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

I have a long history of School Psychology advocacy work. I believe my experiences working at the local, state, and national level over the past 25 years make me a strong candidate for Maryland Delegate.

My advocacy work began with the Montgomery County School Psychologists’ Association (MCSPA). I served as MCSPA President and Secretary; worked on labor-management collaboration committees; and worked on developing best practices documents for identifying intellectual and emotional disabilities. I worked with the Maryland School Psychologists’ Association (MSPA) Legislative Committee and collaborated on drafting responses to Maryland General Assembly legislation. I served as Parliamentarian and President of MSPA, and helped facilitate the development of our Core Values. I am currently MSPA Nominations chairperson and an Information Management committee member.

For the past five years, I have been a member of the NASP Leadership Development Committee (LDC). I work with school psychologists across the country on how to engage in both formal and informal leadership roles in their schools and associations. The most recent work of the LDC has been to develop a Leadership Institute focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

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?

The most pressing issue in Maryland is school psychologist shortages. There are several factors that influence shortages in Maryland. The original influx of school psychologists came following the 1975 passage of Public Law 94-142. As those psychologists have retired, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have had difficulty replacing their personnel because there are not enough school psychologists entering the field to take the place of those who are retiring.

Maryland has three NASP-approved school psychology programs. The cohorts are small so that faculty can provide graduate students with the necessary instruction and supervision to develop competencies. According to the NASP shortages dashboard, there were only 13 graduates from all three Maryland school psychology programs in 2021-2022. This further hinders LEAs’ ability to hire enough school psychologists to meet the employment needs. As the number of openings have increased, school psychologists have reevaluated where they choose to work and have chosen to shift work locations to improve their work-life balance. This leads to a final factor influencing shortages: burnout. Whether the result of personal or vicarious trauma associated from the COVID-19 pandemic, or other factors, burnout is impacting the profession and will need to be included as we address school psychologist shortages.
The NASP Delegate will need to collaborate with MSPA to gather information on all of the factors that are influencing shortages in Maryland - the ones I have outlined and the ones I may have missed. We will need to work together to promote NASP resources, such as the Exposure Project, to advocate for high school and undergraduate students to become school psychologists. I would encourage collaborating with other stakeholders, including the school psychology specialist at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), LEAs, and our school psychology program partners, so we can use the gathered data to develop Maryland-specific plans for addressing these factors and increase the number of school psychologists hired and retained in Maryland.