President’s Pen

It’s a bird! It’s a plane! It’s super school psychologist! Every time I turn around I realize that there is something else I need to know or something I need to know better. I am aware. I am so aware that I sometimes become paralyzed when I think about it. As you all know, the expectations for doing a competent job, not even necessarily an exemplary job, is high in our profession. Think about it. We are supposed to be mental health experts, specialists in psychometrics and assessments, negotiators, fabulous communicators (written and oral), in addition to being insightful, problem-solving, and knowledgeable of the law. We need to know interventions, preventions, issues related to diversity, school-wide practices to promote learning, and the intricacies of family-school collaboration services. At the foundation of this is supposed to be our understanding of legal, ethical, and professional practice.

For those of you who have not seen the National Association of School Psychologists Principles for Professional Ethics (2010) in a while, it is a rather long document. Pages one through three describe the history of ethics in our profession and define what professional ethics are. Pages three through fourteen are the principles and standards that have been developed over time. So, by my math, that is eleven pages of guidelines for what our behavior and practice should look like in the field. That is a lot of rules and expectations. Now many of them are common sense, but some are more nebulous. They make me a little nervous – more because I cannot remember them all. So I comfort myself by thinking that all I can really do as a professional is to make sure I go back and look over the standards from time to time to remind myself of the details. The other thing I can do is to seek out professional development that will help me stay current with legal decisions and changes to our profession. With that in mind, I want to thank our Program Committee for having the Spring Conference on Current Legal and Ethical Issues Facing School Psychologists. Our speakers, Perry Zirkel and Barbara Bole Williams, spoke to making ethical decisions and what “lore vs. law” means. Dave Holdefer, Amy Jagoda, and Jeb Fleagle, who are co-chairs of Program Committee, deserve so much credit for bringing us such a timely topic.

As this is my last President’s Pen, I want to again thank the two recipients of the President’s Award, Mary Cashdollar and Matt Lawser. Mary has served as Membership chair for more years than I can count. She is always thoughtful in her comments and wise in her advice. As she is retiring this year, all I can say is that she will be missed by everyone. Matt Lawser, who is Chair of the Professional Standards Committee, took on the awesome task with his committee of putting together the Leadership Conference held on April 25th in Columbia, Maryland.

I am not sure I can put into words how much I appreciate all the work the executive board members have done this year. Our state organization is considered to be one of the best in the country. That does not happen by accident. We are a great state organization because of the strong dedication of our school psychology membership, student members,
2012-2013 MSPA
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Bill Strein
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President’s Pen
Continued from Front Cover

and associate members. We are a great state organization because of our relationship with our university training programs who give us wonderfully trained professionals. We are a great state organization because of all the volunteers who give their time to the monthly meetings, the extra meetings, and the other extra meetings! As Sharon O’Donnell transitions to being the President of MSPA, I can only wish her the support and help that I have been privileged to have. It’s been an honor to serve.

Laura Shriver

MINORITY SCHOLARSHIPS

MSPA’s Multicultural Affairs Committee is committed to increasing the number of minority school psychologists in the state of Maryland. Towards this end the committee has developed a scholarship. The scholarship provides $3,000 ($1,500 a semester) a year for a two-year period. We are now seeking a new minority scholarship recipient. A minority is defined as any recognized racial or ethnic minority in the United States. Applications for this scholarship can be downloaded on the MSPA’s webpage, www.mspaonline.org: Go to the Minority Scholarships link on the left side of the home page and click “Download the minority scholarship application.” Deadlines for the scholarship are September 15th and January 15th. For additional information please contact Robin M. Satchell at rsatchell@verizon.net.

Get Involved in MSPA!

Contact one of the Committee Chairs listed on Page 2 of the Protocol and let them know that you would like to work on his/her committee. Students welcome.

ARTICLES WELCOME!

Are you doing something unique in your county that you would like to tell others about? Did you read a recently published professional book that you would like to review? Submit PROTOCOL articles or ideas to: protocol@mspaonline.org
It has been a great pleasure to serve as your Maryland NASP Delegate for the first year of my three-year term. I decided at the start of my term that I would not only like to be the link between Maryland NASP members and NASP, but I also wanted to participate in active work that would secure the link between MSPA and NASP. I feel that unless we are strong advocates for our profession, mental health, education, students and their families at the local, state, and national level, we are missing a crucial opportunity to make a difference. When there is a solid link among NASP, MSPA, and local associations, we are at our strongest.

In July 2012, I attended my first Delegate Assembly as Maryland’s NASP Delegate. If I had not already been part of a committee with NASP and participated in Delegate Assembly before, I could have been very lost. Luckily this was not the case. After finishing up with Delegate Assembly, where the budget was approved, the next task was to participate in the Fall MSPA Conference. It was great seeing many of you there at that very successful conference. Next up was the NASP Northeast Regional meeting in November, where many excellent topics were discussed over a weekend trip to Maine. Advocacy, the NASP Practice Model, strategic planning and several other important priorities were covered. I was accompanied by Matt Lawser, MSPA Professional Standards Chairperson; Sharon O’Donnell, MSPA President-elect; and Laura Shriver, MSPA President. During the meeting, the group of us discussed several initiatives that were ongoing for MSPA and future endeavors that we wanted to pursue. As usual, after all of the states shared we learned that MSPA is on the cutting edge in our efforts as a state organization. We were even presented the “Bright Idea” award from the Massachusetts School Psychologists’ Association for lending many exciting ideas to their organization. Overall, the Northeast Regional meeting was time well-spent for leaders of MSPA and NASP.

The month after the regional meeting came the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Shortly after the tragedy, NASP leaders stood together to support the Connecticut community and the school psychologists who are leaders there. It is on the Connecticut community presented an opportunity to educate our country’s leaders on a variety of topics, such as mental health, crisis response, school safety, etc. Therefore, NASP leaders updated documents and not only posted those documents on the websites, but also distributed those documents to other organizations and national leaders. In addition, NASP Delegates were asked to be involved in the distribution of those documents. As NASP Delegate, I communicated with the Maryland General Assembly members, the Maryland Board of Education, and the Maryland State Department of Education. The NASP School Safety Document entitled, “Tips for School Administrators for Reinforcing School Safety” was sent to those groups and was a well-received resource. The distribution of this document prompted further communication with these groups. I worked in conjunction with the MSPA Legislative Committee, led by Courtnay Oatts and Shira Reicher, to provide responses to these groups. In one instance there was a sit-down meeting to discuss the topic of school safety and our position and recommendations. Courtnay Oatts and Shira Reicher, along with the MSPA Legislative Committee members, worked very hard this legislative session to make sure that school psychology was well-represented on many issues, including school safety. It has been a pleasure to be a member of the MSPA Legislative Committee! For a full listing of the NASP Resources on school safety, bullying, mental health, crisis, etc., check out the following link: http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/schoolsafety.aspx. NASP has partnered with several organizations to release a new ‘Framework for Safe and Successful Schools at www.nasponline.org/resources/framework-safe-and-successful-schools.aspx. This joint statement provides suggestions for improving school safety and increasing access to mental health professionals. The month after the regional meeting was time well-spent for leaders of MSPA and NASP.

The NASP 2014 Convention Planning Committee recently began discussing potential “hot topics” for workshops to be included in the 2014 Annual Convention, particularly any that are of interest in Washington, D.C. and the surrounding area. The committee is specifically interested in finding out from local school psychologists what the “hot topic” issues in this area are. For example, topics could include implications of the DSM-V, threat assessment, and best practices in elementary literacy.

What issues pertinent to local school psychologists would you be interested in seeing covered in 2014 Convention workshops? Please email your ideas to naspdelegate@mspaonline.org. Thank you!

**NASP 2014 Conference Workshop “Hot Topics”**

The NASP 2014 Convention Planning Committee recently began discussing potential “hot topics” for workshops to be included in the 2014 Annual Convention, particularly any that are of interest in Washington, D.C. and the surrounding area. The committee is specifically interested in finding out from local school psychologists what the “hot topic” issues in this area are. For example, topics could include implications of the DSM-V, threat assessment, and best practices in elementary literacy.

What issues pertinent to local school psychologists would you be interested in seeing covered in 2014 Convention workshops? Please email your ideas to naspdelegate@mspaonline.org. Thank you!

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health supports for children and youth.

In February of 2013, I went to the NASP Convention in Seattle. At the convention I attended several leadership meetings, including the Assistance to States meeting, along with the Delegate Assembly. It was good seeing how many Maryland NASP members attended the convention. MSPA had a great networking event that allowed Maryland members and NASP leaders to get together to discuss various professional topics.

I also participated on the Assistance to Locals Committee, Public Affairs Committee, and Professional Standards Committee as the NASP Delegate. One of the initiatives that I spent a lot of time on both last year as President of MSPA and this year as Delegate was the MSPA Leadership Conference that was held on April 25, 2013, the day before the MSPA Spring Conference. The purpose of this Leadership Conference was to bring educational stakeholders together to discuss the NASP Practice Model. The Professional Standards Committee, led by Matt Lawser, not only wanted to tell leaders about the model, but we also wanted their feedback about the model. We were hoping that those stakeholders – Superintendents, School-based Administrators, Directors of Special Education and Student Services, Representatives from various parent groups, the MSEA Vice-President, Representatives from the counselor, nurses, and PPW associations, School Psychology Representatives from across the state, politicians and others, as well as leaders from MSPA and NASP – would be able to discuss the model and make suggestions for how we can support school psychologists in their attempt to offer a full range of services within the confines of caseload, economic issues, etc. In our efforts to do this, we asked local school psychologists to do poster presentations as part of the conference. The stakeholders were able to see the NASP Practice Model in action. It was amazing to see just what school psychologists are doing across this great state of Maryland. I think that this type of activity was just what the attendees needed to enlighten them about school psychology practices. Hats off to Matt Lawser and the Professional Standards Committee, as the conference was a huge success! We also want to thank Stacy Skalski from NASP for doing a presentation about the NASP Practice Model to kick off the conference.

The following day, after the leadership conference, I set up a table at the MSPA Spring Conference. I talked with many MSPA and NASP members. One of the focuses I had at the table was not only to talk about the many benefits of NASP membership, but to also talk about the NASP Convention coming up next year in the District of Columbia. The NASP 2014 Convention Planning Committee is searching for “hot topics” for workshops. Since the convention will be so close to Maryland they are asking us to provide input on these hot topics. For example, topics could include implications of the DSM-V, threat assessment, best practices in elementary literacy, etc. What issues pertinent to local school psychologists would you be interested in seeing covered in 2014 Convention workshops? Please send an email to Stephanie Livesay, NASP Delegate, at the following email: selives@hotmail.com or respond to my upcoming NASP Delegate message. I hope the monthly NASP Delegate messages are keeping you up to speed on the happenings in NASP. This first year as your NASP Delegate has been a wonderful experience and I look forward to interacting with all of you at upcoming NASP and MSPA events!!!

MSPA 2013 Election Results

President- Elect
David Holdefer

Treasurer - Elect
Cristina DeForge

Secretary
Bradley Petry

Parliamentarian
Pamela McCoy

Constitutional Amendment: Approved

Congratulations to our elected officials!
Outstanding Practice Nominees

Heather Gallagher

Heather Gallagher is a school psychologist working in a high school setting in Anne Arundel County Public Schools. She is described by colleagues as a true leader and an innovative, dedicated, and exemplary school psychologist. Heather is regarded for her knowledge and passion about suicide prevention and suicide awareness within the nation, state, and local level at her high school and within the Anne Arundel County system.

Heidi Trasatti

Heidi provides services to an alternative high school and an elementary school in Baltimore City. Heidi is an active member of the Baltimore City Association of School Psychologists. Additionally, Heidi has developed a curriculum for a program called Project Mickey, which teaches students about safety around dogs and the needs of pets.

Abby Wagner (Winner)

Abby Wagner is a school psychologist with Cecil County Public Schools. She is described as a professional willing to go above and beyond, a collaborative worker, enthusiastic, approachable, and insightful school psychologist. Abby is passionate about the provision of mental health services to increase school safety. She is an active member of her local association and the MSPA Family Liaison subcommittee, recently organizing the “Book and Bear” campaign to provide comfort to children in local hospitals.

Ann-Marie Kasuda

Mrs. Ann-Marie Kasuda is a school psychologist in Howard County. Some of her admired roles at her middle school include case manager, facilitator for the PBIS committee, and facilitator for the Instructional Intervention Team and Classroom Focused Improvement Process. She also supports her colleagues by serving as a member of the countywide crisis team and a mentor to new school psychologists, as well as intern and practicum students.

Matthew Kamins

Mr. Matt Kamins is school psychologist in Montgomery County. He previously served as the supervisor of psychological services and bilingual assessment team and has facilitated, coordinated, developed, and written many grants, initiatives, and handbooks. In addition, Matt has served and continues to serve in many leadership positions and on many of the committees in Montgomery County. He has received many awards and has presented at local, state, and national conferences.

Scott Showalter

Mr. Scott Showalter is school psychologist in Prince George’s County. He shares expertise in positive behavior supports, crisis response, and suicide prevention. In addition, Mr. Showalter created and revised the Prince George’s County crisis reference guide and crisis response administrative procedures. Scott is also the current Suicide Prevention Liaison between Prince George’s County and the Maryland State Department of Education.

Outstanding Educator Nominees

Louise DeJesu (Winner)

This year’s winner is Mrs. Louise DeJesu, the principal of Hilltop Elementary School in Anne Arundel County. Ms. DeJesu successfully uses interventions to support student success such as PBIS, Saturday School, and after-school programs. In addition, she advocated for Anne Arundel County to open its first and only Judy Center to serve preschool children. Ms. DeJesu actively works with community partners to secure donations for families in need. Throughout her nomination packet, her support of her school psychologist, Robin Satchell, was clear. She ensures that Ms. Satchell has needed resources and actively advocates for school psychological services and professional development opportunities.

Robert Mitchell

Mr. Robert Mitchell, principal at Ebb Valley Elementary School in Carroll County, was nominated for the 2013 MSPA Outstanding Educator Award. Mr. Mitchell works to meet the needs of students at his school by creating supports, classrooms, and programs so that students can be served within their home school. Mr. Mitchell attends the weekly Student Services Team (SST) meetings and helped to create and implement the Social Understanding and Relationship Fundamentals (SURF) program with the school psychologist at his school.
Abby Wagner, Outstanding Practice Award Winner 2013

Abby has been a Nationally Certified School Psychologist in Maryland for seven years. She serves Gilpin Manor Elementary School, Elkton Middle School, and Elkton High School in Cecil County. She has almost completed her Administration I Certification. Her interests include Selective Mutism; School Safety and Threat/Risk Assessment; and Family, School, and Community Partnerships. This year she joined the Family Liaison committee of MSPA and helped create “The Book and Bear Campaign” to coordinate donated books, stuffed animals, and fleece blankets for children who are chronically ill or hospitalized. She continually advocates for the profession and enjoys speaking to psychology students in her high school about the career. She has been married to her husband Brandon, a Tech. Sergeant for the Maryland Air National Guard, for seven years. They have a four year-old son and a nearly two year-old daughter.
Outstanding Practice Award Winner 2013

Abby Wagner’s Acceptance Speech

I feel so honored to accept this award. I am humbled and truly thankful.

When Gillian [Simon] approached me about this, my first response was surprise, and then, “Me?” I don’t know that I even come close to the quality of a school psychologist who wins an award like this. It is hard to think of oneself as “outstanding” when you feel you have so much more to accomplish. I have a vision I’d like to see through, for more comprehensive services for kids. I want to tap into more of the domains of the NASP Practice Model. I know we aren’t always able to do the things we WANT to do.

My response reminded me of something my friend told me about yesterday, and on my way home I heard about it again on the radio. It was a project by Dove (the soap, not the chocolate) called “Dove Real Beauty Sketches.” A woman met with a sketch artist who couldn’t see her. She had to describe her face while he drew the sketch. Next, the woman spoke with a stranger. Then they were separated. After that they had the stranger describe the woman to the sketch artist. He drew the stranger’s description of the woman. When the two sketches were compared, they found that the woman had described herself in a much less favorable way than the stranger had seen her. The woman overemphasized her flaws, and failed to recognize her strengths. When she realized that she had sold herself short, the audience saw her reaction. Her face fell. This really moved me. “Dove Real Beauty Sketches” is on YouTube. You really should watch it.

When I thought about what outstanding might look like, I kept coming back to the NASP theme for this year’s School Psychology Awareness Week: “Know Your Own Strengths: Discover them. Share them. Celebrate them.” Even if we don’t attain the criteria of what Outstanding looks like from our own perspectives, there are so many amazing and talented individuals…just in this room. Look around. You might be one of two. You might be one of 8, or 37, or of 140. You are strong and make an impact in children’s lives, in a family, in your district, in your buildings (even if you have many of them to cover.)

When we identify our strengths and own them, we are outstanding. Just like the women in the Dove Beauty Sketches, it is ok to own your strengths. Even if you feel you have more to accomplish. Share them with each other, and share them with people who don’t know what we do or who we are.

First, I’d like to thank Gillian Simon, and the other outstanding and talented school psychologists of Cecil County. We are a strong and cohesive group, and I for one am personally very proud of all of the strengths that we have collectively and as individuals. You are amazing.

I’d like to thank the members of MSPA. It’s not often that an Executive Board of an association allows all members to participate in monthly business. I attended a few meetings and was welcomed and encouraged to watch and learn. “Listen and you’ll find your niche.” At first I thought, “How could I possibly join a committee, I live more than an hour from Central Maryland?” But in the meantime my ears perked up when I heard my interests being discussed. “Risk and Threat Assessment!” “Anti-Bullying Campaign!” I contributed and I brought contributions BACK.

I found a committee that aligned with my background and interests: The Family Liaison Committee. It is absolutely possible to contribute to MSPA even if you live far away. The Book and Bear Campaign didn’t feel like extra work. I became passionate about it. I discovered that strength, shared it, and celebrated it. Thank you Claudia Bowen for your hard work and inspiration.

Thank you to my supervisor, Director of Special Education, Sally Farr. She has helped me to grow professionally by allowing me to attend MSPA functions. It is my hope that school psychologists and supervisors continue to acknowledge the value in participating in this association, which has a respected reputation even on a national level. Those conversations lead to school psychologists bringing strength back to the group, and ultimately, directly back to students.

To Joan Swanson, my PPW and friend. We’ve enjoyed taking classes together, home visits, laughter, and some really, really memorable meetings. You are my partner in helping to strengthen our community and neighborhood. You are truly one of my best confidants and I enjoy working with you every day.

To Gilpin Manor Elementary, Elkton Middle, and Elkton High School staff members: You are my CCPS family. There are simply so many of you to name but there is something special about these schools and I am proud to be a member of each one. A special thanks to Paula Webster and Stuart Hutchinson and the many, many other talented administrators, teachers, counselors, building coordinators and valued members of my schools.

To my students, no matter if they are in Pre-K or transitioning from a community living program, and to their families who have touched my life and reminded me why I love what I do, and do what I love.

To my husband, Brandon. You have supported me no matter how much time you’ve taken off work so I can take classes, attend evening meetings, or stayed home with sick kids. You are an amazing father and a supportive husband. And, you are a very talented fleece blanket maker.

Thank you Mom, Dad, and my sisters Karen and Kathy. You are my long distance cheering squad.

To my two sweet little ducklings, Joey and Leah: You inspire me to practice what I preach. When you have a tantrum (especially when we’re in public in front of my families or staff members!) I attempt a mini-FBA and a swift Behavior Management Plan. You help me sharpen up my executive functioning skills by making sure you are wearing the correct “Days of the Week” socks…and continued on page 9
handling Crisis Management for when you recognize that I substituted a Friday sock on a Wednesday. This week, Leah discovered how to escape her crib like a ninja. So thank you for providing opportunities to find alternative problem-solving strategies for kids (and parents!). And when I can’t figure it out, I go to my colleagues, to collaborate, because that’s what we do. Most importantly, you both help me remember that every parent I work with needs to hear the positives along with the hard stuff, and that all interactions must be delivered with compassion and comfort because their babies are their world, just like you are mine.

Thank you; thank you all so much for this amazing honor.
Part One: Lore v. Law

Internship year is the year in our graduate education where we can be dependent on our supervisor for the appropriate guidance and to learn as much as we can from those around us. When learning that the MSPA Spring Conference would be about current legal and ethical issues facing school psychologists, I thought it would be the perfect opportunity to increase my knowledge before being out on my own.

The morning session focused on Lore v. Law for School Psychologists. Dr. Perry Zirkel enlightened us with several legal issues that serve as a major concern for school psychologists, including test protocols, advocacy, IDEA evaluations, Response to Intervention, and Section 504. First he began by explaining the difference between lore and law. Lore referred to prevailing perceptions in contrast to the law, which includes legislations, regulations, and court decisions. One issue that Dr. Zirkel discussed was the differences between 504 and IDEA. I was very interested to hear his perspective because often many parents and teachers are confused about the requirements of each and/or what the student is entitled to. Often you hear that in order to qualify for a 504, an adverse effect on educational performance is needed, but the law states otherwise. An adverse effect on educational performance is only required under IDEA. As Dr. Zirkel began to provide specific examples, I immediately think about ADHD and how many parents demand for an IEP even if the child is functioning well without medication and is learning above grade level. It is important to educate parents on the fact that both IDEA and 504 guarantee a free and appropriate education and the main difference is that a 504 provides accommodations within the general classroom and IDEA is more specific for individual students with specific educational goals and instruction.

Dr. Zirkel clarified several misconceptions about several important legal issues. As an intern, I felt like I had heard all there was to know about various legal issues, but Dr. Zirkel shed new light on how these issues can impact school psychologists. His expertise increased my knowledge and confidence in how to explain certain legal issues to parents and teachers.

Part Two: Ethical Decision Making for School Psychologists

The afternoon session centered around ethical decision making for school psychologists. Dr. Barbara Bole Williams began by introducing us to applied professional ethics and professional guidelines for school psychologists, which is known as the NASP Principles for Professional Ethics. Ethical decision making is critical to protecting the rights of students and families. It helps school psychologists make informed decisions when problems arise. As an intern it is important to not only know and understand ethical principles, but also how to apply them daily on the job.

The 2010 Code of Ethics was reorganized into four broad ethical themes: 1) respecting the dignity and rights of all persons, 2) professional competence and responsibility, 3) honesty and integrity in professional relationships, and 4) responsibility to schools, families, communities, the profession, and society. Under each ethical theme, several principles are highlighted. Dr. Williams explained that although these principles are in place, it is important to use a decision-making model because it aids in solving problems if conflicts arise. Using a decision-making model can assist school psychologists in making reasonable decisions, as well as in using a proactive approach. At the end of the session, we practiced problem solving with scenarios in small groups applying the decision making model:

1) Describe the situation.
2) Define the potential ethical-legal issues. Review guidelines. Consult others as needed.
3) Evaluate the rights, responsibilities, and welfare of all affected parties.
4) Consider alternative actions and the consequences of making each decision.
5) Make the decision, take responsibility for it, and measure outcomes.

During this activity, many shared their experiences and challenges that they have faced when making ethical decisions.
Dr. Williams's presentation was very relevant and it taught me that despite negative encounters with teachers or families, it is important to engage in conduct that is respectful at all times. It is our duty to advocate for the needs of all children. In order to achieve excellence, we must work to maintain ethical competence and be consistent when following the ethical principles.

Student poster presentations at MSPA Spring Conference
MSPA SUMMER INSTITUTE 2013

Core Skills and Techniques of Brief Solution-Focused Counseling and Creative Interventions for Persistent Problems

*John J. Murphy, Ph.D.*

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
June 25, 26, and 27, 2013

Atlantic Sands Hotel & Conference Center
Oceanfront at 101 N. Boardwalk, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware
www.atlanticsandshotel.com
Email: atsands@dmv.com

MSPA Members Only
Registration Deadline: May 31, 2013
As noted by President Laura Shriver in her introduction at the Columbia Sheraton held on April 25, 2013, Maryland is the first state in the country to host the kind of meeting termed the “MSPA Leadership Conference.” Leaders and stakeholders in education from around the state gathered by invitation for an afternoon for one reason: to learn more about what school psychologists can do and how we can serve our schools and school systems more effectively by adopting our national practice model at a state and local level.

The purpose

Why did MSPA put this conference together? Two years ago, under the presidency of Stephanie Livesay, our Professional Standards committee – more specifically, Matt Lawser, who was and still is the committee chairperson – was charged with reviewing the practice model for school psychology rolled out by NASP the previous year. The goal, at first, was to have MSPA adopt the practice model and incorporate it into our state standards for practice. Once that was done, it became apparent that this was information that needed to be shared. We already know what we can do. MSPA needed to share the information about the full range of services that we, school psychologists, can provide, and why they are valuable…and most likely, under-utilized. By creating the School Psychology Leadership Conference, MSPA was able to engage stakeholders in the process of promoting a broader role for school psychologists. It also provided an opportunity for gathering feedback from leaders in education about how to move the initiative forward. Finally, once we presented the practice model and the benefits it offered were embraced by the attendees, they could then advocate for the broader range of services promoted in the practice model.

Our invited guests

The Professional Standards committee achieved the goal of including representatives from a variety of groups who are critical to our role as school psychologists: in addition to those who supervise psychological services, attendees included school administrators, heads of student services, special education parent groups, and the Maryland State Department of Education. To clarify, the goal was not simply to inform and send folks on their way. We wanted their feedback as well.

We gathered about 50 of these educational leaders from around the state. Almost all Maryland counties were represented. Delegate Frank Turner from Howard County, familiar with MSPA legislative issues, welcomed the guests and set the tone for the importance of what was to be discussed.

The Practice Model

Maryland has the good fortune of being home to our national association, and MSPA has enjoyed a very good relationship with NASP for some years now. Stacy Skalski, NASP’s Director of Public Policy and a fantastic speaker, agreed to present the model to MSPA’s audience. Skalski defines her role at NASP as the person who helps align research, policy, and practice at the local, state, and federal levels. She helps states adopt the practice model with the long-term goal of reform within local systems. This conference is MSPA’s first step in that direction.

The NASP Practice Model is familiar to most of us by now. If it is not, or if you need to refresh your memory, see Figure 1. The reason, according to Skalski, that NASP created the model is to provide “consistency of practice” – because of the range of service school psychologists are able to provide, this can make the expectations of each provider “unpredictable.” Is a principal going to get

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**Figure 1**

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Continued on Page 14
The long-term objective for NASP is to have the Practice Model for school psychologists link directly to each state’s Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). That is, to make the Practice Model more than just the ideal method of practice, but the legislated model. Many states have created a legal definition of MTSS – also known as RTI. According to Skalski, various domains of Practice Model can DIRECTLY link to a state-adopted, defined MTSS. Although Maryland does not yet have a state definition of MTSS, more than 40 states have defined it, according to the National Center for Learning Disabilities (http://www.ncld.org/disability-advocacy/where-we-stand-policies/multi-tier-system-supports-response-intervention). Skalski referenced Kansas, Florida, and Colorado as being examples of states that have defined MTSS that reference the role of the school psychologist.

The future of school psychology lies within this structure. We come to our school systems as highly-trained specialists, many of us spending most of our time, as reported by Maryland school psychologists via NASP’s self-assessment tool, on legal and ethical compliance: that is, assessment. When we tie together the breadth of our training and practice with the policies of the state and our local districts, we effectively become part of a systemic change in education that benefits students, schools, and the community.

**The model in practice**

Now that the theory had been presented, it was time to show off to our guests how we are already putting the model into practice.
School psychologists from districts around the state presented an example of how they have put one of the seven functional domains (the “rooms of the house” and the “electricity”) into practice, with an additional stop covering the three “foundation” domains. Each domain was represented by one or two groups. Guests toured each of the domains and had an interactive demonstration of a program, intervention, data-collection method, or other model of how presenters have implemented a certain domain within their school environment.

Questions and feedback

One of the most important parts of the day was gathering feedback and questions from the conference’s attendees. They were asked questions in two rounds, the first of which related directly to the gallery walks:

- Which domain of the Practice Model impressed you the most?
- Which domains of the model do you see already in place in your school system?

The second round of questions related to the overall presentation of the NASP Practice Model.

- What are the potential benefits for schools adopting this model of practice for schools psychologists?
- What barriers exist to prevent systems from implementing the NASP Practice Model?
- What are some steps that school systems can take to overcome these barriers?
- What are the next steps you can take when you leave here today with the information you’ve learned about the Practice Model?
- How does today’s conference change your views about the delivery of school psychological services?
- How do school psychologists garner support from school systems and communities so that they are able to provide the full range of services demonstrated here today?

We will compile the answers to some of these questions for a follow-up article for our Fall 2013 issue of the PROTOCOL. The immediate feedback from attendees of the School Psychology Leadership Conference was overwhelmingly positive, and the Professional Standards Committee continues to hear of positive results. In the meantime, let us know what you think of this initiative by e-mailing professionalstandards@mspaonline.org.

SAVE THE DATE!

MSPA Spring Conference 2014

April 25, 2014

Pediatric School Psychology and Advances in Psychopharmacology

Presenters: Kathy L. Bradley-Klug, Ph.D. and George J. DuPaul, Ph.D.

More information to come in the Fall 2013 issue of PROTOCOL
School Psychology Leadership Conference

Stacy Skalski presents to conference attendees

Conference coordinators Stephanie Livesay and Matt Lawser

Gallery Walk
As master level students of Bowie State University's School Psychology Program, our experiences have been unique. The program has created a dynamic course sequence that has prepared us to enter into our school psychology internships armed with many resources and tools to be effective practitioners. One course in particular that has caused our cohort to open our minds, and to think more deeply is “Cultural Proficiency in School Psychology,” taught by Dr. Jennifer West. This course has forced us to use our metacognitive skills to reflect on our own personal cultural values, morals, and beliefs. Furthermore, the assignments from this course have allowed us to examine our own culture, how our culture may be different from the culture of students we may work with in schools, and how these differences can have a large impact on our practice in the schools.

Dr. West asked students in the course to complete many interesting assignments. Some of the major assignments in the course involved researching various educational scholars who have significantly impacted research on the education of culturally diverse students. Furthermore, we were required to immerse ourselves into a culture different from our own, and to write about these personal experiences. Some students in the class visited places of worship different from their own; some attended lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender events; some attended comedy clubs that are populated by cultures different from their own; some attended lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender events; and still others went to culturally unique restaurants. In addition, we were required to examine achievement and high-stakes testing data from a Maryland or Virginia county and analyze trends within the data. This assignment led us on a cultural journey through a problem that has affected American education since the 1960s.

This problem evolved as a major theme for our class—the complex chronic issue with the achievement gap among African American and Hispanic students and their same-aged peers from the majority culture. Over the last four decades, African American and Hispanic students have been scoring below their European-American peers on high-stakes testing in Maryland (i.e., High School and Maryland School Assessments) and the National Assessment of Education Progress.

In our “Cultural Proficiency in School Psychology” course, we identified and analyzed several variables that we hypothesized to be the cause of this epidemic. In examining this issue, we used a problem-solving process to identify the problem, formulate several reasons for the problem, and develop some solutions or best practices to target this issue.

One major solution that we proposed was emphasizing the possible significance and effects of becoming more culturally competent practitioners in schools. We discussed frameworks to help school psychologists to recognize their own culture and to reflect on how the clash between their culture and their students’ cultures can affect their efficacy in schools. We proposed using the “Multicultural Flashpoints for Change” framework (Carroll, 2009) as well as the “Pathways to Getting It” framework (Green, et al., 2009) as a starting point for these reflections. These frameworks are intended to help school psychologists examine the cultural diversity of students, the social injustices in their schools, and provide suggestions for how school psychologists can become change agents and transform schools into multiculturally sensitive environments. Our own reflections and thinking evolved into posters that we presented at the Spring 2013 MSPA conference. This allowed us to share the information that we learned in class with many school psychologists throughout Maryland.

As students in this course, were very fortunate to partake in these insightful assignments. Not all graduate programs place such an emphasis on exploring culture and its complexity, especially through the guidance of such a well-versed and experienced professor as Dr. West. As a result of this course, we are now able to take the knowledge that we have acquired throughout the semester and use it to more effectively practice as interns during the 2013-2014 school year, as well as in our future placements as school psychologists.

References


Advocacy in Action: Congressional Briefing on LGBTQ Youth Suicide Prevention

Sarah Peller, Prince George’s County

Suicide prevention is increasingly an important and focused area of work for school psychologists. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among high school youth ages 15-19 and fourth leading cause of death among middle school students ages 10-14 (Lieberman & Cowan, 2011). The school is often the only site bringing together troubled youth, mental health professionals, and other adults. In the school, we have the opportunity and the duty to prevent these tragic deaths by working to stop bullying, treat mental illness, and take special measures to support and protect at-risk students.

Issues around bullying, sexual orientation, mental health, and suicide prevention are interwoven. Certain groups of students are at higher risk for suicidal ideation and behaviors than others. Students who are being cyberbullied, students with disabilities and mental health problems, and sexual minority students (including students questioning their sexual orientation), are at greater risk than other students for developing suicidal ideation and behaviors as a result of being bullied (Lieberman & Cowan, 2011). Sexual minority youth are four times more likely, and questioning youth are three times more likely, to attempt suicide than their straight peers. Additionally, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning) youth are at a much higher risk for homelessness and LGBT homeless youth die by suicide at much higher rates (62%) than straight homeless youth (29%). Nearly half of young transgender people have seriously considered suicide and one quarter report having attempted suicide (Land et al., 2013).

On the afternoon of Thursday, April 25, I attended a congressional briefing on LGBTQ Youth Suicide Prevention at the U.S. Capitol, sponsored by U.S. Congressman Paul Tonko (D-NY) and The Trevor Project, the premier national organization focused on preventing suicide among LGBTQ youth. The purpose of the event was to present facts about the problem of LGBTQ youth suicide and to publicize current legislation supporting suicide prevention activities in schools. The Mental Health Awareness and Improvement Act of 2013 (S.689) reauthorizes and improves programs administered by the Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services. It incorporates elements of three acts addressing mental health in schools and focuses improvement efforts on awareness, prevention, early identification, and linkage to appropriate care for children and youth. These include the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act (S. 116), which funds suicide prevention programs for youth, and the Achievement Through Prevention Act, which funds school-based mental health programs. The Trevor Project’s Government Affairs division sees the passage of the Mental Health Awareness and Improvement Act as an opportunity to address the health disparities faced by LGBTQ youth.

The field of school psychology played a prominent role in the congressional briefing. NASP President Amy Smith was among the four panelists. Other panelists included Abbe Land, Executive Director and CEO of The Trevor Project; Joshua Deese, a member of The Trevor Project’s Youth Advisory Council; and Dr. Michelle Carnes, public health analyst at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Congressman Tonko introduced the panel and delivered the introductory address. He mentioned that his interest in youth suicide prevention and youth mental illness programs began when the son of a close friend completed suicide as an adolescent. Congressman Tonko has since organized an annual suicide prevention walk in Washington, D.C. which currently has about 1,200 participants. He continues to sponsor legislation related to mental health and specifically suicide prevention. He also discussed the work of The Trevor Project.

The Trevor Project’s Executive Director Abbe Land spoke next and expanded on Congressman Tonko’s descriptions of the organization’s prevention activities. Land stated that last year the Trevor Lifeline, a suicide prevention hotline aimed at LGBTQ youth, received 35,000 calls. The Trevor Project also offers Trevor Chat, Trevor Text,
Continued from Page 18

Trevor Space, Ask Trevor, and a suite of services for educators. The Trevor Lifeguard Workshop helps youth talk about issues faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. Other workshops are designed for school staff and/or care staff that work with LGBTQ youth. Additionally, educators can purchase the Trevor Survival Kit, a resource and curriculum guide for adults who work with young people and wish to provide relevant and appropriate help with issues faced by LGBTQ youth. Next school year, The Trevor Project will be providing a professional development workshop to school psychologists in Prince George’s County Public Schools.

Next on the panel, Joshua Deese of The Trevor Project related his personal story of struggling as a gay youth in the south. He came close to ending his life before calling the Trevor Lifeline and he later began to work with the Trevor Project. Dr. Michelle Carnes discussed the work of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, which currently funds 61 grantees involved in prevention activities in schools, some of them LGBTQ-specific.

NASP President Amy Smith spoke last. She stated that schools should have specific and clear anti-bullying policies and that these policies should explicitly include reference to anti-gay and gender bullying. She spoke of the importance of Gay Straight Alliances, which are student-run clubs in high schools and middle schools offering students a safe space to meet and discuss issues related to sexuality and gender identity. Smith also mentioned “no name-calling week” and other anti-bullying school-wide intervention programs focused on character education and prevention. She cited a statistic indicating that 84% of LGBTQ youth have been the victims of verbal harassment. The majority, she said, feel unsafe. She also cited that 72% of LGBTQ youth reported hearing derogatory comments on a regular basis, and mentioned that many of these comments, sadly, came from adults.

Smith emphasized the role of the school psychologist in serving as a model of therapeutic best practices in working with LGBTQ youth in schools, and in particular working to prevent suicides among this high-risk population. She pointed out the relationship between these activities and anti-bullying work, but emphasized the importance of breaking the silence around LGBTQ issues among staff and students in order to address the specific issues faced by LGBTQ youth. She said that it is school psychologists’ duty to keep these children and youth safe when isolated LGBTQ youth are at increased risk of self-harm. Smith stated that 25% of youth who come out to their parents are thrown out of their home.

During the question and answer session, I asked for more specific information regarding how school psychologists can help each other feel more comfortable addressing LBGTQ issues directly with students when needed, and what specific actions psychologists can take to reach out to LGBTQ youth. Smith mentioned the work of NASP’s workgroup on LGBTQ issues and the online resources available to practitioners working with youth available at www.nasponline.org. She also emphasized the importance of spreading the word in schools about resources that are available to youth in need, in particular the Trevor Lifeline.

I recalled a moment during my internship year in which several school psychologist trainees agreed that they would feel less-than-comfortable discussing sexuality issues with a questioning or gay youth because they felt that it was a specialized area requiring expertise. The panelists agreed that school psychologists should not think of the specific issues faced by LGBTQ youth as requiring a particular expert to address with them. Rather, having no one to talk to about these issues and the general silence around the topic can increase a student’s sense of isolation and increase risk for suicidal ideation or behavior. Smith emphasized the importance of every school psychologist feeling competent to speak with an LGBTQ youth about their concerns. She recommended that school psychologists should also provide students with appropriate and targeted resources. Most importantly, however, she shared that school psychologists and school staff should express to LGBTQ youth that who they are is okay.

After the briefing, The Trevor Project hosted a gathering on its new rooftop several blocks from the Capitol building. Activists and lobbyists from organizations including The Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) were present, along with Congressman Tonko, The Trevor Project staff and others. Executive Director Land thanked those present for their support. She emphasized that while suicide is one of the most tragic outcomes imaginable, it is preventable, and commended the impactful work of individuals and groups, including school psychologists who provide front-line prevention work, for each life they have already saved.

Simply put, LGBTQ youth need caring adults to speak to about their specific issues without judgment and with total acceptance. School psychologists are in an excellent position to take the lead in their schools to model and fill that role. Resources such as the Trevor Lifeline should be readily available and made known to all students. Gay Straight Alliances in schools provide a safe place for LGBTQ youth to support each other and discuss issues related to sexuality and/or gender identity, and can have a large negative impact on feelings of isolation and hopelessness, risk factors for suicidal ideation and behavior.

School psychologists need not fear talking openly about LGBTQ-related issues with young people. Rather, the silence around the topic enforced by adults can be harmful to youth threatening with their own sexuality or with related bullying and/or family non-acceptance. There is no expertise or specialized knowledge required in order to provide a listening, non-judgmental ear and to impart a few simple messages that could save a life: It is okay to be gay, or lesbian, or transgender; it is okay to be who you are; I am an accepting person whom you can speak to; and things will get better.

References


DSM-V and Disruptive Behavior Disorders: Developmental Psychopathology and Evidence Based Interventions

Stuart White, PhD
Post-doctoral Fellow at the National Institute of Mental Health

MSPA FALL CONFERENCE 2013

Friday, October 18, 2013
(MSEA Conference Day: Teachers Welcome)

Martin’s West
6817 Dogwood Road
Baltimore County, Maryland
Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention: The Evolving Role of School Psychologists

Heather Gallagher, Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Suicide remains the second-leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults between the ages of 10 and 24, and it results in 4,800 lives lost each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2010. Depression and suicidal behavior are significant mental health concerns facing children and adolescents, and these issues challenge school psychologists who are called upon to intervene. Schools are logical places to implement interventions for students demonstrating suicidal behavior. Many families face multiple barriers in accessing community-based services. School psychologists are able to increase responsiveness to families and students experiencing mental health issues. It is critical that school psychologists provide follow-up and monitoring of depressed and suicidal youth, as having a trusted adult for students to speak with on a consistent basis serves as a protective factor against relapse.

School psychologists can be leaders in developing and implementing school-based reentry plans after a student has been hospitalized for suicidal behavior or a parent has died by suicide. “There are no standardized procedures regarding the frequency of monitoring that a suicidal youth requires, but the school reentry plan may minimize the amount of pressure the youth feels in catching up academically” (Doll, B., & Cummings, J.A., 2008). Elements of a school reentry plan should include, but are not limited to, the following: identify a school-based team regarding responsibilities to support the student; make a phone call to the family and/or offer to make a home visit; organize a school-based meeting with teachers, administrator, school counselor, and student (only with parent consent); request parents to sign a release to speak to community-based providers; send a message to staff at the reentry meeting to significantly reduce the pressure the youth feels in catching up academically; establish student/staff check-ins; forewarn the student about guest speakers regarding the topic of suicide; and monitor student progress over time. These are all important steps to be taken for suicidal youth re-acclimating to the school environment to restore a level of healthy functioning.

Despite our best efforts, as school psychologists, we can never fully prevent or protect an individual from self-destructive behavior. School psychologists are often called upon to provide support for children and adolescents in the aftermath of a suicide to help guide them through the grieving process. Suicide bereavement uniquely affects a school compared to other forms of death due to the social processes surrounding this public health issue. In addition, postvention in schools is an important area that requires a significant amount of training, as a practitioner must be careful not to romanticize or glorify suicidal deaths. School psychologists are often viewed as the leaders for intervening at the postvention level in the aftermath of a suicide; however, many school psychologists report feeling unprepared due to a lack of training in this area. According to the American Association of Suicidology, “only 22% of school psychologists surveyed believed that their graduate training sufficiently prepared them to adequately intervene with a suicidal youth or to contribute to school suicide postvention activities.”

School psychologists must provide guidance on the following questions: “How do we talk about suicide?” “What words do we use at a developmentally appropriate level?” “When is normal suicide-loss grief with children?” “How do we respond at school?” Suicide intensifies feelings of guilt and shame and poses the challenge of students and families questioning “why?” School psychologists are called upon to identify ways to honor the deceased and provide counseling services to children and adolescents, while reducing the risk for suicide contagion. It requires extensive training to learn strategies to help children and adolescents bereaved by suicide.

To further complicate the public health issue of suicide, schools are becoming increasingly racially and culturally diverse. School psychologists must have knowledge of basic cultural values and perspectives related to suicide to embed into professional practice. In order to influence positive outcomes for students, school psychologists need to be taught cultural awareness regarding this specific topic in order to form successful family-school partnerships. Research conducted on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention has much to offer from an international perspective.

School psychologists are faced with the challenge to provide support at the following levels pertaining to suicide: prevention, intervention, and postvention. Research suggests that effective intervention can lead to successful suicide prevention at the individual and clinical level. This requires a significant amount of training, yet there does not appear to be an entire course devoted to the topic of suicide prevention, intervention, and response in school psychology graduate training programs. School psychology programs require a significant amount of time devoted to testing and assessment. In the context of other courses, students learn how to assess for suicide risk and respond to crises such as suicide. However, given the unique issues that suicide poses, graduate students would benefit from learning more about specific approaches used in clinical practice, as well as postvention. In addition, it is critical that graduate programs teach students how to develop appropriate reentry plans and step-by-step instructions on how to implement school-based prevention programs.

It is the writer’s hope that the Maryland School Psychologists’ Association (MSPA) will collaborate with the Maryland State
Department of Education (MSDE) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) to encourage extensive, mandatory training in graduate programs for school psychologists in the areas of suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. A specific course dedicated to suicide is necessary and will prepare school psychologists to effectively reduce the risk among our youth. It our duty to endeavor to find better ways to prepare school psychologists to come to the aid of those at risk and to help comprehend the profound effects on those left behind. This writer hopes that MSDE and NASP will encourage school psychology graduate programs to pilot a specific course on suicide.

With the help of key leadership like MSPA, MSDE, and NASP, mandatory extensive training in suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention will increase current and future school psychologists’ efforts to better understand and prevent suicides among the youth population.

References

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ATTENTION STUDENTS! CALL FOR POSTERS!

MSPA Student Poster Presentation Guidelines

Student poster presentations are an informal and interactive opportunity to share research, data, and innovative practice at the MSPA fall and spring conference. Student poster presentation proposals should include the following:

1. All information should be typed in 10 or 12 point size font, double-spaced, and sent in a Microsoft Word® document by email to bryan.miller@gallaudet.edu

2. An ABSTRACT of 200 words or less should be submitted containing the objectives of the poster presentation. The ABSTRACT should include the following:

   • State the title of the presentation with presenter name(s) and university affiliation.

   • State the purpose of the presentation.

   • State what will be presented.

   • State how the presentation will benefit participants.

Interested in becoming more involved with MSPA next year? JOIN A COMMITTEE!

Contact one of the committee chairpersons listed on page 2 of this issue for more information on the committee’s purpose and ways to get involved. We are always looking for new committee members and welcome interested graduate students.
The Family Liaison Committee made strides in their efforts to collaborate with other agencies and organizations this year in order to meet common goals related to helping Maryland children and adolescents succeed. This year's committee activities included connecting with families at Honestly Autism Day, an all-day event devoted to understanding autism from unique perspectives, and a successful launch to the Book and Bear Campaign, which provides outreach to families of children who are hospitalized and/or chronically ill.

On April 20, the Partnership Project, a collaboration between the Autism Society of Baltimore-Chesapeake, Baltimore County Public Schools’ Office of Special Education, and Towson University’s Department of Special Education, sponsored Honestly Autism Day. The event was organized so participants could hear the keynote speaker, attend breakout sessions, visit vendors, network with families as well as professionals, celebrate with autism essay contest winners, and listen to the members of a teen panel share their personal stories and give honest insight into their lives by responding to questions posed by panel moderators. In addition to attending these sessions and networking with participants, Claudia Bowen, Abby Wagner and Courtnay Oatts participated by staffing a MSPA sponsored vendor table.

Honestly Autism Day participants were welcomed and introduced to a video presentation from Real Look Autism, a website created by Mary Beth Marsden. It is her hope that the website will provide great ideas for working with children who have Autism Spectrum Disorders and also serve as a place to share your own insights. Real Look Autism attempts to present different therapies and strategies using video in a very focused and thoughtful way. The edited stories are only a few minutes in length and are partnered with an article on the same topic written by a parent or specialist… Or both!

Ellen Notbohm, author of Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew was the keynote speaker. While she may have been selected because of her expertise as a parent of sons with autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, she connected with a diverse audience with her sense of humor and ability to challenge beliefs and perspective about autism. Among many thought provoking questions, she asked, “Who do you consider to be autism experts? What role do they play in your child or student’s autism team? What misconceptions about autism have you encountered or held? What expectations do you hold for your child or student with autism? For yourself?”

Ms. Notbohm emphasized that the ten characteristics she learned from raising her son Bryce serve to illuminate, not define her child with autism. She reminded audience participants in both the keynote address and subsequent breakout sessions that we should learn more than we teach and that we should listen more than we talk. When her son Bryce was in high school, he spent his time trying to define himself. He shared and she listened when he said, “I knew I wasn’t ‘autistic’ and I knew I wasn’t ‘normal,’ whatever that is,” he said, “so I chose something else. I chose to be optimistic.”

Following the keynote address, participants were able to select and attend a breakout session before and after lunch. During both the morning and afternoon sessions, Ms. Notbohm conducted a Round Table Talkabout in which she opened with a short reading from her book, and then entertained questions so that participants could benefit from her insights and the collective experiences of the group.

Additional morning topics included: Story Keepers: Brothers and Sisters Share What Their Lives are Like as Siblings of Children with ASD; “See, Say and Do” with Social Scripts; The DisAbility Journey: Loss, Grief & and the Path to Acceptance; Boxing out Bullies: Teaching Social Competence and Building Connections for Students with Autism at School; Celebrating Idiosyncrasy and Making Meaning: Art Therapy with Individuals with Autism; Building the Father-Child Relationship; Preparing Young Adults for Independence: Transition and Moving Out; ASD-Sexuality and Social Boundaries; Navigating Technology Tools; and Let’s Collaborate: Making OT and SLP Collaboration Work. Afternoon topics included: Music Therapy Strategies for School and Students with Autism; First Aid for Your Relationship; The Importance of Supportive-Inclusive Experiences for All
Continued from Page 23

Adult Learners (Panel of Adults with Autism and Mentors); Social Thinking and Learning in Schools; Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and Autism: Introduction to Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP); and Making the Day Work: Practical Strategies for Classroom Success.

Honestly Autism Day concluded by honoring the essay contest winners and listening to teen panel members share their experiences. Essay categories included individuals with autism, students, teachers, parents and siblings. Stories shared illuminated friendship, lessons learned, courage and optimism. Teen Panel members connected with audience participants with their sense of humor and frank opinions about likes, dislikes, strengths, needs, and expectations of themselves and others.

During the February MSPA Executive Board Meeting, a proposal was approved for The Book and Bear Campaign in order to provide direct outreach to families of children who are hospitalized and/or chronically ill. Committee members and MSPA members collected new stuffed animals, children's books, and fleece for no-sew blankets. Start-up funding for materials were provided through the proposal by MSPA and the project began as a pilot in Cecil County, in the northernmost region of the Eastern Shore. This area was selected due to the unique challenges families face such as limited resources for specialized pediatric care in close proximity.

The initiative allowed for prosocial service-learning activities for students in our schools who volunteered to make the blankets. The MSPA mission and vision was addressed through goals of the program, by helping the volunteer students to develop responsibility, establish community partnerships, develop empathy, and reflect upon experiences throughout the service-learning activity. The project also allowed for positive relationships between families and school psychologists by providing the direct outreach and information about the support available to students and families. Most importantly, the campaign provided for positive experiences for families who may be experiencing the difficult challenge of their child’s illness. Contacts were made by committee members with Child Life Specialists in nearby hospitals in order to determine the course of action and acceptable items for donation.

Finding donations was much easier than anticipated. By making connections with the Communications Department in Cecil County Public Schools, the initiative was explained and advertised to all employees for several weeks. Additionally, the Special Education Department helped to promote the project prior to a Building Coordinator meeting, which allowed for the collection of many donations. After talking about the project with school staff members in the faculty lounge, and guidance department, the main office yielded the most donations of all.

Once colleagues heard of the program, the donations of new books and stuffed animals came pouring into the office.

Occupational Therapists in Cecil County have offered support for the project by having students help tie the blankets during direct service and after-school sewing clubs. Students in the Project Cross Roads after-school program at Elkton Middle School completed many of the blankets during their afternoon activity sessions. The students asked many questions about the project and came up with the idea of including a get well card in each package. Three after-school sessions were held with student volunteers from Elkton High School to help make the blankets.

During an after-school session, a staff member stopped by to share her grandson's story, who has a rare condition which restricts his movement and impairs his mobility. She shared her gratitude to the students for volunteering to help these families, as her grandson has received a donated blanket during one of his hospitalizations. Students from “Teaching as a Profession” from Elkton High School made the bookmarks and coordinated the packages by matching the completed blankets with animals and books. Their teacher planned a lesson around the project, which involved a reflective writing assignment. Some of the students who volunteered shared their experience with MSPA committee members, including one twelfth grade student who wrote about her many challenges, including the need for a tracheotomy. She spent many months at the closest children's hospital and continues to receive medical care there in many departments. She reflected on the feelings of satisfaction she had when giving back to the hospital and families.

A few short weeks from the time the proposal was approved, the materials were purchased and collection through donations, and coordinated by volunteers, the donation packages were transported to the Child Life Specialist department at Nemours/Alfred I. DuPont Hospital for Children. Staff members were gracious and hopeful that the project continues to touch the lives of families in need.

Both Honestly Autism Day and the Book and Bear Campaign project are excellent opportunities for MSPA members to become involved with the Family Liaison Committee and direct outreach to families on behalf of MSPA. It is our hope that participation in Honestly Autism Day continues with direct outreach to families experiencing autism and that the Book and Bear project expands to additional regions in Maryland. Currently, we are looking for coordinators to continue the efforts in other regions, particularly on the Eastern Shore or other areas with limited proximity to children's treatment centers. If you are interested in becoming a regional coordinator for the Book and Bear Campaign, please contact Claudia Bowen at family@mspaonline.org or Abby Wagner at wagner.abby@yahoo.com.
REASONS TO JOIN A LOCAL SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY ORGANIZATION

This handout can be modified for use by school psychologists in districts where there is no local organization in order to motivate individuals to form a group. In addition, it can be used by local associations who are interested in acquiring new members or who would like to increase the organization’s level of activity. Please contact MSPA’s Assistance to Locals Committee Chairperson Jessica Munch at lea@mspaonline.org if you would like more information.

BUILD AWARENESS OF THE PROFESSION LOCALLY AND WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY

Some local districts publish ideas for School Psychology Awareness Week in their newsletter or plan events as an organization during that week. A few local districts hold fundraising events where ticket sales benefit a nonprofit and/or members solicit donations from local community businesses for silent auctions. The nonprofits selected have benefitted students within their districts by providing tutoring services, after-school programming, and food/resources during the holidays. One local district has collected Toys for Tots; another has built a Habitat for Humanity House.

RECEIVE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WHICH INCLUDES PEER SUPERVISION

Some local organizations have applied for the MSPA training grant and host presenters that are well-known in the field. Other associations have started listservs and organized peer supervision groups to utilize the strengths of some members, and to increase the knowledge and skills of others. One local organization has started a book club so members have the opportunity to read and discuss a book related to the field.

KEEP UP WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN CURRENT PRACTICE, STAY AWARE OF NEWS IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY, AND HAVE A LINK TO STATE AND NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Some organizations place their MSPA member on the local association’s board, ask MSPA representatives to report out at meetings or contribute to their newsletter, and include announcements and reviews of books or professional development opportunities within their newsletters.

HAVE A VOICE WITH YOUR UNION

Some associations have a member participate on union committees; other associations have written advocacy letters and met with union leaders related to contract issues specific to school psychologists.

MAKE SOCIAL & PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS WITH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN THE DISTRICT

Many associations across the state hold social activities (e.g., holiday and end of the year parties) where members can meet one another and form bonds, which can decrease feelings of isolation and burnout. In addition, making professional connections can help create informal mentorships and encourage peer consultation.
Views from the Past

Bill Flook, Baltimore County, and Michael Nuth, Anne Arundel County

In the Fall of 1987, almost 25 years ago the “Newsletter,” which has since become the PROTOCOL, published several updates or articles that were topical then and may seem familiar to many of you reading this column.

- As a point of interest the Fall Conference in 1987 was James Comstock-Galogan, J.D., presenting a keynote address on “Rights Without Labels” and James Tucker, Ph.D., presenting a workshop on “Curriculum-based Assessment.” The conference was held on the Lady Baltimore, so during lunch there was a cruise around the harbor.
- The Public Relations/Public Information committee was trying to increase public awareness of how school psychologists work to promote mental health in the schools. The planned activities included developing a PR packet and the sale of promotional products at the conferences. (Here’s where it all got started.) Nancy Enders, who chaired that committee, was asking for member assistance to gather information about effective programs developed by school psychologists to publicize/promote and help in gathering a list of community agencies and interest groups to contact and establish a relationship.
- The first of two MSPA Task Forces that would look at creating “Guidelines/Best Practices” document addressing the “seriously emotionally disturbed child” was hoping to have the document completed by the 1987 Fall Conference. [The second MSPA Task Force would convene in the early 90’s. Author’s note: As psychologists we are used to revisions, i.e., WISC to WISC-R to WISC-III to WISC-IV and soon the WISC-V. However, emotional disability, as it is now known, has changed its name/title four times with no substantial change in definition. It was known as Seriously Emotionally Disturbed, then Seriously Emotional Disturbance, then Emotional Disturbance and now Emotional Disability.] A bit of trivia: Bill Flook was the only psychologist to sit on all three committees.
- The Legislative Committee was attempting to computerize membership information to include legislative districts. At that time the committee was working on advocacy issues for children and working with NASP against the use of corporal punishment.
- Penny Peterson, our newly elected NASP delegate, wrote extensively of the delegate assembly held in September. She mentions a draft position paper on Early Intervention Services in the Schools (tabled until April 1988), a position paper on Minority Recruitment (affirmed) and various mundane business was discussed and passed (budget, fourth draft of the mission statement, etc.). Perhaps one of the most exciting things Penny mentioned was the upcoming ETS/NASP national exam that would grandparent all those taking it in June 1988. [This was the beginning of NCSP.] As the new delegate she emphasized from that first delegate assembly that NASP “is an association which is focused and concentrates on the educational and mental health needs of all children, as well as promotes the interests, and advances the profession of school psychology.”
- Kevin Dwyer discussed the role of the school psychologist in the reevaluation process and the MSPA Position Paper on Reevaluation was included in this 1987 Newsletter. Some points that still ring true:

There are two valid reasons to reevaluate:
1). Eligibility – Is the child still handicapped?
2). Program Effectiveness – Is the child still in need of special education services? Is the special education program working?”

The paper outlines the disabilities that should be assessed by the psychologist and the components of the evaluation. In addressing the appropriateness of the reevaluation, it was stated that “the reassessment should be tailored to the needs of the child in terms of what information is already available and what additional information is needed to address the questions being asked by the ARD [IEP] committee.” It continues with “there are clearly circumstances under which formal standardized testing may be both unwarranted and an unnecessary burden to the child.”

- Finally, Don Pumroy, in his Behavior Corner discussed how the impact of behavioral principles can affect change in regular classroom settings, as it had with children with significant disabilities. He discussed three behaviors that were important for teachers to learn (these might sound familiar):
  ○ Proximity to Students
  ○ Frequency of Interaction, and
  ○ Ratio of Positive Comments to Negative Ones

He comments that, “if school psychologists could help teachers behave more toward students in the manner described by these three points, I believe there would be a significant positive change in the schools.”

In many of these vignettes you can see the source of issues that we are addressing today from both an organizational position and a professional one. In this issue there were the roots of the Parent Liaison, established by MSPA several years ago, national certification and now the NCSP, and special education issues like our current guidelines on Emotional Disability and Reevaluation.

What was old is new again!
Get a Better View of a Kid’s Blues.

A comprehensive multi-rater assessment of depressive symptoms in youth aged 7 to 17 years.

CDI²
Children’s Depression Inventory 2nd Edition
Maria Koresa, Ph.D. & MHS Staff

- Items that target core aspects of childhood depression
- Parent, teacher, and self-report ratings provide a comprehensive evaluation
- Available in paper-and-pencil, online, and software formats

Other Assessments from MHS:

Conners Comprehensive Behavior Rating Scales™ (Conners CBRS™)
C. Keith Conners, Ph.D.

Identifies behavioral, emotional, social, and academic challenges in youth aged 6 to 18 years.

Autism Spectrum Rating Scales™ (ASRS™)
Sam Goldstein, Ph.D. & Jack A. Naglieri, Ph.D.

Effectively identifies symptoms, behaviors, and features associated with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) in youth aged 2 to 18 years.

USA Tel: 1.800.456.3003 / CAN Tel: 1.800.268.6011
Website: www.mhs.com • Email: customerservice@mhs.com
MSPA Executive Board Meetings
2012-2013 School Year

Bad Weather Policy:
If the host school system is closed for students due to inclement weather, the Board Meeting is cancelled.

Meetings begin at 1:00 p.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. • Lunch is served at 12:30 p.m.

- September 21: Howard County
- October 12: Baltimore City
- November 9: Calvert County
- December 7: Carroll County
- January 10: THURSDAY * ALL DAY * ANNAPOLIS
  Legislative Breakfast in the morning
  Exec Board-MSEA Headquarters in the afternoon
- February 1: Baltimore County
- March 8: Frederick County
- April 12: Montgomery County
  NASP Headquarters, Bethesda
- April 26: MSPA Spring Conference
  General Membership Meeting
- June 7: Prince George’s County