



PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING

Professional School Counseling

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

Oct. 15, 2025

Special Issue: *Black Neurodivergent Students and School Counseling*

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Aim and Rationale

Professional School Counseling, the peer-reviewed journal of ASCA, publishes quality manuscripts on theory, research and best practices for the profession. Black neurodivergent students remain a critically underserved population in K-12 schools across the United States. Research continues to show that Black youth are both under-identified and misidentified in special education and mental health services, leading to inadequate support, disciplinary disproportionality, and systemic barriers that inhibit their academic, emotional, and career development (Mayes et al., 2014; Harris et al., 2016; Hines et al., 2025). When neurodivergence – such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia, or other neurological differences – intersects with anti-Black racism, students often experience stigmatization, isolation, and invisibility in school spaces that were never designed with their full humanity in mind. This injustice is amplified when school counselors, who often lack training in intersectional approaches, fail to address how racism and ableism coalesce in systems that shape identification, support, and outcomes (Harris et al., 2021).

School counselors are uniquely positioned to challenge this injustice. As student advocates, they play a central role in equitable identification, strengths-based support planning, collaboration with families, and the shaping of inclusive school cultures. Counselor education must actively center antiracist and social justice frameworks to close opportunity gaps for Black students of all abilities (Holcomb-McCoy, 2022, Mayes & Byrd, 2022). Without intentional focus and professional learning, these students will continue to be harmed by a system that is not set up to serve their needs.

The proposed special issue will focus on myriad issues related to the life and schooling experiences of Black neurodivergent youth. This will include, but not be limited to, the identification process, the unique individual and community strengths, related mental health concerns, academic challenges and opportunities, and career development process. The special issue will include manuscripts that explicate practical strategies to be employed at every level of school counseling, how policy can promote thriving in this demographic, how school counselor training should be reimagined, and what future research should include.

This special issue aims to fill a critical gap in both research and practice by spotlighting the complex, intersectional experiences of Black neurodivergent students. It will amplify the strengths, challenges, and resilience of these youth, while providing school counselors with practical strategies, policy insights, and pedagogical approaches grounded in equity and justice. The issue will also explore the

transformative potential of reimagining school counselor preparation programs and professional development through a lens that centers race, neurodiversity, and student thriving. Through empirical students, conceptual frameworks, and practitioner reflections, this special issue will:

- Illuminate systemic barriers and pathways to identification and support;
- Showcase culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices;
- Examine policy levers for change at local, state, and national levels;
- Offer concrete tools for school counselors to act as disruptors of injustice; and
- Expand the field's understanding of how race and neurodivergence intersect in educational contexts.

In centering the lived experiences of Black neurodivergent youth and elevating the role of school counselors as agents of equity, this special issue seeks to spark urgent conversations and sustained action across the profession.

Potential Topics

Potential article topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying and describing different forms of neurodivergence and the schooling experiences of Black youth who identify with them.
- Analyzing the identification process with emphasis on the unique experiences of Black neurodivergent students.
- Describing and applying developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive strategies that support the academic, emotional, and career development of Black neurodivergent students.
- Articulating the unique challenges and barriers to Black neurodivergent student success.
- Examining the multiple intersecting identities of Black neurodivergent students and their implications.
- Designing culturally responsive policies that remove unnecessary barriers and promotes thriving for all Black neurodivergent students.
- Critically reflecting on personal beliefs and values related to serving the needs of Black neurodivergent youth.
- Reimagining future research, practice, and policy related to Black neurodivergent youth thriving.
- Employing innovative pedagogical strategies in training pre- and in-service school counselors serving Black neurodivergent youth.

We invite submissions that critically examine these issues. Submissions may be conceptual, empirical (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods), or practice-oriented.

Deadlines and Important Dates

Authors are invited to submit a manuscript proposal by **Dec. 1, 2025**.

Instructions:

Each proposal should be 1–3 pages (double-spaced, excluding the title, abstract, and references pages) and include the following:

- **Title of Proposed Manuscript**
- **Author(s) Information:** Full names, institutional affiliations, email addresses, and a 100-word bio for each author.

- **Abstract** (75-100 words): Concise summary of the manuscript, including purpose, scope, and significance.
- **Manuscript Type:** Indicate whether the submission will be an empirical study (e.g., qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods), a conceptual/theoretical paper or a practice-based article. Note: Preference is for empirical studies.
- **Rationale and Relevance to the Special Issue:** Explain how the manuscript addresses the theme of the special issue and its significance for professional school counselors.
- **Framework and Methodology:** Brief overview of the guiding theoretical/conceptual framework and methods.
- **Anticipated Findings/Implications:** Key contributions to research, training, or practice.
- **Formatting Guidelines:** Use **APA 7th edition** for references and formatting.
 - Proposals should be submitted as a **PDF document (.pdf)**.
 - File name format: *FirstAuthorLastName_SpecialIssueProposal.pdf*.

Submit materials to via email PSC publication manager Angie Hickman, CAE at ahickman@schoolcounselor.org. The subject line should say “PSC Neurodivergence Special Issue.”

Timeline:

Dec. 1, 2025	Manuscript proposals close
Dec. 15, 2025	Selection of manuscript proposals and notification
May 1, 2026	Submission of completed manuscript for anonymized peer review
Early June-July	Disposition and feedback from peer reviewers and editors

Completed Manuscripts and Reviews

Authors of accepted proposals will be invited to submit a full manuscript (APA 7th edition) by May 1, 2026. Excluding references, empirical manuscripts should not exceed 25 pages, and conceptual manuscripts are limited to 20 pages, and practitioner research should not exceed 14 pages.

All manuscript proposals will undergo a rigorous review by PSC reviewers and review/decisioning by the guest editors. Please note that acceptance of the manuscript proposal does not guarantee acceptance of the manuscript.

Please contact *Professional School Counseling* publication manager Angie Hickman ahickman@schoolcounselor.org for additional information or questions.