

Danielle CRANKFIELD

2026 School Counselor
of the Year®

KEYNOTE TOPICS



Rules of the Road: Defining and Owning Your Lane

Danielle R. Crankfield, 2026 School Counselor of the Year®, invites school counselors to claim their professional identity and confidently own their lane. Grounded in the ASCA National Model® and professional standards, this keynote clarifies the school counselor role; examines how language like “guidance” and “help with anything” fuels burnout and diminishes the profession; and suggests practical, respectful ways to respond when administrators and colleagues suggest you “stay in your lane” – even when they don’t fully understand the boundaries of that lane in the first place.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Clarify the role and professional identity of school counselors using the ASCA National Model® and ASCA Professional Standards & Competencies as the foundation for practice.
- Examine how outdated language – such as “guidance counselor” – and a pattern of saying yes to any task can diminish the profession, contribute to role confusion and accelerate burnout.
- Equip school counselors with confident, professional responses to comments such as “stay in your lane,” especially when administrators or colleagues misunderstand or undervalue the scope of school counseling work.

Unmistakably Present: Elevating the Influence of School Counselors

Danielle R. Crankfield, 2026 School Counselor of the Year®, challenges school counselors to reconsider what it means to be seen and what it looks like to be boldly, unmistakably present. She delivers a powerful call to step out from behind the scenes; lead with intention; and make your impact visible, valuable and unmistakable in every corner of the school community. This energizing keynote is about more than visibility; it’s about presence – presence that clarifies the role, strengthens credibility and positions school counselors as essential in student success. Attendees will leave with concrete strategies to show up with purpose; claim their expertise; and ensure their work can’t be minimized, misunderstood or overlooked.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Examine how intentional visibility strengthens understanding of the school counselor’s role.
- Identify ways that purposeful presence reduces role confusion and misalignment.
- Explore collaborative approaches that transform presence into influence and leadership.

KEYNOTE TOPICS

Advocacy With Intention: Elevating School Counseling Through Student-Centered Data

Danielle R. Crankfield, 2026 School Counselor of the Year®, illustrates how an ASCA-aligned school counseling program becomes a steady anchor when the school counselor's role is questioned, diluted or misunderstood. Drawing from her own professional journey, Danielle demonstrates how grounding your work in student-centered data, clearly defined program priorities and a confident professional presence allows school counselors to advocate boldly, without apology. This keynote empowers school counselors to move beyond using data defensively. Instead, participants learn to leverage data as an advocacy tool and elevate the school counseling program, communicate impact with clarity and make the value of their work unmistakable across the school community.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Understand how student-centered data anchors and guides an ASCA-aligned school counseling program.
- Examine how program-focused data strengthens professional presence and clarifies impact.
- Apply data-informed strategies to promote, elevate and amplify the value of the school counseling program.

Seeing Barriers, Not Brokenness: A Strengths-Based Approach to Systemic Change

Danielle R. Crankfield, 2026 School Counselor of the Year®, reframes how we understand student needs through a systems-aware, strengths-focused lens. This keynote names a reality many school counselors carry silently – the pressure to fix broken systems – while offering a more sustainable and empowering path forward. Rather than internalizing what is beyond their control, school counselors are guided to focus on what they *can* influence: identifying systemic barriers, naming them clearly and using an ASCA-aligned school counseling program to intentionally mitigate their impact. Grounded in compassion and professional clarity, Danielle demonstrates how honoring student strengths, while seeing systems for what they are, allows school counselors to create meaningful, lasting change without sacrificing themselves in the process.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Identify system-level barriers that shape student experiences and outcomes.
- Examine how a strengths-based, systems-aware lens supports effective, ethical school counseling practice.
- Use an ASCA-aligned school counseling program to mitigate barriers and enhance student success.