

**VERONICA MORALES**  
**State Delegate Candidate: Puerto Rico**  
*Statement 1*

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

Through my professional development and current experiences, I have gained an understanding of the psychological foundations of education, instructional strategies and designs, psychological research, and stages of development for different age groups. I have acquired a broad base of information on learning outcomes, testing, research methods and data analysis, which enable me to contribute to the growth of students.

I always felt a great desire to teach and help children. My journey began when I completed a Bachelor of Arts in Special Education. I chose Special Education because I could have a better understanding about certain behaviors in children, how this behavior can affect their development in school and learn how to work with them. To me having these extra tools it's very important, because by understanding what is happening with students and their environment, I can give them more opportunities to learn and have a better quality of life. Working as a teacher, tutor, and academic coach for teachers I proved to myself that I am able to help a student succeed academically, by understanding the problems behind the difficulties that this student may be presenting, as well as help teacher work with these students by helping them understand certain behaviors and the situations that can develop in consequence of these behaviors. Because of this I decided, within the Psychology field, to specialize in Educational Psychology. Obtaining my Master of Science in Psychology with a specialization in Educational Psychology was very important for both my professional development as well as my personal development. This experience reassured me that I am on the correct path in life. The knowledge that I gained gave me a wider view in all the opportunities that I have to make a difference within the educational field by becoming a Doctor in School Psychology and I was able to graduate from Capella University.

**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?**

When it comes to the issues that need to be continuously addressed, I have always worked to improve is the consistency in psychological services in the school setting. In Puerto Rico currently, it is very important, especially after a year of confinement, students and their families, as well as teachers are struggling to adjust to a new educational reality with the virtual learning and hybrid programs, as well as the consequences of this event on academic achievement, where we are seeing academic skills lag. I have always worked in promoting consultation and collaboration between professionals (teachers, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, school administrators, social workers) to ensure that the student's needs are met in all aspects of their development.

As a School Psychologist I carry out a wide range of tasks with the aim of enhancing children's learning and enabling teachers to become more aware of the social factors affecting teaching and learning. It would be an amazing opportunity to be able to share this and work alongside my colleagues as they NASP Delegate.