

MASCA Counselor's Notebook

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION

Vol. 60, No. 1

SEPTEMBER 2023

Welcome Back!

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

As the days grow a bit cooler, our thoughts turn to beginning the school year. Many of us have enjoyed time with family and friends, a vacation away or perhaps a staycation, and time to relax and rejuvenate. Personally, I spent time camping with my own teens, enjoyed lacrosse tournaments and block parties with live music, and paddle boarded and rode in my Jeep as much as possible. I traveled to Atlanta for the ASCA Conference, where I made new friends across the country and was inspired by the vast knowledge that the presenters and participants had to share. I'll be taking various suggestions and ideas from this conference and implementing them in my own work with students. I also was grateful to be part of MASCA's 1st Annual School Counselor Summer Camp, held at Endicott College in my hometown, Beverly. To be in community with approximately 65 counselors for three days was a joy. We learned



Melinda Cripps

together, formed friendships, laughed hysterically during game night, ate all the lobster our bellies could hold, and really embraced the fun of new experiences that bring about connection and make learning fun. If you didn't go this summer, you'll want to consider it next year- it was everything we had hoped for and more!

Someone not in education recently said to me, "I don't know why, but fall feels like a time of rebirth for me. It is a time when I generate the most creative ideas, both personally and professionally. The fall air whispers to me that there's always something new to learn." Instantly, I knew what she meant. For our students, fall is a time of rebirth, of beginnings. They meet new teachers, form new friendships and rekindle those that perhaps drifted in the summer months, and learn about new subjects in ways that are exhilarating and engaging.

And this is where the magic happens. Like my friend described, you get to create an experience for your students and for yourselves. At the beginning of each year, we have an opportunity to reinvent ourselves in our role. Perhaps we look for different and exciting ways to connect with our students. An example: a counselor came to me a few years ago, and said, "Let's do minute meetings with our students. Five minutes with each student at the beginning of the year, just a quick check in to gauge how they are doing emotionally with the transition back to school and foster connection." I thought, "Well, I'm not sure about this, but let's give it a go." As my colleague had envisioned, these minute meetings were a huge success, gave counselors a quick pulse on how students were adjusting to the year, and they learned a bit about their student's interests. Kids loved it. Parents loved it. Counselors enjoyed the experience.

I encourage you to try new approaches to reaching students. If you feel like you've been in a "rut" or on "autopilot" with your practice, step outside your comfort zone and try something new. It may be as great as you envision, and could breathe new life into the way you connect with students. And if it's not? Well, that's data!

The last few years have been arduous, and COVID certainly took a toll on everyone, including folks in our profession. This year, join me in being courageous. This year, let's frame our approach to how we support students (and each other) by listening to the whispers of fall, telling us that there's always something new to learn.

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MASCA 2023-24 DIRECTORY

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School Counselor
Boston Latin School

Cynthia Eselionis
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Lori Ford
School Adjustment Counselor
MLK Jr. Charter School of Excellence

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School Counseling Department Head
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Director of School Counseling
Whitman-Hansen Regional High School

Ethics Committee

Mindy Cripps
Guidance Director
Billerica High School

Fiscal Oversight Committee

Ed Connor
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Dean College

Government Relations & Advocacy Committee

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Foxborough Regional Charter School

Fran Frederick
School Adjustment Counselor
Belchertown High School

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Access Committee

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School Counselor
Boston Latin School
Manjula Karamcheti
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Woodrow Wilson Graduate School of Teaching and Learning

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School Counselor
RISE Academy

MA Model Committee

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School Counseling Coordinator
Medway Public Schools

Cynthia Eselionis
School Counselor
Ayer Shirley Regional Middle School

Member Services Committee

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Jacob Beaudoin

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School Adjustment Counselor
MLK Jr. Charter School of Excellence

Professional Development Committee

Ali Robidoux
School Adjustment Counselor
Brennan Middle School, Attleboro

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Easthampton High School

Technology Committee

Jennifer McGuire
College & Career Information Coordinator
New Bedford Public Schools

Ad Hoc Committee on School Counselor Gaps

Dana Catarius
School Counselor
Anne Fales Elementary, Westborough

Jennifer McGuire
College & Career Information Coordinator
New Bedford Public Schools

APPOINTED POSITIONS

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Bob Bardwell
Executive Director of School Counseling Services
Boston Public Schools

Secretary

Julia Cahill-O'Shea
School Counselor
Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School

Counselors Notebook Editor

Jean Atwater-Williams
IT Consultant
BizTech Associates

Membership Coordinator

Bob Bardwell
Executive Director of School Counseling Services
Boston Public Schools

Mentoring Coordinator

Maryanne Margiotta
Career Facilitator
Southwick Regional High School

Program Evaluation Coordinator

Karen Marie Harrington

Webmaster

Jean Atwater-Williams
IT Consultant
BizTech Associates

LIAISONS

Affiliate Liaison

Christine Weissman
Graduate Student
Assumption University

Counselor Educator Liaison

Megan Krell
Associate Professor
Fitchburg State University

DESE Liaison

Lisa Harney
MA Dept of Elem & Sec Education

Emerging Leader Liaisons

Cory McGann
School Counseling Department Head
Ashland High School

Dana Catarius
School Counselor
Anne Fales Elementary, Westborough

Graduate Student Liaisons

Alison Giglio
Graduate Student
Merrimack College

Alexis King
Graduate Student
Westfield State University

Leah Worth
Graduate Student
Boston College

Social Media Liaison

Jessica Almedia
School Counselor
Bedford High School

EMERGING LEADERS

Lauren Costanzo
School Counselor
Somerville Public Schools

Rani Gould
School Counselor
The Academy at Kiley Middle School

Jonathan Nardi
School Counselor
Natick High School

Paige Kenney
School Counselor
South Middle School Brockton

Gisele Rojas
Director of Student Support Services
Holyoke Public Schools

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG) LEADERS

Counseling Directors SIG

Dana Plunkett
Director of Guidance
Wellesley High School

Ross Wolfson
Assistant Director of School Counseling
PK-12
Waltham High School

Elementary SIG

Maria Maloney
School Counselor
Granite Valley School, Monson

Maura Ricardi
School Adjustment Counselor
East Street School, Ludlow

Emma Russell
School Counselor

The Learning Project Elementary School, Boston

MultiLingual Learners SIG

Brenda Hernandez
School Counselor
Worcester East Middle School

Olivia Hull
Graduate Student
Lesley University

Heidys Mendez
School Counselor
Lawrence High School

Middle Level SIG

Melissa Clonan
School Counselor
David Quinn Middle School, Hudson

Paige Kenney
School Counselor
South Middle School Brockton

Anndrew Reinfeld
School Counselor
McGlynn Middle School, Medford

Retirees SIG

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 Nidel
Retired School Adjustment Counselor

Anne Thidemann French
Retired School Adjustment Counselor

Secondary SIG

Karen McCrillis
School Counselor
Gardner High School

Leanne Souland
School Counselor
Franklin High School

Rachael Weinhold
School Counselor
Winchendon High School

Urban SIG

Shelby Boisvert
School Counselor
Lowell High School

Whitney Goodwin
College and Career Readiness Liaison
Worcester Public Schools

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

How MASCA Spent the Summer

By Bob Bardwell, MASCA Executive Director

I don't know about you, but this summer seemed to fly by faster than most. I hear this often from people my age or older. Perhaps it is true that this has something to do with age, but my theory is it has to do with how busy your summer is. Well, MASCA had a very busy summer and here is a synopsis of what we did in the past few months and a look at some of the big ideas for the upcoming 2023-24 school year.

In July, MASCA was represented by five members at the Annual ASCA Leadership Development Institute in Atlanta – Mindy Cripps, Board Chair, Jessica Descartes, Board Assistant Chair, Maryanne Margiotta, Mentoring Coordinator, Tama Lang, our 2022 School Counselor of the Year and myself, Executive Director. We typically send four people to this event which precedes the annual conference but Maryanne was asked to go because in late June we were notified that MASCA was one of four finalists for the inaugural ASCA Pinnacle Award.

The ASCA Pinnacle Award recognizes state/territory school counselor associations for innovative projects that benefit the school counseling association, profession or membership. We nominated our three-year-old Mentoring. An interview with representatives from the ASCA committee along with three of our mentors/mentees, Maryanne and myself was held on June 29. Congratulations to Maryanne Margiotta, our Mentoring Coordinator, and all of the mentors and mentees who have been a part of this incredible program which was awarded this prestigious award. It is nice to be recognized by our peers for doing great work that makes a huge difference for our new school counselors.

In between returning from ASCA early to get back for Summer Camp, I was able to give testimony to the [Massachusetts Joint Committee on Education](#) on Monday, July 17 at the State House. I was there to give testimony on [HB 465](#), An Act establishing comprehensive school counseling programs. This bill, sponsored by [Representative Carol Doherty](#) (D-Taunton), if enacted, would mandate "Each public school district shall develop and implement a compre-



Robert Bardwell
Executive Director, MASCA

hensive school counseling program that adheres to the Massachusetts Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs and ensures all pre-K to grade twelve (12) students will receive school counseling services from licensed school counselors," as well as commit to a student:counselor ratio of 250:1.

Our bill was one of 13 school mental health related bills that were heard by the Joint Committee on July 17. HB 465 currently has 11 other petitioners in addition to Rep. Doherty. This is indeed an exciting time for school counseling in Massachusetts. Stay tuned for additional information about this bill and how you can help support this work. If you want more information about this bill or the work of the GRAC, please contact [Juliette Coatsworth](#) and [Fran Frederick](#), GRAC Co-Chairs.

Later in the afternoon of July 17 I traveled to Endicott College to make final preparations for in our inaugural School Counselor Summer Camp (SC²) held at Endicott College. Sixty-one counselors participated in this historic, awesome and invigorating Summer Camp experience. There was lots of learning, networking, eating and laughing. Participants heard from keynote speakers MA Secretary of Education Dr. Pat-

rick Tutwiler and Andrea Encarnacao, 2023 School Counselor of the Year, and learned about Self Care from Michele Lyman ([Serenity Yoga](#)). There were ten breakout sessions from which to choose, small group meetings, arts and crafts and plenty of opportunity for fun and relaxation.

Many thanks to the amazing SC² faculty (**Zandrina Atherley**, Phoenix Charter Academy, Springfield, **Christine Carr**, Stoughton High School, **Mindy Cripps**, Billerica Public Schools, **Cynthia Esie-lionis**, Ayer-Shirley Regional Middle School, **Ali Robidoux**, Brennan Middle School, Attleboro, **Jodi Then**, Boston Green Academy and **Jessica Whelan**, Chapman Middle School, Weymouth), as well as Endicott College for hosting us, in particular Michael Iorio, Assistant Vice President and Dean of Admission. Endicott treated participants to a traditional lobster and clambake along the shore of the Atlantic Ocean. Look for more details about this wonderful event and how to get involved as a faculty member for 2024 elsewhere in this newsletter. The 2024 dates will be July 23-24, 2024, location TBA but on a college campus somewhere in Massachusetts. We anticipate this event selling out because of the success of the 2023 event. Talk about exciting!

The annual MASCA Leadership Development Institute (LDI) was held on August 6 & 7. This two-day event provides an opportunity for team building and bonding among the Governing Board members as well as time to dive deeply into important MASCA work. A total of 26 Board members attended some or all of the program. In addition to traditional team building activities and fun at Boundless Adventures, there was also some intense work done to update our three-year Strategic Plan which will formally be approved at our October 7 Governing Board meeting as well as continue our work with IDEA topics. The Board did an incredible job in a very short period of time for which

(continued on page 4)

Welcome to our Newest Members

The following have joined MASCA over the Summer:

Tricia Blackstock	Tiffany Currie	Stephanie Holmes	Kelley Paige
Tara Blake	Anne Davies	Audrey Jimenez	Daniel Rasanen
Christine Bonenfant	Mary Egan	Hyun Joo (Helen) Lee	Courtney Royal
Kerry Bulk	Janet Fitzgerald	Erika Lepik	Chris Shorette
Tiffany Caldwell	Rachel Flagg	Amy Mahoney	Philippa Siegel
Michelle Catena	Michael Friedman	Jessica Martin	Justin Smith
Taylor Clooney	Emily Fuller	Jackie McGee	Cristiana Stapleton
Elana Cockburn	Moonique Grauer	Cassie Moriarty	Aleka Towers
	Cullen Hagan	Amanda Nguherimo	

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

We are happy you have joined us!

How MASCA Spent the Summer

(continued from page 3)

I am most grateful.

September will see MASCA resume our regularly scheduled programming including professional development opportunities, Special Interest Groups (SIGs) meetings and regular communications with you.

Since it is the beginning of a new school year and often a time when we set annual goals, I thought it would be helpful to share with you some of MASCA's goals for the coming year:

Increase membership – It is expected that we will break our previous membership high of 1807 members set on October 21 of 2022. I have shared with you before that a healthy organization continues to grow and expand opportunities. We will be making waves this year for sure.

Updating our Mission, Vision, Core Beliefs and Strategic Objectives – As noted previously, the beginning of this

work was done by the Board at the summer LDI. Look for more specifics in October/November. These documents are not just words but actions and beliefs so it is critical that they are reviewed and updated regularly as well as keep us on track in order to accomplish what we are supposed to do.

Continuing to increase member services, benefits and professional development opportunities – While this seems a bit cliché, it does have meaning. For example, MASCA has partnered with Hatching Results and StudySmart-Tutors to offer low-cost virtual asynchronous courses to enhance your data collection, analyzing and reporting skills. This is just one example of how MASCA continues to evolve and provide superior resources and services to our members.

Continued Advocacy Efforts – You will be hearing a lot more from our Government Relations & Advocacy Committee in regard to HB 465. We probably have the best chance ever to get some legislation mandating what counselors do (and

don't do) as well as create some realistic ratios for school counselors. This will not be easy and will require your voice, but together we can make this possible.

I could go on and on but many have probably already stopped reading by now. Let me conclude by saying that it is my honor and privilege to serve as your Executive Director. The pride and satisfaction that all of these summer events are just a sample of the many great things that MASCA does for the counselors of the Commonwealth, but most importantly for our students and the families that we serve.

In my biased opinion, MASCA is by far in the top five, and more likely top three, state school counselor associations based on activities, membership involvement, budget and member benefits. Thanks for being part of this awesome journey that just keeps on getting better.

I hope that your 2023-24 school year is the best ever, just like it will be for MASCA.

Spread the News to your SAC's and SSW's!

by Anne Thidemann French

A fantastic new resource now exists for School Adjustment Counselors (SAC) and School Social Workers (SSW) in Massachusetts thanks to MASCA's sponsorship. Responding to a void in role-specific networking opportunities, the SAC/SSW Special Interest Group began meeting virtually in January 2022. Our primary goal is to support each other in the unique demands of our work in a SAC/SSW or related clinical mental health position. Our group has been networking, sharing resources and practices, discussing our current challenges and hearing from guest speakers. Participants have relished the opportunity to consult with each other about immediate questions and concerns, which in turn, helps to decrease the stress and isolation often experienced within their role.

Meetings have included a mix of presentations and ongoing discussions about licensure requirements and resources (SAC, LMHC, LICSW); clinical supervision; job descriptions and expectations; the educator evaluation system and a rubric for SAC/SSW; best practices with tiered systems of support; the School-Based Medicaid Program including reimbursement for billable services and random time studies; school



Anne Thidemann French,
MASCA SIG Leader

protocols related to child abuse, suicidal behavior and self-injury, etc.; our role in the IEP process and the provision of gridded services; tele behavioral health programs; managing student and school crises; and more. The 22-23 school year culminated with our first in-person meeting during MASCA's Spring Conference

in April.

Monthly meetings for the 2023-2024 school year will kick off on September 13th at 9:00 AM.

The September meeting will focus on the new Massachusetts Behavioral Health Roadmap comprised of the Behavioral Health Helpline, Community Based Health Centers and Behavioral Health Urgent Care. Becky Manseau Barnett and Kate Hildreth-Fortin from the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership will be our guest presenters.

The agenda for future meetings this year will include mandated reporting, vicarious traumatization and additional topics as identified and requested by SIG participants.

Co-facilitators for the SAC/SSW SIG are Nychele Clark, SAC in Gardner; Kate Nidel, Retired SAC Westfield; and Anne Thidemann French, Retired SAC North Adams. New participants are always welcome to attend our meetings. And please share this article with SAC/SSW's in your district and watch your MASCA email for meeting notices.

September 2023 Awareness Dates

Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

Children's Good Manners Month

Deaf Awareness Month

Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15–Oct. 15)

Library Card Sign-up Month

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

National Preparedness Month

National Recovery Month

Self-Improvement Month

Sexual Health Awareness Month

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

8 International Literacy Day

10 World Suicide Prevention Day

10-16 National Suicide Prevention Week

10-16 National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week

11 Grandparents Day

16 World Clean-Up Day

17 Constitution Day/Citizenship Day

17-23 Child Passenger Safety Week

17-23 Student Sleep Health Week

20 National School Backpack Awareness Day

21 International Day of Peace

23 International Day of Sign Languages

27 National Women's Health & Fitness Day



Twenty-ninth
Annual Conference

with
Signe Whitson, LSW, C-SSWS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2023
8:45AM – 3:30PM WESTMINSTER, VT
— Lunch is included —

THE
ANGRY
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Teaching Alternatives
to the Aggressive
Expression of Anger

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Please direct all inquiries for the conference to Terry Andrews
at (802) 721-6913, or email tandrews@kurnhattin.org.

MASCA receives ASCA's Pinnacle Award for its Mentoring Program

By Jessica Descartes,

MASCA Assistant Governing Board Chair and School Counselor, Boston Tech Academy

Merriam Webster shares that the **pinnacle** is “*the highest point of development or achievement*”. With that, we are thrilled to announce that the MASCA Mentoring Program was selected as the winner of ASCA's Inaugural *Pinnacle Award*. This new honor recognizes state/territory school counselor associations for innovative projects that benefit the school counseling association, profession or membership.

The MASCA Mentoring program was nominated for its critical work in supporting new school counselors. The program matches experienced counselor mentors and new counselors, with the mission to enhance skills in strategic leadership and reflective practice, to develop strong relationships and to maximize the potential of new school counselors to become integral members of their school community and leadership teams.

Since its inception in SY 2021-22, the mentoring program has grown, beginning with seven mentor/mentee matches during the pilot year and more than tripling to 24 mentor/mentee matches this past school year. Mentoring Program Coordinator and Career Facilitator for the Southwick Regional School Counseling Department, Maryanne Margiotta has spearheaded the program. “I am truly honored that our MASCA Mentoring Program has been recognized to receive this award”, shared Maryanne. “Since the program's beginning, our mentors have worked hard to ensure that our new counselors have the tools they need to succeed. We strive to make the mentoring relationship a ‘two-way street’ - our new counselors receive much needed guidance and support, while our mentors have the chance to learn from their fellow colleagues and reflect on our essential role as counselors”.

Feedback from the program is positive. A current mentee shared that they “appreciated being able to ask my mentor any questions that I had, big or small. I am very grateful for the support she has provided. It has helped me grow as a counselor and I am more confident now”. Likewise, mentors have shared their experiences with the program, stating that it “provided my mentee with



Masca's Mentoring Program honored at ASCA Conference in July 2023.
Top row (L-R) Jessica Descartes, Jill Cook, Maryanne Margiotta, Geoff Heckman
Bottom Row Melinda Cripps and Bob Bardwell

other resources outside her district to ask questions of and learn alternate ways of handling them”. Overall, the mentoring program has provided a necessary space to facilitate a structured and supportive relationship between school counselors.

ASCA solicited nominations for the award in May. Finalists were notified and interviewed towards the end of June. Five state finalists were recognized during the ASCA Leadership Development Institute in Atlanta, with the MASCA Mentoring program being announced the winner. As Maryanne shares congratulations to the other finalists: “*their programs are outstanding*”, she is optimistic about the mentoring programs' future. “As we grow, we look forward to welcoming new mentors and mentees into our program.”

As school counselors, we contribute to fostering a positive and supportive school climate. We help to enhance students' emotional and academic growth, and we help them become well-rounded individuals, prepared for the future. In doing this work, we are leaders in our environments, collaborators with others and change agents for all. As such, ap-

propriate professional development is necessary in ensuring that school counselors maintain a strong professional identity that allows them to be successful in this work. Sharing our experiences as mentors will help new school counselors feel and be supported thus, having an even greater impact on the students served.

We are looking forward to continuing the mentoring program. If you are interested in more information and/or would like to sign up, either as a mentor or a mentee, please visit the MASCA website for details and application requirements. Wishing you a wonderful start to your school year!



The ASCA Pinnacle Award recognizes state/territory school counselor associations for innovative projects that benefit the school counseling association, profession or membership.

COUNSELOR'S NOTEBOOK

MASCA MENTORING PROGRAM SYNOPSIS

MASCA believes school counselors play a pivotal role in a student's academic, social/emotional, and career development. In response to the need for school counselors to receive high quality mentoring, we have established a program to offer additional support to new school counselors or current school counselors moving to a different grade level of service. It is our belief that the provision of structured support for our new counselors will greatly impact the students we serve.

School Counselors are called to be collaborators, leaders and change agents in order to address the multifaceted needs of the students and families they serve. School Counselors are also called to be social justice advocates to address issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion which negatively impact the students they serve. These roles are complex and require continued professional development and a strong professional identity for the school counselor. MASCA adheres to the code of ethics and professional identity established by ASCA regarding the role of school counselors.

MASCA Mentoring Program Mission:

1. to ensure that new school counselors begin their first years (0-3 years) with effective support to enhance skills in strategic leadership, reflective practice, and the development of strong relationships; and
2. to maximize the potential of new school counselors to become integral members of their school community and leadership team.

MASCA Mentoring Program Goals:

- Support the skill development and strengthen the growth of the school counselor mentee.
- Execute responsibilities within a comprehensive school counseling program and how to remove barriers that arise.
- Learn strategies to navigate school culture in order to effectively implement the school counseling program.
- Strengthen the professional identity of the school counselor mentee.
- Build a network of support for the school counselor mentee with other colleagues.
- Support the self-care and wellness of school counselor mentees.

Participants:

- 2021-2022 - 7 mentor/mentee matches
- 2022-2023 - 24 mentor/mentee matches

Mentor feedback from the 2021-22 pilot year:

- I wanted to help a mentee, but I didn't realize how much it would help ME! I got SO much back!
- It gave my mentee the opportunity to process her concerns/questions with someone who has an objective view of the situations presented without worrying about agendas or alliances.
- It provided my mentee with other resources outside her district to ask questions of and learn alternate ways of handling them.
- It gave my mentee access to someone outside their own institution to get feedback and resources from.
- Having another professional to run things by, to feel validated in doing the work, and answering questions were so helpful.
- My mentee had another counselor at her school, so I felt I provided the support she couldn't get at her building.
- I hope that I was able to be a sounding board for issues that came up and that I was able to remind her about her successes.

Mentee feedback from the 2021-22 pilot year:

- I LOVED having a mentor that was not connected to my school or district but who worked with the same grade.
- It was very helpful speaking with someone outside my school about internal conflict, to get an unbiased view.
- I liked the data that we logged and to see my progress.
- I learned things I didn't know, I connected with another school counselor, and I got to plan things together.
- I appreciated being able to ask my mentee any questions that I had, big or small. I am very grateful for the support she has provided. It has helped me grow as a counselor and I am more confident now.
- If you had a magic wand and could create more time for this program, that would be great! I loved that it was low pressure and we could make it what I needed it to be.

Key documents of interest

- [Mentor application](#)
- [Mentor Mentee Goal Setting and Working Agreement](#)
- [MASCA Mentor Mentee Hour Log 2022-2023](#)
- [Mentee application](#)
- [Mentor Meeting Collaborative Discussion Log](#)

School Counselor Summer Camp (SC²), Surfing the Seas of Change is in the books!

by Cynthia Esielionis, MASCA Board Member with Mindy Cripps, MASCA Board Chair and Robert Bardwell, MASCA Executive Director, SC² 2023 Faculty members



The inaugural MASCA School Counselor Summer Camp is in the rearview mirror but the inspiration it provided, the connections made and momentum to implement the knowledge gained is still alive and well. As a result of a year's worth of planning and networking MASCA was able to provide breakout sessions, collaboration, and socialization time that 64 counselors from across Massachusetts and guests from Delaware and Rhode Island engaged in. Summer camp would not have been possible without the generosity of our many scholarship providers, Endicott College, the volunteer faculty and all of the participants who gave up their time to attend and contribute to this amazing professional development opportunity. Everyone's contributions were valuable, validating, energizing and are deeply appreciated.

Our Keynote speaker, Dr. Patrick Tutwiler, Secretary of Education with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, shared personal anecdotes and experiences that helped shaped his philosophy of education and enabled us to connect with him. His clear respect for the school counseling profession and dedication to helping improve our standing in the system was refreshing and motivating. Dr. Tutwiler opened up the conversation so that participants were able to ask questions, some difficult, and he candidly addressed everyone's concerns. He was followed by the articulate yet humble Massachusetts School Counselor of the year, Andrea Encarnacao, who kept the momentum going with her wisdom around diversity, equity and inclusion. Andrea participated in the summer camp and left this comment: "... It was SO valuable to connect with other counselors from across the state and even as far as Delaware and RI. Listening, laughing, learning and growing was good

for my mind and soul. I made some great new friends that I am staying in touch with and will look to for support, inspiration, and ideas throughout the year. I feel hopeful for the year ahead as I have a Summer Camp family that will be there for me as the 2023-2024 school year begins". Breaking out into our small groups allowed for further discussion and development of connections. Participants then chose to attend one of 2 breakout sessions. After returning to our small groups for a bit, we prepared for a wonderful dinner hosted by Endicott College at their Misselwood Estate on the water followed by fun and games at Gully's, Endicott's on campus pub.

For those interested, mornings started with yoga before breakfast and day 2 began with another Keynote focusing on Self Care & You with Michele Lyman of Serenity Yoga. With some simple activities for self-care that we can incorporate into our days as well as some we can use with our students, Michele kicked off day 2 with more positive energy. The first part of this day was filled with four breakout sessions to choose from, more small group time. The afternoon and early evening was for fun, exploration or relaxation. Some participants explored nearby Salem and Rockport, others were able to go home to families or hang out on the beautiful Endicott Campus and beach. We ended day 2 with more games, conversation and connection in the dorm.

Our last day together included two more breakout sessions after breakfast, finishing up our small group activities and then coming back together for final wrap up fun. So many participants gave positive and inspiring feedback; all of the wonderful comments are appreciated by the faculty. Craig Parker, School Counselor at Woburn Memorial High School summed up his ex-

perience with these thoughts:

"MASCA summer camp was everything I hoped it would be, and more! From the opening presentation from the state secretary of education, to the extremely engaging and relevant breakout sessions, summer camp more than delivered. Being with fellow counselors and exploring the intricacies of our profession wasn't just an enlightening learning experience, it was a revelation! I left camp excited about returning to school to incorporate what I learned and to expand upon the relationships built during camp. So often as counselors, our training is secondary to our responsibilities, and development is limited to whatever is being offered to teachers. That is NOT the case at MASCA camp. I highly recommend it to anyone regardless of years of experience. I hope to be able to return and bring more of my peers along. Thank you to Bob and the whole team for making this such an unforgettable 3 days."

Over the course of our time together the breakout sessions included Data, Trauma Informed Counseling, MyCap, managing 504 plans, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Creative Ways to Engage Families, Working with Low income families, exploration outside the gender binary, using ethics to your advantage when supporting students and an overview of the MA Model with examples of how it is currently implemented in participants schools. We are looking forward to School Counselor Summer Camp 2024. Those interested in joining the 2024 faculty, please sign up [here](#) by September 8th!

John Was There When MASCA Was Born A Memorial Tribute to John Gould, Jr.



In August 2023, MASCA lost a 60-year member with the passing of John Gould, Jr. John remembered when Sputnik was launched in the late 1950's and was teaching when Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) funding for school counseling positions to promote and encourage students to consider math and science careers. During his school counseling graduate program, he began attending school counselor meetings hosted by Warren Benson, Senior Supervisor of Guidance from the MA Department of Education, to learn about efforts to establish a statewide school counseling organization. John was present and celebrated with his future colleagues at Babson College in Wellesley in April of 1961, when the MA School Counseling Association (MASCA) was established.

In 1963, John began his career as a school counselor and his MASCA affiliate legacy began. He was a founding member of the Merrimack Valley School Counseling As-

sociation serving in roles including President and Treasurer. When MVSCA merged with another affiliate in 1978, he became a charter member of Northeast Counselors Association (NECA) serving in various roles including president and membership chair, earning many affiliate awards, and ultimately being honored as an honorary NECA Life Trustee. John also served as secretary and treasurer of the North Shore Guidance Directors Association (NSGDA).

During his 60 years as a MASCA member, John's service included membership on the MASCA Governing Board, active volunteer member of conference committees (registrar and exhibits), public relations Committees, and planning committees for all the decade MASCA birthday celebration events. He was honored as MASCA Counselor of the Year in the 1980's and in 2007 recognized as a MASCA O.S.C.A.R. (Outstanding Service Counselor Award Recognition), the highest honor that can be given to a school counselor in MA.

John, thank you for your decades of dedicated volunteer service to MASCA and advocacy for MA school counselors. Your engaging smile, wise advice, capable helping hands, and tireless efforts and service helped to build the foundation of the strong association MASCA is today. You will be missed!

Online guestbook: www.ccbfuneral.com.

Heather Toomey honored by Salem State University Alumni Association



Heather Toomey, School Counselor at Lynn Vocational Technical Institute was nominated for the Charlotte Forten Legacy Award by Dr. Judith Josephs. Heather received a graduate degree from Salem State University in School Counseling in 2002.

The Charlotte Forten Legacy Award is presented to those individuals who best exemplify a legacy of commitment to the mission and purpose of Salem State University.

Heather has spent the better part of the last three decades in service to students from marginalized and underserved communities. As a school counselor at Lynn Vocational Technical Institute, she has made her life's work to ensure that every student has a path and plan for college. She develops articulation agreements with local partner school, administers PSAT, SAT, AC, and AP exams, and she coordinates Career Fairs and Events for those pursuing a professional life.

Today, as Salem State University pursues the federally designated status of being an Hispanic and Multicultural Serving Institution, this recognition is even more important and meaningful. Heather serves a school district where 75% of students identify as Hispanic.

She has referred and encourages countless students to Salem State University which further supports her recognition for the Award as it served to acknowledge those with a commitment to the mission and support of Salem State University.

Salem State University's Joe Wamness (Immediate Past President) presented the award at a Jazz Brunch Program on Alumni Weekend 2023 at the Hotel Hawthorne to an audience of Lynn Tech colleagues and Salem State Alumni.

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 can be accessed from the MA Model page of the MASCA website. (Choose MA Model option under Resources tab.)

School Counselors' Role, Responsibilities, and Use of Time: Best Practice

The MA Model 3.0 and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model 4.0© promotes excellence in school counseling practice and cites research and resources that define the role of a school counselor, summarize national professional practice standards and ethics, and provides guidance for the development of vertically and horizontally aligned comprehensive K-12 school counseling programs. Their websites provide peer reviewed documents and published articles on how school counselors plan, manage, deliver, and assess data-driven, multi-tiered programs that support the academic, career, and social-emotional development of ALL students, and support student development and implementation of their postsecondary plans.

As the academic year begins, take time to review professional guidance on the role and responsibilities of school counselors and share the MA Model 3.0 with your administrators and colleagues. Define and clarify for stakeholders the school counselor's role and responsibilities and announce the department's SMART goal for the year and student grade level end goals. Gather and analyze data about progress towards achieving target department and student end goals. Review compiled formative data from your on-going formative Time Study that is assessing if you are providing equitable services to all your students.

Guidance on the role and responsibilities of school counselors can be found from three sources: DESE, your professional state licensing board; ASCA, the national association representing school counselors; MASCA, your state ASCA affiliate. Since you have already received your provisional or professional license, you have met the DESE's minimal required license credentials.

Promoting their vision of "One Vision. One Voice." and to clarify roles and responsibilities expectations, ASCA has abundant resources at www.schoolcounselor.org/roles. To be informed about nationally recognized professional school counselor credentials and competencies, review *ASCA's Standards for School Counselor Preparation Programs* and *ASCA's Professional Standards and Competencies for School Counselors*. The *ASCA Model 4.0*© (and MA Model 3.0) recommends spending 80% of your time delivering direct and indirect services (academic, career, personal/social) to ALL students, identifies appropriate and inappropriate school counselor activities, and encourages advocating to your administration about your role and use of time.

Other available ASCA website resources, *ASCA Position Statements* and *ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors*, provide guidance and clarity on the school counselors

role and responsibility on many current professional issues. For example, the accompanying article beginning on the next page, "Navigating Use of Time", cites and clearly explains ASCA's position statements on the role and ethical responsibility of school counselors with 504 and IEP plans as explained in ASCA's Position Statements: *The Role of the School Counselor with Students with Disabilities* and *The Role of the School Counselor with Students with Mental Health Issues*.

The MA Model 3.0's define section https://masca.wildapricot.org/MA-Model_3.0 also discusses the school counselor's role and responsibilities. Reference resources include Appendix E: *Roles Specific Indicators* (5 pgs.) and Appendix F: *The Role of the School Counselor* (infographic). Several archived MASCA Counselor Notebooks articles discuss the role and responsibilities of school counselors <https://masca.wildapricot.org/Publications> (scroll to past issues).

- *Role of the School Counselor* (May '20)
- *Find Your Voice. Define Yours Title* (Jan..22)
- *Define Your Title and Role-* Cynthia Esielionis (Jan. 22)
- *Sharpen Your Image* (Sept.'22)
- *Time Studies* (May '19)

The School Counselor's Role in Serving Students with Disabilities

Author(s): Angelica Greiner, Ph.D., and Crystal Hatton, Ph.D.,

This article originally appeared in the May/June 2023 issue of the *School Counselor Magazine*.

It is reprinted here with ASCA's permission.

When I reviewed the 2022 revision of the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors, I noticed the revisions were viewed through an equity lens. What are some practical strategies for addressing diversity, equity and inclusion as I serve all students, including students with disabilities?

School counselors have an ethical obligation to meet the needs of all students, and this includes students with disabilities. These students are members of a marginalized population, so it is imperative that school counselors take an active role in establishing an affirming school environment where students feel safe, included and respected. To foster this learning environment, school counselors must ensure these students aren't being ostracized or discriminated against due to their ability status. Here are some best practices to ensure you're considering diversity, equity and inclusion when serving students with disabilities.

- Acknowledge that students with disabilities are often marginalized within the education system due to their ability status and other aspects of their identity (i.e., race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation).
- Use school data to identify students' needs and identify the disparities that exist within the school environment.
- Ensure that students with disabilities have access to school counseling services.
- Review your school's policies, procedures, and practices to ensure students with disabilities are not targeted or
- treated unfairly.
- Advocate for equitable access for students to ensure they are included in opportunities to foster their academic, career and social/emotional development (i.e., advanced placement courses, specialized programs).

- Differentiate activities that are used within classroom lessons, group counseling and individual counseling to meet students' diverse learning needs.
- Collaborate with special education teachers and case managers to develop effective, developmentally appropriate interventions.
- Celebrate students' strengths and teach them how to self-advocate for their needs and discuss their learning styles with teachers.
- Demonstrate empathy and sensitivity when communicating with students and families about students' progress and challenges related to academics or behavior.
- Encourage family involvement by navigating language barriers, asking for their input and valuing their opinions and perspectives.
- Understand students' and parents' rights under FAPE, IDEA and Section 504, and advocate for them accordingly.
- Cultivate opportunities to recognize and embrace individual differences and similarities.
- Partner with special education teachers and case managers to educate school staff about students' learning needs and strategies to foster their academic, career and social/emotional development.

Navigating Use of Time

I'm a new school counselor eager to implement a comprehensive school counseling program at my school. During my annual administrative conference, the principal told me I'm in charge of overseeing all 504 plans at the school. The principal also told me I'd be written into 504 plans and individualized education plans (IEPs) to support students with disabilities. I know I have an ethical obligation to serve students with disabilities, but I'm concerned about my ability to also serve all other students as well

if I'm tasked with these other duties. How can I work collaboratively with my principal to ensure I'm able to serve all students, including students with disabilities?

The preamble of ASCA's Ethical Standards for School Counselors indicates that all students have a right to equitable access to a school counseling program that promotes academic, career and social/emotional development and improves student outcomes for all students, including students historically and currently marginalized by the education system. When school counselors are tasked with overseeing 504 plans and written into 504s/IEPs, they are unable to serve all students due to time constraints. Discuss this ethical obligation to serve all students with your administrator. Also discuss how ASCA recommends school counselors spend 80% or more of their time in direct and indirect services to all students and 20% or less of their time in program planning and school support. Additionally, you can share ASCA's appropriate and inappropriate activities for school counselors document (available at schoolcounselor.org/roles) with your principal to advocate for the appropriate use of your time. Lastly, be sure to complete use-of-time assessments or use the ASCA National Model App (MApp) throughout the school year to determine how much time you spend in each domain. This ensures you have objective data to advocate for your use of time as you aim to serve all students.

In addition to the ASCA Ethical Standards, it's also important to use ASCA's position statements to guide your work. The position statements are helpful because they provide a roadmap for school counselors as they navigate through issues, including ASCA's stance on an issue and school counselors' specific roles and responsibilities related to that issue.

According to ASCA's position statement on The School Counselor and Student

(continued on page 12)

School Counselor's Role...

(continued from page 11)

Mental Health, “School counselors focus their efforts on designing and implementing school counseling programs that promote academic, career and social/emotional success for all students.” Furthermore, the position statement says, “School counselors provide short-term counseling and crisis intervention focused on mental health or situational concerns, such as grief or difficult transitions.” Similarly, ASCA’s position statement on The School Counselor and Students with Disabilities says school counselors’ responsibilities may include, “providing short-term, goal-focused counseling in instances where it is appropriate to include these strategies as a part of the IEP or 504 plan.”

Accordingly, when school counselors are asked to provide long-term counseling/therapy to students through 504 plans and IEPs, it’s critical to ensure the school team understands these requests are beyond the scope of a school counselor and that providing these services limits school counselors’ ability to serve all students. Although school teams may not indicate “therapy” on a 504 plan or IEP, the plan may state, “The school counselor will check in with the student once a week for the entire school year.” A good rule of thumb is anything over six to eight visits with a student becomes a therapeutic relationship. When IEP and 504 teams request school counselors provide long-term counseling, best practice is for school counselors to remind the school team of their role and help the team to come up with a short-term goal based on the student’s needs. When a student isn’t making progress toward the short-term goal, the school counselor can support the student by providing feedback to the 504/IEP team and connecting the family with additional outside resources.

Private Schools and Students with Disabilities

You are a high school counselor at a private school. In addition to implementing a comprehensive school counseling program, you are also tasked with monitoring students’ learning needs and

serving on the admissions committee. Through your experience on the admissions committee, you learn some families don’t disclose a student’s diagnosis or existing service plans in the application process for fear of being denied admission. Since your school focuses on college prep and doesn’t modify assignments and assessments for students with learning differences, some admitted students immediately struggle to meet the school’s academic standards. Furthermore, you spend a significant amount of time providing individual counseling to these students to support their academic and social/emotional development. Since you work for a private school, do you have any legal or ethical obligations to students during the admissions process and beyond?

First, it’s important to review your school’s admissions policy to determine the language used regarding admission. For example, some policies state students will not be denied admission based on race, gender, disability status, etc. Understanding the language is advantageous as you consider your obligation to advocate for students with disabilities during the admissions process and beyond.

It is imperative to determine the reason the school is seeking information about a student’s disability status. In public school settings, enrollment applications ask if students have a 504 plan or IEP in place. In such cases, this information is requested to identify students in need of services/accommodations and ensure their proper placement. In the case of private school enrollment, some accommodations and supports may not be available, and options for placement may be limited. However, if you are requesting information regarding the student’s diagnosis, it’s best practice to use it to have a productive conversation with families and other school personnel about the needs and required interventions for students to thrive and meet their full potential in the private school setting.

If private schools receive federal funding, they may not discriminate based on a student’s disability per the Americans with Disabilities Act; the school must provide reasonable accommo-

dations to assist students. Exceptions exist in some states and for religious schools. Thus, it’s imperative to check the school’s affiliation, federal funding status and state/local laws.

School counselors have an ethical obligation to bridge the gaps for students with disabilities and make school environments as inclusive as possible. Therefore, school counselors should be mindful of gatekeeping procedures during the admissions process. Disabilities manifest differently for all students, which is why it’s critical to have meaningful conversations with families during the admissions process. Specifically, ASCA’s Ethical Standards indicate that school counselors should, “Recognize the strengths of students with disabilities as well as their challenges and provide best practices in supporting their academic, career and social/emotional needs.” By having meaningful conversations with families during the admissions process, private school admissions teams and families are able to make an informed decision regarding admission.

There are times when the ASCA Ethical Standards may conflict with state laws and/or private school policies. During these times, follow the law and/or school policy, and then advocate for change.

It’s possible families may be reluctant to disclose a diagnosis because they don’t want it to have an adverse impact on their child during the admissions process. Transparency regarding accommodations and interventions private schools can provide students is also a critical component of the conversations with parents. This helps families make an informed decision about their child’s education.

Angelica Greiner, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at Liberty University, serves on ASCA’s Ethics Committee and is an ASCA U Legal & Ethical Specialist. Crystal Hatton, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at Liberty University, serves on ASCA’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, and is an ASCA U Legal & Ethical Specialist. If you have questions about school counseling ethics, email ethics@schoolcounselor.org.

2023-24 ACADEMIC YEAR MA MODEL PD AVAILABLE

MA Model 3.0: A Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

Independent Study for PDP's or Graduate Coursework Opportunities

Series #1 — Be Informed (FREE for MASCA members) [Click here for Resources](#)

Take advantage of MA Model webinars to inform yourself about the MA Model 3.0; A Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs and components that guide the continued development of your school counseling programs.

Registration will provide resources and links to 6 webinars with accompanying ppts.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

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

15 MASCA PDP's — Cost \$80

[Click here for Resources](#)

Earn PDP's while independently reviewing the MA Model 3.0, completing a self-study audit to assess your progress implementing the MA Model, identifying target program growth areas, and preparing for the academic year by developing your annual school counseling department calendar. Registration will provide resources and links to 6 webinars with accompanying ppts.

Assignments included webinar summaries, MA Model Self-Study Audit, and academic year school counseling calendar.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Series #3 — Be Accountable and Data-Informed (Guided mentoring available.)

20 PDP's — \$125

[Click here for resources](#)

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 the MA Model 3.0 ASSESS webinar and completing the MA Model 3.0 self-study audit, identify a target growth area to implement or one component of your program to assess guided by data collection and analysis. Assignments: Identify your school year student end-goals; Define your SMART research question; Gather program impact data relating to end goal achievement; Assess progress towards achieving that goal with a brief narrative and graphs; Explain barriers faced; Answer the research question; Write an action plan to strengthen future goal achievement. [REGISTER HERE](#)

OPEN REGISTRATION FOR SUMMER/FALL 3 CREDIT MA Model GRADUATE COURSES

MA Model Institutes are vetted by Fitchburg State University for 3 graduate credits. Target course completion Dec. 31, 2023 or as soon as course requirements completed. Inquiries: helenod@att.net.

- *Counselors in K-12 Classrooms: Delivering Curriculum That Supports Achievement & College/Career Readiness*
- *Counselors in K-12 Classrooms: Action Research and Program Assessment*
- *MA Model 3.0 Introductory Workshop*

Coursework guided by MA Model and ASCA Model and requires virtual instruction, webinar viewing, peer collaboration and on-going mentoring and project support. Depending your course selection, outcome goals can include developing mission and vision statements, completing annual calendars, collecting data for program assessment, delivering/assessing standards-aligned lesson plans, and/or designing your curriculum maps, but each Institute course ends with a MARC Jr. document. Required assignments vary based on graduate course selected and are personalized to meet registrant identified needs and outcome goals. Registrants select virtual meeting dates and time.

Trainer: **Helen C. O'Donnell**, Ed.D.; MA Model trainer & writing teams; MA Model 3.0 co-chair/editor;

Course registration \$450 each (incl. 45 MASCA PDP's). 3 graduate credits from Fitchburg State University for an additional \$295.

You must complete an [initial registration HERE](#).

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MASCA

Massachusetts School Counselors Association

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

Visit us on the web at www.MASCA.org

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.