



John O. Willis Receives Benoit Award from Rivier

On October 6, 2016, John O. Willis received the Sr Mary Jane Benoit Outstanding Educator of the Year Award from Rivier University. Vice President for Academic Affairs Douglas W. Howard of Rivier presented the award, as the University President was traveling abroad. John is the 16th recipient of this distinguished award. Established in 2001, it



John Willis (L) and Ron Dumont

is given to an individual who brings the highest distinction to themselves and their communities through their teaching and mentoring of students in education and/or mental health. The presentation ceremony was held in the Demoulas Room of the Benoit Education Building at Rivier and was well-attended, including a fine random sample of John's students from throughout the years.

Several speakers preceded the formal presentation of the plaque by offering their fond remembrances of John's lifetime of service. One speaker was former NHASP President Ron Dumont, now the director of both the School Psychology and Psychology Programs at Fairleigh-Dickinson University in

New Jersey. Ron described his first sighting of John, explaining how he had visited the Rivier campus on a Saturday to look around prior to beginning his own teaching there only to find a man (John) teaching a test administration class by playing a xylophone. Ron spoke warmly of his long-standing collaboration with John, which has included many presentations, publications, and especially their website (<http://www.myschoolpsychology.com/>). Ron shared how once, when the power went out during a presentation, John went so far as to pull a flashlight out of his pocket and shine it through an overhead while continuing to speak.

John himself spoke eloquently and with obvious feeling about the many good memories he had of the 120 students he had taught during his 37 years at Rivier. He spoke of the origins of SAIF program, which predated the national special education laws. He thanked his fellow faculty, students, practicing supervisors, and especially his family. John particularly credited his wife, an astute and observant teacher, and

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2016 George Washington/NASP Public Policy Institute (PPI) – Education as a Civil Right for All: Implications for Public Policy

by Tricia Raymond

This summer I spent three days in Washington, D.C. with Kate Salvati learning about past, present, and upcoming issues regarding public policy in education. George Washington University (GWU) and NASP partner together each year to immerse school personnel and graduate students in the world of U.S. public policy as it relates to education. This year PPI focused on “the socio-political and economic factors that contribute to a student’s ability to access a high quality education.” Many attendees were school psychologists, some were GSU students going into the field of education while others were teachers or administrators.

Our first day began with inspiring messages from Michael Feuer and Carol Kochhar-Bryant, Dean and Associate Dean of GWU’s Graduate School of Education and Human Development, respectively. Melissa Reeves, NASP President, spoke about hope, working hard, and seizing opportunities in attaining goals in our profession. She discussed the importance of social-emotional learning and school psychologists’ role in shaping the perceptions of our youth. Dr. Reeves pointed out the connection between the theme of the 2016 PPI and her presidential theme, “Small Steps Change Lives.”

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FALL CONFERENCE SPEAKER SUBSTITUTION

Our originally scheduled speaker for the fall conference was unable to attend due a family medical issue. He graciously found for us an equally qualified colleague



to present on the same topic and using much of his prepared materials. Ann Leonard-Zabel, Ed.D., provided well over a 100 attendees with an overview of how a neuropsychological perspective can aid in our understanding of common neurodevelopmental disorders and provide stronger linkages with evidence-based interventions.

Dr. Leonard-Zabel is a professor of psychology at Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts. She presents frequently both nationally and internationally. Her research interests include neuropsychology, learning disabilities, social-emotional disorders, forensics, ethical and legal issues, disability law, military psychology, and addictions, among others. After serving 16-years as a voluntary member on the Board of Directors for the Massachusetts School Psychologist Association, she was recently elected to the board of the Learning Disabilities Worldwide Congress. Additionally, she has been highly honored by the American Board of Disability Analysts. Among her many areas of post-doctoral training are attention disorders and homeland security.

A President's Message: By Way of Introduction

by Tricia Raymond

For those of you who know me well, you are aware that I am a bit surprised to be writing this, my first message as president of NHASP. I have been a school psychologist in the same position for the past 19 years, after 3 years as a youth and family counselor at Sweetser Children's Services residential Staff Intensive Unit in Saco, Maine. For many years, I was the type of professional who worked dutifully to make a difference for each student that came across the threshold of my door. In my early career, my approach could be characterized as subtle but meaningful (or so I am told). Through the years I have grown in so many ways, and although this approach remains in my toolbox, I have added more assertive, more vocal approaches that I use when necessary. More to the point, earlier on in my career, I would have scoffed at the idea of taking on the role of president of any association. Now I marvel at how well this role fits at this time in my life. At the time I had no idea this was something I needed. I was totally unaware of the many ways in which this role would enrich my life.

My involvement in NHASP began on the Membership Committee in 2013. Nate Jones brought me on board back then, although I must admit I was initially reluctant to make this commitment. In truth, the Membership Committee is a "committee of one," and I feared I was



biting off more than I could chew. How would I find the time? I lived in Wells, Maine then and I remember saying to Nate, "I won't be able to attend many board meetings, are you sure that's okay?" Nate laughs about that now because

I have rarely missed a board meeting since. In addition to Membership Chair, I took on the role of Regional Representative for the seacoast area through the 2014/2015 school year. Next thing I knew, I was encouraged to run for president-elect. I refused at first, unsure of myself and afraid of the time commitment. I could say that I don't know what came over me as I threw my hat in the ring at the last minute, but that is not entirely true. Honestly, I was inspired by the dedication of the NHASP leaders, regional representatives and the committee chairs. I wanted, more likely needed, to be part of that. I felt compelled to continue working on the vision of NHASP after making the trek to all those board meetings and experiencing the enthusiasm of others. When I was elected, I relinquished my role as regional representative to open up the opportunity for the next person. Being a regional representative is a great way to get involved and keep on top of the never ending changes in our field. To this day, however, I am still the Membership Chair.

Becoming an active member of NHASP

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More is Changing this Fall than the Leaves!

by Tari Selig, NASP Delegate

I am recently returned from the NASP Fall Regional Meeting, held this year in beautiful Bethesda, Maryland. It was both an excellent and productive meeting! The leadership reviewed new position statements from NASP: on our role in assessment; on specialized instructional support; on integrated models of support; and on culturally and linguistically diverse recruitment. See the NASP website for specifics, including useful



charts for tiered levels of academic and behavioral support.

In addition, the delegates and leaders discussed shortages in the field of school psychologists and how a growing number of school districts are having a difficult time filling positions with qualified people. Having shortages can make it more difficult for school psychologists to work

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Education as a Civil Right for All

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Diane Stark-Rentner, Deputy Director of the Center on Education Policy, and Jack Jennings, Founder of the center, whom we fondly referred to as “Jack and Diane,” spoke frankly about the pressure felt by many educators under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). They discussed similarities and differences between the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and NCLB. While ESSA maintains the use of academic standards and the use of test data for accountability, the largest difference is the greater responsibility placed on each state in designing these accountability systems. This presentation set the stage for Kelly Vaillancourt-Strobach, NASP Director of Government Relations, and the GPR committee to discuss the importance of advocating for public policy that will improve equity in education. Now is the time for our state organizations, state and local school boards, parent-teacher associations, etc. to join together to “cut through the noise” to ensure that correct action is taken. When various groups are able to come together and put aside their differences in pursuit of a common goal, the result is powerful. One only needs to look at the authors and endorsing organizations listed in “A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools” (nasponline.org) to see a prime example of this.

John Monsif, Vice President of Government Relations, First Focus addressed the ever-shrinking portion of the federal budget that is used for children (2.1% in 2016). He noted that if the trend continues, by 2018 U.S. spending on interest from the national debt will be greater than spending on children. In a separate presentation, Renee Bradley from O.S.E.P. made the point that issues thought of as “problems in special education” are not unique to special education, but are larger “societal problems.” She noted that federal spending on jails has grown three times the rate of spending on education in recent years.

James Ferg-Cadima from the Office of Civil Rights discussed the impact of the U.S. D.O.E.’s policies and programs on the civil rights of students. Paul Morgan, Professor and Director of the Center for Educational Disparities Research at Penn State University gave a thought-provoking presentation of research demonstrating that minorities are

under-identified and underserved in special education. Dr. Morgan pointed to studies that compared minority groups with “other-wise similar students” in terms of factors such as low birth-weight, lead exposure and poverty. In these studies, minority children were under-represented in special education. He made the argument that child in the minority is less likely to be offered special education services than white children with similar circumstances. Dr. Morgan was followed by Dan Losen, Director for the Center of Civil Rights Remedies, who spoke about the disparity of discipline in schools, where the rate of suspensions/expulsions for minority students is higher than that of white students.

Florencia Guitierrez, Senior Research Associate from the Annie E Casey Foundation, National Kids Count, led us through the many resources on the foundation’s website: www.aecf.org. The Kids Count Data Center tracks the well-being of children in the United States by providing high-quality data and trend analysis. State-level data is also provided. One can view data by location, by

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John O. Willis

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wife, an astute and observant teacher, and shared how she had once looked at a student’s draw-a-person that sported cubes for feet and hypothesized a mild club foot. Indeed, when the student was so diagnosed and received the proper orthotics, their foot pain abated, along with their symptoms of a learning disability.



As John retires, he will indeed be a hard act to follow. He has had a significant impact (and clearly in a positive direction) on the assessment of student learning in New Hampshire. His legacy lives on in the multitude of supports provided to children by all those who have known him. Congratulations John!! Ψ

Whither the Nonverbal Learning Disorder Syndrome: Diagnostic Status, Interface with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Implications for School Psychology Practice

by Jerrold Pollak, Ph.D., ABPP; ABN

Introduction: Since the 1980's the Nonverbal Learning Disorder, often referred to as NVLD or NLD, has had a well-established history in the practice of school psychology and special education (Rourke, 1989). However, as early as the late 1960's, reference was made to children with learning difficulties who would likely be diagnosed with this neurodevelopmental condition in contemporary clinical practice (Johnson & Myklebust, 1967). There is an extensive research base and clinical literature pertaining to this diagnosis (Fine, Semrud-Clikeman, Bledsoe & Musielak, 2013; Palombo, 2006; Pennington, 2009; Rourke, 1989, 1995; Spreen, 2011).

Making the Diagnosis: Nonverbal Learning Disorder is a diagnosis usually made in the school-age years. There are, though, adults with this diagnosis who were initially identified in their childhood/adolescence or recognized as having this syndrome for the first time in their young adult years.

The diagnosis of Nonverbal Learning Disorder is primarily based on history, one or more clinical interviews, and the findings of psychological/neuropsychological and psychoeducational testing. Neurologic examination and neuro-imaging, as well as laboratory and genetic testing can be helpful in enhancing identification in cases where there is a suspected medical condition associated with Nonverbal Learning Disorder; for instance, Turner Syndrome, Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome, or Williams Syndrome (Rourke, 1995). Still, in most cases, such studies are not necessary for making the diagnosis.

Persons with Nonverbal Learning Disorder are described as having considerably stronger verbal-linguistic cognitive abilities/skills than perceptual organization/spatial visualization and problem solving abilities/skills. This includes better-developed working and anterograde verbal memory than nonverbal-

“spatial” memory. They typically exhibit bilateral—left more than right—deficits in sensory-motor integration. Many individuals are reported to have noteworthy difficulty coping with novelty and change due to cognitive and/or behavioral rigidity as well as often having additional problems with executive functioning.

The psychoeducational skills profile involves significantly better developed reading decoding and spelling than reading comprehension and mathematics skills. Expository/narrative writing is frequently marred by organizational problems, phonetically accurate spelling errors, and grapho-motor impairment.

As students advance through high school and college, performance is usually better in the humanities (notably subjects like English and history which rely heavily on psycholinguistic abilities/skills for success) than in mathematics and physics that depend more on visuo-spatial processing for satisfactory achievement. Nonetheless, persons with this syndrome are likely to encounter difficulty with courses in the humanities as demands increase for critical thinking and more sophisticated reading comprehension and expository writing skills.

Psychosocial functioning is frequently characterized by deficits in language pragmatics—the use of verbal and nonverbal communication for effective social interaction. Many with this syndrome are described as failing to recognize and respond appropriately to social cues and may appear ill at ease and socially awkward.

Diagnostic Controversies—Interface with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Nonverbal Learning Disorder has been the subject of significant research investigation and remains popular in clinical practice as an explanation for persistent learning, academic achievement, and psychosocial adjustment problems affecting a subset of seemingly intellectually

competent children/adolescents and adults. That said, Nonverbal Learning Disorder has never been formally recognized as a valid and reliable diagnosis and is not included in the DSM-5 or the ICD-10 (Mammarella, Ghisi, Bomba, Bottesi, Caviola, Broggi & Nacinovich, 2016). This condition continues to have its share of enthusiasts (Delgado, Wassenaar & Strawn, 2011), agnostics (Fine, Semrud-Clikeman, Bledsoe & Musielak, 2013), and skeptics (Pollak, 2011; Spreen, 2011) with respect to its validity as a discrete “stand alone” neurodevelopmental syndrome.

A number of accounts of Nonverbal Learning Disorder in the clinical literature refer to deficits in social perception and competence as well as executive functioning. These descriptions overlap with the DSM-IV diagnosis of Asperger's Disorder and the current DSM-5 conceptualization of Autism Spectrum Disorder-Mild Severity which incorporate many persons previously given DSM-IV diagnoses of Asperger's Disorder (Semrud-Clikeman, Walkowiak, Wilkinson & Minne, 2010; Volden, 2013). This suggests that Nonverbal Learning Disorder is on a continuum with Autism Spectrum Disorder-Mild Severity and may represent a variant of this condition. The murky boundaries between these two conditions can create confusion for school psychologists seeking diagnostic clarity and appropriate psychoeducational planning for their clients with neurosocial and other neurodevelopmental difficulties.

Recommendations: One way to bolster the viability of Nonverbal Learning Disorder as a possible separate and distinct neurodevelopmental condition is to limit this diagnosis to those individuals with salient nonverbal information processing weaknesses together with compromised skill development in mathematics and, perhaps, higher-level reading comprehension and selected aspects

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Whither the Nonverbal Learning Disorder Syndrome

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of expository writing, but who do not have demonstrable deficits in verbal and nonverbal communication which characterize persons with Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder and who also lack a history of restricted-repetitive patterns of activities, interests and behavior which typify Autism Spectrum Disorder.

A more circumscribed set of criteria for diagnosis would have several advantages. While it would likely lower Sensitivity (thereby raising the number of “false negative” diagnoses) it would probably enhance Specificity (lower the number of “false positive” diagnoses). It may also bolster the legitimacy of this diagnosis and, hence, better position it for eventual inclusion in a text revision of DSM-5 or, perhaps, a future diagnostic manual devoted to neurodevelopmental and psychoeducational conditions. As well, it may allow persons whose difficulties exceed this more restricted definition greater access to training in language pragmatics and social skills development along the lines of individuals who fall within the DSM-5 definition of Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder.

There is good research support for a fairly broad range of comorbid neuropsychological deficits in Autism Spectrum Disorder. This includes individuals on this spectrum with features of the Nonverbal Learning Disorder (Williams, Goldstein, Kojkowski, & Minshew, 2008). Therefore, in the absence of stronger empirical data moving forward in support of Nonverbal Learning Disorder as an independent neurodevelopmental disorder this diagnosis may eventually play a useful role as one of several cognitive/neuropsychological test profile specifiers for diagnoses like Autism Spectrum Disorder. This would be in keeping with research aimed at identifying possible subtypes of Autism Spectrum Disorder (Grzadzinski, Huerta, & Lord, 2013).

Implications for Clinical Practice: Based on the DSM-5 many persons previously identified with Nonverbal Learning Disorder are probably now being given the new diagnosis of Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder despite the issues raised regarding the validity of this newly

described neurodevelopmental condition (Tager-Flusberg, 2013) together with the revamped diagnosis of Specific Learning Disorder with impairment in mathematics and, in some instances, the revised diagnosis of Developmental Coordination Disorder. These DSM-5 diagnoses capture, reasonably well, the problems with pragmatic language and nonverbal communication as well as the deficiencies in numeric knowledge/quantitative reasoning and psychomotor functioning that have historically defined Nonverbal Learning Disorder.

In the present circumstances it would be prudent for school psychologists who use the DSM-5 to consider these diagnoses for their clients who exhibit features of nonverbal learning disorder. Persons with more pronounced and widespread deficits in social relatedness (including restricted-repetitive patterns) but who otherwise share many characteristics with those diagnosed with Nonverbal Learning Disorder should likely be considered to have Autism Spectrum Disorder-Mild Severity.

To avoid misunderstanding, school psychologists may wish to state in their reports and in discussions with the student and their families that, historically, their client would have probably been diagnosed with Nonverbal Learning Disorder.

Research is clearly needed to clarify how the transition to DSM-5 has impacted the diagnosis of Nonverbal Learning Disorder in educational and clinical settings.

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Dr. Pollak works as a neuropsychologist at Seacoast Mental Health Center in Portsmouth. Ψ

In Memory of Virginia Smith Harvey Dawson

Jonas Taub

On August 4, 2016, Dr. Virginia Smith Harvey Dawson, Ginny to all who knew her, ended her battle with cancer, and we lost a dear friend, colleague, mentor and role model. Ginny was brilliant, a visionary and an advocate, an innovator with incredible drive and commitment, with consistent calm, respect, caring and dignity that made her the incredible teacher, mentor, leader and builder that she was in all of her endeavors. In some of the vignettes that follow, you will hear from some of the people who knew her well and learn about her many accomplishments and contributions.

By way of brief summary, Ginny came to Nashua in the early 1980s as the sole school psychologist and built a school psychology department that continues to exemplify the diverse role of the school psychologist. She moved on to U. Mass. Boston, eventually directing and growing the School Psychology graduate program there. Her impact on training of new school psychologists extended well beyond her classes and program, to develop strong collaborative partnerships among the half dozen graduate programs in Massachusetts. This has led to more and better practicum and internship opportunities for students. She has lectured and published extensively, including the definitive book on Professional development and Supervision, co-authored with her colleague Joan Struzziero.

Peg Dawson

Ginny and I were young mothers when we met (actually, Ginny may have still been pregnant), so long ago the mists of time have folded in around those memories. I remember a building somewhere along Route 3 in Hooksett where we designed and built the New Hampshire Association of School Psychologists. I know there were more people involved, but I have the mists of time as an excuse for being fuzzy on the details. What I remember was two people in their early 30's deciding they could not only be mothers and hold a job, but also could carve out time to help create an organization that 35 years later is still going strong.

And I remember Ginny during her years of being Nashua's sole school psychologist. By the time she left, she'd created a whole department of school psychologists. It stood out because Ginny had the vision to think beyond the referent-place model that was pretty entrenched at the time. If you had asked back then, "What does an expanded role for school psychologists look like?" I would have referred you to Nashua.

And then she moved on to her next challenge.

Ginny's accomplishments extend well beyond what I can cite. But perhaps her greatest accomplishment is that she touched and impacted so many people's lives and careers. Whether a student or a seasoned colleague, everyone who knew her can tell of how she taught, encouraged and modeled ways to be a better school psychologist and a better human being. Even as Ginny's professional work shifted to Massachusetts and the Boston area, she always felt a strong affiliation and commitment to school psychology in NH. She served as President of NHASP, Ethics Chair for many years, and was a regular presence in NHASP leadership activities.

I came to know Ginny through our mutual work in NHASP. I knew that she was doing some remarkable work in Nashua and I was quite in awe upon meeting her, and touched by her reaching out to me as a friend. I felt encouraged to dream and pursue ideas and projects that were seeds of thought. Even though I did not actualize all of them, I always felt that Ginny was available to validate, encourage and provide whatever support I would be willing to reach out for. She voiced and modeled a vision that I aspired and continue to work toward. She, among others in NHASP, has been important role models and mentors to me through the years. I am forever grateful to have known Ginny.

When she joined UMass Boston, I was impressed with her ability to make that transition (and maybe even more impressed with her ability to make that commute!). Once again, she tackled the job, and maybe even transformed it. I think Ginny was a natural problem solver. She looked at the status quo and asked, "How could it be improved?"

In more recent years, I have fond memories of connecting with Ginny at NHASP meetings and NASP conferences. We'd converse over lunch or go out to breakfast together and catch up. Never enough time, and I so regret not being able to get together with her last fall when she was in the state and suggested we meet. What I remember about those conversations was the deep thinking they engendered. In retrospect, the theme of those discussions seemed to be "here's what life has taught me since the last time we met." Life... work...life's work. I'm so happy that Ginny got to experience retirement before the end. In fact, I think of her as a model for my own retirement, whenever that may come—taking on new interests, reviving old ones, staying close to family. I'm just so sorry that that time was cut short.

Fredye Sherr

There are innumerable reasons that I will remember Ginny. More than three decades ago she was my supervisor and mentor, making a lasting difference in my professional life in a way that I am sure that she never realized. How you might ask? I was going on vacation, flying to California, and Ginny gave me a book on family systems to read on the flight. The name of the book I don't recall. Amazingly, I did actually read it. I had a Eureka moment! Not only did I understand family systems, but schools and school districts as systems...what supports change and what challenges change. This realization gave me valuable insights, making me a more effective school psychologist throughout my career.

I will miss Ginny's broad smile that made her eyes twinkle and crinkle. Beyond our professional work together, Ginny became my friend. We were roommates for many NASP Conventions. Over the decades we shared family changes, the growing of children, caring for aging parents, marriages, and the birth of grandchildren. When we last spent time together, I was surprised to find out that she was writing stories about her childhood and family history. I was doing the same and we talked about the personal rewards we were finding in this writing, so different from writing reports, articles or books. Yes, there so many reasons that I will miss, but remember, Ginny, my mentor and more importantly my friend.

Peter Whelley

Over the years, Ginny and I have had a precious few conversations often at professional gatherings of NHASP, NASP and ISPA. Often the conversations about our families, kids growing up, theater productions and of course professional discussions about the practice of school psychology. Following one such conversation at an ISPA conference in Tampere Finland, it came to me that Ginny listened as if there is no one else in the room, or nothing else to pay attention to at that moment. I will miss not only her sage and steady advice, but also her ability to be truly present with each of us.

Ψ

NHASP Briefs

School Psychology Awareness Week 2016 is happening on November 14-18! The theme is, "Small Steps Change Lives!" For ideas and materials please visit <https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/advocacy-tools-and-resources/school-psychology-awareness-week-2016> or simply do a search for the four words above in bold.

Advance Notice. Next fall's conference is headed back to Portsmouth on November 6, 2017. Tentative topics include autism and working with behavior. Stay tuned for more details.

The **Spring Conference 2017** will be held on Friday, March 24th, again in Concord at the Grappone Center. Paul LeBuffe returns to address both social emotional learning and growth mindsets in schools. He will cover assessment though interventions. Given the ESSA's emphasis on these areas, this will be an essential recharge, so put it on your calendar now!

Keep an eye and an ear out for the debut of a multimedia shout out to one of **NASP**

Domains, appearing soon on our website: <http://www.nhaspweb.org/>

The **Second Annual School Mental Health Summit** will take place on Friday, May 19, 2017, at a venue to be determined. Our speaker, Dan Jacobs, will address substance abuse in our schools. This crucial discussion will include prevention, intervention, and family supports.

As of the publication date NHASP has **163 paid members!** Thank you for adding your voice to the multitude supporting the education of children.

The NHASP Board spent part of their October meeting discussing the shortage of school psychologists in the state and particulars of Alternative IV certification with **Alan Pardy**, executive director of the New Hampshire Association of Special Education Administrators. Look for details in the next issue.

Congratulations to Lauryn Barton, now **Lauryn Spadafore**, on her marriage to Nick in Sanbornton on September 10, 2016!!

Education as a Civil Right for All

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characteristic, or by topic. Data topics are grouped into six categories, Demographics, Economic Well-Being, Education, Family & Community, Health, and Safety & Risky Behavior. I encourage you to explore the Kids Count data regarding child and family well-being in your state.

The "Capitol Hill Experience" occurred on day three. We began by hearing from a panel of Capitol Hill staff. The panel consisted of two Education Policy Advisors from the Senate HELP Committee, including one from the Minority Staff and one from the Majority Staff, and a legislative aide. They shared their experiences in working on the Every Student Succeeds Act. Coming up with the language of the new law took many months of work with rarely a day off and long hours that often went straight through the night (it's truly not a myth created by television shows). Listening to them made me happy to be a school psychologist! Kate and I then met with people from Senator Shaheen's office, Senator Ayotte's office and Representative Guinta's office. We were able to share NHASP's Key Messages (found on our website under "About NHASP"), in some cases we provided a better understanding of the role of school psychologists, and we asked questions and expressed concerns moving forward with ESSA. We learned of the disagreement between the House and the Senate regarding funding of Title IV, which includes funding for comprehensive school mental health services.

Emily Russell joined Kate Salvati for the two-day advanced training. This training was a more in-depth look at the theme of equity in education. Discussions emphasized the need to understand and address opportunity gaps, achievement gaps and discipline gaps, culminating in the message that students' zip code should not determine their access to quality education.

I encourage you to visit NASP's Research & Policy page online to view all the wonderful resources provided on ESSA and to see what you can do to encourage your elected officials to fully fund Title IV Part A. Remember, in the words of Melissa Reeves, "Small Steps Change Lives." Ψ

NHASP Invites You to Attend a Regional Meeting!

NHASP has identified seven regions in New Hampshire to facilitate communication among school psychologists and between the Executive Board and Membership.

Why attend a regional meeting?

Regional meetings provide members with:

- Professional development
- The sharing of information and resources
- A voice to share concerns
- An opportunity for case discussion
- Collegial support
- Mentoring

Find the region nearest you:

[NHASP Regions Map.pdf](#)

Regional Representatives are voting members of the executive board and as such can relay your thoughts to the board.

Contact your Regional Representative if you have any questions about your region, regional meetings, or the work of NHASP. Emails are listed in each edition of the Protocol.

The Importance of Social Emotional Learning as Presented by Paul LeBuffe

by: Katherine Misiaszek, Student of School Psychology

I found Paul LeBuffe, our speaker at May's 2016 School Mental Health Summit: Promoting Student Success through Behavioral Wellness, to be very engaging. He started off by explaining the somewhat controversial topic of social emotional learning (SEL) in schools. Popular publications such as the New York Times and the Seacoast Times have been presenting SEL in a negative frame and discouraging the idea of measuring social emotional skills in schools. LeBuffe clarifies that SEL is a set of skills, not a personality or character trait, and that as such we can teach them, just like we would teach something like reading or math.

In his presentation LeBuffe clears up some controversial topics regarding SEL by providing us with research to prove its worth. He draws us in by saying, "Rarely are people fired for lack of skill; typically, they are given a learning opportunity if they are lacking a skill in a job. However what people are most commonly fired for is lack of SEL skills" (LeBuffe, 2016). The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills Report from 1999 surveyed employers about the skills needed in the workforce. The results showed that 50 percent of the skills reported by employers were SEL skills, such as decision-making, personal responsibility, sociability, and integrity (LeBuffe, 2016). If the purpose of school is to prepare our youth to be part of the work force, and thus a contributing part of society, then we need to teach them the SEL skills they will need to be successful.

Another valid point in favor of teaching SEL in schools is that these skills are needed and are actually the basis of being able to perform academic skills. For example, when reading is broken down into elements such as individual reading, group exploration of text, and student led discussion and analysis, several SEL skills

are needed. Looking at the element of group exploration of text, a student needs self-management skills such as self-control, self-motivation, and perspective taking. Furthermore, relationship skills are required for this task, such as being able to resolve conflicts and communicate effectively. Lastly, decision making skills are needed in group exploration of text like evaluating consequences of actions, behaving ethically, and considering the well-being of the group and self (LeBuffe, 2016).

Although some critics of SEL doubt its abilities to do things like close the poverty gap in education, LeBuffe provides us with actual data on how it can! In a study conducted among 3rd graders in Anchorage, Alaska, low income explained 24 percent of the variance on standards based assessments (SBA). In other words, poverty was responsible for affecting reading skills by 24 percent. Once SEL competencies were added to their curriculum, the variance between low-income students and middle class students in reading went from 24 percent down to 9 percent. He claims that if we can increase SEL by just one standard deviation we would offset the income achievement gap. Once SEL programs are in place, schools are predicted to improve by .5 standard deviations a year (LeBuffe, 2016)! The take away point being that we can't change people's income so let's focus on something we can change and that is the fact that we can increase SEL skills in today's learners.

LeBuffe expresses how important universal screeners for SEL are. In order to teach SEL skills it is imperative to have these assessments to help guide instruction. In fact, assessment is only useful if it can guide instruction and lead to better outcomes for students. If you want to prevent SEL problems,

then you need to practice prevention instead of intervention. Assessments can help us identify and implement prevention procedures before intervention is necessary. Once you are practicing interventions, it means that the behavior has already manifested; once the behavior has manifested, the student is already getting in trouble; and when the student gets in trouble their self-esteem is already starting to diminish (LeBuffe, 2016). The point of assessment is to prevent this from happening! In his research for the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) LeBuffe and colleagues followed approximately 12,000 students age 6-16 in Allentown, Pennsylvania. In this study these students were given the DESSA in October, but no SEL skills were taught. In the Allentown school there were tiered levels of infractions the students could get in trouble for, 1 being the most minor infraction resulting in a talking to and 4 being the highest infraction which led to things like out-of-school suspension. At the end of the school year researchers found out that children who were identified as needing SEL skills in October from the DESSA were 4 times more likely to commit a level 3 or 4 offense (LeBuffe, 2016). This proves that we are able to predict fairly accurately the students who need SEL skills. If the students in this study were to have been given SEL skills starting back in October most of these level 3 and 4 infractions could have been prevented.

There is an increasing amount of evidence that social and emotional skills are essential to school and life success. As educators we are not trying to take the place of parents or other outside organizations in teaching students values or changing their personalities, we are

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Social Emotional Learning

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trying to provide them with skills to be successful in life and the community. As school psychologists we can see the value in implementing these skills with a data driven approach in order to more accurately target instruction and provide data on the success of our interventions. LeBuffe spends some time promoting the DESSA which is a strength-based approach to assessing student SEL skills. The fact that such a tool as the DESSA exists should ease critic's complaints about having one more test to tell schools and students what they are doing wrong. The DESSA being a strength-based assessment focuses on identifying student strengths and needs (LeBuffe, 2016). Once identified, educators are encouraged to use these strengths in order to help improve student needs. As you can see,

although recent media has portrayed social emotional learning and assessment in a negative light, there is actually a lot of research that supports SEL and after attending this year's School Mental Health Summit, I do too!

LeBuffe, P. (2016). *Lecture on Promoting Students' Social and Emotional Competence: A Data-Driven Approach*. Personal Collection of P. LeBuffe, The Devereux Center for Resilient Children, Villanova, PA.

Ed. note: This is reprinted from the previous issue, when I needed to truncate it to fit. I think the ending is important and worth revisiting. My apologies to Katie. Ψ

A President's Message

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has been a tremendous benefit to me, both personally and professionally. I have met so many great and talented people, I feel less isolated in my job, I'm more informed of the most current progress and challenges in the field, and I finally feel empowered, like I can make a difference in ways that will impact more than one child at a time.

This president's message is not really about me, despite how it sounds. I share this report of my own journey in an effort to encourage each of you to consider moving beyond your comfort zone. Whether that involves becoming more active in NHASP or doing something else, my opening message to you is this: Take a risk and bring some aspect of your professional experience to the next level, you may surprise yourself! Ψ

Save \$50 on Registration for the NASP 2017 Annual Convention

Registration is now open for the NASP 2017 Annual Convention, February 21–24, 2017 in San Antonio, TX! Save \$50 when you register by November 9, and be entered to win a registration refund. Find details at www.nasponline.org/NASP2017.

This convention is gives you the opportunity to:

Look at challenges with a fresh perspective and bring home recommendations from other practitioners,

Earn continuing professional development (CPD) credit for your national certification or state licensure,

Enhance your crisis prevention and response capacity with the PREPaRE curriculum,

Learn about the latest research in the profession,

Connect with colleagues about future career opportunities, and

Shape the future of the profession by mentoring graduate students and early career professionals.

Topics will include multitiered service delivery, evidence-based interventions, family–school collaboration, support for diverse populations, and more.

Locate materials to convince your supervisor to approve your attendance, get registration and hotel details, and more at www.nasponline.org/NASP2017.

CORRECTION:

The previous issue (Summer 2016) was incorrectly numbered as Volume 34 Number II when in fact it was Volume 34 Number III. We regret the error.



The 10 Domains of the NASP Practice Model

The ten domains of the NASP Practice Model are organized into four broad groups. The detailed list available on the public side of the NASP website (see link below) enumerates the professional skills school psychologists possess in each of the domains. Please refer to the site for more detail.

In the “Practices That Permeate All Aspects of Service Delivery” group are 1) Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability; and 2) Consultation and Collaboration.

In the “Direct and Indirect Services for Children, Families, and Schools: Student Level Services” group are 3) Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills; and 4) Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills.

In the “Systems-Level Services” group are 5) School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning; 6) Preventive and Responsive Services; and 7) Family–School Collaboration Services.

In the “Foundations of School Psychological Service Delivery” group are 8) Diversity in Development and Learning; 9) Research and Program Evaluation; and 10) Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice.

<https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/nasp-practice-model/nasp-practice-model-implementation-guide/section-i-nasp-practice-model-overview/nasp-practice-model-10-domains> (Accessed 4/23/16)

These domains reflect the comprehensive and integrated role of school psychologists. Ψ

More is Changing

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across all the domains of the NASP Practice Model. Indeed, we see that happening here in New Hampshire.

I am particularly struck this year by how well NASP’s key initiatives match up against our state association’s ongoing (2015-18) strategic plan. The NASP initiatives are to: 1) address critical shortages in school psychology; 2) advance our role as qualified mental health providers; 3) advocate for the NASP Practice Model; and 4) develop leadership skills and qualities of school psychologists. At the state level, we continue to take steps to enhance the skills of practitioners and educators to deliver quality services to children, families, and school.

Finally, let me note that the annual changing of the leaves mirrors how all of us grow over time as individuals. Your membership in NASP provides you a powerful opportunity to embrace change along with thousands of like-minded professionals. Ψ

Helping Teenagers to Develop

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learn to collaborate with others – peers and adults – in their learning. They need to see how their special gifts and talents help others to accomplish things they could not accomplish on their own. They need to be excited about learning because education speaks to them in ways that makes them want to be in school and stay in school. Their achievements in writing, speaking, art, music, science and other subjects should be openly exhibited for all to see. Adults must have reasonable expectations for teenagers – not so high as to discourage them and not so low as to bore or insult them. Teenagers also need to experience a sense of power. They need to feel that they have a voice and that their imagination, idealism, creativity

and thinking ability can affect their surroundings in positive ways. Teenagers need to help make rules, decisions, and policies that affect them because only then will they feel a sense of ownership. Coercive, top down control will only alienate teenagers and cause them to resist. It is tragic that as children move through the grades, parental involvement decreases. High school teachers and parents need to have conversations about expectations for parental involvement. Too often parents feel criticized by high school teachers for being overinvolved and underinvolved which causes confusion for parents. Teenagers need parents just as much as preschoolers do, perhaps even more but in a different way. We also have

to accommodate teens’ needs, respect them, and hold them accountable for their behavior. Teenagers want the security of boundaries but they also want and need to be themselves – to forge their own identities with our gentle assistance and loving care. As with a kite, we must let the string out gradually. The relationship that we have with our adult children has everything to do with how we helped them develop. We will know how well we did our job by how little they needs us in their adulthood and how they treat us in our old age. Ψ

Helping Teenagers to Develop

by Leo R. Sandy

As children begin to emerge into teenagers, their parents often wish the child they knew for eleven or twelve years would come back – the child who cooperated, listened, and was helpful and friendly. For some parents, it is as if the body snatchers came in the middle of the night and left a double of their child but now with curled lips, rolled eyes, shrugged shoulders, irritability, and a habit of slamming doors. Dealing with teenagers can be equally challenging for teachers who are confronted by volatile emotions, oppositional behavior, silliness, and intense egocentrism. This egocentrism comes in two major forms – the “imaginary audience” and “personal fable”. Because the blinders of the school age child are no longer providing the teenager with a constricted and benign view of the world, they begin to see everything there is around them in a more critical way, especially their own faults and the faults of adults, hence the “imaginary audience”. They become very self-conscious believing that everyone is thinking about them and talking about them. One way they deal with this is by finding fault with peers and adults. This serves to take the focus off themselves. Thus, name-calling, teasing, and bullying become ways to divert attention from themselves to others. Another aspect of egocentrism is the “personable fable” – a story they tell themselves about their own sense of invincibility or immortality. Even though they intellectually know they are mortal, they deny it and act as if they were indestructible. Thus, becoming sexually active, overdosing on drugs, getting drunk, driving at excessive speeds, and engaging in high-risk behavior in general are common. From the point of view of teens, getting a sexually transmitted disease, becoming pregnant,



or dying in a car accident only happen to “stupid people” and not them. Thus, scare tactics that adult use to discourage teenagers from engaging in high-risk behavior have little effect on them. The personal fable also causes the teenager to believe that their experiences, especially bad

ones, have never happened to anyone else and that things will also get worse before they get better. Teenagers tend not to see lights at the end of tunnels. This accounts for much teenage depression and suicide.

The two dangerous responses by adult caretakers to the teenager’s budding sense of independence are holding on too tight to them and letting go too easily. When a teenager’s need for autonomy is stifled s/he can be intensely belligerent, hostile, oppositional, sneaky, outwardly conforming or even resort to running away from home. When parents relinquish their job of providing limits and boundaries and try to become friends with their children or bribe them, teenagers feel unloved and unsupported. In an attempt to get their parents to care and say no, teenagers will often test the limits and get involved with drugs, become promiscuous, do poorly in school, drink excessively, and/or engage in criminal acts. Parents and teachers are powerful models for teenagers and they will learn what we do more than what we say. A disconnected teen falls easy prey to negative peer influence. Also, if the parent-teen relationship is highly conflicted, the teen may resort to revenge and find the parent’s weak spot. For example, the teen could get arrested if his parent is a police officer, commit arson if his parent is a fire fighter, or fail in school if his parent is a teacher.

The teenage brain has been described as a “work in progress”. This is because teenagers often perceive things from the part of the brain that is associated with

earlier evolution, i.e., the primitive brain called the amygdala. Most adults process information and experiences from the modern brain or frontal cortex. Thus, teenagers may not pick up on our cues and our disapproving expressions. This may cause adults to see teenagers as insensitive and self-absorbed.

What we also have to remember is that teenagers have certain needs that, when met, will result in healthy and productive functioning that will provide the foundation for the rest of their adult lives. One thing that teenagers need is a sense of significance. They need to have their individuality acknowledged and appreciated. They need to be prized for whom they are rather than just for what they do as in getting good grades, providing community service, or doing well in sports. They need to feel supported, cared about, and loved. They need us to spend time with them and allow them their own time as well. They need to be listened to so they will listen to us. They need to feel that their decisions are respected and, unless their safety is an issue, they need to be allowed to fail so they that can learn from their mistakes. They need to know that we trust them to make good decisions and to use failure as a learning experience to grow and change. Our trust in them will help them trust themselves so that they will get up when they fall. Teenagers also need to experience a sense of competence. We must set them up for success by making sure that the tasks we set out for them are challenging but doable. If things come too easy for teenagers, they will not learn the sense of exhilaration that comes with doing something well. They will not be able to know that anything worth doing often requires hard work and frustration. We must provide just enough structure for teenagers so that they have some freedom of movement and choice. They need to

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www.nhaspweb.org

for the most up to date
information on upcoming
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and more!

The New Hampshire Association of School Psychologists publishes the Protocol, its official publication, four times a year and distributes it to members as a membership benefit. We also send copies to all superintendents of schools in New Hampshire and to members of the NASP newsletter editors' network. NHASP's goals are to serve the education and mental health needs of New Hampshire children.

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*Protocol Newsletter layout & design
by Pizzazz Publishing*

Deadlines for Submission

Upcoming issues of Protocol will have the following deadlines for submission of articles, news and announcements:

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Issue</u>
April 15	Spring
July 15	Summer
October 15	Fall
January 15	Winter