



## **Statement regarding the 2022 ASCA Annual Conference in Austin, Texas**

*Feb. 25, 2022*

The American School Counselor Association's mission to support school counselors as they prepare students for life and career transcends politics. ASCA has no plans to relocate the 2022 ASCA Annual Conference, which will be held in-person in July in Austin, Texas. As a national organization with a membership in all 50 states, ASCA intentionally moves the Annual Conference from region to region to ensure the largest number of school counselors can access high-quality professional development.

The choice of ASCA Annual Conference destinations has never been an endorsement of the laws of the particular city or state. Removing the 2022 conference from Austin would eliminate a professional development opportunity for many school counselors in Texas, as well as Oklahoma and Louisiana, who may be unable to participate elsewhere. Additionally, removing meaningful professional development from Texas may have an indirect impact on the 5.4 million students who are educated in Texas and the 1.4 million who are educated nearby.

Since state legislatures began meeting this year, we have seen more than 200 bills introduced or discussed that seek to deny transgender youth access to gender-affirming medical treatment, preventing them from participating in sports teams consistent with their gender identity and denying access to sex-segregated spaces that include restrooms and locker rooms. ASCA opposes all proposals that harm LGBTQ+ youth and calls on legislators to reject these harmful measures. ASCA urges all school counselors to become active in their state school counselor associations and join local voices in opposition to these measures impacting their communities.

ASCA will not further isolate school counselors and transgender students in Texas from their allies based on political posturing and Governor Abbott's recent nonbinding directive. In Austin this summer, ASCA will affirm the more than 13,000 school counselors who serve 5.4 million students in Texas public schools.