

## **CARON PARRISH-NOWELL**

**State Delegate Candidate: North Carolina**

*Statement 2*

**NASP Leaders have adopted five strategic goals that guide the association’s work. In your state, what are some gains being made in school psychology practice related to these goals, and what are some pressing challenges?**

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) lists five goals which “represent outcome-oriented statements intended to guide and measure the organization's future success”. The North Carolina School Psychology Association (NCSPA) developed a strategic plan to support the activities of the association. Our strategic plan has four strategic areas of focus with specific goals. Association activities are entered into a collaborative board plan and reviewed quarterly. Given this structure, it is easy to see the alignment of our state association goals with NASP’s plan.

NCSPA strives to enhance the skills outlined in our NASP practice model by providing professional development. This included “Lunch, Learn and Collaborate” sessions on various topics, an all-day Safety Summit, Ethics training, advocacy training, three asynchronous digital learning workshops, a state-wide social justice book study, and successful blended fall conference. Furthermore, 92% of the professional learning sessions offered NASP CPDs and 97.5% of the sessions offered NCDPI CEUs. One challenge we face is a lack of members to enjoy and participate in the professional development we offer.

As with our national association, NCSPA addresses our workforce shortages. We work with legislators to raise awareness about the field of school psychology, our decline in positions, poor salary and difficulty retaining our current psychologists. We face many hurdles in recruiting and retaining our school psychologists including a non-competitive salary schedule, limited numbers of graduating cohorts from school psychology programs within our state, and poor student to practitioner ratios. We are hoping our legislators will pass a bill created by NSPA which creates a School Psychology Recruitment and Retention position.

Our association stands with NASP on the goal to “ensure all children and youth are valued and that their rights and opportunities are protected in schools and communities.” Last year, the theme of our fall conference was based on equitable and comprehensive services for all children. Our professional development included understanding socially just practices throughout our service delivery and microaggressions. The association also facilitated a state-wide book study to further raise awareness of equitable and just practices and provide time for reflection. This year the association presented relevant professional development at our fall conference, and in topics during our Lunch, Learn and Collaborate sessions. The board also took time to review our operations through a social justice lens.

Finally, NCSPA and NASP share a common goal of leadership development. We created a Leadership Advisory Committee, and, in the past, we’ve hosted a summer leadership institute for rising leaders with presentations and

support from board members. Within our association we recognize leaders and strive to recruit members to fulfill positions on the NCSPA board. Unfortunately, we struggle to find enough leaders to fill our vacancies.

Being a member of NCSPA and NASP has been a privilege. I look forward to working with the school psychologists in North Carolina to promote the field of school psychology and the unique and comprehensive services we provide to all students. Every.Single.One.