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Narrative 2

NASP leaders have adopted five 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?

Alabama has experienced some positive movement with regards to the strategic pillars including advocating for the expanded role, increasing awareness of the NASP Practice Model, and developing leadership skills of practitioners. Alabama currently has one NASP-approved program for school psychology and at least three school psychometry programs. The last couple of years have seen a few school systems throughout the state begin to focus on the expanded roles of school psychologists including that of mental and behavioral health providers. The Alabama Association of School Psychologists recently added the NASP Practice Model to their website; however, informing those that supervise and work with school psychologists about the depth and breadth of the Practice Model is still needed. The last few years have also witnessed increasing interest in the state organization, longstanding leadership training new leaders, and targeted efforts to advocate for the profession and organization. The state association recently added a Government and Public Relations position to the board and several practitioners have expressed interest in becoming part of a committee to advocate on behalf of the profession.

Though we have experienced successes, areas of focus can include addressing shortages, addressing diversity in the workforce, educating those that work with school psychologists about the NASP Practice Model, collaborating with universities, and being explicit in our advocacy for all children. Alabama, like other states, is seeing shortages and vacancies – in school psychology and school psychometry. Therefore, participation in the NASP task force or developing an independent plan to address shortages would be beneficial as the current workforce heads into retirement. In addition, collaborating with universities to make training more accessible to those already working in the schools (with families and responsibilities) can help to alleviate the shortages. Diversity amongst the workforce and leadership is an area of needed improvement and the interest noted above, as well as, leadership opportunities may be of assistance. The practice of school psychology is outnumbered by school psychometry in Alabama; therefore, systems throughout the state would benefit from educating stakeholders (e.g., superintendents, school boards, principals, directors or coordinators of special education) about the NASP Practice Model and the scope of training. Finally, Alabama and the students within our school systems would benefit from explicit conversations advocating for ALL children and their rights throughout school communities.