If elected NASP secretary, how would you support NASP’s strategic priorities?

The strategic priorities for NASP are outlined in the NASP Strategic Plan and were adopted during the Leadership Assembly on September 16, 2017. As a member of that assembly, I feel the strategic priorities provide a timely focus for the work of the association. If elected NASP secretary, I would support NASP’s strategic priorities by calling on the resources that I have: My professional experience and expertise, my community, and my time.

If elected NASP secretary, I will draw on my professional experience and expertise to support and further the goals of the association. As a practitioner with over 30 years in the field, I have had the opportunity to develop expertise as a school leader, a mental health service provider, and an advocate for social justice. I earned my leadership certificate early in my career and spent 10 years as the associate director of a program serving severely emotionally/behaviorally disturbed youth. In this role, I supervised therapeutic treatment teams and advocated for youth marginalized due to the intersectionality of mental health challenges and low SES. Many of my students lived in rural communities with few, if any, mental health resources. My work with this population prompted me to return to school and obtain my doctorate in school psychology. Subsequently, I became a licensed psychologist and trainer in the school psychology program at Georgia State University, using my private practice and school experience to inform my teaching. I teach courses on child and adolescent psychopathology, multicultural issues in counseling and psychological services, and administration and supervision of pupil personnel services. In all of the work that I do at the local, state, national, and international level, I strive to promote the recognition of school psychologists as school leaders, mental health providers, and advocates for marginalized youth.

While I am grateful for these professional experiences, and the expertise that I have developed in my chosen field, I am aware that no single individual can serve every need. Consequently, I will enjoy linking the formidable professional community that I enjoy with the efforts of the association. I am fortunate to have worked with an amazing array of individuals over the years, all strong and mighty in their own way. Some I met as a school-based practitioner, some as a state association leader. Some I have gotten to know through my work with NASP and the International School Psychology Association (ISPA), and some are my colleagues – my 'work family,' those who have walked alongside me over the years. In addition, many of the school psychologists that influence me the most are the very students that I had the privilege to teach, and follow now as they chart their own professional paths. These students were trained in the NASP Practice Model and work daily to change the face of school psychology in districts they serve. This large community of school psychologists has a combined wealth of knowledge and expertise that is impressive. I would work to motivate and channel this community of support in the direction of NASP’s strategic priorities. It is my strong belief that by incorporating all voices, and working together, we can achieve our shared vision as outlined in the strategic priorities of the association.

Finally, if elected NASP secretary, I will dedicate my time to the association in order to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the position as prescribed in the bylaws. I anticipate that I will have to make tough choices about where to focus my energy, as I currently serve on numerous committees at the state and national level. At the state level, I serve on the GASP board as well as the board of the Student Support Team Association for Georgia Educators (SSTAGE). I am also on the Dyslexia Task Force of the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and the DOE of Georgia. While I thoroughly enjoy this work, my
efforts will need to be redirected toward national priorities if I am elected to this position. The challenges that we face with the shortage of school psychologists, and the related challenge of practicing in accordance with the NASP Practice Model, will require innovative ideas for training and practice. I would advocate for respecialization options that would credit qualified candidates with the experience they already hold, both in educational and clinical settings, allowing them expedited paths into the field under the condition of rigorous teaching and supervision. I feel that time dedicated to creating innovative solutions to the shortage crisis, as well as the other strategic priorities, will be time well spent.