

# PREP for “YES!” – A Justification Toolkit

09/01/2018

PSCA’s ANNUAL CONFERENCE is designed by and for school counselors and focuses on best practices in school counseling in Pennsylvania and across the Nation. The conference addresses strategies and information to help school counselors to be proficient and distinguished in practice. The two-day event features presentations on school counseling best practices by exemplary national, state and regional school counseling professionals. Presentations include hour-long skill builders, roundtables, focus sessions, poster sessions and keynote presentations. The exhibit area showcases the latest in school counselor specific products and programs. Opportunities for professional networking abound. Act 48 and NCC continuing education hours are awarded.

## 63rd Annual Pennsylvania School Counselors Association Conference

Thursday, November 29, 2018 – Friday, November 30, 2018  
The Hershey Lodge and Convention Center  
Hershey, PA

### CONFERENCE LODGING INFORMATION AND COSTS

Conference Lodging is at the  
Hershey Lodge  
Hershey, PA



Standard Room  
Single/Double Occupancy  
\$129.00/night plus applicable taxes



# 63rd Annual Pennsylvania School Counselors Association Conference Justification Toolkit

You know from past attendance or have heard from colleagues that the annual PSCA Conference affords opportunities to discover peer-tested ideas, learn about the trending topics in school counseling, and make valuable connections with other school counseling professionals, resource vendors and post-secondary admissions experts and suppliers. You know that one of the top benefits of conference attendance is networking.

We all know that attending the PSCA Conference will be beneficial to you. However, we also know that many professional development budgets have been reduced or eliminated in some school districts. Therefore, you should be prepared to justify both the time and costs to participate to better ensure a “yes” to your request to attend.

## **How do you get to “yes?” How do you share the value of this event with your supervisor in order to justify the “yes”?**

The PSCA Conference Justification Toolkit is designed to provide you with some strategies to enhance the possibility of a “yes” to your request.

The toolkit includes:

- General tips for attending a state conference
- Conference Expenses Worksheet  
Use the Expenses Worksheet to show the breakdown of costs. If possible, offer to cover part of the expenses yourself.
- Conference Benefits Worksheet  
Although you definitely understand the benefits of conference attendance, your supervisor/principal may not. To effectively justify conference attendance, you need to emphasize the benefits to your school counseling program AND your students.

Benefits from attending a conference are not easy to put into quantifiable amounts. For example, one of the greatest benefits of attending a state conference is networking, but how can you put a dollar amount on it? When you seek approval for attending the conference, don't focus on how much you want to go. Instead, define specifically what you will bring back to your school as a return on the investment. You should identify the sessions that will teach those skills that will help your school reach its goals. To support this process, use the Benefits Worksheet. Identify the sessions that are relevant to your responsibilities and list them in the second column.

- Justification Letter for your administrator  
Use the letter as a framework; put the request in your own words and reflect the needs of your school and district.
- A worksheet to show the connect of your attendance to your school and school counseling program needs.

# Tips to Help You Get a “Yes” for Conference Attendance!

To better ensure that your supervisor will say “yes” to your conference attendance request, be prepared to justify the time and cost of your attendance at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual PSCA Conference.

Points to consider:

1. Ask your supervisor to help you select the breakout sessions that will best meet the needs of your school counseling program and the school. Examples of school counselor specific information you could bring back include

- Strategies for ensuring safety in practice/professional practice
- Strategies for increasing student achievement
- Evidence Based Programs that support the needs of your school counseling program
- Strategies and programs to ensure that all students are college and career ready
- Information about using data to impact systemic change
- Strategies for using social media and technology to manage and implement more effective school counseling programs

2. Focus on what you will bring back to your school as a return for the investment. Indicate how the sessions align with your district’s and school’s goals.

3. Offer to prepare and deliver a short presentation about what you learned. Volunteer to speak at a faculty meeting or share the information with fellow counselors who couldn’t attend. Examples of presentation topics: best practices, tips, trending practices and processes...

4. Offer to photocopy and share handouts and materials from workshops and exhibitors.

5. Develop a plan that includes someone to handle key activities while you are at the conference. Prepare a schedule that shows how other counselors and staff members can cover for you while you are attending the conference.

6. Offer to share a room to reduce hotel expenses; consider shared transportation to and from Hershey, PA.

7. Register early for the conference to get the early bird registration rate.

8. If you are a first time attendee, consider applying for the Bill Lee Leadership grant which covers the cost of the conference registration.

# Conference Expenses Worksheet

	Guideline	Cost
Conference Registration	<p>If you are a PSCA member and register by 10/15/2018 you qualify for the early bird rate. Visit the PSCA website for detailed conference costs. <a href="http://www.pscaweb.org">www.pscaweb.org</a></p>	
Lodging	<p>PSCA has contracted a special room rate at \$132 a night plus applicable taxes. Visit the PSCA website's Professional Development link for details on making hotel reservations <a href="http://www.pscaweb.org">www.pscaweb.org</a></p>	
Meals	<p>Full conference registration includes: lunch on Thursday and Friday, reception and dinner on Thursday, breakfast on Friday and refreshment/beverage breaks throughout the conference.</p> <p>Any other snacks or meals are the responsibility of the individual.</p>	
Transportation Gasoline/Mileage/Tolls	<p>Consider Car Pooling with other attendee(s) to reduce the cost.</p>	
<b>Total Cost of Attendance</b>		

# Worksheet: Benefits of Attendance

Needs of the School/School Counseling Program/ School Counselor (List Specific Topics.)	Specific Session(s) that Meets the Need
Vendors With Information and Materials You Are Researching	
Networking Benefits	This conference will allow school counselors to network with other school counselors from across the state. Networking supports informed conversations about new innovative ideas in tools, technology, and programs.

# Sample Request Letter to Supervisor/Administrator

(Please put in your own words with specific details.)

Dear (Administrator/Supervisor's Name):

I am seeking approval to attend the 63rd Annual Pennsylvania School Counselors Association Conference, November 29-30, 20-18 at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, PA. This conference is the premier statewide event supporting the work and professional development of school counselors. It is designed by school counselors for school counselors. The conference will enable me to attend a number of sessions that are directly applicable to my work and will allow me to network with school counseling experts and colleagues from across the state. The sessions are designed to help me to both increase my knowledge and improve my skills so that I might be more than proficient in my practice.

I have reviewed the conference offerings and have attached a listing of sessions I feel are closely aligned with the goals of our school and our school counseling program. If there is a specific area or topic that you would like for me to explore, please let me know. I plan to share the information and materials gained from these sessions with my colleagues.

A detailed conference expenses worksheet is attached as is a copy of the "benefits of my attendance." I have detailed my plan to "connect" conference sessions with the work that I do here at ....An overview of the conference offerings is also attached and more details are available on the PSCA website: [www.pzca-web.org](http://www.pzca-web.org).

The opportunity for me to develop professionally and gain knowledge in specific areas of (provide examples) makes my attendance at the 63rd Annual PSCA Conference essential for improving my practice.

Thank you for considering my request to attend this exceptional professional development opportunity.

Sincerely,

(Your Name Here)