



# Northwest Missouri School Counselors Association

*Counselors Helping Counselors*

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December 2016



## Presidential Perspective

**Becky Houtchens**  
NWMSCA President

### Find the Beat!

In my mind, Christmas truly is the best time of the year. I find so much peace and enjoyment in searching for the perfect gift for friends and family, in driving around town to look at festive Christmas displays, in singing Christmas hymns with my church family, and in watching students take part in holiday giving through many different avenues at school and in the community. This season brings a warm feeling to my heart and soul, a feeling of cuddling under a blanket with my family, sipping hot cocoa, and watching the old familiar holiday movies.

My hope is that every person who is reading this is able to share those same feelings. However, I was recently reminded that this season that brings me so much joy doesn't do the same for everyone. We all know that there are children and adults who struggle with the holidays for a variety of reasons. One such teenager talked with me about this recently. It was one of those heart-wrenching moments –

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## Website Updates

by Lani Clayton, Technology Chair

Have you visited the NWMSCA website? If not, now is a great time to check it out! <http://www.nwmsca.org>

The website has been updated as much as possible with various dates, registration links and other information. I would like to encourage everyone to take a look at the site and click on the "Counselor Websites" tab. Here you will find most of the schools in our district. If the counselor's page for the school could be located, then it has been linked. Otherwise, the school homepage can be accessed. If you do not see your school or would like a specific counselor's page attached to the links, please email that information via the "Contact Us" tab on the NWMSCA website.

If you would like to help with the website updates, the "History of NWMSCA" needs some attention. The president listing is accurate but the remainder of the information ends at the year 2000. Contact us if you would like to contribute information about the history of NWMSCA.

## Looking for a Few (or More) Good Advocates

by Nicole Messick, Professional Recognition Chair

As we are gearing up for the Administrators Breakfast in February, we are in need of Outstanding Counselor Advocate of the Year Nominations! Is there a teacher, principal, community leader, or organization that goes above and beyond for your program? We want to show them our appreciation, so please fill out the nomination form on the website found here:

<http://www.nwmsca.org/applicationsforms.html>

**Nomination forms are due by Jan. 13!**

## Award Winners

Please watch for a special recognition edition of the newsletter in February! We will recognize individuals and groups who received awards at MSA this fall.

## Perspective . . .

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I know that as school counselors, each of you have experienced moments like this. Those times where you just want to draw a student up in a warm hug, even take them home with you, where you can try to keep them safe and take all of their worries away. Knowing that this wasn't possible, instead I listened. I cared. I reassured as much as I could. Though I wish there was more I could do, I choose to believe I was able to make a difference for this young person.

As school counselors, we are in a unique position to affect students in so many ways. I think that most of you who have been in this profession for even a few years would agree that overall, we are seeing a shift in the needs that students bring to us. There are so many more mental health needs, so many more children who are lacking in basic needs (both physical and emotional), and so many who struggle socially. My hope and belief is that each of us, through our formal training, and through our natural care-giving personalities, choose to take the chance to let these young people into our hearts, and search out ways to make a difference.

May your holidays be filled with love, laughter, and the ability to make a difference!




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## NWMSCA Counselor-in-Training Scholarship

by Lorraine Bowers & Michelle Proffer, Scholarship Co-chairs

The 2017 NWMSCA Scholarship opportunity awaits a lucky graduate student!

The applicant has an opportunity to be awarded a \$300 scholarship just by filling out a simple form! All you have to do is go to our NWMSCA website at [www.NWMSCA.org](http://www.NWMSCA.org), click the "Applications/Forms" link, and proceed to the [NWMSCA Scholarship](#). Then just key in your application information. It's that simple of a process to get started on your chance to WIN!

However, we still need your help in advertising our scholarship's availability to eligible applicants! If you know of people who are taking graduate classes toward a school guidance and counseling degree, please give them this article to read or tell them about our website! Our scholarship is intended to encourage and provide support for qualified educators who are pursuing a degree as an elementary or secondary school counselor in the Northwest region.

The application is four parts: a two-page, simple application form; a current transcript which validates a minimum 3.0 GPA in school counseling coursework (with a minimum of twelve cumulative hours being completed); a listing of remaining classes needed to complete school counseling certification; a letter of recommendation from a supervisor who will elaborate upon the candidate's guidance counseling potential. Additionally, applicants must reside within the geographic boundaries of a school being served by the Northwest Missouri School Counselor Association.

All applications must be postmarked or submitted on or before **February 1, 2017**. Additional information can be obtained from:

**Michelle Proffer**  
North Andrew School R-VI  
Rosendale, MO 64483  
[mproffer@northandrew.org](mailto:mproffer@northandrew.org)

**Lorraine Bowers**  
Spring Garden Middle School  
St. Joseph, MO  
[Lorraine.bowers@sjsd.k12.mo.us](mailto:Lorraine.bowers@sjsd.k12.mo.us)

Which counselor-in-training will be our 2017 winner?  
Perhaps you have someone in mind right now! Don't wait!

# Keep Calm and Help Kids in School: Identifying and Managing Pediatric Anxiety

by Dee Anna Kelley, President-Elect

Lindsey Murray, a therapist for the Kansas City Center for Anxiety Treatment (KCCAT) was our guest speaker this year. Ms. Murray gave an overview of the KCCAT, explaining that the center's main focus is treatment, research, and training. Discussion about Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for Anxiety Disorders and how school counselors can integrate it into the school setting occurred. Ms. Murray stated, "The notion that behavioral thoughts/beliefs, and emotional states combine to influence behavior and functioning".

She continued to explain the impact anxiety has on academic success as well as social development. Comparing normal versus problematic anxiety shed light on the level of severity of anxiety that a person can develop. One of the key components to helping any student overcome an anxiety disorder includes working as a team with the student, family, and other health care professionals. Understanding the following three concepts will only strengthen our ability as school counselors to help any student who struggles with anxiety:

- 1) anxiety symptoms are uncomfortable for students but not dangerous,
- 2) treatment goals are to effectively manage a student's anxiety-not to eliminate it, and
- 3) anxiety disorders are considered chronic, neurobiological conditions, but typically have an excellent response to the appropriate treatment.

If you would like more information on KCCAT or feel the need to refer a student please contact Lindsey Murray at [www.kcanxiety.com](http://www.kcanxiety.com).



## We Got the Beat! NWMSCA Administrator/ Counselor Breakfast

**February 10, 2017**

at Missouri Western State University

**Registration begins at 8:00 a.m.**

Join us for breakfast, our speaker, Dr. René Yoesel - DESE Director of School Counseling, and much more!

This newsletter sponsored by:

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# Advocate for Yourself and Your Program

by Becky Whitmer, Multi-level Vice President

## School Counseling Needs Assessment

Conducting a Needs Assessment is a quick and easy way to gauge your students' opinions. After looking through my own assessment and then researching other options, I revamped my own High School Needs Assessment and made it electronic. Google Forms made the process pretty smooth and I can review my data from anywhere. As a counselor at a small school, I love when people share what they have created to help save time. Here is a link of the Needs Assessment that I created for my students: <https://goo.gl/forms/mRIP8xWaEXyE565t2>

If you haven't used Google Forms, I highly recommend you give it a try. You can export your results to view all of your responses on a Google Sheet. With the Google Sheet you can set up notifications and receive email as soon as you get responses or have a summary sent to you...however you want your notifications to look. You can also view your responses and see beautiful graphs of your data. This is an easy way to help you incorporate data into your program!

The form is not perfect by any means. My hopes are that I can help save you time and help you to advocate for your program. Warning, the younger the student, the more questions they had! If you like the form and would like to use it or modify it some for your own use, please email me at [bewhitmer@stewartville.k12.mo.us](mailto:bewhitmer@stewartville.k12.mo.us). I will have to add you as a collaborator and then you will be able to make a copy to use as your own.

## Make Sure You Are Covered!

I remember sitting in my first professional development meeting as a new hire and hearing our MSTA representative share stories of teachers getting sued and fighting for their licenses. The reality of our society is that we are all in real danger and we put ourselves in vulnerable positions all of the time. It comes with the job! We are important! I have been in the situation where a parent accused me of not doing my part to help her child with self-harm and suicide issues. This parent did not pursue legal action but I felt that at any time they could have and I would have had to defend my practices. I felt safe that I had a membership with ASCA and with that comes awesome liability insurance. But is that liability insurance enough to keep my career and family protected?

I have asked this question over the years and this year was the first time I feel that I received a really clear answer. During this year's MSCA Fall Conference I chose to attend one of Dr. Shari Sevier's sessions. In

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Be **involved**  
Be **successful**  
Be a **Bearcat**

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[nwmissouri.edu](http://nwmissouri.edu)



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that session, she mentioned getting coverage from MSTA or NEA to make sure we are protected. After conference I sent her an email to clarify and here was her advice.

*“Our teachers’ union protects you from things that happen to you in your building and district...unfair evaluation, harassment, assignment of unfair duties, etc. Also, your teachers’ union negotiates for you, as you are on the salary schedule, are impacted by calendar, and other school policies. Your ASCA liability insurance will cover you for the big things in which you could be sued and lose your license. They wouldn’t likely come to your school to help with situational issues that are building or district-related.”*

I immediately felt relief having an answer and shared the information with the amazing counselor buddies. They all were thankful for the information and thought they were completely covered with the ASCA membership. Make sure that you are covered for the protection you need and get the word out! Thank you, Dr. Sevier for helping me with the issue!

## NWMSCA Fall Meeting - September 30

