



# MONTANA SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION

## Hello and Goodbye -Barb Holden, MSCA President

Fall 2007

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Just as school starting is a time for transitions, so is October a time for transitions with MSCA. As of October, Kristy Savaria becomes MSCA's new president for the next two years. We all welcome her into this new role. She has worked hard to gain the leadership skills she needs for this job as well as a good understanding of the profession as it now stands in Montana and nationally. I know our organization will continue to thrive under her leadership. Welcome, Kristy!

With that transition I finish my two years as President. I thank all of you for this opportunity to serve you and all school counselors in Montana. I am very proud of the effort and accomplishments of my Board. Those counselors did a great job working for all of you. We are now maturing into an organization with sustainability that will allow MSCA to serve school counselors for many years to come. We are now a legal non-profit corporation, chartered as a state affiliate with a nationally

(ASCA) approved set of by-laws. We operate from a newly approved set of Policies and Procedures following the guidelines of an annually reviewed and updated Strategic Plan. Each board member is more clearly defining her job description and finding new ways to better relate to counselors at all levels. ASCA is well aware of counselors in Montana and see us as a vibrant group working for students all across Montana. Thank you to my Board and thank you to all of you for your involvement and support.

## **SAVE THE DATE!!**

MSCA SPRING CONFERENCE DATES ARE

APRIL 17 and 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Location is at the Bozeman, Montana Holiday Inn. Expect a few changes this year! Conference sessions will be Thursday and Friday with a special evening event on Thursday. There will be more information to come at a later date. If you are interested in helping with the conference, contact Kristy Savaria at:

406-259-5827 home or 406-628-3452 work (12:00-12:50).

Enter this date in your planner today and make your plans to be involved. It's a new year!

## “School bells ringing...children singing...

...it’s back to school again”

-Elaine Schoyen, Middle School Vice-President

Inevitably, each fall a familiar jingle from my childhood days begins to play in my mind over and over again. It goes like this, “*School bells ringing...children singing...it’s back to Robert Hall again!*” While the advertisement was obviously created to draw families through the company’s doors to outfit children for the new school year, I am thinking that this is also about children being able to renew...to have genuine hope about starting out fresh.

As school counselors, we will be actively reading comments made by last year’s teachers, which most often will be from our present district. Perhaps the comments will be our own or those from a previous district. I’d like to suggest that we just might be able to influence how others view our students and increase their success in being able to renew or to have hope about that fresh start. Personally, as I gear up to start a new school year, I have decided to revisit a course guide by a previous instructor, Marjorie Green, where she provided simple examples of reframing and metaphors that encouraged positive or neutral connotations to our student’s characteristics. I am reminded by Ms. Green that by reframing I am “finding a new perceptual outlook on a situation, one that fits the facts of the situation, is plausible, and (usually) is more positive or useful than the original outlook.” Below, I’d like to share some of her examples, but please keep in mind that not all listed alternate connotations will be age-appropriate for the various students that we work with throughout the day/year.

### Reframing By Assigning Positive or Neutral Connotations

<u>Original Connotation</u>	<u>Possible Positive or Neutral Connotations</u>
Hyperactive	Spirited, high energy
Rude, lacks social graces	Forthright, does not stand on ceremony
Annoying	Persistent
Distractible	Perceptive, notices everything
Rule breaker	Independent, challenger
Poor planner	Changes strategies often
Impatient	Results-oriented, doesn’t sweat small stuff
Silly, immature	Lively, dramatic, adds humor
Lazy, unmotivated	Cautious, sets minimal goals
Talker	Friendly, high social awareness

### Metaphors That Can Help Encourage Positive or Neutral Connotations

<u>Original Connotation</u>	<u>Possible Positive or Neutral Connotation</u>
Hyperactive	“Energizer Bunny”
Pesters, annoys	“Mosquito”
Bad influence	“Not a match”
Doesn’t mind own business	“Throws Gasoline on Fire”
Inappropriate use of classroom materials	“Tool/Toy/Weapon”

Realizing that this is a brief list, I welcome you to write your own creative alternate connotations. Remember to make your connotations more positive or neutral, but still “fits the facts.” If you’d like to share your additions, I will include them in our next MSCA Newsletter for our members.

I hope that your own jingle will be playing over and over again in your head, as you ready yourself for the best year ever. May that special jingle motivate you to reframe and assign alternate connotations during parent/teacher conferences, team meetings, or when you are encouraging a student to view another’s or self’s negative description (s) with a positive connotation. You see...as school counselors we realize that we too must be able to *renew and start the school year fresh.*

## Welcome Back

-Linda Konesky, k-12 Vice President

Someone once said, "There are three reasons to be a teacher: June, July and August!"

It seems many folks think that we have the whole summer "off". Those of us who have been in the education profession for many years would beg to differ. Although we are away from the hustle and bustle of regular school days, there are summer workshops, classes for renewing certificates, planning for next year and just plain catching up!

Whatever you have been doing over the summer, I hope you are all rested up and rejuvenated for another year of working with one of Montana's most important re-

sources, our children! As they march through the doors with their new backpacks filled with unsharpened pencils and blank notebooks, let's remember that each and every one of them are special and have gifts to offer to all of us.

Also, remember that those of us on the board are here to help all of you with concerns or questions you may have during the year. If you have ideas for professional development that would help you, please let us know. We are here to serve you. Have a great year!

## Counselor of the Year Awards

Remember that MSCA will honor counselors from each level: elementary, middle school, high school and K-12 at our spring conference in Bozeman. We also honor an administrator. Nominations will be due later this spring. If you have a colleague you would like to nominate, watch for more information and a nomination form on our website. Contact Linda Konesky if you have any questions.

## 2007 MEA-MFT Educators' Conference

**October 18 and 19, 2007**

**Belgrade, Montana**

Book your room now! MSCA hosts keynote speaker Doug Cochran-Roberts speaking on emotional and social intelligence. Mr. Cochran-Roberts will also be doing two sectionals with hands-on best practices for you to take back to your schools through practical applications. We have several excellent presentations and a panel presentation and have done as YOU, our membership has requested, longer level sharing at staggered times. Please remember that this is one of your opportunities to make your voice known at our membership/board luncheon meeting Thursday at noon in the Belgrade Middle School cafeteria. This starts promptly at 12 on Thursday. We need your support and presence.

We are also hosting a hospitality room with the Montana Council for Exceptional Children where there will be light snacks and beverages both Thursday and Friday. This room is in the Belgrade High School. Both of these opportunities to network and relax are made possible through our association with the Montana Education Association and Montana Federation of Teachers at no charge to you. As our sessions will be completed at 2 p.m. on Friday, we would like to encourage anyone who has time to stop in at the Belgrade Lounge on Main Street where they have graciously offered to allow us to meet after our conference for some free time in a more casual setting. (Please note that this is an informal gathering and not an MSCA sponsored event.)

# The Brutal Facts

- Kristy Savaria, President-Elect

At the recent *ASCA Leadership Development Institute* held in Charleston, South Carolina, emerging leaders were challenged to get out of our own heads and to really concentrate on the question presented...If tomorrow our association were to go away, who would notice? Furthermore, I ask you, if our positions as professional school counselors were to go away, who would notice?

What would your answer be? As the Ethics and Bylaws Chair the last two years it has been my privilege to learn and grow with keen awareness that we are responsible for informing not only the general public but also often times our fellow colleagues in our schools, communities and school boards with answers to this question. This can come in a way of accountability with records and statistics. It is seen and witnessed with personal commendations for student success and achievement. It is also a piece that is much deeper than that where personal pride steps aside with the knowledge that our presence as Professional School Counselors really does make a difference in the lives of our students and their families. It is seen when that one student who had many challenges walks across the podium accepting their high school graduation and has a plan for postsecondary options because they were well supported and informed.

It is not a single or random act of kindness. It is an intentional plan that is implemented with the support of their professional school counselor, who is well trained and supported by their state and national organizations with the tools to be prepared to empower others. It is the accountability piece that doesn't need to be enforced by someone else because as professional school counselors we know we are not alone and we understand our role. Our employment is not a guarantee of success but an indicator of well trained persons doing what they know is right based on a state and national model that can be proven to be helpful in supporting student success and achievement. More than that it is an ethical responsibility to do what is right for each individual.

Over the seven years that I have been employed full time in this field and the twenty some years I have worked as a general master level counselor in a variety of fields supporting others, I can honestly say that I always did what I thought was right and that there were no accidents. It was always an intentional act to help others. *MSCA* has intentionally built upon each great leader's expertise to work toward mastery of skills with professional development and policy governance that will support your internal and external growth as a professional

school counselor.

It starts with a group of people who are dedicated to a cause. They talk and sometimes disagree, but work for the common goals that make that difference for someone other than themselves. I believe it is a sacrifice that is well worth the time and effort it takes to prove that whatever their cause and goals, their interaction and efforts were not wasted. Everyday across the states we are given an opportunity to take a moment in some small way to explain how what we do positively impacts a student to support their success. Maybe it is on the elevator going to the doctor or in a line at the restaurant waiting for fresh food to come out. Opportunities abound for sharing our vision and mission. It is ok to let others know what we are doing and who we support. We are the developers of our programs in many cases. We are emerging leaders! We have an opportunity to speak with one vision one voice and to discuss how it impacts others for the future. What difference are you making? How can we support you? What tools do you need? This is a good time to let us know; speak up and make your voice heard. Allow us to help you become the leader we know you are capable of being. We have a dynamite board to get you started! There are opportunities to lead. Join our team and support your state.

# EMPOWER YOUR STUDENTS FOR THE JOURNEY AHEAD



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**[www.mgslp.org](http://www.mgslp.org)**

**email: [custserv@mgslp.state.mt.us](mailto:custserv@mgslp.state.mt.us)**

## MSCA - A Growing Organization

-Carrie Stefanatz, President-Elect-Elect

Greetings and Welcome Back to the 2007-2008 school year. I am thrilled to be back serving on your MSCA Board! I want to pass on some excitement I received from our ASCA Leadership Development Institute in Charleston, South Carolina.

WOW! Excitement, Passion, Pride are the key words that come to mind when I think about Montana School Counseling Association. I felt both affirmed by our MSCA vision and excited for the next steps toward action.

I wish to thank our past MSCA President, Joy Jones, and current President, Barb Holden, and President Elect Kristy Savaria. Due to their passion and dedication to professional school counselors of Montana, our organization is known to ASCA and the rest of the states as vibrant, growing, professional, and moving and shaking! In short, Montana is "the place to be!" It was awesome to meet with leaders from each of the 50 states and to learn that they share the same struggles with growth, retention, and moving their respective state counseling associations in a positive direction. The good news is that MSCA is at a successful and exciting place – already working on many of the steps that we need to for continued sustained growth! Great Job!

Leadership development based on policy governance and increasing active leadership with the involvement of all MSCA members was the main theme that weaved through problem solving and brainstorming sessions. The message that I want to give you is that we are on the right tract, we have made great strides as a professional organization and we have the momentum to continue with our exciting growth.

Thank you again for the opportunity serve on the MSCA Board and to develop my skills as a leader in our profession – I feel honored and blessed.

Wishing you the best 2007-08 school year!

# Loan Forgiveness For School Counselors

## - ASCA Update

On July 11, 2007, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2669, The College Cost Reduction Act of 2007, on a 273-149 vote. The measure would eliminate nearly \$19 billion in lender subsidies and use the money to increase the maximum Pell Grant amount by \$500 over five years and to finance a series of measures to make college loans more affordable. The bill would also authorize more than \$1.5 billion for nine new entitlement programs, including \$500 million for colleges serving minorities, \$300 million on philanthropic groups that help low-income students get loans and an estimated \$400 million in teachers training grants to universities. The establishment of these new programs is what made the bill so controversial. The money saved goes right into these new programs, making fiscal conservatives very uncomfortable.

The news for school counselors, however, is good! As part of this bill, loan forgiveness programs for service in "areas of national need" were incorporated. As a result of ongoing advocacy by ASCA and our allied organizations, school counselors are included as part of the list of occupations and professions eligible for loan forgiveness. Specifically, the bill states that the Secretary of Education is authorized to forgive not more than \$5,000 of a borrower's student loan obligation for being employed full-time in an "area of national need." Forgiveness is provided in \$1,000 increments at the end of each year for a period not to exceed five years. Also, individuals must be employed at Title I schools serving certain students that meet locally established criteria. Other professions designated as "areas of national need" include: Early childhood educators, nurses, foreign language specialists, librarians, highly qualified teachers

employed as full-time teachers of bilingual education, highly qualified teachers who are working in low-income areas, child welfare workers, speech-language pathologists, national service volunteers, and certain public sector employees (public safety, emergency management, public health, and public interest legal services).

While this was certainly a victory for loan forgiveness for school counselors, this bill has a long way to go before it becomes law. The Senate must pass its own version of the bill and then the two chambers must meet in conference to iron out differences. It then must be sent to the President who has already been threatened to veto the bill! ASCA will continue to work behind the scenes on this issue as well monitor the situation in the coming months.

### **House Appropriations Subcommittee on LHHS-Ed Approves Largest Increase Ever to ESSCP**

Thanks to the ongoing efforts of ASCA members' calls, letters, face-to-face meetings with congressional staff and testimony on Capitol Hill provided by ASCA's president-elect, Eric Sparks, and ASCA member Lesli Myers, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (LHHS-Ed) rejected President Bush's recommendation to eliminate the program and instead approved a spending bill for Fiscal Year 2008 that included the largest increase ever to the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program (ESSCP) to \$61.5 million. This is an increase of 77.5 percent over Fiscal Year 2007. In fact, this is the largest percentage increase to any education program found in the House LHHS-Ed FY 2008 Appropriations bill.

### ***What Happens Next?***

The LHHS-Ed appropriations bill next goes to the full House Appropriations Committee on June 14 and then to the floor of the House of Representatives for debate and votes the following week. The Senate will go through the same process later this month, and then the different House and Senate bills must be rectified into one final bill that is passed by Congress and signed by the President.

If the increase in funding to the ESSCP reaches above \$40 million, the funding "trigger" will go into effect making the monies above \$40 million available to secondary school counseling programs as well as elementary school programs. This will be the first time in the history of the program that the funding level will be large enough put trigger into effect making funds available for secondary school programs.

### ***Next Step for ASCA and Montana School Counselor Members***

We want to make sure that Rep. Dave Obey (D-WI), Chair of the LHHS-Ed Appropriations Subcommittee and Chair of the full Appropriations Committee, knows how much we appreciate his efforts on behalf of school counselors and thank him for acknowledging the important role we play in schools by increasing ESSCP funding. To help in this effort, we have drafted a [letter template](#) (please see the ASCA website for the template) thanking Rep. Obey for his efforts and for and for his continued support. Please take a moment to personalize this letter and fax it to Obey's office at (715) 842-4488 or e-mail it directly to [connolly.keigher@mail.house.gov](mailto:connolly.keigher@mail.house.gov).

# Reaching New Heights

## -Barb Holden, MSCA President

As President and President-elect, Kristy Savaria and I had the opportunity to represent you at the ASCA Delegate Assembly in Denver prior to the 2007 Conference. Delegates from all state school counseling associations meet with the National Board and staff to discuss and approve By-law changes, position statements, role statements and other issues of the national organization. We also meet as Regional Groups and as Presidents and President-elects to talk about needs of our counselors and issues relating to running the state organizations. We continue to be amazed at the level of support

Montana receives from the national office.

You also have resources from ASCA available to use. If you are an ASCA member, sign in and go to the School Counselors and Members Link. You will find power points and/or handouts from the conference as well as the newly approved Position Statements. The ASCA website is a wonderful resource for you. Some of the resources on there are also available for non-members. Check out the new additions from the Conference and the Delegate Assembly.

National Conferences are an amazing experience. It has

been the very best professional development I have ever received. The choices are always incredible. I would hope that every one of you would have an opportunity to attend. Many districts do send counselors every year. Many other counselors attend on their own. ASCA's 2008 annual conference, "Setting New Standards," will be held June 28–July 1, 2008, at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, in Atlanta, Georgia. Start saving your pennies now!



## Role of the School Counselor

Parents, the press, administrators and the general public often wonder just what it is that school counselors do on a daily basis. Gone are the days of school counselors sitting in their office simply handing out college applications, making schedule changes for students who want to drop a class or meeting with the troublemakers in the school. Today's school counselors are vital members of the education team. They help *all* students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development and career development, ensuring today's students become the productive, well-adjusted adults of tomorrow. [Learn more](#) about the school counselor's role.

### The Need for School Counselors

School counselors are an important part of

the educational leadership team and provide valuable assistance to students regardless of whether they work in an elementary school or middle school, high school or beyond.

[Why Elementary School Counselors?](#)

[Why Middle/Jr. High School Counselors?](#)

[Why Secondary School Counselors?](#)

[Why Post-secondary School Counselors?](#)

[Why School Counseling Directors/  
Coordinators?](#)

[Appropriate and Inappropriate Activities for  
School Counselors](#)

***Please see the ASCA website for more information on this and much more!***

***[www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org)***