

MASCA Counselor's Notebook

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION

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West Springfield Counselor named 2024 Massachusetts School Counselor of the Year

Colin Moge, School Counselor at West Springfield High School, was honored as the 2024 School Counselor of the Year by the Massachusetts School Counselors Association (MASCA) at a surprise school assembly on Thursday, February 1, 2024, at 10:00 AM in the West Springfield High School Auditorium. Moge will represent Massachusetts in Washington, D.C. at the National School Counselor of the Year Gala in February 2025 and compete with other state winners from around the country for the 2024 American School Counselor Association's School Counselor of the Year award.

Colin Moge has been celebrated for his outstanding contributions as a school counselor at West Springfield High School and West Springfield Public Schools since 2018. During his tenure, Mr. Moge has demonstrated exceptional dedication and innovation, earning him the Rising Star Award in his first year. He pioneered im-



*Colin Moge receives award
with family at his side*

pactful initiatives such as an attendance incentive program, mentor/mentee program, and academic pep rallies, all aimed at enhancing the overall school experience and making substantial contributions to the broader community.

Noteworthy among his achievements is the establishment and oversight of the school Renaissance Program, which recognizes students for academic excellence, good attendance, and behavior. Additionally, Mr. Moge spearheaded the "Terrier Closet," a service project providing essential items such as clothing, toiletries, professional attire, event-specific items, and personal hygiene products to students of all ages. These initiatives not only address immediate concerns but also equip students with essential life skills, fostering resilience in the face of future challenges.

Colin Moge's leadership extends beyond counseling as he actively engages with students both in and outside the classroom. As the coach of the freshmen men's soccer team and co-advisor of the class of 2023, he has consistently worked towards providing memorable experiences, even

during the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. His coordination of fundraisers and organization of events, such as a students vs. staff basketball game, garnered widespread support from fans and community members.

Mr. Moge's unwavering commitment to student success and the well-being of the school community has positioned him as a true asset to West Springfield. He goes above and beyond to ensure that every student feels heard and supported, creating a positive ripple effect throughout the school. His teaching approach incorporates a perfect blend of structure, guidance, encouragement, humor, and perspective, fostering healthier students and stronger critical thinkers.

"The recognition of Colin Moge as the MASCA 2024 School Counselor of the Year is a testament to his exemplary counseling skills, resources and professionalism, earning him admiration from students, parents, faculty, colleagues, and the West Springfield community," says MASCA Executive Director Robert Bardwell. "As one of his graduate school professors, I am not surprised that Colin has risen to this high standard. He is an inspiration to all."

Colin's unmatched warm and welcoming personality connects with people, making them feel valued and supported regardless of the issue. His innate ability to listen keenly and communicate effectively has made him a reliable resource for students and the school community. Embodying the role of an "Advocate," Colin Moge is an inspirational leader and role model whose compassionate and unwavering commitment rightfully earned him the title of MASCA 2024 School Counselor of the Year.

Inside this Issue:

Directory.....	2
President's Message.....	3
New Members.....	4
Director's Message	5
Computer Science.....	6
Co-Regulation	7
Affinity Groups.....	8
Retirees.....	9
MAModel.....	10

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School Counselor
Anne Fales Elementary, Westborough
Jennifer McGuire
College & Career Information Coordinator
New Bedford Public Schools

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Karen Marie Harrington

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Fitchburg State University

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Bedford High School

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Somerville Public Schools
Rani Gould
School Counselor
The Academy at Kiley Middle School

Jonathan Nardi
School Counselor
Natick High School

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Holyoke Public Schools

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Anie McCarthy
School Counselor
Franklin County Technical School

Maryrose O'Neil
School Counselor
Tantasqua Regional High School

Lauren Robillard
School Counselor
Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School

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Worcester East Middle School

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Graduate Student
Lesley University

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School Counselor
South Middle School Brockton

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School Counselor
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Helen O'Donnell
Retired School Counselor
Anne Thidemann French
Retired School Adjustment Counselor

School Adjustment Counselors/ School Social Worker SIG

Nychele Clark
School Adjustment Counselor
Gardner High School
Kate Niedel
Retired School Adjustment Counselor
Anne Thidemann French
Retired School Adjustment Counselor

Secondary SIG

Karen McCrillis
School Counselor
Gardner High School

Leanne Souldard
School Counselor
Franklin High School

Rachael Weinhold
School Counselor
Winchendon High School

Urban SIG

Shelby Boisvert
School Counselor
Lowell High School

Atera Horne
School Counselor,
Boston Arts Academy

Rani Gould
School Counselor
The Academy at Kiley Middle School

Vocational/Technical SIG

Annie McCarthy
School Counselor
Franklin County Technical School

Maryrose O'Neil
School Counselor
Tantasqua Regional High School

Lauren Robillard
School Counselor
Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School

For complete contact information, please go to <https://masca.wildapricot.org/GB+Staff/>

The Benefits of Attending the MASCA Conference

By Melinda Cripps, MASCA 2023-2024 Board Chair and Director of School Counseling, Billerica High School

As school counselors, our work can often feel isolating. We spend our days meeting with students, collaborating with teachers, advocating for our profession, and tending to urgent student needs—sometimes without much interaction with other counselors. While this important work keeps us busy, it can also be emotionally draining at times to feel like we're on our own.

That's why the annual MASCA Conference is such an invaluable opportunity to step out of our isolated day-to-day and into a welcoming community. For two days each year, we have the chance to fully immerse ourselves in the school counseling world, learning cutting-edge information while connecting with like-minded professionals.

Attending the conference is a powerful reminder that we are part of a statewide community dedicated to student success. We network with counselors from diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and geographic districts, building relationships that last long after the conference ends. Meeting colleagues face-to-face fosters camaraderie, sparks new ideas,



Melinda Cripps

and leads to future partnerships, resource sharing, and ongoing support. The relationships built at MASCA conferences are invaluable for collaboration, advice, and solidarity in our shared work.

The conference also provides access to world-class professional development. We get to hear from inspiring keynote speakers at the cutting edge of counseling techniques, trauma-in-

formed care, and social-emotional learning. Breakout sessions allow us to dive deep into specialized topics to find relevant takeaways for our student population. Seasoned counselors can choose sessions to reenergize their practice, while new counselors have the chance to gain wisdom by networking with veterans. We all leave feeling motivated, with new knowledge and skills to better serve our students.

In our often underappreciated profession, it's easy to become overwhelmed and lose sight of why we chose this work. The MASCA conference reignites our passion by reminding us we are part of a greater movement to foster healthy development in every student. We reflect on the lives we've touched and feel hopeful about the future.

Whether you're a first-year counselor looking for inspiration or a veteran seeking new ideas, the MASCA Conference promises an unforgettable experience. Mark your calendar and register today to fully experience the camaraderie, learning, and passion of the school counseling community. This conference is too valuable to miss.

Register NOW for MASCA's Premier PD Event!

For more information go to ncyionline.org/conferences/masca/



Spring Conference

APRIL 8-9, 2024

**SHERATON FRAMINGHAM
HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER
FRAMINGHAM, MA**



Welcome to our Newest Members

The following have joined MASCA in the last month:

Ashley Antoine	Shauna Frazier	Ryan McHale
Elizabeth Atchley	Charlsey Gentile	Lauren Meader
Arianna Avezzie	Luis Gomba	Kimberly Melendez
Olivia Beauchesne	Yaritza Gomez-Ruiz	Allison Negron-Campbell
Matthew Belanger	Daniel Gutierrez	Christa Nunnally
Mary Kate Cavanaugh	Savannah Hennessey	Julie Ortiz
Cherish Centeno	Lynn King	Luis Pagan
Sabrina Cohen	Sammy Kominiarek	Jermaine Patterson
Ayana Elmore	Sheylia Leka	Rebecca Potter
Danielle Enos	Taisha Lopez	Nathan Reed
Mona Fan	Jaclyn Mait	Emma-Lee Santillo
Aarin Feliz	Olivia Marques	Rogette Solomon
Carrie Fitch	Jacqueline McCarthy	Rosie Urbina

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

We are happy you have joined us!



February 2024 Awareness Dates



African American History Month

Career & Technical Education Month

Gap Year Awareness Month

International Boost Self-Esteem Month

5-9 National School Counseling Week

5-9 Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action

14-20 Random Acts of Kindness Week

15 International Childhood Cancer Day

17 Random Acts of Kindness Day

26-March 2 National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

Membership Matters!

By Bob Bardwell, MASCA Executive Director and Executive Director of School Counseling Services Boston Public Schools

I last wrote about membership in [October 2022](#) when MASCA hit an all-time record high of 1841 members. At the time, that was the largest known membership in our 63-year history. Despite some dips since then, I am pleased to announce that MASCA achieved a new all-time record membership of 1900 (yes, 1900 on the dot) during the week of January 22. If you were reading your MASCA emails, you would have seen that notice sent to all members on January 24.

If you were to ask me if 1900 was an attainable number I would say absolutely. In fact, that number should be much higher. Higher you ask? Yes, especially when I tell you that, according to [DESE data](#), in the 2022-23 school year there were some 2595 school counselors working in the Commonwealth. There are also 2913 school adjustment counselors and school social workers currently working according to DEDE data. Let's look at why 2000 or 2100 members are not only attainable, but also realistic.

The 1900 current members includes four basic categories of membership – professional, associate, retired and student members. Professional members include school counselors, school adjustment counselors, school social workers, school counselor educators (graduate school faculty) and college admission officers. They make up 81% of our membership.

By the way, you may wonder why MASCA, the association for school counselors, allows school adjustment counselors and school social workers to join. There are numerous reasons, but the most compelling is that neither school adjustment counselors nor school social workers have an equivalent state level professional organization to which they can call home. MASCA may not be the perfect fit either, but our school adjustment counselors and school social workers are more like us than any other student support personnel so we welcome them to join us, especially when we consider that all three groups need similar mental health student resources and supports.

Associate members are those who are interested in our work but are not certified as a school counselor (think DESE staff, financial aid counselors or community partners). Associate members represent 3% of our membership. While associate members get all of the benefits of membership, they are not allowed to hold office or vote in our annual elections.



Robert Bardwell
Executive Director, MASCA

Student membership currently represents about 15% of our membership. For the longest time their membership fee was \$15, but that still seemed to be a barrier. In 2022 when we eliminated the dues for our graduate students, that number did jump up to about 350 members (as compared to 286 today). The theory is that if we can show our graduate students the many benefits of membership when in grad school when it is free, then they will hopefully want to continue their membership once in a professional position. We strongly believe that the reason that this number is not higher is that there are fewer school counseling graduate students today (that is topic for another column) than in recent years.

Our retired membership is small but mighty. The 21 current retirees represent just 1% of our membership but they are important for several reasons. Most importantly they provide us a connection to our past so we don't forget where we have come from.

So, when one considers that at best, MASCA currently might represent only 50% of the school counselors in the state, we cannot rest at 1900. 1900 is not bad, but not really great either.

Why is it that the other 1300+ practicing school counselors don't join MASCA? There are certainly several reasons. Some may not know about us. This is a bit hard to believe because of all the work we do with our 15 graduate school programs. Others

may not understand the value of membership. This is real. We are all bombarded with dozens of emails, spam, junk snail mail and social media ads every day, and for many of us, we do not want more distractions. I get that, however if you are going to be a school counseling professional, you owe it to yourself, the profession and most importantly, your students, to belong to your state association. Do you want to have a doctor who does not belong to the American Medical Association?

Some are not able or willing to pay for membership. I estimate that about a third of our members pay out of pocket to join MASCA. Granted \$45 is not much in the big picture since that is the cost of a nice dinner out on the town for just one person. Rather this shows that there is not a connection or feeling of "I must join this organization". Did you know that of the all but one superintendent in the Commonwealth belongs to the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS)? I do not know how many school principals belong to their state association – the Massachusetts School Administrators Association (MSAA), but I can tell you this much. I bet that very few, if any, superintendents or principals pay their association dues out of pocket. Does that seem fair or just?

While MASCA has work to do to get more school counselors to join our association, 1900 members is nothing to sneeze at and should be celebrated. My mantra is if we provide members with value, support and representation, then joining or renewing their membership will become a priority and there will be no question when that renewal notice comes. MASCA has had a 118% increase in membership from June 2019 so if we keep on doing what we are doing, we will hit our 2000+ member goal soon.

My closing remarks in that 2022 column seem appropriate again, so let me re-state.

"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 1900 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."

From CSS Myspace Code to Building the Future with Computer Science- How Counselors Can Market Computer Science Electives

by Ali Robdoux, MASCA PD Chair, School Adjustment Counselor Apponequet Regional High School.

Remember the Y2K panic where everyone thought computers would implode? Yep, that was my understanding of computer science for years – lines of code, endless calculations, pixelated Mario games, and Chandler Bing’s job that none of his friends knew what he did. Then I met my Computer Science teacher turned Digital Learning Specialist- husband, and my brain shattered. Turns out, CS is way more than just fixing dates to stop the world from falling apart. It wasn’t until my understanding of CS, about 10 years ago, that I realized I, in fact, engaged in computer science activities in my youth (without any formal CS classes). That was for the “smart kids”, remember? However, what I thought was tinkering, and genuinely having fun changing my Myspace aesthetic back in 2007 was in fact, one facet of computer science.

Educators and parents alike are raising a generation that breathes technology like air. They code their Minecraft worlds, edit TikTok masterpieces, and solve problems with apps before we even know they exist. But most schools still treat CS like an outdated elective. Even the names of the CS courses are boring and unattractive. Honestly, a course named, “Javascript” or “Python” or simply, “Intro to Computer Science” does not get me jazzed. I am yawning just typing it.

That’s where you come in. I know you are amazing at connecting with kids. So let’s ditch the stereotypes and make Computer Science the coolest elective in school!

Far beyond just coding, computer science equips students with critical skills that transcend specific industries. From problem-solving and logic to creativity and collaboration, these skills are in high demand across every sector, from healthcare and finance to entertainment and environmental science.

Here in Massachusetts, the hub of innovation, the need for tech talent is booming. Companies like Wayfair, iRobot, and TripAdvisor rely on a steady stream of skilled professionals, and they actively seek grad-

uates who understand the language of technology. National organizations like the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) are also headquartered here, providing invaluable resources and mentorship for underrepresented groups in tech.

But beyond the immediate career prospects, computer science offers students a unique lens to understand the world around them. It empowers them to be creators, not just consumers, of technology. They learn to build websites, design apps, and analyze data, gaining valuable insights into the digital world that shapes their lives.

CS is way more than just coding in a basement. It’s about building the future. Here’s how:

- First things first. Tech isn’t just for the hoodie-and-Doritos crowd. We’re talking about designing robots that heal hearts, building apps that save the planet, and even crafting sick beats for the next viral TikTok trend. The possibilities are endless!
- Challenge teachers to share the local heroes of the tech world. You know, that kid who built the AI that helps diagnose diseases? Or the girl who coded the app that connects farmers with sustainable markets? These are our neighbors, our classmates, proof that CS is for everyone, not just Silicon Valley bros. Let’s connect them with mentors who can answer their questions and show them the path to their own tech dreams.
- Speaking of paths, let’s make sure our school’s offerings aren’t stuck in the dial-up era. We need CS electives that are relevant, engaging, and accessible. Think coding games, building websites, even exploring the ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence. If your school’s curriculum is stuck in the dark ages, change! Talk to your coordinators to advocate for more CS opportunities, get creative, and use

those classes to showcase the amazing things that computer science can help with.

- And let’s be real, diversity is the fuel that powers innovation. Schools need to champion inclusivity in CS, make sure everyone feels welcome at the coding table. Working with organizations like Girls Who Code and Black Girls Code can help bring in a broader demographic of students to understand that anyone can do computer science, without the limitation of stereotypes or math prerequisites. Showcase diverse role models, celebrate different perspectives, and make sure everyone sees themselves reflected in the world of tech.

So, counselors, let’s get our students coding for a brighter tomorrow. Share that CS isn’t just about screens and algorithms, and isn’t just for the “tech-savvy” few. It’s about fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity – skills that will benefit students regardless of their chosen path. Let’s unlock the potential within every student and empower them to become the next generation of innovators, right here in Massachusetts, the heart of tech. Let’s work together to make computer science a core part of every student’s education, preparing them for a future filled with endless possibilities.

Resources:

- CS for MA: <https://www.csforma.org/>
- Code.org: <https://code.org/>
- Massachusetts Tech Collaborative: <https://masstech.org/>
- National Society of Black Engineers: <https://www.nsbe.org/>
- National Center for Women & Information Technology: <https://ncwit.org/>
- Girls Who Code: <https://www.girlswhocodegirls.com/>
- Black Girls Code: <https://www.wearebgc.org/>

Co-Regulation: the *NEW* De-escalation

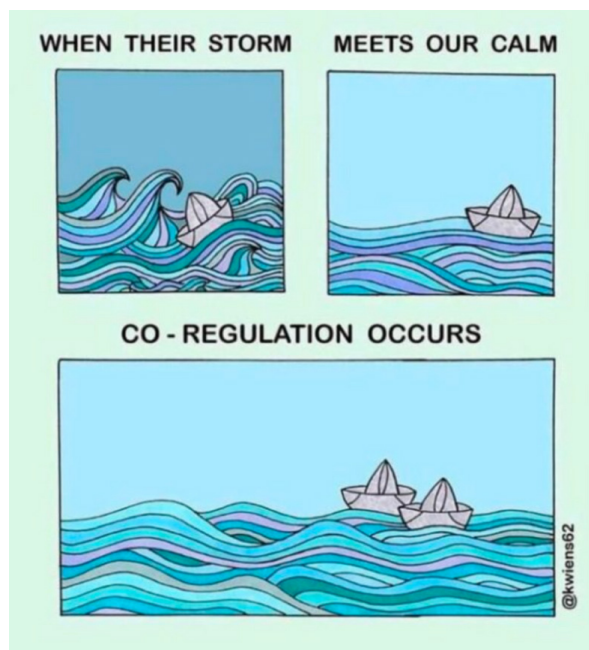
by Dana Catarius, 2023-2024 MASCA Board Member, Co-Liason Emerging Leaders,
Co-Liaison Counselor Shortage Ad Hoc Committee

You have likely heard of the term de-escalation; reducing the intensity of a conflict or situation. Educators and school counselors help students to de-escalate situations and self regulate daily. Young elementary age students have not fully developed emotional regulation skills, therefore school counselors can play a vital role in helping students to regulate when they are unable to self regulate - this is co-regulation!

Dr. Bruce Perry describes the 3 R's when dealing with dysregulation; Regulate, Relate & Reason. These principles are part of Dr. Perry's neurosequential model. This model is described as a bottom up model, intentionally working our way from the brain stem upwards through the diencephalon, limbic system to the control area where reflection and reason are possible. The 3 R's emphasize the importance of helping students to regulate their emotions, build rapport and engage in reasoning and problem solving in the midst of a conflict. This is especially important in the context of trauma informed care.

Regulate - For this model to be effective it is crucial for the adult to be regulated. You can start with a few simple checks of your own self regulation.

- Your tone and volume - keeping a quiet or moderate volume with a serious, calm steady tone.
- Your physical space - get on your students eye level (safely) to balance power. This is especially powerful with younger students.
- Use reflective language - acknowledge and name students emotions they are expressing. This helps show active listening.
- Prompt Strategies - help students with choices and strategies.



Relate/Validate - Relationship building and understanding their perspective is crucial to co-regulation. Reflecting on how your student is feeling, clarifying their thoughts/feelings and normalizing their feelings helps to build a trusting relationship. For example you might respond to your student

- “Wow, that would be confusing.”
- “He really said that? I’d be angry too!”
- “Ah, that is so sad.”

Reason- once your student is calm and you have acknowledged their feelings it is time to engage in thoughtful problem solving. This involves higher level thinking skills and requires that both parties are regulated.

A simple example of this is a student raising their hand while talking out at the same time. A dysregulated response may be “Put your hand down and wait your turn”. A response that uses reason and is regulated may sound more like “I love that you are raising your hand ___, it looks like what you have to say is important, I am going to call on ___ who has a quiet hand, then it will be your turn”.

Once co-regulation is happening on a consistent basis, there are several positive outcomes. Students feel emotional security, co-regulation helps with behavioral management within a school and classroom, and students develop social and emotional skills through the posi-

tive interactions they are having with adults. It is a win-win for a more nurturing environment!

Co-Regulation for Elementary-aged Children:

- Continue to provide a warm, nurturing, supportive relationship
- Assist in problem-solving more complex academic, behavioral, and social situations
- Model conflict resolution strategies
- Prompt and coach coping skills and calm-down strategies, including self-talk and relaxation
- Teach and support organization and planning skills needed for academic success
- Provide opportunities to make decisions and self-monitor behavior
- Continue to provide clear rules, structure

Co-regulation for Adolescents:

- Provide a warm, responsive relationship
- Provide support and empathy in times of intense emotion
- Model, monitor, and coach more sophisticated self-regulation skills across different contexts
- Monitor and limit opportunities for risk-taking behavior
- Provide opportunities to make decisions and self-monitor behavior in less risky situations
- Give time and space to calm down in times of conflict
- Monitor and prompt use of organizational and planning skills for successful task completion
- Continue clear rules, boundaries, and consequences to incentivize good choices

Affinity Groups - a Small Way to Create a Larger Community

by Jonathan Nardi, 2023-2024 Emerging Leader and School Counselor, Natick High School

We have all been there before - working with a student who feels a bit disconnected from his, her, or their peers. Perhaps it is simply because they just moved to town and have not joined a club or a sport, or connected with classmates in a particular course. Yet, the feeling could be much deeper rooted than that. Maybe they have always lived in the community and go to a school in which they simply do not feel like they fit in; regardless of how many fun activity clubs and sports they join. Those feelings may not be imagined, they can truly be the student's reality. Whether it is their religion, the color of their skin, or the way that they identify regarding gender and sexuality - they, simply put, stand out in a crowd that can sometimes be otherwise homogeneous. Pair those feelings of isolation with negative social media influence, microaggressions, and direct aggression - and people can be made to feel like they are not a part of the community very easily. They can feel like they are on an island all on their own.

How do we handle pulling those students out of isolation in school settings, to make spaces that are better and more welcoming to all? Advisors step forward and create specific clubs that welcome students into safe spaces, those that celebrate and support the differences of groups of students who find themselves in the minority - religious clubs, cultural clubs, and GSA groups are examples. A school or district may also institute policies that bring the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion to the foreground. I love what I have seen happening in the districts I have worked in over the years. Every time I hear about a cultural food night for a club meeting, or a GSA Regional Event that is taking place, it makes my heart beat to a new tune for a little while. This school year, a change was made in my district in an attempt to make people feel more welcome - just by flying a flag. Now, when I see the Progress Flag flying on the school's flagpole

each morning, it reassures me a bit more that my students feel seen. Things are getting better for our students, little by little; however, it does not come without effort and change.

More often than not, the people who are putting in the effort to create those safe spaces fall into the same or similar minority groups; or have a very close loved one who inspired them to be an advocate. The advisors of those groups - your colleagues - carry the torch and make positive changes along with the students that can be felt by anyone; other faculty members and staff included. I mentioned above that seeing the Progress Flag each morning reassures me that my students feel seen; however, the truth is that I feel seen as well. There is so much power in that.

Writing as an out and proud gay high school counselor, who advised two GSA groups over nine years, and volunteered at countless Regional GSA Meetings and several GLSEN Conferences - I can say the work is beyond rewarding, but also EXHAUSTING. It is quite difficult to carry the "torch" alone, while also so easy to feel as many students feel - isolated on one's own island. Our school faculties statewide often mirror the same patterns of diversity that exist in the student body of their individual districts. In many cases, the faculty - composed of fewer people - is even less diverse. While districts must work hard to hire people from various backgrounds, they are also battling against the rising tide of isolation that exists for those same faculty and staff members once they come aboard. Whether it is directly acted upon or not, that feeling of being isolated certainly does exist; so retaining people of diverse backgrounds is also a very real challenge that districts end up facing.

What my school district and MASCA have done to combat that issue is create Affinity Groups for faculty and staff members, in the case of my district; as

well as school counselors across the state, who participate in MASCA. If you are not familiar with what an Affinity Group is please check out the following definition, as found through a quick Google Search:

"Affinity Groups are employer-recognized and promote inclusion, diversity, and other efforts that benefit employees."

My school district created two Affinity Groups for its faculty and staff - one for BIPOC individuals and one for those who identify as LGBTQ+. Through the groups, people who fall into those populations are welcome to join, create a community, find support, and build camaraderie with people who share similar experiences. It makes coming to work feel a little less isolating and it does not even require much to make that change happen. Meetings can take the form of conversations, as an opportunity to vent about the day or bounce a situation off a colleague, or even as a small event like a group bonding trip to an escape room, or a meal out before open house night. I have enjoyed getting to know colleagues across the district, by way of attending the Affinity Group meetings and activities; those whom I would not have otherwise had the opportunity to connect with.

This school year, the MASCA organization is in the process of establishing two Affinity Groups as well. One group has been created for school counselors who identify as LGBTQ+, and a second group for Counselors of Color is in the process of forming too. These are closed groups for people who fall into those specific communities. If you do relate, it is highly encouraged that you register to join by visiting the MASCA website. Your input as these groups develop is crucial for their design, success, and future growth. Together, we can take steps to build a small community on our "island", because we - in fact - do not live there alone.

Attention Retirees and Future Retirees: Become Informed! Advocate for Fairness! Advocate to Eliminate the GPO and WEP!

by Retiree SIG co-chairs, Anne Thidemann French and Helen O'Donnell

MA is one of 15 states impacted by the GPO/WEP legislation!!! GPO/WEP deprives millions of public servants of the Social Security benefits they've earned. NEA-Retired members are leading the charge to change the law.

What is the Government Pension Offset (GPO)? *GPO reduces or eliminates the Social Security spousal or survivor benefits of people who also get a pension based on federal, state or local government employment that is not covered by Social Security. It impacts more than 730,000 educators.*

What is the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)? *WEP reduces or eliminates Social Security benefits for people who, over the course of their careers hold jobs covered by Social Security and jobs not covered by Social Security – including educators who take part-time or summer jobs to make ends meet. It affects more than 2 million educators.*

KEY ARTICLE TAKEAWAYS

1. Currently more than 2.7 million hard-working Americans are affected by the WEP and GPO regulations, which slash Social Security and pension benefits.
2. These regulations penalize workers who live in GPO/WEP states, but who have had paid into Social Security in previous jobs.

3. NEA-Retired members are advocating for legislation to repeal both GPO and WEP – and stop punishing public servants for their decision to serve the public good.

https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/being-teacher-cost-retiree-111384?utm_source=neatoday&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20231018_newsletter&ms=email_neatoday_20231018_newsletter

How can you be more informed?
Read this article.

- **Marie Ardito** of **Retirees United** has joined the Retiree SIG several times to talk about GPO/WEP and legislative advocacy. She welcomes your inquiries mariearditto@retireesunited.org
- **Join the Retiree SIG on Thursday, February 15, 3:30 to 4:30 PM** – Ward Johnson, Regional Retirement Specialist for MTA will present *Proactively Planning for Retirement*: an informational meeting to MASCA members about preparing for retirement and also any updates or useful info for those of us who are already retired. You may pre-register [here](#).



Retiree SIG's: Genealogy

by Retiree SIG co-chairs, Anne Thidemann French and Helen O'Donnell

Program Presented by

Jessy Wheeler, Genealogy Specialist Research Services ask@bpl.org

Boston Public Library
Copley Square
700 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116

617-536-5400

In January, Jessy presented an outstanding summary of the extensive resources available at the Boston Public Library and many other genealogy sites.

She welcomes your inquiries because her job is to assist with genealogy searches. Messages left will always be returned by Jessy or her colleagues.

Important advice: always begin with basic information (name, date/place of birth) and any other information that will assist the search, AND document details of the source of any information you find, to allow you to return to the source at a future.

Here is a link to a [handout](#) that she provided and another to her [PPT slides](#). Both provide many links to helpful genealogy websites and archives.

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 Model 3.0 and ASCA Model 4.0©.

A library of updated MA Model resources and CN implementation articles available at https://masca.wildapricot.org/MA-Model_3.0

Data Provides Concrete Evidence of Successful Multi-Tiered Interventions: A Brighton HS Counseling Success Story

Just before the pandemic arrived, Belle Ange Moreau, M.ED, a Brighton HS counselor, joined a *MA Model Counselors in K-12 Classrooms* graduate class. The pandemic delayed Belle's ability to work on her project, but she was determined to finally complete her data collection and answer her MARC Jr. research question: **Are our multi-tiered school counseling initiatives helping students be responsible for their academic success?**

During the 2022-23 academic year, Belle and her colleagues implemented their action plan.

With a very clear plan for data collection, multi-tiered initiatives were delivered and targeted data collected.

Initiative #1

Their first Tier 1 initiative was a Naviance/MyCAP goal to have 100% the Grade 9 & 10 students log into Naviance and complete a learning styles Inventory. The "Learning Styles lesson was delivered to all Grade 9 and 10 students, who were in attendance when the class was delivered. Student learning objectives included being able to identify their learning style and becoming aware of successful study strategies associated with their learning style that could enhance academic achievement. Ongoing efforts were made by the advisory teachers to encourage students who were absent for the lesson or who did not complete the activity to log into Naviance and complete the Learning Styles Inventory and populate their personal MyCAP portfolios with the results." Chart #1 documents successful progress toward goal achievement during the academic year.

Chart #1:

Naviance/MyCAP Target Goal	Gr. 9		Gr. 10	
	March	May	March	May
Logged Into Naviance	55%	68%	72%	84%
Completed the Learning Styles Inventory	60%	72%	74%	78%

Initiative #2

Another Tier 1 school counseling lesson was the Transcript Audit. One hundred percent (100%) of the Grade 10 students were informed about their permanent high school transcript, reviewed both promotion requirements for Grade 11 and graduation requirements, and then completed a personal transcript audit to learn if they were on-track to move to Grade 11. Students in the green zone were praised for their ongoing successful efforts. Students in the yellow and red zone were reminded they needed to *own their learning* and be accountable for their academic success! They were informed about Tier 2 and 3 opportunities for counseling support and academic assistance including extra help tutoring with the teachers, and credit recovery accelerated academy opportunities over vacations and summer school.

Chart 2: Graduation At-Risk Summary

	Green % of class			Yellow % of class			Red % of class		
	Jan	April	June	Jan	April	June	Jan	April	June
Gr. 9 N= 97	75%	78%	90%	25%	23%	10%	15%	7%	5%
Gr. 10 N=106	78%	79%	92%	32%	27%	17%	22%	17%	11%

As a result of the audits, Chart 2 data documents that counselors successfully targeted students at risk of non-promotion with personalized Tier 2 and 3 counseling support to motivate them to "*own their learning*". Red and Yellow zones data documents progress was made with 90% and 92% of the students arriving at the green zone by June!

(continued next page)

MA Model Success Story

(continued from previous page)

Initiative #3

Second semester, Belle was assigned 12 chronic absentees or chronically late seniors and tasked with the challenge of motivating them to attend school regularly and on-time. She implemented several initiatives including: weekly attendance meeting reviews; daily check-in with each student; informing students and families of MA Attendance Laws and school handbook requirements; identifying student barriers to regular, on-time school attendance to brainstorm personalized interventions; frequent communication with parents in conversations and in writing; and daily automated phone calls to families keeping them current about student attendance.

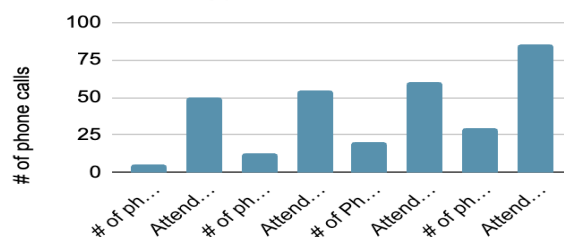
Graph #1 Attendance Initiative

Graph data documents the second semester impact of the Tier 2 and 3 attendance initiative. The 12 seniors had a 62% improvement with on-time attendance in the 4th quarter and ALL of the students graduated. “The department evaluated the impact of the interventions and determined the phone calls had a direct impact on improving attendance.”

Graph #1 – Attendance Interventions

Answering the research question: *Are multi-tiered school counseling initiatives helping students be responsible for their academic success?* The compiled data documents that the Brighton HS multi-tiered counseling approach is motivating students own their learning, achieve grade level student end goals, and encourages student academic success. Belle’s compiled data on her MARC Jr. provided concrete evidence documenting the Brighton HS counseling department’s success story!

Attendance %



Calling MA Model Success Stories

Have you implemented the MA Model (or some part of it) to help students? Most of us don't like to brag, but the Model Committee wants to help with that!

Fill out the (brief) [MA Model Success Story](#) form and the Committee will contact you to get the detailsso we can share your successes!!

Registration is now open for 4 academic year **MA Model Graduate Courses**. Syllabi Summaries available from helenod@att.net

(Registration \$450 includes 45 MASCA PDP's. Additional \$295 for 3 Graduate Credits from Fitchburg State University).

- *MA Model Introductory Institute*
- *MA Model 2: Next Steps*
- *Counselors in K-12 Classrooms: Delivering Curriculum That Supports Academic Achievement & CCR*
- *Counselors in K-12 Classrooms: Action Research and Program Assessment*

I LOVE MY DATA! Documenting Your Success with Data and a MARC Jr.

FREE Webinar Feb. 14, 2024 2:00-3:30

Registration confirmation provides resources and details.

Trainer: **Helen C. O'Donnell**, Ed.D, MA Model Trainer

Guest Presenters include:

Belle Ange Moreau, M.ED, a Brighton HS counselor,

Colleen Fors, LMHC SAC, SSW, Quabbin Regional Middle High School

By actively engaging in this webinar, participants will:

Dig into your data to determine program or learning gaps, review the MA Model 3.0 and MA Accountability Report Cards (MARC Jr.) template, and write your SMART research question.

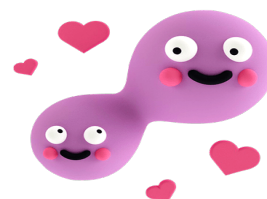
Assess if your lessons and curriculum are standards-aligned, data-driven; **Apply** action research strategies and the Cycle of Inquiry for on-going initiative assessment.

Target strategic interventions and gather inclusive participation, perception, and outcome data.

Analyze compiled formative and summative data in the aggregate and in disaggregated formats to assess impact of instruction and inform/guide decision-making initiative continuation or data-driven modifications, and how to answer your research question.

Hear colleague action research Success Stories documented in their MARC Jr. documents.

With additional coursework, convert your webinar attendance and data collection into hybrid MA Model 3.0 PD by registering for 25 PDP's - \$150 https://masca.wildapricot.org/MA-Model_3.0



MA Model Independent Study PD Offerings

Series #1 -Be Informed (FREE)

Register and a welcome email will include links to free webinars.

Series #2 – Be Prepared (Guided mentoring available with registration)

15 MASCA PDP's – Cost \$ 80 Resources: https://masca.wildapricot.org/MA-Model_3.0

Earn PDP's while independently exploring the MA Model 3.0, completing a self-study audit to assess your progress implementing the MA Model and identifying target program growth areas, and preparing for/organize the academic year by developing your annual school counseling department calendar.

Series 3 - Be Accountable and Data Informed (Independent PD, but guided mentoring available.)

20 PDP's - \$125 https://masca.wildapricot.org/MA-Model_3.0

Through Action Research school counselors can document the need for school counseling programs and show the effectiveness of a specific counseling practice, program, or intervention. After reviewing MA Model 3.0 ASSESS webinar and completing the MA Model 3.0 self-study audit, you will: identify a growth area to strengthen or one component of your program to assess; define a SMART student end-goal; Identify alignment to student learning standards; write your research question; gather and assess student progress towards end goal achievement; identify barriers faced; write a next steps action plan. Capstone: complete your MARC Jr. document.



A blue and white poster for a 'POST-SECONDARY FAIR' for students who learn differently. The poster features a graduation cap icon at the top. The text 'POST-SECONDARY FAIR' is prominently displayed in a large, white, serif font. Below this, a banner reads 'for Students who Learn Differently'. At the bottom, it states 'HOSTED BY LANDMARK SCHOOL' and 'March 28, 2024 6-8 p.m.'. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner with the text 'Learn More:' above it.



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

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.