

How to Avoid Falling Prey to a Phishing Attempt

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in the danger and frequency of phishing attempts. These attempts often target employees to gain login credentials that allow cybercriminals access to your network and systems and can include:

- Account Locked or Disabled Emails. An email that indicates an account is locked or disabled and ask the recipient to click a link and enter their credentials. The link directs users to a fake site where it captures login information.
- News and “Clickbait” Pieces. There are many fake news and clickbait sites that include articles that contain unusual news, simply to spur users to click a link. The site then may install a virus or other malware.
- Charitable Donations or Prize Emails. Scammers frequently seek to prey on emotions and solicit donations to fake charities or may promise that a user has won something. They attempt to capture banking information, either under the guise of a

donation or require this information in order to provide a prize.

- Coworker Needs Help Email. Cybercriminals send spoof email that appears to be from a coworker asking for assistance, adding a sense of urgency that COVID-19 is impacting the coworker in some way.
- Attachments Concerning COVID-19 Prevention Tactics. These emails may have attachments that claim to be from health organizations or employers concerning prevention measures or workplace policies. Once opened, the attachments contain malware.

The best way to prevent phishing attacks is through employee education concerning cybersecurity.

Other steps to take include:

- If one receives an “account locked” email, do not click the link but instead, go directly to the site and determine if the account is really locked.
- Visit only well-known and recognized news and information sites.
- Do not donate to charities via an email

link. Go directly to the charity’s website and donate via their webpage.

- When an odd email from a coworker is received, or an email requesting money or assistance that’s not normally handled via email, reach out to the contact via phone, or by sending a direct email to that contact. Do not reply to the initial email or take the steps requested in the email without first confirming it is legitimate.
- Never open attachments from unknown sources or unexpected emails. Confirm with the sender via phone or direct email they sent information via an attachment.

Employees must be aware of what cybercriminals can attempt and must always be vigilant to help protect organizations from cyberattacks.

For more information, please contact Trish Oppeau directly at 314-619-1792 / oppeaut@pfm.com or Nick Kenny at 573-529-9245/ kennyn@pfm.com.

For important disclosure information, please go to pfm.com/disclosures.

2021-2022 Missouri Superintendents Academy For Superintendents Starting Year 2, 3 or 4

The Missouri Association of School Administrators, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and St. Louis University, founded the Missouri Superintendent Academy with the goal of further preparing men and women to lead school districts across Missouri. Members who are about to begin their second, third or fourth year of the superintendency, or who are new to Missouri, are encouraged to apply for the Academy. The Academy is a one-year program that will help you take your skills and leadership ability to a higher level while also developing a greater network of colleagues. The program includes three day-and-a half retreats where you will share time with state and national experts in the field of education leadership.

Among the areas covered in the Academy are understanding the role of the superintendent in a political and social democracy; developing highly effective interpersonal skills; understanding and demonstrating effective communication techniques; working with elected boards and communities in consensus building,

developing skills and insights in change initiation and management, and leading in an instructional environment.

What do past participants say about the Academy?

- “The best PD I’ve had in my entire administrative career.”
- “The presentations were thought provoking and the conversations with my colleagues were helpful as well.”
- “Two days of learning, growth, and good conversation – a great experience.”
- “One area that I truly enjoyed about the academy was the opportunity to network with other superintendents.”

Learn more and apply online at www.masaonline.org (view under the “Leadership Program” tab). For more information, applicants may call program director Sarah Riss at 314-575-8942 or email her at sarah.riss@mcsa.org.

Fees cover all expenses including room, meals, and all materials and speakers. Partial scholarships are available based on need. Please contact Sarah Riss to request a partial scholarship.

MASA 2020-2021 Leadership

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MASA Enhances Credit Card Offerings

MASA partners with Missouri-based financial institution, Central Bank, to offer a MASA MasterCard® Commercial Credit Card. The Commercial Credit Card is a commercial, purchasing and fleet card all-in-one, affording your school district flexibility, control and advanced reporting at your fingertips. Enhanced with an embedded EMV chip, the Commercial Credit Card carries added security from counterfeit fraud.



Commercial Credit Cards offer an assigned credit limit with options to add daily or even single transaction dollar restrictions. They can carry a declining balance which is great for faculty and staff with a fixed budget set for the school year. Cards can be assigned to vehicle or bus drivers for fuel and vehicle maintenance expenses. The school district can opt to have the driver be prompted for an odometer reading or vehicle number at the time of transaction, making detailed reporting available down to the vehicle or driver level.

The MASA MasterCard® Commercial Credit Card is intended for school districts requiring 10 or more cards. Central Bank also offers the MASA MasterCard® BusinessCard® enabling corporate card functionality while allowing the school district to apply transaction restrictions and credit limits on a per card basis.

You can work with Central Bank locations around the state to establish an account. Each one of the locations has personnel who can assist your district with setting up a card program for your district. You do not have to work with people in a foreign country or individuals in another state. Central Bank has locations in Jefferson City, Branson, Lake of the Ozarks, Kansas City, Sedalia, Columbia, St. Louis, Moberly, Audrain County, Springfield, and Warrensburg.

For more information, contact Doug Hayter at MASA. Phone: 573-638-4825. Email: doug.hayter@mcsa.org.



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MASA/MOSPRA Spring Conference, March 24-26

What do MASA members want from their Spring Conference? According to past surveys, the answer is meaningful breakout sessions, interesting and entertaining keynote speakers, and both formal and informal time with colleagues. The 2021 MASA / MOSPRA Spring Conference, set for March 24-26 at The Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark, will meet all of those expectations and more.

With a great line-up of special breakout sessions on topics including school law, curriculum, leadership, public relations and communications, strategic planning, school finance, mental health, and innovative means to meet student needs, attendees will leave the conference with new and improved skill sets. Among the presenters are key leaders at the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, university scholars, legal experts, communication professionals and members of MASA who are doing incredible work in their districts.

Spring Conference Keynote Speakers



Dr. Bruce Baker will headline our First General Session on March 24. Dr. Baker is a professor in the Graduate

School of Education at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, where he teaches school finance policy and district business management.

Dr. Baker is well-versed in Missouri school finance, where he has assisted in estimating costs for school districts and evaluated career paths of administrators.

Dr. Baker has spoken at past AASA events and is known for his insight into education finance blended with a wry sense of humor.



Mr. Sean Covel is our Thursday lunch keynote presenter. Sean believes the most powerful questions you can ask yourself rely on one single word. It is a word that, more than any other, has

shaped the entire modern world... And it is a word you already use each and every day.

Sean combines humorous stories of growing up in small-town America, with fantastic tales of true-life adventures in the movie business. Through these stories, he shares a theme that has connected them all, an idea that connects us all, and a concept that lets us *shape our world for the better.*

Creating a Safe Conference Experience

MASA is working closely with The Lodge of Four Seasons to create a safe environment for attendees, presenters and vendors. We will only be using the larger rooms for break-out sessions and special events in order to exercise social distancing. This may call for some longer walks to reach certain sessions, and it will mean that we will have fewer people sitting at tables during meals and other events. Hand sanitizer will be provided to all attendees and the Lodge will have sanitizer stations as well. The MASA leadership team will be wearing safety masks the majority of the time we are with groups of conference participants, and respectfully ask that when possible attendees wear masks. (Masks will be available at the sanitizer tables).

Thursday Lunch and Keynote

On Thursday, we will use an A/B lunch and keynote speaker format. When you register, you will be designated part of the A or B group. We ask that you dine and attend the keynote talk with your designated group, as well as take advantage of time with vendors. We will provide additional guidance as we approach the conference and during registration.

Download the Conference App

The entire conference will be available on the MASA app. From there you can read about and place sessions and events on your phone’s calendar.

Connect, Grow, and Carry On



By Doug Hayter, MASA Executive Director

of your contractual agreement to be a voice for your schools to the elected officials at the local, state and even national level. But regardless of “why” you should build connections with these individuals, the benefits of doing so are many.

I urge each of you to reach out to your legislators now. Place a phone call. If it is a newly elected person, introduce yourself and share information about your schools. If you already know the official, reconnect. Provide an open invitation for to them to visit your schools (or better, make a specific invitation for a date and time). Share the positives of your district, but also share areas of concern. Take time to intentionally listen to their thoughts.

This Legislative Session will include serious discussion of open enrollment, virtual instruction, charter school funding, tax vouchers and other related issues that have the potential to significantly and negatively alter public education. If you have developed a relationship with your representatives, your phone calls, letters and emails will carry much more weight.

While you may have the ear of those who represent your school district, the voices of your school board members, staff, parents and community members are vitally important. Please keep your school community informed and encourage them to be active in sharing their thoughts with their House and Senate representatives as well.

I want to urge you to review the January 4, 2021 Legislative Bulletin regarding these bills and track each Friday’s edition of the Bulletin to stay informed on legislation that will affect your district and public education in the state of Missouri for years to come.

Spring Conference

The MASA/MOSPRA Spring Conference is set for March 24-26 at The Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark. As you know, MASA surveyed membership twice to determine how to best approach the conference. Approximately 250 MASA members participated in the surveys. A slight

majority were in favor of a fully in-person conference, but many selected some form of hybrid as a second option. Our goal is to have a high quality “in person” conference, all the while being diligent in our safety measures. Furthermore, while the conference will not be truly hybrid/virtual, our plan is to provide many of the top sessions a second time via Zoom during the months of April and May. We understand and respect your individual decisions regarding attendance at this year’s conference. We are planning to do everything we can to make it an informative, safe, and worthwhile experience.

In Closing...

In 1939, as Britain prepared to enter World War II, government ministers turned their attention to the task of bolstering national morale. Two posters designed for that purpose made it onto walls and windows across the country before war was officially declared. A third was also created, reserved for a moment of greater need. That poster, representing 65% of the posters printed, was to be used only if the worse thing happened, the Nazis crossing the English Channel. With white type and a crown motif on a solid red background, it read “KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON.”

Those posters were never needed. Most of them, more than two million copies, were destroyed. Then, in 2000, a bookstore owner in northern England, discovered a single copy of the poster, folded neatly at the bottom of a box of used books. He had it framed and hung it in his shop, where it immediately drew attention from customers. Now in the public domain, it has been recreated countless times up through today.

The best message I can leave with you for the 2020-2021 school year and beyond is the one expressed through the perils and subsequent victory in World War II:

“KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON.”

(In Closing derived from the daily inspirational calendar by PAGE A DAY as Copyrighted by Workman Publishing, 2020.)

Open Enrollment, Virtual Instruction, Vouchers, and Charter Schools All on Tap for 2021 Legislative Session



The 2021 legislative session began on January 6th and will end on May 14th. As of this writing (January 21, 2021), legislators have filed over 1,300 bills of which we are tracking over 440. As expected, certain education reform bills have been filed yet again, such as voucher tax credits, virtual instruction expansion, open enrollment, and charter school expansion, to name a few. While there are many bills filed that would impact public education, below is a brief discussion on the topics that are of greatest concern.

Open Enrollment

House Bill 303, filed by Representative John Wiemann (R – O’Fallon), and HB 543, filed by former superintendent of the Sedalia School District, Representative Brad Pollitt (R – Sedalia) both create open enrollment in Missouri. While the bills say it is a voluntary program, it should be known that neither bill precludes a student from leaving their resident district. The bills diverge on several important topics such as transportation, special education and most notably funding.

Virtual Instruction

Because of the pandemic and the resultant move to online learning in a number of our schools, there is again a push to significantly expand the current Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program (MOCAP) statute. Senate Bill 95, filed by Senator Bob Onder (R - Lake St. Louis), seeks to do just that by making several harmful modifications to MOCAP.

Charter Funding

House Bill 137, filed by Representative Doug Richey (R-Excelsior Springs), and SB 218, filed by Senator Tony Leutkemeyer (R – Parkville), seek to give a greater percentage of local funding to charter schools. The bills would result in millions of dollars leaving the Kansas City and St. Louis Public School Districts (and any other district that has a charter school), making it harder for them to educate the students they serve.

Vouchers/Voucher Tax Credits/Voucher Tax Deductions

There have been twelve (12) different voucher/voucher tax credit/voucher tax deduction bills filed for the 2021 legislative session and several of these bills (SB’s 23 and 25) are moving quickly through the legislative process. Each of the voucher proposals will seek to further deplete needed resources for public education. The state simply cannot afford to take on these additional expenditures when public education is so significantly underfunded.

Charter Expansion

Senate Bill 25, a bill filed by Senator Bill Eigel (R – Weldon Spring), seeks to allow charter schools to expand to school districts in charter counties (those are: St. Louis County, St. Charles County, Jefferson County and Jackson County) or to school districts that have cities with a population greater than 30,000 inhabitants.

Property Tax Assessment Modifications

Much like last year, a large number of bills have been filed relating to property tax assessment issues. Some of these bills focus on changes to delinquent payment dates and penalty waivers while others seek to freeze or reduce rates for disabled or elderly individuals. Even more troubling

are those that place artificial caps on the amount property taxes may be increased. Unfortunately, the result of many of these bills would be the lowering of total assessed value for schools across the state.

STAY INFORMED! STAY ENGAGED!

The 2021 Legislative Session will be a true test of not only how effectively MASA members stay informed, but how diligently they stay engaged with those who represent their districts at the Capitol Building. Those who represent the School Administrators Coalition will be working hard on your behalf, but nothing speaks louder to those in the House and Senate than you, your school board, your staff, your parents and your community!

Contribute to Better Schools for Missouri!

Better Schools for Missouri was formed as a way for supporters of public education to help elect candidates in Missouri who share the value of quality public education.

We encourage MASA members to support the action committee. You may contribute and learn more at www.betterschoolsformissouri.com or send an email to betterschools@mcsa.org. You may reach us by phone at 573-638-2692.



MASA President’s Report Finding the Communications Solution

Susan Crooks, Superintendent, Leeton R-X School District



Leeton R-X Communications Team: (Clockwise from upper left) Kelly Flemings, Elementary Administrative Assistant; Susan Crooks, Superintendent; Joanie Shackelford, Middle/High School Administrative Assistant; and Patty Cox, Superintendent Administrative Assistant

Communication. *Communication.* **Communication!** As a school administrator, there is little chance of a performance evaluation without the discussion of improved communication. Even if you feel you provide quality information to all stakeholders, communication will likely be addressed. If you are fortunate to have a communication director within your district, you can share that responsibility. However, what happens when you as the superintendent are the communications director? For many school districts across the state of Missouri, this is the case.

Finding a Solution

Ten years into my superintendency, many board conversations later, and the overwhelming feeling of how to get everything accomplished, a solution had to be found. Hiring a communications director was out of the question so why not use the resources I had at hand? Looking at my staff, I realized the most informed individuals in the district were the administrative assistants. Although

it started as a potpourri of individuals, my first team was comprised of one administrative assistant, one nurse, and a school registrar. My team has now evolved into three administrative assistants, two building principals, and myself. This team of individuals meets regularly and assigns the upcoming events for our district. Dividing up the responsibilities like social media posts, website updates, internal and external communications, and special events has helped us reach a broad audience with more consistency.

Delegating

Building administrators are in charge of social media posts for their buildings. The administrative assistants cover nearly everything else from special group recognitions like “custodial day” to posting weekly events and emailing parents with school information. As the superintendent, I am in charge of weekly board and staff updates, posting on Twitter, and an occasional email to all stakeholders. Together we

are providing a more comprehensive communications platform for our school.

Small, but Mighty!

In a small school district, everyone has many responsibilities. I would challenge you to look outside the box and find ways to utilize your resources to develop a public relations plan. Do not look at the lack of resources as a barrier, but rather an opportunity to grow people within your organization. Then recognize those individuals for the contributions they make within your district.

There is no mystery, effective leaders are also good communicators. However, I challenge you to realize you do not have to be the only communicator. Empower others, work as a team, set some goals, and your district communications platform will be successful regardless of district size.

I like to call Superintendent Crooks’ communications team the “power trio,” and with her guidance and encouragement, they have created an incredibly effective unit. They approach their work systematically and professionally, and they strive to get better by seeking out best practices and professional development. Leeton is one of the smallest districts in the state with members in the Missouri School Public Relations Association (MOSPRA), and they are a great model for what small schools can do to keep their staff, parents and community informed. I highly recommend other smaller school district leaders investigate the “Leeton Method.”
— David Luther, MASA Director of Communications and MOSPRA Executive Director

