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State Delegate Candidate: New Hampshire

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?

NHASP’s current strategic plan runs from 2021-2026 and our goals are aligned with the three NASP strategic goals. As we have discussed in our statewide strategic planning sessions, the three goals are related. We have been advocating in NH to help districts adopt and implement the NASP Practice model for a number of years. We have worked with the department of education to have our certification standards based on that model and continue to advocate for an expanded role for school psychologists. As is the case nationally, workforce shortages impact the ability to fully realize this goal in NH at this time. Our school psychologist to student ratios vary widely in the state and improving them has been a challenge. While we can advocate for better ratios and a full practice model, we are often unable to fill the positions we currently have. This is why we have prioritized the critical shortage of qualified school psychologists as a strategic goal. We are partnering with our university training program as well as the NH Association of Special Education Administrators for recruitment and retention of both practicing school psychologists and university trainers. Our state association leadership has committed to utilizing the NASP Exposure Project resources to engage high school and undergraduate students in awareness of the field of school psychology, and have discussed potential mentoring opportunities as an extension of that work. We have an Early Career learning community available for school psychologists in their first three years of practice as a way to support and retain new practitioners. It has been an active group and members have been very appreciative of the mentoring and support. This has also helped us build our leadership capacity by encouraging new practitioners to become involved in NHASP. We have prioritized our social justice goal to foster an organizational culture and climate of inclusion and acceptance. We have realized that our largest and most diverse communities have been underrepresented in NHASP leadership and we have actively recruited representation from those districts to engage more actively with our executive board. All of these activities help us in achieving our vision of advocating for comprehensive and integrated school psychological services that advance the learning, behavior, and mental health of all children and youth of New Hampshire.