



Media Contact

Kathleen Rakestraw

American School Counselor Association

(703) 683-2722, krakestraw@schoolcounselor.org

ASCA Names Jill Cook Executive Director



Alexandria, VA (Sept. 19, 2020) – The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Board of Directors enthusiastically announces the selection of Jill M. Cook, M.Ed., CAE, as its new executive director following a nationwide search. She assumes the role Oct. 1, 2020.

Cook, currently ASCA’s assistant director, brings nearly 30 years of experience in K–12 education and school counseling to the position, including 19 years of service at ASCA. She helped create the ASCA School Counselor of the Year Program and also created, developed and expanded the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP), which has honored more than 900 schools across the U.S. for exemplary school counseling programs.

“We’re thrilled to have Jill taking the helm to lead ASCA forward,” said Katherine Pastor, chair, ASCA Board of Directors, and school counselor at Arizona’s Flagstaff High School. “We look forward to working with Jill to further grow the organization’s impact and support for school counselors and educators as we continue to be the catalyst for advancing the profession in K–12 districts across the U.S., our territories and around the globe.”

A graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she earned her master’s of education degree in school counseling as well as a bachelor’s degree in music education, Cook was an assistant principal at the elementary and middle school level and a middle school counselor prior to joining ASCA in 2001. She completed the American Express Nonprofit Leadership Academy in 2017 and is a Certified Association Executive through the American Society of Association Executives.

Cook assumes the position held by Kwok-Sze Richard Wong, Ed.D., who is retiring Sept. 30, 2020, after 20 years as executive director. “We appreciate the many ways ASCA has grown and advanced over the past 20 years,” said Tinisha Parker, Ph.D., ASCA Transition Committee chair and executive director of student services, Gwinnett County Public Schools in Georgia. “With Jill’s leadership, we are excited to support and sustain the association and the profession in meeting the current and future needs of students, families and communities across the K–12 education system.”

With her experience as a school counselor, administrator and ASCA leader, Cook brings a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the profession. She has served as the primary contact for ethics inquiries and has played a critical role in supporting content development and presenters for the ASCA Annual Conference. Cook has successfully cultivated collaborations and partnerships with a wide range of nonprofits and organizations to develop policies, programs, toolkits and other resources to benefit students and promote school counselors' work. She also has served as an ASCA spokesperson with major media outlets, including CNN, National Public Radio, *Time* magazine, *U.S. News & World Report*, *The New York Times* and *Education Week*.

"I understand how the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic inequities and racism are affecting our students and our communities," Cook said. "We must continue to support school counselors as districts shift between in-person and virtual instruction, collaborate with associations and other organizations to collectively improve student outcomes and work to eliminate longstanding inequities that harm minority and disadvantaged youth. My vision is to lead this amazing organization to successfully address these complex issues. The ASCA staff, board, state associations, and current and future members are truly a dedicated network of people. I am so pleased to continue my work to support the profession."

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 learning to help today's students become tomorrow's productive, contributing members of society. Founded in 1952, ASCA has a network of 50 state and territory associations and a membership of approximately 40,000 school counseling professionals. For additional information on the American School Counselor Association, visit www.schoolcounselor.org.