

## **BETH HOWELL**

**State Delegate Candidate: South 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?**

NASP's five strategic goals have helped provide a lot of guidance and direction for school psychology in South Carolina. While there is still work to be done to move forward with these goals, there have been gains in practice in the state.

**Social Justice** – The Fall SCASP conference featured Dr. William Blake, who spoke on equity and ensuring practices to ensure that every student can succeed. His presentation offered practical recommendations that school psychologists can start to implement in their districts and/or practice setting so that we ensure that all students have access to the educational (both academic and social/emotional) resources that they need. By creating this dialogue, all school psychologists can examine their own practices to ensure equity. There are still needs in this area to make sure that students in every part of the state have equal access to quality school psychological services.

**Workforce Shortages** – There is a definite need to focus on workforce shortages in our state, both in finding and recruiting school psychologists and creating new positions for school psychologists throughout the state. SCASP worked with the State Department of Education to help designate School Psychologists as an area of critical needs for the teacher loan program to help recruit more school psychologists.

**Leadership Development** – There is always a continuing need for developing leaders within the school psychologist community. SCASP is continually trying to reach out for new members and new board members. Being on the SCASP Board has given me many leadership opportunities within the state and on the national level.

**NASP Practice Model** – The adoption of the new Practice Model (2020) allows school psychologists to see the way their unique set of skills can be utilized to help students succeed. Every school psychologist needs to become familiar with the Practice Model so that they know, understand, and embrace their large set of skills. All SCASP conferences are designed to offer sessions that focus on one or more of the NASP domains so practitioner can see the way the Practice Model can guide all that we can do. The more we understand and embrace everything we are able to do as school psychologists, the more we can advocate for our positions. There are still many in the state that are unaware or unsure about all the roles and competencies they possess.

**Mental/Behavioral Health Professions** – School psychologists are uniquely qualified to provide school-based (or community-based) mental health services. We are trained not only in understanding children/adolescents but also in school systems. We know how school systems work; we know the limitations and the benefits of mental/behavioral health services being offered in the school systems. The 2021 Fall SCASP conference had a

major focus on social-emotional learning, which is an excellent pathway to helping provide these mental/behavioral health services. There is still a need for further advocacy that needs to be done so that districts, school, and families see that we are qualified and competent to offer these services.