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ASCA Announces 2021 School Counselor of the Year Finalists

ALEXANDRIA, VA – The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is pleased to announce the five finalists for the 2021 School Counselor of the Year awards program (#SCOY21). The award honors exemplary school counseling professionals who devote their careers to serving as advocates for the nation’s students, helping them achieve success in school and in life. The five finalists are:

- Vanessa Barnes, Millbrook Magnet High School, Raleigh, N.C.
- Megan Bledsoe, Discovery Middle School, Vancouver, Wash.
- Olivia Carter, Jefferson Elementary School, Cape Girardeau, Mo.
- Sarah Flier, Willow River Elementary School, Hudson, Wis.
- Barbara Truluck, Palmer Middle School, Kennesaw, Ga.

ASCA will announce the 2021 School Counselor of the Year in late fall.

Nominations for the School Counselor of the Year awards program were submitted by ASCA-affiliated state school counselor associations. The School Counselor of the Year awards panel included representatives from AASA: The School Superintendents Association, Character.org, the College Board, the Gates Foundation, the National Association for College Admission Counseling, Reach Higher and Strategic Questions Consulting. The review panel also included representatives from Bernards Township Public Schools and Ridge High School, Basking Ridge, N.J.; Five Forks Middle School, Lawrenceville, Ga.; Francis Scott Key Elementary School, Arlington, Va.; Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School, Falls

Church, Va.; and St. Theresa School, Ashburn, Va. The panel selected the finalists based on several criteria, including school counseling innovations, exemplary school counseling programs, leadership and advocacy skills, and contributions to student outcomes.

“Each year, this School Counselor of the Year program shows us what the research tells us – that school counselors have a significant impact on students’ academic achievement, social/emotional development and plans for life after graduation,” said Jill Cook, ASCA executive director. “Through their dedication, contributions and excellence, these finalists have demonstrated their commitment to the values and mission of the school counseling profession.”

The School Counselor of the Year and finalists will be celebrated in a series of virtual events and will participate in briefings and webinars during National School Counseling Week, Feb. 1–5, 2021.

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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 50 state and territory associations and a membership of nearly 40,000 school counseling professionals. For additional information on the American School Counselor Association, visit www.schoolcounselor.org.