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BERKELEY LAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR  
NAMED AS FINALIST FOR  
SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR  
*Karen Griffith from Lilburn, Georgia Among Top Ten*

**Alexandria, VA, January 22, 2009**—Karen Griffith, a school counselor from Berkeley Lake Elementary School, has been named one of the top ten school counselors in America. Griffith is one of more than 400 elementary, middle, and secondary school counselors nationwide who were nominated for the School Counselor of the Year award. The program, which is presented by Naviance and the American School Counselor Association, honors the professionals who devote their careers to serving as advocates and often lifesavers for the nation's students.

A counselor for over twenty years, Griffith started her career as a classroom teacher in 1977. She is admired and respected for the development of several successful programs including CLUE, a drug abuse intervention program for students and their parents, and "On a Roll," a student recognition program. In addition to being named a finalist for the national School Counselor of the Year, Griffith was awarded Georgia's Elementary School Counselor of the Year 2008.

Griffith is a true leader in her profession and serves as Coordinator for the New Counselor Mentoring Program in Gwinnett County. She presents counseling workshops on a variety of topics, such as peer mediation, and guest lectures for counseling education classes at the University of Georgia, Georgia State University, and Emory University. Griffith recently authored a book, titled *Creative Small Groups*, which was published in January 2008. She is also currently enrolled in the University of Georgia's PhD Program in School Counseling and Social Justice, the first of its kind.

"Karen's love for school counseling and her dedication to the positive development of capable and caring individuals is contagious," said Kelly Cowart, 2007 ASCA Elementary Counselor of the Year. "The depth and breadth of her knowledge regarding children, counseling, and education makes her a sought after resource for teachers and parents."

The School Counselor of the Year awards program was open to all 100,000 members of the school counseling profession. The top ten school counselors were nominated by their peers and administrators and judged by a select panel to be the "best of the best."

The candidates were judged on several criteria including: creative school counseling innovations, effective counseling programs, leadership skills, and contributions to student advancement.

"School counselors make significant contributions to the overall well-being of students and their success," said Richard Wong, Executive Director, American School Counselor Association. "They have unique qualifications and skills that allow them to address students' academic achievement, personal/social and career development needs."

Griffith, along with the other nine finalists, will be flown to Washington, D.C., on January 28, 2009, for three days of celebratory events. The honorees will have meetings with their Members

of Congress, attend a Congressional briefing and reception, and be formally recognized at a black-tie gala.

Co-chairs of the 2009 School Counselor of the Year program are Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.), Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-Cal.) and Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.). The 2009 program is presented by Naviance, a provider of planning and advising systems for secondary schools, and the American School Counselor Association.

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

#### 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 professional school counseling through leadership, advocacy, collaboration and systemic change. ASCA helps school counselors guide their students toward academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning to help today's students become tomorrow's productive, contributing members of society. Founded in 1952, ASCA currently has a network of 50 state associations and a membership of more than 25,000 school counseling professionals.

#### About Naviance

Naviance is the leading provider of planning and advising systems for secondary schools. Nearly 40,000 educators and counselors serving more than 3.5 million students in schools across the U.S. and in 60 other countries use Naviance products to manage academic and post-secondary advising, communicate with students and families, and analyze data. For more information about Naviance, visit [www.naviance.com](http://www.naviance.com).

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