

Maryland School Counselor Association Names 2017 Maryland School Counselor of the Year

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GREENBELT, Md. – The Maryland School Counselor Association (MSCA) has identified the Maryland School Counselor of the Year as Jill Jahries, of Baltimore County’s Ridgely Middle School. There were a record 72 nominations submitted for this annual program, recognizing professional school counselors for their innovative and data-oriented programs that serve all students’ academic, career, and social-emotional developmental needs. Judges representing Maryland’s elementary and secondary school administrators, superintendents, teachers, parents, and school counselors, carefully reviewed the submissions and identified three level-specific school counselor of the year finalists: Christie McCubbin, Ms. Jahries, and Melanie Martin.

Having been recognized by her county school counseling association, Jill Jahries was nominated for the state award by Baltimore County School Counseling Specialist MaatenRe Ramin. Something that is clear to all who are familiar with her work – be they her colleagues, the families she serves, or MSCA School Counselor of the Year committee reviewers – is that she implements, to an exemplary degree, a comprehensive school counseling program at her school. She uses data to inform her practice, she advocates for the needs of all students, she continuously and she proactively works to improve equity in her school. Ms. Jahries initiated a vertical teaming program to better support elementary school students who matriculate into Ridgely Middle School. She is a notably active and visible resource for parents during the day and at evening events, she runs successful career programs, and she works to improve the social-emotional outcomes of her students. Ms. Jahries has presented to her colleagues on topics related to serving young women who are experiencing conflict, and runs counseling groups to help children deal with anxiety. Ms. Jahries uses her advanced study in college access counseling to better prepare her middle school students for their high school experience. As a department chairperson, she impressed the committee by showing how school counselors are educational leaders.



Also from Baltimore County, George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology’s school counseling chairperson Melanie Martin is known for running a school counseling program that is consistent, strong, and infused with technology. She implemented a weekly lunch series for students to participate in group sessions with themes related to high-need areas, such as “Common App Thursdays” and “First Generation Fridays.” Her principal Karen Steele noted that Ms. Martin is a leader when dealing with students’ myriad issues ranging from “the ordinary and expected to the extraordinary and unexpected.”

Carroll County’s Westminster Elementary School Counselor Christie McCubbin is the leader of her school’s Positive Behavior Intervention System, and has worked so hard to incorporate the American School Counselor Association’s Mindsets and Behaviors for Academic Success that her principal Whitney Warner refers to them when reflecting on Ms. McCubbin’s lessons and counseling groups. Different from many elementary school counselors, Ms. McCubbin has arranged field trips to area colleges to show her students their options for educational outcomes, as a way to reinforce the value of their current learning.

The Maryland School Counselor Association will formally honor these professionals at its National School Counseling Week gala on February 3 at Martin’s Crosswinds in Greenbelt. At this event, the association will also recognize MSCA Advocate of the Year Judy Klinger (School Counseling Supervisor, Carroll County), Principal of the Year John Yore (Meade High School, Anne Arundel County), and Graduate Student of the Year Xiomara Medina (Bowie State University). Registration is open until January 21 at <http://www.mscaonline.org/>.

The Maryland School Counselor Association is a professional association that provides opportunities for professional development, networking, and advocacy for the state’s public and private school counselors, as well as school counseling graduate students and counselor educators. School counselors plan and implement a needs-oriented, data-driven comprehensive program using foundation, management, delivery, and accountability components that support all students’ academic, career, and social-emotional development. The Maryland School Counselor of the Year will be nominated for the national School Counselor of the Year, managed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). National School Counseling Week, February 6-10, 2017, is an annual event to recognize and celebrate the efforts and value of school counselors and the work that school counselors do to support all students.

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