APRIL BOWERSOX McCLARAN  
State Delegate Candidate: Kentucky

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?

The Kentucky Association for Psychology in the Schools (KAPS) has been working diligently to address and navigate the current challenges faced by school psychologist of the Commonwealth. As President, I asked our Executive Council to consider revising our organization’s current vision, mission, and goals to address our current climate and congruent with NASP’s Strategic Plan. Together, in the summer of 2023, our KAPS EC did just that. In September of 2023, we presented our revised plan to members who unanimously approved it.

Although our goals align with NASP’s, what we see as being the most pressing issue in our state are the workforce shortages. We have identified finding solutions to these shortages as our primary goal. In Kentucky, we are bringing these issues to the forefront. In the past two years, we have established a Retention and Recruitment Committee that works closely with our Government and Professional Relations Committee and University representatives to collect accurate data regarding the number of open positions, posted positions, practitioners in each district, graduate students in each year of their programs, interns entering the field, and the number of graduate faculty. This has helped us immensely when talking with our legislators on Capitol Hill during Hill Day and throughout the year. We are able to present accurate data that is not necessarily being collected elsewhere. We are also able to connect with them about the number of students this affects in their districts. In the past three years legislation has passed in our state that, for the first time, has included school psychologists as mental health providers and begun to review how our time is spent. Not only does this serve as the beginning step to lowering ratios, incentivizing working within our state, and state sponsored student loan forgiveness programs, but it also supports the NASP Practice Model by identifying school psychologist as a role group with a broad range of competencies that can be utilized to meet the needs of youth, families, and schools.

In addition there has also been work to find candidates, alternate pathways, and funding sources for graduate programming that would increase the number of school psychologist our state is able to train. School psychologists in Kentucky have also collaborated with other role groups with similar interests such as school counselors and school social workers to advocate for socially just practices that protect the right of every student to receive high-quality educational access, opportunities, and experiences. We have asked our KAPS members to take action and provided them with links and form letters to do so as well. As President, I have tried hard to make sure that our organization is represented in all advocacy efforts related to student safety (physical and mental), which has been a difficult task in our divisive political climate. NASP’s legislative updates have been critical to these efforts. I hope to have the opportunity to continue to assist our state in its efforts to meet its goals, which mirror the work that NASP is leading.