

# MASCA Counselor's Notebook

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION

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November 2016

## President's Message: Time-Saving Techniques

By KATE SALAS, Ed.D., MASCA President

**G**reetings school counselors! The fall seems to be a particularly busy time of the year. Although, we know that every day is a busy day for a school counselor! I have found a few things that help me when it seems like there are just not enough hours in the day.

Most of the tech tips were discovered from reading Jeff Ream's blog The Counseling Geek at <http://www.thecounselinggeek.com>.

### Are you spending too much time on email?

There are a few things you can do. Allot certain times for checking and responding to email. Don't feel like you have to respond instantly. Also, a good rule of thumb is that any more than two responses requires a phone call. It is more effective to have a conversation than spend lots of time going back and forth trying to explain yourself. A quick call can



often times clear things up.

Drowning in junk mail? Try Unroll.me (<https://unroll.me/>)? Simply add your email address and click unsubscribe to all of the things you no longer wish to receive. It's much faster than unsubscribing to each newsletter. The first time I tried it, I was able to unsubscribe to 83 items! **Are you trying to get it all done and be healthy at the same time?**

Talk about a balancing act! How do you do your job, take care of your family, eat right, and exercise all at the same time? I recently discovered Mason jar salads. You can make a few on Sunday evening and then you will be prepared for at least

the beginning of the week. You take a one wide mouth quart jar, put your dressing on the bottom, then a handful of grape tomatoes, then your protein, then the crunchy vegetables, and lastly the lettuce. If you wish to add something a little crunchy like croutons or nuts, put a clean empty applesauce container just under the lid. It will keep the croutons from getting soggy. I replaced my lids with plastic ones (they are easier to clean). Some folks make 5 on Sunday night and then they are set for the week. Personally, 2-3 days is enough, but anything helps! For the rest of the week I get a salad from the cafeteria at school.

Finally, make sure that you take some time to eat your lunch! Go to the teacher's room or close your door and take your lunch break.

*If you have some time-saving tips, I would love to hear about them!*

**C**all for presenters! The Massachusetts School Counselor Association is soliciting proposals for presentations promoting evidence-based programs in the domains of academic, career, and social/emotional development, or highlighting the latest techniques and practices in school counseling. Preference is given to sessions that relate directly to the work of school

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counselors or to the implementation of the MA Model/MA Model 2.0 for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs. For "Call for Presenter

Info," please check out the MASCA website or follow this link: <http://ncyi.org/www/docs/193.470>.

The Board and officers of the association are working hard to create an exciting conference, featuring Carolyn Stone!

The room block at the Holiday Inn in Boxborough will fill rapidly, so please move quickly to reserve a room if you will need one!



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## Social and Emotional Learning Spreads

By DONNA M. BROWN, MASCA Executive Director

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is taking center stage across the country. Even the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is involved. Six years ago, the following mandate was established in Massachusetts: Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010: “An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, approved by the Governor, May 3, 2010, called for a number of requirements to help schools prevent bullying.”

One of the requirements was the creation of guidelines for schools on the implementation of SEL curricula in K-12. As defined by the law, "SEL is the process through which students and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills associated with the core areas of social and emotional competency." The DESE website further explains SEL as “the processes by which children acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to:

- recognize and manage their emotions,
- demonstrate caring and concern for others,
- establish positive relationships,
- make responsible decisions, and
- constructively handle challenging social situations.”

So, how will this impact school counselors in Massachusetts? For one thing, it validates what we do. SEL is an area of expertise for school counselors. Many one-on-one meetings, small groups and classroom presentations have SEL as their themes. One of our primary goals is to help students develop empathy, so as to become caring students, family members, and citizens. Being able to work cooper-

atively, communicate effectively, and resolve conflicts peacefully are key skills to becoming successful, competent learners.

One of the outcomes of this increased interest in SEL is additional resources for counselors to use. As we know, publishers will be flooding our mailboxes with the new best program. At the same time, though, many nonprofits like CASEL.org and Edutopia.org are ramping up their efforts to share research and best practices to those of us in the field.

In an Edutopia.org interview with Roger Weissberg, CEO of CASEL, Weissberg sums up the goals of Social and Emotional Learning: "We want to provide kids with the best possible education so that they are knowledgeable, responsible, caring people who contribute and who are going to succeed in postsecondary education and in careers and as good community and family members. I think there's a growing research base that says when you have high-quality social and emotional learning programs, it improves kids' prosocial behavior; it reduces their conduct problems; and it promotes academic engagement, connection to teachers, and academic performance."

There are many resources available; a Google search of “Social and Emotional Learning” yields hundreds of listings, many of them freebies. We have an opportunity to “strut our stuff” as well-trained competent school counselors able to lead the way in SEL. Let’s take the challenge and help ALL of our students become the very best they can be.

# MASCA

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## Calling All Massachusetts School Counselor Educators: What's New this Year?

By Amy L. Cook, Ph.D., MASCA Board Member

MASCA is building on efforts to expand its network of school counselor educators. Over the past two years, we have had the opportunity to revive our network of Massachusetts school counselor edu-



cators through holding biannual meetings. Thanks to the hospitality of Fitchburg State University, and in collaboration with Dr. Megan Krell, immediate past CO-VP of Counselor Educators and President-Elect of MASCA, we have reestablished our network of counselor educators across the state.

This year, we moved our meetings online, allowing the possibility for greater participation among counselor educators across the state, as well as providing the potential to meet more frequently. Our kickoff meeting this year was on October 17, 2016, during which we shared MASCA updates, but most importantly, identified goals for our collaboration moving forward.

We envision the Massachusetts School Counselor Educator Network to serve the unique needs and interests of school counselor education programs and educators across the state. We hope the meetings provide a forum for open dialogue that are responsive to local, state, and national issues related to the profession. The

network will also provide opportunities to connect school counselor educators who are looking to enhance research collaborations. In addition, the network will provide the space for faculty to provide and receive mentorship

to support the varying needs and roles of faculty along the spectrum of teaching, research, and service.

As a junior faculty member in my fourth year at the University of Massachusetts Boston, I have appreciated opportunities to receive mentorship from senior colleagues and enjoy sharing what I have learned along the way with new, incoming faculty.

In efforts to expand collaborations and strengthen our network, we continually welcome new faculty to join the School Counselor Educator Network and seek your input to ensure we are meeting each network member's needs and interests. I am excited about the potential prospect to enhance these supportive networks, while building collaborative partnerships in research and teaching.

For more information about the network and how to join our next meeting, please do not hesitate to contact me at [amy.cook@umb.edu](mailto:amy.cook@umb.edu). Also, please stay tuned for updates on our next Massachusetts School Counselor Educator Network meeting.

## Tweaking Students' College Lists for Good Financial Fit

By MARK BILOTTA, Author, *Paying for College: Before, During and After* (2017 Edition), and Board President, MassEdCO

Today, more than ever before, it is essential that students' college choices are both good academic *and* financial fits. To assist students, families, and school counselors, the following recommendations may prove financially helpful:

- It is important for students and families to understand the difference between total cost of attendance (sticker price) and net price. Let's be honest, sticker price continues to shock most families. Net price, what most families will pay, is the total cost of attendance minus scholarships and grants and is a bit more palatable to consumers.

Students and families should be encouraged to have thoughtful conversations at home about what they can afford. With the FAFSA now available as of October 1, it is prudent for parents and students to complete it together early on and receive their Expected Family Contribution (EFC) as a starting point. A good backup to the FAFSA is the College Board's own EFC calculator.

- Since student loans are a staple of funding college costs, grasping what is reasonable to borrow during the search process is key to preventing future financial strain. A good rule of thumb today is to limit total student borrowing

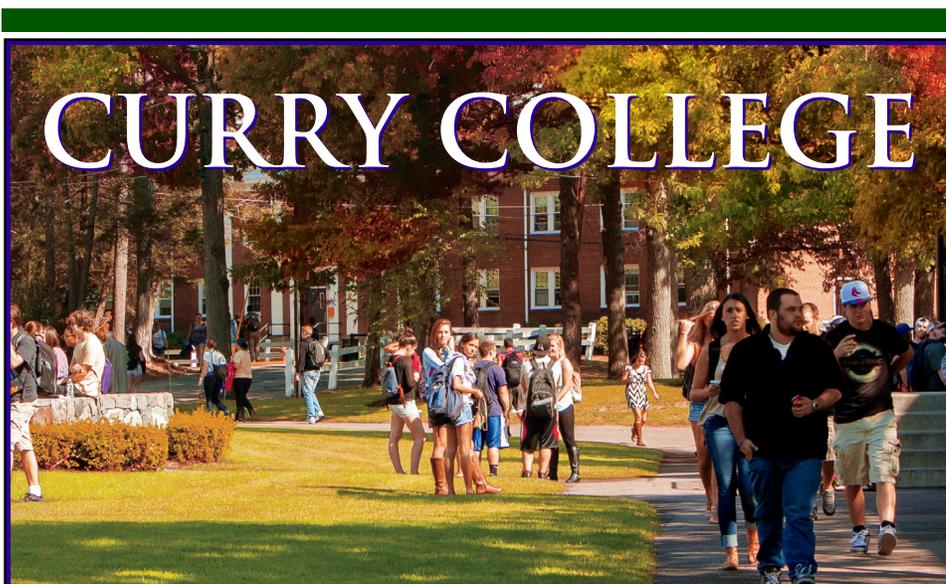
to no more than 10% of future monthly take-home pay. This requires students to estimate their expected annual salary based on their anticipated employment following graduation. For example, a student with an anticipated starting salary of \$45,000 and estimated monthly take-home pay of \$2,800 could reasonably pay \$280 a month in student loans. That equates to borrowing about \$26,000.

- Net price calculators, mandated by the U.S. Department of Education, are a good online tool to receive early estimates of financial aid awards before even applying. It is no secret that some calculators are much better than others. That said, students and families can gain some insight into a specific college's affordability for their family. Unmet financial need and considerable dependence on loans should be enough to encourage families to keep exploring better, more affordable options early on in the search process.

- Asking probing finance-related questions is part of due diligence to make sound financial decisions: Are admissions decisions need-blind? What is the average student debt at graduation? How do private scholarships impact financial aid awards? What's the policy for transferring credits?

- The college scorecard is another online tool that is proving helpful with data. One of the most helpful data points is the graduation rate. The average graduation

*(continued on pg. 5)*



### QUICK FACTS:

- A private, four-year, co-educational liberal arts college founded in 1879
- Serving over 2,000 traditional undergraduate students
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- 24 majors and 65+ minors/concentrations leading to bachelor's and master's degrees
- Student/faculty ratio is 10:1  
Average class size is 20 students
- Approximately 94% of undergraduate students receive some form of financial aid
- Offering a wide array of extra-curricular activities including 14 NCAA Division III athletic teams

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## FINANCIAL (cont'd from page 4)

rate for four-year schools is about 60%, slightly higher for private schools, slightly lower for public. A college with a rate greater than or equal to the national average rate stays on the college list. A college with a graduation rate significantly lower than the national average should sound an alarm with students and families as too risky.

• Students and families should also explore reducing their college costs. Alternatives to the traditional college credits, including AP, are well known. Less known among traditional-aged students are CLEP and DSST challenge exams. For a fee of around \$80, students can take these exams and, with qualifying scores, re-

ceive college credits at participating schools. Worth mentioning is the College Board's noting a rise among high school students opting for the Spanish Language exam and receiving 3 or 6 credits for qualifying scores.

These and other strategies

should be used as early as possible so that students and families move into the final decision making phase more confident that their ultimate enrollment decisions are sound academic and financial fits.

### November Awareness Dates

Adoption Awareness Month  
Military Family Appreciation Month  
National Career Development Month  
National Runaway Prevention Month  
National Scholarship Month

13 World Kindness Day  
13-21 National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week  
14-18 American Education Week  
16 International Day for Tolerance  
17 National Parental Involvement Day  
19 Great American Smokeout  
19 National Adoption Day  
19 National Family Volunteer Day  
25 Native American Heritage Day

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## School Counselor and School Resource Officer Collaboration

By JOHN STEERE, MASCA Board Member

The cafeteria at Wellesley High School can sometimes feel like an intimidating place when I enter it for my twice-a-cycle sojourn on lunch duty. Those of you who have worked in education know what lunch duty really entails. Basically, it is a time for an educational professional to observe several hundred adolescents attempting to squeeze at least ten friends into a circular table that was probably designed for only six. Furthermore, to the few adults who are there to supervise, the energy level and sound of the room can rival a Dropkick Murphy's concert.

However, as chaotic as this may appear and sound, there is something that I see that always brings a smile to my face and makes me feel things are under control. In the thick of this crowd stands a 6'4" man who looks like he could play Tackle for the New England Patriots dressed in his police uniform speaking with a group of young people. What is incredible about this sight is that the students are smiling brightly and happily as they speak to this police officer. The students are showing that they actually want to speak with this officer of the law and have a conversation with him about their day-to-day interactions.

With this past summer of bad publicity for police department and police officers, I wanted the opportunity to discuss how important I believe the role of the School Resource Officer (SRO) is to a school, and more importantly, why I believe that collaboration between SROs school counselors is a good thing for students.

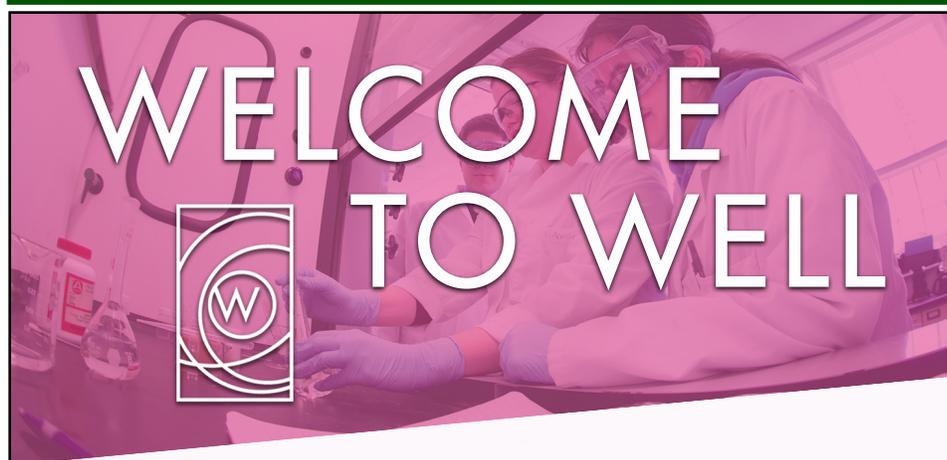
Wellesley's SRO, Officer Evan

Rosenberg, is an alumnus of Wellesley High School and he has been the SRO for the Wellesley Public Schools for the last four years. Every time I see him doing this type of activity in the cafeteria, I always say to myself, "That is a school coun-

selor; the only difference is that he is wearing a police uniform."

I took the opportunity to sit down with Officer Rosenberg and discuss his role as an SRO and his counseling opportunities in the pub-

*(continued on pg. 7)*



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SRO (cont'd from page 6)

lic schools of Wellesley. Here are some excerpts from that interview with Officer Rosenberg:

### **What is your role in the Wellesley Police Department?**

“My job title with the department is School Resource Officer (SRO). As SRO, it is my primary responsibility to be a visible and active law enforcement figure on public school campuses and deal with any police-related issues. I work closely with the school faculty and administration to solve problems and investigate and prevent crimes with the school community, while acting as liaison between the school community and the police department.”

### **Do you do any counseling/advocating for students in your role as SRO?**

“I do counsel students on a daily basis. It can range from an informal conversation explaining the role of law enforcement in the community to having a more formal conference with students, parents, and faculty members to discuss problems related to law enforcement or crime prevention.

On a day-to-day basis I probably have anywhere from 8-12 assign-



**Wellesley High Schools' SRO, Officer Evan Rosenberg, and School Counselor, John Steere**

ments throughout the school district. Aside from counseling, these assignments may include guest lecturing on topics concerning student delinquency, conferring with school administration to develop strategies or minimize dangerous situations on or near campuses, and following-up on juvenile cases that may or may not rise to juvenile court involvement.”

### **Why do you feel it is important for there to be a communicative relationship between the counsel-**

### **ing staff and the SRO?**

“In a lot of ways I feel that guidance counselors and SROs have a similar mission. We both want the best outcome for students. In fact, I like to get guidance counselors involved for all of our department’s cases so they can help me in promoting a mistake as a learning lesson. Mistakes happen and this notion of police-involved students are eventually going down a path of more involvement with the criminal justice system is just not true. I feel that counselors get this.”

I hope that you can see from Officer Rosenberg’s responses that he truly believes in counseling students to make more informed decisions about their behavior. It shows a level of care that he has for the students of Wellesley.

I truly do feel that SROs are key “counselors” in schools and I believe that Officer Rosenberg does this job amazingly at WHS. I hope that all of you within the school counseling world have relationships with your own SROs that are collaborative and positive in order to help provide the best educational opportunities for our students.

## **MA Model 2.0 Needs Input from School Counselors**

The MA Model 2.0 writing team has been hard at work updating and refreshing the existing MA Model 1.0 document. The Foundation, Accountability, Management, and Delivery sections have been enhanced to include current references, appealing graphics, and helpful examples and templates for counselors to use in their practice.

The DRAFT MA Model 2.0 was shared at the MASCA Spring Conference this past April and the team

reached out to colleagues for feedback. That feedback was reviewed and edits were made to all sections at a recent writing team meeting.

In order to give all MASCA members a chance to add their voice, the team is extending the deadline to submit additional feedback. To do so, please go to the MASCA website and download the Microsoft Word version of the MA Model 2.0 document. Add your suggestions by using the “Track Changes” func-

tion, save your changes, and email your new document to [2.0mamodel@gmail.com](mailto:2.0mamodel@gmail.com). Changes should be submitted no later than **November 23, 2016**.

The team will review the responses and create a final document to be released at the 2017 MASCA Spring Conference. More information will be shared at local affiliate and MASCA meetings as well as by eblast, the website, and social media. Get involved and stay tuned!

## Using Individual Learning Plans for College and Career Readiness

To generate a competitive workforce in our 21st century economy, it is imperative that our students graduate from high school ready for further education and training so they are able to pursue a career that will gen-

erate a family-sustaining wage. We know that academic success is essential for college and career readiness, but we also know that of equal importance is the attainment of personal/social skills, along with the acquisition of

workplace readiness skills. The question for K-12 educators is how do we ensure ALL students graduate from high school college and career ready?

Across the country and within our state, districts are using learning plans to engage students in their education and to personalize learning. The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a student-directed, multi-year, dynamic tool that maps academic plans, personal/social growth, and career development activities, while taking into account the student's unique, self-defined interests, needs, and goals for the attainment of post-secondary success. The ILP is designed to increase students' understanding of the connection and relevance of what they do now to their future success.

The ILP is intended for ALL students and can be thought of as an instrument and a process. An online instrument (such as Your Plan for the Future, Naviance, Career Cruising, MassCIS, etc.) provides a place to organize and record progress related to academic, personal/social, and career development information. As a process it:

- Promotes the implementation in a structured time in the school schedule – e.g., advisory period, a college and career planning time, a homeroom period;
- Ensures every student has at least one caring adult to support his/her planning;
- Encourages the student to set goals based on his/her individual

*(continued on pg. 10)*

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## Call for Nominations for the Pillars of MASCA: Memorial Legacy Recognition Award

The Pillars of MASCA: Memorial Legacy Recognition Award was established in 2016 to honor school counseling colleagues who had been career long, active members and leaders serving both their local MASCA affiliate and the Massachusetts School Counseling Association (MASCA), contributing decades of leadership, active participation, assistance, and support for school counselors and the school counseling profession. Pillars demonstrated the following traits:

**P** = Pride, passion and integrity representing MA School Counselors

**I** = Initiatives and efforts promoting the mission and organization of MASCA

**L** = Leadership in MASCA and the local affiliate MASCA

**L** = Long-time dedicated service to MA School Counselors

**A** = Assisting, advocating for and actively promoting MASCA initiatives

**R** = Respect for school counselors and the school counseling profession in MASCA.

### Nomination Criteria for a Pillar of MASCA: Legacy Recognition:

- Documentation of concurrent membership, identified active leadership, and service for minimally 25 years to both their local affiliate and on the MASCA Governing Board.

- Written nomination packets should document specific service and contributions to both the affiliate and MASCA Governing Board PLUS a brief summary tribute statement and a photo for website posting.

- Nomination packets should be forwarded in hard copy to Donna Brown, MASCA Executive Director and electronically to [helenod@att.net](mailto:helenod@att.net) for review by the Retiree Pillars Committee. Candidates who meet the rigorous Pillar qualification requirements and accepted by the Pillars Committee will be submitted to the MASCA President and Executive Director for inclusion on the Governing Board agenda as a MASCA Pillar Nominee.

After approval by the MASCA Governing Board for Pillars of MASCA: Legacy Recognition, the family will be notified and honoree photo and legacy recognition will be posted in the Pillars Library on the MASCA website.

Submissions accepted until **November 30th** for spring recognition.



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[umb.edu/visit](http://umb.edu/visit) or 617.287.6000.



ILPs (cont'd from page 8)

strengths and interests;

- Identifies action steps to achieve goals;
- Fosters development of career awareness, exploration, and immersion activities to prepare students for the workplace;
- Identifies the actions needed to achieve those goals;
- Creates opportunities to increase positive communication between students, school staff, parents, and other influential adults;
- Supports school and district

improvement efforts to be responsive to student interests and needs.

Over 30 states throughout the country legislate the use of ILPs for their students. The ILP research studies by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability (NCWD) indicate that ILPs show promise as an effective strategy for delivering quality career development opportunities. Students who were more engaged in ILP activities reported stronger goal-setting skills, increased

motivation to attend school, and increased academic self-efficacy, which leads to better academic achievement, stress and health management, and readiness to engage in career decision-making.

Teachers, school counselors, and family members highly value ILP and believe that they help students become more focused learners who complete more challenging coursework in order to reach their self-defined career and life goals.

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

Reach Higher MA Working Group #1: Viable Careers and Citizenship for All

is initiating a series of Career Activity ideas that can be delivered in diverse settings and encourage you to infuse a career development strand into your school counseling curriculum and school communities.

Colleagues are welcome to submit brief lessons with identified standards alignments, measurable student learning objectives and outcomes, and interdisciplinary curriculum links.

Submit ideas to Helen O'Donnell at [helenod@att.net](mailto:helenod@att.net).

This month's idea was compiled from visits to schools actually implementing components of this lesson.

### Career Awareness Month

**Description:** In an identified school month, the interdisciplinary school community theme is "Career Awareness." The month concludes with a school community celebration showcasing curriculum lessons and projects for each grade including: art project displays of students who traced their bodies and decorated them dressed as the person in the career would dress; school parades in which students dressed in costumes representing a variety of careers marched the corridors (for an open house, or an outside parade for families); community partners assisting with Career Day events; student presentations about careers of interest and the academic subjects needed to be successful in that career; and student-generated press releases and ads in school newsletters or community media announcing, promoting, and/or reporting on the events.

**Student Outcomes:** By the end of the month, every student will have participated in grade level curriculum about careers, and be able to identify at least one career of interest, and explain the importance of at least one academic subject for entry into that career.

**Standards:** MA Career Development Benchmarks: Appendix C: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/connect/cde/guideglossary.pdf>: Academic/Technical Development A1-3, A2- 1+4, A3-1, A4-1,2+3; Workplace Readiness: W1-1+4, W2- 1,2,3, W3-2

ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success: [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org): Mindset: #4 + # 6; Behaviors (Learning Strategies) #1 + #7; (Social Skills) #1

**Interdisciplinary Links:** Art: Design a graphic of student engaged in the career; Technology: complete an online career inventory; ELA: research and gather information about specific careers, Speaking and Listening Skills; Community Partnerships

## “Viable Careers and Citizenship for All”: Initiatives and Resources

By HELEN C. O’DONNELL, Ed.D., Co-Chair, Working Group #1, Reach Higher MA

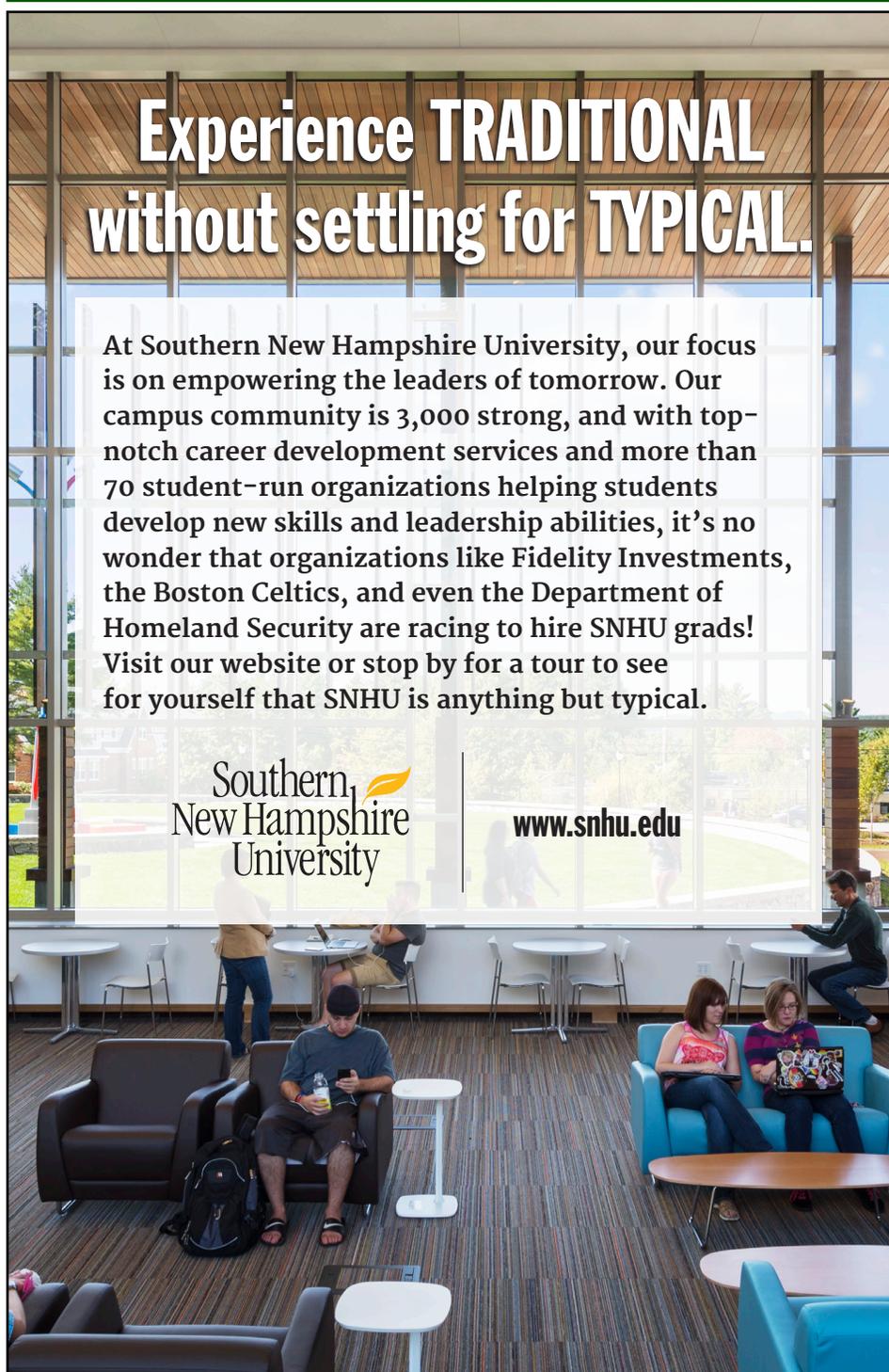
As part of the Reach Higher national initiative guided by First Lady, Michelle Obama, Reach Higher MA has formed Working Groups with a variety of goals. Beth Hennessey from Nipmuc High School and I co-chair Working Group #1: Viable Careers and Citizenship for All. The Reach Higher initiative’s goal is to assist ALL students to Reach Higher and pursue postsecondary education.

At the Spring 2016 MASCA conference, volunteers from Working Group #1 presented two workshops. Beth and I focused on integrating career development into K-12 curriculum. With the help of Anne French from North Adams Public Schools, we developed and provided handouts that identified helpful resources and state and national learning standards that can help counselors and educators align their lessons to measurable objectives. Contact me at [helenod@att.net](mailto:helenod@att.net) if you are interested in copies of the handouts or wish to join Working Group #1. You can get connected to the Reach Higher MA newsletter and resources by emailing Bob Bardwell at [bardwellr@monson-schools.com](mailto:bardwellr@monson-schools.com).

Another excellent library of free open source resources has been compiled by MA Model Institute participants who have provided downloadable copies of best practice materials they have designed and field tested. The Table of Contents includes topics like Foundation, Management, Delivery, and Accountability and includes resources like mission

and vision statement, calendars, and standards-based K-12 lessons in academic/technical, workforce readiness/career, and social/emotional categories. Found under the Conferences/PD tab/MA Model, explore and download materials

at <https://masca.wildapricot.org/MA-Model>. Thank you, Maria Paolettii, for being the librarian of this project. Inquire about MA Model Institute graduate courses offered in your area by contacting [helenod@att.net](mailto:helenod@att.net).



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