

LACY SKINNER

State Delegate Candidate: Vermont

Statement 1

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

I am thrilled to be running to represent Vermont as a delegate to NASP. For 14 years, I worked as a practitioner before returning to academia. I love working as a school psychologist and appreciate those small moments of success with our students. However, I also feel strongly about the need for more of us in the profession, which led to my decision to become a graduate school trainer of future school psychologists. I believe having experience in both the applied field as well as graduate education has provided me with opportunities and knowledge that make me a strong candidate. I feel it is important to continue to grow within our profession; therefore, I look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with others across the country. That new knowledge will not only benefit myself, but more importantly can share that information with other Vermont school psychologists. Furthermore, a primary role for a NASP delegate is to work as an advocate for our field. Advocacy has long been a strong pull for me, and I attended the NASP advocacy training program this past summer. As NASP delegate, I intend to use the information I gain to advocate with our local schools and legislation.

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?

I believe the school psychologist shortage is the most pressing issue for Vermont. However, looking at it as a only a shortage is a narrow view of the concern. In some cases, school districts do not hire more psychologists because they are unaware of the broad role that school psychologists can take. As a delegate I would work with our state association, VASP, to make connections with the other school professionals to educate them on the NASP professional model. Those professionals would then have the knowledge of our skills and be able to advocate for additional school psychologists in their districts. Some schools do not hire due to lack of funding, so I view the delegate role as advocating legislation for school mental health funding. Also, having high ratios in some districts limits the time our professionals can use their broader skills. However, many of our school psychologists will need to expand their current roles with the upcoming changes to our state laws on identification. So, to that end as delegate I would work to provide training to the school psychologists in our state to help with the transition and to support them in finding ways to stretch their skills. Finally, the shortage can lead to pressure and burn out in school psychologists because they often feel both overworked and under-utilized. These feelings can be exasperated by the isolation many feel from other school psychologists in the state. Therefore, I would work with VASP to continue to grow the initiatives started by VASP to increase opportunities for informal communication among ourselves and more formal mentoring opportunities. These are just a few of the ideas I have for working as a delegate and I look forward to sharing more ideas with you soon.