



Dear Lone Star State School Counselor Association Member,

I hope you have had a great end of another school year. Because of you, many of our students have had a successful year and many are celebrating graduations throughout this incredible state of ours.

I hope you will pray for our fellow counselors who worked tirelessly on an unnecessary tragedy at Santa Fe High School. I know these counselors have had a very stressful end of a school year, yet, they still had to graduate students and be there to help students or staff who are still grieving. Please pray for our very own Texas counselors at Santa Fe High School.

Due to this horrific incident at Santa Fe High School, Governor Abbott and our state legislatures have been and will continue to seek ways to keep schools safe in the coming year and through the legislative session. School counselors are one of their topics of discussion. It is clear to us as school counselors that we play a vital role in the process of both preventive and responsive roles, but it is also up to us to continue to let our legislatures know of our importance in the schools.

We, as school counselors, must rise to the occasion and not be afraid to voice our opinions to local legislatures. It is important to let them know the following:

We advocate for mandated school counselors at all levels. Texas is one of 20 states that does not have mandated school counselors.

We advocate for mandated student to counselor ratios, that align with ASCA's recommendations, in order to provide effective quality direct and indirect services for all students.

We advocate for spending 100% of time on task providing direct or indirect services to all students, which means 80% for/with students and 20% managing the comprehensive school counseling program throughout the school.

We advocate for the counselor's role to be clearly defined so that counselors are not doing administrative duties, testing, and other duties that do not relate to the expectation of a Masters level school counselor.

Now is a critical time to reach out to your legislators to share the priorities outlined above to support student safety. Find your legislators at: <https://gis1.tlc.texas.gov/mobile/fyi/> Send a letter and/or make a phone call today. At the LSSSCA conference in November, we hope to have your input and tips on a plan to work and move forward on this momentum.

This is our TIME. Let's not be passive and allow others who are not school counselors to dictate what our roles and responsibilities are as professionals. Let's be proactive and advocate for our profession.

Sincerely,

*Wes Upton*

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