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ASCA Announces 2023 School Counselor of the Year Finalists

ALEXANDRIA, VA – The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is pleased to announce the five finalists for the 2023 School Counselor of the Year awards program (#SCOY23). 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:

- Keisha J. Larry Burns, Ed.D., Shadow Hills Engineering & Design Magnet Academy, Palmdale, Calif.
- Meredith L. Draughn, B. Everett Jordan Elementary School, Graham, N.C.
- Joshua T. Nelson, Richard Lewis Brown Gifted and Academically Talented Academy, Jacksonville, Fla.
- Beth Ruff, Ed.D., Powder Springs Elementary School, Powder Springs, Ga.
- Matthew Shervington-Jackson, Susquehannock High School, Glen Rock, Pa.

ASCA will announce the 2023 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, Advance CTE, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, College Board, Reach Higher and Strategic Questions Consulting. The awards panel also included representatives from Escuela Key Elementary, Arlington, Va.; Falls Church City Public Schools, Falls Church, Va.; Hayfield Secondary School, Alexandria, Va.; Livingston Unified School District, Livingston, Calif.; 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.

“ASCA’s School Counselor of the Year program shines a valuable spotlight on the school counseling profession, bringing attention to exceptional school counselors who are supporting K–12 students every day,” said Jill Cook, CAE, ASCA executive director. “School counselors are vital to students’ academic achievement, social/emotional development and plans for life after graduation.

The 2023 finalists have demonstrated their commitment to the values and mission of the profession to help all students succeed.”

An in-person celebration is planned in Washington, D.C., Feb. 2, 2023. The School Counselor of the Year and finalists will be celebrated in a series of virtual events during National School Counseling Week, Feb. 6-10, 2023.

About the American School Counselor Association

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is a nonprofit 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 51 state and territory associations and a membership of more than 43,000 school counseling professionals. For additional information on the American School Counselor Association, visit schoolcounselor.org.