

ASCA Monthly Update

FEBRUARY 2026



**AMPLIFY
SUCCESS**
New Orleans • July 11-14, 2026

ASCA Annual Conference

Registration is open for the 2026 ASCA Annual Conference in New Orleans, La. July 14-17. Register by March 1 for Early Bird Rates!

ASCA Releases Updated Student-to-School-Counselor Ratio Data

New data indicates the student-to-school-counselor ratio continues to narrow – reaching its lowest margin since ASCA began tracking ratios in 1986. According to the data, the national student-to-school-counselor ratio was 371:1 in 2024–2025, compared with 376:1 the previous school year, representing a 1% improvement year over year. With this new ratio, approximately 529,080 more students had access to a school counselor in the 2024–2025 school year compared with the previous school year. [Read more.](#)

Upcoming Meetings & Dates

February

19 [SCA Share](#)

March

10 [ASCA In Your Neighborhood](#)

19 [SCA Share](#)

24 [Quarterly SCA Advocacy Meeting](#)

FEBRUARY UPDATES

U.S. Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education is accepting public comment through March 2, 2026, on a proposed rule that would cap federal graduate borrowing and eliminate Grad PLUS loans. School counseling master's degree programs would not qualify for higher "professional degree" limits, leaving students capped at \$20,500 per year and \$100,000 total.

School Counselor Preparation Programs

The University of Central Arkansas and Lincoln University have been named an ASCA-Recognized School Counselor Preparation Programs.

Board Focus Groups

The ASCA Board of Directors is seeking input from ASCA members as part of its ongoing work to directly connect with members. This year, the board is conducting focus groups for school counselors new to the profession (three years or less) and school counselors employed in a rural setting. This invitation is an opportunity to share your insights to help inform the work of the ASCA Board of Directors and the school counseling profession.

Each 90-minute focus group will take place during the times/dates below. Space is limited, so please register as soon as possible. If you are interested in participating, please click the appropriate link below (please select no more than one time slot per group). If your name is selected, you will receive an email with instructions. Please feel free to forward this message to school counseling colleagues who fit the criteria. Thank you in advance for your participation.

New School Counselors (three years or less experience in the field):

- [Sunday, March 29, 6:30 p.m. EDT](#)
- [Wednesday, April 8, 8 p.m. EDT](#)
- [Thursday, April 16, 6:30 p.m. EDT](#)

School Counselors Employed in a Rural Setting:

- [Sunday, March 8, 6:30 p.m. EDT](#)
- [Wednesday, March 11, 8 p.m. EDT](#)
- [Thursday, April 2, 6:30 p.m. EDT](#)

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

SCA Share

All SCA leaders are welcome to attend these virtual meetings to share resources, brainstorm, network and support each other. 2025-26 meetings will be held the third Thursday at 4 PM ET/1 PM PT. Please add the following dates to your calendar. [Register here](#).

- Feb 19, 2026
- Mar 19, 2026
- Apr 16, 2026
- May 21, 2026



Quarterly SCA Advocacy Meetings

Leaders gather to discuss policy updates, ask questions, share advocacy strategies, and coordinate efforts to influence change at the state level.

Register for each separately via the links below:

[Tuesday, Mar. 24, 4 p.m. ET](#)

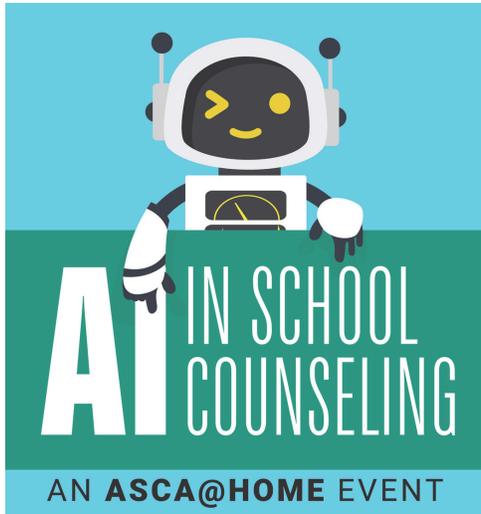
SCA Assistance and Coaching

As you land into the new year, reach out when you have questions or need support. Direct questions [to Leisl by email](#), or call/text 571-329-0934 or schedule time to meet with Director of Affiliate Relations any [time that fits your schedule here](#).

Social Media Office Hours

Need help with your association's social media strategy or want advice on best practices? Schedule [office hours](#) with ASCA's social media manager, Kayla Shelton.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



On Demand: AI in School Counseling

On demand through Dec. 31, 2026.

Register for ASCA@Home! This online event is designed to help K–12 school counselors explore the rapidly evolving role of artificial intelligence in education and student support. The two-day program will feature expert-led sessions, hands-on demonstrations and collaborative discussions on practical AI tools, ethical considerations and innovative strategies school counselors can use to better serve students in an evolving digital world.

ASCA in Your Neighborhood: The Conversation Continues

ASCA's hitting the road again, virtually that is. With recent shifts in education policy reshaping priorities and expectations, staying informed and connected has never been more important. Let's talk about it. ASCA members are invited to join the conversation as we explore the evolving education landscape and its impact on school counseling and the school counselor role. Let's share best practices for thriving in your building while providing school counseling program services to each and every student. This is an opportunity to give and get, be seen and heard, network, equip and empower your colleagues. These collaborative conversations are scheduled for

- Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 7 p.m. EDT
- Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 7 p.m. EDT



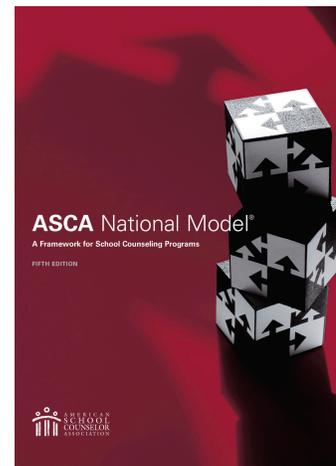
ASCA U Ignite

ASCA U Ignite: Practical Strategies for a Successful Year is an online training that focuses on the ins and outs of building and maintaining a school counseling program.

ASCA National Model[®], Fifth Edition

[This page](#) houses the main links for the 5th Edition, including Templates and the [PDF for free download](#). It's currently linked right on the homepage of the website.

Watch [this webinar](#) for a detailed review of all the changes to the 5th edition, and this one for the [updates to the templates](#).



The SCA pricing for the ASCA National Model, fifth edition, is \$5 each plus shipping, with a required quantity of at least 100. The PDF is free to download, as already mentioned. We'll need the final quantity, shipping address, and a date by which they must arrive to proceed.

One final reminder with SCA pricing for publications – please follow ASCA Publication policies for SCAs, which are included in full, below.

No online sales are permitted. Should an SCA choose to sell these directly to attendees at the event rather than just give them away, they cannot be listed above the public ASCA Member rate. In this case, for the ASCA National Model, 5th edition, that rate is \$14.95. As with other publication sales, the SCA may retain any portion of the difference between the rate of \$5 and this public ASCA Member rate.

ASCA Publications

SCAs may request ASCA publications to sell at conferences and trainings. Online sales are not permitted. ASCA offers deep discounts on publications to ensure SCAs are able to support comprehensive school counseling programs within each state. ASCA suggests the SCA set pricing to align with ASCA's published prices to fully leverage a non-dues revenue stream for their time and work to sell these publications at the state level. If SCAs wish, the publications may be included in the registration cost of a training.



Out and About

Jill Cook served as a panelist for a Whiteboard Advisor webinar about how kindness-based practices can strengthen school culture and student well-being.

Amanda Fitzgerald met with Sean Robbins from NACAC.

ASCA staff met with American Student Assistance.

Eric Sparks participated in training with the Seminole County, Fla., school counselors as part of the ASCA National Model[®] pilot program.

ASCA staff participated in the National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services.

Jill attended a press briefing at the AASA office, where the Superintendent of the Year was announced.

Eric participated in a meeting with the Colorado DOE about the revision of the school counselor standards.

Jill met with Craig Robinson from Strada Education Foundation.

Out and About



PRESS

- Shawn Yancy, host for the School Counselor of the Year Gala, shared footage from the event on NBC News4 at 11 on Jan. 29.
- National School Counseling Week Coverage:
 - [ABC4](#)
 - [Albany Schools](#)
 - [Dallas ISD News](#)