



# Northwest Missouri School Counselors Association

*Counselors Helping Counselors*

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February 2013



## *Presidential Perspective*

**Geoff Heckman**  
NWMSCA President

### Enjoy the Path and Make Memories

My grandfather was a pastor in a small community and was known for his organized and predictable behavior. Our visits to my grandparent's house were always carefully measured scoops of play, social time, and Saturday evening devotions. He was always very careful to portray the image of a pastor as he was never sure who in his congregation might be checking to make sure his home life was matching what he proclaimed from the pulpit. The joke was that he would mow his yard on hot, sunny days wearing black dress pants and a white dress shirt because preachers did not sweat nor did they wear shorts and t-shirts. You can imagine my surprise then when on a visit to a local state park he suggested that we go on a trail hike without knowing the route or length of the trail. The thought of watching birds, examining pine trees and avoiding local critters was not

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## NWMSCA Boots Were Made for: SUCCESS!

by Dee Anna Kelley, Co-Advocacy

It is with great pride to report that over 60 professionals walked the path towards MWSU on Feb. 7th to attend this year's Administrative Breakfast. Appreciation for our Administrators as well as for the profession of School Counseling was apparent in various ways. The number of Administrators that were in attendance not only shows our appreciation for them but in return shows the respect that Administrators have for our profession.

It wasn't only Administrators who proudly recognized the important work School Counselors do each day. Sergeant Nash from the United States Army was in attendance this year to honor two of Northwest's finest School Counselors for their efforts at supporting students' desire to join the military. Sergeant Nash recognized Shelly Vertin from Savannah High School located in Savannah, MO and Casey Justus from North Platte R-1 School District located in Dearborn, MO. Way to go Shelly and Casey!

Another shining moment was when Sarah Gerving, Principal at Pickett Elementary School located in St. Joseph, was recognized as the 2013 Northwest Missouri School Counselor Advocate of the Year. It was clear that Sarah not only supports comprehensive school counseling programs but also has a deep respect for the School Counseling profession. Thanks for believing in the power of school counseling Sarah!

The theme of dual respect and appreciation between Administrators and School Counselors continued as this year's speaker, Judy Fuston, Retired Director of School Guidance and Counseling for the St. Joseph School District, reminded us of a few important ideas. Judy encouraged both School Counselors and Administrators to work diligently at keeping the lines of communication open. She also mentioned the best way towards success is to have a strong working relationship between School Counselors and their Administrators. A relationship that should be based on what is best for children. Wise words from a very wise lady!

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## Perspective . . .

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top on my list, but an unexpected adventure with Grandpa quickly won me over.

He assumed that the trail would be a short walk – thirty minutes at most, but as we approached what we would later know was just past the halfway point, we realized the hike would be much longer. The hot Nebraska sun bore down on us as we became tired and dry, much like the sandy clay we were walking on. It wasn't until a young couple passed our way from the other direction that we found out that this short walk was actually several miles. It was over an hour later when we exited the end of the trail, although it felt like we had walked for half the day, and found the car where my mom and grandmother were waiting patiently with the air conditioner going full stream. I was so thankful to be at the end.

It's at this point in the year that reminds me of that walk. So often we start the school year with a fresh perspective, excited by what the promise of this new journey may hold. After the passing of so many days we find ourselves just past the halfway point tired and weary from the unexpected situations and routines that have unfolded before us. It's not necessarily this time of year, but the hope of what's waiting at the end that keeps us going; students who have reached their potential, stronger guidance programs, well established professional connections...

So many times in that trail hike with my grandfather I thought about what would be at the end – air conditioning, water, snacks... it kept me going. As I reflect on it today, those aren't the things I cherish. It's the memory of that walk with Grandpa and the time we spent together. I know we are all anxious for the end of the year and what it holds – as we should be, but I hope we don't get caught up in the feeling of being halfway there and excitement for the year to end. These are the days that make memories and the moments we will remember as the days just before summer start to slip through our hands. The end of the year will be here soon enough; let's make some more memories and take time to enjoy the path just a little bit longer.



## SUCCESS!

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This year's Administrative Breakfast reached a goal of promoting appreciation for both Administrators and School Counselors. Success? There's a path for that!

## NWMSCA Spring Meeting

The NWMSCA Spring Meeting will be held on

**Friday, March 8  
at EmPowerU  
in St. Joseph, MO**

Registration and Breakfast start at 8:00 a.m.

The guest speaker will talk about how to help students after a concussion.

### Send newsletter submissions to:



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## Mentoring Meeting

There will be a mentoring meeting for first year protégés and mentors immediately following the NWMSCA Spring Meeting on **March 8, 2013**.

Second year pairs will correspond via email but *will not* be meeting. Please direct any questions or concerns to

Rachel Peek  
[rpeek@savannah3.com](mailto:rpeek@savannah3.com)

or Michele Veasey  
[mveasey@nwmissouri.edu](mailto:mveasey@nwmissouri.edu)

## Get Connected

by Becky Houtchens, Technology

**NWMSCA website**.....There is a new feature available on the our website – and only YOU can help make it an even more valuable resource! From [www.nwmsca.org](http://www.nwmsca.org), click on “Counselor Websites.” On this page, you will find links to guidance counselor webpages within the Northwest District. What a great resource to gather information about area schools (in case you have a student transferring to or from one of these schools), to share ideas with other school counselors in our district, and for networking between counselors! Only those schools (elementary, middle, and high) who volunteer to have their websites linked will be added. To add your school to the list, simply fill out the form on the webpage.

### School Counselors and iPads.....

Maybe you already use an iPad or other tablet in your counseling program. Maybe you need ideas of how you *could* use one to justify adding one into your budget. Here are a few ways that a guidance counselor can use an iPad on the job:

- For “on-the-go” record keeping as you are moving from classroom to classroom
- There are many apps available to help students explore feelings on an individual or group basis
- Conversation starting apps (two free examples: “Chatoms” or “Chatter Box”)
- Stress relief and relaxation apps (try free app “Take a Break”)
- Even a few minutes on a simple strategy game (Angry Birds. Cut the Rope, etc.) can help students calm and refocus themselves when they find themselves in crisis mode
- Translator apps for our ELL students



For test coordinators, DESE recently released the following information:

*Beginning on February 18, 2013, the iTester Administration System (iTester Admin) will be available for use by district and school staff using iPad® mobile digital devices and Android™ tablets to manage online testing in their district, school, or class for the spring online Missouri End-of-Course Assessments. Using one of these devices, Test Examiners and/or Test Coordinators can now access critical features in iTester Admin from anywhere with internet service. This also enables School or District Test Coordinators to move more easily from room to room or school to school as needed to oversee the administration.*

## Performance Tips for MAP

by Corrine Allee, Newsletter Editor

We are quickly approaching the time of year that many school personnel dread: testing season. As school counselors, we are tasked with helping our teachers and students be as prepared as possible for the high stakes state assessments. Below are tips from DESE to share with your teachers and parents to help your students be as prepared and successful as possible on their tests. Of particular importance is Tip #10 – if you don’t already, be sure to share testing dates with your parents. They are the first line of intervention to ensure that students are well-rested and well-fed on test days!

### Tip #1: Read, Read, Read!

Reading takes skill and practice. One of the best and simplest steps to improve the reading ability for children is to provide sustained periods of time for children to read.

### Tip #2: Help your child to read like a writer.

Even in the early grades, children can begin to “get into the head” of the author. Reading improves a child’s writing, and writing improves a child’s reading.

### Tip #3: Read a variety of books and magazines.

MAP Communication Arts test contains short stories, poems, dialogues, magazine articles, charts and tables. Children need to be able to read a wide variety of texts ranging from road signs to restaurant menus, comic books to classics, and from tennis shoe ads to computer manuals.

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**Tip #4: Build your child's reading stamina.**

To build reading stamina, you may wish to encourage your child to increase gradually the amount of time she reads at one sitting. Include short breaks, such as stretching or closing her eyes for a minute. Set individual reading goals based upon doing the "best that she can."

**Tip #5: Teach your child that visuals are part of the text.**

Students are often required to gather information from photos, captions, drawings, charts, and graphs. You can help by teaching your child to look at all of these materials as part of the total text.

**Tip #6: Help your child know how to use text-based support in written responses.**

Most of the constructed-response items on the MAP assessments have two parts or require children to explain or show how they arrived at their answers. Children will receive only partial credit for answers to questions that are not supported with specific details or that do not contain an explanation.

**Tip #7: Teach your child to preview the test before starting.**

Planning the test time will allow your child to pace himself while he is working and decrease stress.

**Tip #8: Teach your child to identify all parts of a question.**

Teach your child to identify exactly what each question is asking. Some questions have multiple parts, which are often combined into a single sentence with a single question mark at the end. The child should underline each question word (who, what, when, where, why, how and any other

word or phrase that indicates a question). By doing so, she can see if a question has multiple parts. Not answering all parts of a multi-part question is a common error.

**Tip #9: Teach your child to paraphrase test items, turning questions into statements.**

Teach your child to turn questions into statements. The child may underline the question words as described above, and then turn each part of the item into a statement. For example, the question, "Why did the main character play with the ball?" could be rephrased as "The main character played with the ball because ...". This practice allows the child to phrase the question in a way that makes the most sense to him. He is then ready to read the passage and look for answers.

**Tip #10: What can a parent or guardian do to ensure successful assessment for their student?**

- Be aware of the testing schedule.
- Be certain that your child has had adequate rest (this may mean getting them used to an earlier bed time before the week of testing).
- Be on time for school.
- Avoid scheduling appointments that can be done at a later date.
- Dress your child in layered clothing. This way, the child may add clothing to get warmer or remove some clothing to be cooler.
- If your school allows it, make sure your child has a book to read when the testing session is complete.
- Be certain that your child has two or more number two pencils (not mechanical).
- Have a positive attitude.

*Adapted from the Practical Parenting Partnerships by Laura Schwab and the 2001 MAP Class 6 Team, from [www.dese.mo.gov](http://www.dese.mo.gov).*



# Go Bearcats!

Be challenged. Be noticed.

Be involved. Be successful.

Be a Bearcat.

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



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# Hot Headlines from the House and Senate

by Kim Mayo and Brenda Smith, Government Relations

If you are like us, articles on government issues were unfamiliar topics, and we would turn our attention to more interesting articles such as those on the annual MSCA conference or upcoming workshop dates. Maybe we were turned off because we did not understand the legal words or the process of the legal system, but that changed when we became co-chairs of government relations. We took the position, and waited to get more instruction on what to do, but later decided to do what we teach our students – **Be Proactive** – and that is our message to you.

Here are some simple ways to be proactive when it comes to government issues:

1. Check websites for bill updates.
  - MSTA, ([www.msta.org](http://www.msta.org)), or another option for MSTA members is to sign up for rapid response, ([rapidresponse@msta.org](mailto:rapidresponse@msta.org)), and receive updates on the latest legislative issues.
  - MNEA, ([www.mnea.org](http://www.mnea.org)), have websites that will inform their members of bills they support and those they oppose.
  - Missouri House ([www.house.mo.gov](http://www.house.mo.gov)) or Missouri Senate ([www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov)) and click on Bill Information – Bill Tracking.
2. After reading what legislature is proposed, contact your elected official and let them know what you think, why you agree or disagree.
  - ([www.house.mo.gov](http://www.house.mo.gov)). Send emails to our Missouri House Representatives, Pat Conway, District 10 or Delus Johnson, District 9.
  - ([www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)). Contact U.S. Senators Roy Blunt or Claire McCaskill with your opinions.
3. Important topics to follow:
  - HB 292 – High School graduation requirements. This bill requires a transitional skills class to be taken after the personal finance class in order for students to graduate from high school.
  - HB 294 – Requires proficient level or higher on state assessments in order to graduate from high school.
  - MSIP 5 changes – Go to ([www.moschoolcounselor.org](http://www.moschoolcounselor.org)), and scroll down to the bottom of the page for important MSIP 5 information. The revised assessment plan, which is scheduled to be phased in by 2018, has some concerns about the proposed EOHC (End of High School) exam being tied to district accountability only, thus creating more exams that do not have significance to the students. What do you think? Be sure to let your thoughts be heard!

Government issues do not need to be a topic that is ignored in hopes that others will take care of it. Get informed and empowered by expressing your voice. Your voice can make a difference for your future and the future of your students. **Be Proactive!**

## 2013 My Success Event

by Alicia Saunders, Career Guidance

The dates for the 2013 My Success Event have been set. The annual event will take place on October 9th and 10th at the Civic Arena in St. Joseph. Please check your calendars, as the reservation forms will be sent out the end of April. Counselors will be asked to complete the form and return to Alicia Saunders by May 17th. For more information, check out the website at [www.themysucsessevent.com](http://www.themysucsessevent.com).

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