Hello School Counselors, and Happy December to you! You have survived three months of the school year and looking forward to a winter break. You have earned it!

I consider myself fortunate to work in a school district that values counseling. Stoughton boasts a counselor in every elementary school, with three at the middle school and five at the high school. We don’t quite meet the ASCA and MASCA recommended ratio of 250 students to one counselor, but we are with 50 students at the middle and high school levels. While not all of the elementary counselors are school counselors, every student in Stoughton has access to a trained counselor who can support them and advocate for them.

As I reflect on my first four months as MASCA President, I think about what is important about a state association. Professional development is important, since even counselors in supportive districts like mine should continue making progress toward implementing the Mass Model and following the recommended ratio of students per counselor. MASCA is always looking for new topics and methods to bring Professional development to our members.

But perhaps even more important is advocacy. Many districts in the Commonwealth are not as supportive of counseling as my district is. Many children have no School Counselor at their school, including the majority of elementary schools. Some districts are outsourcing their counseling needs to private agencies and non-profits in order to obtain the services they think students need. Advocacy is vital as we work towards our goal of bringing School Counselors into every school. Even though you may feel confident that your district values your skills and expertise, many students attend schools that do not understand what a School Counselor does.

MASCA is stepping up and advocating for the School Counseling profession. We re-hired our lobbying firm, who is constantly working with our Government Relations committee to keep us abreast of new legislation.

And we are excited about the brand new event on December 3: School Counselors: Ensuring All Students are Future-Ready. DESE Commissioner Jeff Riley will address the capacity audience, and we hope to help him to understand the vital role that School Counselors play in student success. By the time that you read this Counselor’s Notebook, the event will be in the past. I am confident that we are making a difference for the School Counseling profession in the state of Massachusetts.

Won’t you join us? Consider serving on the Government Relations committee or attending the Day on the Hill. If we all serve in small ways, perhaps we will eventually be a state that can boast a School Counselor in every school.

Happy holidays and New Year to you all. Remember to take time for yourself.

Barbara
GOVERNING BOARD:
Barbara Meyer, President
b_meyer@stoughtonschools.org
School Counselor, Stoughton High School

Kerry Bartlett, President Elect
kabartlett@hudson.k12.ma.us
School / Career Counselor, Hudson High School

Jennifer McGuire, Past-President
jmcguire@uppercapetech.org
School Counselor/ Teacher Leader for Guidance, Upper Cape Cod Technical School

Ruth Carrigan, Board Member
Ruth.Carrigan@whrsd.k12.ma.us
Director of School Counseling, Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

Ed Connor, Board Member
econnor@dean.edu
Executive Director of Admissions, Dean College

Laurie Dickstein-Fischer, Board Member
ldicksteinfisc@salemstate.edu
Assistant Professor & Program Director for School Counseling, Salem State University

Megan Krell, Board Member
mkrell@fitchburgstate.edu
Associate Professor, Fitchburg State University

April Megginson, Board Member
amegginson@bridgew.edu
Assistant Professor of Counselor Education, Bridgewater State University

Johanna Smith, Board Member
smithj@lynnvcschools.org
School Counselor, Lynn Vocational Technical Institute

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:
April Megginson, Advocacy Committee
amegginson@bridgew.edu
Assistant Professor of Counselor Education, Bridgewater State University

Jeremie Bateman, Awards & Publicity Committee
jbateman@lexingtononma.org
School Counselor, Lexington High School

Ruth Carrigan, Conference Committee
Ruth.Carrigan@whrsd.k12.ma.us
Director of School Counseling, Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

Helen O’Donnell, MA Model Committee
helenod@att.net
Retired School Counselor,

Manjula Karamcheti, Member Services
karamcheti@wwgradschool.org
Woodrow Wilson Graduate School of Teaching and Learning

Jennifer McGuire, Nomination and Bylaws Committee
jmcguire@uppercapetech.org
School Counselor/Teacher Leader for Guidance, Upper Cape Cod Technical School

Sandra Collins, Professional Development Committee
sac1330@gmail.com
School Counselor, Hartwick Elementary School

Christine Shaw, Research and Evaluation Committee
shawc@merrimack.edu
Associate Professor of Practice, Education & Community Studies, Merrimack College

Jennifer McGuire, Strategic Planning Committee
jmcguire@uppercapetech.org
School Counselor/ Teacher Leader for Guidance, Upper Cape Cod Technical School

Jean Atwater Williams, Counselors Notebook Editor & Webmaster
cn@masca.org; webmaster@masca.org

Kathy Getchell, Membership Coordinator
Katherine.Getchell@whrsd.k12.ma.us
Administrative Assistant, Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

LIAISONS:
Laurie Dickstein-Fischer, Counselor Educator Liaison
ldicksteinfisc@salemstate.edu
Assistant Professor, Salem State University

Megan Krell, Emerging Leaders Liaison
mkrell@fitchburgstate.edu
Associate Professor, Fitchburg State University

Jennifer McGuire, Retirees Liaison
helenod@att.net
Retired School Counselor

EMERGING LEADERS:
Molly Brewster, Emerging Leader
mhallbrewster@bostonpublicschools.org
School Counselor, Brighton High School

Karen Stackow, Emerging Leader
kstackow@wrsdeaf.org
School Counselor, Willie Ross School for the Deaf

Tyeshia Weir, Emerging Leader
weirt@springfieldpublicschools.com
School Counselor, RISE Academy

Find out how you can become a MASCA leader. Go to:
https://masca.wildapricot.org/How-to-Get-Involved
By the time you read this column, the December 3 Convening with DESE Commissioner Jeff Riley will be over, hopefully historic and definitely significant to school counselors in Massachusetts. The mere fact that we had over 350 people register to hear what the Commissioner had to say about school counseling is a testament to the fact that people are hungry to be inspired and want change. Time will tell what the long term impact of that Convening will be, but the goal was simple enough – engage the Commissioner in a conversation ensuring all students are future ready and have him commit to empowering school counselors as critical to achieving that goal.

In this month’s column I want to focus on the idea of partnerships and the work that MASCA must do if we want to be considered a legitimate and critical player in the educational leadership and reform space here in the Commonwealth. While we are a small professional association with about 800 members and no full time staff, we are still a force to which should be listened and consulted. We absolutely should be invited to the table when it comes to any discussion around student achievement, school mental health, career and college readiness, school climate, closing the gaps, family and community engagement and student safety. I hear time and time again that important meetings occur where school counselors should be but we are left out of the conversation. That has happened far too often in the past and has to stop. If the Commonwealth really wants to make significant changes in how our students are educated and prepared for life after high school, school counselors have to be at the table all the time and every time, not just once and a while.

With that mindset, I know one of the most important tasks in my first few months on the job was to engage with leaders of like-minded associations. So far I have met with Jeff Riley, DESE Commissioner, Richard Pearson, Assistant Executive Director of the Massachusetts School Administrators Association (MSAA), Ed Lambert, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE), Christina Doyle, Executive Director of the New England Association for College Admission Counseling (NEACAC), John Crocker, Coordinator of the Massachusetts School Mental Health Consortium (MASMHC) and Chad d’Etremont, Executive Director of the Rennie Center, a public policy and research organization based in Boston. Still on my list to meet with are representatives from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA), Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA), Massachusetts Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (MA-HPERD), Massachusetts Student Financial Aid Administrators (MASFAA) and the Massachusetts Educational Opportunities Association (MEOA).

Why all of these meetings and what is the desired outcome you ask? My goal is to establish MASCA as major presence in the educational reform space, to create a partnership of mutual trust and support and establish the need to have school counselors be part of these important conversations. So far outcomes include joint memberships, presentations at each other’s conferences, establishment of seats on advisory committees and a better understanding and utilization of school counselors. My hope is that by establishing these partnerships, MASCA will be front and center when a situation or conversation occurs that we have the expertise and direct knowledge to be of assistance.

This work is obviously ongoing and requires continual collaboration and communication. Simply checking the meeting off from the to do list is not enough. It requires follow up, additional education and outreach and continuous advocacy, not unlike the work we need to do with school boards, policy makers and legislators.

If you have some ideas about other organizations or leaders that I should meet with or if you want to get more involved with these advocacy efforts, please contact me at executivedirector@masca.org or 413.267.4589 x 1109. Your voice is needed now more than ever. Our students and the future of our association are depending on you.

Are you with me?
The College Essay Project – Sharing a Best Practice

By Ruth Carrigan

When this article reaches you, hopefully all of those early action deadlines will be a distant memory, and you will be getting ready for some well-deserved time off. As we all know, the frenzy of the fall application season can be an incredibly busy and stressful time for students and counselors. For many years, a favorite component of our school counseling curriculum, The College Essay Project, has proven to be a positive and helpful experience for students and counselors at my school.

Although we’ve tweaked things a bit since we started this program 15 years ago, we feel that we’ve put together a program that works well for our students and teachers. During the first or second week of school, we invite one of our college admissions partners to spend the day at our school, meeting with all of our seniors and our senior English teachers, for a College Essay Workshop. In this workshop, our students learn what admissions counselors are looking for, and not looking for, in a college essay. After the workshop, students spend the next few weeks drafting, editing, and revising their essays with their English teachers. On deadline day, all essays are turned in to English teachers and then to the school counseling office. Several days after that, essays sent via priority mail or shared via google drive to our college admissions partners.

This year, we partnered with six college admissions representatives from colleges and universities across New England. Each college professional typically agrees to work with one or two of our senior English classes. After the essays are read and critiqued, the admissions representatives come to our school, visit the English classes with which they have partnered, return the essays, confer with students individually, and share insightful feedback with our seniors. Although students don’t always like what they hear, we feel it is important that they get a chance to see, prior to their actual college application, exactly what an admissions representative thinks of their essays. This is truly an opportunity for meaningful authentic assessment for our students.

We feel that the College Essay Project is a very good use of our time and is truly beneficial as it helps support college/career readiness for our students. Collaborating with English teachers and establishing a network of college admissions partners has been a wonderful way to build professional collegiality for our staff.

If you are doing something interesting and innovative that is helping your school and your students, please feel share your best practices by submitting an article to the Counselors Notebook so that we can spread the word about programs and services that can make a difference in the lives of our students.

KEEP CALM AND WRITE THE ESSAY

Join us on March 30 and 31, 2020 at the Boston Marriott/Newton for our annual conference! We are excited about this great facility that is centrally located in Newton with easy access to the Mass Pike, Route 95, and the Riverside “T” Station.

Be the Change
Advocacy & Leadership Workshop

Workshop Description:
Come learn how you can be an agent of change for your students and the school counseling profession. In this interactive day-long workshop participants will learn about advocacy at the state level. This will include an opportunity to participate in the legislative process. Participants will also engage in a leadership style training utilizing the Leadership Compass model. Come join us in celebrating National School Counseling Week and learn how we can be the change in Massachusetts.

Advocacy Presenter
Savannah Kelleher is the Vice President of Tremont Strategies Group. She has a decade of experience managing state government relations and public policy advocacy for both corporate and not-for-profit clients, with a specialty in Massachusetts health and human services issues impacting children and vulnerable adults.

Leadership Presenter
April Megginson is the Government Relations and Advocacy Chair of MASCA. She has a PhD in Counselor Education. Currently, she is a professor at Bridgewater State University and the Program Director of the School Counseling Graduate Program. She has taught multiple leadership courses and is an advocate for the school counseling profession.

1
WHEN
Tuesday, February 4th
9:30am-2:30pm

2
WHERE
MA State House
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133
Room TBA

3
COST
Free
Includes Lunch & PDP Certificate

4
REGISTER NOW

Sponsored By:
New Counselor Boot Camp

MASCA’s first annual New Counselor Boot Camp occurred in October on the beautiful campus of Pine Manor College. There were over 50 people in attendance - mostly new counselors and graduate students. Participants learned strategies for self-care, working with administrators, collaborating with school staff, licensure and fulfilling requirements of IEPs and 504s. Registration costs included a one year membership to MASCA.

“I thought it was a very beneficial event for new counselors and really appreciated the opportunity to attend!”
(participant feedback)

We hope to make this an annual event. If you are interested in planning and/or sharing your expertise, please contact:

Sandra A. Collins, MSW, MS, LCSW
Chairperson, MASCA Professional Development Committee

tele 413.218.9178
fax 413.737.1952
What’s Your Plan for Life After High School?

By Ashley Guba

In an endeavor to be more inclusive, I have been striving to shift the conversation we have with our students from “What college are you going to?” in exchange for “What kind of future do you envision for yourself?”.

This question facilitates answers that vary from: living in a big city, not sitting behind a desk, moving out of state, earning money to pay for college, owning a luxury car, helping people, or the traditional answer of “college”.

Whatever the answer might be, it allows for students to think about the bigger picture - what is their plan for life after high school? This allows us to meet students where they are at rather than the cut-and-dry approach of steering students toward going to college or not. It provides a foundation for engaging students in planning for their future and digging deeper into their career development.

Here are some tools and strategies I use in the College and Career Center that support students creating a plan for life after high school. Many of these can be applied after high school as well.

1. MassHire CIS (https://portal.masscis.intocareers.org/)
   “The Massachusetts Career Information System is free to all Massachusetts residents. MassCIS is designed to provide occupational and educational information to help people make better-informed career and school choices. Create a login to develop an entire career portfolio; take career assessments, explore careers and programs of study, develop a resume, and keep track of your career activities.” I enjoy utilizing the “Reality Check” portion with my students that connects their expenses to the amount of money in which they need to earn and which occupations support their lifestyle.

2. Connecting Activities of the Greater Brockton Workforce Board “Connecting Activities (CA) is the state-funded intermediary system, led by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), linking education, business and workforce development partners through the work of skilled intermediaries. These linkages provide the background for a network that provides career development experiences for students in approximately 200 high schools across Massachusetts. For more information on the Connecting Activities program, please contact Dave Edwards: DEdwards@MassHireGBWB.org.”

3. Career One Stop Interest Assessment (https://www.careeronestop.org/Explore-Careers/Assessments/interests.aspx)
   Based on O’Net’s Interest Profiler. It will provide a long list for students that are categorized as “best, great, or good” matches with direct links to up-to-date occupational profiles and modern videos. It can be saved to a pdf.

4. Systemic Approach - Change the culture by starting with faculty.
   When I first started this role, I met for a few minutes with each department during collaboration to discuss the importance of changing the conversation with students from “What college are you going to?” or “what’s your plan?” to “what future do you envision for yourself?” You will get more information from that question to support your students plan rather than “college, I don’t know, I’m going to work for my dad, etc.”

5. Change a behavior. Is attendance a problem? Homework? Ask the question, “what kind of future do you envision for yourself?” You can then inquire whether that particular behavior is moving that student away or towards that goal.

Ashley J. Guba, M.Ed., is a College and Career Counselor at Stoughton High School
However you may choose to celebrate the season, MASCA wishes you and yours the happiest of holidays.

### Awareness Dates

December 2019

- National Impaired Driving Prevention Month
- Safe Toys and Gifts Month
- **1** World AIDS Day
- **2** Special Education Day
- 2-8 National Handwashing Awareness Week
- **3** International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- **5** International Volunteer Day
- **10** Human Rights Day
- **15** Bill of Rights Day
How do you actively engage students in the learning experience and not just be passively present and disinterested attendees in your Tier 1 school counseling curriculum instruction? Regardless of the setting (classrooms, whole school assembly, class meeting format, on-line instruction, etc.) active engagement and participation is key to motivation and learning.

Teaching strategies and instructional practices are not usually part of school counselor training programs or professional development activities. Therefore, designing and delivering standards-based lessons, gathering data to assess the impact of instruction that guides next steps action planning, and classroom management are often challenging experiences.

This MA Model article will suggest strategies for hooking students into the instruction by validating the relevance and importance of the lesson, identifying the personal value of developing the competencies identified in the lesson, and providing authentic experiences to reinforce the learning.

The HELP process (Hook, Engage, Lesson, Participation) will assist your planning, your instructional delivery and classroom management.

Hook: Strategically planned activators promote interest in the pending instruction. Consider a challenge question or game, peer brainstorm to solve a problem, inspiring YouTube video or music related to your targeted instruction, or even a student led activity. I have brought props like a Halloween Captain Hook’s plastic hook to my lessons. Curiosity can keep students wondering how the prop fits into the lesson.

Engagement: Move away from Information dumps and lectures which relegate students to the listen to me mode of learning. It is important to actively engage students in the learning process. Get them involved. Why not start off your activity in the upper grades with a Kahoot pre test to gather baseline data? Promote student-generated projects or responsibilities like management of their MyCAP portfolios, logging their monthly attendance data, or monitoring the action plan steps they have identified to achieve their personal SMART goals.

Lessons: A well-planned standards-aligned lesson will allow you to INFORM your class why the instruction is important, DELIVERY the instruction using techniques to ACCOMMODATE multiple learning styles, INCLUDE instructional strategies to address diverse student needs, and strategically facilitate authentic PRACTICE and APPLICATION activities that promote RELEVANCE of the instruction.

Participation: School Days can be long. Students can be tired. Design your lessons with the intent that your activities require active engagement in discussions, role play activities, and movement. Brain breaks allow student minds to relax and practice mindfulness to de-stress to manage anxiety OR to activate their bodies. Research supports these learning breaks. Check out websites like Go Noodle for a variety of engaging activities.

MA Model 3.0

JOIN THE DATA DISCUSSION ABOUT REBRANDING DATA CATEGORIES: Should we rebrand our data components to align our language with the new ASCA 4.0 Model or stay align with current data terms used in the statistics field?

Join the discussion about renaming the data categories of the Model. ASCA suggests Participation Data (replacing Process Data) and ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors Data (replacing Perception Data). Outcome and Results data remains the same.

Check out the ASCA website www.schoolcounselor.org to view free ASCA 4.0 webinars or review the data changes in the hard copy of the ASCA 4.0. Do some research and send your feedback and comments to helenod@att.net

More information on upcoming MA Model workshops and sessions to be presented at our Spring Conference will be available in the next issue of the Counselor’s Notebook. Stay tuned!

MA Model Continuing Ed

For information about available MA Model trainings such as: “MA Model Introductory Institute”, “MA Model 2: Next Steps”, and/or “Counselors in K-12 Classrooms”, or to seek graduate credit for "MA Model Implementation and School Counselor Curriculum Delivery" please contact: helenod@att.net
I was reminded of the importance of attendance in 2 recent conversations with business colleagues. When I asked a representative from a national company what was her company’s biggest employment challenge, she replied, “…consistent daily attendance! Our company provides scheduled service to customers, and our employees are expected to reliable and show up on time regardless of the weather.” In a phone call for a job reference, I was asked, “Will the candidate you are recommending be a punctual, daily employee?” Both conversations were reminders of the importance of teaching K-12 students about on-time daily attendance as an essential habit for future employment.

The 21st century workforce needs employees to be responsible, consistent, and dependable about their attendance for maximum workplace efficiency. Under Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA), states have the responsibility of choosing at least one indicator to measure school quality for student success.

According to Chronic Absences: Our Top Pick for the ESSA School Quality of Student Success chronic absenteeism data is one of the most valuable measures to choose that will provide valid data. As of May 2017, 14 of 17 states (including MA) have submitted ESSA plans to include attendance as an accountability measure. (Attendance Works: Advancing Student Success by Reducing Chronic Absenteeism http://www.attendanceworks.org). DESE tracks, reports on, and monitors school and district attendance data which can be found in EDWIN, the DESE Data Warehouse. https://masca.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Publications/Counselor’s%20Notebook/CN_February%202018.pdf

Research documents that regular attendance results in improved academics due to consistent participation in academic instruction and the learning experiences offered in classrooms. Strategies to improve annual attendance data include student and stakeholder education about MGL Chapter 76 legislation (regular attendance and chronic attendance), attendance teams monitoring attendance and offering assistance (when appropriate), and delivering curriculum instruction about self-regulation and time management to meet school day attendance requirements.

**Essential Question:** Are students able to understand the importance of daily school attendance and on time school arrival?

**Focus Question:** What can students do to be prepared for school every day and arrive on time?

Establishing regular attendance should begin early, since school is a student’s first job. Continuing the Attendance HERO: Here, Every Day, Ready, On Time* theme of the Career Corner article (Feb. 2018 MASCA CN pg. 8) based on resources and materials submitted by Jillian Ehnstrom, Fitchburg State University School Counseling Graduate Student), Rachel Schwab writes

“I visited every K - 4th grade classroom at ACES, and K - 6th grade at RCS, dressed up in my Attendance Hero costume. I created the costume in green, to match the Zones of Regulation “Green Zone” behavior that we expect all students to be in. I taught all of my Attendance Hero lessons wearing my costume. I can tell you that I am now a big “celebrity” with students, as they all want to know when the “Attendance Hero” will come back to school to visit them. I taught the large poster of the Attendance Hero at Staples, and one hangs in the lobby of each of my schools. This lesson was the most fun I have ever had as a school counselor!”

- I also have a school-wide Attendance Hero Incentive Program we created where the class with the highest attendance percentage each month earns a popsicle party from me, and also every student writes their name on a slip of paper, every day they come to school, and puts it in a treasure raffle box. At the end of each month, each teacher pulls out a student name and the winning student for each class wins a large full color “ACER Card” (the ACES Owl is our mascot) to take home.

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**What is Your School Attendance Footprint?**

MA Legislation and Student Learning Standards Alignment

- **MA Legislation:** Lesson content should include instruction on MGL Chapter 76, Sections 1,1A, 1B, 2 https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartII/TitleXII/Chapter76, and Truancy vs. Chronic Absenteeism http://www.attendanceworks.org/whats-the-difference-between-chronic-absence-and-truancy/.

**MA Career Development Education Benchmarks**

Academic/Technical: A2-3 Workforce Readiness Development: W1-1; W1-3 Personal/Social Development PS1-3

**MA DESE’s Future Ready Campaign:**

(1) Start Now; (2) Aim High; (3) Look Beyond

**ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success**

www.schoolcounselor.org

(continued next page)
ATTENDANCE
(continued from previous page)

CASEL: Self-Awareness and Self-Management.

ASSESSMENT Strategies (ideas for K and I):
By the end of the Tier 1 instruction,

- raise their hand signaling school attendance is required by MA law
- turn and tell a peer 2 things they can do at home to help them prepare in advance for the school day
- explain to a peer one reason why daily, on-time school attendance is important.
- report to their partner what the letters HERO (in Attendance Hero) stand for.

ASSESSMENT Strategies (ideas for Gr. 2-6)
Sample Pre/Post Test
By the end of the lesson, students will complete the Pre/Post with 86% accuracy. (True or False)

- Students have a job to attend school like parents have a job to go to work
- MGL is an abbreviation for MA General Law
- Arriving on time means you will get all A’s AND 100’S on your report card.
- Having a night and morning routine will not help students be prepared for the school day
- Tardy means arriving on time
- Students are not expected by law to be in school every day

Fill in the blanks:

What do the letters HERO stand for in the Attendance HERO lesson?

H __________________________
E __________________________
R __________________________
O __________________________

MASCA Scholarships Available

Don’t miss your opportunity to have your conference registration and/or your professional development funded by MASCA.

Apply NOW!

MASCA SCHOLARSHIP AWARD OPPORTUNITIES: 2019-20

Honoring the legacy of two MASCA colleagues, current and emerging school counselors are invited to apply for PD scholarships. The Forsyth Fund has $150 specifically for MASCA conference registration. The Fredrickson Fund has $1000 specifically for PD registration for MASCA Conference or MA Model Institutes/workshops (Introductory, MA Model 2: Next Steps, or Counselors in K-12 Classrooms). Applications are accepted on an on-going basis. The committee will review requests and select recipients who will be expected share their PD experience by presenting to colleagues or writing an article for the Counselor’s Notebook.

Include the following information in your scholarship request. Incomplete applications will not be accepted

Name: Contact email and phone #:  
☐ school counselor ☐ graduate student  
PD Registration Fee Requested: $  
School name and address:

BRIEF 200 words or less statement of how you will strengthen your school counseling practice and apply your professional development to enhance the career/workforce readiness outcomes for your students.

☐ Email inquiries or scholarship application with “PD Scholarship” in the subject line to helenod@att.net  
If you do not receive a confirmation receipt within 48 hours, please resubmit or call 413-549-1914.

☐ Mail your scholarship request to: Helen O’Donnell, MASCA, 10 Maplewood Terr., Hadley, MA 01035.
You will receive an email confirmation when your application is received.

☐ Award notifications will be issued between Feb. 1 and March 30th.

After receiving documentation of your PD registration, the Scholarship Chair will notify the MASCA Treasurer to disburse the funds to the successful awardees.

MASCA LOUISE B. FORSYTH AWARD

Louise B. Forsyth was one of the founders of MASCA in 1961 and served the organization in a variety of positions over the next forty years. She was President of MASCA, ASCA, and APGA (now ACA). In addition, she was also active in the Canadian School Counselors Association. Her work in the field of Public Relations was recognized by ASCA through the Louise B. Forsyth Award, which was annually given to a state association that developed and implemented an exemplary public relations program.

The MASCA Governing Board voted to establish the Louise B. Forsyth award to attend a MASCA conference. The award covers only conference registration expenses. Recipients must be MASCA members.

Dr. Ronald H. Fredrickson
PD Scholarships for School Counselors*
An Advocate for Career Education for ALL students.
Counselor Educator – Visionary - Mentor - Colleague
Author - Gentleman – Friend

*This PD endowment was established by family in 2019, in partnership with MASCA, to honor his legacy and encourage and support the PD of MA school counselors.

Co-founder of FHCA and MASCA, namesake of the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research, Dr. Fredrickson, UMass Amherst professor emeritus, modeled and expected highest quality standards as an educator and in life. He was professionally dedicated to students, the school counseling profession, and school counseling practitioners.
The Mission of MASCA

The mission of MASCA is to advocate for school counselors in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by providing leadership, collaboration, and professional development. Stay informed by visiting MASCA’s website regularly. https://masca.wildapricot.org/