

# MASCA Counselor's Notebook

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION

Vol. 57, No. 7

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## On Becoming an Anti-Racist School Counselor: Question Everything!

By Manjula Karamcheti, Director of Equity and Student Support, Woodrow Wilson Graduate School of Teaching and Learning,

As school counselors, we say our role is to support all students. We are supposed to advocate for all kids. But do we? Can we? Have we been trained to do so? Have we done the personal work and the systemic evaluation to be educators that truly practice in a way that promotes diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) and anti-racism for our students, our schools, our districts and our state?

What are the knowledge, skills and dispositions a DEI & Anti-Racist School Counselor might possess? ASCA, our national organization, has a plethora of [articles, training, and research to consider](#). ASCA also created a crosswalk of the ASCA National Counseling standards in action entitled [Eliminating Racism in Schools: The Counselor's Role](#). There are also many books to read, podcasts to listen to and movies to watch. However, what is difficult is taking what we have learned and turning it into actions with positive outcomes. We need to start by considering who we are, our roles, and our spheres of influence: steps that are vital to achieving equity and justice.

Many experts in DEI and Anti-Racism have developed their frameworks from Bronfenbrenner's Social-Ecological Model.



Manjula Karamcheti

el. This framework was developed to understand the multifaceted levels within a society and how individuals and the environment interact within a social system. We can consider this model as it relates to our development as Anti-Racist School Counselors. As individuals, we need to explore our own behaviors, beliefs, values and experiences. How has our background contributed to who we are as counselors and educators? Are there students we gravitate towards more readily than others? When we see a certain name do we automatically make assumptions? We must consider our own identity and reflect on our own practices and their impact.

Our roles rely heavily on interpersonal relationships. We need to investigate our own communication styles and biases (yes, we do all have them); consider what microaggressions we may be committing, how we cooperate and who we cooperate with; and think about how our own power and privilege impacts those we serve, those we work with, and those we lead. How do we speak to and/or advise our Black and Brown students as compared to our White students? Are there students we recommend for opportunities and others we do not take the time to consider? Do we speak out at department meetings when racist comments are made? Are we more

comfortable working with colleagues who look like us or have similar backgrounds? Do we question our leaders when they make decisions that negatively impact historically marginalized students or do we stay quiet? Is it because of what we believe or how brave we are?

In order to be advocates and change a system that has historically marginalized our Black and Brown students, we must look at the roles and structures that contribute to the status quo. Does the staffing in your department, school and district represent the population you serve? Do White students have the opportunity to learn from faculty that don't look like them? Who and what are represented in your curriculum? What is the composition of leadership at your school? Who has the power to make decisions that impact a student's present and future? How do policies and practices impact the most historically marginalized population? Data can be a helpful tool here. Look at your course enrollments and AP rosters. Consider who gets recommended for what classes and levels and consider why. What does your discipline data tell you? Once we recognize the patterns and potential injustice of our policies and practices, perhaps there will come the motivation for change at the organizational level.

As school counselors, how do we see our greater community? How do we connect and collaborate with caregivers and community organizations? Do we understand what is wanted and needed in the cities and towns we serve. Have we considered the cultural assets and strengths of our community and asked for input and feedback? Do we try and push our own beliefs and values on those we serve, or do we listen and learn what matters most to them?

Here are six competencies developed by the High Meadows Graduate School of Teaching and Learning that, as School Counselors, we might commit to developing in ourselves as we strive for more just and less racist schools and educational systems.

(Continued on page 6)

### Inside this Issue:

Anti-Racism.....	1
Directory.....	2
FAFSA Completion.....	3
Implementing MyCAP.....	4
2021 MASCA Conference.....	7
Practicum during a Pandemic.....	8
Gender Myths.....	9
Using Community Resources.....	10
MA Model.....	12
MASCA O.S.C.A.R. Awards.....	14

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*Find out how you can become a  
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[https://masca.wildapricot.org/  
How-to-Get-Involved](https://masca.wildapricot.org/How-to-Get-Involved)*

# FAFSA Completion

By Bob Bardwell, MASCA Executive Director

The pandemic continues to wreak havoc on so many things from when students and staff will actually return to school (if they have not already done so) to how do we get students to engage either on camera or via email, text or phone when they just do not want to.

There will be so many long lasting, if not forever altering crises of the pandemic that will be felt for years to come. The list of casualties related to the virus is long and ever growing, from kids who cannot read, to students who fail to earn a diploma, to families who have lost beloved students and family members and schools who have lost cherished staff members. One such crisis that should be of concern to every K-12 school counselor is the rate of FAFSA completions. Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is often a key step for students to attend higher education.

Did you know that in Massachusetts:

- For the class of 2020, enrollment in higher education dropped by 10 percent this past fall compared to the previous year, and by 20 percent among economically disadvantaged students.
- For the class of 2021, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion has dropped compared to this time last year by over 9 percent statewide, with larger drops in populations with historically low college going rates.
- That every school counselor can access current data in [Edwin](#) which tells you whether your students have started and/or completed the FAFSA.

Overcoming the financial barrier to higher education is critical, so to help mitigate this potential crisis in college going rates, DESE, in partnership with the Mass. Dept. of Higher Education, MASCA, Reach Higher Massachusetts, and GEARUP sponsored a recent FAFSA completion webinar to help illustrate the FAFSA completion situation, demonstrate FAFSA reports on Edwin Analytics, and to hear from practitioners to explain how they are “getting it done” despite the pandemic and limited



**Robert Bardwell**  
Executive Director, MASCA

access to students. To access the webinar recording, click [here](#)

If you have never seen this information, are not sure if you have Edwin access or how to access the FAFSA completion data, check out this [FAFSA cheat sheet](#) or contact your district data person and request Edwin access. You are looking for Report CR607 - FAFSA Completion Report Detail. If you cannot access Edwin, you can also get data from the federal government by clicking [here](#).

While this session is particularly aimed at high school counselors, I would go as far as to say elementary and middle level counselors should be keenly aware of this crisis and understand their role in helping to prepare students for life after high school.

I often talk about the ongoing change in philosophy about teaching foreign language. Back in the day students were likely only exposed to a foreign language in high school, maybe upper middle grades if they were lucky. But the current research now shows that early acquisition of language skills is the best approach. I often ask why is it that a similar approach does not happen when we talk about school counseling? I've heard from elementary counselors that career and college readiness is not their domain, that it is for the middle and secondary counselors and that elementary counselors

should only focus on the social-emotional domain. Please don't get me wrong. There are plenty of counselors who do a great job exposing elementary students to appropriate career and college readiness lessons and topics. We just need to ensure that it is happening everywhere.

I am also very aware that not every high school student is college material, at least not right out of high school. The pandemic has only made that more glaringly obvious. Not every 17 or 18 year-old high school graduate is ready for higher education right after they graduate, however every graduate needs some additional training, degree or certifications. Gone are the days when a decent living can be made with only a high school diploma. Sure there are many success stories about those who are now millionaires without formal education beyond high school, but that is certainly not the norm any longer.

But because the pandemic has wreaked havoc with some of our most vulnerable students, some are not even attempting to apply for college or financial aid. That is certainly understandable. However, since these students may never see you again after graduation and will not necessarily know where to go for help, it is imperative to at least show them how to do it and arm them with the skills to do it on their own, if even a year or two down the road. That is the least we can do for all of our graduates. This is why states like Louisiana and Illinois require all high school graduates to complete a FAFSA even if they don't intend to apply to college right after high school. Massachusetts will likely never go for that since bureaucrats frown upon such mandates even if it is good for our graduates and others already do it, instead leaving it up to local policy makers to require such things, if at all.

If you have read this far, thank you. I am hopeful that your school has at least downloaded the Edwin data. However, recent data provided to me by the Executive Office of Education indicates that only some 22% of high schools in the state have downloaded the FAFSA completion data this year. That's simply unacceptable. We have some work to do.



# Implementing MyCAP Programming at the Middle School Level (During a Global Pandemic and beyond!)

*by April Brunelle, School Counselor, Boston Tech Academy and MASCA Emerging Leader*

Almost two years ago, my colleague and I were introduced to an opportunity to build and collaboratively design the MyCAP (My College and Career Plan) programming at our school, TechBoston Academy, a 6-12 public pilot school in Dorchester, MA. An e-mail was written that our school was granted a FOCAL (Foundations of Career and Academic Learning) grant through EdVestors. Coincidentally, we were already signed up for the MA state College Career Advising/MyCAP three part training with a five person team consisting of a MS School Counselor, a HS School Counselor, an SEI 6-12 School Counselor, an administrator, and a 12th grade teacher. This was the beginning of our long journey towards developing College and Career Plans for our middle school students.

There were many steps along the way that led us to where we are today, and we are definitely still heading to our destination. Here I will take some time to highlight some of our steps for those who are interested in the process of implementing MyCAP programming at their school.

1. Mapping out a Calendar/Scope and Sequence with our counseling team of 8 (remember... 6-12) In previous years as a school counseling team, we had started to outline what more closely resembled a monthly calendar of all the typical school counseling work we would be doing in that particular month (for example exam school admissions work in October, or the 7th/10th health fair in November). We furthered this work by using colored sticky notes (representing the three domains of personal/social, academic support, career/college readiness) and physically put each task on the sticky note, placing the sticky note in a calendar month (Imagine multiple giant pad papers all over our learning commons). We then digitized these notes and thoughts into a google doc. This took multiple sessions, and sometimes it was difficult for us to remember everything we do in future or past months of the one we were in. School Counselors do

a lot!

2. Attending the MA College and Career Advising/MyCAP three part training There were three throughout the year that we attended as a team (as previously mentioned). These trainings helped us create a tangible plan in regards to aligning the work with standards, making it a whole school initiative, and providing specific lessons to use. Of course, these lessons were all geared towards high school, but it is a starting point.
3. Bi-weekly Meetings with our EdVestors/support team Throughout the first year and the following summer, we met bi-weekly with the two co-content facilitators of the school counseling program (myself & my colleague), two VERY supportive staff members from EdVestors (one who was a former TBA teacher!), and an administrator. This work helped keep us on track with our implementation goals and provided us with fresh ideas to use.
4. /Receiving training in Naviance and utilizing Naviance as the MyCAP tool Our district had provided us with multiple trainings and opportunities for questions/growth in using Naviance as a college and career readiness tool. Our seniors had already been using Naviance for college applications, and now we were expanding into the middle school with our own created lessons, the pre-created Naviance curriculum, and other exploratory learning features.
5. Gaining district support The Boston Public School district was already supportive and had been doing this work for years, but the focus was always on high school. We used the 9-12 lessons and MyCAP pathway that was created for a BPS high school student, and tried to apply some of these concepts at a developmentally appropriate level for middle school students. Let me just highlight

that we already and have always had administrative support in this work which is crucial for growth and progress.

6. Utilizing books and materials We drew upon many books and materials for support. Some of us read Mandy Savitz Romer's "ready, willing, and able: A Developmental Approach to College Access and Success". I HIGHLY recommend reading this before you start the work. It helped frame a lot of the middle school scope and sequence and programming. It also helps apply the less tangible concepts of creating an anti-racist curriculum that is actually developmentally appropriate for where students might be in the process of seeing themselves as successful in their future career path, most specifically in regards to college. Although I did not read this book until after the first round of curriculum was written, I do plan on using Alicia Ogselby and Rebecca Atkin's "Interrupting Racism: Equity and Social Justice in School Counseling". The internet is also a great space for seeing what other people have done in other school counseling programs.
7. Writing the Curriculum/Scope & Sequence We spent the summer utilizing all the work previously mentioned to create a tangible scope and sequence, aligning MA Career Development Education Benchmarks highlighted in the MA School Counseling Model 3.0. Something that our team deliberated about for a while was who should be delivering the curriculum, teachers or school counselors. Focusing on the middle school, we finally decided for capacity purposes it would be a whole school, teacher and school counselor delivered curriculum during our 30 minute advisory periods. There have been some roadblocks with this model, but it is our first year! Also just to highlight, in

*(Continued next page)*

# Implementing MyCAP Programming

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6th grade, we are heavily relying on the Naviance Curriculum, setting up SMART goals, and learning how to use circles in our everyday school community. 7th grade is primarily focused on self-identity, and the entire year focuses on self-identity and discovery. In 8th grade, the focus shifts to how can I incorporate my self-identity into a college and career plan, and also prepare for high school.

The main focus for all of this is career and college concepts for middle school students to EXPLORE. We want them to do exploration in middle school, rather than primarily in high school when they have to make the difficult decisions. The use of Naviance allows for this programming to be tracked, so students can look upon their previous thoughts and work when they are in high school making the decision.

There have been multiple roadblocks as we have implemented this work for the first time this year. These roadblocks have in-

cluded digitizing all of the work (surprisingly easy, but after the first year we will see in regards to complete student engagement), getting teacher support and understanding, and scheduling. We also want to ensure that we are developing a curriculum that is anti-racist in nature and not committing curriculum violence (as noted by Learning for Justice, formerly Teaching Tolerance) recently wrote about. We will need to survey the staff and the students at the end of the year, and use this data to adjust the curriculum in the summer for the following year. We will also need to start thinking about what this curriculum will start to look like in person, as it is completely a remote learning opportunity at the moment.

If you are currently doing this work and want to collaborate, my e-mail is [abrunelle@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:abrunelle@bostonpublicschools.org) and I am happy to talk! It has been a work in progress, but worth it so far as we develop this Tier 1 intervention for ALL of our students.



## QUICK FACTS:

- A private, four-year, co-educational liberal arts college founded in 1879
- Serving about 2,000 traditional undergraduate students
- 85% of first-year students reside on campus
- 131-acre New England campus located just minutes from downtown Boston
- Over 97% of recent graduates employed, in graduate school, or in service
- 30 majors and 60+ minors/concentrations leading to bachelor's and master's degrees
- Student/faculty ratio is 12:1, with an average class size of 20 students
- Approximately 99% of first-time students receive some form of financial aid
- Offering a wide array of extracurricular activities, including 15 NCAA Division III athletic teams

**(800) 669-0686 or (617) 333-2210**

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## March 2021 Awareness Dates

Deaf History Month  
(March 13 – April 15)

Gender Equality Month

Middle Level Education  
Month

Music in Our Schools Month

National Nutrition Month

Women's History Month

Youth Art Month

1-5 Say Something Week

1-8 Sleep Awareness Week

1 Self-Injury Awareness Day

2 Read Across America Day/  
Dr. Seuss's Birthday

8-12 National School Break-  
fast Week

8 International Women's Day

21 International Day for  
the Elimination of  
Racial Discrimination

21 World Down Syndrome  
Day

22 World Water Day

22-28 National Drug and  
Alcohol Facts Week

31 Transgender Day of  
Visibility

# Anti-Racism

(continued from page 1)

tems:

1. Seek to understand the sociopolitical and historical context around race, language, gender, and other social and biological identities, and explore how schools can contribute to reproducing injustice.
  - a. Demonstrate continuous growth in our understanding of the systemic factors (present and/or historical) that contribute to the reproduction of racism and discrimination in schools.
  - b. Consider the societal factors that may underlie the academic struggles of individuals or groups of students.
  - c. Consider how intersectionality - the intersection of multiple facets of identity - may affect students' experiences.
2. Articulate an awareness of our own position relative to others, considering how our identities affect our cultural lenses and our opportunities, how this may be similar to or different from others, and how our position may influence our interactions.
  - a. Study our own personal history to uncover the development of our own cultural lenses.
  - b. Consider our own intersectional identities, including those that give us privilege and those that are marginalized.
  - c. Acknowledge our power and privilege as counselors.
3. Recognize and articulate how students' actions and words can be interpreted through different cultural lenses.
  - a. Recognize that there are different cultural lenses through which one can view student actions and words.
  - b. Acknowledge that institutions were built around the cultural lenses of the privileged e.g. white, straight, economically advantaged, able-bodied, cisgender, males.
  - c. Seek alternate interpretations for deficit-based assumptions if and when they arise.
  - d. Position students as experts on cultural knowledge and seek to learn from them.
4. Interrogate our perceptions of students' ability to learn.
  - a. Identify moments when we viewed students' capacity to learn as fixed, malleable, or somewhere in between and pay close attention to how we characterize students and student work.
  - b. Intentionally capture growth mindset principles in our work and counseling practices.
  - c. Construct strategies to help ourselves interrupt our own tendency to view students' capacity as fixed.

5. Support students in developing a disposition towards a growth mindset and beliefs about malleable intelligence.
  - a. Observe and infer how students' interactions with us and one another demonstrate the extent to which they hold fixed or growth mindsets about themselves.
  - b. Co-construct strategies to help students identify and overcome obstacles to learning that are caused by fixed mindsets and beliefs about fixed levels of intelligence.
  - c. Promote self-regulated learning by acknowledging students' efforts and helping them to name strategies they are already using.
6. Seek to ensure that the curriculum is culturally affirming and sustaining to all students, especially those with marginalized identities.
  - a. Question when curricula reinforce oppressive paradigms.
  - b. Interrogate the messages about race and culture conveyed through curricular materials.
  - c. When necessary, reshape the curriculum to be more culturally sustaining, or supportive and not reductive of the cultural and linguistic knowledge and skill that students bring from their homes and communities.

Did you know MASCA offers  
Professional Development online?

GO TO:

[https://masca.wildapricot.org/  
/Electronic-PD](https://masca.wildapricot.org/Electronic-PD)

If you are interested in learning more about these competencies, exploring the ASCA Standards in Practice for Eliminating Racism and Bias from Schools, collaborating with school counselors and counselor educators doing this work and learning from/with DEI & Anti-Racism Professionals, please consider joining the MASCA IDEA Committee. For more information, please contact MASCA IDEA Committee Co-Chairs Manjula Karamcheti ([karamcheti@hmgrad-school.org](mailto:karamcheti@hmgrad-school.org)) or Tyeshia Weir ([weirt@springfieldpublicschools.com](mailto:weirt@springfieldpublicschools.com))



# MASCA 2021 Virtual Conference - It's the "place" to be on April 5-6!

We hope you will make plans to attend the 2021 Massachusetts School Counselor Association's Annual Conference, on April 5th and 6th. This will be a great opportunity for you to connect virtually with other school counselors across the state for excellent professional development. A great feature of our virtual conference is that you will be able to view conference content until May 31, 2022.



**Allison Edwards**  
**Opening Workshop Session**  
*15-Minute Counseling*  
*Techniques that Work*  
**Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup> – 3 PM**



**Julia Taylor**  
**Conference Keynote Speaker**  
*Mental Health Literacy*  
**Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup> – 8 AM**

## PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE

### FOSTERING CHANGE AND INCLUSION



APRIL 5-6, 2021



## SPRING CONFERENCE



Don't miss this opportunity for counselor-centered professional development!

Go to [MASCA.org](https://www.masca.org) for registration details.

Questions? Contact [Ruth Carrigan](#), Conference Chair.

## Advocacy 101

**Date:**  
March 3, 2021  
**Time:**  
3:30 - 4:30 pm

Please join us for a one hour webinar on Advocacy 101 with Mike Morris and Savannah Kelleher from Tremont Strategies Group. They will review the process to pass a bill in Massachusetts and Tips and Tricks to contacting your State Representatives and Senators. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions. We hope you are able to join us!

[Click here to register for the event](#)



# Practicum During a Pandemic

by Johanna Smith, School Counselor, Lynn Vocational Technical Institute

It is so hard to believe that it has been almost a full year since we packed up our offices and left our schools for what we thought would be only two weeks when the Covid-19 pandemic shut down the state of Massachusetts last March. Throughout the time that has elapsed, school counselors and other educators have been forced to bend and flex our practices in ways that most of us never even imagined, and as my principal keeps saying, we have been building this plane as we're flying it, with no best practices to fall back on, no words of wisdom from those who have gone before us.

One group of individuals who has been impacted in a huge way by the pandemic is the graduate students who are carrying out their observation and practicum hours this year. In my role as an adjunct professor at Salem State University, I am so blessed to be able to work with energetic, enthusiastic students, eager to join the world of professional school counselors. They have been extremely well-prepared by my colleagues who teach the earlier coursework in their programs; their classroom lessons and counseling skills rival those of seasoned veterans. They can research, write papers, and discuss case conceptualization thoughtfully. And now, when faced with taking on the biggest and what should be the most exciting part of their journey, they have been met with what has been the most difficult collective school year of our careers.

The students I am working with are interning at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. Some are working in schools with students in the building 5 days a week; some are fully remote; others are somewhere in between in different hybrid situations. And while none of these situations are anywhere near what we would call normal, they have been working diligently to serve their students in new and emerging ways, to learn under incredible stress and pressure.

The professional school counselors



The Author's Virtual "Bitmoji" Office

who have taken on interns this year had varying degrees of trepidation. They did not know how much time and attention they would be able to devote to their interns and wanted to make sure that they could give them an excellent learning experience. And as the year has unfolded, they have each expressed such joy and gratitude for the interns that they have working alongside them.

In an overwhelming year, school counseling interns have been able to take some tasks off of their supervisors' plates. But more than that, they have brought new and ever-adapting skills and talents to the table. In one individual meeting with a student that I observed, one intern taught a middle school student how to organize her email into folders so that she would be able to keep track of work for different subjects. In another session at a high school, an intern taught her students about a website that students could use to cut off their own access to the sites that they noticed caused them to procrastinate while online when they should have been doing their remote work. I have observed remote classroom lessons led by interns who adeptly integrate apps like Nearpod and Padlet into their learning, and some where students have dropped off supplies to small group students' homes so that they could virtually engage in projects while talking about self-esteem.

There is a specific sort of grief that comes along with losing out on the experiences that we have been looking forward to for a long time. We all recognize that in our high school students who will not get to celebrate a prom or a traditional graduation ceremony. The graduate students who have been working tirelessly this year at their internships have had to simultaneously grieve their own loss of a "normal" internship experience while supporting those students who are struggling. They have been juggling the demands of coursework, internship, outside jobs, and maintaining their own mental health while caring for friends and family during this unprecedented time.

If you are in a position to hire school counselors anytime soon - and I hope, for the sake of all of the students across Massachusetts, that the funding we keep hearing about for more student support comes through so that we can all serve our students and families better - you would be hard pressed to find a counselor who is more adaptable, competent, and compassionate than those in the graduating class of 2021 have had to become. One silver lining to this year is certainly that the future of the school counseling profession is looking bright, and all of us will benefit from the skills and compassion that these soon to be graduates exhibit every day.



# Making our Language and Communities More Inclusive

## Part 1: Busting Gender Myths

by Anne-Marie Sklarwitz, SEL Coordination and Remote Student Support, Westwood HighSchool

As educators, our job is to support and advocate for all students so that they can reach their full academic, career, and social-emotional potential. Part of that is validating students for who they are. Using inclusive language can make room for all our students' identities and experiences. Even knowing this, it can be easy to miss many "normal" sounding things around us (and that we might say!) that are harmful. If we upend what gets taken for granted as the only options, we create room for all students. We can use our words to recognize the dignity of each student, providing support for those who are marginalized and modeling for everyone else. Below are changes we can implement immediately and resources for further learning.

**Myth: Gender is binary; there are two genders, and they are opposites.**

Truth: Someone's gender might be male, female, both, or neither. There are unlimited gender identities. There is no such thing as an "opposite" gender; gender can exist on a spectrum, and it can also exist outside that spectrum entirely. Learn more at [Gender Spectrum](#).

**Myth: Gender and sex are the same.**

Truth: Babies are assigned a sex at birth, generally based on anatomy and sometimes on chromosomes. Gender, however, is one's internal sense of self. When someone's gender identity lines up with their sex assigned at birth, they are cisgender. If their gender does not line up with their sex assigned at birth, they might be transgender and/or nonbinary. Someone's sex assigned at birth might be male, female, or intersex. Someone's gender might be man, woman, male, female, both, neither, nonbinary, genderqueer, genderfluid, or an infinite number of other options. Gender can be fixed or fluid.

**Myth: You can know somebody's sex/gender/pronouns by looking at them.**

Truth: Guessing someone's sex/gender/

pronouns reflects assumptions based on that person's gender expression. A person's gender expression may or may not fit with society's norms or an individual's expectations. A person of any gender and any gender expression may use any pronoun, such as she, he, they, ze, or any combination of pronouns, such as she/they.

**Myth: It is good to separate people into groups by gender.**

Truth: There are many unintended and harmful consequences of separating people into groups by gender. Research shows that separating children by gender leads to an increased belief of gender stereotypes (Bigler & Leaper, 2015). This includes anything from boys being better at math to girls being better at understanding emotions; these stereotypes limit children's ability to appreciate each other fully, to inhabit and express their own gender identities, and to fulfill their potential. This also assumes cisgender as the norm. If we separate into "boys or girls," where do our nonbinary students go? If we perpetuate this false gender binary, how can our cisgender students see that there are all different kinds of people in the world? How can students who are not cisgender see that their identities are just as valid as cisgender students' identities? Children need to see that all kinds of people can be skilled in each academic area and can have strong social-emotional skills. Forcing someone to conform to or identify as a gender that is not their own is harmful, whereas affirming someone's gender can lead to improved mental health outcomes (Restar et al., 2020). You cannot know a person's gender by looking at them based on their gender expression. Even if people feel completely free to express their genders, this may or may not line up with others' expectations of gender norms. So much of who we are is a combination of nature and nurture and we cannot easily separate what is innate to us as individuals or as members of a group from the impact of our surroundings, how we are treated, and

others' expectations.

**Myth: It's hard to use pronouns other than he and she.**

Truth: It's easier than you think once you start practicing! First, avoid making assumptions about people's pronouns. When someone nearby is wearing shoes you like, you can point them out to your friend by saying, "look at that person's awesome shoes!" instead of "look at that man's/woman's awesome shoes!" or when you want your child to take turns on the slide, you can say, "let the little kid who's been waiting so patiently have a turn" instead of "let the little boy/girl who's been waiting so patiently have a turn." You can also try some sentences online using [Practice with Pronouns](#).

Language, identity, culture, and norms are always changing and evolving. We constantly need to educate ourselves on how best to advocate for our students and model inclusive, justice-oriented words and behaviors. Check out resources on [Expand Your Classroom](#) and stay tuned for Part 2 of this series in next month's *Counselor's Notebook* for practical steps on building inclusivity into your own language and community.

### References:

- Bigler, R. S. & Leaper, C. (2015). Gendered language: Psychological principles, evolving practices, and inclusive policies. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 2(1), [Link to Article](#)
- Restar, A., Jin, H., Breslow, A., Reisner, S. L., Mimiaga, M., Cahill, S., Hughto, J. M. W. (2020). Legal gender marker and name change is associated with lower negative emotional response to gender-based mistreatment and improve [sic] mental health outcomes among trans populations. *SSM - Population Health*, 11, 1-9. [Link to Article](#)

## Career Activities Corner: K-12 College and Career Readiness Activities

Reach Higher MA Working Group #1: Careers and Citizenship for All hosts this Career Activity Corner to encourage infusion of a career development strand into your school counseling curriculum. You are invited to submit K-12 lessons with identified standards alignments, interdisciplinary curriculum links, measurable student learning objectives and implementation outcome data to Helen O'Donnell, Ed.D. [helenod@att.net](mailto:helenod@att.net)

### Using Community Resources to Strengthen Career Development, Education & Civic Engagement Project and Resources

*Project and Resources submitted by Judith Josephs, Ed.D.*

School counselors need to search their community for the resources and contacts needed to help their students with career exploration and post high school planning. I am fortunate to host a TV show, *History of Success*, utilize Lynn Community Television as a resource to promote Career Development Education (CDE) and inform students about career and civic involvement and engagement opportunities in their community. With a focus on mentoring and engaging students in the community, civic leaders and guests are invited to explain career opportunities in the City of Lynn and the North Shore of Boston by highlighting labor market information about local workforce assets. Shows involved interviewing guests who share their career backgrounds, job responsibilities, and entry level academic requirements which could inspire students to explore promoted career fields. By sharing the stories of successful alumni and community leaders, you can help encourage today's students to achieve their goals.

Below are descriptions of eleven *History of Success* videos and their respective links should you wish to view them:

**Video #1 - Richard Starbard**, City Counselor, and **Jim Cowdell**, Director of Economic Development. City Political leaders promote the importance of Civic Engagement, getting to know the politicians in their community, and involvement in the community where they live. Both participants would make excellent classroom speakers. Civic Engagement Theme.

**Video #2 - Professor Amy Smith**, Media and Communications Department Salem State University, and student **Katharine Garrido** meet and establish a connection between Salem State University and potential student. The student is offered a tour of the Department and is given a card to call any time to visit. The show highlights a resource in the community to help students achieve their goal. Student Exploration Theme, Mentoring, Career Development Education.

**Video #3 - President of Salem State University John Keenan** and V. P. of Community Health Dana Farber **Magnolia Contreras** are Educational Leaders on the North Shore. President Keenan highlights Early College Pathway and new additions to Salem State such as the Bloomberg Labs, partnership with Cabot Wealth Management, and Bertolon School of Business Accreditation. Magnolia emphasizes community health benefits and is on the Board of Trustees at Salem State. They are both outstanding speakers on Career Development. Educational Leadership Theme.

**Video #4 - Rick Starbard & Leonardo Rodriguez** share a story about the importance of Mentoring. Both of these speakers were my former students. Mr. Starbard was also a colleague and had Mr. Rodriguez in class and also hired him at his Auto Body Company. Leonardo Rodriguez was mentored by Mr. Starbard and started his own business with the help of his teacher. This is an outstanding example of Mentoring and Career Development. Leonardo Rodriguez is in business for himself in the Auto Body field and attributes his success to Mr. Starbard.



*The author with Susan and Stephen Archer*

**Video #5 - Susan and Stephen Archer** are community leaders in their chosen fields. Susan is Director of Development for Family & Childrens Services. Stephen is the Chief of the Fire Department in Lynn. Mr. Archer expresses a desire to bring students into the Fire Department in order to explore Fire Fighting careers. He speaks about his

career as an Electrician and the influence his brother Graham had in encouraging him to follow a career in the field of Fire Fighting. Susan works with the most vulnerable populations. F&CS is a resource for Youth Services.

**Video #6 - Lillian Wall and Natasha Smith**, Interns at Salem State University located in President John Keenan's office. They serve as Public Relations Associates. Lillian was an English major and is applying her skills in the field of Public Relations. Natasha majors in Early Childhood Education and enjoys hands on experience in the President's Office. Internship theme as part of Career Development Education.



*Steve Rima and Esperanza Vasallo (bottom) with Judith Josephs (top)*

**Video #7 - Steve Rima**, owner of 3 McDonalds franchises, and **Esperanza Vasallo**, Employee, receives a McDonalds Scholarship in order to continue as a student at Salem State University in the field of Psychology. The scholarship allows her to graduate from Salem State University. She is a mother, student and employee. Like many students financial aid is important to their ability to complete their education. Scholarships and Mentoring Theme.

**Video #8 - Roman Gold**, V. P. of Operations Flag Pharmacy & **Shella Santiago**, Certified Pharmacy Technician work for Flag Pharmacy, a company employing people with many language skills. Shella was mentored and encouraged to rise from a Clerk, to Registered Technician, and now Certified Pharmacy Technician. She

*(continued next page)*

## Community Resources

(continued from previous page)

was mentored and helped to study by the managers of Flag Pharmacy. Her bilingual abilities in Spanish and English are very important at this company. Importance of Language Acquisition, Mentoring, Career Development promotion by the company.

**Video #9** Joe Scanlon, Board of Lynn Arts & Lynn Museum and Doneeca Thurston, Director of Lynn Museum are community leaders in the field of student exploration, internships, partnerships with local schools. They offer work-based learning experiences with local schools and colleges. Guest Speakers, Work-Based Experiences, Partnerships with local schools, Internships.

**Video #10** Richard Wood, President of the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce and Richard Sisson, student at Lynn Tech High School speak to the importance of soft skills in career exploration. Mr. Wood is the owner of an insurance company and serves as the President of the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce. Richard Sisson is pursuing a Career in Media & Communica-

tions. He was working at Lynn Community Television as part of Cooperative Education in his major at Lynn Tech High School TV Production. Career Development Education, Guest Speaker, Role Model, Career Exploration.

**Video #11** - Cheryl Crounse, V. P. of Institutional Advancement and Kaitlyn Meeks, a junior in Nursing at Salem State University. Cheryl Crounse and Kaitlyn Meeks are both mentors. Cheryl joined Girls Inc. and mentored 3 students in a program called Middle School Mentoring. Kaitlyn is currently a junior in Nursing and mentors First Generation Students. Kaitlyn hopes to gain her training and then pursue her goal in graduate school as a Nurse Practitioner. Role Models, Mentoring, Career Exploration, Leadership Themes.

### LIST OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES USED IN VIDEOS:

- Lynn City Councilor Rick Starbard & Owner of Rick's Auto Collision
- Director of Economic Development Jim Cowdell
- Professor Amy Smith, Media & Communications, Salem State University
- President of Salem State John Keenan

- Vice President of Dana Farber Magnolia Contreras
- Leonard Rodriguez Auto Works Collision
- Susan Archer Family & Childrens Services
- Stephen Archer Chief, Lynn Fire Department
- Interns Salem State Lilian Wall and Natasha Smith
- Steve Rima McDonalds Owner
- Esperanza Vasallo Scholarship Winner
- Roman Gold, Vice President Flag Pharmacy
- Sheila Santiago Certified Pharmacy
- Joe Scanlon, Board of Lynn Arts & Lynn Museum
- Doneeca Thurston, Director of Lynn Museum
- Richard Wood, President Greater Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce
- Richard Sisson, Lynn Community Television
- Cheryl Crounse, V. P. of Institutional Advancement
- Kaitlyn Meeks, Nursing Student Salem State University
- Katharine Garrido, High School Student

MA Model committee presents:

## ACTION RESEARCH and THE ACCOUNTABLE COUNSELOR

March 24, 2021 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

### Agenda:

- Review of MA Model 3.0: Define, Assess, Manage, Deliver
- MA Model Implementation in Action: Practitioners Presenting Implementation Initiatives.
- Data: The Short Version
- Drafting your MARC/MARC Jr. document
- Announcing MASCA's MARC/MARC Jr. Recognition Award Recipients

### Outcome goals for participants:

#### Guided activities include:

- an overview of Define, Assess, Manage and Deliver components of the MA Model 3.0 by the MA Model writing committee;
- strategies for Identifying and compiling program outcome data;
- reviewing MARC and MARC Jr. documents.

### Outcomes: As a result of participating in this work, participants will:

- deepen their understanding of MA Model Implementation
- develop awareness of MARC/MARC Jr. document development.
- learn action researcher competencies.
- begin to draft a MARC or MARC Jr. to document your program's impact.

## REGISTER HERE

### FREE for MASCA members

NOTE: Non-Members must join MASCA to attend  
(Professional membership = \$45; Grad students =\$15)

**ALSO** Register now for Spring MA Model Institutes

(Introductory Workshops, Counselors in K-12 Classrooms or MA Model 2: Next Steps)  
offered for 45 PDP's or 3 Graduate Credits from Fitchburg State University.

Registration and inquiries: [helenod@att.net](mailto:helenod@att.net)



# IMPLEMENTING MA MODEL FOR COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS:

by Helen C. O'Donnell, Ed. D, MA Model Trainer, MASCA MA Model Chair and MA Model 3.0 Co-Chair ,  
Cynthia Esielionis, M.Ed., MA Model 3.0 Co-Chair, School Counseling Coordinator, Ayer Shirley RSD

*This Counselor's Notebook (CN) series began in Sept 2017 to inform colleagues about steps and strategies for implementing the MA Model 2.0 and ASCA Model 3.0. With the spring 2020 endorsement of MA Model 3.0 and June 2019 release of ASCA Model 4.0®, previous MA Model resources are being updated. A library of updated CN articles organized by theme will be posted on the MA Model section of the MASCA website soon. .*

## Helping Counselors Work Smarter: MA Model Committees in Action!

The MA Model committees have been working diligently on several initiatives. Updating resources and developing a revised MA Model section of the website, developing PD opportunities for colleagues, and preparing MA Accountability Report Card materials and submissions for MASCA MARC Recognition Award presentations. THANK YOU Cynthia Esielionis, Megan Bizarro, Brenda Richardson, Pam Paynter, David Elsner, and Christine Scafidi.

### MA Model Committee Strategic Plan

**MA Model Strategic Plan Goal for MASCA's Professional Development Committee:** *To inform and educate school counselors about standards-based, data-driven school counseling programs aligned with the current MA and ASCA Models for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs.*

### MA Model Committee Vision Statement

- M** Motivating
- A** All
- M** MA School Counselors to participate in
- O** Organized, On-going PD for
- D** Delivery of K-12 multi- tiered school counseling programs with
- E** Equity for all students.
- L** Lead with data-informed action planning.

### MA Model Committee Target Goals

ALL Massachusetts schools K-12 will offer a school counseling program lead by licensed school counselors informed about and actively engaged in planning and implementing comprehensive, data-informed school counseling programs guided by MA Model and ASCA Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs.

ALL MA students will have the opportunity to participate in a vertically aligned, multi-tiered, standards-based school counseling program.

### MA Model Committee Mission Statement.

The MA Model Committee offers professional development including educational opportunities and mentoring to guide and support implementation of the MA Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs.

### MA Model Committee Action Steps and Activities offering diverse MA Model PD opportunities.

Continue monthly *MA Model Implementation Articles and Career Corner Activities* in the *Counselors Notebook*.

Deliver/record a MASCA New Counselors Boot Camp (NCBC) webinar: *Planning, Delivering and Assessing Multi-tiered Instruction*.

Continue offering a spring *MA Model Implementation in Action* workshop with MARC Recognition Awards presentations. (preconference or separate event).

Continue expanding recorded MA Model PD webinars and offering archived webinar training for MASCA PDP's.

Offer summer and academic year MA Model 3.0 Institutes for 3 graduate credits or 45 PDP's

[\(MA Model Introductory Institute, MA Model 2: Next Steps, Counselors in K-12 Classrooms\).](#)

Update MASCA website MA Model Implementation Resources and Materials (2020-21)

Promote Data-Based Practices hosting a competition to win one of 4-\$100 Ronald Fredrickson Scholarships for MA Accountability Report Cards submission.

Consider offering PD (virtual or face-to-face) introductory or theme-based MA Model training/workshop or series

to MASCA affiliates, school district for curriculum or PD day, etc., or submit proposals for administrator (principals, superintendents, MTA).

### Reminders:

Submit your compiled MARC/MARC Jr. documents by March 17<sup>th</sup> to be eligible for the random drawing for 4 -\$100 MARC/MARC Jr. PD Scholarships. Submissions rated high honors or honors by MARC committee will be MARC and MARC Jr. documents, rubrics and samples available on MASCA website or email [helenod@att.net](mailto:helenod@att.net).

Register for the FREE 1:00-4:00 virtual March 24<sup>th</sup> PD, ACTION RESEARCH and THE ACCOUNTABLE SCHOOL COUNSELOR including guided instruction for developing your MARC documents, presentation of MARC Recognition Awards, and announcement of MARC/MARC Jr. Scholarships.

### Retiree Special Interest Group (SIG)

An initial meeting of the Retiree SIG occurred on Feb. 2nd. Wonderful ideas were generated. Currently, Joe Fitzgerald [jdfitz02188@comcast.net](mailto:jdfitz02188@comcast.net) is developing a retiree database. Please have interested retirees contact Joe if they want to be included in our SIG. Currently, we are discussing having virtual monthly meetings that include social connections time in addition to topics like "Technology Tricks and Tips- What do you want to learn?" and guided sessions with a guest leading retirees through a series of activities related to "Leaving your Footprint" More details coming soon. Watch your MASCA email.

*Who wants to co-chair our Retiree SIG?*



Wednesday, March 3 at 6 PM EST

## Navigating Financial Aid Offers

Please join us for a panelist discussion from three college and university financial aid administrators on navigating and understanding financial aid offers.

Scott Jewell, Director of Financial Aid, Salem State University,

Edward Maroney, Associate Director of Financial Aid, Bryant University

Ken Ferreira, Associate Vice President, Student Financial Services, Franklin Pierce University

**Register today:**

<https://salliemaebank.webex.com/salliemaebank/onstage/g.php?MTID=ec91bfe32bb10175c36b0e77379995e4f>



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# MASCA

Massachusetts School Counselors Association

*The mission of MASCA is to promote excellence in the school counseling profession by advocating for, connecting, supporting, and empowering school counselors in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through leadership, collaboration, and professional development.*

Visit us on the web at [www.MASCA.org](http://www.MASCA.org)

# MASCA O.S.C.A.R. Award: Outstanding Service to Counseling Award of Recognition

by Helen O'Donnell, Ed D.

The MASCA O.S.C.A.R award was established by the MASCA Governing Board as part of its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 1986 to tribute and honor *school counselors who have dedicated a professional career of distinguished and exemplary service to MASCA and the profession of school counseling in Massachusetts. It is a lifetime achievement award. Primary considerations for selection include both the length and quality of service to MASCA. The award is not an annual award. Being recognized as a MASCA O.S.C.A.R. is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a MASCA member of the school counseling profession in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*

The first "Outstanding Service to School Counseling Award Recognition" award recognized Oscar Krichmar, a founder of MASCA in 1960-61 and active member for 25 years as a president, executive secretary, and editor of the *Counselors Notebook* from its inception.

Most living O.S.C.A.R.'s are retired, but continue dedicating their time and talents to advance MASCA and their communities. They include: **Mary Choinard, Ralph Sennott, Helen O'Donnell, Donna Brown, John Gould, Jan Tkaczyk, Mary Westcott, Ron Miller, Bob Bardwell.** Even retirement from MASCA leadership and school counseling positions does not end O.S.C.A.R.'s decades-long commitment to and advocacy for MASCA and the school counseling profession. Current MASCA related initiatives include: Retiree database development; planning and participating in the Retiree SIG; archive development including outreach to past MASCA Executive Directors and Presidents to locate archive materials including pre-2000 Counselor Notebooks and Award materials; and MASCA 60<sup>th</sup> birthday year-long event planning. OSCAR profiles are posted on the website.

On Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> at the MASCA Awards Gala MASCA recognized two new O.S.C.A.R.s.

**O.S.C.A.R Award Citation for Joe Fitzgerald.** After a 13-year career as a K-12 school counselor in Randolph. Joe served as a Guidance Director in Milton for 23 years. Joe began working on the MASCA conference committee in the early 90's as assistant to the evaluation chair, George Thompson. After retiring from public school counseling, Joe was an active member of the Governing Board and worked tirelessly on MASCA committees in leadership roles as conference registrar, technology chair, and VP retirees.

**As conference registrar** 2005-2014 for MASCA's fall and spring conferences, Joe meticulously registered attendees, managed



Joe Fitzgerald

deposits, and facilitated invoicing. He created professional registration spreadsheets, masterfully collected and tracked registration income, and analyzed attendance data. In doing so, he willingly used his own personal equipment and supplies to manage his registrar's tasks.

**As Technology Chair,** Joe was a skillful technology partner and his tireless efforts established and implemented technology initiatives and supported website development that brought MASCA out of the 20th and into the 21st century. Gradually, MASCA expanded its technology capabilities including assisting with selections and use of an on-line registration platform for membership services, credit card payments, billing and invoicing, as well as email outreach promoting professional development to MASCA's membership.

**As VP Retiree,** Joe was instrumental assisting retirees *Tame the Technology Tiger*. Guided by his patience, dry sense of humor, and encouragement, he supported and mentored colleagues as they faced and conquer computer anxiety and challenges. His helping hands and advice were invaluable! He also consistently contributed relevant articles for the *Counselors Notebook*.

After his tenure as MASCA's VP Retirees, Joe continued to contribute to the technology and computer literacy of area retirees by volunteering to teach classes at senior centers in the Weymouth and South Shore area.

Joe's credentials and dedication over decades of volunteer service are exemplary and significantly impacted MASCA's technology growth, conference experiences, and PD related work.

It is my pleasure to announce and welcome **Joe Fitzgerald** as a MASCA O.S.C.A.R.!



Jan Parsons

**O.S.C.A.R Award Citation for Jan Parsons** It gives me great pleasure to introduce our newest O.S.C.A.R recipient. Petite in stature, but not in accomplishments. By far, the most devoted member of the school counseling profession. She has participated in her local affiliates as well as MASCA. She was president and trustee of the West Suburban Counseling Association and active in the Guidance Administrators Forum. In MASCA, she served as President and VP Secondary. She also expanded her horizons by becoming ASCA member and attended National ASCA conferences in San Antonio, Nashville, Washington, DC, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. MASCA benefited from her ASCA experiences where she gained new school counseling perspectives and brought them back to share with her MA peers. She has been a consummate professional always seeking to improve her school counseling credentials, pursuing innovative ideas, and bringing them to fruition even starting and running a graduate summer PD program for practicing counselors and mentoring school counseling graduate students.

Considering her credentials and dedication to the school counseling profession, it is not surprising that she was mentored by another O.S.C.A.R recipient and long-time colleague, Marilou Cashman, a MASCA Executive Director.

Our newest OSCAR honoree has been a most loyal member of MASCA, attending every conference since 1993 and never shirking from accepting any responsibility or challenge. She has received other awards such as the TORCH Award, Educator Shining Light Award and MASCA's Leadership Award.

Very appropriately, tonight she receives the highest award given to a MASCA Member. Congratulations to JAN PARSONS!