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 leg@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.