



## **Jan Desmarais-Morse Named 2019 School Counselor of the Year Finalist by the American School Counselor Association**



**ALEXANDRIA, VA** – Jan Desmarais-Morse, a school counselor at Goshen Middle School in Goshen, Ind., has been named a 2019 School Counselor of the Year finalist by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). Desmarais-Morse is a graduate of The University of Maine and Worcester State College. She has served as a school counselor for 29 years and has been at Goshen Middle School since 1997.

The School Counselor of the Year award honors professionals who devote their careers to advocating for the nation’s students and addressing their academic and social/emotional development and college and career readiness needs.

During a time when the school climate at Goshen Middle School was deteriorating, Desmarais-Morse was instrumental in researching and advocating for the implementation of the Development Designs curriculum to effectively meet students’ social/emotional needs while increasing student engagement and learning. Her advocacy efforts resulted in a \$45,000 grant to train more than 90 staff members in the Developmental Designs approach. “With many recent changes within our building, our school was in need of something to foster a sense of community again,” said Jennifer Johnson, school counselor at Goshen Middle School. “Jan has facilitated book studies, follow-up sessions and additional trainings to help staff learn new ways of interacting and teaching students in a way that best meets their needs.”

Collaboration and advocacy are the hallmarks of Desmarais-Morse’s leadership style. Lori Shreiner, Goshen Middle School principal, refers to Desmarais-Morse as a systemic partner with teachers, colleagues, school social workers and other

stakeholders to support academic goals while focusing on the needs of the whole child. Desmarais-Morse's collaborative nature led her to connect with a cohort of seven area school corporations to apply for and receive a 2017–2018 grant from Lilly Endowment Comprehensive Counseling Initiative for Indiana K–12 Students. "Her passion for students is contagious, and the productivity behind her vision for student success inspires and motivates me to do my best work for students," Shreiner said.

Autumn Waddle, former Goshen Middle School student, describes Desmarais-Morse in one word – superwoman. Desmarais-Morse is known for going above and beyond the call of duty for all students. She's conducted home visits and referred students to outside community services to ensure their safety and well-being. Waddle credits Desmarais-Morse with helping her navigate some of the toughest times of her life. "I truly believe that the people surrounding us are those who help us make it through," Waddle said. "Whether it was academically, socially or personally, she was always there. I have yet to find a more caring and supportive person out there."

The School Counselor of the Year finalists were judged based on their ability to create systemic change within the school counseling profession. Through their significant leadership, collaboration and advocacy skills, the School Counselor of the Year finalists achieved increased student success via their comprehensive school counseling programs. Desmarais-Morse, along with the additional five School Counselor of the Year finalists, will be in Washington, D.C., Jan. 30–Feb. 1, 2019, where they will be honored and formally recognized at a black-tie gala.

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### **About the American School Counselor Association**

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) professional organization based in Alexandria, Va. ASCA promotes student success by expanding the image and influence of school counseling through leadership, advocacy, collaboration and systemic change. ASCA helps school counselors guide their students toward academic achievement, career planning and social/emotional development to help today's students become tomorrow's productive, contributing members of society. Founded in 1952, ASCA has a network of 52 state and territory associations and a membership of more than 36,000 school counseling

professionals. For additional information on the American School Counselor Association, visit [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org).