NASP Advocacy Roadmap: The NASP Practice Model  
*Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services*  

Exhibit H2  

**Becoming an Effective Advocate:**  
*How to Educate Lawmakers about Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services*  

1. **Identify your elected officials.** You can use the NASP Advocacy Action Center ([http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/advoactioncenter.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/advoactioncenter.aspx)) to identify your elected senators and representatives at the state and federal level. Review facts about them including which counties he/she represents, political party affiliation, committee assignments, personal history, awards, involvement in education, and key staff names and roles.  

2. **Send a message to your elected officials.** Through the NASP Advocacy Action Center, you can send your legislators messages through e-mail, mail, and/or phone calls to let them know that their support is needed and that you would like to be involved in the legislative process. Offer to be a local resource if the legislator has questions about your knowledge area. Legislators like to know professionals they can call on to discuss specific issues and they are especially interested in their constituent’s knowledge.  

3. **Meet with your legislators at their local offices.** You may join up with other colleagues and other specialized instructional support personnel (e.g. school counselors and school social workers) to visit your elected officials. If the legislator is unavailable, meet with staff. Use their names and keep in touch throughout the legislative session to remind them of your issues and ask about progress. Leave a note or materials summarizing your purpose for the visit. Be sure to leave your contact information (e.g. business card) and request contact information from those attending the meeting.  

4. **When making personal visits, provide a written summary of research, data, and other information that supports your issue.** NASP has a variety of fact sheets, position papers, brochures, and other information available online at [http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/researchmain.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/researchmain.aspx) and resources related to the Practice Model at [http://www.nasponline.org/standards/practice-model/](http://www.nasponline.org/standards/practice-model/). Additional materials about the NASP Practice Model are available at [http://www.nasponline.org/standards/practice-model/](http://www.nasponline.org/standards/practice-model/). See Exhibit D: Key Messages in this Advocacy Roadmap for more information about how to craft your advocacy messages.  

5. **Coordinate a “call-in day”**. It can be very effective to flood the phones of an elected official by organizing a “call in day” where you and your colleagues call an
elected official about an important issue. Prepare a brief outline of “talking points” (see suggestions below) for all participants and target specific legislators for multiple calls.

- **Rehearse a brief statement summarizing your purpose for contacting the elected official.** For example, “I am a school psychologist in your district and I would like to discuss the benefits of a Comprehensive School Psychological Services Model and how this is linked to improved outcomes for students.” Make a brief outline of the points you wish to convey using the available NASP talking points. Be concise and present your points in order of importance. Be prepared to relate at least one quick real-life example illustrating how critical school psychological services are to educational success.

6. **Write a follow-up letter or email thanking the legislator and/or staff person for their time.** Whether you have met a staff member in person or talked to them on the phone, it is always good to follow up with your conversation with a brief letter/email. Include in your letter a brief summary of your visit and the discussion topics. Assure the legislator that you will stay in touch and then periodically follow up with the legislator regarding your issue and to request information on any progress or work towards your request.

7. **Invite legislators, in collaboration with other school personnel, to visit your school(s).** Legislators are invited to hundreds of events a month so you need something special to get them to attend. Make your invitations personal and be determined to include them. During the visit, be sure they learn more about what you do and how students benefit from your services. Include your school district staff and administrators on invitations and events.

8. **Directly ask if they would be willing to support a specific proposal, vote yes (or no) for a certain bill or amendment, or champion an issue.** Offer to be a local resource person if the legislator has questions about education or school mental health issues. Legislators like to know professionals they can call on to discuss specific issues.

9. **If the legislator, or staff member, says something you disagree with, practice good active listening skills, and politely offer facts (if you have them) to rebut the statement.** A polite, positive approach is always best. After you leave, you may think of a point or find relevant information to support your argument. This gives you a perfect opportunity to follow up with the legislator and restate your point. The more they hear from you (without being annoying), the more you will make the issues known and they will consider you a resource. Sometimes it takes years to correct faulty information or beliefs…be patient, polite, positive and persistent.

10. **Remember to keep track of your “connections.”** Keep a record of any contacts that you, your family, or friends may have with school board members.
These “connections” help personalize the relationship and will help the elected official have a greater interest in your work. You should also keep a record of contacts made with your elected official including meetings (date, time), issues you discussed, and any other personal tidbits that help personalize and prioritize your issues.