



Secretary of Education and Surgeon General to Speak at American School Counselor Association Forum

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ALEXANDRIA, VA – The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is pleased to announce that Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and Surgeon General Vivek Murthy will speak at the 2022 ASCA Forum: Critical Issues in School Counseling, Feb. 3, 2022, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

In a Fireside Chat moderated by 2022 School Counselor of the Year Alma Lopez, Cardona and Murthy will address topics such as student mental health and the K–12 education staffing shortage. Lopez is lead school counselor at Livingston Middle School in Livingston, Calif.

“Secretary Cardona and Surgeon General Murthy have demonstrated incredible leadership in supporting our educators, particularly school counselors, who are on the front lines in addressing the mental health of our nation’s youth,” said Jill Cook, CAE, ASCA executive director. “We are honored to have them with us to discuss the most critical issues in education with our 2022 School Counselor of the Year. Their support of the school counseling profession is essential to fostering a successful U.S. education system.”

The second half of the forum will focus on ASCA’s latest research: School Counselors Addressing Racism and Bias. This research report demonstrates that school counselors, administrators and other school staff are working to address racism and bias in their districts.

According to the report, 41% of respondents observed improved school climate as a result of DEI and anti-racism efforts. That statistic is encouraging, as is the finding that two-thirds of respondents said they are extremely supported or supported by administrators in this work. However, these efforts are incremental, with 38% of respondents reporting no programs and curriculum in place for students. Additionally, this research reveals respondents are concerned about resistance from parents and local communities that prevent effective deployment of

targeted programs both to educate students about racism and bias and to address disproportionalities. Further research is needed to identify what programs are most effective, including what best resonates with students and what efforts are most effective in addressing systemic inequities. Panelists will discuss the research findings and possible next steps school counselors can take.

Moderated by Denise Forte, interim CEO of The Education Trust, the panel is comprised of the 2022 School Counselor of the Year finalists: Matthew Berry of Ritenour Husky Academy, Overland, Mo.; Teshia Stovall Dula of Hull Middle School, Duluth, Ga.; Marianne Matt of Capital High School, Madison, Wis.; and Ashley Wright of Lucille J. Bradley Elementary School, Spring, Texas.

The ASCA Forum: Critical Issues in School Counseling will be livestreamed on ASCA's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/AmericanSchoolCounselorAssociation) from 10 a.m. to noon EST Thursday, Feb. 3. Press interested in attending in person or who plan to view the livestream are asked to RSVP to Kathleen Rakestraw, krakestraw@schoolcounselor.org.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, career and social/emotional development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. Founded in 1952, the 42,000-plus member organization provides professional development, publications and other resources, research and advocacy to school counselors around the globe.

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For more information or to request press credentials for the event, contact Kathleen Rakestraw at (703) 683-2722 or krakestraw@schoolcounselor.org.