; you don't make them because they're popular; you make them because they're right." ~Rev. Theodore Hesburgh