



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
School Psychologists

4340 East West Highway, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814

PHONE: 301-657-0270

FAX: 301-657-0275

September, 2016

Dr. Jill Stein
Jill Stein for President
PO Box 260197
Madison, WI 53726

Dear Dr. Stein:

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is pleased to present the attached education policy recommendations, *Ready to Learn, Empowered to Teach: Guiding Principles for Effective Schools and Successful Students*, for inclusion in the national conversation over how best to help all of America's children achieve their fullest potential. Your leadership on education is critical to the future of our children and our country.

NASP represents over 25,000 school psychologists who work with students, educators, and families to support the academic achievement, positive behavior, and mental wellness of all students, especially those who struggle with barriers to learning. *Ready to Learn, Empowered to Teach* outlines six guiding principles necessary to ensure excellence in education by lowering barriers to learning and effective teaching. Specifically, *Ready to Learn, Empowered to Teach* calls for:

1. Combining high expectations for all students with high-quality instruction across rigorous and comprehensive curricula
2. Creating positive school climates to ensure safe and supportive learning environments for all students
3. Providing access to comprehensive school-based mental and behavioral health professionals
4. Increasing family and community engagement to support students' success
5. Creating systems that support the recruitment and retention of properly trained and prepared professionals
6. Creating accountability systems that reflect a comprehensive picture of all students' and schools' performance, inform instruction, and guide school improvement efforts.

These principles reflect the reality that, in order for *all* students to thrive, schools must effectively address their learning, behavioral, social-emotional, and mental health needs. Comprehensive learning and specialized instructional support services provided by school psychologists and other professionals enable teachers, administrators, and parents to better ensure that students are ready and able to learn.

School psychologists and other specialized instructional support personnel play an important role in ensuring all children and youth attend school with a safe and supportive learning environment. These professionals also are integral to supporting students' mental and behavioral health, a critical component to their well-being and academic achievement. We hope that as you further refine your mental health and education policy recommendations you will emphasize the critical role of schools and access to school-employed mental health professionals. Enclosed are two additional documents that contain further details (*School Psychologists: Qualified Health Professionals Providing Child and Adolescent Mental and Behavioral Health Services; Mental and Behavioral Health Services for Children and Adolescents.*)

NASP is committed to working with policymakers, educators, parents, and others concerned with helping children achieve their best. We have long led or collaborated on efforts related to special education, school-based mental and behavioral health services, improved home-school collaboration, effective discipline and violence prevention, and school crisis response. We are actively involved in current efforts to create trauma informed schools and support the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

We look forward to supporting your efforts and those of our nation's leaders to craft education policies that will truly achieve excellence in education and a positive future for all of America's children. We also hope to be of help in this effort, so please feel free to contact Kelly Vaillancourt Strobach, NASP Director of Government Relations (kvaillancourt@naspweb.org) / (301) 657-0270 with any questions and comments.

Sincerely,



Melissa L. Reeves, PhD, NCSP
President



Susan Gorin, CAE
Executive Director

Att.