

**GREGORY MELLON**  
**State Delegate Candidate: New York**  
*Statement 1*

**What are your qualifications that make you a strong candidate for delegate?**

It has always been my conviction that a leader's number one qualification has to be a desire to serve people and the community. If you are not making the lives of people better, you are not really doing anything of significance. It's how I've always approached my work in business, my volunteer work in local churches and community organizations, and particularly my leadership role with NYASP-NYC. As NASP Delegate, I can bring these experiences to make school psychology stronger in NY.

I also believe I'm qualified because New York made me. I recall as a child being in my NYC kindergarten class and having significant coping issues. I remember seeing the school psychologist, who encouraged my parents to spend more time relating to me. I recall going to one of the worst high schools in Brooklyn at the time. I graduated early, just to get out of there and I often tell people "I graduated with my life". When making my decision to be a School Psychologist, I interned in the very same office of the School Psychologist that supported me as a child. New York has given me its best and its worse. School psychology was there for me, now it's my time to give back to school psychology.

**What is the most pressing issue in your state? As NASP Delegate, how do you see your role in working with your state association to address this issue?**

It still rattles me when I'm asked the question "What is a School Psychologist?" Working with NYASP as a Student Representative and a Chapter Representative for NYC, I've heard this question from people around this state, from all ethnicities and shades of color. But none more than in the communities in which I've lived and served. Never have I been more adamant about making sure that vulnerable population know the people that are "Here to Help" them and the services/programs created to support their children. I come from a community where resources and funding were always scarce. I also come from a community that has been traumatized by how American institutions serve communities of color. And in a time where our country is still at odds with its history, vulnerable communities must know that their access to a Free and Appropriate Education won't be hampered by classism, bigotry and racism. Nothing in America is free from the legacy of institutionalized racism, especially education. I'm proud to be an ambassador for communities who need reassurance that the American Education System is created with every child in mind. Addressing education inequities and representing all communities will be my passion as a Delegate. Working with NYASP on defining the role of school psychologists in diversity, equity, and inclusion is the work that is needed today. This work began with NASP and I look forward to furthering the great work NASP and NYASP are doing.