

## **GREGORY MELLON**

**State Delegate Candidate: New York**

*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?**

New York has the largest educational department in the United States and faces organizational challenges as diverse as its population. To start with the positives, one the thing that New York City does relatively well is that it supports and enforces a framework ensuring Special Education are a priority. With one of the largest special education budgets in the country, School Psychologist closely monitor and manage educational plans, ensuring that Students with disabilities receive the services they deserve. Additionally, the NYC Department of Education intentionally recruits Bilingual School Psychologists straight out of college and into their hiring ranks. They seek our diverse languages such as Spanish, Urdu, Haitian Creole, and many other languages, employing school psychologist to support the over180 languages that exist in its system. When considering NASP's Strategic goal of Social Justice, this is very impressive. However, to this point, a focus on social justice requires us to address the inequities in how children from poorer and black/ brown communities are supported in school. The legacy of structural racism in America and our education system should be considered in how we protect and support these student minorities.

When considering NASP strategic goal for Leadership development, I have found that many NY school psychologist took very little interest in promoting the field outside of the building. Stress from their workloads and low moral were often the reasons. As a NYC chapter representative for NYASP, I made a concerted effort to make sure local politicians were knowledgeable about the work School psychologists are doing and how they can help to create more supportive learning environments. We made civic engagement a priority in our chapter. As a result, many School Psychologists in NYC are in regular contact with local assembly and councilmembers, fostering strategic relationships.

New York falls significantly short in two strategic goals. These shortfalls can be seen in Workforce's shortages and the use of School Psychologists as Mental/Behavioral Health Providers. Presently, many public-school psychologists have increasing case loads and are responsible for multiple schools. This contributes to the lack of support to children and their Social- Emotional development. Psychologists are often the most qualified Mental health professional in the school building able to support children with disabilities. While the department of education employs Guidance Counselors and social workers as part of their Mental Health Teams, a case can be made on how effective this practice has been with vulnerable populations. When considering NASP practice model for Consultation and Collaboration, New York needs to make larger strides in how School Psychologist directly collaborate with parents and families to promote the effective implementation of services.