

American School Counselors Association in Idaho Schools

Report conducted and authored by the Center for American Education



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Summary

This report aims to reveal the increasing prevalence of the American School Counselor's Association (ASCA) in Idaho's public school system. ASCA is the largest K-12 school counseling organization in the nation. Though its impact in Idaho remains less significant than in other states, it is still influential, and recent trends indicate a growing acceptance of the ASCA National Model in school counseling centers statewide. This is concerning not only because ASCA's reach is spreading through unassuming and often unnoticed channels, but also because the organization is captured by radical Marxist ideology. ASCA's influential counseling framework—the ASCA National Model—instructs school counselors to serve as progressive activists and advocate for policies in schools, school districts, and beyond, that support diversity, equity, inclusion, and LGBTQ priorities. The National Model also provides room for counselors to make decisions on behalf of students without parental consent when they deem such a decision necessary. This mirrors a national trend of school administrators secretly transitioning students without their parents' knowledge.

Despite its radical positions, the Association is finding purchase in Idaho's school system in several ways. First, a number of schools and districts have explicitly adopted the National Model for their counseling programs: [Oakley Elementary School](#) of Cassia County School District, [Coeur D'Alene School District](#), [West Ada School District](#), [Centennial Elementary School](#) of Lewiston Independent School District, [McCall-Donnelly High School](#) of McCall-Donnelly Joint School District, [Plummer/Worley School District](#), [Twin-Falls School District](#), [Wood River High School](#) of Blaine County District, and [Vallivue High School](#) of Vallivue School District.

Second, virtually every district in Idaho has adopted ASCA's three-part framework for its counseling policies: academic, career, and social/emotional development. The widespread use of this specific language demonstrates ASCA's substantial—though covert— influence on Idaho school counseling, across the board. Their basic representation of the school counseling profession has become the default model in the state. Third, the Idaho universities that grant counseling degrees are accredited by organizations that are not only strong allies of ASCA but also promote and have adopted the National Model. Finally, Idaho contains a state division of ASCA—the Idaho School Counselor Association (ISCA). Like its parent organization, ISCA promotes DEI counseling practices and advocates for progressive legislation, but devotes its energy to accomplishing these objectives in Idaho.

ASCA's policies have already resulted in controversial and tragic incidents in other states by, among other things, advocating for bathroom and locker room assignments based on gender identity. The National Model threatens not only parental rights and student safety, but also endeavors to transform the school environment into a marinade that steeps students, teachers, and administrators in radical Marxist values. Idahoans would do well to eliminate the organization's influence from the state.

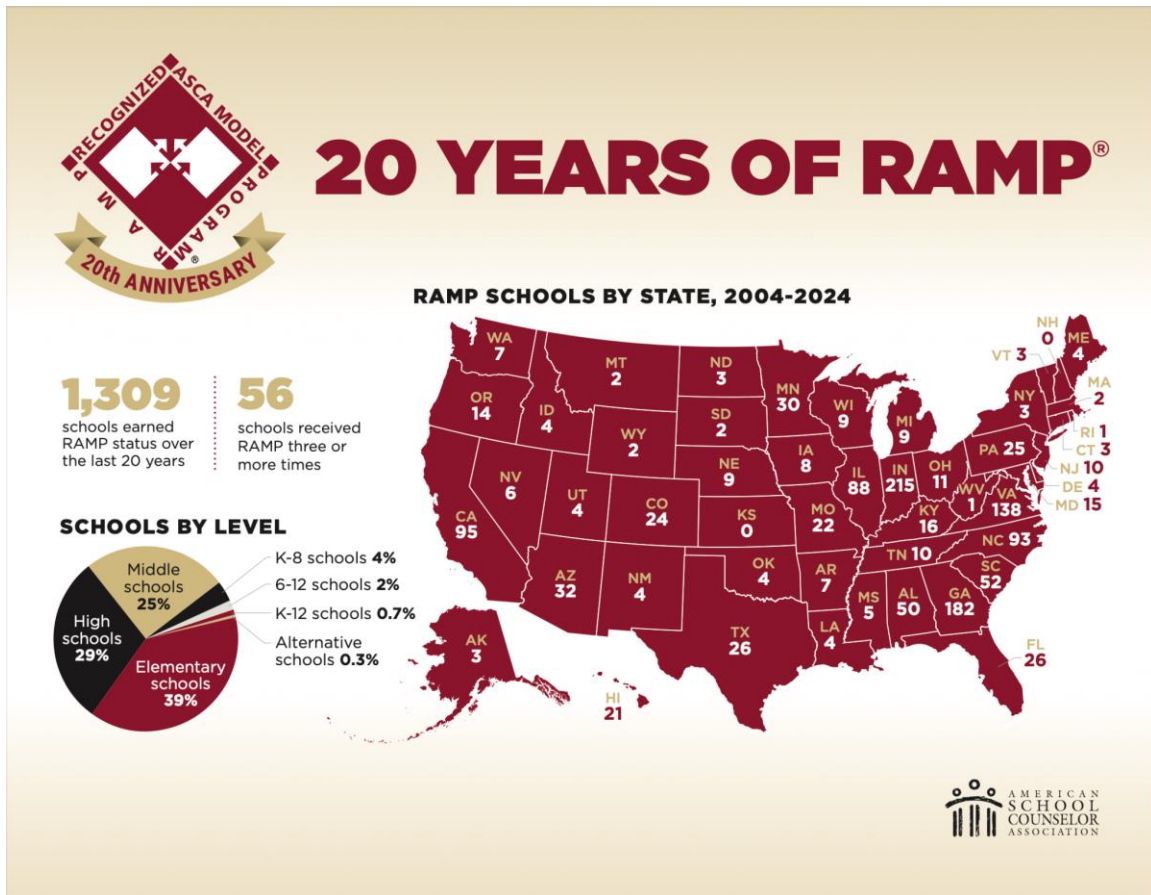
ASCA

ASCA is the most influential force in America's school counseling profession. Founded in 1952 in Alexandria, Virginia, the Association operates as a non-profit organization and boasts nearly 43,000 members. ASCA has [established divisions](#) in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands—including Idaho's own [Idaho School Counseling Association](#).

According to their [website](#), the Association “supports school counselors’ efforts to help students focus on academic, career and social/emotional development.” It also “provides professional development; publications; and other resources, research, and advocacy to school counselors around the globe.” ASCA’s stated [mission](#) is to “represent the school counseling profession and equip school counselors to create equitable opportunities and inclusive environments that enable all students to succeed.”

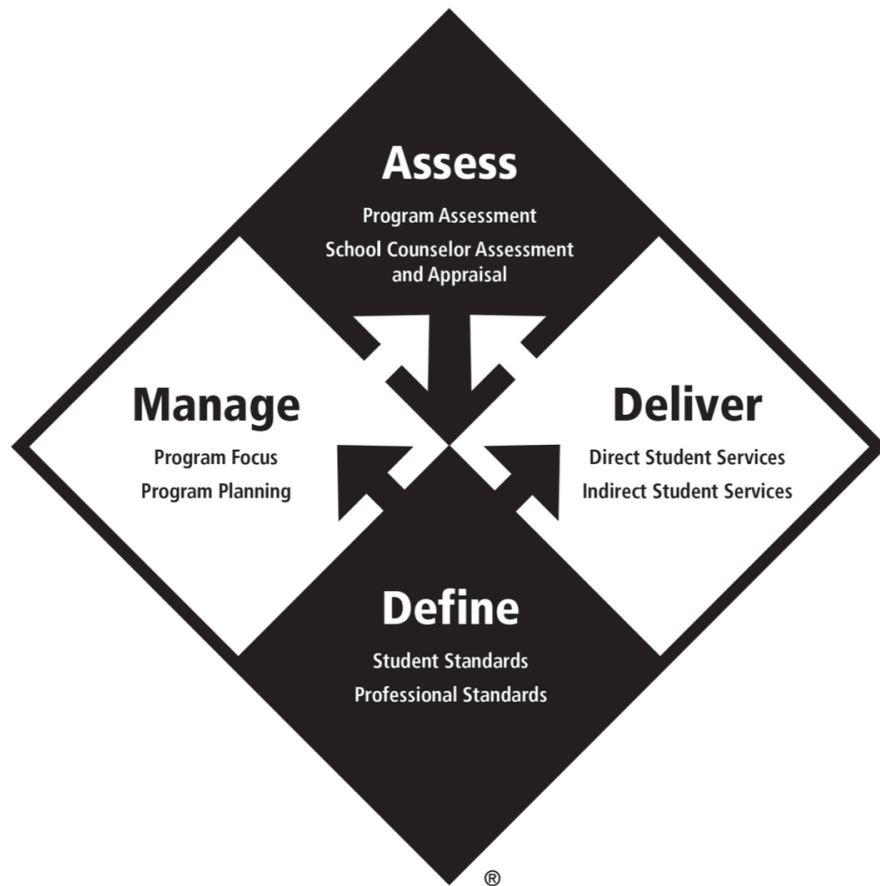
Above all, ASCA is known for its National Model, a comprehensive framework of policies and procedures that defines the role of school counselors and guides their practice in schools across the country. The ASCA Model has fundamentally shaped the high school counseling profession both nationwide and in Idaho.

In fact, recent trends suggest that the rate at which Idaho schools are implementing ASCA’s framework leads the nation. A 2024 ASCA [report](#) records that Idaho saw the greatest increase in counselor-to-student ratio of any state in the country — a change of 23%. Additionally, ASCA’s [catalog](#) of Recognized ASCA Model Programs (RAMP), which “recognizes schools committed to delivering school counseling programs aligned with the ASCA National Model framework,” shows that Idaho, which had never qualified a school for recognition prior to 2016, has now qualified four: Vallivue High School (2016), Lakevue Elementary School (2018), South Junior High School (2018), and Lewiston Senior High School (2020).



Source: <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Recognition/RAMP> (August 14, 2025).

This should concern Idaho parents for one simple reason: the ASCA National Model is rife with DEI ideology. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that DEI is a central pillar of ASCA's framework. The National Model breaks down counseling into four central tasks presented as the ASCA diamond: define, deliver, manage, and assess. When fleshed out, it becomes clear that DEI infects each of these tasks.



Source: <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/About-School-Counseling/ASCA-National-Model-for-School-Counseling-Programs/Templates-Resources>. (August 14, 2025).

The Four Tasks of the National Model

The first task of the counselor — to define the role and purpose of the school counseling program — is the most foundational of the four, and presents the clearest evidence of ASCA’s radical agenda. The National Model provides three sets of standards that together define school counseling: [Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#), [School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies](#), and [Student Standards](#).

The Ethical Standards not only embrace progressive concepts like “diversity,” “social/emotional learning,” “systemic bias,” and “marginalized populations,” but also promote more radical elements of gender ideology and critical theory, including “gender identity and expression,” “sexual orientation,” “equal outcomes,” and “anti-racism.” In the National Model, these notions define the counseling practice. Consider these statements from the Ethical Standards document.

School counselors:

Understand and advocate for all students’ right to be treated in a manner that honors and respects their identity and expression, including but not limited to race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language and ability status.

(A.10. e.)

Actively advocate for systemic and other changes needed for equitable participation and outcomes in educational programs when disproportionality exists regarding enrollment in such programs by race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language, immigration status, juvenile justice/court involvement, housing, socioeconomic status, ability, foster care, transportation, special education, mental health and/or any other exceptionality or special need.

(A.10.h.)

Promote culturally sustaining practices to help create a safe and inclusive school environment with equitable outcomes for all students.

(B.2.m.)

Develop knowledge and understanding of historic and systemic oppression, social justice and cultural models (e.g., multicultural counseling, anti-racism, culturally sustaining practices) to further develop skills for systemic change and equitable outcomes for all students.

(B.3.g.)

The Ethical Standards also make clear that religious objections — labeled “biases” — counselors might have to gender identity or sexual orientation must be set aside and replaced with an attitude of affirmation, inclusion, and acceptance.

School counselors:

Respect students’ and families’ values, beliefs and cultural background, as well as students’ sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and exercise great care to avoid imposing personal biases, beliefs or values rooted in one’s religion, culture or ethnicity.

(A.1.h.)

Honor the diversity and identities of students and seek training/supervision when prejudice or biases interfere with providing comprehensive school counseling services to all pre-K-12 students. School counselors will not refuse services to students based solely on personally held beliefs/values rooted in one’s religion, culture or ethnicity.

(B.3.k.)

And on top of these requirements, the Standards provide only paltry recognition of parental rights over their children:

School counselors:

Are aware that even though attempts are made to obtain informed consent, it is not always possible. When needed, school counselors make decisions on students' behalf that promote students' welfare.

(A.2.d.)

Recognize their primary ethical obligation for confidentiality is to the students but balance that obligation with an understanding of parents'/guardians' legal and inherent rights to be the guiding voice in their children's lives.

(A.2.g.)

Collaborate with school administration to ensure a student has proper supervision and support. If parents/guardians will not provide proper support, the school counselor takes necessary steps to underscore to parents/guardians the necessity to seek help and, at times, may include a report to child protective services.

(A.9.c.)

Recognize, honor and respect the importance of parents/guardians when providing services to students in a school setting and collaborate with students' parents/guardians as appropriate.

(B.1.a.)

Inform parents/guardians of the confidential nature of the school counseling relationship between the school counselor and student, while recognizing parents/guardians have inherent legal rights to student information.

(B.1.h.)

While these policies on parental rights don't directly provide grounds for malicious activity, they also fail to foreclose that possibility by granting counselors a concerning level of decision-making power. Counselors decide when it is appropriate to "collaborate with parents/guardians," and possess a primary obligation to ensure their interactions with students remain confidential, a confidentiality which is explicitly framed in tension with parental rights. Counselors also play a substantial role in deciding whether students have proper support from their parents, and may involve CPS when they believe it is necessary. And the Standards go so far as to establish that there are situations where school counselors have a responsibility to "make decisions on students' behalf that promote students' welfare."

It is no stretch to imagine a situation where a counselor might consider a parent's refusal to approve a gender transition for their child to be a lack of proper support, leading the counselor to take action against their wishes for the child's "welfare." This kind of situation has already occurred in other parts of the country. For instance, [school administrators](#) in Tallahassee met secretly with a 13-year-old to develop a "gender support plan" without her parent's knowledge, a case that is currently working its way through the legal system. Nor is this the only example; [various battles](#) are being fought over this issue in a number of states.

Similar priorities drive the Professional Standards and Student Standards. The Professional Standards instruct counselors to:

Demonstrate basic knowledge and respect of differences in customs, communications, traditions, values and other traits among students based on race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or intellectual ability and other factors.

(B-PF 6.a.)

Create systemic change through the implementation of a school counseling program.
(B-PF 9)

This last standard provides a lens into ASCA's vision for school counseling programs: centers of activism that seek to transform schools and the wider culture by promoting progressive ideology.

This activist vision is further fleshed out in the Student Standards. According to ASCA, these standards "should be used to promote equity and access for all students and create a school culture free of bias and oppression." Counselors are charged, when "faced with data exposing inequitable outcomes," to "use their leadership, advocacy, and collaboration skills to address underlying systemic issues and create systemic change in the school." In addition, counselors are to:

Advocate for policies, practices and guidelines that dismantle bias and promote equity for all.

Lead efforts to challenge policies, procedures, practices, traditions, customs or other behaviors perpetuating intentional or unintentional biased behaviors and outcomes.

Serve on school/district committees focused on ending bias, including committees addressing academic content.

Advocate for learning materials and resources in all content areas that promote diversity and inclusion and address systemic barriers.

Recognize and respond to incidents of bias among staff and Students.

Collaborate with families, educators, businesses and community organizations focused on promoting opportunity and ending disparity, bias and oppression.

These standards leave no doubt that ASCA counselors, if faithful to the National Model, serve as leftwing activists. One of their core duties is to define the counseling practice through a radical progressive lens and then to advocate for corresponding systemic change in their schools and school districts.

The other three tasks — deliver, manage, and assess — build off of these definitions and provide guidance for implementing the National Model and evaluating the quality and efficacy of counselors and their programs. At root then, the ASCA National Model is a program designed to establish school counselors as evangelists for gender ideology and critical theory who use their programs to indoctrinate students and transform school culture.

ASCA's Position Statements

Any lingering doubt about the character of the Association is put to rest by its unequivocally radical [position statements](#) on a host of issues.

Among these statements is a [defense](#) of “anti-racist practices,” that declares “racism remains a part of society in the United States and exists throughout all our institutions.” It goes on to say that “the education system contributes to maintaining systems of oppression through racist policies, practices and guidelines that negatively affect all students but especially students from racially diverse backgrounds, including Black and Indigenous students, who historically have been distinctly affected by white supremacy in the United States.”

Drawing from radical social justice activist, Ibram X. Kendi, it calls on school counselors to embrace “anti-racist policies” and “anti-racist ideas,” and to “embrace their roles as social justice advocates and change agents who examine and dismantle systems of oppression.”

A statement on “[Cultural Diversity](#)” also maintains that “[i]t is an expectation, not the exception,” for school counselors to integrate multiculturalism and social justice perspectives into their work as advocates and leaders.”

Another position statement on “[LGBTQ+ youth](#)” charges counselors to “work to eliminate areas impeding LGBTQ+ student development and achievement.” Among other things, counselors are to:

Advocate for transgender, nonbinary and gender-expansive students regarding access to building facilities (e.g., ensuring a safe environment for restroom use and changing) and gender presentation (e.g., wearing a dress or pants for an orchestra or vocal performance).

Understand the intersections of students’ sexual, gender and racial identities and the additional victimization experienced by LGBTQ+ students of color.

Promote sensitivity and acceptance of diversity among all students and staff to include LGBTQ+ students and diverse family systems.

Provide a safe space for LGBTQ+ students and allies such as Genders and Sexualities Alliance Clubs.

Model language that is inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity.

A third position on “[Transgender and Nonbinary Youth](#)” states counselors should “encourage a safe and affirming school environment and promote awareness of and education on issues related to transgender and nonbinary students.” Fleshed out, this “affirming environment” regards gender identity as the guiding standard for names and pronouns; access to restrooms and locker rooms; participation in P.E. classes, intramural activities, and interscholastic sports; and dress code policies.

And worst of all, this policy holds that “[i]f students have not disclosed their gender identity to a parent or guardian and as a result their name and/or gender marker cannot be changed on their student records, their chosen/affirmed name should be noted as a ‘preferred name’ in the system. This affirmed name should be used by staff and peers, according to the transgender or nonbinary student’s wishes.” In other words, even if a student has not informed his or her parents, staff and students should still use the student’s desired name and pronouns.

Several position statements also reinforce the ASCA vision of counselors as activists. A statement on “[Student Sexual Wellness](#)” describes counselors as “systemic change agents,” who “advocate for more equitable school policies around student sexual wellness, especially when such district guidelines create barriers and marginalize students.” Regarding “[Undocumented Status](#),” ASCA instructs counselors to:

Advocate for the rights of each and every student, including students who are undocumented, by ensuring students are not barred from education based on international birth certificates, lack of a Social Security number or a home language other than English.

Advocate for schools to be a safe haven for students who are undocumented.

Advocate against the practice of separating children from their families at U.S. borders.

Put together, these standards and positions remove any semblance of neutrality from the American School Counselor's Association: ASCA is a radical, left-wing organization that is on a mission to advance DEI, gender ideology, and other progressive priorities in our education system through a model of school counseling centered on activism.

ASCA in Idaho

How is ASCA's Model finding purchase in Idaho schools? The Association's most obvious inroads into the state are through the districts and schools that have openly adopted its guidelines. This includes [Oakley Elementary School](#) of Cassia County School District, [Coeur D'Alene School District](#), [West Ada School District](#), [Centennial Elementary School](#) of Lewiston Independent School District, [McCall-Donnelly High School](#) of McCall-Donnelly Joint School District, [Plummer/Worley School District](#), [Twin-Falls School District](#), [Wood River High School](#) of Blaine County District, and [Vallivue High School](#) of Vallivue School District.

These have all publicly embraced ASCA in plain language. But much less obviously, a vast majority of school districts in the state have adopted an essential portion of ASCA's counseling framework. The National Model divides the role of the counselor into three components: academic achievement, career planning, and social/emotional development. Though it may seem rather general, this language is specific to ASCA. These components are an essential piece of the National Model, and are mentioned repeatedly in ASCA documents.

The [Student Standards](#) mentioned earlier, for instance, seek to “describe the knowledge, attitudes and skills students need to achieve academic success, college and career readiness and social/emotional development.” Later, these three elements are defined as domains to which these standards can be applied:

Academic Development – Standards guiding school counseling programs to implement strategies and activities to support and maximize each student’s ability to learn.

Career Development – Standards guiding school counseling programs to help students 1) understand the connection between school and the world of work and 2) plan for and make a successful transition from school to postsecondary education and/or the world of work and from job to job across the lifespan.

Social/Emotional Development – Standards guiding school counseling programs to help students manage emotions and learn and apply interpersonal skills.

A position statement on “[The School Counselor and Academic Development](#)” contains a similar declaration: “School counselors deliver school counseling programs that enhance student growth in three domain areas: academic, career, and social/emotional development.” In summary, the position concludes, “School counselors provide a school counseling program that helps all students enhance their academic development to achieve and exceed high academic standards while recognizing that growth in all three domains of academic, career, and social/emotional development is necessary for students to be successful now and later in life.”

And many other examples could be provided.

Aside from a handful of exceptions, nearly every Idaho district board has approved this language for their guidance and counseling policies (typically listed as policy 601 or 2300).

This is not to say that each of these districts has wholeheartedly embraced the ASCA Model or that they agree with each of ASCA's positions. Nevertheless, the widespread adoption of this language demonstrates just how pervasive ASCA's influence over the counseling profession has become: ASCA's model is the default approach in Idaho's public schools, providing a backdoor for radical progressive ideology, such as "implementing...[inclusive and affirming practices](#)." At the very least, this calls for caution and vigilance.

Nor are these policies the only reason to assume this. ASCA maintains a formative presence in Idaho's counseling degree programs as well. The four schools that provide counseling degrees — the University of Idaho, Boise State University, Northwest Nazarene University, and Idaho State University — are all accredited by organizations that are ideologically aligned with ASCA and have either been shaped by or actively implement its Model. Each of these universities' education departments is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

CAEP is a strong ally and implementer of the ASCA Model. CAEP has [designated](#) ASCA a Specialized Professional Association — a set of groups that serve as "advocacy units, bodies of research informing practice, as well as bearers of ethical practice and standards for the profession" they represent. ASCA has set the [parameters](#) of CAEP's School Counselor Preparation Programs and is otherwise closely bound up with the Council.

[Aside from](#) the University of Idaho, each school's master's program in school counseling is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

CACREP, though less closely associated with ASCA, still [promotes](#) the Association and features ASCA in its [2009](#) and [2016](#) standards, encouraging active participation in ASCA programs. Further, CACREP has mirrored many of its standards off ASCA's guidelines (e.g., [G.8.](#)), and both [CAEP](#) and [CACREP](#) affirm many of the same DEI positions promoted by ASCA. Of note, the Idaho State Board of Education has formally [recognized](#) CACREP in its Standards for Initial Certification of Professional School Personnel.

A vast majority of counselors in Idaho obtain their degrees from one of these four universities. Thanks to these accrediting bodies, most Idaho counselors have been familiarized with ASCA — or at least ASCA-inspired — strategies and guidelines.

Lastly, Idaho is home to the Idaho School Counselor Association, an ASCA division that promotes the Association within Idaho and supports ASCA school counselors in the state. ISCA mirrors its parent organization's advocacy efforts, but with a special focus on Idaho. Most notably, Article V, Section 2 of ISCA's [bylaws](#) establishes several standing committees, including a DEI Committee and an Advocacy Committee. The DEI Committee "is tasked with providing feedback to the Board to ensure that the organization is implementing equitable and diverse practices for both members of the board and members within the organization." The Advocacy Committee is to "actively pursue, liaise, and support legislation that reflects the aims and goals of the Association. The committee will serve as the official liaison between the Association, national, state, and locally elected officials, and other agencies."

In other words, ISCA seeks to ensure that members within the state actively administer DEI-based counseling, and also advocates for state legislation that aligns with ASCA policies. In these ways, ASCA is hard at work in Idaho, advancing leftist counseling practices and progressive state policies.

ASCA's Impact

Lest there be any skepticism over whether ASCA's influence pushes counselors in an ideologically leftward direction, an ASCA [survey](#) of its members makes this clear. 86% of respondents affirmed that "school counselors/school counseling candidates must be able to accept and affirm students of any sexuality even if they do not affirm or approve of their sexual behavior;" 63% agreed that "if a school counselor/school counseling candidate is generally unwilling to work with students who request help with same-sex relationships then the school counseling profession is not an appropriate choice for this person."

Additionally, the organization Courage Is a Habit has documented [proof](#) of ASCA's radicalism in action. In conferences and training sessions across the country, ASCA is promoting gender ideology and anti-racism in their most progressive forms.

And these are far from merely theoretical concerns — these policies have had real-world consequences in other parts of the country. Back in 2021, a girl was assaulted in the ladies' bathroom in Loudoun County, Virginia, by a male dressed in a skirt. As it turns out, 11 Loudoun County [schools](#) had been awarded RAMP recognition by ASCA at the time of the incident, a fact the district [celebrated](#). That number has since grown to [12](#). While ASCA may not have been directly responsible for the crime, their ideological priorities were clearly deeply embedded in the district and fully supported the decision to allow bathroom access based on gender identity.

ASCA is also [ingrained](#) in the Weare School District in New Hampshire, where controversy [recently erupted](#) over a boy being allowed to use the girls' restroom at Weare Middle School against the wishes of the girls and their parents.

Additionally, a 2023 California court case, [Mirabelli v. Olson](#), centered around Escondido Union School District (EUSD) policy [AR 5145.3](#), which mandates recognition of students' gender identities and encourages school administration to keep students' gender identities and transgender status strictly confidential, even, if needed, from parents. The policy also provides that counselors will support students on this path and assist them in planning how to inform their parents of their new identities. As in the other cases, ASCA is and has been at work in EUSD. A current [job posting](#) for a district counseling position considers "counseling and guidance...in accordance with ASCA National Standards" to be an "essential dut[y] and responsibilit[y]," while [Bear Valley Middle School](#) states that it adheres to ASCA counseling standards.

This does not mean that the blame for these policies and incidents is directly attributable to ASCA, but these examples reveal the kinds of district and school cultures in which ASCA naturally thrives and the kinds of policies that ASCA standards comfortably support. ASCA can be found operating in the background of many schools that embrace LGBTQ+ identities and other DEI priorities. And this is perfectly consistent with National Model standards and positions, and ASCA's vision of counselors as progressive activists.

Conclusion

It should thus be worrying that ASCA is finding inroads into Idaho school counseling programs. If successful, the Association will transform Idaho school counseling centers into hubs that promote radical left-wing axioms and steep students in destructive ideologies. For Idaho to preserve its free and conservative identity, the expansion of ASCA and organizations influenced by ASCA must be forcibly halted. The Association is large, aggressive, and quite radical, and will inflict lasting damage on Idaho schools and students if left unchecked. The only appropriate response is to consciously and decisively eliminate their influence from the state.