

MASCA Counselor's Notebook

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION

Vol. 53, No. 7

March 2017

President's Message: Celebrating School Counselors

By RUTH CARRIGAN., MASCA Acting President/Immediate Past President

I hope that you all had a refreshing, rejuvenating, and well-deserved February school vacation. Before you headed off for your vacation adventures, I hope you had a chance to celebrate National School Counseling Week that took place from February 6 - 10.

I have to admit that I didn't always celebrate this week for my staff since we were always included in teacher/educator appreciation week in April. Over the past few years, though, I have made a concentrated effort to celebrate the school counselors on my staff to recognize the incredible work they do and the difference they make every day.

For us, the week included cards of appreciation, a special luncheon celebration, and due to a snowstorm, two days off from school!

I hope that you had a chance to celebrate, too. I would love to hear what other school counselors across the Commonwealth did to recognize National School Counseling Week! Please feel free to share your stories and pictures with Amy Wheeler-Sutton, the *Counselors Notebook* editor.

With our annual MASCA Conference only a few weeks away, I hope you will make time to attend this great professional development and networking opportunity on April 3 and 4. Our pre-conference and keynote presenter, Carolyn Stone, is an amazing national speaker. If you haven't had a chance to see and hear her in person, don't miss this opportunity! I have attended her presentations at ASCA over the past few years, and her sessions are always well attended and a won-

derful learning experience. Check out the MASCA website at masca.wildapricot.org for conference details and registration links.

One last piece of MASCA business that I want to share is a change in MASCA leadership. Kate Salas has stepped down as our association president due to family issues. We appreciate her dedication and vision and will work hard to carry on the important work of our association. After much deliberation and a review of our bylaws, it was decided that I will assume the role of acting president to complete Kate's term. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you again for all you do for your students every day! You make a difference, you impact the future, and you deserve to celebrate the important work you do!

HAPPY NATIONAL
SCHOOL
COUNSELING
WEEK





The 2017 MASCA Conference is right around the corner! The **30 program sessions** are especially structured to equip, encourage, and strengthen your efforts on the front lines with your students. Please spread the word to your colleagues and others who you know would benefit from high quality professional development.

Dr. Carolyn Stone, nationally-known speaker and school counselor advocate, will be presenting the Pre-Conference (included in registration fee) and the Keynote Address.



- ***Pre-Conference Workshop:*** Legal Muscle to Support LGBTQ Students - Practical guidance and resources to support your students!
- ***Keynote Address:*** Let Your Advocacy Actions Define Your Role! - This is a remarkable Keynote!

You do not want to miss this conference! If you have not already made plans to attend this exciting event on **Monday, April 3 and Tuesday, April 4**, please go to MASCA.wildapricot.org for more details.

While you are registering, please reserve your room at the Boxboro Regency Hotel & Conference Center to take advantage of the **\$99 early bird special!** Staying at the hotel Monday evening provides a great opportunity to network with other counselors from across the state at the **President's Reception** in the relaxing Courtyard. We look forward to seeing you at this exciting conference in April!

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Common Sense Media

By DONNA M. BROWN, MASCA Executive Director

Are you familiar with Common Sense Media? It is a free website with an accompanying e-newsletter that provides educators and parents with information about various media and edtech for students from elementary through high school. Sometimes I only have time to skim the monthly offerings, but in February I downloaded several of the articles including a blog entitled, "The EdTech Eleven: This Month's Must-Know Tools," three websites with great lessons for black history month and an evaluation of "Best Games, Apps, and Sites for Personalized Learning."

As counselors spend more and more time in the classroom, it becomes obvious that some of our methods have to change and be updated. Often, while classroom teachers have sets of Chromebooks or iPads (and the training to use them) the school counselor is lucky to have even been issued a device. And training? Not so much. Thus, we need to make use of what is available.

The CommonSense.org website begins its mission statement with: "Common Sense is the leading independent nonprofit organization dedicated to helping kids thrive in a world of media and technology. We empower parents, teachers, and policymakers by providing unbiased information, trusted advice, and innovative tools to help them harness the power of media and technology as a positive force in all kids' lives." The site itself has three major divisions: Common Sense Media, Common Sense Education, and Common Sense Kids Action, each with its own mission and information of

use to school counselors.

One of the tools mentioned in this month's blog is "Checkology Virtual Classroom." This tool provides students with practice separating fact from fiction. Designed by the News Literacy Project, this app "uses real-world stories and examples."

For counselors of students in K-5 schools, "GoNoodle" is awesome! This tool provides students with "brain breaks" of physical activities ranging from zumba to free exercises. Using a Smartboard, the site provides video activities that are perfect for the pre-lunch kindergarten squirmies.

The list continues with everything from "Bitmoji" which allows users to create personalized emoji to "Seesaw" which allows students and teachers to share work and progress with parents.

Additionally, there are many online training videos for professionals, as well as videos of students learning particular subjects or concepts. For example, a recent video was entitled "Lesson in Action: Talking Safely Online." This slightly over 5 minute lesson is an example of the Digital Citizenship collection available from Common Sense.

For those who would really like to enhance their knowledge of digital citizenship, there are online courses available that target specific grade groupings: elementary, middle and high school.

On the media side, there are reviews and recommendations of movies, video games, and books, often divided into grade/age levels. In February, one of the arti-

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cles, “How to Handle the Violent Videos at Your Kid’s Fingertips,” offered strategies and tips to share with parents. “Girl power! Our 10 new favorite empowering books for girls,” is a list of nonfiction stories about girls who broke stereotypes and succeeded through hard work. The subjects range from Ruth Bader Ginsburg to Ada Lovelace to Kate Warne. Several highlight little known facts -- did you know that

the WWII victory gardens were actually the brainchild of Diana Hopkins, the young daughter of FDR advisor Harry Hopkins?

Whether you are looking for ways to supplement a lesson plan or you are looking for enhancements for a group, look at Common Sense Media. There are lots of resources to augment SEL lessons as well as safety and technology presentations.

CALL FOR PROGRAMS

The Lausanne Learning Institute is seeking proposals from school counselors for sessions for their June SEL conference. The deadline for submissions by MASCA members is **April 15**. Additional information is available on the conference website at linewengland.com.

Coloring within the Lines

By JOHN S. STEERE, MASCA Board Member

On a shopping trip to a local office supply store during the summer, I found myself wandering up and down the aisles looking at all the items that I felt I really didn’t need when I saw something that I felt might actually be a good item to get. On the shelf closest to the ground looking back up at me was a book with barely any words. The book title was Color Me Happy and it was a coloring book full of several intricate patterns that resembled something out of the Beatles Yellow Submarine album.

As I looked through the book, I remembered attending a professional development meeting the previous year where an educational professional stated in their presentation that the minimal act of coloring is a modest way of practicing mindfulness and relieving stress. At the time, I seriously thought this statement was one of the most ridiculous things I had ever heard. In my mind, coloring was only done by elementary students and toddlers when their teachers or parents were needing a few minutes of peace and quiet. Also I felt that

there was no way that an adult like me would take enjoyment and find stress relief in coloring.

However, adults in the United States reportedly are finding the ex-



act opposite of what I initial thought about coloring. In an online article from NBC News, “Producers of coloring books for adults can’t seem to print them fast enough.” Illustrator Lisa Congdon states, “The popularity of coloring books right now is part of that larger movement to break away from the hustle and bustle of life and sort of the internet... this urge to constantly look at our phone or our computers or check

our e-mail.” As I stood there in the aisle continuing to thumb through the book, I made a decision to buy the book and six others of a similar title. I also bought seven boxes of colored pencils. I was going to give this practice a try.

On the first day of school, I presented to my advisory students their coloring book and colored pencils and asked that once a week, I would like for us to take the eight minutes of advisory and color. During this time, the daily stress of high school will be put on hold and all of us will attempt to concentrate fully on the pictures that we are bringing to life. As I write this article in March,

so far this experience of coloring has been fantastic! As professional school counselors, I challenge you to try coloring either by yourself or with your students and see how it impacts your day. I do believe it will bring about a sense of positivity and optimism to you as it has done for my students and me, but more than anything else it will get you to see how beautiful the colors are in the world.

Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program

This FREE training will prepare school staff and community members to implement the SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program for middle and high school youth, and to provide gatekeeper training to adults in their schools and communities. Topics include: warning signs, risk factors, and symptoms of depression and suicide in youth; how to respond to youth at risk; SOS Signs of Suicide Prevention Program implementation steps;

mock implementation using the “Friends for Life” video & sample student discussion; training adults to support at-risk youth in seeking help; barriers to youth suicide prevention and action steps to take

Attend one of these trainings to learn more about how to receive an

SOS Program at no charge to your school.

3/15/17 - Groton Country Club,
Register: <http://www.tadsma.org/training/index.htm>

4/12/17 - Sandwich Public Library
Register: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SOSontheCape>

Visit the Counselor's Corner section of the MASCA website to learn more about events, resources, and information not officially sponsored by MASCA, but which may be of general interest to the counseling community.

<https://masca.wildapricot.org/Counselors-Corner>

March Awareness Dates

Gender Equality Month
National Nutrition Month
Women’s History Month

1 Self-injury Awareness Day
2 Read Across America Day
5-12 National Sleep Awareness Week
6-10 National School Breakfast Week
8 International Women’s Day
21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
23-27 National Youth Violence Prevention Week

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Expanding Opportunities: Looking at Supporting Early College Programming

For first generation and underrepresented students, early college is an opportunity to engage in college-level work, to develop a deeper understanding of the college experience, and to envision themselves

as college students. As postsecondary education becomes increasingly necessary to participate in a 21st century economy, early college has the potential to close the educational attainment gap between advantaged

and disadvantaged youth. Early college opportunities can increase all students' ability to engage in an economically viable educational and career pathway.

Most high schools in Massachusetts offer some form of early college programming that supports college credit accumulation through initiatives such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and articulated coursework. Massachusetts high schools also collaborate with higher education institutions to provide college courses in which students earn both high school and college credit (dual enrollment). Some high schools offer a comprehensive early college experience, where students engage in early college career pathway models that integrate a high school and college sequence of academic and career-focused coursework, including work-based learning experiences, leading to a specific degree in a particular industry or field.

Early college programming incorporates credit-bearing college coursework into the high school experience to support an increased number of students graduating from high school and going on to earn a postsecondary credential. While dual enrollment is the foundation for all early college programs, additional programming elements are necessary to implement a comprehensive early college model with a focus on a particular industry or field.

The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

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COUNSELOR'S NOTEBOOK



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and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education met on January 24, 2017 to discuss the implementation of what could be a sea change in the early college landscape. On that date, both Boards resolved to create a Massachusetts Early College Designation.

Proposed Massachusetts Early College Designation Process:

1. There shall be a five-member Early College Joint Committee (ECJC) consisting of: the chair of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE); the chair of the Board of Higher Education (BHE); a member of the BESE appointed by the chair of the BESE; a member of BHE appointed by the chair of BHE; and the Secretary of Education. The Commissioner of Higher Education and the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, or their respective designees, shall be non-voting members of the ECJC and shall staff the ECJC.

2. The ECJC shall design, develop and coordinate the administration of a Massachusetts Early College program across agencies with existing and new resources.

3. The ECJC shall develop criteria for designating partnerships among public K-12 institutions and public or private Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) as Massachusetts “Early College Schools.” The ECJC shall seek stakeholder input in developing the designation criteria. Said designation criteria shall:

- a) be based on the key design principles set forth below;
- b) include a review and designation approval process; and
- c) include performance measures to aid in evaluating the performance of participating institutions/ part-

nerships and the overall effectiveness of the program.

4. The ECJC shall also review options for funding the planning, start-up, and on-going operation of “Early College Schools,” including continuing state support per enrolled student (currently estimated at \$700-900) in a designated “Early College School” and a method for counting student enrollment in such schools as a potential enrollment category for the purpose of calculating foundation budgets under Chapter 70 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

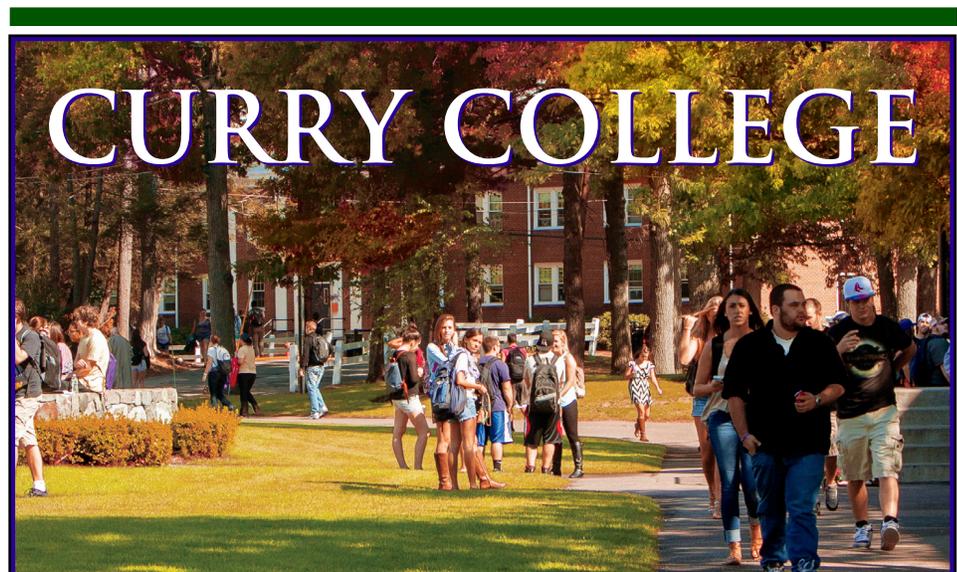
5. The ECJC shall report back to the BHE and BESE boards, either individually or through a joint session, on the proposed designation criteria and grant procurement criteria by June 30, 2017.

Key Design Principles of a Massachusetts Early College School:

1. **Equitable Access:** Designated programs should prioritize students underrepresented in higher education enrollment and completion. To facilitate this, programs should be structured to eliminate barriers to student participation.

2. **Guided Academic Pathways:** Designated programs should be structured around clear and detailed student academic pathways with regard to coursework, sequencing, and experiences beyond the classroom, requiring students to complete at least twelve college credits that count towards a postsecondary credential. Programs should also offer students substantive exposure to career opportunities in high de-

(continued on pg. 9)



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Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition and Transition/Return-to-School Programs

By PAUL HYRY-DERMITH, Director of BRYT, Brookline Community Mental Health Center

In the United States, one in every five adolescents has a serious mental health disorder and 5-9% of teens have mental health concerns so severe that they necessitate hospitalization or result in prolonged absences from school. These youth disproportionately drop out of school,

attempt suicide, abuse alcohol and drugs, and function poorly at home, school, and/or in their social lives.

Over a decade ago, Brookline Community Mental Health Center launched Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT, pronounced “bright”) at Brookline High. BRYT is

an innovative, school-based program that addresses the needs of students reentering school after absences due to serious mental health or medical illness. Since then, nearly 50 Massachusetts high schools have established similar programs, adapting the BRYT model to the specific assets, cultures, and needs of their schools; more than 25 additional schools are in various stages of planning for program start-up. In many cases, school counselors have been the “champions” who have worked to bring these programs to their schools.

BRYT recognizes that both mental health and academic supports are necessary for successful reentry, and its model has proven to be highly effective – helping students develop resilience, regain health, maintain social connection, and continue and complete their high school education. While program design differs from school to school, the basic elements are simple and consistent: **Space:** a dedicated classroom, open and staffed every day, every period; **Staffing:** dedicated clinical and academic support staff; **Services:** clinical support, care coordination, academic support, and family support.

Having these “3 S’s” in place allows for effective transition planning and continued engagement with the student, family, other school staff, and outside providers from reentry to the student’s return to class full time.

School counselors repeatedly express a high level of satisfaction with BRYT/return-to-school programs. Counselors know that the highest-needs students on their caseloads are getting what they need and continue to stay in contact with these stu-

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mand fields, allowing them to make an informed decision about which career pathway to pursue. Students should also be exposed to the authentic experience and academic rigor of postsecondary education. This would require validating that courses are as rigorous as college level courses offered on campuses. Further, programs should prioritize allowing students to take courses on college and university campuses where possible, and otherwise offer experiences intended to acculturate students to the post-secondary experience.

3. Enhanced Student Support: Designated programs should incorporate sufficient wraparound services to promote academic success and completion, taking into consideration the needs of diverse populations of students.

4. Connection to Career: Designated programs should expose students to a variety of career opportunities including greater depth in careers relevant to their selected pathway, for example, by providing opportunities for targeted workforce and career skills development, career counseling, and elements of experiential and workplace learning.

5. Effective Partnerships: Designated programs should be a partnership between at least one institution of higher education and one secondary school and/or district, and may include one or more employers. Partnerships should present evidence that the program is consistent with collective bargaining agreements and memoranda of understanding detailing the nature of governance, budget, sustainability, scheduling, respective responsibilities, and performance measures.

MARCH 2017

Programs should be sufficient in size to capture economies of scale goals and to ensure long-term sustainability.

The ECJC shall work with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Higher Education, and the Executive Office of Education to ensure that the development of design principles and a designation process for “Early College Schools” is coordinated and aligned with similar planning efforts that are underway regarding “High-Quality Career Pathways.”

Resources on Early College: The Rennie Center put together an issue brief, [Early College Designs: Achieving College- and Career-Readiness for All](#). This report highlights innovative Massachusetts

programs offering pathways to college that allow students to pursue a postsecondary credential even before earning a high school diploma. Early college designs, which allow students to earn both high school and college credits simultaneously, are among the most effective strategies for promoting higher rates of postsecondary access, persistence, and completion. In its new report, part of the [Roadmap to Expanding Opportunity](#) series of issue briefs, the Rennie Center identifies three effective models of early college programs and compiles cost estimates for replicating these models in other districts. See recent coverage of the report release in [The Atlantic](#) and the [National Journal](#), as well as a [Letter to the Editor](#) published in the Boston Globe.

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College, Career and Technical Education (CCTE) e-Newsletter

The first edition of the College, Career and Technical Education (CCTE) e-Newsletter has been released. It will be published seasonally to inform you of major updates and activities within the newly formed Office for College, Career, and Technical Education at the DESE. The mission of the CCTE unit is to help all students become college and career ready by giving them the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to successfully navigate to completion an economically-viable career pathway and to participate as an active and responsible citizen. In this issue, you will have an opportunity to meet the CCTE staff and learn about recent developments and major priorities that drive our work – all in support of the educators and students in the Commonwealth. Find the e-newsletter here: <https://masca.wildapricot.org/Counselors-Corner/4589755>.

BRYT (cont'd from page 7)

dents, but they are able to focus their efforts on their full caseloads rather than spending extensive amounts of time with a few high-need students.

The BRYT Team works statewide to support schools in developing new transition/return-to-school programs and supporting continuous improvement in existing programs. We are

happy to be in touch with schools who want to know more about this work. Please contact Katherine Houle, BRYT Associate Director, at (617) 312-1979 or katherinehoule@brooklinecenter.org, or Paul Hyry-Dermith, BRYT Director, at (413) 219-8587 or paul_hyry-dermith@brooklinecenter.org.

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College, Career & Technical Education e-Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1 Winter, 2017

INTRODUCING THE OFFICE FOR CCTE

From Commissioner Mitchell Chester
As part of an agency-wide reorganization last spring, the former offices of Career Vocational Technical Education and College and Career Readiness were merged into one new unit called the Office for College, Career and Technical Education (CCTE) in the new Center for Educational Options. This merger strengthens our commitment to prepare students for postsecondary education opportunities and economically viable career pathways, regardless of the education delivery system. In November 2016, it was my pleasure to promote Keith Westrich to the position of Associate Commissioner to lead the CCTE team in this important work.

From Associate Commissioner Keith Westrich
Welcome to the first edition of the CCTE e-Newsletter, published seasonally to inform you of major updates and activities within this newly formed unit. Our mission is to help all students become college and career ready by giving them the knowledge, skills and experiences necessary to successfully navigate to completion an economically viable career pathway and to participate as an active and responsible citizen. In this issue, you have an opportunity to meet the CCTE staff and learn about recent developments and major priorities that drive our work – all in support of the educators and students in the Commonwealth.

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

Colleagues are welcome to submit brief lessons with identified standards alignments, measurable student learning outcomes, and interdisciplinary curriculum links. Submit to Helen O'Donnell at helenod@att.net.

21st Century Learning Conference

Submitted by: Elizabeth Hennessy, ehennessy@mursd.org, Career & Community Coordinator, Nipmuc Regional HS Upton, MA

Description: Preparing all students for the careers and life they desire includes providing rigorous academics, the ability to collaborate and communicate effectively, and opportunities to practice those skills through authentic experiences. The 21st Century Learning Conference is a one-day career development activity for all high school students. During the conference, business, collegiate, and community partners join faculty in offering sessions in their area of knowledge. Students enjoy the autonomy they have in selecting their conference schedule. Perception data from students indicates that students believe the experiences offered during workshops help them to connect skills taught in school to the real world.

Procedure:

- 1) Decide on a theme. Consider the selection of a timely topic, such as civic engagement, for example, or survey the school community to determine interest.
- 2) Enlist the support of the faculty and community partners.
- 3) Generate workshop ideas based upon the theme and solicit presenters.
- 4) Utilize conference software such as sched.com.
- 5) Publicize your conference. Success generates success. Since holding the first conference in the fall of 2015, Nipmuc's events have grown in popularity with the greater community, parents, and collegiate and industry partners. Publicizing the conference was key.
- 6) Evaluate! Create opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences. Also, collect feedback from all participants including attendees, faculty, and outside presenters. Use the information gathered to inform the next conference.

Authentic 21st Century Conferences Experiences:

Students use event software to register for the event.

Students provide suggestions for program sessions that are organized around diverse college and career themes (financial literacy, technical skills, technology, etc.).

Students select their sessions and organize their schedules.

Students are provided a supported opportunity to attend a professional conference, practice "dressing for success," apply time management skills, and practice networking with professionals.

Students apply professional communication and interpersonal skills in an authentic setting. Professionals participating in the conference interact with students with handshakes and professional courtesy.

Curriculum Benchmarks and Links:

A1: 21st Century academic/technical and employability skills for success school and the workplace

A2: Strong academic, technical and employability skills for career and life management

A3: Knowledge of how education and work are interrelated and contribute to the economy and society

A4: An appreciation for the relevance of education in their lives (i.e., answering, "Why do I need to know this?")

ASCA Mindsets 5, 6

CTE: Strand 4

You are invited to Nipmuc Regional High School's 21st Century Learning Conference March 29, 2017

IN CASE OF NON-DELIVERY, RETURN TO:

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Bryantville, MA 02327



The mission of MASCA is to advocate for school counselors in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by providing leadership, collaboration, and professional development.

Stay informed by visiting MASCA's website regularly.

You can share your views with fellow MASCA members by joining in the Forum.

<https://masca.wildapricot.org/>

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