MARY MACLENNAN
State Delegate Candidate: Maine

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?

Under my leadership, MASP has focused on enhancing the role of Maine school psychologists, as we have the Practice Model written into our certification. We have been working to provide training to our members so that they are confident in their skills. However, it is hard to break the perception that our jobs have such a narrow focus. I believe that ongoing collaboration with the Department of Education and MADSEC will help to enhance a broader school psychology role. I look forward to gaining a deeper understanding of how other states are breaking out of the “tester” role, which will improve outcomes for the students we serve in the state of Maine. MASP is working to increase the perception of School Psychologists as school based mental health service providers, especially in this time of critical need. We have presented on mental health topics to the special education directors organization. This work serves the dual purpose of increasing access to mental health services, while expanding the role of Maine school psychologists. I hope to learn how other similar states deliver these services through my work with NASP. I am also working with the state association to promote awareness of the NASP Practice Model and in advocating for our role and the profession through the Push Project.

Maine has been hit hard by the shortage of school psychologists. We are a large geographical area, with many current school psychologists at or nearing retirement age. The reinstatement of USM’s specialist level program is a step forward in bringing new school psychologists into Maine Schools. While NASP has revised the standards for certification of school psychologists, I was part of a group that looked at the Maine certification to facilitate revisions to our 093 certification. We are hopeful that the changes that are in the revision will facilitate smooth credentialing of qualified graduates and current practitioners moving to Maine while at the same time maintaining the high standards of our profession. I see providing adequate services for our spread out, rural communities as probably the biggest part of the challenge of workforce shortages. I look forward to collaborating with representatives from other rural states in identifying strategies for meeting the needs of our rural schools.

When looking at Social Justice, in Maine we are trying to reduce discrimination with many school districts working on diversity training. Recently, with the updates by the Department of Education of all of the certifications in the State of Maine, a requirement of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion course requirement was written into all of them. While we are not a very diverse state overall, there are pockets of very diverse cultures. As NASP Delegate, I would rely on the many resources that NASP can provide to assist with making sure that the school psychologists who work with this population have the skills and resources that they need to provide for the needs of these students.