

MASCA Counselor's Notebook

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION

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JUNE 2023

"All Good Things..."

By Jennifer McGuire, Board Chair 2022 -2023

There is definitely truth to the proverb "all good things must come to an end." My term as Board Chair for the Massachusetts School Counselors Association will expire at the end of the month. But for me, June 30, 2023 means the end of much more than my year as chair. June 30th will also mark the end of six consecutive years as a voting member of MASCA. (Not to worry, though! While you will no longer have the privilege of reading my front page musings in the Counselors Notebook, I do intend to remain involved as the Technology Chair for the immediate future. I am not that easy to get rid of!)

I want to thank all of you—the school counselors, school counselor educators, and school counselor allies that make up the Massachusetts School Counselors Association—for trusting me to represent our association. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you. I also want to acknowledge the other voting board members I have served with, the many committee chairs and appointed positions, and especially Jean for her help with all of my articles. I would be remiss if I did not give a shout out to Donna Brown and Bob Bardwell, the two Executive Directors of MASCA during my recent consecutive terms.

The past six years have been... well, different than what I expected! Back in the



Jennifer McGuire
Board Chair 2022-2023

winter of 2017, someone reached out to me and asked me if I would consider running for the board again. After several years without a position on the board, I was excited about the opportunity to volunteer my time with our professional association. It was exciting to jump back into MASCA leadership and to see how far the organization had come since my first stint as president in 2007-2008. I did not anticipate two terms as president/board chair. I could not have even dreamed up the possibility of a global pandemic. And I also did not envision changing jobs. A lot has happened in a short amount of time!

Being on the MASCA board has been incredibly rewarding for me. (Again, if you are considering getting involved just a little bit, I cannot emphasize enough that you will never regret it!) There is something really special about being involved with an organization that is constantly trying to do better on behalf of its members. I am especially proud of the work that the MASCA board has done, and continues to do, around diversity, equity, and inclusion. I know that I have benefited as a school counselor and as a school leader from the

work that I have been fortunate to do as part of the MASCA leadership.

Our organization has continued to grow and change during this time period. Every time we meet as a board, and I listen to the reports from various committees, and the perspectives that are shared by individuals serving in various capacities, I am reminded that MASCA is truly an organization that wants to serve its members. MASCA offers so much to the membership—there is truly something for everyone—from SIGs to Book Clubs to mentoring programs, and now, Summer Camp. When challenges come up, MASCA does not hold back. Rather, MASCA figures out a way to keep moving forward despite the challenges. The MASCA leadership truly embraces a growth mindset.

I have developed many new professional connections during my time on the board. Even with the move to many more virtual meetings than in person meetings, I have managed to collaborate with and learn from individuals across the state that have helped me to stretch my thinking. I am grateful for these individuals who are not only colleagues but also friends.

Finishing this term is bittersweet. Certainly, no longer having the responsibility as the board chair will provide me with some more time for family. I also feel really good about where the organization is right now, where the focus is for the future, and the pipeline of MASCA leaders that are coming up due to active initiatives, like the Graduate Student Liaisons and the Emerging Leaders Program. Despite all of these wonderful points, it is still sad to let go and move on.

As you wrap up the school year, I wish you a restful, enjoyable, and rejuvenating summer. I hope you are able to take some time for yourself and to spend time with the important people in your life.

And to quote Winnie the Pooh, "How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."

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Focus on the Pipeline

By Bob Bardwell, MASCA Executive Director

I recently saw these two anonymous Facebook posts and felt compelled to share as part of my monthly column.

"I'm just spent. Chest pains all week. I brought home so much work yesterday, but I can't keep putting life with my family on hold to work way past contract hours. Everyone says just leave and I try, but when it doesn't all get done I fear looking like I can't handle my job. Truth is I can't handle all the extra things I'm having to do."

Yesterday a teacher approached me to see if I'd had a chance to check in w a student. I haven't because I've been proctoring so many tests. While proctoring each test, I received texts involving a suicide comment, a panic attack, etc. I tried talking it out w Admin but was only met w basically, "sorry, small school we all wear many hats" because admin is also in the same position as me.

Meanwhile I'm still expected to meet with those with attendance issues and at-risk of failing while also needing to still complete all dual enrollment information for master schedule that I've also been largely in charge of. Trying to finish honors night info which is huge at our school, as well as making sure I have all the right seals for diplomas, pathway test scheduling, testing, and whatever else I'm not thinking of.

Yesterday I discovered I made a minor mistake due to having to do everything in a hurry which is stressing me to the max wondering what other mistakes I'm going to find. I like my work to be excellent and that discovery just sent me over the edge into tears which has lingered into today.

I have a student helper one block per day but there's only so much she can do with confidentiality etc. School has an admin assist that



Robert Bardwell
Executive Director, MASCA

is supposed to assist me some of the day but this person is absent a lot and doesn't make any effort to check in w me. I take them things to do, when they are there, but I fear giving them something and then they won't be there for several days....

Now, it's Saturday and my child just said to me, "can we go do something fun today" and we are about to figure that out but I can't even focus. I absolutely love my school, the people I work with, and the students but I do not know how to mentally, physically, and emotionally keep going at this rate.

3rd year here. Prior counselor didn't have children and took on everything but had several helpers. I'm expected to keep that pace plus additional jobs that have been added, but I don't know how. Feeling defeated."

and:

"I have made a decision that I am leaving my position. I cannot take the administrative team any longer. It has been a toxic environment. I don't have another job lined up and this is very scary. At some

point our mental health has to be important. I will miss my kids. Some, it will be very hard to tell. I have not turned in my resignation yet. I will do that next week. Wish me luck!"

These two posts are no doubt representative of so many more, both written and non-written. June is tough time of the year for all educators, and in particular school counselors who are busier than ever and just trying to get to the finish line. Ensuring that seniors graduate, finishing up testing requirements, determining who will be promoted or not, assisting with course selection and master scheduling, ensuring students gain access to summer school or summer jobs are just some of the things to do in June. The list goes on and on.

I wrote in last month's column that MASCA is working to address the shortages, fill the gaps and decrease burn out. I recently had a personal conversation with Secretary of Education Tutwiler about bringing together like-minded associations to look more closely at the pipeline issue and he has promised a response in the coming weeks. This topic has been already discussed at several of our recent Board meetings. Here are some things that MASCA is either already addressing or will be pursuing in the coming year:

- Host meeting with policy makers and like-minded association leaders to discuss the school counselor shortage – [Initial meeting held on April 4 at our Spring Conference](#)
- Develop a PSA highlighting the School Counseling profession – [initial meeting with video production company held on May 18](#)
- Educate Americorps staff about the role of school counseling
- Collaborate with Career Coun-

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Pipeline

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selors and Career Development folks by participating in career fairs, hosting our own career exploration programs and having counselors speak about their jobs/career paths, etc.

- Mimic HSSIEP and place high school students at our K-8 schools to learn about the school counseling profession
- Present in college psych 101 classes about the school counseling profession
- Form a new committee that focuses on the pipeline – [Proposed Ad Hoc Committee on School Counselor shortage will be voted upon by the Board on June 6](#)
- Send [The Counselors Notebook](#) each month to all administrators highlighting what school counselors do – [Investigating mass email options with Technology Committee. Will be in place by September 2023.](#)
- Create a poster with a QR code and hang in college Psych areas filled with resources and connections
- Collaborate with the Region 1 Chair (Northeast) of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) to discuss ways to educate college academic advisors about the school counseling profession.

If you have any ideas or questions or wish to help with this new ad hoc committee, please let me know.

In the meantime, please have a safe, fun and relaxing summer. You have earned it.

Welcome to our Newest Members

The following have joined MASCA in the last month:

Krysta Cabral
Allison Campbell
Maggie Folli
Michaela Goodhile
Alex Greenwood
William Halfmann
Samantha Kominiarek
Melinda Loosian
Sydney Magner
Amy Mahoney
Alyssa Mathieu
Bridget McGrail
Yusuef Mohammed
Brooke Odunlami
Jessica Phelps
Lynnel Reed Powell
Jennifer Ruhle
Angeline St Germain
Brienne Terrence

*If you know any of these new members,
please extend a warm welcome and greeting.*

We are happy you have joined us!

Push Yourself into Professional Development

By Juliette Coatsworth,

MASCA Government Relations & Advocacy Committee; School Counselor, Foxborough Regional Charter School

For some time now, the MASCA Governing Board has been discussing the school counselor shortage. Even with a lower counselor to student ratio - about 1:35 - in comparison to the national average, Massachusetts has not escaped this issue. Back in October 2022, MASCA was joined with other student mental health advocates in a panel to speak to the need of more school counselors, though the problem is far from a solution of simply hiring more professionals in the field; we must deal with the concern of attrition.

In response to a MASCA survey, 50% of respondents indicated that their school had at least one opening for a position supporting mental health. Why are we seeing this? There is no argument that the COVID pandemic, which only recently was shifted to an “endemic” by the World Health Organization, significantly impacted most areas of our lives. If you ask anyone where those effects are still at large, I imagine most would bring up education and mental health. School counselors are facing more of a challenge than ever before, and burn-out is prevalent. Whenever a few friends from my school counselor program get together, it’s inevitable that we learn about a new situation of a former classmate changing careers. Without thinking too hard, I can name eight of those who I graduated with who have moved on.

During this time, I keep coming back to my graduate capstone paper, which touched upon burnout and professional development. A few key takeaways are below:

1. Job stress has been found to be positively correlated with burnout and negatively correlated with job satisfaction and commitment of school counselors.
2. Burnout leads not only to turnover, but also has been found to impede a counselor’s ability to deliver suitable services, impair one’s attitudes, and lead to a devaluing of clients.
3. For school counselors, role ambiguity, role conflict, and feeling overworked all significantly increase job stress and lower job satisfaction.
4. Researchers regularly suggest professional development as a possible amelioration to job stress and burnout. Recommendations include attending conferences and events, belonging to a professional or state association, engaging in group/peer coaching/supervision, collaborating with counselor educators, and partici-

pating in in-service training or seminars. Many of these experiences contribute to self-efficacy, which is correlated with increased satisfaction with their careers.

5. Most school counselors are believed to not be engaging with the available opportunities.

Personally, I cannot deny the impact that professional development has on me. Every year, the MASCA conference is a tonic, revitalizing and inspiring. Getting together with counselors from my graduate program keeps me going in-between. Professional development isn’t just about learning; it’s about a community of people working towards improving themselves.

This past year, MASCA membership has hit an all-time high, growing by nearly 200 members since June 2019. Clearly, there is a demand for professional development in all manner of forms. My recommendations? Take advantage of the group activities, especially the in-person ones, as frequently as you can. Book club, mentoring, MASCA summer camp, the annual conference - these may be less convenient than reading a book or watching a pre-recorded webinar, but they will go a lot farther in providing you with what you actually need.



[uAspire](#) is partnering with DESE this school year to bring a variety of [free](#) resources and services to students and counselors across the state of MA to support FAFSA completion efforts such as online trainings for counselors, a virtual FAFSA help desk, student-facing webinars, and Zoom-based appointments to help complete the FAFSA and next steps.

You will find a variety of helpful free tools and resources on [this website](#).

Contact Erica Rose at ericar@uaspire.org if you have additional questions.



MASCA seeks Advocacy Outreach Leader

MASCA's Government Relations and Advocacy Committee is pleased to announce the creation of a new position, the role of "Advocacy Outreach Leader."

DESCRIPTION:

An Advocacy Outreach Leader (AOL) will represent a constituency of MASCA members in correspondence with legislators regarding various bills and initiatives, on behalf of MASCA's direct goals and areas that impact school counselors and educators. Each AOL will be a member of the Government Relations Advocacy Committee (GRAC) and report to the chairs.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Participates in GRAC meetings;
- Engages in advocacy webinars and trainings, as necessary;
- Initiates and maintains monthly contact with elected officials within their regional districts and identifies themselves as a MASCA representative;
- Educates and organizes MASCA members within their regional districts regarding the MASCA legislative agenda;
- Shares regional concerns and issues with GRAC, contributing to the responsiveness of action within the committee.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- Strong and proactive ability to work independently;
- Member of MASCA;
- Ability to attend 6-8 committee meetings per year, evenings via Zoom.

STIPEND: \$1,000 per year

APPOINTMENT:

The 2023-2024 fiscal year, starting in July 2023. Anticipated commitment is approximately four hours per month.

APPLICATION:

Interested MASCA members should complete an application including a resume and cover letter. Applications for the 2022-2023 fiscal year are due by June 6th. The GRAC chairs will then evaluate applicants and seek final acceptance from the Executive Director for a total of 4-6 AOLs. Applications will be notified by June 9th, followed by a training session.

Additional positions may be created for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

CONTACT:

Juliette Coatsworth, Chair of the Government Relations and Advocacy Committee, juliette.nori@gmail.com

APPLY NOW

June 2023 Awareness Dates

LGBTQ Pride Month

National Hunger Awareness Month

National Safety Month

Fireworks Safety Month
(June 1– July 4)

5 World Environment Day

10 Family Health & Fitness Day

11 Children's Day

14 Flag Day

19 Juneteenth

Reach Higher Massachusetts Convening Proposals Now Open

*The 2023 Massachusetts Reach Higher Convening will be on
Tuesday, August 15 at Fitchburg State University.*

*If you are interested in submitting a breakout session proposal, please go to the website
at ReachHigherMA.org! The deadline to submit a proposal is Friday, June 16.*

*Our theme for 2023 is: Reaching Higher Massachusetts: Helping Students Create Their
Vision for the Future through Post-Secondary Planning.*



2023 CONVENING



HELPING STUDENTS CREATE THEIR
VISION FOR THE FUTURE THROUGH
POST-SECONDARY PLANNING.

Keynote Speaker: CJ Powell,
Director of Advocacy, NACAC



August 15th, 2023
8:00 - 3:00

REGISTER NOW

 ReachHigherMA.org



Implementing the MA Model 3.0: A Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

by Helen O'Donnell, Ed.D, MASCA MA Model Committee, 3.0 Writing Team Co-Chair, PD Institute Trainer

Endorsed by both MA DESE and MA School Counselors Association's Governing Board, the MA Model 3.0: Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs is an evolving document to guide professional best practice. It was presented as a professional courtesy to the field in the spring of 2020 as a public domain resource. This ongoing Counselor's Notebook (CN) series shares steps and strategies for implementing the MA Mode 3.0 and ASCA Model 4.0©. A library of updated MA Model resources and CN implementation articles can be accessed from the MA Model page of the MASCA website. (Choose MA Model option under Resources tab.)

Upcoming Trainings

MA Model 3.0 Institute Training for 3 graduate credits or 45 PDP

Registration is open for the summer/fall offering of these graduate MA Model Institutes vetted for 3 graduate credits by Fitchburg State University. Target course completion Dec. 31,2023 or as soon as course requirements completed.

MA Model 3.0 Introductory Workshop

**Counselors in K-12 Classrooms:
Delivering Curriculum That Supports Academic Achievement & College/Career Readiness (CCR)**

**Counselors in K-12 Classrooms:
Action Research and Program Assessment**

Coursework guided by MA Model and ASCA Model and requires virtual instruction, webinar viewing, peer collaboration, Tier 1 curriculum delivery and assessment, completion of a MARC Jr., and on-going project support. Required assignments vary based on graduate course selected and are personalized to meet registrant identified needs and outcome goals.

Trainer: Helen C. O'Donnell, Ed.D, MA Model committee and MA Model 3.0, co-chair/editor;
Adjunct Graduate Faculty, FSU

Institute registration fee: \$450 each (include 45 PDP's)

Option: \$295 for 3 graduate credits from Fitchburg State University

Inquiries and registration information: helenod@att.net





A Message from the Office of the Attorney General: Child Labor Laws

As we head into the summer, many teens will work because they want to earn money and others may work to contribute to family income. Together, we can support our teens to make a safe, informed, and successful transition into the working world.

The [Massachusetts Child Labor Laws](#) exist to protect minors from exploitation and to make sure their education is a top priority. The Massachusetts Attorney General's Office enforces the state's youth employment laws, which limit the number the hours workers under 18 can work and the kinds of jobs that they can do. These laws also require employers to have [Youth Employment Permits](#) (work permits) on file for all workers under 18. In Massachusetts, all of the other wage and hour laws apply equally to minors and adults (i.e. minimum wage, overtime, etc.) and these protections/requirements apply regardless of [immigration status](#). Any teen could be a victim of child labor violations, but some may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation. By educating yourself about these laws and protections, you may be able to help protect the young people you serve from exploitation in the workforce.

Should you have questions about youth employment or state wage and hour laws, please do not hesitate to contact our Fair Labor Division at (617) 727-3465 or visit our website, www.mass.gov/ago/fld/youthemployment.



NAEP is hiring

In-school data collectors are needed for national assessments of grades 4, 8, and 12, January 29–March 8, 2024.

Enter your contact information at <http://www.WorkNAEP.com> to be notified once applications are available.



NAEP NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF
EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS



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

MASCA deeply values its diverse membership and is fully committed to creating an organization where each individual is welcomed, included, respected and empowered. No person will be excluded from MASCA on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation or military status, or for any other discriminatory reason.

These activities include, but are not limited to, appointment of its Governing Board, hiring or firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and the providing of services.