

PROTOCOL

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President's Pen

I can think of no better way to begin my fourth President's Pen, and second term as MSPA President, than by reflecting on my first term, during the 2016-2017 academic year, and the extensive progress made by the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) over the last two years. The impact this committee has had on our organization is so significant and we could not have done it without the leadership of immediate Past President, Michelle Palmer, and our current SPC chair, Celeste Malone.

The SPC completely restructured our organization, establishing our Core Values, Strategic Goals, and action steps so that we can move forward with confidence. We are now ready to transition to the third and final phase of our Strategic Plan: developing an evaluation framework that will monitor our progress towards attaining our goals. To see these next steps, and learn more about

the history of the SPC, see page 4.

With the improvements to the overarching structure of MSPA, put in place through the Strategic Plan, I was able to turn my focus as President Elect to the internal operations of our organization. Helping the board update policies and committee procedures is important because as new committee chairs and other board members join our organization, they need this guidance and support.

In addition to the work of the SPC, my presidential focus of the 2016-2017 academic year was to increase membership participation. This participation makes our organization rich with diversity and collaboration. The strides that were taken include updating the content on our website, sharing board meeting minutes online, and utilizing teleconferencing for meetings. As President, I also made a personal commitment to reach more of our members located all around

the state, by attending every LSPO function to which I was invited.

While we have taken these sizeable steps in the last two years, increasing active member participation is more like a marathon event rather than a sprint. As Melissa Reeves, the 2016-2017 NASP President said, "Small Steps Change Lives", and we still have quite a few more steps to take before we maximize our member involvement. To take these important steps, I have created a new branch of the Membership Committee: Engagement. This branch will be led by our Membership Committee Co-Chair, Juralee Miranda. The Engagement branch will be responsible for empowering our members to become more active participants in the association. For more information on our Engagement branch, please turn to page 3.

Engagement's first step was to establish Meet and Greets after each board meeting. We understand that it can be hard to attend board meetings during the work day and believe that these events will provide time for general members to engage with the Board in a relaxed setting and have an opportunity to ask meaningful questions. These events are also open to co-workers and non-MSPA members with the hope that we will continue to build more connections to our communities. Lastly, we know that it take a lot of work to host and attend an MSPA board meeting, so these Meet and Greets also serve as a thank you to our active members.



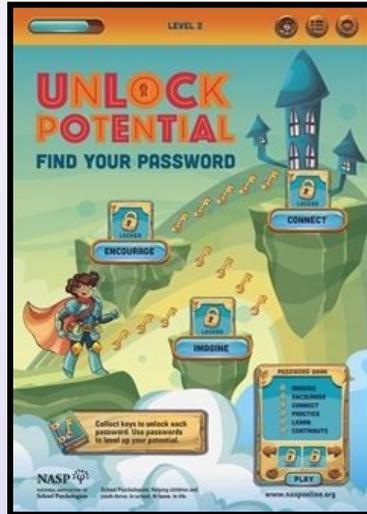


MSPA

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Thank You for Celebrating School Psychology Awareness Week (SPAW) 2018: UNLOCK POTENTIAL. FIND YOUR PASSWORD!



From the [NASP Website](#): “A password is a personal key for unlocking any number of areas of potential in our lives. Our goal is to connect with how modern youth and adults unlock things (e.g., gaming levels, phones, devices, codes) and to highlight how thinking about specific skills, assets, or characteristics as “passwords” can lead to positive growth. School psychologists are particularly skilled at assisting students and staff in unlocking the resources, proactive and preventive skills, and positive connections necessary to unlock one’s full potential to thrive in school and life.”

Thank you for all of the valuable work that you do as school psychologists for our students and families throughout the state of Maryland!

The MSPA Diversity Committee hosted their Third Annual Diversity Dialogue on October 19th, with the theme *From Anger to Advocacy: Global Citizenship in Your Community*



Thank you to all who participated!

For more information about the MSPA Diversity Committee, email them at diversity@mSPAonline.org

or

visit their page at <http://www.mSPAonline.org/diversity>

President's Pen *(Continued from Page 1)*

This year has gotten off to such a great start already, particularly during our 2018 Summer Planning, where the MSPA Executive Board engaged in a new committee goal-making process. Aligning each committee's goals and objectives to our recently adopted Core Values ensures that we are all working collaboratively and efficiently to benefit our membership. MSPA has continued this pace with our first few board meetings where we established two new ad-hoc committees that will prepare for the upcoming NASP Convention in Baltimore in 2020, the MSPA 60th Anniversary Celebration, as well as the rebranding of our logo, webpage, and newsletter.

Thank you for reading my fourth President's Pen. I look forward to continued service as MSPA's President this year. If you need me please reach out. I'm always here to support you.

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In What Way are MSPA and Ships Alike?

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MSPA board members are excited to launch a branch of the membership committee leadership which focuses on membership engagement. Current MSPA President, Courtney Oatts Hatcher, identified the need to more fully engage MSPA members with the work of the organization during her 2016-2017 presidency. This coincided with the organization's momentous work on the development of MSPA's strategic plan, which began at the prodding of then NASP delegate Stephanie Livesay; the plan was approved in 2018. With the strategic plan serving as a lighthouse to guide each committee in navigating their respective ships toward one harbor, many long-standing committee activities were evaluated for their utility, and board members committed to new undertakings designed to move the organization ever closer to that overarching plan. Graciously, elected officers and committee chairs embraced the changes brought to their roles as a result of aligning under the strategic plan, and out of these efforts was born the membership engagement branch of the membership committee.

As with any new initiative, the role of membership engagement is evolving and will continue to do so. Currently, the objectives can be thought of as a three-pronged approach: engage the board, engage graduate students, engage the MSPA membership. Lofty? Yes. Worthy? Absolutely. With an over 500-person strong membership, there is a plethora of untapped talent among school psychologists in this state. Whether you are fresh at the helm with your recent training barely behind you, a tenured captain resisting the burnout visible on the horizon, or likely, somewhere in between, active participation with your state association can transform your professional identity and your experience as a school psychologist in Maryland. As we have all experienced in our lives, what we get out of our participation in organizations is directly related to what we have put into them. So I challenge you to step aboard, be newly welcomed, and check out that which is new within MSPA leadership. I can assure you, within this fleet, there is a place for you.

MSPA board meetings are open to all members. We rotate around the state in order to encourage members to attend meetings and begin or continue their involvement. Please visit www.mspaonline.org to RSVP to your local meeting, and remember to join us for lunch before the meeting begins. If you are interested in contributing to the membership engagement undertaking by sharing your experience or providing suggestions to further this work, or if you are interested in receiving more information to assist you in finding your place within the association, please email me at engagement@mspaonline.org.



Envisioning Our Future: The Development of the MSPA Strategic Plan

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The Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA) adopted its first ever strategic plan in March 2018. Although the process began in earnest in spring 2016, the seed was first planted in 2010 when then MSPA president, Stephanie Livesay, brought this idea to the Executive Board. The Executive Board voted to create an ad-hoc Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) in March 2016, and the group began its work that summer. Over a two-year period, the SPC has gathered data from school psychology practitioners, supervisors, graduate educators, and graduate students from across the state to determine the most important needs among Maryland students, families, and schools; the external forces which will impact the profession; and the areas on which MSPA should focus in the future. Using this feedback, as well as Executive Board input, the SPC engaged in an iterative, consensus building process to identify MSPA's core values (approved by the membership in April 2017) and the strategic goals and objectives adopted by the Executive Board in March 2018. As MSPA approaches its 60th anniversary in 2020, the adoption of a strategic plan will help to ensure the organization's future relevance and viability.

In the spring 2017 issue of *Protocol*, past president and former SPC chair, Michelle Palmer, described the purpose of strategic planning and provided an overview of MSPA's strategic planning activities through May 2017. The purpose of this article is to describe the strategic planning activities that have occurred since that time and to present the data used to inform the development of the strategic plan.



Figure 1. Timeline of MSPA strategic planning process

Data Informing the Strategic Plan

There were two major data collection efforts during the strategic planning process. First, we reviewed the Maryland data of the NASP *Self-Assessment for School Psychologists* (http://apps.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/survey/survey_launch.aspx). This assessment was created for school psychologists to assess their individual work activities in terms of the 10 domains outlined in the NASP Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services (i.e., NASP Practice Model; NASP, 2010) and to identify professional development needs in each domain. We then developed our own *Strategic Planning Survey* to learn more about school psychologists' and school psychology trainees' perspectives on the state of school psychology practice in Maryland and how MSPA can support their work. The *MSPA Strategic Planning Survey* was disseminated electronically to the MSPA distribution list. This list includes MSPA members and former members as well as non-members who have registered for MSPA events.

Envisioning Our Future: The Development of the MSPA Strategic Plan

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Two hundred and seventy-three participants started the survey and a total of 161 participants both met inclusion criteria (i.e., identification as a school psychologist or psychologist working in schools) and completed the survey resulting in a 59% completion rate. In addition to the survey data, the SPC reviewed the feedback provided by the Executive Board in the environmental scan. For the environmental scan, the Executive Board discussed MSPA's strengths and weakness (internal to the organization) and the external opportunities and threats that may impact the organization. The following themes emerged from review of the data:

1. **The role of school psychologists in Maryland has expanded over the past few years and will continue to expand in the future.** Almost all participants reported that their work has slightly or greatly increased across all NASP practice domains and that they expect this trend to continue over the next five years.
2. **There is a growing need for resources to support students' mental health needs and advocacy to promote the value of school psychologists as behavioral/mental health providers.** Mental health support was identified as one of the most important needs among the students, families, and schools Maryland school psychologists serve, with 89% of participants reporting that the growing need for school-based mental health services is having a significant impact on their work. Additionally, there is a strong desire for MSPA to increase their focus on advocacy on mental health promotion in schools and with the Maryland State Department of Education. Notably, participants believe MSPA's advocacy is more impactful than their own individual advocacy efforts.
3. **Professional development is highly valued.** Over 93% of participants endorsed professional development as a helpful resource to support their work, over 80% rated MSPA's fall and spring conferences as moderately to greatly important in enhancing their practice, and over 90% think MSPA should spend its income on professional development. There is also strong interest in MSPA offering online professional development in the form of live webinars, pre-recorded videos, and articles with accompanying questions.
4. **The demand for school psychologists in Maryland will soon exceed supply.** Approximately 27% of participants reported more than twenty-five years of experience in school psychology; over one-third of the sample (37%) had at least twenty years in the profession. Given that there are only three school psychology programs in the state, it is unlikely there will be a sufficient supply of graduates to replace those school psychologists retiring over the next five to ten years.

Developing the MSPA Strategic Plan

Based on our review of all the data collected (i.e., *NASP Self-Assessment for School Psychologists, MSPA Strategic Planning Survey, results from the environmental scan, and Executive Board feedback*), the SPC developed draft strategic goals that will allow MSPA to move closer to achieving its vision while also being responsive to the needs of Maryland school psychologists and the populations we serve. These strategic goal statements reflect our benchmarks for success and are listed below:

1. School psychologists are valued as integral members of schools to support the social-emotional and academic growth of Maryland's students.
2. There is a sufficient and well-trained school psychology workforce equipped to meet the needs of Maryland schools and students.
3. MSPA provides high-quality professional development that is responsive to changes in the profession and the changing needs of Maryland schools, students, and families.
4. MSPA is an active, viable association that supports the advancement of school psychology in the state of Maryland.

The first three goals are directly linked to the themes identified in our data review. The fourth strategic goal was added based on feedback from the Executive Board. Having a healthy professional association is key to fulfilling our mission of supporting students, families, and schools.

Envisioning Our Future: The Development of the MSPA Strategic Plan

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Next Steps

Although the strategic plan has been adopted, the strategic planning process is not yet complete. The Executive Board has prioritized the strategic objectives, and, during the annual summer planning meeting, committees developed projects and programs to advance the prioritized objectives. The strategic plan also is linked to budgeting to ensure that resources are appropriately allocated. During the 2018-2019 membership year, the SPC will develop the evaluation framework to monitor MSPA’s progress towards attainment of the strategic goals. Once the SPC has completed this final task, the SPC will sunset and responsibility for monitoring of the strategic plan will shift to the President-Elect.

Acknowledgements

MSPA would not have been able to achieve the organizational milestone of having a strategic plan if not for the contributions of several people. I would like to thank and acknowledge the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 MSPA Executive Boards and the members of the Strategic Planning Committee: Kim Dorsey, Bill Flook (distinguished member), Stephanie Livesay (immediate past NASP Delegate), Juralee Miranda, Courtnay Oatts (MSPA President), Selina Oliver, Michelle Palmer (MSPA Past-President and former Strategic Planning Committee Chair), Laura Shriver, and April Turner (NASP Delegate). And, thank you to all Maryland school psychologists for making your professional needs known and engaging in this process.

<p>Vision: All students thrive in school, at home, and throughout their lives.</p> <p>Mission: MSPA promotes and advocates for best practices in school psychology to improve learning, behavior, and mental health for all students, families, and schools.</p> <p>Core Values: Advocacy, Collaborative Relationships, Diversity, Equitability, Excellence, Integrity, Responsible Stewardship</p>			
Strategic Goals			
School psychologists are valued as integral members of schools to support the social-emotional and academic growth of Maryland’s students.	There is a sufficient and well-trained school psychology workforce equipped to meet the needs of Maryland schools and students.	MSPA provides high-quality professional development that is responsive to changes in the profession and the changing needs of Maryland schools, students, and families.	MSPA is an active, viable association that supports the advancement of school psychology in the state of Maryland.
Objectives			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote school psychologists’ expertise and knowledge base to internal and external stakeholders Engage in professional and legislative advocacy efforts consistent with MSPA’s vision, mission, and core values Advocate for increased resources to allow school psychologists to support students’ academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and mental health needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with school psychology training programs to increase recruitment efforts Promote districts’ adoption of the NASP Practice Model and appropriate school psychologist ratios Support local school psychology organizations’ efforts to provide resources for recruitment and retention of school psychologists in their districts Provide a venue for school psychology training programs and school districts to discuss training needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a professional development resource bank Diversify the manner in which MSPA provides professional development Provide comprehensive professional development that promotes school psychologists’ expertise with an additional emphasis on academic and mental health supports Expand access to professional development throughout the state (e.g., school districts, community organizations) by creating a speakers’ bureau of professionals with expertise in a variety of content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase MSPA’s membership so that it is representative of school psychologists throughout the state Provide additional support to local school psychology organizations to improve their impact and organizational excellence Provide leadership development training to MSPA leaders and the general membership Increase membership and board member engagement

Figure 2. MSPA Strategic Plan (adopted by the MSPA executive board in March 2018)

References

National Association of School Psychologists. (2010). *Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services*. Bethesda, MD: Author.

Palmer, M. L. (2017). MSPA strategic planning. *MSPA Protocol*, 57(3), 14-15.

Views from the Past



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There are times that we have looked back through early newsletters and realized the more time changes, the more some things stay the same...

Forty years ago, in the fall 1978 MSPA Newsletter and the newsletter from March 1979, there are concerns addressed that closely relate to concerns we have today. This was the start of a massive series of educational reforms that affected the practice of school psychologists. In her President's Report, Penny Finch (Peterson), addressed the issue of increasing accountability due to the recently passed Public Law 94-142, the first law dealing with special education students, and showed great foresight into our continuously evolving profession. She wrote about the "added responsibilities and requirements...our accountability," which we continue to feel in our role today. She continued that:

Rather than moan and gnash teeth over the abundance of seemingly bureaucratic addons...forms, checklists, letters, and committees layered like flannelled long-johns... I would invite the membership of MSPA to view this phenomena a bit differently; i.e. within the sentiment of massive social change.

Shift your perspective...the paper flow is only a means to a goal too often obscured by or cynicism. I find it exciting to witness The Education for all Handicapped Children Act from the social context from which it emerged. Truly 94-142 is a most important piece of civil rights legislation with tremendous and far-reaching implications. It has and will continue to create change, growth and reform within public and private education. And the law addresses a constituency of clients whom school psychologists have been supporting and defending for decades...handicapped kids...ALL handicapped kids! Perceived within this framework, we are in the midst of marvelous and exciting times. So, colleagues, we aren't on the brink...we are in the core. I anticipate more anguish before we're through; but, I also anticipate added professional pride, greater congruence of ethical functioning and the joy of seeing all handicapped children respectfully and caringly educated.

Forty years later the bureaucracy continues, but we have become a stronger profession and children with disabilities are seen and treated in a more respectful and caring manner. It's not perfect yet, but we are still moving in a positive direction.

A second item from forty years ago was a mention that the Executive Board of MSPA was sponsoring a "Logo Contest." We as a Board are currently looking at "our brand" and discussing if/when and how we need to rebrand MSPA.

Finally, it was in March 1979 that our current nominee for Distinguished Member, Nickolas Silvestri changed his membership status from Associate to Active.

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!*

MSPA Attends 2018 NASP Public Policy Institute



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During a typical, humid Washington, D.C. week this summer, school psychologists from across the United States came together with NASP staff, public, and private stakeholders to attend the 2018 NASP Public Policy Institute (PPI). This year's theme was "Equitable Policies and Practices that Promote Engagement and Success for Diverse Learners". Reflecting on the week, the content was both relevant and prescient. It equipped attendees with the ability to understand where education policy was and where it might be going. Topics addressed during the professional development sessions included the role of advocacy in promoting policy solutions, the changing definition of Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), a data dive with the Annie E. Casey Foundation into their annual KIDS COUNT report, policies to support the use of MTSS, and understanding teacher bias and how it impacts preschool suspension and expulsion rates. The sessions provided a foundation of knowledge for new and seasoned professionals, and also offered actionable tips attendees could use while lobbying for policies which move the nation towards an equitable education system for diverse learners.

After two full days of professional development, which stretched late into the evening over wine and pizza, PPI attendees set out for the Capitol Hill Day on Wednesday. An early morning start had the crowd of school psychologists buzzing with excitement. MSPA member Ciara Caprara had scheduled a full day of appointments for the team of Maryland school psychologists with Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen and Representatives John Sarbanes and Jamie Raskin. With our agenda set and our precious security badges in place, we boarded the US Capitol Subway car to head to our first meetings.

The thrill of getting to ride the subway cars between the Capitol buildings, a mundane experience for most Capitol staffers and elected officials, had us giddy and laughing the whole way. Our collective joy in that moment set the table for the conversations we would have throughout the day, during which each member took responsibility for sharing a fact, an anecdote, or an infographic to support our conversation with the staffers. Our conversations felt persuasive and personal. We offered insight into the role which school psychologists can play in increasing equity within education systems and supporting current school safety initiatives. We argued for a balanced approach to school safety, which emphasized providing mental health care over punitive discipline and over enforcement. We highlighted how Maryland had passed state-level legislation in 2018 which limited suspension and expulsion for pre-kindergarten to 2nd grade students and ensured prevention and intervention supports for our youngest learners prior to removing them from classrooms. Maryland is overall a friendly state for education, so our arguments were not likely to be deemed controversial. Nonetheless, we feel that we made an impact in educating the staffers about what school psychologists do and how we can be partners in moving our education system forward.

Attending PPI was a privilege that we hope every MSPA member is able to experience at some point in their career. However, knowing that time and resources are constantly in short supply, the MSPA members who attended the 2018 PPI have compiled a list of resources on the following pages that we hope will be useful as you embark on your own journey of advocacy for equitable policies and practices.

MSPA Attends 2018 NASP Public Policy Institute

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The following are resources school psychologists can use to support their advocacy through evidence and data-based policy arguments. Additionally, the following includes general advocacy tips and ways in which NASP and MSPA can support you in advocating for equity in your school, district, city or town, or at the state or national level. However you choose to get involved, we hope you remember that *no action is too small when you are working on behalf of creating a more equitable and just education system for our students*. Whether you write a postcard, send an email, meet with an elected official, vote or lobby for a specific piece of legislation, involvement and engagement as a citizen or concerned community member has an impact.

Resources and Tips for Advocacy

When crafting your message to your representatives, it is helpful to incorporate national, state, or local data along with personal anecdotes. At PPI, we learned about several organizations and sources of relevant data:

- **First Focus** – According to their website, “First Focus is a bipartisan advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families the priority in federal policy and budget decisions.” One useful tool is their annual Children’s Budget report that shares and analyzes trends in federal funding for programs and departments that impact children and the child poverty rate (e.g., child welfare, education, health, housing, etc.). Find out more at: <https://firstfocus.org/>.
- **KIDS COUNT Data Center** – A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the KIDS COUNT Data Center provides data regarding a variety of factors related to child wellbeing. You can look at the data for a given state, sometimes disaggregated by city or congressional district, and for a given indicator. For example, “Education Indicators” includes data such as kindergarten readiness data by subgroup, suspension and expulsion data, state testing performance data, and much more. It also produces tables and charts, based on your selected data, for easy sharing with representatives and stakeholders. Find out more at: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>.



MSPA Attends 2018 NASP Public Policy Institute

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- **Center on Education Policy** – As part of The George Washington University, the Center on Education Policy (CEP) is “a national, independent source for research and information about public education.” Examples of reports published by the CEP include “The Shape of the Federal Role in Education” and “3 Ways Congress Can Support Public Education.” Find out more at: <https://www.cep-dc.org/>.

When contacting your elected representative, you will want to consider the content of your message and how urgently it needs to be delivered. The following are some tips in discerning whether contact through email or over the phone is appropriate:

- **E-mail** if you want to schedule an in-person meeting. This can take some coordination with the secretary or one of the Legislative Assistants (who you may meet with) in order to make it work for the day/time you are interested in. Meeting in-person provides the chance to build a relationship with your representative and/or their staff. As you build a relationship with them, they may reach out to you in the future regarding legislation that matches your area of expertise.
- **Call** if you want your representative to know your opinion on an upcoming vote on legislation. For hot topic legislation, the offices of representatives keep a tally of how many people call in support (or not) of specific legislation so that the representatives know how their constituents want them to vote. That means, encouraging everyone you know to call is also important!

NASP is a strong proponent for members being actively engaged in advocacy at the local, state and national level. NASP’s ability to advocate on our behalf is made stronger when the membership is engaged and committed. Some of the ways you can tap into advocacy efforts on behalf of NASP are:

- **Join NASP’s new Advocacy and Public Policy Interest Group in the NASP Communities.** The interest group provides information about important legislative developments, monthly policy matters blog posts, and NASP advocacy resources. You also can ask questions and get assistance with your advocacy efforts. To join, log in to your NASP account, click on “Communities” under the Membership & Community tab in the top right corner, and search using the group name “Advocacy and Public Policy.”
- **Join NASP’s Rapid Response Team list.** Once you join, you receive a limited number of emails asking you to amplify NASP’s responses to various current events.
- **Participate in Virtual Hill Day on November 14th as part of School Psychology Awareness Week.** More information on how to participate can be found on the NASP website.
- **Participate in the 2019 Public Policy Institute next summer (July 2019 dates to be announced).** You can earn NASP-approved CPDs for your next NCSP renewal. If you have previously attended PPI, you can join first-time attendees for the Capitol Hill Day.

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Spotlight: MSPA's 2018 Outstanding Educator and School Psychologist of the Year

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The Public Affairs committee would like to recognize the winners of MSPA's 2018 Awards Program. The purpose of the Awards Program is to identify and celebrate outstanding professionals from the field of school psychology, as well as those in related fields who work in collaboration with school psychologists to support children, education, and mental health in Maryland. Each year, nominations from across the state are sent to the committee for review and voting takes place in accordance with MSPA policies. It is a competitive process due to the high quality of nominees received, who all go above and beyond their daily duties to promote positive change in children and adolescents. This year's nominees and winners were announced at MSPA's Spring Conference, which was held on April 20, 2018 at The Hotel at Arundel Preserves. Winners were awarded with a plaque from MSPA to honor their accomplishments.

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, and acts as a leader at the local, state, or national level. Nominees for this award are full-time Maryland school psychologists who provide direct services to students, staff, and parents and perform their job in an exemplary manner.

The Public Affairs Committee was proud to recognize Dr. Julie Grossman as MSPA's 2018 School Psychologist of the Year. Dr. Grossman is a school psychologist in Prince George's County Public Schools. Data-based decision making is at the core of Dr. Grossman's practice, from utilizing the problem-solving framework on a small scale to conducting and presenting larger research endeavors. In addition to her daily tasks related to assessment and counseling, Dr. Grossman goes the extra mile to spread her reach as far as possible. One of the most notable trends in Dr. Grossman's practice is that her consultation and collaboration extends beyond the students and teachers; she strives to reach and involve families and communities whenever possible, spending many hours outside of her duty day to plan for and host trainings and events targeting families and community stakeholders. As part of Children's Mental Health Matters Week, Dr. Grossman coordinates an annual Mental Health Expo in which families are able to meet with community organizations to learn about available resources and children visit stations to learn about positive coping techniques. Dr. Grossman also has organized and led parent workshops to provide families with information regarding the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process, homework support, and positive behavioral approaches. Dr. Grossman lends her leadership skills and knowledge to MSPA through her role as co-chair and Managing Editor of the Newsletter committee. Dr. Grossman is a member of APA's Early Career Psychologist Workgroup and has recently spearheaded the creation of a NASP Interest Group for practitioners who conduct research. She has presented at numerous conferences and workshops for a variety of organizations, including Prince George's County Public Schools, NASP, APA, the Society for Research in Child Development, and the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development. Congratulations, Dr. Grossman!

Due to the caliber of nominees for this distinction, the committee recognized both a winner of the School Psychologist of the Year Award and a runner-up at the Spring Conference. Elizabeth (Liz) Niemiec, school psychologist in Baltimore City Public Schools, was voted as the runner-up for the SPY Award. Ms. Niemiec is the Baltimore City School Psychologist of the Year for the 2017-2018 school year and was nominated by her colleagues for the MSPA Award. Ms. Niemiec is a wonderful advocate for her students in Baltimore City. She spent several years working with youth experiencing emotional and behavioral difficulties, where she provided trauma-informed rehabilitative activities and services to students. She co-founded the Gay-Straight Alliance at one of her high schools, established weekly grief groups, and has worked on the Climate and Culture Team in one of her buildings, where she helped analyze data and plan staff and student activities. Ms. Niemiec is currently a part of the Prevention and Intervention for Early Learners (PIEL) team in Baltimore City and as part of that group, has facilitated pre-kindergarten social, emotional, and academic interventions. Ms. Niemiec frequently shares her knowledge with her colleagues through provid-

Spotlight: MSPA's 2018 Outstanding Educator and School Psychologist of the Year (Continued from Page 11)

ing professional development on topics including trauma and loss, behavior interventions, language and literacy development, and the collaborative problem-solving model. Outside of her duty day, Ms. Niemiec is an active member of the Baltimore City Association of School Psychologists as well as MSPA's diversity and newsletter committees and recently served as a member of the Maryland State Department of Education dyslexia workgroup. Additionally, she assists with facilitating an interactive presentation for early career school psychologists at the annual NASP convention. The Public Affairs committee was so impressed with Ms. Niemiec's accomplishments that she will be nominated on behalf of MSPA for NASP's Certificate of Appreciation Award.

The Outstanding Educator Award recognizes a school-based professional who works in partnership with school psychologists and supports the provision of quality school-based mental health services. The award is a way to highlight the importance of collaboration among professionals within the school system to reach common goals and outcomes. Nominees for this award come from an array of fields and may include administrators, directors, supervisors, counselors, social workers, pupil personnel workers, and related service providers.

The Public Affairs committee was happy to recognize Dannielle Midkiff, teacher in Carroll County Public Schools, as MSPA's 2018 Outstanding Educator. Mrs. Midkiff is an elementary teacher in the PRIDE (Positive Responses to Issues of Discipline with Elementary Students) Program, an alternative program for students with significant social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. Mrs. Midkiff has been involved with the PRIDE Program since it was established in 2004 and has been an integral part in the evolution of the program. She balances data-driven decision making with an understanding of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) that impact the learning, behavior, and development of many of her students. She incorporates mindfulness into her classroom on a daily basis, assists her school psychologist in the development of Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavioral Intervention Plans, and provides professional development related to trauma-informed practices. In addition, Mrs. Midkiff builds relationships with families by providing frequent communication, conducting quarterly parent trainings, and assisting families in accessing community mental health supports. The voting committee was extremely impressed with Mrs. Midkiff's dedication and passion to support some of her school system's neediest children and is happy to recognize her as the winner of the Outstanding Educator Award!



2018 Award Winners, Mrs. Dannielle Midkiff and Dr. Julie Grossman, with 2017-2018 MSPA President Michelle Palmer and Public Affairs Chairperson Bri Connaghan

Spotlight: MSPA's 2018 Outstanding Educator and School Psychologist of the Year
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MSPA's School Psychologist of the Year Award Recipient, Dr. Julie Grossman (left), and Runner-Up, Ms. Elizabeth (Liz) Niemiec (right)

GET INVOLVED WITH MSPA: JOIN A COMMITTEE

Contact a [committee chairperson](#) for more information on the committee's purpose and ways to get involved. We are always looking for new committee members and enthusiastically welcome interested graduate students.

Diversity, Information Management, Legacy, Legislative, Nominations, Membership, Newsletter, Professional Development, Professional Standards, Program, Public Affairs, Rebranding (Ad Hoc), Standards and Certification, Strategic Planning (Ad Hoc), 60th Anniversary (AD Hoc)



MSPA Grant Recipient: PREPaRE Training in Calvert County

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The Student Services Department of Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS) has been evaluating its school safety plans and procedures for several years. In the process of conducting these evaluations, consideration was given to existing safety structures of school buildings and how all staff were prepared to handle a school crisis. Student Services consulted with Sigma Threat Management Associates and received training from Dr. Gene Deisinger, a threat management consultant and psychologist. Dr. Deisinger's presentation provided knowledge regarding school violence and best practices on conducting threat assessments. This training prompted the supervisor of our school safety advocates and former state trooper, Mr. Larry Titus, to study all previous school shootings and develop an active shooter drill to be completed with all CCPS staff. The purpose of this drill was to practice how to respond if an active shooter were on the premises. There were several plausible response options for staff to practice.

Further discussions and recent events also sparked the interest and need for student services staff to be trained in how to respond to the needs of students, families and staff in a crisis. We decided to apply for the MSPA grant to assist us with the cost of funding the PREPaRE training for our department. With the support of the MSPA grant, we were able to send two school psychologists, Ms. Shemea Gross and Ms. Susan Estep, to the PREPaRE Training of Trainers Workshops at the NASP Summer Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey in July 2018. While there, they completed the Training of Trainers Workshops 1 and 2 and became Certified PREPaRE trainers. Afterwards, they provided a two-day PREPaRE training to CCPS staff. Ms. Gross is a graduate of Bowie State University and has been practicing school psychology in CCPS for five years. Ms. Estep is a graduate of Towson University and has been practicing school psychology in CCPS for 23 years.

What is PREPaRE?

The National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP) website provides detailed information about the PREPaRE Training Curriculum and Workshops. According to NASP (<http://www.nasponline.org>), PREPaRE provides school-based mental health professionals and educational professionals with the skills needed to participate on school safety and crisis teams. Additionally, PREPaRE is one of the first nationally available comprehensive training curriculums developed by school-based professionals (<http://www.nasponline.org>).

According to NASP (<http://www.nasponline.org>), the PREPaRE model emphasizes that school based mental health professionals must be involved in the following specific hierarchical and sequential set of activities:

- P – PREVENT** and PREPaRE for psychological trauma
- R – REAFFIRM** physical health and perceptions of security and safety
- E – EVALUATE** psychological trauma risk
- P – PROVIDE** interventions
- A – and**
- R – RESPOND** to psychological needs
- E – EXAMINE** the effectiveness of crisis prevention and intervention

MSPA Grant Recipient: PREPaRE Training in Calvert County

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The PREPaRE curriculum describes crisis team activities as occurring during the four states of a crisis: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. It also incorporates the incident command structure as delineated by the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

The PREPaRE Workshop 1, *Crisis Prevention and Preparedness: Comprehensive School Safety Planning* is a one-day workshop that focuses on how comprehensive school crisis teams are organized and how they function. This workshop emphasized the steps involved in developing these teams, including components that integrate school personnel and community provider roles. It also addresses issues with the media, social media, technology, students with special needs, culture, and memorials.

The PREPaRE Workshop 2, *Crisis Intervention and Recovery: The Roles of School-Based Mental Health Professionals* is a two-day workshop that provides school-based mental health professionals and other school crisis intervention team members with the knowledge necessary to meet the mental health needs of students and staff following a school a crisis. Participants learn how to prevent and prepare for psychological trauma, help to reaffirm both the physical health of members of the school community and students' perceptions that they are safe, evaluate and conduct psychological triage, respond to the psychological needs of the school community, and examine the effectiveness of school crisis intervention and recovery efforts.

PREPaRE Presentation in CCPS

Following their attendance at NASP, Ms. Gross and Ms. Estep provided the PREPaRE training to all school psychologists and school social workers in August 2018. The Director of Student Services and two supervisors of student services also participated in this two-day training. Following the training, all mental health staff decided that they wanted to develop a crisis folder containing pertinent resources so that they would have something easily accessible in the case of a crisis.

All attendees completed the curriculum evaluation tools included with the PREPaRE training materials. According to the results, 100% of the participants indicated that they will be able to apply the information and skills learned to their professional duties and 93% of the participants indicated that they would recommend the workshop. Additionally, 93% of the participants said they would recommend the trainers and 81% of the participants indicated that the workshop increased their knowledge. As a result of the training, the participants were able to understand crisis reactions, prevention of psychological trauma, assessment of psychological trauma risk, and interventions and evaluation of the effectiveness of those interventions.

CCPS One Year Plan

Our next step is to have our school safety advocates complete Workshop 1 with Ms. Estep and Ms. Gross. We also would like available administrators to participate in this training. A modification of Workshop 1 and 2 will be provided to our Pupil Personnel Workers and School Nurses. Lastly, our 41 school counselors will be trained in Workshop 2.

Conclusion

Our society is experiencing crises on a regular basis. Over the years, our county has been impacted by traumatic events that have occurred in our county as well as in neighboring counties. While we have always been able to respond right away, we believe that it would be valuable to continue to advance our crisis-response knowledge and skills. The PREPaRE training helped provide our school psychologists and other staff with the valuable skills in crisis prevention and preparedness. Thank you to MSPA for sharing in the cost of training our staff.

Bringing Science Home: Helping Parents Support Their Children's Learning



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Job growth in STEM fields, larger economic concerns, and international comparisons have prompted a focus on preparing students for careers in science-related fields (Department of Education, 2015; Langdon et al., 2011). However, one place where STEM, and science in particular, has received less attention is the home. After a systematic review of the literature on the topic, the National Science Teachers Association (2009, 2016) concluded that families must become more engaged in assisting their children with STEM-related activities at home. Parents are a key resource for facilitating children's science learning because they are uniquely poised to reinforce children's interest in learning science, their beginning to think like scientists, and their learning of science concepts. School psychologists can play an important role in conveying information to teachers and parents about how to foster science learning at home.

Research in the Children and Families, Schooling, and Development Lab at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, under the auspices of Susan Sonnenschein, provides some insight into the nature of science exploration at home. In an online survey of 189 parents of 1st-6th graders, parents reported various types of children's science engagement at home. Interestingly, they rated supporting science learning at home as less important than supporting reading, writing, or math. Findings also indicated that children spent less time engaged in science than in reading or math. Parents reported being less confident in their ability to support their child's science learning than their reading or writing. Other, larger studies have reported similar findings, particularly for parent confidence. Silander and colleagues (2018) observed that parents ($N = 1,442$) were less confident about their ability to support science learning than other subjects. This was especially true for less educated parents. McClure and colleagues (2017) reported that although parents were enthusiastic about supporting STEM in early childhood, they lacked confidence and were anxious about STEM learning.

Research has demonstrated the important role that parents play in supporting their children's learning (e.g., Serpell, Baker, & Sonnenschein, 2005; Sonnenschein & Sawyer, in press). Parent involvement has been shown to relate not only to children's academic achievement, but also to their interest in science, confidence in their skills, and feelings of connectedness with the field of science (Honig, 2012; Perera, 2014; Schinske et al., 2016; Stets et al., 2017). In the following sections, we describe ways in which school psychologists can help parents support their elementary school-aged children's science learning.

Bringing Science Home: Helping Parents Support Their Children's Learning

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Science as a Way of Thinking

Parents' attitudes and beliefs impact the type and frequency of science experiences they provide for their children (e.g., Taylor, Clayton, & Rowley, 2004). In our study, parents' ratings of the importance of engaging in science at home predicted the amount of time children spent engaged in science activities. In a separate study, Perera (2014) found that parents' attitudes about science positively impacted children's science achievement, and this association was stronger for children from low-income backgrounds.

Many factors can impact parents' attitudes and beliefs about science. Parents may feel that science is not important or valuable, due in part to a lack of familiarity with science or confidence about their own skills. The parents in our study reported more confidence supporting reading and writing than they did science. Parents may not feel well-equipped to support their children's learning for several reasons. Some parents may feel they lack sufficient knowledge about science or that science is challenging and complex. However, recently, there has been a shift in the way professionals think about science. Rather than viewing science as a school subject made up of discrete topics of study, researchers and educators have begun to view science as a way of thinking (Silander et al., 2018). This view is evident in the Next Generation Science Standards, (NGSS) which were adopted by the Maryland State Department of Education in 2013 (for information about the standards, visit: <http://mdk12.msde.maryland.gov/instruction/curriculum/Science/index.html>). These rigorously designed and internationally benchmarked standards were developed to help foster students' knowledge as well as their critical thinking skills (National Academy of Sciences, 2017). Silander and colleagues (2018) put it best, "Science exploration and investigation help children develop language, literacy, and thinking skills necessary for them to become adults who can reason logically and solve problems, think creatively, and collaborate and communicate with others," (p. 1).

School psychologists can help parents become more comfortable assisting their children with science at home. They need to convey to parents that science is not just content knowledge (e.g., the periodic table), but includes critical and logical thinking skills. Such skills are beneficial in and out of the classroom. Parents do not need to be scientists to support their children's learning. They can help their children develop necessary skills through conversation, asking questions, and searching for new knowledge together throughout the day at home.

Informal and Playful Experiences

Children are natural scientists who display an affinity for exploration of their world. In our study, parents reported that children enjoyed science more than reading, writing, or math. You can see this interest in the way many young children devour books and other media about dinosaurs, volcanoes, or magnets. It is through such experiences and others that children begin to develop their first science ideas and skills (National Research Council, 2012). It is also through these early experiences that children begin to develop a science identity, a sense that they are scientists (Honig, 2012). Early exposure to science helps children feel as though they have a place within the field of science. This feeling of connectedness has been shown to impact later participation, persistence, and achievement in science (Honig, 2012; Schinske et al., 2016; Stets et al., 2017).

However, not all parents are aware of the value of playful and informal science experiences. McClure and colleagues (2017) argued that parents (and teachers) could benefit from re-conceptualizing what "counts" as STEM activities and use informal and playful learning practices to foster children's growth in science. School psychologists can help parents (and teachers) by emphasizing the many simple and inexpensive ways in which they can support informal science learning at home. Science does not need to take place in a lab, nor does it necessarily require special equipment. School psychologists can emphasize to parents the importance and value of early informal experiences.

Digital Science Media

Technology is great way to support science learning at home. Children like to make use of digital resources and parents can capitalize on this interest. Additionally, technology can connect parents and children to numerous opportunities and resources for learning (McClure et al., 2017). According to Silander and colleagues (2018), a primary concern of parents was a lack of ideas for incorporating science learning at home. Science websites and YouTube channels can give parents ideas for activities. Many libraries and museums have interactive websites with ideas for activities and printable materials for children. Some even provide live streams so children and parents can take digital field trips to places like the Arctic circle. Importantly, digital media can make science more accessible for parents (Silander et al., 2018), and facilitate family-wide engagement in science.

Bringing Science Home: Helping Parents Support Their Children's Learning (Continued from Page 17)

The many resources available on the internet are encouraging but can be daunting. Parents may need help selecting appropriate resources for their children. School psychologists can provide parents information about available resources. Educational media conglomerates like BBC, PBS, and Leap Frog provide well-developed media and materials. However, there is one important caveat to remember when using technology. Although science media can be used as entertainment, parents should make sure to use technology *together* with their children. Children learn best when adults are present to help them to process information and make connections between what they watch and their lives.

Ideas for Parents

We describe below several examples of activities parents can do at home with their children. These come from the National Science Teachers Association and what parents in our study reported they were doing.

1. Capitalize on children's interest.
 - Children learn best when they are interested (see Sonnenschein, Baker, & Serpell, 2010; Sonnenschein, Metzger, & Thompson, 2016).
 - Let children choose the topics they are interested in. In our study, parents reported that children were most interested in nature, animals, and space.
2. Encourage children to observe, ask questions, and make predictions.
 - For example, at bath time discuss which objects sink and which float. When baking, talk about how the different ingredients combine and change to create a cake.
 - Turn the "whys" back to the child. Ask *why* they think birds have feathers or *how* cars work.
3. Make use of resources like libraries and the internet to find the answers to questions that children ask.
 - Posing questions then searching for the answer fosters early research skills. Parents should not worry if they do not have all the answers but welcome opportunities to seek out knowledge together *with* their children.
4. Play, look, ask.
 - Help children engage in informal experimentation. For example, children can build ramps out of blocks or other materials. They can try rolling different objects down the ramps. Remind parents to ask questions and help children make predictions about which objects will roll the fastest and why.
 - Parents can find ideas and instructions for experiments online. Many simple experiments can be conducted using common pantry essentials, which parents may already have at home. Parents in our study reported children enjoyed activities like making slime and growing crystals.
5. Go outside.
 - The outdoors provides great opportunities for science learning. For example, children can observe bugs, play with mud and water, or talk about the weather with their parents.
6. Provide access to books, games, and digital media with science themes.
 - Children can watch others conduct experiments via digital media (e.g., documentaries, Bill Nye, and YouTube channels). Exposure to the language of science and experimentation is valuable for learning.
7. Go on trips to museums, nature centers, parks, zoos, aquariums, and other science-related centers.
 - If these options are not feasible, consider live streams of museums, zoos, and other nature sites that are available for free online. For examples, parents and children can watch and discuss the live ape camera at the San Diego zoo streams online (<https://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/cams/ape-cam>).
8. Remind parents that science should be fun!
 - Parents may not have strong science identities and may need support to bolster their confidence that they can, and should, engage in science with their children.
 - The National Science Teachers Association (2009) advised parents to think about science as something they can learn together with their children. Parents should not worry about having all the answers but use opportunities to seek out knowledge together with their children.

Bringing Science Home: Helping Parents Support Their Children's Learning (Continued from Page 18)

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Professional Growth Through Peer Supervision

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Peer supervision is an effective way to guide reflection and foster professional growth. The reasons to engage in a peer supervision relationship are innumerable. The structure of some school districts makes receiving direct supervisory services from an administrator either overly evaluative, not clinically specific, or too infrequent to be effective (Harvey & Struzziero, 2008). Even practicing school psychology in Maryland, where state regulations demand that supervision be provided by someone eligible to be a school psychologist and having the benefit of several years of experience (Code of Maryland Regulations [COMAR], 13A.12.04.08), does not always mean that optimal supervision or even guidance is available on a regular basis. Many districts have very high practitioner to supervisor ratios, and several districts ask the school psychology supervisors to take on additional responsibilities beyond solely supervising practitioners alone (Harvey & Struzziero, 2008).

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) encourages self-directed accessing of peer-to-peer mentoring and guidance. By reaching out to like-minded practitioners throughout the nation via internet listservs (NASP Membership Exchange), or the “find a mentor” program (NASP, 2017), school psychologists can access the knowledge base of many practitioners in the field from across the nation. In Maryland, our state professional organization, MSPA, provides access to peers across the state through membership directories, committee work, social gatherings and professional development opportunities. There is a high likelihood of meeting other professionals with similar backgrounds, and hopefully even greater, more robust experiences. MSPA also encourages healthy Local School Psychology Organizations (LSPOs) at the district level. These organizations frequently offer opportunities for face-to-face interaction with peers, many times facing similar situations due to local policies, inherent supervisory structures, service populations, and overall district needs.

Although these opportunities may be accessible, there is no guarantee that we, as practitioners, will regularly take advantage of them. People may be more inclined to visit listservs when they are seeking solutions to personal problems, rather than frequently making themselves available to meet the needs of other listserv members. Peers across the state or even within a district might have a lot of experience upon which to draw when giving suggestions and guiding reflections, but that does not mean that they are capable, have sufficient time, or are able to follow up. All in all, these avenues are not likely to provide the optimum “supervision” experience, and might barely be effective at facilitating regular, professional data-based decision making, or with the provision of ad hoc professional advice. Structured satellite mentorship programs may have more formal agreements to define the ongoing structure (NASP, 2017), but again, the outcomes of the process are typically dependent upon the motivation of the mentee and the skills of the mentor.

On the other hand, structured peer supervision can be effective, when there is an emphasis on “structured.” Newman, Nebbergall, and Salmon (2013) have found that highly structured peer supervision can increase the intrinsic feelings of satisfaction and resolution, can provide practical solutions and strategies, and prevent feelings of evaluation on the part of the supervisee. However, the researchers lament that although these outcomes may be reproducible in the pre-service training environment, these structures are less likely to be replicated in the field with practicing school psychologists (Newman, Nebbergall, and Salmon, 2013). As the name suggests, structured peer supervision requires a recurring schedule of meetings, a structure of conversation that guides the provision of supervision, and reliance upon a cycle of feedback that revisits the topics of previous sessions. There often is a component of oversight, from a trainer or a supervisor. This structured setting, and the use of an “overseer” is one of the many reasons that Newman et al. (2013) indicate that the likelihood of field implementation is small, as these researchers gathered their results from practicum and internship students engaging in field work.

Professional Growth Through Peer Supervision

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Field Application

In the school year 2013-14, the Prevention and Intervention for Early Learners (PIEL) Team was formed in Baltimore City Public Schools. The goals of this team were to collaborate and consult with early learning general education teachers and school administrators in an effort to make literacy instruction more comprehensive, design universal social, emotional, and behavioral supports, make data-based decisions for providing students more intensive supports, and to decrease inappropriate early learner referrals to school student support and IEP teams. Throughout the pilot and early years of the project, school psychologist and speech-language pathologist practitioners relied heavily on the NASP adopted practice model and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) implementation guidance. Though trained to engage in full-spectrum school psychology, many school-based practitioners had not been afforded the opportunity to engage in early intervention work, consultation, and systems change before working with this team. In their new roles, these practitioners felt more like novice practitioners, having greater needs to seek support for complex experiences and new skill development (Harvey & Struzziero, 2008). This change in duty represented a significant shift in professional responsibilities, which was uncomfortable for most of the team members. It was evident to team leaders and members that peer support and supervision would be necessary component for easing anxiety and ensuring positive implementation of new skills. This decision came about organically, as new team members frequently sought each other for support, which occurred right after monthly team meetings.

The procedural skills related to more intensive consultation, data-based decision-making and systems change can be taught through didactic professional development provision and by reading up on the latest research and text books. Indeed, monthly team meetings provided that venue for training. However, in consultation relationships and in systems-change work, there are often significant periods of uncertainty and a lack of inherent professional satisfaction, even if a practitioner follows the best practices in these areas perfectly.

Further adding to stress of uncertainty in engaging in this practice, was the uncertainty of achieving success with goals. Team members reported that when engaged in more traditional work, timelines and to-do lists are externally dictated; work is often dictated by IEPs or by IDEA, rather than being self-directed. When these team members completed an assessment report, or attended a meeting, there was a concrete feeling of satisfaction associated with the finality of checking those items off the to-do list. As reported by team members, when work is longer-term, multi-stepped, and based on changing large systems and inherent views of others, the development and consequential "checking off" of a to-do list is much more nebulous. Satisfaction can be slow in coming, or sometimes, not experienced at all.

Sweeny (2011, pp. 164) indicates that when roles of educational professionals transition from duties that are concrete in completion to consultation and relationship-building, the inherent satisfaction of a professional is likely to decrease. Consultants even have cyclical morale that is chartable and predictable, with mid-fall being a particular "low point" for new coaches. Both research and experience led the leaders of this team to conclude that a structured peer coaching format was important to implement. Team members needed the guidance and reflection afforded by such an opportunity, but also relied upon a set scheduled frequency and expected outcomes. Team members knew that they would have coaching and mentoring meetings on a monthly basis, and that time for reflection would be included and goals set in the previous month would be revisited. Team members indicated feeling more satisfaction and support once the structure had been implemented. Having an outsider evaluate month-to-month goals also helped lessen the feelings of uncertainty that came with setting less-tangible goals. On a rare occasion when these supports were temporarily removed, the coached team members indicated that they greatly preferred the recurring structure and frequency.

As the team successfully reached overall goals in successive years, the structure of the team changed as well. With these changes, the focus on coaching and mentoring other professionals increased in importance for the PIEL team. Team members who received coaching from each other were now acting as peer supervisors themselves, coaching several other related service practitioners over the course of a year. Even while providing this supervision to others, team members still indicated a desire to receive structured coaching. As opposed to only scheduling recurring meetings, the team adopted procedures and documentation systems that rooted coaching discussions and goal development in school-wide and student-level data, demanded recurring

Professional Growth Through Peer Supervision

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times and opportunities for structured support, and surveyed recipients in satisfaction of the inter-professional relationships. Last year, 75 clinicians across the district received structured coaching, and many of these clinicians received both group and individual peer-driven coaching and mentoring. Survey results indicated high satisfaction in the structure and support of the models adopted by the team. The process of providing structured peer supervision for a year or more, then working to transition the recipients of this support into providers of this support continues to be a main tenet of the PIEL team.

Field Perspective

Elizabeth (Liz) Niemiec, a school psychologist, has taken part in this peer coaching structure from several perspectives. Three years ago, she was engaged in more “reactive,” special education-focused roles and responsibilities in two schools. Since then, however, she has worked in PIEL-supported schools, receiving monthly coaching from a full-time team member, and shifting her focus to engage in more consultative-based responsibilities. This year, Liz herself is a full-time team member, and is receiving coaching support from team leads, while also providing some coaching support to other school psychologists in the field. Once again, her role is transitioning, and so is the level of peer support that she receives.

Liz reported a personal perspective regarding professional duty transitions and the benefit of structured peer coaching. She indicated that despite some uncertainty at the beginning, she came to rely upon structured peer coaching to help her reflect on her accomplishments, to troubleshoot upcoming barriers, and to feel a sense of belonging as she was engaging in new professional experiences. Liz also echoed some of the feelings of insecurity that many practitioners have when they begin to engage in a greater consultative focus. She said that it was hard to not feel like the conversations were evaluative, and once she felt supported and confident that this type of supervision was non-evaluative, it was easier to attain success with the engagement. Furthermore, it is nice to be in a “brave space” where you can lean into discomfort, ask questions and express uncertainty about upcoming tasks; a stark contrast to the typical role of assessment interpreter and data analyst, where everyone else is looking to the clinician to be the expert.

Lessons Learned

No matter what terms are used, peer coaching, supervision, or mentoring, can be invaluable tools for supporting professional growth and offering opportunities for professional reflection. There are many resources that can be accessed to choose the structure and design that may be the best fit for practitioners in the field. Professional organizations can provide contact with other practitioners that can engage in a coaching and peer support relationship. Peer support can be beneficial and lead to greater satisfaction and accomplishment if engagement is purposeful and ongoing (Newman et al, 2013). Practitioners who are engaging in new skills or responsibilities, especially if these new tasks do not have explicit, cut-and-dry outcomes to measure success, are prime candidates for receiving peer support. These structures can be applied to modern methods of networking and communication. Rather than seeking professional peer supervision on an “as needed basis,” frequent, recurring support that relies on data and goal-setting is much more likely to result in professional satisfaction and feelings of support. A practitioner does not have to be a novice, on a special team, or engaging in new tasks to take advantage of such a network of support. Given the outcomes related to professional growth, reflection, and satisfaction, it makes sense that practitioners of all types of experience are engaging in such a rewarding relationship.

Resources

Over the time that the PIEL Team designed the peer coaching process currently used, the team accessed the following resources:

Coaching Matters by Killion, Harrison, Bryan, and Clifton uses the “Learning Forward” approach to coaching peers and other professionals. This book gives great practical structures and reproducible tools, with the focus of keeping coaching engaging and applicable for adult learners.

Student Centered Coaching: A guide for K-8 Coaches and Principals by Sweeney uses a data-based approach to structuring coaching. By focusing on student needs and student-centered data, many of the pitfalls of power dynamics and consultee resistance can be avoided.

Professional Growth Through Peer Supervision

(Continued from Page 22)

Further Techniques for Coaching and Mentoring edited by Megginson and Clutterbuck provides guidance in coaching techniques through the lens of mental health service provision and theory.

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International School Psychology Association Conference 2018 Tokyo, Japan



The International School Psychology Association held its 40th annual Conference at the Tokyo Seitoku University in Tokyo, Japan. From July 25th through the 28th, attendees were able to partake in matters revolving around primary care, education, psychology, school, student and school psychology matters.

Bowie State University was able to send 13 of their students who were accompanied by faculty member Dr. Darla M. Scott. Our students begin working on research proposals in their first year in the program as part of their research, statistics and program evaluation course. The students (at the time) voted on proposals they liked from their particular cohort (3 students from Cohort 12 and 10 from Cohort 13). Studies were conducted, data analyzed and results were disseminated in poster sessions and presentations on campus, at MSPA Spring Conference, and at ISPA. Both groups of students submitted their proposals to ISPA and both were accepted to present in Tokyo last summer.



Above: the front entrance to the building where the conference was held.



They had a poster presentation, *The Relationship between Cultural Competency, Burnout and Implicit Bias among School Psychologists*, that was presented by Quaneesha Bey, Monique Easley, Renee' Hall, Shemiyah Holland, Aubrie Kerner, Sydney McWilliams, Carly Sanchez, Tali Spencer, Brianna Turner, Brittany Wilkerson and Dr. Darla Scott.

Left: Dr. Darla Scott, Monique Easley and Quaneesha Bey

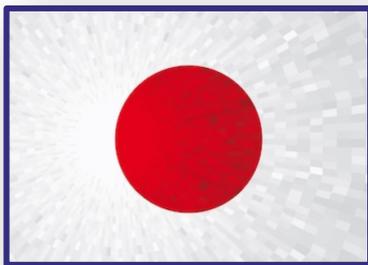
International School Psychology Association Conference 2018

(Continued from Page 24)



Left to Right: (bending) Jessica Jefferson, (back black sweater) Jataya Richardson, (black sweater/tan pants) Monique Easley, Quaneesha Bey, Brianna Turner, Carly Sanchez, (black/white pants bending) Aubrie Kerner, (pink shirt) Tali Spencer, Cinthia Solis, Brittany Wilkerson, Shemiyah Holland, Sydney McWilliams, Renee' Holland.

The paper session, *Creating an Inclusive Safety Net: Examining Risk and Protective Factors among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities*, was presented by Jessica Jefferson, Cinthia Solis, and Jataya Richardson .



Back row: Shemiyah Holland, Aubrie Kerner, Tali Spencer, Jessica Jefferson, Cinthia Solis, Sydney McWilliams

Front Row: Carly Sanchez, Brittany Wilkerson, Jataya Richardson, Quaneesha Bey, Dr. Darla Scott





Kawasaki International Education Symposium 2017

Author: Warren J. Cohen

Current Role: School Psychologist, Prince Georges County Public Schools, MSPA Nominations Chair

Email: warren.cohen@pgcps.org

From 1994 to 1995, I took a year long sabbatical in Kawasaki, Japan during which I conducted a research study about Japanese literacy rates. I also taught English and had the opportunity to visit several schools and gain insight into the way the Japanese education system is run. Ever since, I have been invited back to speak about my experiences and to experience Kawasaki in a new and ever-changing way. In the twenty four years since I took my sabbatical, I have seen the city of Kawasaki be transformed from a construction site to a bedroom community for Tokyo and Yokohama. Mushashi-Kusagi has become a commuter train hub surrounded by a dozen towering condominiums with gleaming malls like Green Tree. I truly should have bought real estate when I could!

This year, the Kawasaki International Educational Symposium was once again supported and hosted by the Kawasaki Teachers Union and President Kadokura. While at the Symposium, my co-presenter and I were fortunate enough to meet the Mayor and Superintendent. Aside from the banquet and the "French" dinner, we were treated with the vast Japanese cuisine of nigiri, udon noodles, tempura, shabu-shabu, and okonomaki. The Symposium featured familiar and eminent representatives from the United Kingdom and Croatia. The delegates from China and Korea were equally eminent, presenting in English, and engaging in friendly banter. By the end, we bonded, it became a "love-fest," and we had a sad departure, reluctant to say goodbye to our new and esteemed friends.

In addition to all of these changes to the physical city and the cuisine, this year's symposium presented many changes in education as well! Dontria and I made a good team in presenting our contributions: while I delivered the meat and potatoes, Dontria brought the heart and soul. I think it was a good idea for me, an individual who has been to Japan on numerous occasions, is familiar with the culture of Kawasaki and the general atmosphere at the symposium, with a new one, like Dontria, because the experience of presenting can be intimidating, especially when done internationally. We were also helped tremendously by a professional translator from Georgetown University.



We began our presentation by promoting Baltimore City, its Public School system, and the changes to the Baltimore Kawasaki Committee. While our segment addressed an overall shrinking student population, there have been several improvements, including a decrease in dropout rates, an increase in high school graduates. The makeup of our student population has also changed, with an increase in the number of black students, and twice the number of Latino students. This information was collected using information from the Maryland State Department of Education's "Fact Book", which is published annually and can be found online at

<http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/pages/dbs/factbook.aspx>.

Kawasaki International Education Symposium 2017

(Continued from Page 26)

For the island nation of Japan, which has such a homogenous people, it can be difficult to understand the concerns that come with having such a diverse student population. In that same vein, the need to advocate for the individual rights of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds, gender and sexual identities, and with disabilities can be a foreign concept. It is surely a stark contrast when considering that Baltimore City Public School's special education rates hover around 15% and Kawasaki's are around 3%.

As Japan is most interested in education in the United States, Dontria addressed the recent rise in charter/choice schools from 11% to 34% over the last five years. It was splendid that she spoke of the public charter school, Banneker-Blake Academy, and the success of one of their star students. While Baltimore City still underperforms the state, it is making progress in some ways. Her micro analysis balanced my macro one.

True to form, in addition to the symposium, we had the opportunity to observe several schools in Japan, including a multi-million dollar facility for students with severe and profound disabilities as well as a new choice school emphasizing citizenship and empathy for students who are not mathematically- or scientifically- inclined.

Throughout this visit, I think we were appreciated for interpreting beyond the facts. I think we were honest, balanced, substantive and challenging. This has been both an intellectually stimulating and physically exhausting experience, but we both are appreciative of the opportunity. I look forward to future symposiums, where I may continue to connect with individuals who are so deeply dedicated to improving education across the world.



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Call for Posters

MSPA 8th Annual Diversity Poster Presentation Guidelines

Poster presentations are an informal and interactive opportunity to share research, data, and innovative practice at the 2019 MSPA Spring Conference to be held on Friday, April 12, 2019 at The Preserve at Arundel Mills in Hanover, MD.

Graduate students and school psychology practitioners are invited to participate.

Poster topics proposed should promote diversity, cultural awareness, and/or culturally competent practice within the field of school psychology.

An ABSTRACT of 200 words or less (excluding title) should be submitted containing the objectives of the poster presentation. The abstract should also:

- State the title of the presentation with presenter name(s) and university or school system affiliation
- State the purpose of the poster presentation
- State what will be presented
- State how the presentation will benefit participants

All information should be typed in 12-point font and double-spaced and sent in a Microsoft Word Document to diversity@mSPAonline.org by **February 1, 2019**.

Previous Poster Topics

- Trauma-Sensitive Practices in Schools: A Voice from the Field
- Embracing Diversity and School Safety through Collaboration, Systems Change and Program Evaluation
- Social-Emotional Learning in Racial and Ethnic Minority Youth
- The Relationship between Cultural Competency, Burnout and Implicit Bias among School Psychologists

Before you submit your proposal, please consider the following:

- Are the title, abstract and objectives well aligned?
- Is the topic relevant to diversity, culture awareness, or culturally competent practice in the schools? How will the presentation benefit the participant? Will the poster encourage the viewer to reflect on their learning or practice?
- Does the proposal align with a theory, relevant research, evidence-based practice and/or data supported decision making activity?
- Are practices, conclusions, and recommendations well supported/substantiated by the information provided?
- Is the proposal written in a clear, concise and professional manner?

Proposals are due February 1, 2019

Accepted proposals will be notified by March 8, 2019

ATTENTION STUDENTS: The lead author of up to five student poster presentations will be awarded a stipend to attend the MSPA Spring Conference. Students who receive the award must register for the conference in advance and do not need to be members of MSPA to participate.

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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.

December 14—Virtual Meeting via Zoom

January 10—Anne Arundel County

February 8—Carroll County

March 29—Frederick County

May 3—Baltimore City

June 7—Calvert County

Membership Update

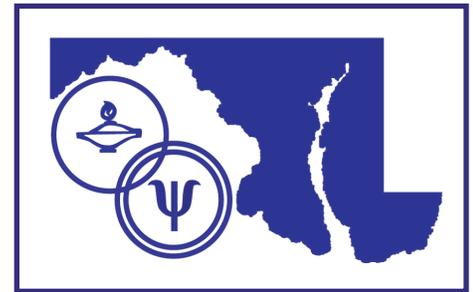
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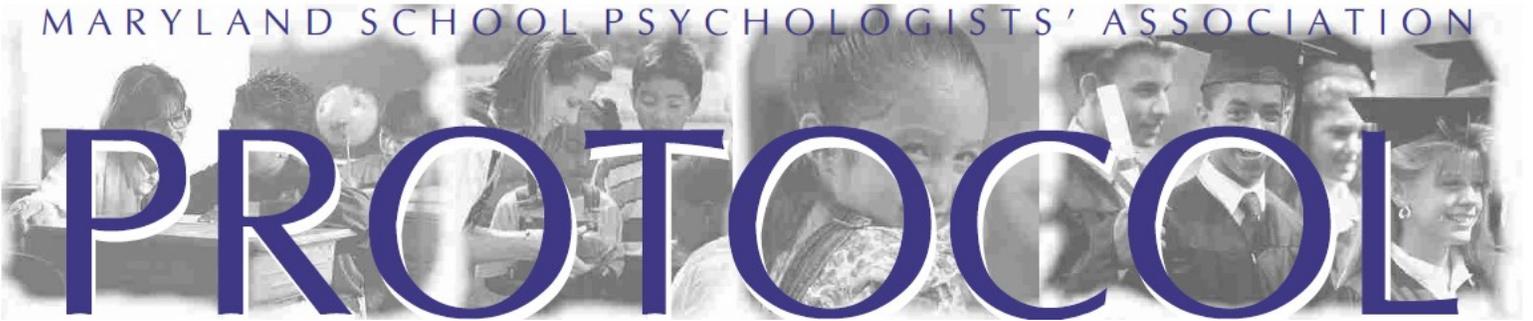
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