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Diego Castro Selected as 2027 School Counselor of the Year Finalist



ALEXANDRIA, VA – The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is pleased to announce Diego Castro, ACSC, is a finalist for the 2027 School Counselor of the Year® awards program (#SCOY27). Castro is the school counselor at Herbert Hoover Middle School, Merced, Calif. The school serves approximately 850 students, grades 6–8. Castro has been a school counselor since 2015. He received a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of California and a master's degree in education with pupil personnel services credential from California State University – Stanislaus.

"As the principal of Hoover Middle School, I have had the opportunity to work alongside many dedicated educators. Yet, even in the brief year Diego has been a part of our Husky family, his impact has been nothing short of transformative," said Julie Ann Rivard, former principal, Hoover Middle School. "He has infused our campus with a vibrant energy; introduced innovative, data-driven frameworks; and demonstrated the exact type of systemic leadership that defines the very best of the school counseling profession. Diego's approach to building authentic relationships is purposeful and effective. He is a highly visible presence on our campus who connects effortlessly with middle school students during a critical juncture in their development, while consistently building meaningful bridges with our staff and families. He doesn't just work within our school culture; he actively elevates it by streamlining

communication around student needs and collaborating daily with administrators, teachers and families to ensure no student falls through the cracks."

"In every sense, Mr. Castro exemplifies what it means to be a transformative school counselor – someone who not only supports students in the present but also empowers them for the future," said Amy Brambila, parent. "His unwavering commitment, compassionate nature and proactive approach make him an invaluable asset to our school community. Mr. Castro ensures that every child feels seen, heard and valued – both academically and emotionally. He skillfully navigates social challenges, academic concerns and mental health needs with remarkable patience and empathy. My child has grown more confident and resilient largely because of Mr. Castro's consistent guidance. He has a unique ability to connect with students, fostering a safe environment where they can thrive."

"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 January 2027.

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 53 state and territory associations and a membership of approximately 38,000 school counseling professionals. For additional information on the American School Counselor Association, visit *schoolcounselor.org*.