



Brian Coleman Named 2019 School Counselor of the Year by the American School Counselor Association



ALEXANDRIA, VA – Brian Coleman, a school counselor and counseling department chair at Jones College Prep in Chicago, Ill., has been named the 2019 School Counselor of the Year by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). Coleman is a graduate of Northwestern University and DePaul University. He has served as a school counselor at Jones College Prep since 2014.

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.

Coleman, a former actor, found his love for education and students while performing with About Face Theatre company and its youth talk-back program. These programs encouraged him to earn his master’s degree in education and pivot into the school counseling field. Coleman recognized that serving as a school counselor would afford him with daily opportunities to “support, validate and affirm the next generation of leaders and change agents.” David Gilmer, English teacher at Jones College Prep (and co-Advisor to the school mentorship program Coleman oversees), said Coleman’s dedication and diversity is exactly what sets him apart. “Brian is a school counselor who not only currently represents the best the profession has to offer but also who will continue to set the bar high, even if it means moving in new directions,” Gilmer said.

Therese Plunkett, Jones College Prep vice principal, states that Coleman works diligently to differentiate the delivery of services to meet the needs of the school’s diverse student population. As the faculty sponsor to JonesPride, the school’s LGBTQA+ student organization, Coleman became aware of students’

frustration about the lack of resources, relationship support and inclusive language for gender and sexual minorities in the freshman sexual health curriculum. In response, Coleman collaborated with the Student Government Association to spearhead a revised sexual health education program for 377 sophomore students. "With Mr. Coleman's help, we were able to take the necessary actions that have allowed our school to include more hours of sex education into our health curriculum," said Sheryl Ordonez, senior at Jones College Prep. The program's success is leading to potential expansion opportunities to freshman, junior and senior students.

Coleman's holistic approach to school counseling at Jones College Prep includes advocating for expanded education and knowledge for students as well as school staff. According to vice principal Plunkett, in addition to postsecondary planning and academic planning, Coleman has a strong commitment to ensuring the school provides interdisciplinary social/emotional learning supports for all students.

"As a school with college in our name, there tends to be a great deal of focus and energy placed exclusively on students' college and postsecondary planning processes," Coleman said. "However, we have worked to create a broader awareness that students' holistic well-being is just as important to their current and future successes." Coleman, who earned his Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) designation in 2017, collaborated with the school team to create extensive social/emotional programming at the freshman level as well as enhanced the school community's awareness of social/emotional learning as an important facet of the high school experience. "Brian is truly talented and deeply committed to building a more just society through education," said LaToya Hudson-Spells, former colleague and school counseling department co-chair at Jones College Prep. "He has done so much for our school community in his short tenure as a school counselor."

"In back-to-back years, Chicago Public Schools counselors have earned the title of School Counselor of the Year for the incredible support they have provided Chicago's children," said Chicago Public School CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson. "On behalf of Chicago Public Schools, I want to congratulate Brian Coleman, who represents not only the best in the state but the best this nation has to offer when it comes to supporting our students and helping make their dreams

become a reality.”

Six finalists were selected for School Counselor of the Year based on their ability to create systemic change within the profession through leadership, collaboration and advocacy. All six finalists achieved increased student success through their comprehensive school counseling programs.

Coleman and the other 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 35,000 school counseling professionals. For additional information on the American School Counselor Association, visit www.schoolcounselor.org.