



ASCA Announces 2016 School Counselor of the Year Finalists

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ALEXANDRIA, VA – The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is pleased to announce the six finalists for the 2016 School Counselor of the Year awards program (#scoy16). The award honors the professionals who devote their careers to serving as advocates for the nation's students, helping them achieve success in school and in life.

The six finalists are:

- Durenda Johnson Ward, school counselor, Centennial Campus Magnet Middle School, Raleigh, N.C.
- Robert Lundien, school counselor and department chair, Staley High School, Kansas City, Mo.
- Kris M. Owen, Ridgeview STEM Jr. High School, Pickerington, Ohio
- Katherine Pastor, school counselor and department chair, Flagstaff High School, Flagstaff, Ariz.
- Kim Reykdal, career and college counselor, Olympia High School, Olympia, Wash.
- Samantha Vidal, school counselor, Creekside Elementary School, Franklin, Ind.

From these six finalists, one will be named the 2016 School Counselor of the Year.

Nominations for the School Counselor of the Year awards program were submitted by the state school counselor associations. The School Counselor

of the Year awards panel was composed of representatives from AASA: The School Superintendents Association; ACT; the College Board; the Hispanic Heritage Foundation; the National Association of College Admission Counseling; the National Association of Elementary School Principals; the National Association of Secondary School Principals; Operation Respect; and school counselors from Alamosa High School, Bishop O'Connell High School, Fairfax County Public Schools, J.W. Alvey Elementary School and Longfellow Middle School. The panel selected the finalists based on several criteria, including: school counseling innovations, effective school counseling programs, leadership and advocacy skills and contributions to student advancement.

“School counselors make significant contributions to the overall well-being of students and their success,” said Richard Wong, Ed.D., executive director, American School Counselor Association. “They have unique qualifications and skills that allow them to address students’ academic achievement, career development and social/emotional needs.”

The finalists, their principals and a representative from their state school counselor associations will travel to Washington, D.C., in January 2016 for three days of celebratory and educational events. The honorees will have meetings with their members of Congress, attend a congressional briefing, be honored in a ceremony at the White House and be formally recognized at a black-tie gala.

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, career planning and social/emotional development 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 approximately 30,000 school counseling professionals. For additional information on the American School Counselor Association, visit www.schoolcounselor.org.