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State Delegate Candidate: Utah  
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?

Utah has made great strides in recent years to address school psychology shortages. The UASP Legislative Committee has collaborated with legislators to pass a bill expanding the Grow Your Own program to school psychologists - facilitating growth and training opportunities for local aspiring school psychologists - which I testified on behalf of to the Utah Senate Education Committee. Legislative advocacy plays an important role in raising awareness of our profession, establishing adequate funding, and growth/continuation of training programs to address the shortage issue. To that end, I recognize the importance of strength in numbers with our advocacy work. As Public Relations Committee Chair, I have worked to push out advocacy opportunities and tips to our social media channels. I also recently arranged professional development around legislative advocacy to our 50 district school psychologists in an effort to broaden our advocacy efforts. Locally, I have presented the NASP Exposure Project to over 200 high school and university students in an effort to build awareness of the field of school psychology, which has been a key goal of our Public Relations Committee. Shortages and particularly funding of graduate training programs continue to be pressing challenges for Utah and remain priorities for our legislative committee.

Working to address our shortages issue and reduce our ratio of students to practitioners will have the added benefit of enabling our school psychologists to provide more comprehensive services in accordance with the NASP Practice Model. We have districts in Utah that have been able to employ one school psychologist per site and have enjoyed success with being able to provide this range of services; featuring direct services through comprehensive mental health supports for students, as well as systems level services through building support teams and parent education programs. I have positive working relationships with several school psychologists who work in such settings and look forward to collaborating and learning from their models.

Utah has also engaged in important work with respect to social justice. In recent years, UASP has formed an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee – arranging book studies and professional development around the topics of equity and racism. Thus, facilitating the process of critical dialogue and reflection around our roles as practitioners working toward implementation of equitable access to education. This year, the committee is working toward establishing affinity groups for Utah practitioners of color, LGBTQ practitioners, and other specialized populations. UASP has also enjoyed a partnership with Utah Educators for Pride, through which I facilitated UASP’s participation in the Salt Lake Pride Parade this past summer as a gesture of awareness and support of our local LGBTQ community. The work of social justice is in a constant state of evolution in terms of education, critical reflection, and acknowledging mistakes and implicit biases. Therefore, I see this as a continuing focal issue for UASP and look forward to seeing this important work of our EDI committee continue, as well as learning from the work being done by similar committees in other state associations.