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VALDOSTA HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR
NAMED AS FINALIST FOR
SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR
Michael Brian Law from Adel, Georgia Among Top Ten

Alexandria, VA, January 22, 2009 — Michael “Brian” Law, a school counselor from Valdosta High School, has been named one of the top ten school counselors in America. Law 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 more than twelve years, Law entered the education field as a middle school teacher in 1993. He is a constant advocate to his students as witnessed by his signature line “Always...for the children.” Law has been recognized by his local, regional, state, and national school counseling organizations as the ASCA Elementary School Counselor of the Year (2004) and has worked as a school counselor at all levels including elementary, middle alternative, and secondary.

Law is widely admired and respected for the development of several unique programs including CAT Camp, a transition program for 9th grade, and Valdosta/Lowndes Teens Against Bullying, a joint program that trains high school students to teach an Anti-Bullying curriculum to fourth grade students. Law has been instrumental in the facilitation of Big CAT CARES (Cat Athletes Reading to Elementary Students), where Valdosta High Athletes visit elementary schools across the state to teach about the importance of reading, staying in school, and saying “No” to drugs. This program evolved into WE PALS (West and East Promoting Athletics, Learning and Service) when a visiting football team from Jordan High in Utah joined in the program and took it back to their schools. With collaboration from Valdosta Technical College Stay-In-Schools Grant Coordinator, Law also developed a “Career Planning Portfolio” for students in Valdosta City Schools grades 6-12, which aids school counselors in advising and connecting career awareness to their students.

“We may never know the infinite impact that this school counselor has had on the youth that he has inspired, challenged, guided, and served,” commented Alice Pendleton, Math Teacher and Parent, Valdosta High School. “He is on a mission to see his students succeed despite the many obstacles they face through youth.”

“Brian is truly deserving of this prestigious honor due to his commitment, enthusiasm, and passion for supporting students,” said Scarlet Correll, Director of Professional Learning, Research, Intervention and 504, Valdosta City Schools.

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.”

Law, 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.

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.

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