



MAINE
SCHOOL
COUNSELOR
ASSOCIATION
Serving Maine School Counselors K-12

February 23, 2021

Andrew O'Connell -Shevenell : MESCA Board Member & Chair of Government Relations Committee

Sarah Adkins : MESCA Member, Educator, School Counselor Intern, Former DOE Specialist

Kelly O'Brien Weaver: MESCA Chair Elect, 2018 School Counselor of the Year, Recognized ASCA Model Program, NBCT

MESCA Mission



The mission of MESCA is to support the success of all students by empowering, uniting and advocating for Maine school counselors.

Associated with the American School Counselor Association.

Committees: Conference and Professional Development, Membership and Communications, Government Relations, School Counselor of the Year and other Awards

We currently serve **354 members across the state** with school counselors at every level of PK-12. There are 624 certified School Counselors in the State of Maine (not all are practicing).

What is school counseling?

Help students in three domains:

1. Apply academic achievement strategies
2. Manage emotions and apply interpersonal skills
3. Plan for postsecondary options

In a comprehensive school counseling program:

- Proactive/data -driven: data analysis to identify student issues, needs and challenges
- Program for all: multi -tiered system
- Essential role in the school improvement process
- School counselors as school leaders
- Develop, manage and evaluate a comprehensive school counseling program
- Classroom lessons based on student success standards
- Short-term counseling to students
- Collaboration with families/teachers/ administrators/community for student success
- Advocacy for students at individual education plan meetings and other student -focused meetings





The impacts of Covid-19 that school counselors have observed on Student Mental Health



Based on a fall survey of MESCA members:

- Anxiety
- Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy
- Isolation, depression
- Limited extracurriculars
- Decreased engagement in school
- Care for siblings
- Exhausted from uncertainty
- Sleep disruptions
- Substance Abuse
- Long waiting lists for community mental health supports, some only doing telehealth,
- Teenagers not wanting to do more zoom meetings for therapy



SCHOOL COUNSELORS work to COVID-19 impact



- Individual counseling
- Small group counseling
- Classroom lessons and standards
- Social Emotional Learning curriculum
- Crisis response
- Mindfulness
- Social activities remotely
- Referrals to community therapists and case managers
- Attendance support plans

So that...

students are engaged, connected, have peer interactions, positive adult support, consistency, structure, and healthy relationships.



MESCA work to address COVID-19 impact



- Providing webinars for school counselors and guided discussions on adapting school counseling for a pandemic environment.
- Connecting mental health resources to school counselors so they can support their schools' staff.
- DOE and MESCA Chair host statewide weekly sessions with School Counselors and Social Workers to address mental health.
- **SEL4ME** curriculum development

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Thank you for your time!