



The American School Counselor Association applauds President Obama and his administration's efforts to strengthen the public education system in America. Contrary to many critics of the American educational system, ASCA does not believe the system is fundamentally broken, but acknowledges that the current incarnation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is in need of serious revision. We hope the Blueprint for Reform will be the first of many steps in the right direction.

In particular, ASCA commends the Blueprint's emphasis on college and career readiness, higher standards and more effective assessment systems, and equity and opportunity for every student to be successful in school and beyond. ASCA believes the goals of American education extend beyond academic success. ASCA believes education prepares the students of today to become the responsible adults of tomorrow by helping them develop the skills, knowledge and abilities necessary to continue to move America forward.

These goals can only be accomplished through collaborative efforts of policymakers, parents, community leaders and educators. Although the Blueprint addresses teachers and administrators, it does not discuss or include many professionals who are not traditionally defined as "teachers." Specifically, school counselors contribute directly to student success by helping develop the whole child through improvements in academic achievement, career and post-secondary planning, and personal and social development. School counselors already work toward many of the goals set forth in the Blueprint, such as decreased dropout rates, increased graduation and promotion rates, and preparation for careers and post-secondary education. Recent studies have shown the detrimental effects that may occur when students do not receive adequate assistance and guidance through post-secondary planning and the college admissions process.

The challenges of education are great and the solutions cannot afford to exclude any sectors. Training and retaining effective educational leaders is crucial, but the definition of educational leaders must be expanded beyond teachers and administrators.

The road to reauthorization of ESEA will undoubtedly encompass many unexpected turns, but we must maintain a clear vision of the destination. The American School Counselor Association is committed to working with Congress, the Department of Education, and the entire Obama administration to provide the education our students need and deserve.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) professional organization based in Alexandria, Va., and is the school counseling division of the American Counseling Association. ASCA promotes student success by expanding the image and influence of professional school counseling through leadership, advocacy, collaboration and systemic change. ASCA helps school counselors guide their students toward academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning to help today's students become tomorrow's productive, contributing members of society. Founded in 1952, ASCA currently has a network of 50 state associations and a membership of more than 27,000 school counseling professionals. Learn more at [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org).