

MASCA Counselor's Notebook

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION

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Fall: a Time for Transformation

By Jennifer McGuire

So we have all made it through the first month of the 2022-23 school year. I know for many of us, we see this school year as the first “normal” year in a while. Let’s hope things stay that way.

I imagine some of you are reading this and thinking that you can’t believe it’s already October. If you haven’t made time to set your own goals for the school year, now’s the time to do so. Your goals don’t all have to be about student success or closing gaps. It’s ok to set goals that relate to who you are as a person. Perhaps you want to aim to spend more time with family, or to increase your exercise. Remember that self care is essential in order to bring your best school counselor self to work. (And a selfish plug—if you haven’t done so yet, set a goal around how you can make MASCA a part of your year as well!)

October might possibly be my favorite month of the year. For starters, my birthday is in October. I like to take advantage of this all month long by reminding others that it is my birth month. It is also the first full month of fall, which is without any doubt my favorite season. It’s a



Jennifer McGuire
Board Chair 2022-2023

great time to live on Cape Cod—after the summer visitors have departed but while it is still nice out and you can enjoy the region without the crowds.

And then of course, it’s full on “Pumpkin Spice” season, right? That’s the big debate at the end of August when everything pumpkin spice shows up on store shelves and coffee shop menus and your social media feed is filled with two kinds of people—those who embrace the arrival of pumpkin spice, and those for whom its early arrival feels like an assault on summer. (In all honesty, for me, pumpkin spice is just OK. But I do enjoy lots of other flavors of the season—apples, cinnamon, cider donuts.)

So if you are still reading this, you now might be hungry. My apologies. While there are lots of images we associate

with fall, the first thing people often think of or visualize is leaves—changing colors and falling. The leaves fall from the trees, discarded and stomped on by us. But those falling leaves make way for new leaves to emerge in the spring—full of hope and possibility.

The trees are like our students. They show up at the start of the school year, bringing whatever baggage they have carried with them. For some, the baggage is light—perhaps they are a bit out of practice from having the summer off. For other students, their baggage is heavier, weighed down by circumstances like food insecurity, homelessness, a lack of parental support, etc. The first few weeks of school we work hard to create safe and supportive learning environments, where all students feel like they belong. Hopefully by October, as the leaves are falling outside the windows, our students are feeling comfortable enough to peel back their layers.

The school year parallels nicely with the image of a tree from the fall to the spring. One of the main roles we play with our students is helping them see opportunities for their future clearly. By clearly, I mean that they see all of the possibilities out there and they do not feel limited by circumstances beyond their control. We can think of our students as trees in September—still green. By October, the leaves are coming off. The students may seem bare through the winter months, but just as in years past, they are preparing for spring when the leaves begin to appear again, full of new ambition and anticipation. Here’s to wishing your students a year of transformation and planning for bright futures!

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Membership

By Bob Bardwell, MASCA Executive Director

Happy October. I hope that your school year has gotten off to a stellar start, especially considering that the last two years have been nothing but stellar. We cannot say that the pandemic is over but at least we can say that we are returning to a somewhat normal start to a school year, whatever normal is. While we cannot let our guard down and still have to be careful, it is exciting to know that activities like field trips, college admission fairs, guest speakers and mask-free sessions are returning to our school counseling programs. Hopefully this will continue without interruption.

I love the back-to-school time of the year for many reasons, most importantly it is a time to begin anew. How many occupations can say that they get a do-over every fall? Even if you are returning to the same school with same responsibilities, the students with whom you interact are not the same as those who left in June. The summer usually does some amazing things to students as they mature and continue their educational journey. We school counselors are very lucky to have this annual opportunity to start over.

Fall also means that its time for many of our members to renew their MASCA memberships. If you recall my column from last month, I updated you on just how great MASCA is doing financially, membership numbers and the number of folks who are participating in our professional development activities. This month I want to focus on just one of those categories, membership.

As of September 21, there are 1841 MASCA members. This represents the highest number of members ever known to MASCA and is a 112% increase over membership from June 2019. In many ways this is unfathomable. While we know that there were some 5000 school counselors, school adjustment counselors and school social workers in Massachusetts (according to DESE data) in 2021-22, we have never had such a strong interest in MASCA. To say this is exciting is an understatement.

Why does this matter? It matters for a whole host of reasons-

1). **Representation** - If MASCA is to truly represent all 5000 counselors across the state, we need to have them be dues paying members. To be able to say that MASCA has over 1800 members makes a statement that we have a voice and that we are not



Robert Bardwell
Executive Director, MASCA

to be ignored. Outside organizations will look at that number as a sign of strength, commitment to the profession and respect for who we are and what we do. We still have much work to do in order to represent all of our brothers and sisters, districts and types of counselors, but we are making strides.

2). **Participation** - If counselors are members, then they are more likely to benefit from the numerous opportunities we offer, both free and not. It is not a coincidence that our Spring 2022 conference had the highest number of attendees ever. More members = more people participating in our events.

3). **Fiscal strength** - More members obviously equate to more revenue but beyond that, we have a stronger fiscal presence and the ability to do more things for our members. This certainly includes discounts for PD programs but also opportunities like our mindfulness series at a \$40 reduction or a greatly reduced fee for the mentoring program which would not be possible if we did not have financial resources to support these efforts.

4). **Advocacy** - You have heard the saying that there is strength in numbers. Well, that is certainly true in this case as well but it really does matter. When working with policy makers, legislators, business leaders and sister organizations, we have a stronger voice because our membership is so strong.

1800 vs. 500 or even 1000 has a wow factor, meaning you better pay attention since this is a healthy sized organization.

One reason why membership has soared in the last month is that we began a pilot to offer graduate students free membership. Previously graduate students paid \$15 for their yearly membership. We averaged just over 200 graduate student members with that policy in effect. Now, we have 310 and that number continues to grow as more programs connect their students with MASCA for their free membership.

Why do we give away free grad student memberships? Well to begin with, the roughly \$2000 that those memberships brought in was a drop in the bucket in our budget of about \$200,000. Secondly, these new student members are more likely to participate in our events because they are members. However, most importantly is that the hope is that these graduate student members will remember just how great MASCA is that they will want to continue to be members long after their free student membership ends. In other words, they become hooked on MASCA and turn into lifelong members.

Of course, there are rules about how long they are eligible to be a student member and we will monitor the data to ensure that this policy is indeed working, but suffice to say the early data supports students who are interested, willing and appreciative of their free MASCA membership.

I could go on and on, but I think you get the point. MASCA is in a great position and always striving to be better. Do we have more work to do? Of course. But we are moving in the right direction. Slow and steady wins the race, right? While we can always strive for more members (2000 anyone?), we need to make sure that we take care of our current members and that they renew their membership yearly.

Let me conclude by saying thank you for being a member. That takes time, dedication, a willingness to join and for many of you, a financial commitment out of your own pocket since your district does not pay your membership fee. Everyone one of our 1800+ members matter and that is what makes MASCA so unique and special. If you have any questions or thoughts about making our MASCA membership stronger, please [let me know](#). I welcome your thoughts and ideas.

Welcome to our Newest Members

Joining MASCA since August 27, 2022 are:

Scarlett Acheampong
Helen Amore
Taylor Anderson
Colleen Arruda
Samuel Arruda
Shannon Atkeson
Danya Bader-Natal
Erica Bardan
Marissa Beise
Michael Belanger
Jake Bergonzi
Emma Bernier
Emilee Boivin
Kathryn Bonneau
James Bottino
Jennie Breton
Stacy Brooks
Heznie Bubb
Claire Buesser
Ciara Byrne
Patrick Cadigan
Melissa Caisse
Giovanni Calvarese
Kayla Camardella
Delanie Carrasquillo
Courtney Champagne
Sara Chang
Catherine Chasse
Jingyan Chen
Christine Cody
Gabriel Collazo Rodriguez
Stephanie Cormier
Jessica Costa
Shea Cruikshank
Milena Cruzado-Gregory
Erica Curtis
Lauryn Cyr
Lois D'Allesandro
Kyle DaLuz
Mackenzie Degnan
Valerie Del Villar
Victoria Delannoy
Kate Deltorchio
Gina Demelo
Kate Deming
Carey Dimmitt
Cristina DiRezze
Jordyn Drabinski
Heather Duane

Vincent Duane
Mary Duarte
Pamela Duphily
Alexis Early
Jerry Etienne
Julia Fader-laskin
Kim Faulconer
Shanelle Fernandez
Jillian Ferreira
Elizabeth Finelli
Jeremy Fischer
Marie Foley
Alison Foley
Mayanh Forbes
David Franklin
Morgan Furber
Carla Furlani
Meghan Garrity
Kadyn Germain
Alison Giglio
Sean Godbout
Elizabeth Gokey
Nerida Gomes
Amarildo Goncalves
Ben Greenwood
Courtney Gregoire
Meghan Guptill
Jennifer He
Atiera Horne
Patricia Keefe
Megan Kelleher
Victoria Kelliher
Katherine Kelly
Megan Kindt
Alexis King
Jolie Kouta
Kyle Krupa
Nicole Kujala
Rebecca LaRoche
Kelsey Leonard
Phyllis Leslie
Elizabeth Lloyd
Nayelle Louis
Jillian Lucchetti
Elise MacCurtain-Cogan
Dr. Sharon MacDonald
Larry Machado
Julia Marshall
David Martins

Megan Mathieu
Faith May
Rongina McClelland
Jackie McGee
Stephanie Messina
Brendan Moran
Jennifer Moran
Jeanette Moreau
Marykate Mulcahy
Madison Murphy
Stephanie Norton
Tyler Ochs
Alexandra O'Connor
Celine O'Dowd
Erin Panteleakis
Stacey Paradise
Sophie Parquet
Sarah Pavelec
Kayla Pelletz
Serena Pereira
Ashley Pereira
Jordan Pina
Kaitlin Podmore
Martha V Promousas
Candace Proulx
Kristen Pruett
Cheyenne Reed
Julia Richards
Karli Rigali
Antonia Rosati
Annette Ruggiero
Saira Saez
Tivisay Sanchez Baez
Kiana Saroce
Alexander Serrazina
Megan Sookey
Sarah Stotelmyre
Meghan Sullivan
Nathan Terry
Juan Topete Martinez
Suzy Trahan
Jessica Vangos
Taylor Vietri
Martha Vosnak
Patrick Walker
Olivia Weinmann
Zachary Weinstein
Leah Worth
Victoria Zarozinski

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

We are happy you have joined us!

The Principal-Counselor Relationship: Essential in Educational Equity

By Manjula Karamcheti and featuring an interview with Dana Brown

“Equity focuses on outcomes for students. Equity in education demands that we hold the same high expectations for all students, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. It requires leadership, practices, and school culture that guarantee educators help all students meet those expectations. The work of educators is not to lower the bar; it’s to provide all students with the support they need to reach and exceed the bar so they’re prepared for college, career, or life” (Achievement Network 2018).

In Building Ranks, NASSP offers four strategies that school leaders can implement to advance equity throughout the school community:

- 1) Ensuring that each student is known and valued;
- 2) Diagnosing inequitable practices or structures;
- 3) Inspiring staff members, students, and parents to understand and resolve issues of equity;
- 4) Leading members of your learning community in identifying and implementing strategies that promote equity, including culturally responsive teaching and learning (NASSP 2018, 69).

Lastly, Building Ranks underscores three imperatives for a commitment to equity in our schools:

1. Foundations of equity should be found within vision and mission statements;
2. Evidence of equity should be present in the school’s approach to learning— student-centered and ethical practices;
3. Foundations of equity should be evident in the expectations informing instructional practices and desired student achievement outcomes (NASSP 2018).



Manjula Karamcheti, IDEA Committee

The ASCA National Model addresses this commitment to equity as well:

1. Equity, access, and success for every student is a key component of the mission of a school counseling program. School Counselors promote equity through the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program.
2. School Counselors use data to demonstrate a need for systemic change in areas such as course enrollment patterns; equity and access; and achievement, opportunity, and/or information gaps.
3. School Counselors provide direct student services to help all students become college and career ready, and indirect student services of collaboration, consultation, and referrals. School Counselors enhance student achievement and promote equity and access for all students.
4. School Counselors create systemic change through the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program.

5. School Counselors partner with others to advocate for student achievement and educational equity and opportunities.
6. School Counselors promote equity and access for all students through the use of community resources.

Biggest Challenges for Equity

Principals and counselors were asked to rank six areas where there may be gaps between subgroups in terms of which are in greatest need of being addressed in their own schools:

- Graduation rates
- Dropout rates
- State test scores
- College-going rates
- College entrance examinations
- Honors, AP and/or IB participation

The above are all excerpts from the two essential reads on the Principal-Counselor Relationship:

1) [Principal-Counselor Relationship Toolkit](#)

2) [A Closer Look at the Principal-Counselor Relationship](#)

In order to make progress on any of the items above, I also believe that a strong, positive partnership between principals and School Counselors is essential. I’ve worked with quite a few principals since becoming a School Counselor in 2002 and becoming a counseling administrator in 2008. Some of my relationships with principals were extremely rewarding and successful in regards to student outcomes and some were, let’s just say “less successful”.

As I reflect on why some of my Principal-Counselor relationships were stronger and more impactful than others, the themes and practices mentioned in *A Closer Look: The Principal-Counselor Relationship* really resonate with

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The Principal-Counselor Relationship

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me. In the schools and districts where communication, collaboration, respect and a shared vision existed between the counseling department, the principal and me, together we were able to make significant progress in student achievement from increasing college-going rates and AP enrollment to reducing the drop-out rate and expanding access to mental health programs.

Communication, collaboration, respect and a shared vision are all essential to improving educational equity and breaking down systems of oppression in schools. In the schools and districts where those elements didn't exist and efforts to grow the Principal-Counselor relationship were less successful (and in some cases down-right contentious), it was difficult to make a positive impact in the same areas. What is clear is that establishing and maintaining the Principal-Counselor relationship is a two-way street - true partnership requires effort on both sides, effort that is consistent and intentional.

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet up with one of my favorite principals, Mr. Dana Brown, to chat about our time together in Malden. During our conversation, we unpacked the principles that Mr. Brown and I agreed on during our six years together at Malden High.

- 1) Know every student's name and story
- 2) Relentless outreach is a priority
- 3) All students can be successful if given the chance, opportunities and resources
- 4) Sometimes rules are meant to be changed or broken (sometimes we employed the "ask for forgiveness, not permission strategy!")
- 5) Support each other in public, but fight it out behind closed doors

As a team at Malden High School, we were able to reduce our drop-out rate, increase AP enrollments, move towards unleveling courses, expand the number of School Counselors, reduce caseload sizes at MHS and much, much more.

While I had my own opinions about what made us successful and what was challenging during my six years at Malden High School, I wanted to get Mr. Brown's perspective on what matters most in the Principal-Counselor relationship, and his thoughts on how to develop and maintain a positive, powerful professional partnership between Principals and School Counselors.

Interview Questions:

Manjula: *What do you think made the Principal-Counselor relationship strong during your time at Malden High School?*

Dana: Knowing students individually and having a common shared vision of what was good for students was our starting point. It took tough conversations and hard work to get there. Hiring was critical. The School Counselors we hired together had similar high expectations for students, staff, and the community. "Same page" type of thing... There really was a time period when I felt as the Principal that we were all rowing in the same direction with very little rocking of the boat! I believe we also had a tendency to start with "yes," allowing counseling staff (and you as their Director!) license to pilot programs, run with ideas and take risks, with little worry about making mistakes. All of this was done to create a culture and community of equity and support. It was to benefit students. "We're here for the kids."

Manjula: *What was challenging about the Principal-Counselor relationship during your time at Malden High School?*

Dana: A big challenge involved getting teachers and some administrators

to believe the same things we believed about students, expectations, success, etc. Getting School Counselors and the administrative and teaching staff to believe in the same good things is a monumental challenge in all schools. Hiring is key. Overall, we did an excellent job of hiring during our time at MHS. Another challenge included holding each other accountable, even if we believed in the right and good things.

Manjula: *What do you think matters most in the Principal-Counselor relationship?*

Dana: What matters most...students first as the priority, trust in the working relationship, ability to have difficult conversations while still moving forward. We also laughed a lot, at ourselves, the situation, our reactions. There is humor everywhere. It helped when things got dark.

Manjula: *How has your thinking about the role of School Counselors changed over time?*

Dana: Over time my view of a counselor's role expanded. Brought up in the 'guidance counselor' world, I shifted over time to the idea of School Counselor, thanks to you and your team. I also developed a keen sense that counselors could offer way more to the school and were actually school leaders in many ways. Counselors helped me get clarity around equity in programming, scheduling. School Counselors helped turn around Malden High School.

Manjula: *What advice do you have for School Counselors in building relationships with principals?*

Dana: School Counselors should have regular, open and honest conversations about what is happening in your world. And it is important for School Counselors to learn the Principal's job from the 30,000 foot view. This means trying to figure out the thought processes, the decision making, the politics that your Principal is dealing with. Also, ask lots of "why do we still do this" questions when you see pockets of inequity or in-

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Relationship

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justice. It will help you accomplish your goals as a School Counselor.

Manjula: *What advice do you have for principals in building relationships with counselors?*

Dana: Really the same advice as above. Principals really need to observe and talk to their counselors and truly understand the role, the job, and what is going on with students and families in and outside of the school.

Manjula: *Anything else you want to share, Mr. Brown?*

Dana: Good schools, great schools, can only be established and sustained when the Principal of the school embraces the School Counselor role as a school leadership role. School Counselors and Principals have to work together to support and maintain a school community where all students are known and valued and where the expectations are high for all.

Serving as joint ambassadors for each student's social, emotional, and academic growth, the Principal and the School Counseling team model high expectations for all, empathy and support where needed; all through an equity lens.

Manjula: *Thank you so much Mr. Brown. I really appreciate you taking the time to sit down with me and talk about the Principal-School Counselor relationship.*

What you can't glean from this conversation (but maybe our bio pictures), and something I think is extremely important to note, is that Dana Brown and I are very different people. Different backgrounds, different race, different gender, different degrees, different certifications, different religions, you name it. But our differences didn't matter. Where we aligned, what we believed about kids, and what we were willing to do took the differences and made them assets in promoting equity, access, and



Dana Brown

positive educational outcomes for the students of MHS. It was a symbiotic Principal-School Counselor relationship. Of course, there were bumps in the road but we worked at it, and worked on it, for the six years we both had the honor of serving the Malden Public Schools community together. Along with incredible students, families, teachers, administrators, and many more, we were able to accomplish a great deal.

More about Mr. Dana Brown:

Dana Brown is in his 40th year of education, now serving as Coach-Mentor to principals across Massachusetts. For 16 of his 40 years in education, Mr. Brown was a building principal, serving in Malden, Holyoke, and Boston. He was brought on board to lead two different turnaround schools, one a high school, and the other a grade 6-12 school. Dana has a particular interest in supporting building administrators around creative programming and scheduling, culture building, and communication.

Mr. Brown has served on several statewide DESE committees regarding career pathways, dual enrollment, and early college. In 2014-15 he served as the President of MSAA and made social and emotional wellness his yearlong priority for the Association. He was MA Principal of the Year in 2016. Mr. Brown has served as an adjunct instructor at the University of Massachusetts Boston, teaching a graduate level class in Facilities Management and School Budgeting. Dana has been a classroom teacher at the middle and high school levels and also coached at the interscholastic and collegiate levels in basketball and softball.

October 2022 Awareness Dates

ADHD Awareness Month
Bullying Prevention Month
Communicate with Your Kids Month
Computer Learning Month
Crime Prevention Month
Domestic Violence Awareness Month
Down Syndrome Awareness Month
Dyslexia Awareness Month
Health Literacy Month
LGBT History Month
Meet the Blind Month
National Book Month
National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month
National Depression and Mental Health Screening Month
Positive Attitude Month
1 International Day for Older Persons
2-8 Mental Illness Awareness Week
3 Child Health Day
3 World Habitat Day
5 World Teacher's Day
5 Walk to School Day
6 National Depression Screening Day
7 World Smile Day
10 Indigenous Peoples' Day
10 World Mental Health Day
11 National Coming Out Day
16 World Food Day
16-22 America's Safe Schools Week
17-21 National Health Education Week
17-21 National School Bus Safety Week
19 Unity Day – Kindness, Acceptance, Inclusion
22 International Stuttering Awareness Day
23-31 Red Ribbon Week (Drug-Free America)
24 United Nations Day

GRAC Chat

Submitted by Juliette Coastworth

Welcome to the GRAC Chat, information brought to you by the Government Relations Advocacy Committee.

Moving forward, you can expect to see updates on our legislative agenda and advocacy efforts as well as information on other state-wide bills and policies that impact school counselors. Today, we would like to draw your attention to [Question 1 on the 2022 Massachusetts Ballot](#) for November 8th Election Day.

Question 1: Proposed Amendment to the Constitution “Additional Tax on Income Over One Million Dollars”

This amendment was approved by the General Court in joint sessions of the two houses on June 12, 2019 and June 9, 2021. The passing of the amendment has been put to the voters, and it is important to understand how this may impact students, families, schools, and communities. “A YES VOTE would amend the state Constitution to impose an additional 4% tax on that portion of incomes over one million dollars to be used, subject to appropriation by the state Legislature, **on education** and transportation. A NO VOTE would make no change in the state Constitution relative to income tax.” Essentially, a yes vote would increase taxes on incomes over one million, which would then be used to support state education and transportation.

This question has been referred to as the [Fair Share Amendment](#) because proponents claim that passing this amendment will generate roughly \$2 billion in sustainably, annual support for transportation and public education. In regards to education, this includes public schools, colleges, universities, early education, vocational training, and adult training. These funds could help to make childcare more accessible and affordable, provide schools and educators with more

supplies and resources, and work towards lessening the burden of student debt on our public college graduates.

[Opponents](#) of Question 1 claim that this amendment would give politicians “a blank check, with no accountability,” concerned about the language indicating that the funds are “subject to appropriation.” However, the funds are subject to appropriation *within* public education and transportation and must be monitored in the same ways that current funds are utilized within the state budget. In fact, “a March 2022 legislative commission suggested first steps towards what might be a multi-year path forward for early childhood education... [Since] the state is in the midst of its 7-year commitment to significantly expand funding for K-12 education, especially in low-income school districts,” this increase in funding will help to support initiatives that are currently suffering from a lack of investment.

Another concern of opponents is that this is the largest tax hike in Massachusetts history. First of all, the 4% tax raise will impact only income, not wealth. Taking this into consideration, only about 1% of all households or fewer would be impacted by this change. Further, Massachusetts is unlike most other states in that we do not already apply higher tax rates to income at higher levels. Currently, “higher-income people in the state pay a *lower* portion of their income in state and local taxes than do lower-and middle income taxpayers,” about 7% versus 9%-10%, respectively.

All in all, it is important to stay informed on this question not only as a citizen but also as a school counselor. Think of the needs and concerns of your students, families, and coworkers. What would benefit them the most? How can you best be an advocate for your community?

Upcoming Fall MASCA Retiree SIG Meetings

**Preserving Retirement
Adventure Memories
October 20, 2022
from 3:30 to 4:30 PM
Part 1- Blogging for Novices**

Anne will share how she got started with blogging about her RV travel adventures and showsome examples of the published narrative and photos. What started as a simple travelogue for family and friends became a repository of treasured personal memories.

**November 3, 2022
from 3:30 to 4:30 PM
Part 2- Sharing our Stories
and Photos**

Come prepared to share a highlight or two of an adventure that you have enjoyed-during your retirement. Your adventure could be related to travel or another type of new experience for you. Bring a photo or two and your anecdotes!



Collaboration and Sport

By Sean Stevenson

As I continue to embark on my full practicum experience at a Middle School one thing in particular has come across as jarring. There are a plethora of sixth graders with services written into their IEPs that my site doesn't have the staffing or services to deliver. This has ultimately led to meetings that rework the IEPs to a format in which my site can service. As I have come to learn first hand, the professional school counselor is a busy individual. These meetings as well as the frustration reading an IEP you literally can't service can really be draining. Nobody does this work for the paycheck, they do it for the children. When I think of how to avoid this situation in my future professional practice one word comes to mind, and that word is collaboration.

Perhaps this is a phenomenon unique to my site. However as I get ready to graduate this May I don't want to find myself in the same spot my supervisors are thrust into. I'm unsure if this is realistic in practice but even making a visual to send to the lower level schools with what kind of accommodations are realistic to service and a contact to call if there is something additional a kiddo might need seems like it would at least open that stream of communication where there aren't a lot of IEPs that need to be re-worked. I also feel an end of the year meeting discussing high profile kids moving up would be important and help the staff of the school be prepared. So I plead to anyone reading this that doesn't know what kind of accommodations the school their students move onto can service to call and ask and open that stream of communication.

At my site we have a sixth grader who came into our building without any sort of IEP, 504, cap or really any plan at all. Since day one he has been a behavioral challenge. Disrupting class, calling out, and flat out eloping from

class have been a common theme this first month. My supervisors had an impromptu meeting with some of his old teachers that he had a great relationship with at the elementary level. When I showed up to my internship after that I joined a meeting with his current teachers, counselor and admin. What was handed out from that meeting was two and a half pages of documentation dating back to 2017 with multiple infractions including but not limited too; verbal harassment, harrasment non sexual, phsyical altercation, and disrespecting staff. We had no idea this student was coming into our building. In the days after we began to work on a behavior plan where he could earn leaving for his bus a little early or basketball with me, the intern.

In my professional practice as a therapeutic mentor I have found great val-

ue in the game of basketball. Shooting hoops with clients has helped me make some serious progress towards clients goals and I am really excited for when this student earns basketball with me. I've done some observations to track behaviors that informed the plan and I've noticed he has a really negative self concept and his team reports the same. I am armed and ready to run in there with my unconditional positive regard, and cognitive behavioral strategies to offer reframes to those negative self statements and get some buckets with the young man. In my experience it is a fast track to building rapport as well as a worthwhile and fun intervention for all involved. I'm excited to see what kind of progress we can make on the behavioral and self concept front as a result and encourage other professionals to utilize basketball as an intervention where appropriate.

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MA Model Committee - New Purpose from Past Progress

By Cynthia Esielionis and Dave Elsner

There are lots of new things happening on the MA Model Committee. We are excited to begin the year with a new set of goals, building on the significant initiatives and progress in recent years. The Committee has also had a transition in leadership with two new Co-Chairs, Cynthia Esielionis and Dave Elsner, both of whom bring long-term experience with the Model, along with various leadership positions within MASCA.

The Committee thanks Helen O'Donnell, the outgoing Chair, for being so generous with her energy, enthusiasm, and experience. We are grateful she is remaining a member of the committee and thank her for the many years she has dedicated to promoting and improving the MA Model as Chair. On behalf of many, many school counselors working with the Model, as well as the countless students and families who benefited from those programs, we extend our deepest appreciation for her tireless devotion and leadership. Thank you Helen!!

The Committee has been dedicated to promoting the Model and supporting school counselors working with it. As we know, the MA Model 3.0 is "a framework for excellence in school counseling practice which guides the development of a K-12, Tier 1, vertically aligned, comprehensive school counseling program" (MA Model, pg 15) with a Vision to "implement standards-based K-12 school counseling programs statewide in order to ensure that every student has the necessary academic/technical, workplace readiness/career plan-

ning, and personal/social (social emotional) attitudes, knowledge and skills for school and future success" (MA Model, Pg 18).

With that in mind, the Committee informs and educates school counselors about the Model, develops resources and provides professional development about how to put the Model into practice, collaborates with partners within and outside MASCA to promote awareness and understanding, and evaluates Model implementation. You may have seen the Committee Vision statement before, but it is worth reminding, that the **MA MODEL** Committee is:

Motivating All MA school counselors to participate in **Organized**, ongoing professional development for **Delivery** of K-12 multi-tiered school counseling programs with **Equity** for all students **Lead** by data-informed planning.

The goals set by the Committee for the upcoming year follow from these foundational statements.

The first goal is to increase collaboration within MASCA to promote Model awareness, training, and practice. Much has happened previously and more is planned. The participation of the MA Model Committee in the New Counselor Bootcamp hosted by the Professional Development Committee in October is one upcoming example. We are eager to explore other partnering opportunities to promote and improve model implementation.

The second goal is to collect data for Model assessment and evaluation. The Model encourages school counselors to use data to be well informed about how school counseling programs are improving student outcomes within districts. The Model Committee will be doing that more broadly to better understand how best to support Model implementation and how that implementation has influenced student outcomes across the state. This data collection and analysis can come from many sources including feedback about model implementation through surveys, assessment of district experience with the Model through reports (eg: RTTT, MARC documents, etc) and available district and state data about student outcomes.

The third goal is to expand the Model Committee membership and extend invitations to contribute to the process. We are redefining roles and responsibilities within the committee, actively recruiting new members from as wide a representation of school counseling as possible, and inviting perspectives from MASCA committees and leadership to promote this important work. If you are interested in conversation or projects related to the Model, please contact either Cynthia (cesielionis@asrsd.org) or Dave (delsner@medwayschools.org).

We are looking forward to 2022-2023 and beyond. We hope you will join us in our ongoing effort to make the Model work to improve outcomes for all students all the time.



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