

Ohio Delegate Candidate—Kathy McNamara

NASP recently adopted its 2010 Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services. What steps would you, as state delegate, take to use the 2010 model to best solidify the professional identity of school psychologists and ensure access to school psychological services by all children, families, and schools?

In the current political climate, it is more important than ever to protect the integrity of our services; to maintain quality when resources are being cut and there is pressure to sacrifice effectiveness for efficiency. In my conversations with Ohio school psychologists, I've sometimes heard frustration with what is perceived to be NASP's failure to bridge the gap between the realities of daily practice and NASP standards or prescriptions for such practice, with the *Practice Model* cited as an example of this "disconnect." Some feel that a continued emphasis on best practice implies a certain tone-deafness; others wish that NASP would focus more on the guild issues threatening job security and the quality of services.

While recognizing the legitimacy of these concerns, I can't help but consider how much greater the risk to our profession would be if there was no *Practice Model*, or if that *Model* promulgated standards that fell short of what our knowledge base recommends as best practice. On many occasions, I've turned to the *Practice Model* to illustrate both the breadth and depth of services that school psychologists can and should provide; to acquiesce to a role constrained by economic or political factors – no matter how pressing and real – would reverse the gains we've made as a profession in the decades since NASP's founding.

In a recent article published in the *Communique Online*, Eric Rossen and Jeffrey Charvat describe preliminary results from a study of 870 responses to a *Self-Assessment Tool* designed to help school psychologists evaluate their own practices in context of the *Practice Model*. Overall findings indicated that, while school psychologists endorse "the broad spectrum of services laid out in the *NASP Practice Model*," their ability to engage in these activities was constrained by issues of knowledge, skills, time, and competing priorities. Services focused at the system level were particularly problematic, despite uniform agreement on their importance. How can conditions be made right for school psychologists to become proficient in, and then deliver this "broad spectrum of services?" I believe that answers can be found in several domains:

Awareness. Last year, OSPA President Elaine Semper and I offered a brief introduction to the *NASP Practice Model* during the Spring Conference. This year, President Aimee Kirsch has invited me to work with her to coordinate a discussion about the *Model* during an upcoming Executive Board meeting. I am excited about this opportunity for our association to articulate its priorities and activities within the coherent and comprehensive framework provided by the *Practice Model*.

Advocacy. The Ohio School Psychologists Association is fortunate to have the services of Ann Brennan, recent recipient of a NASP advocacy award, who not only keeps Ohio school psychologists apprised of legislative and policy issues affecting our work, but who also coordinates appropriate action on such issues. At a recent meeting with Ohio Department of Education officials, Ann worked with a team of graduate educators to solidify perceptions of the positive impact of school psychological services. As a participant in this meeting, I witnessed the manner in which data linking services to student performance outcomes can move discussions

from abstract assertions to concrete demonstrations. Throughout the meeting, the NASP *Practice Model* served as a basis for enumerating the activities that led to these outcomes. I have no doubt that ODE officials will remember these data when considering budget proposals and policies important to our profession, and that such data also will be useful in ongoing discussions with legislators and other advocacy groups. As Ohio's NASP Delegate, I will continue to work closely with OSPA as an advocate for the "best practice" of school psychology in Ohio.

Education. Here in Ohio, we enjoy the benefits of a strong state association with sufficient resources to sponsor two conferences annually, featuring nationally known experts in one or more of the ten domains of practice presented in the NASP *Practice Model*. The *Model* is an especially useful resource that can be used to plan programs, particularly as augmented by findings generated through the use of the *Self Assessment Tool* by Ohio school psychologists. I encourage the use of the *Tool*, and will continue to offer support to OSPA in its efforts to map out a long-term professional development strategy that reflects the provisions of the *Practice Model*.

Representation. Finally, as Ohio's NASP Delegate, I will maintain our voice in the Delegate Assembly, ensuring that both professional and guild-related issues contributing to the gap between "best" and "actual" practice are adequately addressed by our national association.