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NORTH CAROLINA
SCHOOL COUNSELOR
ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER 5-7, 2025

EMBASSY SUITES
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NORTH CAROLINA

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Monarch

Wednesday, November 5, 2025 | 3:30 p.m.

PRE-CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SESSION

This session is open to
all conference attendees



The Kee to Success

TaRael Kee

ABOUT THIS SESSION: In this presentation, TaReal uses his life story to provide educators with inspiration and strategies to become agents of change for themselves, their students, and school communities.

SPEAKER BIO: TaRael Kee is currently the principal of West Elementary School. He is deeply passionate about building community, challenging students to think critically, and working collaboratively with staff. At West Elementary, he is committed to upholding the school's standard of excellence.

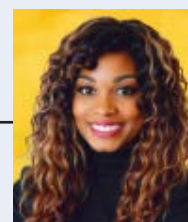
Previously, TaRael served as an Assistant Principal and Director of School Counseling at Alton High School, where he led the English Department in adopting a highly engaging curriculum and spearheaded the Automatic Acceleration process, allowing many students to access honors courses and more rigorous curricula. He also has a strong background in student support services, providing comprehensive college and career advising, academic planning, and social-emotional learning.

TaRael is a past-president of the Illinois School Counselor Association and a Site-Based Trainer for the American School Counselor Association. As a former school counselor at Collinsville High School, he utilized data and technology to make the counseling department more innovative, efficient, and inclusive. He is a published author and has received several accolades, including the Collinsville School District e-Educator of the Year (2017), recognition by the College Board (2018), the Lindenwood Alumni Spotlight (2019), and Illinois School Counselor of the Year (2021). He graduated from Lindenwood University with a specialist degree in Educational Leadership in May 2021.

TaRael will also be presenting two breakout sessions.

Thursday, November 6, 2025 | 8:30 a.m.

OPENING KEYNOTE SESSION



Passion, Purpose, Position

Ashley Wright

ABOUT THIS SESSION: Are you an educator feeling stuck in a rut? Do you yearn for a sense of purpose in your work? "Passion. Purpose. Position" – a call to action for educators to unleash their unique gifts and transform their communities. Join Ashley for an inspiring keynote session where you'll discover how to harness your passion, find your purpose, and position yourself as a change agent in education.

When you identify your strengths and align them with your goals, you'll truly discover the impact you can have in your school and beyond, and leave a legacy with every individual you encounter. Become transformed and motivated to make a difference in the lives of your students, staff, and community.

SPEAKER BIO: Born and raised in Houston, TX, Ashley Wright has been an educator since 2008. She graduated from Sam Houston State University and currently serves as a certified school counselor and Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). Her experience as an elementary classroom teacher helped her realize students were having endless challenges dealing with home, school, and peers. Inspired to serve more students, she became a school counselor, connecting with them both at school and in the community. This role allowed her to provide broader social-emotional support, equipping students with tools to build resilience and stronger relationships.

Ashley's commitment to fostering inclusive and comprehensive educational programs has made a significant impact on countless students, families, and educators at the national level. Her exemplary efforts were recognized when she was honored as a 2022 American School Counselor of the Year Finalist and the 2021 Texas School Counselor of the Year. She is also the author of *Passion, Purpose, and Position: Reignite Your Passion, Deepen Your Calling, and Lead Positive Change*. In addition to school counseling, Ashley serves as a national speaker and advocate of the profession to teach students and educators to embrace diversity, increase self-esteem, build character, and maintain resilience. It is her divine belief that "Every human being has the unlimited potential to make positive change in one's life."

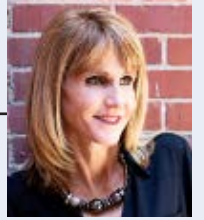
Ashley will also be presenting a breakout session.

November 7, 2025 | 8:30 a.m.

CLOSING KEYNOTE SESSION

I Need a LARGE Re-Charge! - Boosting Mental Wellness

Julia Cook



ABOUT THIS SESSION: School counselors live in GIVE GIVE GIVE world! In order to survive, we must take care of ourselves. In this interactive, uplifting, fun-filled talk, Julia Cook identifies the key ingredients of mental wellness. She will also offer effective strategies for building and maintaining well-being. Enjoy listening as you grow STRONGER TOGETHER! You'll laugh, you'll cry... but most important you will walk away with tools you can use for a lifetime of healthy!

According to the World Health Organization, the definition of mental wellness is living in a state of well-being in which people:

- realize their own abilities
- are capable of coping with the stresses of life
- can work productively and fruitfully
- can make contributions to their community

When you work in the kid-building world...this is a tall order to maintain!

SPEAKER BIO: Julia Cook, M.S. is a national award-winning children's author, counselor, and parenting expert. She has presented in thousands of schools nationally and internationally, regularly speaks at education and counseling conferences, and has published almost one hundred children's books on a wide range of character and social development topics. The goal behind Cook's work is to actively involve young people in fun, memorable stories and teach them to become lifelong problem solvers. Inspiration for her books comes from working with children and carefully listening to counselors, parents, and teachers, in order to stay on top of needs in the classroom and at home. Cook has the innate ability to enter the worldview of a child through storybooks, giving children both the "what to say" and the "how to say it."

Julia will also be presenting a breakout session.



TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2025

- 7:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. On-Site Conference Registration and Information Desk Open
- 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. NCSCA Delegate Assembly
- 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Exhibitors Setup
- 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Leadership Day Meeting
- 12:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Pre-Conference Sessions
- 1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Snack Break with Exhibitors
- 1:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Exhibits Open
- 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Pre-Conference General Session with Keynote Speaker – TaRael Kee
(Open to all conference attendees)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2025

- 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. On-Site Conference Registration and Information Desk Open
- 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast
- 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Exhibits Open
- 7:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Silent Auction
- 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Opening Session Kick Off: Welcome, Introduction, Regional Roll Call, Updates & Awards with Keynote Speaker – Ashley Wright
- 10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Break with Exhibitors
- 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Program Session 1
- 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Boxed Lunches (Name Badge Required)
- 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Past Presidents Luncheon
- 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Graduate Student Luncheon and Panel
- 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Program Session 2
- 1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Break with Exhibitors
- 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Graduate Student Poster Sessions
- 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Program Session 3
- 3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Break with Exhibitors
- 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Program Session 4
- 4:40 p.m. – 5:10 p.m. Regional Meetings
- 5:10 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Celebration Reception & Silent Auction

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2025

- 6:30 a.m. – 7:30 a.m. Fun Run/Walk
- 7:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. On-Site Conference Registration and Information Desk Open
- 8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Coffee Service Only
- 8:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Exhibits Open
- 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Closing Keynote Session – Julia Cook
- 9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Transition Break
- 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Program Session 5
- 10:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Break with Exhibitors – Last Chance!
- 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Program Session 6

Visit **50+ Exhibitors** at the Conference!



PRE-CONFERENCE LEARNING INSTITUTE



Fall Conference

Wednesday, November 5, 2025 | 12:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. (Lunch not included)

The Pre-Conference Learning Institute includes additional opportunities for more professional development and CEU contact hours. The sessions generally cover more in-depth information and allow more opportunity for discussion. **These sessions are not included in the conference registration fee.** Space is limited for all sessions. Interested participants are encouraged to register early.

All Pre-Conference sessions are being held at the same time, so you may only choose one session to attend.



1. School Counselors Navigating Legal and Ethical Dilemmas in 21st Century Learning Environments

Franciene Sabens

ABOUT THIS SESSION: School counselors encounter legal and ethical dilemmas in 21st century learning environments almost every day. The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors provides an opportunity to have difficult conversations regarding ethical dilemmas, while also providing direction for navigating the legal and ethical dilemmas encountered through the profession. Participants will develop an ethical decision-making framework for analyzing and resolving ethical and legal dilemmas through the application of the ASCA ethical standards, case and statutory law, and the most recent research in counseling. Through the discussion of the purpose of ethical standards, professional responsibilities, ethical concerns for practice, and current research and case law, participants will be given the opportunity to increase their understanding regarding the complexities of respecting a minors' right to confidentiality, sole possession notes, caregiver rights, duty to warn, implementing suicidal ideation response efforts, AI/Chat GPT, and personal conduct.

SPEAKER BIO: Franciene Sabens, M.S. Ed., LPC, NCC, is a litigation paralegal turned school counselor with nearly two decades of experience. Franciene serves as a board member for the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, and is a member of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Ethics Committee, and the National Council for the Advancement of Educator Ethics (a special NASDTEC Committee). In 2014 Franciene was named Illinois high school counselor of the year and honored by ASCA in 2016 at the White House as the Illinois state representative for the School Counselor of the Year ceremony. She contributed to the current Developmental Counseling Model for Illinois Schools, co-edited the second edition of the School Career Development Advisor Curriculum for the National Career Development Association, and is a frequent ASCA presenter and publication contributor. Franciene is passionate about enhancing the counseling profession by helping school counselors implement ethically aligned comprehensive programs that maintain the highest standards of integrity, leadership and professionalism while supporting students as they strive to reach their greatest potential.



2. The Colors of Loss: 10 Expressive Counseling Techniques that Work

Makenzie Perkins

ABOUT THIS SESSION: Did you know new studies estimate 1 in 12 children will lose a parent or sibling before the age of 18? This presentation will allow school counselors to leave with creative ways to help students process their own grief journeys. A variety of expressive counseling techniques will be explored (and practiced!) that can be utilized in both individual and group sessions for all ages. Although we can't control if a student experiences loss and grief, we can help give their grief a voice.

SPEAKER BIO: Makenzie Perkins, MS, currently serves as the Counseling Specialist for Collierville Schools (TN). In this role she is responsible for coordinating and supervising school counseling, threat assessment, health facility transitions, and crisis response across the district. Previously she served as the Prevention Counselor at Collierville High School, where she helped students and staff navigate mental health concerns and crises at the largest high school in the state.

Makenzie is a National Certified Counselor and earned her Master of Science degree and Clinical Mental Health Specialist degree from the University of Memphis. She is also the author of 30-Minute Groups: Grief. Makenzie is passionate about training professionals in the areas of threat assessment and management, suicidality, school safety, loss and grief, and understanding the everchanging mental health needs of today's youth.



3. The Playlist for Creating a Trauma-Informed School

Elishia Basner

ABOUT THIS SESSION: Do you wonder if your school is supportive of students who have experienced trauma? We understand that not all of our students have had the same experiences and many may be struggling in the Survival Brain, unable to access the Learning Brain. That's why it's so important to create an environment that promotes the learning brain, regardless of past trauma. See how you can help build a trauma-informed school atmosphere that is safer, calmer, and more conducive to learning for all students.

SPEAKER BIO: Elishia is a former school counselor with a decade of experience aiding children and adolescents in navigating life challenges such as grief, loss, divorce, emotional regulation issues, and transitions. Elishia is passionate about helping schools become more resilient-centered and helping school counselors create comprehensive programs that align with the ASCA National Model. Elishia has over 14 years of experience in counseling and education; she has a Master's degree in the Science of School Counseling and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. She is also the author of the small group curriculum 30-Minute Groups: Life Skills.

In her 14+ year career in the helping profession, she has done everything from working as a school counselor for a decade with every grade level from pre-k through college, in-home counseling with children at risk of removal from social services, managing a 24/7 women's crisis center, and teaching psychology to undergraduates. Elishia is an enthusiastic speaker who helps audiences connect to the information they need to help children thrive.

REGISTRATION



Fall Conference

Save on your conference registration by becoming a member of the NCSCA!

Visit www.ncschoolcounselor.org BEFORE registering to get your member number.

REGISTRATION FORM (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

I am a current NCSCA member. Yes ☐ No ☐ #: _____ (required for member rates)

I would like to volunteer at the conference. Yes ☐ No ☐ I am a first time attendee. Yes ☐ No ☐

NAME (as it should appear on name badge) _____ JOB TITLE - (REQUIRED PLEASE) _____

ORGANIZATION/SCHOOL DISTRICT _____

ATTENDEE EMAIL (REQUIRED FOR CONFIRMATION) _____

WORK ADDRESS _____ COUNTY _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

WORK PHONE () _____ CELL PHONE () _____

SPECIAL NEEDS _____

PLEASE ANSWER: IF YOU WERE TO PURCHASE A NCSCA T-SHIRT AT THE CONFERENCE, WHICH STYLE WOULD YOU PREFER? ☐ Short-sleeve ☐ Long-sleeve

A. MAIN Conference (Nov. 5-7)

- ☐ Early Registration (by Sept. 30)**
☐ Regular Registration (Oct. 1 - Nov. 2)**
☐ Onsite Registration (after Nov. 2)

Professional Member*	Non-Member	Grad Student/Retiree Member*
\$150	\$240	\$120
\$160	\$250	\$125
\$170	\$260	\$135

(A) Main Conference \$ _____

(B) Thursday Only \$ _____

The Main Conference includes access to the Pre-conference Keynote General Session on Wed. Nov. 5, 2025.

B. Thursday ONLY (Nov. 6)

- ☐ Early Registration (by Sept. 30)**
☐ Regular Registration (Oct. 1 - Nov. 2)**
☐ Onsite Registration after Nov. 2)

Professional Member*	Non-Member	Grad Student/Retiree Member*
\$115	\$210	\$90
\$125	\$220	\$100
\$135	\$230	\$110

(C) Pre-Conference \$ _____

C. Pre-Conference Learning Institute (Nov. 5)

(Additional fees required. Choose only ONE.)

- ☐ 1. School Counselors Navigating Legal and Ethical Dilemmas – Sabens
☐ 2. The Colors of Loss – Perkins
☐ 3. The Playlist for Creating a Trauma-Informed School – Basner

Member*	Non-Member
\$45	\$100
\$45	\$100
\$45	\$100

Total Due

(A + B + C) \$ _____

* NCSCA membership must be good through November 7, 2025.

** To qualify for the early or regular registration rates, your registration form and payment (copy of your purchase order, check, or credit card) must be received or post-marked by the cutoff dates.

REGISTRATIONS CANNOT BE PROCESSED WITHOUT PAYMENT. PLEASE SEND PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION FORM(S) TOGETHER.

How and Where Do I Pay?

	WEBSITE	EMAIL	FAX	PHONE	MAIL
CREDIT CARD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PURCHASE ORDER		✓	✓		✓
CHECK					✓

PAYMENT METHOD

☐ PURCHASE ORDER A COPY OF THE PURCHASE ORDER IS REQUIRED.
(PAYABLE TO NATIONAL CENTER FOR YOUTH ISSUES, P.O. BOX 22185, CHATTANOOGA, TN 37422-2185)

☐ CHECK ENCLOSED (MADE PAYABLE TO NATIONAL CENTER FOR YOUTH ISSUES)

☐ CREDIT CARD ☐ PERSONAL ☐ CORPORATE

CARD NO. _____ EXP. DATE _____ CID# _____

NAME ON CARD (PLEASE PRINT) _____

CREDIT CARD BILLING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE _____ EMAIL _____

PROCESSING FEE: There will be a \$35 service charge for all returned checks and declined credit cards.

CANCELLATION POLICY: If we are forced to cancel the NCSCA Conference because of a "force majeure" event, such as a government restriction on large gatherings that cover the intended size of the conference, then we will issue full refunds of the registrations. Otherwise, our normal cancellation policy will be upheld: Requests for refunds must be received in writing. No refund requests will be granted after October 5, 2025. There is a 20% processing fee for refunds requested prior to August 31, 2025 and a 50% processing fee for all refunds requested September 1 – October 5, 2025. Send cancellation requests to the NCSCA Treasurer at treasurer@ncschoolcounselor.org. The association is not responsible for and cannot give refunds due to problems beyond its control, such as weather and school closings.

On social distancing and other health and safety measures, the regulations/guidelines that apply to hotels and conference centers may change. The NCSCA Conference will conform to all necessary regulations/guidelines that are in place as of the date of the conference.

PLEASE NOTE: The attendee will receive a confirmation to the email address provided when their registration is processed (make sure to check Junk/Spam folders). The sponsors of the conference receive registrant contact information.

WEBSITE: www.ncyionline.org/ncscac

EMAIL: registrations@ncyi.org

FAX: 423-899-4547

PHONE: 866-318-6294

MAIL: National Center for Youth Issues

P.O. Box 22185

Chattanooga, TN 37422-2185

Please make your check or purchase order payable to: **National Center for Youth Issues.**

A W-9 is available on the website.

WAIVER OF LIABILITY: The signed, in consideration of his/her registration of the 2025 NCSCA Fall Conference, releases, holds harmless and discharges the association, management staff and their agents, from any and all actions, claims and demands which may arise out of an accident, casualty or occurrence during said convention. Your signature above acknowledges acceptance of these provisions of registration for all those listed on this form.

ACCOMMODATIONS



Fall Conference

Make hotel reservations early! Limited Availability!

Embassy Suites Resort and Convention Center

5400 John Q. Hammons Dr NW • Concord, NC 28027

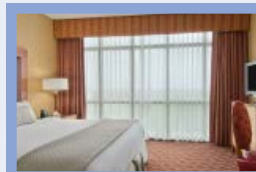
The Embassy Suites, the Conference's host hotel, has a **conference rate of \$179 per night, plus tax**, which remains valid for reservations made **by October 21, 2025**, while rooms are available. The price includes full, cook-to-order breakfast and evening Manager's Reception.

TO MAKE HOTEL RESERVATIONS

CALL: (704) 455-8200.

Please be sure to mention the "91M" group and the dates of the conference.

REGISTER ONLINE: Visit www.ncyionline.org/ncscac and scroll down to the "Accommodations" section. Click on the link to visit the hotel's on-line reservation system.



Come Learn and Play!

In the evening, make sure you take time to relax and enjoy the surrounding area. Go to www.ncyionline.org/ncscac to see the things to do around the beautiful Embassy Suites.

Visit Concord Mills, just minutes away and in walking distance from the Embassy Suites!

- You can sit back and relax at the many restaurants at Concord Mills, such as Bonefish Grill, Dave and Busters, and Outback Steakhouse, along with others.
- Concord Mills also has an 24-screen AMC movie theater, so you can finally watch that movie you have been wanting to see.



At Concord Mills enjoy shopping at the Saks Fifth Avenue OFF 5TH, Nike Factory Store, Banana Republic Factory Store, Ann Taylor Factory Store, Tommy Bahama Outlet, and many more!



We hope this conference will educate and equip you to do your job well, and we also hope you will take advantage of the wonderful ways you can relax and be refreshed!