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State Delegate Candidate: Alabama  
Statement 2

The NASP Leadership Assembly has adopted three 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?

Alabama is one of the unique states with the position of psychometrist in addition to school psychologists. Both perform similar roles within the State and both are experiencing shortages. I have encouraged members to share the Exposure Project or general information about our field with middle and high schoolers as well as college students. Our challenges continue to be 1) encouraging professionals to share about our field as it is often a silent field, 2) addressing retention and job satisfaction. We recently completed phone calls to each district in the State to develop a list of school psychologists/psychometrists. This information can be used to create surveys to help address difficulties with shortages (e.g., is location or pay a factor), improving retention (e.g., is the job more stressful than being a school counselor) and advocating for job satisfaction (e.g., what are schools doing to show employee value).

The Practice Model has been addressed in several ways in Alabama this year – one district submitted interest in participating in the Excellence in School Psychological Services and there is talk of at least 2 more this year. This award raises awareness of the field, within the community and sheds light to the scope and practice of our profession. I co-presented the Practice Model at the State conference and have presented it to a university class. I encourage members to share with key stakeholders – Boards of Education, PTAs, local and State legislators - and offer to co-present for those who struggle with public speaking. I have interviewed practitioners who advocated to their supervisors and brought them to NASP Annual Conventions changing their job role and satisfaction. Their advocacy raised awareness and by sharing it, I hope others will be encouraged to do the same. Challenges for the upcoming term would be to have the Practice Model presented to our State Board of Education, key legislators, and at least one presentation in each region of the State.

Social justice is the most critical aspect to address in this term, in my opinion. While presenting the Practice Model and the Exposure Project, social justice is discussed. However, we should focus on encouraging our members to self-reflect (book studies, surveys, NASP Self-Assessment) and build capacity for them to address the inequities they see. Encouraging members to anonymously share social injustices (similar to anonymous ethical questions) may allow the opportunity for people to address concerns and seek advice without turning the spotlight on their district. Continued professional development in how to address social injustice when it is observed should also be addressed in conference considerations.