

Dear Louisiana School Counselors:

It is an honor to serve the Louisiana School Counselors Association as the LSCA Chair for the 2026-2027 school year. I am eager to work with you in our collective efforts to impact change for Louisiana's students. Your commitment to your students, families, and community is appreciated, valued, and respected. Thank you for your presence and for the work you do each day to ensure that Louisiana students have an advocate and an amplifier in their corner.

Please join me in embracing this year's theme: **Turn It Up: Amplifying Student Success. Empowering Futures!**

How do we help set the stage for the performance of our students' lives? Amplification is meaningless without support, without confidence, without a voice. Amplification is merely a tool. We know that school counselors are uniquely positioned to guide every student on their journey toward becoming stage-ready for their academic, social-emotional, and college and career performance. We also know there is a great deal of practice, mistakes, refinement, and repetition that happens behind the scenes before success, however that may be defined, is achieved.

We set the stage as a community of carers, invested in students' futures. One goal is to support our community by hosting virtual meet-and-greets centered on guided discussions and shared experiences. In a profession that can feel isolating, increasing opportunities to form meaningful connections across parish lines can mean the difference between burnout and perseverance.

We set the stage by committing to lifelong learning and continuous growth, recognizing that sharpening our skills strengthens our ability to serve students. We will continue to offer a high-quality spring conference for Louisiana school counselors as interest and participation grow. We hope to build upon that professional development momentum through strategic partnerships that allow us to offer learning opportunities throughout the year. School counselors amplify student success most effectively when their equipment is reliable, current, and built to withstand the tests of time. Professional development is the foundation that upholds our seal of excellence.

So, let's turn it up and amplify success! Turn up to ensure that every student has the support, confidence, and resources needed to discover and strengthen their own voice. Turn up to helping students recognize their strengths, navigate their challenges, and envision possibilities they may not yet see for themselves. We amplify success when we show up every day to advocate, encourage, listen, teach, challenge, celebrate, and support each and every student. Students may never fully understand the behind-the-scenes work that sets the stage for their success, but the impact reverberates throughout their lives.

As we begin this year together, I challenge us all to embrace every opportunity to amplify excellence, amplify leadership, amplify connection, and ultimately amplify student success. The stage is set. The microphones are on. Now it's time for us to turn it up, empower futures, and pave the way for performances to last a lifetime.

With appreciation,

Val Estoque, M.S., LPC, NCC

LSCA Chair 26-27