

President's Pen

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Wow! Just like that, flowers are blooming, birds are chirping, and spring is here. I think it is safe to assume that your experiences mirror mine in that this year has flown by at what has felt like the speed of light. My first President's Pen was about my presidential priorities. My second Pen was a thank you to some of the unsung heroes that that make up the MSPA board, and a request for you to get more involved. My final Pen will summarize what we have been able to accomplish and my thoughts for MSPA's future.

My first presidential focus was to complete the 'Phase One of Strategic Planning.' This task was tackled in multiple stages, first by developing the foundational work at the 2016 Summer Planning meeting, followed by the creation of the Strategic Planning Ad Hoc committee. The Ad Hoc committee served to keep us focused on tasks and timelines and to share out progress monitoring data at monthly MSPA board meetings.

After the committee's proposed Core Values were approved by the board, they came out to you for a final vote. I am pleased to share that the Core Values were voted on by the membership and that each value recommended by the board was also approved by the membership. Thank you for your participation in aligning MSPA's Core Values with yours; as I have said before, you are MSPA and MSPA is you. Thus, your approval is of utmost importance. These values now set the foundation on which the rest of the strategic plan will lay. From here, we will move on to align core committee goals and objectives to our Core Values.

The second presidential focus was to increase membership participation. I am pleased to share that MSPA has gained one more LSPO to the family (welcome Baltimore County!). We have also successfully increased participation within committees by using teleconferencing and technology to reach members. In addition, all MSPA board meeting minutes will now be updated on our website. This will keep the membership informed if they are unable to make the monthly meetings. Furthermore, we continue to have committee web pages that are also updated with relevant news.

Additionally, as President, I made it a point to attend every local LSPO function to which I was invited. I found that going out to meet with each

locale and having the opportunity to work with organizations on local matters served the efforts of engaging membership toward more active association participation. I hope that future presidents continue this work.

Although we have taken steps, increasing active membership participation should be thought of as a marathon event, not a sprint. It is true that, as the saying goes, "Small Steps Change Lives," and it is also true that we still have quite a bit of ground to cover.

As this is an opportunity area for our organization, it will be my focus as Past President with the following goals in mind: Increasing the number of local members at board meetings, working with LSPOs to invite at least three local members to each board meeting, and post standing committee meetings (with at least two weeks notice) on the MSPA website.

It has been my honor to serve as President of MSPA this year. I have had the great honor of working with a dynamic board full of phenomenal and very talented people. I would not have been able to accomplish the tasks that I set out to complete without the full support of these energetic school psychologists. Please view my thank you letter, later in the PROTOCOL, to read more about the amazing work of these volunteers. I hope that everyone has a wonderful summer and I thank each of you for reading my final pen.





The Impact of Complex Childhood Trauma on Brain Development and Attachment: Implications for School-Based Professionals

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Every day, educators are tasked with the responsibility of providing safe, supportive, and productive learning environments for children. To do this, we embrace opportunities to enhance our understanding, tools, and techniques to better guide us in meeting the needs of an increasingly diversified student population.

As we equip ourselves with multi-sensory instructional strategies, social-emotional learning curriculums, and cultural competency trainings, we would be remiss in not also educating ourselves in how to support the millions of school-age youth who have experienced significant trauma.

What is trauma?

The term 'trauma' refers to an individual's emotional response to challenging events or situations in which they experience stress or adversity. Trauma is not a physical event or experience, but rather the unique reaction to actual, or perceived, harm to one's physical, psychological, or emotional well-being (Attachment & Trauma Network, 2016). When an individual is poorly equipped to cope with this harm, the traumatic response that they experience results in long-term changes and impairment in daily life functioning.

Acute trauma occurs when an individual experiences an adverse response to a singular harmful event (Tullberg, 2011). Such events may include a car accident, loss of a loved one, personal illness, theft, or natural disaster. These events, as well as their impact on an individual's ability to cope, are generally limited in duration. Direct treatment and support for those who experience acute trauma is often highly effective. Recent research reports that more than two-thirds of children will experience a traumatic event before the age of sixteen (Flannery, 2016). With appropriate resiliency factors, and availability of caregivers to help them in processing this event,

many of these children are able to cope with this experience.

When an individual encounters multiple events that threaten their physical or psychological integrity over a prolonged period of time, however, they experience what is called chronic trauma (Tullberg, 2011). This form of trauma is often much more challenging to support and treat. Furthermore, when the multiple harmful events begin at a very young age, and involve the child's immediate caregivers, complex trauma is experienced (ATN, 2016).

According to Rossen & Cohen (2013), of children who experience a traumatic event before age sixteen, 78% will experience chronic or complex trauma. Examples of complex trauma may include neglect, physical, mental, and/or sexual abuse, exposure to drugs or alcohol, domestic violence, parental incarceration, or a persistent lack of basic human needs being met.

Unfortunately, many children who experience complex trauma do not have the necessary supports for resiliency, and are therefore unable to effectively cope with their experiences. This results in lifelong changes to their physical, emotional, and psychological development. Namely, structural and chemical changes in the brain, and unhealthy attachment patterns are two developmental impacts of complex trauma that directly impact children.

Complex Trauma & The Brain

When children experience complex trauma, the resulting impact is not limited to their emotionality. Long-term traumatic stress causes structural and chemical changes in the organs of the brain. These changes have a profound impact on the function of the brain organs, and therefore, the child's development and capabilities.

Complex trauma negatively impacts the

development and functioning of at least four key areas of the brain. The corpus callosum, responsible for bridging the right and left hemispheres of the brain, is noticeably underdeveloped in the brains of children who experience complex trauma (NSCDC, 2014). This structural change impairs the brain's ability to integrate right and left-brain functions- an essential step in adequate processing of experiences. Children with a smaller corpus callosum will often struggle to describe their emotions in words, consider cause and effect in situations, and otherwise integrate logical thought and language with interpersonal and emotional processing.

Furthermore, complex trauma results in significantly smaller frontal lobe development. With the prefrontal cortex operating as the "command center" of the brain, impairment in development of this structure means weak executive functioning skills for reasoning, decision-making, organization, working memory and impulse control. (NSCDC, 2014) Children with underdeveloped frontal lobes will often have difficulty making appropriate behavioral choices.

A third key brain structure that is altered with trauma exposure is the hippocampus. This "memory maker" part of the brain is responsible for integrating information from all different areas of sensation to form memories. With impaired development, a child's hippocampus struggles to both form and retrieve memories efficiently.

Finally, perhaps the most profound structural impact of complex trauma is the underdevelopment of the amygdala. Whereas other brain structures are less able to perform their responsibilities when underdeveloped, the amygdala becomes supercharged. The amygdala is the part of the brain responsible for perception of threat and signaling the body to respond to potential threats.

Children who have experienced complex trauma have an amygdala that is eternally on

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guard. Constant activation of the amygdala means that the brain is always hyper-sensitive to potential threat, and the child is left responding at all times with their stress system (NASP, 2015). With the brain constantly in this stress response setting, chemical changes also take place. The stress system releases an abundance of cortisol, the stress hormone, into the child's body. Children with supercharged amygdalas and excess cortisol levels may appear anxious, on edge, and may be highly reactive or impulsive. They are likely to demonstrate strong emotional responses, with weak memory for details and skills for logical thought.

Complex Trauma & Attachment

At a very young age, children begin to develop their own personal views of relationships, trust, and attachment. They learn, mostly from their interactions with their primary caregivers, the rules of trust and reliance. For children with reliable caregivers, who are consistent in their responses to the child's needs, a secure attachment is generally developed. These children learn that they can trust others; they also tend to have a positive self-concept, and are better able to self-regulate (ATN, 2016). They internalize the notion that, "I am loveable. I am worthwhile. I am safe."

When young children reside with caregivers who are, in some way, unable to attend to their needs with support and consistency, however, disordered attachment styles are often the result. Children with disordered attachment styles may approach interactions and relationships with others in different ways. Some children learn to "deactivate" their attachment needs, and to protect themselves from vulnerability (O'Neill, et. al, 2010). They are often well-versed in accepting and responding to rejection and punishment, but do not have strongly-developed skills for responding to protection and nurturance. These children will often demonstrate rejecting behaviors towards others, as a means of self-protection.

In other cases, children with disordered early attachment are confused by the incon-

sistency of their caregiver's responses to their needs. They often do not know how to predict how others will respond to them; therefore, they may hyperactivate their attachment needs and behaviors. These children may appear clingy, dependent, and demanding of their relationships (O'Neill, et. al, 2010). They internalize the notion of "I am unloveable."

A recent study by the National Institute of Mental Health (2016) examined children's interpretation of caregiver facial expressions, with a particular focus on the interpretations of children who were victims of maltreatment or neglect. Results suggested that children with trauma history exhibited a strong, unconscious negativity bias to attend rapidly to signs of threat in faces. Ambiguous caregiver facial expressions, such as neutrality and surprise, were never interpreted as neutral or positive by children with trauma exposure. In contrast, these facial expressions were always read as 'threatening.' In connection with brain changes, the children with trauma exposures'

Children who have experienced complex trauma have an amygdala that is eternally on guard.

supercharged amygdala caused them to respond to expressions of neutrality with an alert stress response and perception of threat.

When a child is demonstrating challenging behavior in the school setting, there are a variety of potential influencing factors to consider. It is important for educators to understand the attachment development of children who have experienced complex trauma, in order to adapt approaches and strategies to best support the unique needs of these children.

The Traumatized Child in School

While there is no standard profile of a child who has experienced trauma, there are several common cognitive, physiological, behavioral, and social characteristics that may indicate trauma exposure. Awareness of these characteristics and symptoms is important for educators and evaluators alike in determining appropriate interventions and supports.

Cognitively, children with trauma exposure often demonstrate poor verbal skills.

They may struggle to access the language they need to express themselves, or to form logical, coherent thoughts for verbal expression (Deihl, 2013). Often, memory challenges are common as well. Children with trauma exposure struggle with focus and concentration, and may commonly be diagnosed with biological attention deficits. Difficulties with organization, sequencing, and problem-solving can lead them to be challenged learners in the classroom. They struggle to consider and approach learning in a logical fashion, create a framework for learning, demonstrate flexible reasoning skills, and shift perspectives (Deihl, 2013). In many instances, they are evaluated to demonstrate learning disabilities.

Physiologically, children with trauma exposure may or may not have fully developed the capacity to read their internal physical cues. They may appear unaware of their body's physical needs and changes (Flannery, 2016). Often, a poor appetite and low weight are common. They may demonstrate digestive challenges, and complain of frequent stomachaches or headaches. Challenges with sleep, such as nightmares or difficulties falling or staying asleep, as well as bed-wetting are also common physiological manifestations of trauma (Deihl, 2013).

Behavioral challenges are generally the most readily observed characteristics of trauma exposure. Children with trauma history may present in different ways. Some children may display an excessive temper; they may be verbally or physically aggressive toward others, and may scream or cry excessively. In some cases, children will behave with actions that imitate the trauma that they have experienced. They may act out in social situations, be highly irritable, and demand attention from others through both positive and negative means (NASP, 2015).

In other instances, a traumatized child may appear withdrawn. They may lack confidence, fear separation from caregivers, and appear unable to develop and sustain friendships with peers. These children often demonstrate an exaggerated startle response to target sounds or physical touch (Rossen & Cohen, 2013). In many cases, as previously mentioned, traumatized children appear highly

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inattentive or overactive and impulsive, resulting in attention deficit diagnoses.

What can educators do to help?

In many cases, educators may not be aware of which of their students have or have not been exposed to, or are currently experiencing, complex trauma. Therefore, it is important to incorporate supportive and trauma-sensitive practices within all settings of the school building, for all students. Some key steps for educational support of traumatized youth are discussed here:

1. Reframe your thinking.

Children with challenging behaviors quickly become the focus of team discussions and brainstorming sessions for the development of strategies and interventions to address the behaviors. It is very easy to become frustrated or overwhelmed with the process of helping a child with challenging behaviors. When educators have implemented multiple interventions, exhibited the utmost patience, and partnered with as many supportive professionals as possible, and a child still struggles behaviorally, it is very easy to develop the mindset of "What is wrong with this child?"

When working with children with trauma exposure, however, it is important that we try to reframe the way that we think about challenging behavior, and the common assumptions that we may have. Consider challenging this mindset by replacing the question above with the question of, "What may have happened to this child to result in this behavior?" This re-framing serves many purposes. By considering a child's behavior in this light, we are separating their behaviors from their person, making it easier for us to see the various strengths that the child continues to have. In addition, it puts us in a better position to consider and develop stronger interventions to support the child. Finally, this reframing serves a self-preserving role for the educator; we are better able to escape personalization of the behaviors and failed intervention attempts by understanding that the underlying cause of this behavior may very well be something that is out of our control.

2. Understand adequate wait time.

When a child is demonstrating challenging behaviors in the classroom, one common behavioral intervention is to allow the child access to a brief escape, for the purposes of de-escalation and calming. This time is generally provided within a safe 'Cool Down' space within the classroom, or in the form of relocation to another space with an adult to process emotions and behavioral responses. It is also very common for this time to be limited, and regulated with the use of a timer, so as to avoid extended interruption to classroom learning.

Consider what is happening in the child's brain. As the supercharged amygdala is responding and the stress system is pumping excess cortisol and adrenaline into the body, the child is often left unable to access logical thought and separation from emotion. Chemically, their system is dominated by the stress hormone. Research tells us that it takes, on average, 18-22 minutes for the body to adjust back to baseline chemical levels, following the stress system response to a perceived threat (NSCDC, 2014). This means it may be 20 minutes before the child is even able to keep their body regulated enough to return to the learning setting. At that time, they may still be unable to logically process the events, and verbalize with others. As educators, we need to make sure that our first priority is assisting the child in de-escalation back to baseline to reengage in the classroom. Secondary processing of the event may need to take place at a later time, when the child is mentally available.

3. Be the child's frontal lobe.

As previously discussed, children with trauma exposure possess smaller frontal lobe development in the brain, resulting in impaired executive functioning. One such function is the consideration of cause and effect, and the capacity for logical decision-making (ATN, 2016). Though the child may be aware of the behavioral expectations of the school setting, when responding with their stress system they may be unable to access the logical part of the brain that processes this information in a cause and effect manner. The child will then struggle to make appropriate behavioral choices; they will generally re-

spond in a reactive manner, failing to logically map the connection to resulting consequences at that moment.

Educators can support children with this logical thinking and decision-making by taking on the role of their frontal lobe. Verbal and visual patterns of response, such as "When-Then, If-Then," provide educators with a tool for displaying the cause and effect nature of behavioral choices for students, to assist them in making appropriate behavioral choices. Consider presenting to the child, through brief verbal statements and/or a visual reference tool, his/her behavioral response choices, accompanied with the logical consequence of that choice. The positive, or desired, behavioral response choice is always presented first to draw the child's attention to the benefit of this choice.

4. Implement consistent, logical, & restorative discipline.

The approach to discipline for challenging behaviors in schools has varied widely over the years. From Zero Tolerance policies that implement strict, punitive measures for offenders, to Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports initiatives that adhere to positive-based feedback, students have experienced varying responses to their challenging behaviors.

When addressing children with trauma exposure, it is important for school administrators to be familiar with the implications of trauma exposure, and to be trained in effective communication strategies with traumatized children. Furthermore, the practice of restorative justice, an approach to discipline that focuses on repairing damage caused by the behavior, should be strongly considered as a response tool for challenging behaviors. By involving multiple key stakeholders, including the child, in the disciplinary process, educators can empower children to take ownership of their behaviors, while simultaneously strengthening relationships with authority figures. Logical disciplinary responses to challenging behaviors provide consistency and structure, as well as an externalized example of cause and effect, for children to make sense of. It further allows for a learning opportunity, assisting the student in making positive behavioral choices in the future.

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Counseling for Children with Trauma Exposure

There are several promising and effective therapeutic techniques to address complex childhood trauma. For instance, strong research support exists for the use of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), a psychotherapeutic technique designed to alleviate distress associated with traumatic memories. This form of therapeutic intervention enables the child to relieve distress, reformulate negative beliefs about themselves and the world that have formed due to trauma exposure, and reduce the physiological arousal that regulates the child's daily functioning (ATN, 2016).

As school-based mental health providers, however, our access to training and development necessary for implementation of techniques such as EMDR is limited. Often, our counseling support serves more of a behavioral function than an intensive mental health therapy function. There are, however, many things that we as school psychologists can offer to children with trauma exposure, beyond consultative roles with school-based teams.

Direct Instruction in Coping Skills

While we may not have the clinical training to assist children in resolving their trauma history, we do have the capacity to help them learn and practice various coping skills and use of therapeutic tools during times of need. Direct instruction in coping skills, such as breathing patterns, progressive muscle relaxation, and cognitive shifting, can be highly beneficial for children to implement in moments of distress. When introduced, modeled, and practiced within the safety and predictability of a counseling session setting, children are able to develop solid familiarity with such

strategies, and are better able to access them in times of need. In addition, such strategies are easily generalized to a variety of settings, through the use of consistent language in prompting, or visual cues. School psychologists can consult with educators and families to provide learned language and/or visual cues from counseling, and assist others in developing the ability to effectively prompt the escalated student.

Incorporating Caregiver Involvement

As we have learned previously, children with complex trauma exposure have often developed disordered attachment styles with their primary caregivers. This directly impacts their skills for connection with others, as well as their understanding and beliefs about themselves. Therefore, attention should be drawn to involving a child's primary caregiver, to the greatest extent possible and appropriate, in the child's support structure. By empowering the primary caregiver in the support process, we assist in building stronger, healthier relationships in the child's home setting.

The involvement of caregivers can vary, depending upon the nature of the child's needs, the capacity of the caregiver for involvement, and the relationship and attachment developed between the child and caregiver and the child and psychologist. Some manners of involving caregivers can include sharing consistent language and visuals for coping skills prompting, providing opportunities for direct positive feedback to the child from the caregiver, and establishing open lines of communication between home and school (NASP, 2015). School psychologists are uniquely trained to effectively mediate and support parent-child interactions, simultaneously teaching both the child and the parent in supportive and healthy social behaviors.

Mindfulness in Schools

Mindfulness, the practice of intentional awareness of thoughts, emotions, and surroundings, is earning growing support in academic settings. It has been discussed as a beneficial tool in helping children and adults alike deal with toxic stress, or stress caused by the outpacing of the demands of life to our coping skills (Mindful Schools, 2016). Mindful practices have been shown to directly benefit several of the brain functions that are negatively impacted by trauma exposure. The amygdala benefits through calming and reduced activation, assisting the child in regulating their stress system response. In addition, the hippocampus is shown to be more active, and therefore stronger in the development and retrieval of memories. Finally, the prefrontal cortex, in the frontal lobe of the brain, is more activated, assisting in behavioral regulation and decision-making skills (Mindful Schools, 2016). School psychologists can promote mindfulness through their individual and small group work with children who have experienced trauma, as well as through advocacy and direct action with school-based teams; introducing and implementing mindful practices on a school-wide level.

In closing, the exposure to complex trauma during childhood is a societal trend that continues to impact the development and learning of children across the globe. These children, as all children, deserve safe, supportive, and productive learning environments. What they require to achieve this learning environment, however, demands more of educators. It is imperative that educators inform themselves of the impact of trauma exposure on brain development, attachment style, learning patterns, and behavior. With this knowledge, we can better equip ourselves to effectively support the millions of school-age youth who have experienced significant trauma, and are seated in our classrooms every single day.

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School Psychologists and “Diagnosis”



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Background

This article stems from the author’s experience leading the “Autism Waiver Workgroup” for MSDE, a project designed to address current DHMH regulatory requirements for formal documentation of the Autism diagnosis for children qualifying for the Maryland Autism Waiver. The final report of the workgroup is making its way through the upper floors of MSDE, and should be published soon. Members of the workgroup engaged to produce a document which should be very helpful to local school systems, achieving substantial consensus in most aspects of the project. Their input was particularly valuable as the author developed the present article.

The one area where there was some significant disagreement among workgroup members was over the question of whether school psychologists were “allowed” to engage in “diagnosis.” The ability and regulatory authority to diagnose does not appear to be universally accepted among Maryland school psychologists, nor indeed among some of the local school systems which employ them. Some school systems may in fact discourage or even prohibit their school psychologists from using terms such as “diagnosis” and “diagnostic criteria” in their assessment reports, citing the supposed lack of explicit authorization for using such terminology in Maryland laws or regulations.

At the same time, MSDE and Maryland school systems do appear to expect school psychologists to identify emotional and behavioral conditions in students for purposes of both assisting the IEP Team in determining special education eligibility, and for determining if a student has an impairment requiring the supports of a 504 Plan in general education, whether they use the term “diagnosis” or not. In fact, a number of school systems have developed more or less

detailed guidelines and “best practice” documents for their school psychologists regarding the identification of Intellectual Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and other conditions that affect children. And MSDE recently produced a resource document, “The Role of the School Psychologists in the Identification of ED” which provides detailed guidance for school psychologists on identifying “emotional conditions” such as those which are the basis for coding a student with an Emotional Disability.

Legal and Regulatory Authority

Despite the apparent lack of consensus in these matters among school psychologists and their employers, Maryland school psychologists are indeed qualified by their training and their certification to diagnose conditions in students such as ID, ADHD, ASD and others. The term “diagnose” is used here to refer to the identification of a condition in a student for purposes of providing educational services, based on a diagnostic system such as the DSM, the ICD, or another empirically-based system for classifying disorders in children.

The legal and regulatory authority for Maryland school psychologists to use the term “diagnosis” when identifying such conditions and impairments is as follows:

COMAR 13A.12.03.08: School Psychologists are certified to “provide psychological services to children in a public or state-approved non-public school setting.”

Statute: Maryland’s Health Occupations Article 18-101(f) defines psychological services to include diagnosis.

Statute: Health Occupations Article 18-301(b)(2) provides an exception to the requirement for licensure for “the education-related services described in regulations adopted by the State Department of Educa-

tion that are performed by a certified school psychologist.”

“Education-related services” defined in COMAR (13A.05.05.04) indicate that “The School Psychology Program is a comprehensive continuum of services and activities based on psychological principles. The goal of the program is to prevent or remediate educational, emotional, or behavioral problems by identifying, analyzing, and reporting psychoeducational needs through consultation, observation, or through psychological and educational assessment.”

“Education-related services” are defined in practice by local school systems to include the school psychologist conducting assessments to identify disorders in children in order to provide educational supports and services, both in special education (IEP) and in general education (504). This may be called “educational diagnosis” as opposed to “medical diagnosis,” although the distinction may not be meaningful in school practice.

Diagnosis vs. Eligibility Determination

While it is important to assert our role as qualified diagnosticians, it is also necessary to remind ourselves (and others) of the important distinction between diagnosing a condition in a student, and qualifying that student for a 504 Plan or for an IEP. Identifying the condition is the necessary first step for many conditions – an IEP team cannot, for example, proceed with applying the ID code to a student’s IEP unless it has a report from a qualified professional (such as a school psychologist or a licensed psychologist) stating that the student meets diagnostic criteria for an Intellectual Disability. Likewise, the OHI code requires the existence of a diagnosis of a qualifying health condition from a qualified professional, typically a physician. But when that condition is ADHD, the school psychologist is able to provide the

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ADHD diagnosis. With the possible exceptions of Developmental Delay and Specific Learning Disability, identification of the underlying condition leading to an IEP is not a consensus-driven process; in each case a qualified professional provides a diagnosis which opens the door to the coding process.

But identifying the condition is just the first step; the team must then determine if the condition exerts a substantial adverse impact on student functioning (in 504 terms, the team decides if the condition “substantially limits” one or more basic life functions). That determination is indeed a consensus process.

If the team finds such impact, it then goes one of two routes – if the student needs “specialized instruction and related services,” then they get an IEP; otherwise the process leads to a 504 Plan.

(As a side note, the outdated term “qualified examiner” may still be in use in some places, but at least 20 years ago MSDE began discouraging use of the term, since in practice it was erroneously being interpreted as giving a single professional the ability to “qualify” a student for an IEP. As noted above, qualifying for a disability-related sup-

port plan involves team consensus, with the necessary participation of the “qualified professional” – school psychologist or otherwise – who can diagnose the underlying impairment.)

Why This Matters

As school psychology has matured as a profession, and has evolved in the direction of the NASP Practice Model, there has been an increasing emphasis on our role as “qualified mental health professionals.” It is important for us to embrace the implications

ties. The recent emphasis by NASP, MSPA, and some school systems on our role as mental health providers serves to reinforce the diagnostic aspect of our traditional role.

Recently, MSPA has been examining the question of licensure for school psychologists. One strand of this initiative is driven by the desire to restore the ability of Maryland public school systems to bill Medicaid for certain assessment and intervention services provided by school psychologists for students with disabilities. Another appears to be the desire on the part of some school psychologists to engage in independent practice outside of school employment. Asserting our authority and competence to provide diagnoses for both Medicaid billing and for independent practice is essential.

In the light of the above discussion, it makes sense for Maryland school systems, for training programs serving the state, and for MSPA to examine current practices, and to determine if additional pre-service or in-service training on diagnostic assessment would be beneficial.

For additional references and for questions and comments, please contact the author at wmflook@gmail.com.

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of that term – without over- or under-emphasizing any aspect. So while we provide consultation, intervention, professional development, and other services in many forms, conducting assessments is still an essential part of the job. School systems need us to be able to perform competent psychological assessments and to be able to draw diagnostic conclusions from our findings in order to help support students with disabili-

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Using Math Board Games to Promote Early Numeracy Skills



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Fewer than half (45 %) of new kindergartners in Maryland in 2015 began school with the skills and behaviors necessary to thrive in their classrooms (Ready at Five, 2016). Achievement gaps are most pronounced between children from low- and middle-to high-income homes. Low-income children score, on average, 22 points below their middle- to high-income peers on standardized assessments (Ready at Five, 2016). Focusing specifically on math, only 40% of children demonstrated the foundational math skills expected upon entry to kindergarten (Ready at Five, 2016). This is especially concerning because early gaps in performance remain persistent as children progress through school (Duncan et al., 2007; Jordan, Kaplan, Ramineni, & Locuniak, 2009). Thus, it is critical to foster children's early math development, even before the start of formal schooling (Ginsburg, Lee, & Boyd, 2008). As is discussed below, playing math board games at school or at home can improve children's math skills. School psychologists can use this information to help parents and teachers facilitate young children's math development.

Research by Ramani and Siegler (2008) has demonstrated the value of using math board games to improve young children's math skills. They created a board game that consisted of a line containing ten rectangular spaces.

Each space was individually labeled with the numbers 1-10. Children used a spinner to move either one or two spaces per turn. There also was a special counting rule called count-on, which required children to say aloud the written numbers on the spaces as they moved their piece, (e.g., if a child spun a 2 while on space 7, the child would say 8, 9 as he or she moved the piece) rather than counting the number of spaces being moved (e.g., 1 or 2). After playing this simple game using the easily taught counting rule, preschoolers significantly improved their number line estimation skills (Ramani & Siegler, 2008, 2011; Siegler & Ramani, 2008).

In fact, playing this math board game eliminated differences in number line estimation scores between children from low- and middle-income backgrounds. Ramani and Siegler's studies took place in one-on-one settings in the classroom. However, there may be value added to playing the game at home.

Children's exposure to math activities at home is positively associated with their later math skills (Sonnenschein, Metzger, & Thompson, 2016; Susperreguy & Davis-Kean, 2016). Although most parents acknowledge the importance of providing their children with math activities and assisting their children with such activities (Sonnenschein, Metzger, & Thompson, 2016; Susperreguy & Davis-

Kean, 2016), many parents are unsure what they can do to best support their children's math development (Cannon & Ginsburg, 2008). In a replication and adaptation of Ramani and Siegler's (2008) study, Sonnenschein, Metzger, Dowling, Gay, and Simons (2016) sent home the commercially available game Chutes and Ladders to a sample of low-income families with children in preschool. This game was recommended by Ramani and Siegler (2008) as a commercially available equivalent of the game they had used in their study. Parents were trained to use the count-on procedure. Children either were trained in school, given a motivational sticker chart to use at home, or both trained in school and given a motivational sticker chart. Sonnenschein, Metzger, Dowling et al. (2016) found that children's number line estimation skills improved when children were also trained to play the game in school and provided with a motivational sticker chart to keep track of their progress. This finding shows the importance of children practicing the skills that they learn in school at home.

Despite this positive finding, many parents reported that the game was too challenging for their preschool-age children primarily because of the children's limited number knowledge. The Chutes and Ladders playing board is a 10x10 grid with spaces numbered 1-

Using Math Board Games to Promote Early Numeracy Skills,

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100. Many children were not yet readily familiar with numbers greater than 20. In addition, not only can children progress through the spaces but they also can be sent back to an earlier space if they land on a chute. Preschool-age children found that very frustrating. Nevertheless, parents expressed excitement about taking home a game to play with their children. School psychologists should advise parents seeking a means of improving their children's early math skills to try board games that are at the appropriate difficulty level for the child.

In addition, parents must be informed about the importance of the activities they do with their child to increase the likelihood that they will successfully implement activities (Niklas, Nguyen, Cloney, Taylor, & Adams, 2016). Accordingly, school psychologists should tell parents of the importance of home-based activities and the value of using learn-

ing through play. Research shows that during play children can gain not only valuable academic skills, but also social-emotional and self-regulatory skills (Ramini & Eason, 2015; Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Kittredge, & Klahr, 2016).

In addition to helping parents work with their children in the home, studies like those described above shed light on a potential avenue for establishing successful partnerships between parents, teachers, and school psychologists. Parents are excited to take materials from school into their homes. Board games are an inexpensive and easily accessible activity that teachers can integrate into the classroom and parents can easily implement in the home. Schools could establish a system where children learn to play a math game targeting a specific learning goal during the week in school. Children then could take these games home on the weekends to play with their par-

ents. Sending home materials may be especially beneficial for children from low-income homes, who may have limited access to math resources and activities. Teachers could create a lending library of board games, something that has been done successfully using books (e.g., Serpell, Baker, & Sonnenschein, 2005).

In short, board games are an accessible and easily implemented intervention that parents can use in the home to help their children arrive for kindergarten prepared and ready to succeed. The game developed by Ramani and colleagues (2008) was both simple and effective and easily could be re-created by teachers or parents. Games such as Chutes and Ladders can be made more developmentally appropriate for preschool children by having the game go from 1- 20. Count-on or other simple math could even be introduced to games like Candy Land or Hi-Ho Cherry-o.

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Developing Scientist-Practitioners: The Professional Practice Issues Poster Session

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Howard University school psychology program (HUSP) students enrolled in the Practicum in School Psychology course sequence participate in a professional practice issues poster session every spring. This assignment was added to the course in 2015 to increase students' knowledge and appreciation of research-based practice and to strengthen their identity as scientist-practitioners. Additional learning goals of this assignment are to 1) increase student knowledge of contemporary issues in school psychology; 2) teach students how to create an effective poster; and 3) prepare students for future presentations at conferences (e.g., "walking" someone through the poster). Over the past two years, students have incorporated the valuable feedback provided from faculty and peer attendees to revise their posters for submission (and acceptance!) to national conferences.

The Scientist-Practitioner Model and the Research to Practice Gap

HUSP follows a scientist-practitioner model. The underlying assumption of this model is that the relationship between research and practice is bi-directional. As such, both are emphasized equally throughout training. "Scientist-practitioner psychologists embody a research orientation in their practice and a practical relevance in their research" (Belar & Perry, 1992, p. 72). Practitioners should utilize evidence-based interventions and evaluate intervention and therapeutic outcomes; researchers should conduct research with a practical purpose. With the scientist-practitioner model of training, psychologists would have the knowledge base and the clinical skills to be both a practitioner and a researcher.

Through the practicum seminar, students start developing their identity as scientist-practitioners. They receive didactic instruction in and review research on special topics in assessment, intervention, and consultation within the context of the work they are doing at their practicum sites. Class discussion focuses on how to apply these evidence-based techniques into their practicum work. The course content is responsive to students' clinical training needs and their practicum experiences. As such, the Practicum in School Psy-

chology course allows students to practice applying research in school-based practice to their clinical work. For the professional practice issues poster assignment, students select any topic related to school-based practice, review literature on the topic, and discuss practice implications. Most students select topics based on what they have observed at their sites and their own clinical interests; this makes the assignment more salient to students. And, with students being placed at different sites and having a broad range of research and clinical interests, there was a very strong likelihood that no two students would present on the same topic and that students would be exposed to a broad range of topics.

Use of Posters as Teaching Tools

To facilitate discussion and to increase meaningful student engagement, the instruc-

tor thought a poster, rather than a paper, would be the most appropriate medium for the professional practice issues assignment. With a research paper, the student has an audience of one (i.e., the course instructor) with no interaction; presentations have an audience, but limited opportunity for interaction. Posters are an effective way to present research and engage observers in a discussion about the topic. There is a substantial body of research describing the use of posters as instructional and assessment tools. Posters are

Students report learning more about a topic from preparing a poster as opposed to writing a paper (Deonandan, Gomes, Lavigne, Dinh, & Blanchard, 2013).

an effective alternative tool for developing communication skills; they encourage students to investigate a topic thoroughly and provide opportunities for peer learning (Berry & Houston, 1995). An effective poster summarizes the most salient points about a topic because there is limited room for text. Students must be concise and judicious in what information is presented on the poster; yet, they must also be prepared to discuss details in responses to questions from poster session attendees. This facilitates deeper learning and understanding of the topic. Students report learning more about a topic from preparing a poster as opposed to writing a paper (Deonandan, Gomes, Lavigne, Dinh, & Blanchard, 2013). Additionally, in-class poster sessions help students to be more comfortable with presenting research in a professional setting and increase the likelihood that students will submit to present at professional conferences (Johnson & Green, 2007). For ex-

Developing Scientist-Practitioners, *Continued from page 10*

ample, social work graduate students who participated in a class poster session reported increased confidence in conducting research, greater understanding of the relevance of research to social work, and increased interest in engaging in research in the future (Ello, 2006). Based on this research, it was clear that a poster session would be effective in helping expanding students' knowledge about the relationship between research and practice while also promoting interaction between students.

HUSP Professional Practice Issues Poster Session

Details about the assignment were included in the course syllabus and reviewed during the first class meeting of the semester. Students were instructed to prepare a research literature review poster focusing on a professional practice issue in school psychology. They were provided with broad topic suggestions, but were otherwise free to select a topic of their choice. Past topics included considerations in working with Middle Eastern families, culturally responsive RtI, autism interventions in early childhood settings, and brain games for children with concussion.

Based on formal student evaluations of the project in previous years, scaffolding assignments were added to support poster planning and preparation. Students submitted and received feedback on their tentative topics six weeks in advance and their draft abstract three weeks in advance. Additionally, the first lecture of the spring semester included a discussion of the scientist-practitioner model of

training and the research to practice gap to provide a stronger foundation for the purpose of the assignment. Sample posters, pictures from past poster sessions, and resources and templates for designing posters were posted on the course's Blackboard site. Throughout the semester, students were encouraged to consult with the instructor regarding their proposed topics and preparation of their posters.

Although all of their posters were up for the entirety of the poster session, students were assigned to presentation time slots. When not presenting, they browsed other students' posters. Similar to poster sessions at professional conferences, students stood adjacent to their posters presenting their findings to attendees which included undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and administrators from the Howard University School of Education. Both student presenters and attendees completed evaluation forms on the posters they reviewed to provide the presenter with formal feedback.

To determine the extent to which the poster session learning goals were attained, students completed a 20-item evaluation form. They responded to 16 statements about the experience of the poster session using a Likert type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and four items about their level of comfort presenting and preparing a research poster before and after the assignment using a Likert type scale from 1 (very uncomfortable) to 5 (very comfortable).

Students indicated that the poster session increased interaction among students ($M =$

4.50, $SD = .67$), that completing the poster and attending the poster session increased their knowledge of professional practice issues in school psychology ($M = 3.92$, $SD = .79$), that they valued the opportunity to present their work in a format other than a written paper ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .67$) or a PowerPoint presentation ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.12$), and that they found the poster session to be a valuable experience ($M = 4.50$, $SD = .67$). Additionally, students rated themselves as more comfortable preparing and presenting a research poster after completing this assignment; however, the difference was not significant. Most of the students indicated that they were interested in adapting their class poster for submission as a poster or paper session at a professional conference. These data suggest that all the learning goals for this assignment were attained. In addition to the positive student outcomes reported, faculty attendees were impressed with the quality of the posters and the depth of students' knowledge on their selected topics.

Overall, the professional practice issues poster session is a positive and rewarding experience for both students. Separately, it has raised the profile of the school psychology department in the School of Education as faculty from other departments and administrators see what school psychology graduate students are learning in their courses and through their practicum sites. It is the hope that this poster session becomes a signature event for the school psychology program and is replicated in other programs in the School of Education.

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2017 MSPA Awards

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Members of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association's Public Affairs committee had the honor of announcing and recognizing the winners of the 2017 Awards Program at MSPA's Spring Conference held on April 21, 2017. This is always an exciting time for the committee as we are able to celebrate outstanding professionals not only in our field, but also individuals of other professions who work in collaboration with school psychologists to reach common goals. Each year, we vote on an Outstanding Educator, Outstanding Advocate, and School Psychologist of the Year. This year's nominees for each award truly surpassed our expectations. As the Public Affairs committee read over the nominations, we were amazed by each nominee's accomplishments and their passion for children, education, and mental health.

The Outstanding Educator Award recognizes a school-based professional who works in partnership with school psychologists and who support our practices and principles. Examples of professionals who may be nominated for this award include superintendents, area directors, administrators, school counselors, pupil personnel workers, related service providers, school social workers, teachers, and supervisors/coordinators of psychological services.

The committee had the honor of recognizing Jessica Silva, Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) in Baltimore City Public Schools, as this year's Outstanding Educator Award winner. Mrs. Silva works in conjunction with several school psychologists in Baltimore City on the Prevention and Intervention for Early Learners (PIEL) initiative, an intervention program designed for prekindergarten and kindergarten students. As part of the PIEL development team, Mrs. Silva attended a social skills training program, consulted with other professionals, analyzed

data, utilized a problem-solving model, developed and helped standardize a screening tool, created a language development milestones guide for teachers, and transferred her knowledge of prevention and mental health to local speech-language pathologists. In addition to her role on the PIEL team, Mrs. Silva acts as her school's PBIS chair, is involved in the Maryland Speech and Language Association, and presented at a National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) event on the combined role of speech-language pathologists and school psychologists.

The Outstanding Advocate Award was initiated last year to recognize individuals or groups who relentlessly advocate for education, children, and youth at the local, state, or national level and help create meaningful change in policies that govern the provision of education and mental health services. Nominees' efforts should align with the missions and goals of MSPA and NASP. Last year's award winner, Nick Silvestri, went on to be nominated and selected as the recipient of NASP's Outstanding Advocate Award.

This year's recipient of the Outstanding Advocate Award is Nancy Davidson, school psychologist in Anne Arundel County Public Schools. Ms. Davidson not only advocates for the individual needs of her high school students, but also advocates for the profession on a larger scale. In addition to holding parent trainings and participating in various professional learning communities, Ms. Davidson regularly attends community events, town hall meetings, board meetings, and budget hearings. Her advocacy work has assisted in improving school-based mental health services, increasing awareness and training in suicide and crisis prevention and intervention, increasing school psychology positions, transitioning 210-day school psychologists to 12-month positions, and improv-

ing the health care and treatment of teachers and school psychologists. Ms. Davidson's leadership experience includes Legislative Chair for the School Psychologists' Association of Anne Arundel County (SPAAAC), school psychologists' Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County (TAAAC) representative, and Board of Directors member for TAAAC's Foundation for Educational Excellence. Her efforts have resulted in her nomination for several distinguished awards, including the 2016 Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce Educational Excellence Award and TAAAC's 2014 Mills/King Human Relations in Education Award.

The School Psychologist of the Year (SPY) Award is presented annually to a practicing school psychologist who provides a full range of psychological services, collaborates with home, school, and community stakeholders, supports student development and diversity, acts as a leader at the local, state, or national level, and performs their job in an exemplary manner. The following nominees were recognized at the Spring Conference:

Dr. Pauline Prince, school psychologist in Anne Arundel County Public Schools, was nominated for the 2017 SPY Award. Beyond Dr. Prince's daily duties as a highly-regarded school psychologist, she is a Diplomat in the American Board of Professional Neuropsychology and mentors post-doctoral graduates, interns, and psychology associates. She has worked with her students to publish several professional journal articles related to school-based neuropsychology. Dr. Prince regularly attends and provides trainings to a variety of audiences on topics including neuropsychology, ADHD, anxiety, concussions, and executive functioning. Within her district, Dr. Prince participates in the AACPS School Psychology Advisory Committee and AACPS Crisis/Trauma Response Team, and also acts

Public Affairs Committee, *Continued from Page 12*

as the AACPS neuropsychology consultant and a consultant for AACPS athletic department's Return to Learn concussion protocol. Dr. Prince's colleagues commend her for her ability to connect with high school students, parents, and school-based staff, as well as her ongoing dedication to learning and professional development.

Kerri-Jean Wheeler, school psychologist in Baltimore City Public Schools, was nominated by her colleagues for the School Psychologist of the Year Award. Mrs. Wheeler's multiple roles include practicum supervisor, first year mentor, creator and teacher of Achievement Unit (AU) after school professional courses, member of district-wide FBA/BIP team, guest lecturer at Towson University, and officer for the Baltimore City Association of School Psychologists (BCASP). To increase family and community involvement, Mrs. Wheeler actively promotes wrap-around services for her families and has led a bilingual parent support group focusing on special education and supporting children at home. Mrs. Wheeler initiated a Girls on the Run program at her school, participates in a program entitled Leaders Go Places to build leadership skills in middle school students, and has raised money and organized clothing and furniture drives to help families in need. It is not unusual for Mrs. Wheeler to plan birthday celebrations for her students at school or attend students' extracurricular activities to ensure they feel supported and cared for.

Kelly Gruitt, school psychologist in Montgomery County Public Schools, was also nominated for MSPA's School Psychologist of the Year Award. Mrs. Gruitt is known for her data-based decision making and focus on preventative evidence-based practices. She is a member of the Joint Collaboration Council for Psychological Services (JCCPS), served as

co-president of the Montgomery County School Psychologists' Association, and has been a leader in implementing the Sources of Strength suicide prevention program in multiple Montgomery County high schools. Additionally, Mrs. Gruitt mentors practicum students, interns, and novice school psychologists. Mrs. Gruitt's colleagues regularly seek her out for case consultation and questions regarding educational law. Outside of her typical school-day responsibilities, Mrs. Gruitt has delivered testimony to the Board of

school psychology interns, implements data-based decision making, and advocates for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. Professional areas of interest include eliminating the school to prison pipeline and the use of restorative justice practices. Among others, Ms. Christy has served in the following leadership positions: Board of Directors for the Prince George's County Educators' Association (PGCEA), Chair of the Faculty Delegation for Psychological Services, Chair of the Faculty Advisory Council, National Education Association (NEA) Delegate, PGCEA Board Liaison to the Public Relations and Special Education committees, Chair of Technology sub-committee of the PGCEA Public Relations committee, and committee member of PGCEA's Restorative Practices/School Discipline, Government Relations, and By-Laws committees. As an active delegate for the National Education Association, Ms. Christy successfully advocated for the adoption of a resolution recognizing NASP's recommended ratio for school psychologists. Ms. Christy was recently elected as the Maryland State Representative to the NEA Resolutions Committee and assisted in a new resolution calling for

trauma informed instructional practices. In addition, she is the first school psychologist to serve on the Maryland State Education Association's Board of Directors.

Congratulations to Jessica, Nancy, and Donna, as well as to all of the nominees! If you are interested in nominating an outstanding school psychologist, advocate, or educator for one of these awards in the future and have any questions, please contact the Public Affairs committee at publicaffairs@mspaonline.org. The nomination materials will be available on the MSPA website in December, the selection will occur in March, and winners will be presented at the Maryland School Psychologists' Association's annual Spring Conference in April.



2017 MSPA Award Winners at the Spring Conference

(From left to right: Nancy Davidson- Outstanding Advocate Award Recipient, Donna Christy- School Psychologist of the Year, Jessica Silva- Outstanding Educator Award Recipient)

Education on behalf of school psychologists and advocates for equitable school assignments and expanded leadership roles for MCPS school psychologists. Mrs. Gruitt is described as an approachable professional with a true passion for the students she supports.

Congratulations to MSPA's 2017 School Psychologist of the Year, Donna Christy, school psychologist in Prince George's County Public Schools. Ms. Christy has completed a post-graduate program in School Neuropsychology and is currently pursuing her doctoral degree in Public Policy and Administration. In addition to providing a full range of psychological services in the buildings she currently serves, Ms. Christy supervises



MSPA Strategic Planning

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What is Strategic Planning?

For an organization to grow and mature, the organization’s leaders and members need to understand not only where the organization has been but where it wants and needs to go. There should be a road map to guide organizational leaders down the membership’s desired path. Organizations engage in Strategic Planning in order to develop this road map. Strategic Planning starts with developing a Vision, Mission, and set of Core Values. An organization’s Vision is the unique and ideal image of the future state of the organization. It is the look ahead to where the organization wants to go. An organization’s Mission is the purpose of the organization. Missions tend to be externally focused on constituents or stakeholders. Once an organization has a Vision and Mission, Core Values are developed. These are timeless, guiding principles that explain the beliefs of an organization or the ethical boundaries. The next step is to develop Strategic Goals. These are broad-based areas of performance, as well as the specific measurable milestones and accomplishments, that get measured in the short- and long-term, as a way of determining whether an organization is doing what it set out to do.

Why is MSPA engaging in Strategic Planning?

The Executive Board became interested in the strategic planning process during the 2016 NASP Regional Leadership Meeting (RLM). States with Strategic Plans seemed to have a better understanding of what their association’s and members’ needs were. These organizations had a clearer understanding of how funds should be prioritized and allocated, as well. MSPA had never undergone Strategic Planning in its 50-plus years of existence. It seemed time for MSPA to think critically about what would most benefit members and other stakeholders. The Ad Hoc committee on Strategic Planning was created in the spring of 2016. The committee is an outgrowth of the Professional Standards committee. The chair of the committee is Michelle Palmer, President-Elect of MSPA for 2016-2017. Committee members include Stephanie Livesay (NASP Delegate), Courtney Oatts (President 2016-2017), Selina Oliver (Immediate Past President, 2016-2017), Celeste Malone (Howard University), Juralee Miranda (Protocol Editor), Laura Shriver (Carroll County), Bill Flook (Retired; Distinguished Member), and Kim Dorsey (student, Towson University).

What will MSPA’s Strategic Planning process entail?

The Strategic Planning process began at the MSPA Summer Planning meeting in July 2016. After hearing a presentation by NASP Delegates Stephanie Livesay (MD) and Emily Klein (DE), the Executive Board developed the timeline for completing the Strategic Planning process.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
<p>Collect data to inform the Strategic Planning Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review MSPA data sources Develop & adopt Core Values Gather membership input on priorities <p><i>End of June 2017</i></p>	<p>Begin the development of Strategic Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data gathered to develop Strategic Goals Gather membership input on these goals. <p><i>End of June 2018</i></p>	<p>Use Strategic Goals to guide Committees & the use of MSPA Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Committee goals and tasks, and timeframes for implementation of these goals and tasks Share results of the Strategic Plan- <p><i>End of June 2018</i></p>

MSPA Strategic Planning, *Continued from Page 14*

Where are we in the Strategic Planning process?

After setting the timeline for completion, the committee's first task was to begin work on developing Core Values for the organization. The Executive Board started the process at the MSPA Summer Planning meeting. Participants worked in small groups to generate ideas for potential Core Values, using the NASP and Delaware Association of School Psychologists' (DASP) Core Values as inspiration.

The Ad Hoc committee on Strategic Planning began meeting in August 2016. The committee's first task was to use the ideas generated at Summer Planning to begin the task of drilling down to a small group of ideas that ultimately became the Core Values reported in this article. The committee presented the draft Core Values to the Executive Board for comment in November 2016. The draft Core Values were edited based on the feedback received, then presented for a formal vote at the January 2017 Executive Board meeting held in Annapolis, Maryland. Each Core Value was voted on individually. Each Core Value was passed unanimously. The general membership vote on the drafted Core Values during the MSPA election held from March 27 to April 7, 2017. Each Core Value was voted on individually. All seven Core Values passed with at least 97% acceptance by those who voted.

Simultaneously, the Ad Hoc committee has been working on gathering data from the membership on the wants and needs of the membership. The committee has analyzed data from the NASP Self-Assessment Survey completed by NASP members living in Maryland. The committee also worked with the MSPA Executive Board to examine what MSPA advantages and disadvantages MSPA has using Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis. Finally, the committee is also in the process of developing a survey regarding what is important to members. The survey will be sent out in May. The data collected from these tools will be used in Phase 2 and 3 to develop priorities, themes, and goals.

MSPA VISION & MISSION

Vision	All students will thrive in school, at home, and throughout their lives.
Mission	All students will thrive in school, at home, and throughout their lives.

MSPA CORE VALUES

Advocacy - MSPA engages in actions that seek to positively influence outcomes directly affecting the lives of the

Collaborative Relationships - MSPA partners with allied organizations, agencies, and others to develop and achieve

Diversity - MSPA understands and honors individual, cultural, and other contextual differences in our own interac-

Equitability - MSPA empowers school psychologists to work towards creating equitable and positive school climates

Excellence - MSPA strives to achieve the highest standards in our profession.

Integrity - MSPA is committed to honest, ethical practice, and treating others with dignity and respect.

Responsible Stewardship - MSPA promotes sustainability by engaging in careful use of fiscal and human resources

Views from the Past



Left: Bill Flook, Ph.D.

Current Role: *Adjunct Faculty, MPA/MSPA
Liaison Pro Tem, MSPA Historian*

Place of Work: *University of Maryland*

Email: wmflook@gmail.com



Right: Michael Nuth, NCSP

Current Role: *School Psychologist, MSPA
Historian Committee*

Place of Work: *Anne Arundel County Public
Schools*

Email: historian@mspaonline.org

Note: *This article summarizes the 1984 and 1985 attempts by MSPA to obtain licensure for independent practice for school psychologists, and the aftermath of those efforts. It may have particular relevance today as MSPA considers a similar move.*

Sources included issues of the MSPA newsletter from that period, along with letters and other documents related to the licensure initiative. The first author also conducted interviews with several MSPA leaders who were involved in the process at that time. But it is also important to note that the record is not complete – several newsletter issues are missing from our files – if you have any, please pass along copies – thanks!

MSPA recently conducted a survey of its members asking about views on this question, and the Executive Board established an Ad Hoc Committee to examine it. It may therefore be informative for us to review the history of MSPA's initiatives in the 1980s for independent licensure, which were ultimately unsuccessful.

For context, it is helpful to note that MPA had just achieved actual DHMH "licensure" for doctoral level psychologists in 1981 – prior to that all psychologists were "certified." Following this event, MSPA and MPA engaged in discussions about how licensure might be extended to school psychologists as well. Again for context, it is noteworthy that many school psychologists at the time had a level of training closer to the basic MA level, in contrast to today's specialist level as spelled out in current NASP standards. During the early 1980s MPA worked with MSPA on the concept of the "Psychology Associate," with the MA level psychologist working under the supervision of a licensed psychologist. MSPA ultimately decided that this op-

tion was not sufficient, and moved ahead with a licensure bill.

The first newsletter which refers to MSPA's legislative initiative to obtain licensure was from the Winter of 1984, alerting members to pending legislation for the 1984 session of the Maryland General Assembly. HB 1061 was introduced by Delegate Gene Counihan, developed in cooperation with MSPA leaders including Kevin Dwyer, who organized and spearheaded MSPA's legislative efforts for this bill. Kevin wrote a summary of the legislation in this issue of the newsletter: School psychologists with three years of experience would be able to practice independently outside of school employment without supervision. Services would be those stipulated by NASP guidelines and under the NASP Code of Ethics. Other MSPA leaders identified by Kevin as contributing to this initiative included Dave Holdefer, Heather Albrecht, and Dennis Duda.

In a special edition of the MSPA newsletter which followed, President Dave Holdefer reported that HB 1061 was heard before the

House Constitutional and Administrative Law Committee on February 22, 1984. The newsletter included copies of much of the very extensive testimony provided to the committee, the details of which will not be summarized here. The interested reader may contact us for copies. Tom Fagan of NASP testified in favor, as did numerous practicing school psychologists and university trainers. Letters from these folks as well as from licensed psychologists, affiliated professionals, and others were submitted as well.

The next issue of the newsletter (Spring 1984? - dating unclear) brought the report that the bill had been generally well received by the committee, but that due to some strong objections and concerns raised by MPA, it was not moving forward. Instead it was sent to "Summer Study" for the two groups to work out the concerns in time for a new bill for the 1985 session.

The Summer 1984 MSPA newsletter provided a recap of the situation with the bill, with an update on the Summer Study process. Interestingly, it also announced new

Views from the Past, Continued from Page 16

certification standards from MSDE, putting in place the distinction between "School Psychologist I" (essentially a psychometrist) and School Psychologist II (qualified for the full range of services).

The Fall 1984 issue includes a message from new MSPA President Nick Silvestri commending the hard work of the Legislative Committee, and a report from Legislative Chairperson Dave Holdefer that the Summer Study process had failed to produce consensus; he invited input on next steps.

The next issue of the newsletter available for review is dated March 9, 1985. Here President Nick Silvestri provides a summary of MSPA's new licensure bill for the 1985 General Assembly session, HB 578. He noted that on February 21, 1985, Alex Thomas of NASP testified in favor, as well as school psychologists and six sets of parents. In contrast to reports from the 1984 committee hearing on the MSPA bill, this time apparently MPA took a more aggressive stance, both in its testimony in opposition to the bill, and in its lobbying efforts both before and after the hearing. The bill ultimately did not pass, and MSPA did not pursue the issue the following year. One reason may be found in the final newsletter which covered this two-year licensure initiative; in the Summer 1985 edition, the President refers again to the bitterly divisive campaign waged by MPA in opposition to the bill and to school psychologists' use of the title "psychologist."

MSPA's newsletter archives appear to be missing some issues from late 1985 into mid-1986. In the Fall 1986 issue, the only mention of legislative matters at all is of the possibility

of hiring a lobbyist. Interestingly, the MSPA budgets for 1984 and 1985 did not show substantial expenditures on legislative matters (although some increases were noted); MSPA appears to have managed the entire two-year licensure project primarily through the efforts of motivated, energized, and well-informed volunteers. But it was clear that no new school psychology licensure legislation had been introduced by MSPA in 1986, nor has any been introduced in the years since, despite periodic surveys of the membership which continue to show support for the idea.

Based on a review of the available issues of the newsletter, substantial legislative matters did not rise to the surface for MSPA in 1986 or 1987. There are also no available reports of liaison, collaboration, or even communication with MPA during that period. All of that changed dramatically in 1988 with the introduction by MPA of SB 415, which among other things would have removed the "exemption" clause in Title 18 which allows school psychologists to use the title in school employment.

It is noteworthy that MSPA responded strongly and effectively, including communications to legislators and to MPA from then President Sabino Strippoli as well as U.MD School Psychology Program Director (and past MPA President) Don Pumroy. Midway through the 1988 General Assembly session, MPA had withdrawn the portion of the bill which would have removed our exemption, and it has not initiated such action since that time. The interested reader may contact us for copies of the many documents associated with this episode.

There is no direct evidence that MPA introduced HB 415 as any kind of "retaliation" for MSPA's earlier efforts to secure independent licensure, although it was certainly perceived that way by some at the time. In any case, over time an unspoken understanding appears to have evolved between the two associations, essentially agreeing to stay out of each other's "turf." Parenthetically, the Maryland Board of Examiners of Psychologists (not MPA) did introduce legislation proposing to remove the exemption again in the mid-1990s, but was fairly easily persuaded to withdraw it. But note that this is exactly the same issue which arose for us on the national level from 2007 to 2010 with APA's proposed revision to their "Model Licensure Act."

It is worth closing this article by making reference to President Sabino Strippoli's message in the Spring 1988 edition of the newsletter. He cites the rancorous and emotionally fraught relationship between MSPA and MPA that existed at that time, but resolved to seek common ground with MPA leadership in an effort to improve the relationship. He noted that he had been able to restore the prior agreement for the two associations to allow each other's members to register for conferences at member rates (this agreement is still in place). And it was not long after this series of events that an MPA/MSPA Liaison Committee was established, which has now evolved into an established liaison position between the two associations, to our mutual benefit.

For additional information or to seek additional information on this topic, please contact the lead author at wmflook@gmail.com.

Note to Our Senior Readers:

Do you have very early issues of the MSPA Newsletter?

While we are fortunate enough to have the very earliest, and many from the 1970s and 1980s, we are also missing many issues from those decades.

Please contact Historian Michael Nuth if you would like to share your copies of these historic documents – thanks!

Baltimore County School Psychologist's Association



Left: D'Andrea Jacobs, Ph.D.

Current Role: School Psychologist, Baltimore County Public Schools, BCSPA President-Elect

Professional Interests: Systems-level change. Home-school partnerships

Email: Djacobs3@bcps.org



Right: Mara Egorin, MA, CAS

Current Role: School Psychologist, Baltimore County Public Schools, BCSPA President

Professional Interests: Legislative issues, twice exceptionality, multiple intelligences

Email: megorin@bcps.org

Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) is a happening school system with innovative ways to provide each student with their own device, integrate Spanish in the elementary schools, and expand the county's magnet program to provide better access to all students. Dr. Margaret Kidder and Dr. Alicia Bennett lead the group of 90+ school psychologists through the Office of Psychological Services (OPS). OPS supports the needs of our staff through periodic professional development meetings that provide important informational updates to the BCPS system and other valuable information.

J. Stephen Cowles, Esquire, counsel for Baltimore County Public Schools, presents to OPS staff on legal issues that pertain to special education and the provision of psychological services. We often look forward to his information and legal expertise, as he often refers to new case law, updates to COMAR, and how these changes affect the manner in which OPS provides psychological services. This influences how we support our schools and system to provide special education services and accommodations through 504 plans. Mr. Cowles often provides information regarding data from within our county, case examples, as well as decisions and procedures that have resulted in complaints, and decisions from the Administrative Law Judge. His expertise and knowledge of special education and school law are invaluable to the OPS staff.

Within Baltimore County Public Schools, there is much collaboration with universi-

ties and government agencies with the intent to improve access and identification of emotional and behavioral health supports among our students. One such initiative is the Comprehensive Emotional and Behavioral Health Crisis Response and Prevention Model (EBH-CRP), which is funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Office of Justice Programs and evaluated by University of Maryland School of Medicine (Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Center for School Mental Health).

The goal of EBH-CRP is to develop an array of emotional and behavioral supports based on a 5-tiered continuum. The 5 tiers of support include:

- 1) Universal Prevention (i.e., Positive Behavior Supports; implementation of the Safe School Ambassadors Program, which provides training to students in order to identify mistreatment that takes place at school and "take action" by connecting those in need to support staff/resources within the building);
- 2) Early Identification (i.e., use of an online Mental Health awareness training program called Kognito for staff);
- 3) Assessments and Linkage (development of an Emotional and Behavioral Health team with school and community partners; developing a referral and assessment process within school settings);
- 4) Crisis Response (i.e., development of a standardized protocol to respond to crises at school);
- 5) Post Crisis Relapse Prevention (i.e., de-

velopment of a relapse prevention monitoring system to track student progress and provide additional preventative supports as needed). 40 schools (20 intervention schools, 20 comparison schools) that range from elementary to high school participate in this research program.

In addition to the EBH-CRP program, Project AWARE is another avenue that uses innovative and varied strategies to improve access. Project AWARE is a funded through a 5-year training grant provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Project AWARE provides consultants to work collaboratively with schools in order to improve behavioral health and access to services within our schools and extended communities. The program emphasizes multiple components (i.e., Multiple Tiered Systems of Support, staff training using Kognito and Youth Mental Health First Aid, increased collaboration with community partnerships, and classroom consultation using a brief, teacher-based consultation approach called Classroom-Check-Up).

We also have kudos to OPS staff: Congratulations to Dr. Amirah Beeks for article published in *Psychology in the Schools* entitled 'Academic Leaderships Views of School Psychology and Black Students: The Case of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.' Dr. Beeks was one of our school psychology interns last school year and is a first year school psychologist this school year.



Montgomery County School Psychologists' Association

Author: Jessica Stein, M.A., CAS, NCSP

Title/Role: School Psychologist - Montgomery County Public Schools
& MCPS LSPO Co-Representative for MSPA

Interests: Mental health awareness, Positive Behavior Intervention Supports

Email: jessica_D_Stein@mcpsmd.org

This school year, the Montgomery County School Psychologists' Association (MCSPA) has been busy with several new association initiatives, community engagement, and social events. The new executive board, led by co-presidents Jeanne McCormack and Alli Jacobus, is leading the charge in revitalizing MCSPA committees in attempts to expand the awareness of the important role school psychologists play in our schools. The Newsletter Committee recently published the annual Psych Report newsletter that provided information about MCSPA members and exciting updates in the association. Additionally, the Information Management Committee has created and launched a website to provide information to the public about the association, relevant community events, and important resources in Montgomery County. There is also a private section where MCPS school psychologists can access association meeting notes, a calendar of events, committee updates, and relevant resources to support our practice. Be sure to check out the website at: <http://www.mcspaconline.com/>

While school psychologists in Montgomery County work hard, we also like to have fun! The Social Committee hosted our annual kickball tournament in the fall and several friendly gatherings where colleagues enjoyed each other's company. In addition, the association awarded the Montgomery County's School Psychologist of the Year (SPOTY) award to past MCSPA president Kelly Gruitt for her skills as a school psychologist and her leadership in the county. Congratulations Kelly! In addition to these celebrations, two important members of the department, Brian Bartels (Director of Psychological Services) and Judi Amick (school psychologist who has been practicing for over 40 years in the

state) have retired. Congratulations on your retirements Brian and Judi!

Most recently, on March 28th, MCPS school psychologists hosted the MCSPA Annual Reception. The reception focused on strengthening relationships with stakeholders, promoting our many roles in the school system, and advocating for the need to hire additional school psychologists in the county so we are better able to provide comprehensive psychological services. Psychologists

hosted breakout sessions and led discussions regarding academic, social-emotional, and behavioral interventions, support for LGBTQ students, grief support groups, and personal experiences using the PREPaRE model. Guests included board of education and county council members, associate superintendents, community partners, and other MCPS leadership staff, as well as 35+ school psychologists. A wonderful time was had by all.



Prince Georges County School Psychologists' Association



Left: Jaclyn Standeven, M.A., C.A.S., NCSP

Current Role: School Psychologist

Place of Study: Prince George's County Public Schools

Professional Interests: Mental Health Awareness, Consultation and Collaboration, Building the school/home partnership

Email: jaclyn.standeven@pgcps.org



Right: Erica J. Chandler, M.S., NCSP

Current Role: School Psychologist

Place of Study: Prince George's County Public Schools

Professional Interests: Increasing Community Involvement and Engagement, Mental Health Awareness, Professional Advocacy

Email: Erica.dorfmeister@pgcps.org

This has been an exciting year for the Prince George's County School Psychologists' Association (PGCSPA). It has been our goal to embrace the NASP theme of "Small Steps Change Lives" throughout our school year. During our fall membership drive, we had forty-five psychologists join, and we held our annual raffle in which one lucky paying member had their MSPA dues paid by PGCSPA. Team PGCSPA – School Psychologists, which included eleven school psychologists and friends of school psychologists, participated in the Prince George's County Out of the Darkness Walk on September 10, 2016. Our team was recognized as the top fundraising team when we raised over \$1,400.00 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. PGCSPA was represented as a community supporter and had a designated table to share awareness materials with those in attendance. It was a wonderful and very moving experience for our organization.

In September, thanks to the MSPA Professional Training Grant, we were able to have Michael Gimbel present a "Straight Talk about Street Drugs" at our monthly staff meeting. Mr. Gimbel is President and owner of a nationally recognized substance abuse consulting company that provides education, prevention and treatment services to schools, colleges, athletic teams, businesses, faith communities, youth organizations and other health professional across the Mid-Atlantic region.

On October 26, 2016, PGCSPA hosted an awareness event in preparation for School Psychology Awareness Week. Under the amazing leadership of our president, Erica Chandler, we were able to partner with local organization Art Works Now, who graciously allowed us to host our event at their Hyattsville, MD location. Several school psychologists participated

in this event by engaging students of all grade levels from their assigned schools in a lesson on character and how small steps can change lives every day. I personally worked with a class of fifth grade elementary students on an art project that found students painting their feet and walking across large pieces of canvas. They then decorated the canvas with words that relate to character. Other psychologists worked with their students in creating unique footsteps. The students' art was put on display at Art Works Now for our event. Students and their families were invited to attend the event, in addition to several leaders from our county and state. At the event, students performed original poetry and shared their ideas for incorporating small changes in their daily lives that can make a change in their everyday environment. We also had the opportunity to hear from the State's Attorney from Prince George's County, Ms. Angela D. Alsobrooks. It was a very moving event for those who attended and allowed us to share with others in our community how school psychologists have a positive impact in the daily lives of students.

Each December, the PGCPs school psychologists select a local charity that serves the students we work with in our schools to raise funds for through our annual live and silent auction. The recipient of this year's proceeds, the Chesapeake Life Center (CLC) of the Hospice of the Chesapeake, has locations in Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties. They provide support to families and youth affected by advanced illness, as well as provide grief support services to the community due to the loss of a loved one, including those who experienced a traumatic or sudden loss. They also host a special weekend summer camp for grieving children and teens. Erica Chandler

and Elizabeth Magrogan, PGCSPA Vice President, presented CLC with one of the canvases that had been created by students as part of our event in October. CLC was also gifted art supplies for their youth and group sessions and \$1,600.00 for CLC to use in their children's grief programs.

This February, several PGCSPA members attended the NASP conference in San Antonio, TX, including PGCSPA Secretary, Julie Grossman, who presented on Engaging Parents in the IEP Process and Trends in Parental Involvement. We also hosted the March MSPA Executive Board Meeting in Laurel, MD.

As we head into the homestretch of the school year, we have encouraged our members to sign up to be School Champions for the 2017 Children's Mental Health Matters Campaign and Awareness Week, which is May 1-7, 2017. In years past, PGCSPA members have had record numbers of schools sign up to participate in this annual event. School Champions are provided with electronic resources and documents to help organize their efforts and get their schools on board. Several PGCSPA members have used this week to incorporate various school wide activities that further enhance the discussion surrounding the importance of children's mental health and how school psychologists can help in this area.

In conclusion, it has been a busy and productive year for PGCSPA. As we finish this school year, we already have our eye on the next one. We will hold our officer elections for the 2017/18 school year in May, and we will continue to strive to discover new ways to become involved in our communities so that we may advocate for the children we serve and educate those we come into contact with on the value of having a school psychologist in every school.

Congratulations Distinguished Members



David Holdefer recently retired from employment as a school psychologist for the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), where he worked since 1996. He served for three years as the Maryland State Department of Education Specialist in Psychological Services, Pupil Services Branch, Division of Compensatory Education and Support Services. In total, Dave has 39 years of experience as a school psychologist. He is a Nationally Certified School Psychologist who worked full-time for the Montgomery County Public Schools for three years prior to his position with MSDE. He was also a faculty associate at Johns Hopkins University, Department of Continuing Studies. In addition, Dave worked in Germany for the Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) for 11 years including several years as the Director of an Education Resource Center. He was also employed by the Howard County Public Schools as a school psychologist for eight years (1977-1985). Prior to school psychology, Dave worked as a special education resource teacher and research associate in the Baltimore City School System.

Dave has served as President of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association twice (1984-85 and 2014-15), as well as serving for many years as Program Chair (1978-82 and 1997-2014), bringing many highly effective workshop presenters to Maryland including Alan Kaufman, John Exner, Cecil Reynolds, Donald Meichenbaum, Jay Hayley, Nancy Mathers, Jack Naglieri, Bruce Bracken, Joe Torgesen, Reid Lyon, Richard Woodcock, Russell Barkley, Neil Bernstein, Richard Brooks, William Jensen, and Sally Shaywitz. Dave was instrumental in building MSPA's currently outstanding reputation as a provider of high quality CPD/CE programs for Maryland school psychologists.

Dave has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Special Education from East Carolina University, a Master's degree in School and Clinical Psychology from Towson University, and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Counseling and Therapy from Johns Hopkins University.

Judi Amick worked as a school psychologist in the Prince George's County Public Schools from 1970 to 1988, and then in the Montgomery County Public Schools, 1988-2016. She has served every population there is in a public school system – general education, multiply-handicapped, learning disabled, orthopedically impaired, emotionally disabled, alternative education.

Judi has been a member of MSPA since 1970, serving in many offices, including:

Parliamentarian: 1986-1987

Newsletter Co-editor: 1990-2000.

Montgomery County Representative: 2003-2005, 2009-2010

Secretary: 2005-2006

President Elect: 1987-88; 2006-2007

President: 1988-1990 (a special 2-year experiment that was not continued!) and again 2007-2008

Chair, Ad hoc Committee on the MSPA Operations Handbook: 2008-2009



Judi also served as MSPA Treasurer early in her career. She reports using a red leather notebook to keep the records. She also notes that she chaired several other ad hoc committees in the early days, but can't recall the specifics. Judi has continued as an active member of MSPA to the present day, most recently serving as a member of the Legislative Committee. She has an MA in Counseling Psychology from American University.

Congratulations Newly Elected MSPA Officers



*President
Elect*

*Courtney Oatts
Baltimore City*



Treasurer

*Cristina "Tina" DeForge
Howard County*



Parliamentarian

*Kyle Potter
Montgomery County*



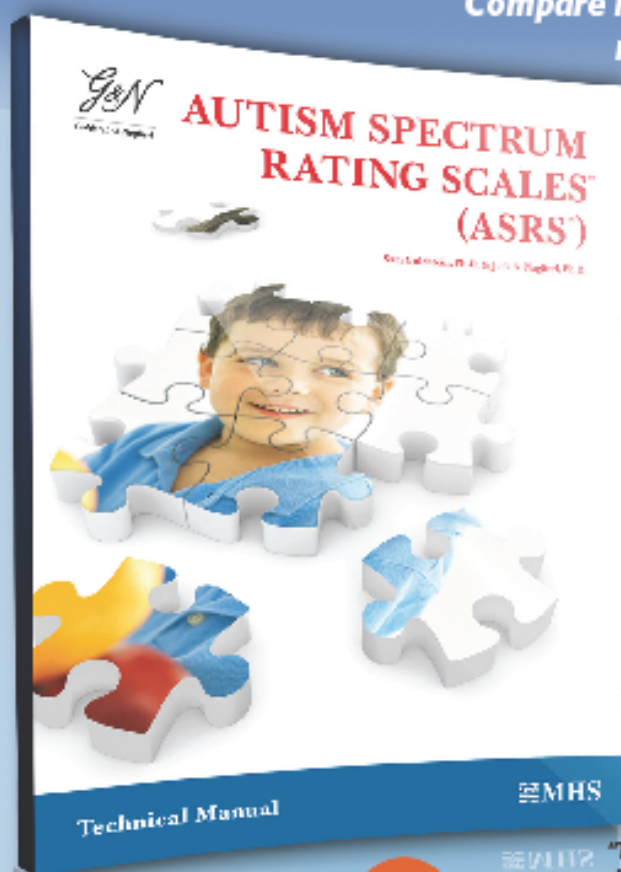
Secretary

*Shannon Cassidy
Washington County*

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Legislative Committee

Author: Shannon Cassidy

Current Role: MSPA Legislative Chairperson, School Psychologist

Place of Work: Washington County Public Schools

Professional Interests: Ethics and Law, Behavior Management, Systemic Leadership

Email: legislative@mspaonline.org

The 2016-2017 year has been an exciting and busy one for the MSPA Legislative Committee. It never ceases to amaze me how hard this committee works as well as how dedicated the members are to making things better for our profession and those people we support. I was a graduate student when I initially joined MSPA and the Legislative Committee. Since then, I have engaged in a variety of roles including serving as the current Chairperson. My involvement with the committee has been invaluable to my growth as a school psychologist and it has provided me with fantastic experiences for professional development and networking. Moving into the 2017-2018 academic year I will be taking on a new elected role on the MSPA board as the Secretary. I am very pleased to say that the person stepping into my role with the Legislative Committee will be a fantastic Chairperson, and this is essential to me as I continue to be dedicated to the committee's efforts. Below is a reflection of the course the past academic year and the strengths of the MSPA Legislative Committee. If you have questions about the Legislative Committee please don't hesitate to reach out at legislative@mspaonline.org, although I will not be the Chairperson following this academic year the new Chairperson will be able to support any inquires received. As I mentioned above, it is the members of this committee that make it exceptional and we are always looking for new people to be involved.

The Legislative Committee spends the entire year working toward specific directed efforts that are designed to support school psychology as field, and to also support the children and families with whom we work. The goal for the committee is as follows, "To continue to collaborate and foster relationships with related colleagues, legislators, and parent advocacy groups." This goal serves to increase school psychologists' presence and

ability to advocate for children and families and support local and national legislation. Throughout my time on the committee, members have worked hard to ensure that they are constantly striving for this goal. As the committee has grown and developed over the years, the hard work has continually paid off for the organization.

Our intentions toward the goal across this year involved four major efforts as well as a variety of minor outreach efforts. Across the year, committee members make connections with families, organization, educational stakeholders, and legislators in order to spread awareness about school psychology. We also

*The goal for the committee is as follows,
"To continue to collaborate and foster relationships with related colleagues, legislators, and parent advocacy groups."*

work to ensure that others are aware of our value as an organization in that we can share essential information with various agencies, in order to help others support children and families. The small connections we continually initiate and work to grow every year allow for the organization to have a presence and to be looked toward as a resource. Although these efforts are minor in comparison to some of the events and engagement we take on, it is these small steps that help increase our visibility. Small Steps Change Lives.

Each year begins with our grassroots advocacy event which is a time to spread

awareness of our work and also learn from a legislator about important legislative insights, both generally and regarding specific issues. This year's event took place in Montgomery County and the committee hosted Delegate Andrew Platt. The event with Delegate Platt was extremely informative and provided a new connection as well as valuable insight to the legislature.

Our second significant effort is the Annual Legislative Breakfast in Annapolis. This year was a milestone event as it was the 10th year we hosted the breakfast. The event has flourished, becoming better attended and more meaningful each year. Immediately following the breakfast, the Maryland General Assembly begins the annual legislative session which marks the start of our third major effort. The session lasts about three months and during this time the committee works constantly to monitor all bills that move through the legislature related to education, mental health, children, and families. Committee members diligently follow the bills coming out of the legislature and meet multiple times a month to consider what is of value to our organization.

On the next page is a list of the bills the committee took action on throughout the 2017 session. Further insight on the bills below can be found at <http://www.mlis.state.md.us/> by searching the bill number. The final major effort the committee engages in each year is participation with NASP's Annual Public Policy Institute (PPI). This event supports further understanding of grassroots advocacy as well as legislative engagement. Two committee members will be representing Maryland at the 2017 PPI this year which is held in Washington, DC. Upon their return the participants share helpful information learned through NASP that can support our actions on a state level.

Legislative Committee 2017 Action Steps:**House Legislation****Monitoring:**

- HB 17 – School Days, Repeal
- HB 286 – cross file of SB 1
- HB 425 – Public Schools – Suspension and Expulsion
- HB 461 - Accountability Program – Assessments
- HB 516 – Workgroup for universal prekindergarten
- HB 705 – PARCC Testing – Children with Disabilities
- HB 978 – ESSA Implementation
- HB 1080 – Education - Universal prek
- HB 1240 – Burden of Proof
- HB 1268 – Education – Student Achievement Gap
- HB 1310 – Education – Ethical SpEd Advocate Cert
- HB 1613 – Individuals with Disabilities - Establishing Community Based Long Term Services and Supports

Letter of Support:

- HB 18 – Task Force, improving PARCC scores
- HB 174 – IDEA, Parental Consent
- HB 1264 – Dyslexia Advisory Bill
- HB 1522 – Needs assessment for school based behavioral health counseling

Discussion of Concerns with Legislator:

- HB 331 – BIPs - Physical Restraint and Seclusion
- HB 786 – Individuals Counseling Services – Requirements

Senate Legislation**Monitoring:**

- SB 1 – Intervention tracking
- SB 452 - Accountability Program – Assessments
- SB 581 – Workgroup Study Universal PreK
- SB 604 – Visual Impairments – Requirements for Teachers
- SB 651 – Public Schools – Suspensions and Expulsions
- SB 359 – Education – MD Meals for Achievement-Breakfast in Classroom
- SB 360 – Education – Breakfast & Lunch Funds
- SB 825 – Education Nonpublic School – Programs for SpEd

Letter of Support:

- SB 244 – Task force, African American pre-k suspension
- SB 710 – Education – Children with Disabilities

Discussion of Concerns with Legislator:

- SB 786 – Education – BIPs

Professional Development Committee: Training Grant Recipients



Author: Ann Hammond

Current Role: *Supervisor of Psychological Services and School Therapists, MSPA Professional Development Chair*

Place of Work:

Frederick County Public Schools

Professional Interests: *Trauma Informed Schools, School Based Mental Health*

Email: Ann.Hammond@FCPS.org

The Professional Development Committee, in conjunction with the MSPA Board of Directors, is pleased to announce the winners of the five MSPA Trainings Grants for the 2017-2018 academic year.

The grant amount continues to be \$800.00 and grants are awarded to LEAs, Professional Organizations, and Graduate Training Programs to promote professional learning on pertinent issues at the local level. The grants are offered to support projects which enhance the effectiveness of school psychologists as service providers.

Funding priorities are given to first-time applications and applicants who have not received similar awards in recent years; applicants from remote counties lacking geographic proximity to the more typical training forums and sites; groups that demonstrate support of MSPA activities and membership; projects that reflect cross-county participation; and applicants who, having received similar awards in prior years, completed all objectives of the grant including submitting an article for the Protocol describing the presentation.

Grants are not awarded to groups using presenters who are currently scheduled to speak at upcoming MSPA Conferences.

Congratulations to each of the following LEAs and Associations who received a grant for the upcoming academic year!

Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Interactive Strategies to Help Prevent and Intervene With Microaggressions.

Baltimore City Association of School Psychologists

Training on the Evidence-Based Reading Fluency Intervention Helping Early Literacy with Practice Strategies

Baltimore County Public Schools

The Impacts of Trauma and Poverty on Learning and Behavior in Schools

Montgomery County School Psychologists' Association

NASP PREPaRE Workshop 1

Washington County Public Schools

Maryland School Psychologist Panel Discussions



Professional Standards Committee

Author: Matt Lawser

Current Role: Professional Standards Committee Chair, Practicing School Psychologist

Place of Work: Prince George's County Public Schools

Professional Interests: Crisis Intervention, Suicide Prevention/Intervention, Consultation

Email: Matt.Lawser@pgcps.org

The Professional Standards Committee continues to work to support best practices and ethical standards on behalf of the MSPA Executive Board. The committee's efforts over the past year have focused on two projects. First, the committee continues to promote a proposed revision to COMAR 13A.05.05.04 (School Psychology Program). This section of COMAR essentially defines the role of school psychologists within the public school setting in Maryland. While the existing regulation does cover a number of roles of school psychologists, it was last revised in the mid-1980's. The committee has developed a draft revision to COMAR that aligns with the NASP Practice Model and emphasizes current, recognized standards for the practice of school psychology. The committee's efforts to promote the Practice Model and ultimately to revise COMAR began as early as the 2012-2013 school year. In April, 2013, MSPA hosted the School Psychology Leadership Conference in order to not only present the Practice Model to stakeholder groups and school psychology leadership, but more importantly to gain feedback from these groups regarding the strengths of the model and feasibility of rolling out the model. Since that time, the committee has attempted to engage various stakeholder groups to gain support for a broader, more comprehensive role for school psychologists and to obtain further feedback regarding what to include in a revision to COMAR.

After being approved by the MSPA Executive Board in June, 2014, the committee has taken numerous steps to promote this draft document. With the support of Dr. Deborah Nelson (Specialist, School Psychological Services, MSDE), the draft document has been presented to supervisors and representatives from each of the school systems in Maryland. More recently, Dr. Nelson put together and facilitated a work group, which included supervisors, university faculty, leadership from NASP, and members of the MSPA Professional Standards Committee. The purpose of this

continued efforts and hard work, and we are very optimistic regarding the eventual inclusion of the proposed revisions in COMAR.

Over the course of the current school year, Professional Standards has also had the privilege of working closely with the School Safety Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by Bradley Petry. Under Bradley's leadership, the School Safety Ad Hoc Committee developed a position paper, titled, "Best Practice Considerations for Maryland School-Based Threat Assessment." The purpose of this document is to provide guidance related to best practices in student threat assessment, with an emphasis on the inclusion of the school psychologist as a designer and member of the threat assessment team (further information regarding this document will be provided in a future Protocol article). Professional Standards provided final feedback to the Ad Hoc committee regarding this document and fully supported its approval by the Executive Board as a guiding document for MSPA.

The Professional Standards Committee continues to work to support ethical standards and the implementation of best practices. I would like to encourage anyone interested in participating on the Professional Standards Committee to please contact me (Matt.Lawser@pgcps.org). I look forward to continuing to work with the Professional Standards committee and welcome any questions or feedback from the MSPA membership.

The committee has developed a draft revision to COMAR that aligns with the NASP Practice Model and emphasizes current, recognized standards for the practice of school psychology.

work group was to discuss, provide input, and determine next actions regarding the draft revision to "School Psychology Program" in COMAR. Some final revisions were made to align the language with existing language in COMAR, and the draft document was sent to all school psychology supervisors/representatives for final review and to obtain feedback. Feedback provided by the school psychology representatives was very positive and was considered in the development of the final draft version of this document. Since that time, Dr. Nelson has continued to present the document to stakeholders and leadership at MSDE, again receiving a very positive response. Professional Standards is extremely grateful to Dr. Nelson and her



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2017 NASP Update

Author: Stephanie E. Livesay

Current Role: School Psychologist, MD NASP Delegate

Place of Work: WPS Assessment Consultant

Professional Interests:

Leadership Development, Strategic Planning, Advocacy, Collaboration, and Autism

Email: selives@hotmail.com

It has been my pleasure to serve in the role of the NASP Delegate over the last five years. For three of those five years, it has also been an honor to be elected to the position of Northeast Delegate Representative and serve on the NASP Board of Directors. While I will serve on the Board of Directors for two more years, I will only be NASP Delegate in Maryland for one more year. This means that NASP will hold elections for the MD NASP Delegate position during the 2017/2018 school year. The election preparation will begin in the fall. Those of you who are interested in running for NASP Delegate please contact me if you have any questions about how the process works. There are strict election guidelines so it is important that you are aware of those guidelines prior to any campaigning. I can share with you the role and responsibilities of the NASP Delegate and answer any questions you have. This position is vital to the profession of school psychology as the NASP Delegate plays a crucial role in serving as a conduit between the MSPA leadership and NASP leadership. Therefore, I hope that people who have an interest in furthering the profession and maintaining the MSPA/NASP relationship come forward to put their hat in the ring for NASP Delegate.

It is important to mention that NASP has concentrated its efforts over the last couple of years to focus on four Key Initiatives. Those are 1) Ensuring availability of a high-quality school psychology workforce by addressing shortages, 2) Advancing the role of school psychologists as qualified mental and behavioral health providers, 3) Advancing recognition and implementation of the NASP Practice Model nationwide, 4) Developing leadership skills and qualities of school psychologists. These Key Initiatives are part of a strategic

plan for NASP, which is available on the NASP website <http://www.nasponline.org/utility/about-nasp/vision-mission-core-values-and-priorities>. NASP leaders are in the process of updating its Strategic Plan. We are considering feedback from all stakeholders, so if you have any input on NASP's strategic goals and priorities, please feel free to email me with your thoughts selives@hotmail.com.

As part of my Delegate Representative role, I am one of the people responsible for the planning and execution of the Regional Leadership Meeting (RLM) that takes place just prior to the NASP Annual Convention. The RLM planning group seeks to understand the leadership development needs of the leaders in each state, as well as the issues affecting school psychology and state associations across the nation. This year, MSPA was able to send six leaders to attend the RLM. Those leaders were Michelle Palmer (President-elect), Amy Jagoda (Program Chairperson), Laura Shriver (Program Committee member), Juralee Miranda (Newsletter Chairperson), Shannon Cassidy (Legislative Chairperson), and me. The topics covered during the RLM included Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), strategic planning, leadership development, building the capacity of leaders and state associations, developing key messages for state associations, trauma sensitive schools, mental and behavioral health, and other topics.

The format of this meeting is mixed. Attendees are able to attend large group presentations to hear from NASP leaders and staff about the latest developments affecting our profession. They are also able to meet with other association leaders from across the country who are part of associations that are similar in size. Finally, each region meets

to discuss issues that are facing school psychologists in their part of the country so that they can compare notes and suggest strategies on how to address these issues. As a group, we felt that the time that we spent at the RLM was time well spent. We were able to strategize, determine a proposed future direction for MSPA, and affirm the steps we have taken thus far in our strategic planning process. We are certain that the information gleaned during the RLM will be put to good use in Maryland.

The NASP Convention in San Antonio was attended by approximately 4,800 school psychologists and students. There were many workshops, paper, and poster presentations offered. There was also much to discover in San Antonio, including the wonderful restaurants along the River Walk. As we have done for many years, MSPA hosted our networking event on Wednesday evening of the convention. This gave an opportunity for MSPA members and others to get together at the convention and network for a couple of hours. If you have not attended one of these events in the past, you should put it on your calendar for the 2018 NASP Convention in Chicago.

Shortly after the MSPA event, a large group of Maryland school psychologists attended the NASP Awards Ceremony. I'm excited to announce that Nickolas Silvestri, Resource Psychologist from Anne Arundel County, was awarded the 2017 NASP Government and Professional Relations (GPR) Outstanding Advocate Award. This award is given to individuals or groups who have worked to make systemic change in policies that govern the provision of education and mental health services at the state or local level. In addition, these individuals or groups have worked to support the NASP

2017 NASP Update, Continued from Page 28

mission and its goals. I have known Nick since I first became involved in MSPA back in 2000. He has been heavily involved in advocating for the profession of school psychology, children and their families, and school psychologists. He has served in many roles over the years, including NASP Delegate and NASP GPR Committee Member, NASP Membership Chairperson, and MSPA President, among many other roles. He was also one of the founders of the School Psychology Association of Anne Arundel County. Nick is a kind and caring man and I cannot put into words the effect he has had on me and many others. It was an honor to be able to nominate him for the NASP GPR Outstanding Advocate Award. Congratulations Nick!

I also want to congratulate Celeste Malone, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the

School Psychology Doctoral Program at Howard University. Celeste has been serving as the co-chair of the NASP Leadership Development Committee, but was recently appointed to serve on the NASP Board of Directors as a Strategic Liaison. Starting July 1, 2017, she will be working with various NASP committee chairpersons and members of the Board of Directors to help carry out NASP's Strategic Plan and Strategic Goals/Key Initiatives. We are excited to welcome her to the NASP Board of Directors!

There are two professional development opportunities available this summer for those who may want to attend the NASP Summer Conferences. The conferences will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio July 10-12 and in Las Vegas, Nevada July 24-26. There is also an additional opportunity for those who are

interested in public policy and advocacy. The NASP Public Policy Institute will take place at George Washington University July 17-21. There is a five-day training, a three-day training, or a two-day special topic focus. Please go to the NASP website for more details www.nasponline.org.

I would like to encourage all of you to please contact me if you would like to get any information about NASP, NASP's efforts, or if you have input to give. If you would like to get involved in NASP you can also contact me and I can discuss ways in which you can become involved. You can reach me at selives@hotmail.com. I look forward to the next year as the Maryland Delegate to NASP and the next two years as the NASP Delegate Representative to the Board of Directors for the Northeast Region.

ARTICLES WELCOME!

*Are you doing something unique in your county that you would like to tell others about?
Did you read a recently published professional book that you would like to review?*

Submit PROTOCOL articles or ideas to:

protocol@mspaonline.org

Please submit all articles as email attachments in Microsoft Word or Microsoft Word compatible formats. Include captions for all pictures.

Please also include the following for all contributors to the article
within the word document:

Headshot (a clear picture using a smart phone or equivalent camera)
Name, Title, Current Role, Place of Work (District, University, Private Practice),
Professional Interests (list, limit 5)
Contact Email



MSDE Updates

Author: Deborah Nelson, Ph.D., NCSP

Current Role: Section Chief, School Safety and Climate; Specialist, School Psychological Services,

Place of Work: Maryland State Department of Education

Professional Interests: Teacher Consultation, Systems Change, School Mental Health, Positive Student Behavioral Supports

Email: Deborah.nelson@maryland.gov

The growing commitment of Maryland to school climate, mental health, and educational issues has been reflected in the initiatives at the Maryland State Department of Education throughout the year. Below are a sample of the initiatives that we are currently working on in the Student Services and Strategic Planning Branch.

Disproportionality Model

In January 2017, the State Board approved the Maryland State Department of Education's Disproportionality plan. That plan includes a method that will be used to analyze local school system discipline data to determine whether school discipline practices have a disproportionate impact on students of color and students with disabilities. Local school systems are being provided with an overview of the method this year. Next year, the plan will include targeted technical assistance focusing on root cause analysis and tiered supports for students with challenging behaviors. A copy of the documents reviewed by the State Board can be found at the following link:

<http://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/01242017/TabM.pdf>

Governor's Opioid Operational Command Center

Governor Larry Hogan has developed a statewide Opioid Operational Command Center to assist in breaking down government silos and to aid in the coordination of federal, state, and local resources to combat the opioid crisis. This initiative will allow MSDE to strategically support school system training, technical assistance and support geared toward students and

families.

Mental Health Workgroup

The Maryland State Board of Education has formed a Mental Health Committee which is designed to explore ways to more effectively integrate and coordinate programs and services that are aimed at identifying youth at risk for mental health issues in general, and suicide prevention and human trafficking, in specific. This committee affirms the Departments commitment to emotionally and socially vulnerable youth and shifts the focus to critical conversations that focus on mental wellness, resiliency, and the allocation of resources to support these efforts.

Suicide Data Collection Workgroup

Drawing upon the expertise of our colleagues in the field, we have begun to work again on a state-level data collection system for suicide attempts and ideation. The work on this data collection system began a few years ago, but was not completed and we are focusing on this once more. A special thanks goes to Ivan Croft, Nick Silvestri, Joanna Seiberling, Phil Lauer, Scott Showalter, Robert Schmidt, and Mike Blanchard for their assistance and support in this effort. The hope is to have a way to better identify the needs of students at risk for suicide in our state.

As you can see, things are quite busy! There are more changes coming in the next few months, but as always, I continue to be encouraged by the support of you all, my colleagues. Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions or concerns that you may have. My email is deborah.nelson@maryland.gov and my phone number is 410-767-0294.

2016-2017 Executive Board Members

Elected Officers	Committee Chairpersons	Committee Chairpersons (Ad Hoc)
President: Courtney Oatts	Historian: Michael Nuth	Standards & Certification: Melissa Leahy
President Elect: Michelle Palmer	Information Management: Brittney Stafford	School Safety: Brad Petry
Past President: Selena Oliver	Legislative: Shannon Cassidy	Strategic Planning: Michelle Palmer
Secretary: Laura Sass	Membership: Laura Veon	Liaisons and Delegates
Treasurer: Tina DeForge	Newsletter: Juralee Miranda	MSDE Liaison: Deborah Nelson
Parliamentarian: Jessy Sammons	Nominations: Warren Cohen	MPA/MSPA Liaison: Bill Flook (Pro Tem)
	Professional Development: Ann Hammond	NASP Delegate: Stephanie Livesay
	Professional Standards: Matt Lawser	
	Program: Amy Jagoda	
	Public Affairs: Bri Connaghan	
	Diversity: Shira Levy	

Local School Psychology Organization Representatives

Baltimore City Association of School Psychologists (BCASP)	April Turner
Eastern Shore School Psychologists' Association	Valerie Wilder
Montgomery County School Psychologists' Association (MCSPA)	Kyle Potter & Jessica Stein
Prince George's County School Psychologists' Association (PGCSPA)	Jaclyn Standeven
School Psychologists' Association of Anne Arundel County (SPAAAC)	Shira Levy
Western Maryland School Psychologists' Association (WMSPA)	Sharon Conley
Baltimore County LEA Contact	Mara Egorin
Charles County LEA Contact	Nicolle Steed

University Representatives

Bowie State University	Kimberly Daniel
Gallaudet University	Bryan Miller & Caitlin Presley
Howard University	Celeste Malone & Janicia Dugas
Towson University	Craig Rush
University of Delaware	Kathleen Minke
University of Maryland, College Park	Hedwig Teglassi



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A Final Note from Courtnay Oatts, MSPA President

Diversity: Mrs. Shira Levy is no stranger to being a committee chair, however this was her first year leading the Diversity committee. Under her leadership, the diversity committee has improved the way that we, MSPA, discuss and think about diversity. Just before the Fall Conference, Mrs. Levy and her committee hosted an incredibly well received face-to-face forum to begin open, and sometimes difficult, discussions on topics of diversity and our roles as school psychologists. I hope that this type of forum will continue in the coming years as it serves as an invaluable place to engage nonjudgmentally on hot topics which are so relevant to our professional roles.

Historian: Mr. Michael Nuth. What can one say about Mr. Nuth? When I became active in MSPA back around 2009, Mr. Nuth was the Treasurer, a role he served for several years. I quickly learned that Mr. Nuth (along with others) have been the long term memory of MSPA. Whenever there is a question about policy, procedure, or random fact; we call on Mr. Nuth and he comes through with the answer. As MSPA grows and adapts to the changing needs of its membership, Mr. Nuth has reminded us of the history of why we do what we do as well as how to avoid missteps. I believe in the saying 'if you don't know where you've come from, you won't know where you're going.' For me, Mr. Nuth has been a wise and guiding sage to the organization.

Information Management: Ms. Brittney Stafford has done an excellent job with keeping our website up to date. Additionally she has created a recurring "happenings around the state" section that highlights different things that our colleagues are doing; if you have not already, please check this section out. It is hard to believe that this is only her first year.

Membership: Mrs. Laura Veon has been the chairperson for membership for a few years now. She constantly comes up with ideas for how to improve MSPA membership benefits and works to develop innovative, fun, and effective ways to increase our membership.

Nominations: Mr. Warren Cohen has been this committee's chairperson for several years now. Just in case you didn't know, it was under Mr. Cohen's leadership and years of advocating that MSPA went from paper ballots to electronic. This was no small feat. Every year, Mr. Cohen and his committee do their best to make sure that our elections go forward without a hitch and they strive to ensure that we have several candidates running for elected positions.

Professional Development: Ms. Ann Hammond continues to lead the way with making sure each LEA has the opportunity to apply for local PD grants. These grants have helped to ensure that cost does not get in the way of locals getting continued PD.

Professional Standards: Mr. Matt Lawser has housed three Ad Hoc committees under his committee this year. This year the School Safety Ad Hoc was able to produce MSPA's first position paper in a while. Mr. Lawser's committee was also tasked with updating the definition of a school psychologist in COMAR and looking into the practices of our profession in various states.

Public Affairs: How many balls can one committee chairperson handle at one time? Ask Ms. Bri Connaghan. Her committee is tasked with being the public face of MSPA. This means that she attends various mental health and community events every year. This also includes college visits as requested as well as Sunshine duties. As if that is not enough work, her committee is also tasked with conducting a fair and competitive awards program, the winners of which she submits to NASP.

Newsletter: I'm extremely impressed with MSPA's newest Newsletter chairperson, Mrs. Juralee Miranda. One only needs to look at the Protocol to see all the wonderful and interactive updates. Also, if you really want to see her awesomeness, you only have to read my President's Pens. Her editing skills and way with words is unbelievable. If I ever write a book, I would love for her to be my ghostwriter or editor. Not only can she edit like a pro, but she has to find people who are willing to write articles. This is no small feat. Thank you Mrs. Miranda for all of your hard work this year.

Finally, although all of the work that MSPA volunteers invest is invaluable, I would like to share with you the MSPA President Award recipients. Dealing with public policy and legislation is not the most glamorous job. In fact, some people tune out when the topic is being discussed. Several state associations have hired either part time or full time employees to do this job. Each year, Ms. Shannon Cassidy holds bi-monthly meetings during the three-month long legislative session as well as monthly meetings which are coordinated with the written and oral testimony of bills. Furthermore, she reviews hundreds of bills annually. As if that was not enough, she also hosts the MSPA legislative breakfasts, held annually in Annapolis. In addition, she answers and composes daily emails for various state and local stakeholders, all while she is currently pursuing her doctoral degree.

Mrs. Amy Jagoda and her committee have revitalized our conferences. Mrs. Jagoda reads the conference feedback and incorporates the membership needs into future conferences. She spends countless hours trying to find speakers that are cost effective as well as speak on meaningful topics. Mrs. Jagoda's committee also keeps us accredited so we can offer CPDs. Thank you, Amy!



PROTOCOL

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2016-2017 Submission Deadlines

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Winter/Spring: January 8

Summer: April 1

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MSPA Executive Board Meetings

Meetings begin at 1:00 p.m. and end at 4:00 p.m.

Lunch is served at 12:30 p.m.

MSPA Board meetings are open to all MSPA Members.

Members are encouraged to attend and become involved with MSPA at the executive board level.

Please visit www.mspaonline.org to register to attend a board meeting and to find out location details.

◆ Jun. 9, 2017 Baltimore County, MD

Membership Update

Welcome to all our new members!

Karen Ashton
Cheryl Cunningham
Jennifer Doidge
Gabrielle Glorioso
Brian Grim
Laura Hammond
Paul Johnson
Yael Lukin
Katherine Mangus
Kristen Mayle
Byron McClure
Molly Meyer
Kay Moore
Heather Nunley
Denise Pankow
Ashely Ryan
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