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State Delegate Candidate: Texas
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?

In the area of social justice, the issue of disproportionality (both in special education identification and discipline) continues to be our challenge. I do feel that Texas school psychologists strive to ensure that all children and youth are valued and that their rights and opportunities are protected in schools and communities. I see an increase in awareness of various issues that impact our minoritized students as evidenced by LSSPs participating in the NASP National Book Read, hosting a discussion around Policing in Schools, a TASP Talk Podcast episode and Communique article about promoting inclusive practices by LSSPs.

In the area of the Practice Model, Texas was one of the first states to formally adopt the 2020 Standards, including the revised Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services. A challenge continues to be ensuring districts provide LSSPs with the opportunity (read as reduced workload) to provide the comprehensive range of services as listed in the Practice Model. We have seen more districts allow LSSPs to do more than “test and place”, but depending on the area of the state, and even the district, this could vary. There are some LSSPs that are very close to meeting or meet the recommended 1:500 ratio. In addition, Texas has 2 Excellence in School Psychological Services (ESPS) Recognition Districts.

In terms of Texas LSSPs as mental/behavioral health providers, TASP has centered their annual summer institute exclusively around this topic and set an attendance record this year which focused exclusively on trauma informed practices. I feel there is a large group of LSSPs that desire more practice in this area but are hampered by workload demands. With the recent challenges brought on by the pandemic and staff morale at an all-time low, the approximately 2,000 LSSPs in our public schools are currently struggling to do more than simply meet compliance timelines. A challenge continues to be increasing Social Emotional Learning practices, although Texas recently held its first statewide SEL Conference.

To address leadership development, the state is seeing more LSSPs take on leadership positions at the local levels, although more work is needed in this area. We are seeing an increase in LSSPs taking advantage of advocacy efforts to affect change at the state level. A recent example is this past April where 884 advocates sent 10,729 letters for the title change bill with some representatives personally receiving over 900 letters in support of the title change.

Perhaps the most pressing need is the workforce shortage. Even with the issuance of over 150 new LSSP licenses this year, we continue to struggle to ensure a diverse school psychology workforce is available to meet an increasing demand for school psychological services. The workforce shortage is felt from graduate programs to school districts. Texas has an uneven distribution of applicants to the various graduate programs in our state. Most of our

school districts currently have an open position. The current ratio of 1 LSSP to approximately 2,700 students highlight the ongoing work needed.