



March 2019

Greetings from Bob Bardwell

Welcome to the first Reach Higher Massachusetts (RHM) newsletter of 2019. I am excited to share with you updates regarding the Reach Higher initiative here in Massachusetts. We continue to be a strong state team and I feel fortunate to have such a wonderful group of dedicated volunteers willing to continue to participate.

Planning has already begun for the 2019 Reach Higher Massachusetts Convening which will be on Monday, August 19 at Bridgewater State University. Angel Perez, Vice President, Enrollment and Student Success at Trinity College, Hartford CT will be the keynote speaker. The theme will be *Reaching Higher Massachusetts: Urging Access, Equity and Excellence for All*. If you wish to submit a breakout session proposal you may do so by March 15 at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfvGZNUkPlmiZs_hGIZuedgGXF4YCdZ7-rozSk4mG-4_IFE7g/viewform. We want to hear from you about what great programs and opportunities you are involved with that can achieve the goal of the Convening. Please contact Christine Scafidi (cscafidi811@gmail.com) if interested in helping coordinate this exciting event.

Here are some other items of interest regarding Reach Higher Massachusetts

- We welcome Apelila Joseph from the Springfield Public Schools to the RHM Leadership Team, replacing Jackney Joseph. We thank Jackney for her many years of service on the Leadership Team and welcome Apelila. Her work in the Springfield Public Schools in the area of financial aid support and awareness is both exciting and necessary to our mission.
- By the time you have received this newsletter, MASCA & NEACAC will have completed their Advocacy Day on Beacon Hill. A bill has been filed by State Representative Dan Cahill that would provide funding to add more school counselors to Gateway Cities. Also, MASCA has hired a lobbyist who will help us promote the school counseling profession and this bill in particular. Look for additional information in the coming months about what you can do to support this legislation.
- DESE has completed the second of three College Career Advising sessions that are being provided this year to teams of school staff members for 83 schools across the state. The third round of workshops will be in March. The goal is to get 80 more next year and the year after.

The spring season is always busy and seems to move faster and faster, especially if you work in a school setting. Stay tuned for news alerts and updates on these exciting initiatives. Please contact me at bardwellr@monsonschools.com or 413.267.4589x1109 if you have any questions or want to get involved. Thank you for your continued interest in RHM.

Sincerely,

Bob Bardwell
RHM Team Lead

Reaching Higher Massachusetts Convening “Urging Access, Equity and Excellence for All”

A professional convening for school counselors, higher education and community-based professionals to share best practices that support students on their path to college and career success.

Keynote Speaker
[Angel B. Perez](#), PhD.
Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success,
Trinity College

Monday, August 19th, 2019, 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Sponsored by: Bridgewater State University
No cost to participants. Light breakfast and lunch provided.

To submit a session proposal no later than **March 15th**, click [HERE](#)

For more information, go to www.reachhigherma.org
Or email Christine Scafidi at: cscafidi811@gmail.com

Springfield Promise Program: College Financial Aid Advising

Apelila Joseph, Springfield Promise Administrator

Since 2009, the City of Springfield has been providing students and families with college financial aid counseling and a last dollar scholarship through the Springfield Promise Program. Initially, the City of Springfield utilized a Boston based nonprofit to facilitate these services within public and charter schools. In the Fall of 2016, the City of Springfield and Springfield Public Schools brought the Springfield Promise Program in-house and launched their own district team of Financial Aid Advisors to replace the use of the outside nonprofit.

The Springfield Promise Program district team is tasked with supporting high school seniors and their families through the college financial aid process, including support for completing financial aid forms, identifying affordable college options, understanding award letters, and completing scholarships. This in-district team further supports the School Department’s mission for all students to graduate college and career ready and to go on to postsecondary education. The team supports all the high schools in Springfield, including three charter schools, Springfield Public High Schools, and the Springfield Public Alternative High Schools. As district employees, the financial aid advisors created a stronger collaboration with high school counselors, which has led to a stronger college planning team for the City’s students. This increased capacity enables families to receive individual advising and support from their school counselor, financial aid advisor, and other college access organizations based in the school buildings. In addition to supporting students during the school year, the financial aid advisors also work with the school counselors over the summer to prevent summer melt by connecting with recent graduates in the summer and providing walk-in hours at all the high schools.

The Financial Aid Advisors are now in their third year of implementation. Since the start, Springfield Public School's FAFSA completion rate has steadily increased with last year's completion rate being within 3% of the State completion rate. This school year alone, students and families were able to attend evening and weekend FAFSA completion events, receive scholarship support during school vacations, and setup individual appointments for the entire family to learn about the college financial aid process. The Springfield Promise Program also provides early college awareness counseling to students in grades 9-11, which includes early FSA ID creation, awareness about the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship and the connection to MCAS performance, as well as education around the financial aid process for students and their parents.



College and Career Advising and MyCAP Workshop Series

The second in a three-workshop series, designed to build district/school capacity to customize and implement high-quality College and Career Advising (CCA) and MyCAP (My Career and Academic Plan) programs was held in four locations in Massachusetts in January! DESE, in partnership with MASCA, developed these workshops and retained PCG as a consultant.

Workshop 2 provided teams with time to design a grade level scope and sequence of CCA lessons within the state's new CCA Framework. Participants learned how to integrate their district/school online college and career planning systems, and develop plans for MyCAP. They were also introduced to ways of including social/emotional learning, career development education and college access activities into their CCA program.



Workshop 3 of the series will take place in March:

Workshop 3: Will focus on helping schools create a plan to successfully implement, and evaluate, their new district/school CCA and MyCAP program. Participants will develop communication materials needed to explain the value of CCA and MyCAP to multiple stakeholders, and design an evaluation strategy for their program.

Participants are surveyed after each workshop.

There will be another workshop series in FY20, with capacity for at least 80 more high schools



MEFA Seminar: “After the College Acceptance”

During March and April, MEFA will be holding over 20 free seminars around Massachusetts on the topic of “After the College Acceptance” to help parents and students understand financial aid award letters and make a plan to pay for college. An experienced MEFA representative will provide an overview of the college payment process, including the details of financial aid award letters, using payment plans, different financing options, and how to minimize debt. Parents and students are also encouraged to bring financial aid award letters to get all of their questions answered after the presentation. Families should visit [MEFA’s website](#) to find a seminar convenient to them or sign up for a webinar. They can also download a copy of the seminar presentation and find other tools and resources to assist in the college planning process.

MEFA also has a number of recorded webinars available for counselors to listen to at any time on our Counselors Training and Events page: mefa.org/counselors/training-and-events/

“Paying for College” Workshop

Reach Higher Massachusetts Financing Postsecondary Education Committee

The Reach Higher Postsecondary Financing subcommittee is continuing its work to bring professional development to graduate students in school counseling programs across MA. Along with our MASFAA (Massachusetts Association of Financial Aid Administrators) and MASCA colleagues, co-chairs, Julie Shields-Rutyna, Director of College Planning for the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA), and Mark Bilotta, Board President of MassEdCO and author of ***Paying for College: Before, During and After (2018 Edition)*** have developed resources and a flexible curriculum specifically focused on helping school counselors better understand the issues surrounding financing a postsecondary education. They are reaching out to the programs in Massachusetts to work with faculty members to develop a program that works best in the context of their classes. So far we have workshops scheduled at Boston University and Lesley University for the spring.

For more information on this workshop please contact:

Julie Shields-Rutyna, Director of College Planning, MEFA Jshields-rutyna@mefa.org

Mark Bilotta, CEO, MassEdCO mbilotta@massedco.org

Current Members of this Group include:

Jonathan Sparling, Associate Director of College Planning, MEFA

Christina Coviello, Senior Assistant Director of Financial Assistance, Boston University

Amy Staffier, Director of Financial Aid, Simmons University

Kevin Fudge, Director of Consumer Advocacy and Ombudsman, American Student Assistance

Jessalynne Brown, Counseling Student, Fitchburg State University

MassHire

Network of public career centers and workforce boards

By Shannon N. Doran

During the Fall of 2018, the state of Massachusetts gave the forty-five state organizations that are focused on creating connections between employers and job seekers with the a unified brand, MassHire. Now, the 29 Career Centers and the 16 Workforce Boards across the state all include 'MassHire', the name of the region, and 'Career Center' or 'Workforce Board' respectively. (For example: 'MassHire Holyoke Career Center' or 'MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board') Depending on what browser you are using, you may have also noticed that 'MassCIS' is now ['MassHire Career Information System'](#).

Why does this matter to school counselors and individuals across the state?

MassHire Career Centers are invaluable public resources which, as stated on the [MassHire Department of Career Services website](#), "provide(s) job seekers with career guidance as well as referrals to jobs and training." The rebrand as well as education about MassHire Career Centers will greatly increase the chances that high school graduates, whether attending college or not, will access this resource when (not if) they need it as adults. The unified brand will also make it a lot easier for anyone moving from one part of the state to find their new MassHire Career Center.

Making high school students (ie. Seniors) aware of the MassHire Career Center network is a strategic career domain intervention. The reality is that most high schools are not able to provide students with opportunities to gain relative mastery with job search processes and tools (networking, cover letters, resumes, interviewing, thank you letters, etc.). We can't assume that they will learn this at college either. Research by Gallup and the Strada Education Network revealed that only 20% of undergraduates go to their college career center to learn how to find work – even though only a small percentage (34%) reported being confident about competing in the job market. According to Guy Berger, an economist at LinkedIn, millennials will change jobs an average of four times during the decade following college (twice as often as Gen Xers). MassHire Career Centers can serve as a more immediate resource for those students who do not go to college or do not complete college. If you are helping your students develop MyCAPS (My Career and Academic Plan), consider recommending that MassHire Career Centers be listed as a resource to support upcoming or future work-life transitions.

Of course, the earlier we can instill world-of-work knowledge and empower students with get-a-job resources, the better. The MassHire Workforce Boards are where most of the regional School-to-Career Connecting Activities Coordinators are located (even though Connecting Activities is an initiative of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education). School-to-Career Connecting Activities Coordinators augment the work being done by high schools within the college and career domain – with the emphasis on "career-readiness". They support school-to-employer connections, work-based learning opportunities, and other activities that inform and prepare high school students for the world of work. If you are not already collaborating with your regional School-to-Career Connecting Activities representative, you can find their contact information at <http://massconnecting.org>.

To read the official press release about the MassHire rebrand, click here: <https://www.mass.gov/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-masshire-brand-for-commonwealths-workforce-system>.

RESOURCE

MASCA's Counselor's Notebook Career Activity Corner

For 3 years, the MASCA's *Counselors Notebook* has hosted a monthly Career Corner Activity page highlighting K-12 multitiered career lessons and activities to promote implementation of CDE education for all students. They include alignment with the MA Career Development Education Benchmarks, , interdisciplinary curriculum opportunities, and often data gathering suggestions to assess student impact. See www.masca.org and link on past CN issues.

MA Model 2.0 Professional Development Opportunities: CDE Delivery and Accountability

Endorsed by DESE, the MA Model 2.0 for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs guides the implementation of the ASCA Model 3.0. In addition to MA Model Institutes that offer 45 PDP's or 3 graduate credits (*Introductory Institute, MA Model 2: Next Steps, and Counselors in K-12 Classrooms* – inquiries helenod@att.net), both DESE and MASCA have disaggregated components of the MA Model (Foundation, Management, Delivery, and Accountability) for target PD opportunities.

The **Delivery** component is highlighted in the DESE-MASCA CCA/MyCAP (formerly ILP) training currently being presented regionally to HS teams that include administrators, counselors, and educators. The goals include engage the school community to partner implementing CDE for ALL students and to strategically plan the delivery of a standards-based, sequential workforce readiness curriculum for student in a targeted grade for pilot implementation next year. IF you are not part of the initial HS cohort, it will be repeated next year.

The **Accountability** component is developed in the DESE-MASCA PD initiative *Digging Deeper with Data* to encourage counselors to gather data to assess the impact of Tier 1 instruction and identify achievement gaps for closing the gap interventions.

The MASCA MA Model 2.0 committee is presenting the following 1- day regional workshops

- **REVISITING and REENERGIZING MA MODEL 2.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

Focus: K-12 CDE/workplace readiness school counseling curriculum development

Wed., **March 20th** @ Dean College, Franklin 8:30-2:45 Light lunch included.

Email for date/sites of additional (5 hour) regional workshops or schedule one in your area

MA Model 2.0 promotes the development of a workplace readiness/career strand of the school counseling core curriculum. Join colleagues for a 1-day K-12 curriculum sharing workshop and reenergize your CCR curriculum

- **ACTION RESEARCH and THE ACCOUNTABLE COUNSELOR:
DOCUMENTING YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM'S IMPACT
WITH MASCA'S MA ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT CARD (MARC or MARC
Jr.)**

Mon., April 29th in Hyannis 10-2:45 Light lunch included in Hyannis

Email for date/sites of additional (5 hour) regional workshops or schedule one in your area.

To Register:

Name, email and contact phone number to Helen O'Donnell., helenod@att.net

Cost: \$50/pp (PO's will have a \$10 processing fee)). Certificates of Attendance provided.

Opportunity to convert workshop hours and registration cost into registration for MA Model Institutes (*Introductory Institute* or *Next Steps 2.0*) OR *Counselors in K-12 Classrooms* offered for 45 PDP's or 3 Graduate Credits (additional fee) from Fitchburg State University.

Save the Date!

2019 Reach Higher Massachusetts Convening

**Monday, August 19, 2019
Bridgewater State University**

Reach Higher Massachusetts Guiding Coalition Meetings

March 28, 2019, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Boston University

**Wheelock College of Education and Human Development
2 Silber Way, Room: IMC 423**

June 25, 2019, 9:00 am - 12 Noon

MSAA in Franklin, MA