



Special points of interest:

- 📣 Elementary, Middle, and Post-Secondary Vice Presidents speak on page 2
- 📣 Incoming LSCA Officers announced on page 3
- 📣 LSCA Scholarships **for Master's Level** Graduate Students in School Counseling Programs on page 3
- 📣 Celebrate the 2018 LSCA Award Recipients, starting on page 4
- 📣 Your Executive Leadership for 2018-19 pictured on page 12

Presidential View Advocacy²

Denise Latour, LSCA President, 2018-19

How exciting it was to see ADVOCACY come to life at the LCA Conference!

It is always fun to catch-up with old friends and make new friends. I look forward to seeing you in New Orleans next fall.

Thank you to the members who made time to attend the board meeting on Sunday evening. It was standing room only! Our next board meeting will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, February 16, at the East Baton Rouge Main Library on Goodwood Boulevard in Baton Rouge.

Kudos to the members volunteering to serve on committees, to proofread the newsletter, and to read nominating packets for the School Counselor of the Year awards. As LCA reminded us: WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER.

For those of you who haven't volunteered yet, there is still a spot for you.

Great job LSCA members who presented at the conference. School counseling topics were well represented on the agenda.

Congratulations to all of the School Counselor of the Year Nominees and Award Winners. You work hard in your profession and deserve the accolades. All nominations must be submitted to the following address: www.lscaschoolcounselorawards.org by January 15, 2019. All applications and documentation for the nominees must be completed and submitted by Friday, February 15, 2019.

Congratulations to incoming Board Members: Kesha Simmons, President Elect Elect; Miriam Davis, Elementary VP; and Amanda Duplantier, LSCA Secretary who was elected as Secondary VP. And congratulations also to former LSCA President, Dr. Reshelle Marino, who was elected LCA President Elect for 2020-2021 at the fall conference!



Upcoming Event

School Counselor Week
February 4-9, 2019
Cajun Counselor will share more information in a special issue!

LSCA's Mission:

To support professional school counselors as they assist students and their families in their academic, career, and personal/social development.



Grateful For Elementary School Counselors!

Danielle Cole, Elementary VP

I enjoyed the conference this year, especially the warm and fuzzy vibe that presenters gave during various sessions. They not only provided information essential for

us to fulfill our roles as school counselors, but validated what we do on our campuses.

A little appreciation goes a very long way. Conference came at a time when we all might have needed a little pick me up. Julia Cook emphasized our outlook on **situations: we can utilize a “get to” perspective instead of a “have to” point of view.**

With the new year upon us, we must remember **that we are our students’ flicker of hope!** Our students depend on us to be genuine and honest with them, along with being fully present in our interactions. The knowledge and skills we instill in them helps to prepare **them for the future. I’m grateful that I get to be part of their journey.** What are you grateful for that you get to do?! 📣



With Passion and Enthusiasm

Dr. Wendy Rock, Post-Secondary VP

As we enter the holiday season, it is my sincere hope that members of the Louisiana School Counselor Association take time for some R, R, and R: rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation. As the

post-secondary vice-president for the LSCA Board, I am tasked with facilitating professional development. We are already beginning to plan the LSCA track at the 2019 LCA conference.

The 2019 Teacher Leader Summit will take place June 26–28, 2019 at the Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. Did you know there are content sessions for school counselors? Start making plans to attend!

I am so grateful for my school counseling mentors, colleagues, and students who inspire me every day with their passion and enthusiasm for student success. If I can ever be of service for you, please reach out me via

wendy.rock@southeastern.edu. 📣

Middle School Counselor Spotlight

*Dr. Dymphna Davis, LPC-S, NCC
LSCA Middle School VP*



In order to surface the stories of the dedication and wealth of expertise LSCA Middle School Counseling professionals possess, I am creating something new: The Middle School Counselor Spotlight! Here we give you a glimpse of the amazing network of school counseling professions statewide.

Today in the spotlight is Mrs. Meghan M. Duplessis, M.Ed., NCC! Mrs. Duplessis is currently a middle school counselor at Harry Hurst Middle in Destrehan. Harry Hurst Middle School is a part of the St. Charles Parish School System. Mrs. Duplessis earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Secondary English Education in 2007 from Southeastern Louisiana University. She went on to **earn her Master’s Degree in Counselor Education from Southeastern Louisiana University in 2011.** This is her seventh year as a school counselor here at Hurst. She previously taught middle school English at J.B. Martin Middle School for several years. Mrs. Duplessis is the counselor for students on teams 4, 5, and 6 (Students in 8th Grade and ½ of 7th Grade).

Mrs. Duplessis was asked three questions in order to give a glimpse of her perspective of how she effects change as a middle school counselor.

1. Why did you decide to become a middle school counselor?

After teaching middle school English for 5 years, I realized I would be able to better meet the needs of students in the role of a school counselor. Middle school students are unique and interesting; they face challenges and struggles that younger students and older students do not. Students at this age often do not know how to appropriately advocate for themselves with teachers, administrators, etc. I value my role in helping advocate for them in the school setting.

2. How do you balance addressing students' academic and social/emotional needs?

If a student has a social/ emotional need that is

(Middle School, continued on page 3)



Candid picture of LSCA members enjoying each other's company at the LSCA Award Luncheon



Congratulations to incoming Board Members: Kesha Simmons, President Elect Elect; Miriam Davis, Elementary VP; and Amanda Duplantier, Secondary VP, not pictured.

Middle School, continued from page 2

not being met, then they are often unable to be successful academically. I strive to help each student learn coping mechanisms and preventative strategies to address their emotional needs in order to be successful in the classroom. I also work closely with teachers to help them understand the social/ emotional needs of the students they teach. We brainstorm techniques and strategies for the teacher and student to implement in weekly team meetings.

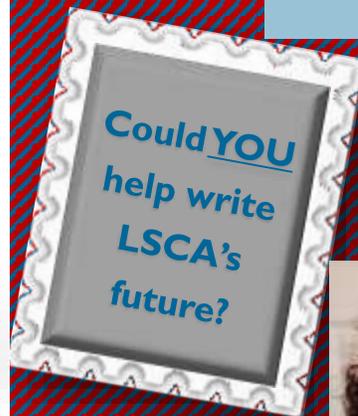
- 3. What advice do you have for first-year counselors?

My advice for a first-year counselor is to find a way to document activities that works for him/her. I use a lot of technology in my counseling program that assists me with notes, student appointment requests, teacher referrals, classroom guidance lessons, etc. There are so many tools out there to help manage the needs of a counseling program, so first-year counselors should research these tools and try different ones in order to see which ones are a fit for them.

If you would like to nominate yourself or a fellow middle school counselor please contact me at phdddavis191307@gmail.com or click the link below: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScIjx4SoISUwryb1qCBwcRHSXROtghnwSZqrnE1e5nQyGQIA/viewform?usp=sf_link 



Kesha Simmons,
LSCA President Elect-Elect



Miriam Davis,
Elementary Vice President



Announcing the LSCA Scholarships for Master's Level Graduate Students in School Counseling Programs



LSCA invites nominations for its two annual scholarships. Self-nominations are welcomed and encouraged. Two (2) graduate students currently pursuing their Master's Degree in School Counseling will each be awarded a \$1000.00 scholarship to further their education. Additionally, winners will be asked to serve on the LSCA Board. The application deadline is March 8, 2019. Instructions for completing and submitting the application portfolio are provided below.

APPLICATION PORTFOLIO must include the following:

1. Completed LSCA Scholarship Application Form (provided below).
2. Completed typewritten essay of no more than two double-spaced pages addressing the following: [Current trends in education focus on exploring data, accountability, and progress monitoring as a way to evaluate school counseling programs and school counselor effectiveness. Considering the current trends, what role do you believe data, accountability, and progress monitoring should play in evaluations? How could a school counselor be impacted by the three above-mentioned components as it relates to the compass performance evaluation?](#)

Reference: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/key-compass-resources/2014-2015-compass-counselor-rubric.pdf?sfvrsn=16>

3. Two professional letters of recommendation. One letter must be from a current academic advisor or professor and include a statement acknowledging your current enrollment in the program.
4. Proof of LSCA membership.

The completed Application Portfolio must be postmarked by March 8, 2019.

*Stephanie Eberts
Louisiana State University
Peabody Hall 122
Baton Rouge, LA 70803*

*You may also email your application to Dr. Stephanie Eberts,
Scholarship Chair at seberts@lsu.edu*



Celebrating Louisiana's School Counselors

Dr. Deona Austin, Dr. Alice Cryer-Sumler, and Mrs. Kesha Simmons

The Louisiana Counseling Association celebrated 50 years of service this year at the conference. The

School Counselors celebrated with LCA. Our communities across the state view the school counselors as a profession who spend a lot of their time lifting the spirits of students, teachers and other staff in their buildings. These positive acts of kindness are always very prominent at the conferences as counselors are observed embracing each other, listening attentively in **sessions and applauding each other's work. The Louisiana School Counselors' Luncheon is a special opportunity to acknowledge, applaud and emphasize each others' accomplishments. As the school counselors entered the banquet room for lunch, their enthusiasm and support were evident as they offered to assist with collecting tickets, decorating the tables and placing programs on our seat.**

The nominees anxiously sat chatting with their families, colleagues and friends who are were there to support them. The counselors know that it is an honor to be nominated as the Louisiana School Counselor of the year. These nominations are very special. In that, counselors are nominated by another counselor, an administrator or supervisor. Once the counselors are nominated, they complete an online application, which involves responding to five essay questions and uploading three letters of recommendation as well as other significant documents. Their applications are read online by other counselors across the state, including previous School Counselors of the Year who do not work in same districts as the nominees.

All nominees were introduced including their schools and school districts by Keisha Simmons, Caddo Parish Magnet School. With excitement and pride, they

Article continues in the next column



We all have something within us that this world needs.

— Anonymous

moved to the front of the room as their names were called to receive their certificates as everyone cheered for them. Our nominees for this year are the following:

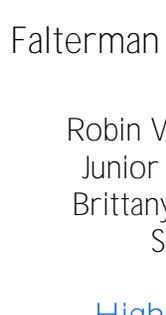
Elementary School Counselor of the Year Nominees:



Kellie Falterman

- Kelle Falterman – Honey Island Elementary School – St. Tammany Parish
- Jennie Hermann – Norco Elementary School – St. Charles Parish
- Dawn Stelly – Ridge Elementary School – Lafayette Parish

Middle School Counselor of the Year Nominees:



Cassandra Austin

- Cassandra Austin – S. J. Welch Middle School – Calcasieu Parish
- Robin Wood Nall – Caroline Dorman Junior High School – Rapides Parish
- Brittany Pecor – Edgar Martin Middle School – Lafayette Parish

High School Counselor of the Year Nominees:



Royce Hooks, Sr.

- Raquel Augustus – Lafayette High School – Lafayette Parish
- Royce Hooks, Sr. – Edna Karr High School - InspireNola – Orleans Parish
- Sherre Morse – Oak High School – Rapides Parish
- Carol Mills – East St. John High School – St. John the Baptist Parish
- Robin Valerius – Destrehan High School – St. Charles Parish

Other Awards: School Counselor Legislator

Senator Beth Mizell

(Celebrating, continued on page 6)



What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.

— Jane Goodall

Celebrating, continued from page 4

Our School Counselor of the Year Program strives to recognize and honor school counselors, who are running top-notch, comprehensive school counseling programs at all levels as well as administrators and advocates who support school counselors. As outlined in the **American School Counselors' Model to provide services to all students**, these counselors must spend time with the students discussing academic, personal/social and career development. This year the following school counselors are our winners in each category.

Elementary School Counselor of the Year

Mrs. Dawn Stelly – Ridge Elementary School – Lafayette Parish

Mrs. Stelly has been a counselor for more than seven years. She assembled the first Advisory Council at Ridge Elementary School, which provides the counseling department with a structured resource to

meet with parents, teachers, parents and other stakeholders to provide information about her job as well as an opportunity to advocate for her school counseling program which is PreK – 2nd and to receive feedback from these advisory council members. She makes it a priority to participate in ongoing professional development in Lafayette Parish, with LSCA and ASCA. She be-



Dawn Stelly

Article continues in next column

lieves that all students can be successful. This is reflected in her work as she utilizes the ASCA standards to provide classroom guidance, small group counseling and individual counseling. Although she has the responsibility of chairing the School Building Level Committee and 504 Committee, she views these responsibilities as positive ways to advocate for her students and provides opportunities to reach out to the parents and teachers. She will represent the Louisiana School Counselors Association in the spring in Washington DC. She is our overall winner for School Counselor of the year. We are proud of her work!

Middle School Counselor of the Year

Miss Brittany Pecor – Edgar Martin Middle School

Ms. Brittany Pecor has been a counselor for a little over three years at Edgar Martin Middle School in Lafayette Parish. Her principal sees her as a leader and has invited her to present on the role of the school counselor as well as walk the teachers through how to refer students and the first teacher in-service meetings of the school year. The parents are always excited to participate in her presentation at Open



Brittany Pecor

(Celebrating, continues on page 7)



This newsletter is the work of many LSCA members! It is easy to see the great articles and appreciate their authors. I welcome three new volunteers to the newsletter team — Sarah Barnes, Layla Touchet and Laura Smestad — to the four original members who always work quietly in the background — Claire Barry, Dr. Wendy Rock, Cathy Smith and Katherine Wolf! Cathy Smith who pulls double duty as she is also LSCA Technology/Website Chair; for this issue she also took the wonderful pictures from the Awards Luncheon! Thanks to the entire team! You help to keep our association informed!



Celebrating, continued from page 5

House. She makes it informative and engaging. Her **quest to support her students' success has lead her to** play a crucial role in the Accelerated Reading Program and the Review 360 Program. These programs support students with literacy and behavioral issues. Her work at the school is not haphazardly implemented. That is, she uses data from several sources to drive her counseling program, which determines the lessons she presents for classroom guidance. She is very knowledgeable of the ASCA model for school counselors. She believes the new referral process that she and her colleague have created will provide the data and understanding necessary to support her with advocating against using her time at work to complete non-counseling activities. The new process will also provide data for all stakeholders on how much the counseling department is **assisting in all aspects of the students' success. She has** created a notable systemic change over the last three years, which has lead to the counselors at her school no longer serving as the test coordinator or RTI coordinator. This gives her more time to counsel students and implement the American School Counselor Association Model and provide services to all students.

High School Counselor of the Year

Ms. Robin Valerius – Destrehan High School

Ms. Robin Valerius has been a counselor at Destrehan High School in St. Charles Parish for eighteen years. She has advocated for counselors in several ways such as presenting at conferences, reading applications for the School Counselor of the Year Awards as well as being an active part of the school improvement team at Destrehan High School. She has served as the counselor at several grade levels and the counselor for alternative program at her school. This year, she is supporting a caseload of students in grades 9 – 12 and providing the same top notch



Robin Valerius

Article continues in next column

services and information to her students to promote success. She shares information on graduation requirements, TOPS Pathway, JumpStart Pathways and post secondary options. She presented this information through classroom guidance early in the school year. During her time with students, she supports the creation of a rough draft for their IGPs. After these whole class sessions, she meets with all students individually to review transcripts, discuss career interests, athletics, employment and peer relationships. She is very proud of her work with implementing the Comm 10 Unity Program, which provided her students with opportunities to give back by facilitating a project with the local animal shelter where she volunteered. In her comprehensive counseling programs she strategically uses ad-

(Celebrating, continued on page 8)

Growing Together

*Vinetta Frie, Cajun Counselor
Newsletter Editor*



While LSCA has been my primary division for many years, I was first a member of LCCA. I enjoyed the college counselor association, but I kept thinking I was missing an important facet of how to help college aged clients.

I have been impressed by the variety of perspectives which comes from our diverse academic settings in which we work. But despite that diversity, we all strive to help our students from preschool to seasoned adults to develop better, more productive behaviors and habits that facilitate their job of being better students of life and at school.

I don't think it was a coincidence that it was two LSCA members who without conferring with each other volunteered to help me with the LCA Conference. Chi Franklin and Tara Williams were truly the wind beneath my wings. They helped me to think through my vision, then break it into action steps. They helped me to let go and accept their help. And together we created an event that helped set the stage for all the LCA Divisions to reconnect with their members and with friends in other divisions.

I hope that as you celebrate the winter holidays that are meaningful to you, or if you just take this time to reflect on what you will do to make next year better, I hope you will consider becoming more active in LSCA.

It will make you a better counselor! 

Celebrating, continued from page 5

vocacy, leadership development, systemic change and collaboration to make a difference with her students. Throughout the school year, she reviews data that offers information on students' grades, attendance and behavioral issues, which leads to her work with the students who are failing, losing credits or being recommended for expulsion. She notes that as she better understands students, she recognizes that her students' lives are bigger and more complicated than what happens during the day at school.

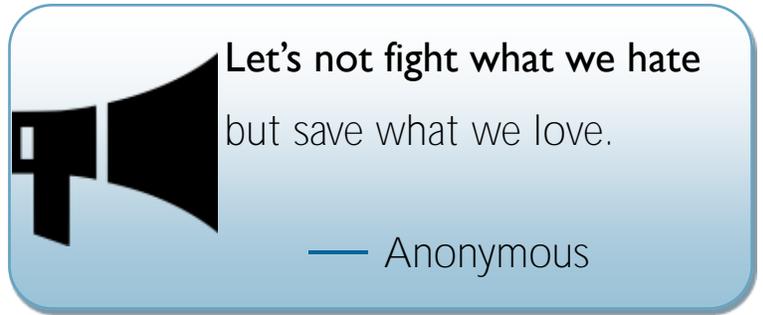
Legislator of the Year – Senator Beth Mizell



Senator Beth Mizell is passionate about reducing human trafficking in the Louisiana. She is very supportive of school counselors and believes they can assist her in her human trafficking prevention efforts. She believes we can save our children from these predators. She is currently working on

submitting a bill that will allow school counselors the opportunity to distribute a flier to parents every year with crucial information. The fliers would provide significant educational information on how to put up parental securities on electronic devices. Hopefully, the **Parent's Guide to Internet and Phone Safety** will also prevent some children from being exposed to potential traffickers. Senator Mizell understands that school counselors are often taxed with other duties such as administrative paper work, test coordination, and SBLC duties, which prevent them from focusing on prevention efforts. She is supportive and committed to the role of the school counselor, serving all students by the implementation of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program based on the American School Counselors Association Model. She has many ideas about how school counselors can be instrumental in the prevention and reduction of human trafficking in the state of Louisiana. The Louisiana School Counselors appreciate Senator Mizell and be-

Article continues in next column



stow the honor of School Counselors Legislator of the Year on her with pride and gratefulness.

At the end of our program, we recognized the counselors who have represented the Louisiana School Counselors in Washington DC in the spring over the last five years: Jennifer DeGruse - 2014, Cathy Smith - 2015, Denise Peinado - 2016, Tara Washington - 2017, and Dawn Stelly - 2018. 🗣️



Above: Julia Cook at the Awards Luncheon. Below, L to R: LA Counselors of the Year Dawn Stelly, Tara Washington, Denise Peinado, and Cathy Smith





Government Relations

Brenda Eccles, LSCA Government Relations Chair

For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2018, the State of Louisiana was facing a budget shortfall based on the expiring one-cent sales tax that was passed in 2015. **One bill that was successful was concerning PLPC's** being classified as certified professional counselors to work in the school setting in mental health. It was presented on the BESE Board Agenda end of June/July for the language to be changed in Bulletin 746 to include PLPC, along with Social Workers as qualified supervised professionals who could be paid through insurance billings. It takes at least 90 days after Bulletin 746 language has been changed for it to go into effect, which should happen this Fall.

Other significant bills that will be reviewed in the 2019 legislative sessions which involve the school system implementation are as follows:

HB 766, which became Act 696, by Representative Vincent Pierre provides access to behavioral health service providers in schools across the state.

HB 898, which became Act 716. This bill was presented by Representative Tony Bacala which addresses threats of violence or terrorism at elementary and secondary schools, including investigation and reporting thereof and required mental health evaluation.

HCRS 12 and 82 by Representative Larry Bagley were attempts at creating a task force to study issues relative to the employment of retired teachers (which counselors fall under) to meet shortages in public schools. This measure was voluntarily deferred in the House of Education Committee and will be presented again in the 2019 legislative session possibly as a Resolution.

Before the April 2019 legislative session, professional counselors we should start contacting our legislators. I would recommend especially contacting the sponsoring representatives listed above to express your concerns as they relate to these issues. 

Editor's Note: *This letter was submitted by current LSCA President, Denise Latour.*

Dear Louisiana School Counselors,

We are writing to invite *current practicing school counselors* to participate in a research study through the University of Minnesota called An Exploratory Factor Analysis Examination of School Counselor Preparedness in Effectively Counseling Gender Nonconforming Students – A National K-12 Survey (UMN IRB exemption determination #00002588). For study purposes, we are looking for K-12 school counselors across the country to complete a short and simple survey. The study seeks to determine the usefulness of this survey in assessing counselor perceptions of preparedness in working with gender nonconforming students. The survey will take only 10-15 minutes to complete.

Upon completion of the survey, you will be directed to a Google Form where you can enter your contact information to be entered in a drawing for a chance to win one of fifteen \$100 Visa gift cards. The drawing is optional and you may opt out of filling out the Google Form if you wish.

Survey responses will be entirely anonymous and all data gathered will be stored in a secure online environment. Information will be kept confidential and secure and only the people working with the study will have access to the data unless required by law.

Thank you in advance for consideration.

To access the survey and more information regarding this study, please click on the following link: https://umn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aUVpiMERMMibIYB

Sincerely,

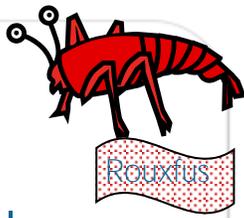
Carolyn Berger, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
University of Minnesota
caberger@umn.edu

Recommended By-Laws Changes

Brenda Eccles, LSCA Bylaws Chair

Under Article IV, Section 5 Duties of the Officers, I recommend we consider adding this as the last sentence:

The President shall appoint the Past Past President of LSCA or an active non-voting LSCA member to serve on the LCA Executive Board and fulfill the requirements of a Division President (attend Board meetings) 



Cajun Counselor

The Cajun Counselor is the quarterly newsletter of the Louisiana School Counselor Association, LSCA. LSCA is the state branch of the American School Counselor Association, ASCA. LSCA is also the largest division in LCA, the Louisiana Counseling Association. Total LSCA membership now exceeds 900 members statewide.

Please submit articles to Vinetta Frie, Newsletter Editor, via her email, frienews@yahoo.com. Please include LSCA Cajun Counselor in subject line. Next deadline:

January 26, 2018

Louisiana School Counselor Association's Leadership Roster for 2018-2019

Elected & Appointed Officers

- Denise Latour, *President*
denise.latour@tangischools.org
- Royce Hooks, *Past-President*
royce_hooks@yahoo.com
- Veronica Douglas, *President Elect*
jarelle2npower@aol.com
- Danielle Cole, *Elementary Level VP*
dtcole@lpssonline.com
- Dr. Dymphna Davis, *Middle Level VP*
phdddavis191307@gmail.com
- Tanya Hebert, *Secondary VP*
tjhebert@lpssonline.com
- Dr. Wendy Rock, *Post Secondary VP*
wendy.rock@att.net
- Amanda Duplatier, *Secretary*
Amanda.duplantier@gmail.com

- Jill Lockhart*, *Finance*
- Brenda Eccles, *Policies/Procedures/By-Laws and Government Relations*
bdeccles@lpssonline.com
- Claire Barry & Katherine Wolf, *Graduate Student Rep.*
chbarrt@uno.edu
kwold7@lsu.edu
- Royce Hooks,* *Nominations & Elections*
- Membership Committee:**
Veronica Douglas and all Vice Presidents
- Dr. Ariel Mitchell, *Long-Range Planning*, Amitch11@xula.edu

Dr. Stephanie Eberts, *Professional Development, Research Grant & Scholarship Chair*

Veronica Douglas,* *Program*

Vinetta Frie, *Publications*
frienews@yahoo.com

Cathy Smith, *Technology/Website*
catz80@gmail.com

Dr. Wendy Rock,* *Research Grant & Scholarship Chair*

*see first column for contact info

Committee Chairs

- Awards Co-Chairs:**
Dr. Alice Cryer-Sumler & Dr. Deona White
acryer-sumler@stcharles.k12.la.us
daustin@winppsb.org

To Be Announced
Ethics Board & Professional Certification
wendy.rock@southeastern.edu



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Official website of LSCA, which includes info on LSCA leadership roles, awards, news and events, newsletters, scholarships, and more visit www.louisianaschoolcounselor.com