



# Ohio School Counselor Association

## 2021 OSCA Board Elections Slate of Candidates

Elections for those who will serve on the 2021 OSCA Board of Directors will take place during the period of November 6-13, 2020. All eligible professional and retired members of OSCA will be invited to vote via an electronic ballot. Emails will be sent on November 6 and the voting window will be open until 11:59PM on November 13. Below is the slate of candidates and their bios for your review prior to voting.

### President-Elect (Vote for 1)

#### **WillaMarie Jackson, School Counselor, Zanesville City Schools**

*dum vivimus servimus* - "While We Live, We Serve. I have been honored with the opportunity to serve on the OSCA Board for the past several years. My role began six years ago as an Emerging Leader and then I transitioned to the Government Relations Chair. It has been a privilege to represent my fellow colleagues and advocate on behalf of our students within this great state of Ohio. As long as I live, I will serve to help others live their BEST Lives! In order to accomplish this, we have to educate, empower, and advocate through the good times and bad times. It would be an honor and privilege to be able to continue the great progress that has been made as your next OSCA President.

### Secretary (Vote for 1)

#### **Diane Zimmer, School Counselor/Counselor Educator, Firelands Local Schools/Wright State University**

I am writing to introduce myself as a candidate for the secretary position on the OSCA Board. I have been grateful for the opportunity to serve school counselors in our state for the last four years as an At-Large Representative. My years of experience as a school counselor at Firelands High School in Oberlin, my passion for teaching as a counselor educator at Wright State University, my desire to make an impact on the profession, my excitement for research, and my doctoral training have all prepared me to take on an important role. I love being a school counselor and have been fortunate to spend over twenty years assisting young people and their families. I also realize that not all students have access to high-quality, comprehensive school counseling programs. As an educational leader and social advocate, I will help school counselors spend more time providing direct services to students. I hope you all remember to take care of yourself and show yourself self-compassionate during this uncertain demanding time. Thank you for taking the time to consider me for the position of secretary.

### At-Large Representative (Vote for 2)

#### **Heather Couch, School Counselor, Blanchester Local Schools**

Hello, my name is Heather Couch and I'm running for the Ohio School Counselor Association At-Large Representative. This is my fifth year as a school counselor and I am committed to being an advocate for my students, self, and profession. I am an advocate for social justice and equitable education. Every student should have the opportunity to obtain a rigorous academic education. I believe that students are able to learn the same concepts at different levels through tiered learning. I am committed to providing a systemic change in the school I work in. I'm passionate about being a representative for school counselors at the local and state level. I was on the Kentucky School Counselor Association Board and have served on the ASCA Position Statements Committee. While on the ASCA Position Statements Committee I spearheaded the writing of "The School Counselor and Supporting Students in Foster Care". In 2019, I wrote a resolution to a local school board policy on the roles and responsibilities for school counselors to align with the Ohio School Counselor Standards. During that process, I met with school counselors in that district to get input and collaborate on presenting the resolution to the school board. I spoke at school board meetings advocating for school counselors and talked with local elected officials. This year I published a book for first-year school counselors through Routledge Publishing. As the At-Large Representative, I want to continue to advocate for you and build relationships among stakeholders. My board and committee experiences have

given me the skills to collaborate with folks from diverse backgrounds to accomplish a common goal. We are in a unique position to be advocates for change at the local and state level. Some challenges we experienced during COVID and pivoting to remote learning are how to meet the personal, social-emotional, career, and academic needs of our students and how to conduct a comprehensive school counseling program in a blended environment. There are additional resources, education, and funding our school districts need and as counselors, we are impacted by all of it. More often than not, we are the person students go to in times of crisis, and when they need a question answered. There is a lot that falls on our shoulders and we care deeply about our students. I believe that we can take the lessons learned in 2020 about the state of education and the counselor's vital role in the school to make a lasting meaningful impact in the future! I hear you and am ready to represent you!

### **Cristina Foster, School Counselor, Ohio Virtual Academy**

Until this past spring, little was known about virtual School Counseling in the field of education. The pandemic created a need and desire for School Counselors across Ohio to learn how to provide services in a virtual setting. I believe it is now critical to have an experienced virtual School Counselor serve on the OSCA Board of Directors. As School Counselors, we know we must advocate to create change and bring awareness. Electing a virtual School Counselor to the OSCA Board of Directors will add credibility, bring subject matter expertise, and relevant experience to support all School Counselors across the state. My name is Cristina Foster. I have been a virtual School Counselor for ten years at Ohio's largest virtual school. I love being a School Counselor, and I believe wholeheartedly in the work of the School Counseling profession. I have had the privilege of being a Department Lead to 30 wonderful School Counselors over the last two years. My unique experiences as a virtual School Counselor can enhance the Board of Directors and represent a part of the School Counseling field and student population that has struggled to be recognized for many years. Through my position as Department Lead, I have learned a lot about leadership, organization, and collaboration. I have learned that leadership requires listening. I promise to be attentive to the voice of School Counselors across the state. I want to be a leader for our field and create lasting change to benefit all School Counselors statewide. The leadership experiences I have from running a large department and working with a sizable at-risk student population has afforded me the skills I need to strengthen our Board of Directors. I believe in the ASCA model. I have great expertise in creating a thriving, data driven, virtual ASCA model program. Recently, our School Counseling department submitted our first RAMP application. If we are awarded RAMP, we will be the 2nd eSchool in the nation to earn this recognition. My knowledge and experience of the ASCA model and virtual School Counseling can benefit all School Counseling programs across the state by bringing unique ways to digitally modernize programs. Throughout my career, I have been given incredible opportunities to connect with thousands of students and help them blossom into productive, well-adjusted adults. I have been in the field of education for over 15 years. My experience includes traditional classroom teaching, career counseling at the college level, and serving as a virtual School Counselor for the past decade. These rich experiences bring a deep knowledge base that will complement the OSCA Board of Directors. If I am elected, I promise to listen to your challenges and advocate for School Counselors across the state to identify and support policies that will benefit all School Counselors.

### **Cara Habermehl, School Counselor, Vermilion Local Schools**

My name is Cara Habermehl and I am seeking to be elected as an At- Large Member. I have been married to my husband, for 21 years. He is a middle school teacher and has been the head coach of our varsity basketball team for the last 21 years. I have three wonderful children who I am so proud of. A sophomore at the University of Cincinnati, a junior in high school, 6th grader. I am in my 26th year of education and for the past 23 years, I have worked at Vermilion High School. Fifteen of those years have been as a special education teacher and the last 8 years as a school counselor. I have served the past two terms as a High School Level Representative. I have really enjoyed my past two terms serving on the OSCA Board. Meeting members from across Ohio and coming together on issues that we as school counselors are passionate about is an important role to me. I have served on the Membership committee, and also have presented at all Ohio. As a current board we have worked very hard to make sure that school counselors have a voice and are recognized at the state level. If I am elected as an at large member, I will continue to advocate for the role of a school counselor at the state and local level. I feel now more than ever the school counselor's role is more important with all the changes in education and with the ongoing challenges that we are faced with the Covid pandemic.

### **Jennifer Ruff, School Counselor, The Arts & College Preparatory Academy**

I am writing you to express my interest in seeking At-Large Representative on the OSCA Board of Directors. Since receiving my license as a school counselor seven years ago, I have served at both the middle school and high school levels and always strived to be a leader and continuously grow in my career. I have a working partnership with my alma mater, The Ohio State University, where I serve on the Counselor Education Advisory Board and as a site

supervisor for Counselor Education Master's students. Giving back to my profession and guiding school counselors throughout their internship placement is something I thoroughly enjoy and feel passionate about. Another area that is critically important to me is advocating for social justice and influencing and creating systemic change. I seek opportunities to create systemic change no matter how big or small. Being on the board could allow me to advocate for social justice and systemic change not only in the community, but within the school counseling profession specifically. Serving on the OSCA Board of Directors, I would use the skills I have as a school counselor, supervisor, and social justice advocate to serve fellow school counselors and the profession.

### **Cara Sanders, School Counselor, Massillon City Schools**

As a passionate school counselor, I am interested in becoming an At-Large Representative on the OSCA board to continue my professional advocacy at a higher level. This is my 6th year as a middle school counselor, and I feel I have established a solid foundation of collaboration, advocacy, and strategies when working with students, parents, staff, administrators, and stakeholders. I have spent the last 2 years on the board as an Emerging Leader, providing me with the stepping stones necessary to fulfill this role with the OSCA board. I feel strongly about advocating for more school counselors across the state of Ohio and using data to support the benefit of our roles and the impact that we have on student success. Through the leadership opportunities that OSCA provides, I feel my voice could help empower other school counselors, administrators, legislators, and stakeholders to take a more vested interest in our profession and express how powerful and impactful our work is. I am very passionate about my career and my daily work, and feel it is very important to lead and share my passion with others to help support their work.

### **Kenneth Stocker, School Counselor, Buckeye Career Center**

Having served as an emerging leader for the past two years has provided me an opportunity to gather a better understanding of OSCA and its importance to our profession. School counselors are advocates for education providing assistance to administrators, parents and especially students. OSCA is the advocate providing assistance to the school counselors. I have seen first-hand the hard work OSCA has done to help improve the work environments for school counselors. The past two years have encouraged me to look at my position from a broader perspective seeing not only my own personal needs as a counselor, but also the needs of all school counselors. Many times issues we face on a personal level require input and change from levels outside our control as individuals. We must become part of a team in order to impact those changes we may need or desire. I hope to be a voice for all school counselors to assist OSCA in making more systemic changes to further our mission to provide the most effective education possible for our students.