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Jennifer Sack Selected as 2024 School Counselor of the Year Finalist



ALEXANDRIA, VA – The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is pleased to announce Jennifer Sack, lead school counselor, Booker T. Washington High School, Tulsa, Okla., as a finalist for the 2024 School Counselor of the Year awards program (#SCOY24). Sack has been a school counselor since 2012. The school serves 1,249 students, grades 9–12. Sack received her bachelor’s degree from St. Mary’s College at Notre Dame and a master’s degree from the University Tulsa. She is an ASCA U Legal & Ethical Specialist and College Admissions Specialist.

“Jennifer Sack is a thorough, dependable, kind, equitable, intelligent human who serves the students of Booker T. Washington very well,” said Staci Pennington, senior admission counselor, University of Tulsa, and a Booker T. Washington High School parent. “Each student is important to her, and she can fluctuate between the needs of her students daily. She provides personal, nonbiased, exceptional support for every student she counsels.”

In April 2022, Sack became aware of language in a bill proposed in the state legislature related to students meeting with their school counselor about issues of gender identity or sexual orientation. As an ASCA U Legal & Ethical Specialist and a member of the Oklahoma School Counselor Association’s (OSCA) Ethics Committee, she was concerned about the bill’s ethical implications for the relationship of trust between school counselors and students. Sack collaborated with ASCA, OSCA and

some state legislators to work to either defeat the bill or at least have the language “meeting with their school counselor” stricken. “I enlisted the support of other school counselors in my district,” she said. “I advised legislators who opposed the bill about the role of the school counselor and the ASCA Ethical Standards related to topics of student gender identity and sexual orientation.” Legislators used the information Sack shared to guide them in calling for amendments to the original bill. The language of the bill was significantly revised, and the phrase “meeting with the school counselor” was stricken.

For Sack, the most rewarding aspect of being a school counselor is when students tell her she made a difference in their lives. “Whether they say, ‘Thank you for making me believe college was possible for me,’ or ‘If it weren’t for you, I would have dropped out’ or ‘Thanks for being someone I could talk to,’ knowing I made a difference to a student is the greatest feeling in the world,” she said.

“Each year, the 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 Washington, D.C., in February 2024 and will participate in online events during National School Counseling Week, Feb. 5–9, 2024.

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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 51 state and territory associations and a membership of approximately 43,000 school counseling professionals. For additional information on the American School Counselor

Association, visit www.schoolcounselor.org.