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Describe the site where you work and how you decided on this type of placement.

I am currently a postdoctoral research scholar at the Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development, which is located at the University of Iowa. The Center's mission is to provide research, professional training, and outreach that supports the international gifted community, and my current responsibilities truly do align with forwarding that mission. Most of my time is spent in our clinic, where I provide psychoeducational assessment and counseling services to school-age children and adolescents. Many students seen in our clinic demonstrate high cognitive ability and scholastic aptitude; their parents and school teams may have questions regarding whether academic acceleration is an appropriate intervention, or whether there is a disability that warrants additional support services or accommodations. Our evaluations often assist school teams with addressing these concerns. In addition, I also teach the intellectual assessment course for doctoral school psychology and counseling psychology students in the University of Iowa's College of Education.

I chose this placement because it provided me with a truly unique, one-of-a-kind opportunity to specialize in serving gifted and talented students. I earned my PhD here at the University of Iowa, and I actually completed a practicum at the Belin-Blank Center during my training as a graduate student. It was such a memorable and rewarding experience! When I was notified that there would be a postdoctoral position available, I pursued it with alacrity. Fortunately, my time at Belin-Blank has helped open many doors. I will be joining the graduate faculty of the College of Education in the fall, and I will continue to maintain clinical, administrative, and supervision responsibilities within our clinic.

What are your areas of expertise at this point in your career?

So far, I can confidently say that I have developed expertise at conducting psychoeducational assessments of high-ability students. A careful and thorough evaluation can be very useful when making recommendations for whole-grade acceleration, subject acceleration, early school entrance, or any of the many other forms of academic acceleration. I espouse a strengths-based approach when delivering psychoeducational services, and I think this aligns quite well with the direction that school psychology is increasingly moving toward. Understanding and making sound recommendations to both nurture a student's strengths while also addressing areas that are in need of support can be a complicated endeavor, but I have become quite skilled at this work. These skills are especially important when evaluating and making recommendations for twice-exceptional students (i.e., students who present with both high cognitive/academic ability *and* a disability that impacts their scholastic functioning).

Describe something that has surprised you about your career thus far.

I have been pleasantly surprised by just how valuable my training and experiences within K–12 schools has been in my current work within a university-based clinic setting. My knowledge of schools has really bolstered my ability to make good, well-reasoned, and implementable recommendations for school teams. My recognition of this has really strengthened my professional identity as, first and foremost, a school psychologist. Increasingly, I have found my professional identity as a school psychologist to be of paramount importance now that I do not currently work in the schools.

Describe your engagement in the local community and how this impacts your work.

Social justice and advocacy for marginalized groups have prominent roles in how I decide to allocate my professional and personal time. Professionally, I routinely provide inservice trainings and workshops for professionals who serve twice-exceptional students. This outreach is very important, as the challenges experienced by twice-exceptional students are often overlooked, underrecognized, or misunderstood. Personally, I am very active within the Iowa City community through my volunteer and advocacy work with a number of organizations, including the local NAACP chapter and my fraternal organization, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. As a relatively young Black professional (I'm 29), I try my best to be an exemplar for children of color who reside within the Iowa City community, especially young Black males.

What challenges have you faced in your early career, and how have you handled them?

A recurrent challenge that I have encountered at this juncture in my career is convincing parents and other professionals that I am indeed knowledgeable enough to provide consultation about student learning, problem behavior, and mental health. I presume they may be apprehensive to take me seriously because I am relatively young and just at the beginning of my career. Positively, I am confident that I will eventually age out of this problem! However, until that happens, I am very intentional in corroborating up my recommendations with empirical research literature. I have found this approach to be very helpful when providing consultation to schools and families.

What advice do you have for other early career school psychologists?

I strongly encourage early career school psychologists to find mentors to whom they can reach out for support and advice. I am quite fortunate to have had superb professors and supervisors throughout my graduate training, and I continue to seek advice from them more often than I would like to admit. For example, just a few weeks ago, I reached out to my former internship supervisor for information

about parent rights regarding restraint and seclusion within public schools. When I decided that I wanted to pursue a career in academia, I found a superb mentor through NASP's Find-a-Mentor program who gave me excellent advice as I embarked on my job search. My academic advisor Dr. Susan Assouline has been a stalwart supporter of my career from the start, and she continues to be an invaluable resource as I transition to a faculty position. I am definitely proof that mentorship matters!

How has your NASP membership benefitted your career?

Membership in NASP has really provided me with a vast and diverse community of professionals who strive to do their very best to serve kids. My interactions with other NASP members are always encouraging and motivating, whether they be through the NASP Member Exchange or in person at the NASP convention. I am especially proud of how NASP members have really advanced school psychology's recognition and understanding of children of color, LGBTQIA youth, undocumented immigrants, and other groups who have historically been marginalized or disenfranchised. Despite some of the current challenges impacting students in this current educational climate, NASP's commitment to social justice reassures me that our work as school psychologists is both meaningful and impactful.