

West Virginia Psychologists Association Perspectives

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President's Message

Sometimes we seek leadership and sometimes leadership is thrust upon us. For what it's worth, I have always looked at myself as falling into the latter category. Whichever the case, I thank you for expressing your confidence in me, and want you to know that I am looking forward to the opportunity of serving as WVSPA President, 2003-04.

My major goal as WVSPA President will be to strengthen our profession by enhancing the level of communication and information sharing among our members. I hope to achieve this, in part, through the revamping of the WVSPA webpage. I also see the utilization of email, as well as the creation of listserves to enable more regular and timely communication with executive board members, regional representatives, and among the profession as a whole. I am sure the possibilities are limitless and I invite you to share your ideas with me.

There are moments that define us as individuals just as there are moments that define an organization or profession. I believe that our profession will be experiencing one of those moments in the very near future. I encourage and invite you to work with me to strengthen our profession during this defining moment so that we can more ably meet the growing needs of the children and families we have been entrusted to serve.

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WVSPA Fall Conference

The WVSPA Fall Conference is slated for October 29-31, at the Lakeview Golf Resort & Spa in Morgantown, WV. The agenda has not been finalized yet, however, topics include: "Under-Represented Gifted" by Sherry Kieffer, "Minds Matter: All Children Can Learn" and "Integrating Neuropsychological Principles into the Schools" by Dr. Dan Miller, NASP President. We also hope to conclude the conference by continuing the discussion on legislative/licensure issues.

Accommodation rates for the conference are \$66 single or double. Individual reservations can be made by calling the Resort directly at (800) 624-8300 or (304) 594-1111. To receive the Group rate, please identify yourself as attendees of the WVSPA conference. Deadline for reservations is September 29.

Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend. More details about the conference and Conference Registration Forms will be published in August.

NASP 2003 Convention Notes

By

Toni G. Parsons

The outbreak of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) did not put Toronto on my list of favorite places to see. But I had made a commitment so I wasn't about to change my mind and cancel my plans to attend the NASP 2003 Convention. The uneasiness I felt reminded me a little of how I felt several years ago on my way to attend a Behavior Disorders conference in Charlotte, N.C. I think it was in 1989. Hurricane Hugo had hit the east coast a day or so before the conference was to begin and raced northward through Morgantown. Winds gusting from 50 to 80 mph literally ripped the tops out of trees surrounding my house.

The Adam's Mark Hotel in Charlotte had been damaged but the conference was still on. Rather than arriving in Charlotte the night before the conference (in the midst of all the hurricane aftermath), as planned, my wife and I stayed overnight in Statesville, N.C. We hoped that one more day would give our hotel and the city a little more time to clean up some of the storm damage. The conference went off without any major problems except for some electrical difficulties that interfered with highly sophisticated, technological driven presentations (PowerPoint). I had an opportunity to see my brother, who still lives in Charlotte, and also caught a glimpse of Reverend Jim Baker who was under indictment at the time

(remember Tammy Faye). But I digress. Upon my return to work, the Business Office threatened to not cover my first night's expenses (even though it was less money) because I had made an interim stop. Go figure.

As for Toronto, it is a beautiful city and I had a view of the CN Tower from my room on the 26th floor. I saw a performance of the smash hit musical, MAMMA MIA! at the Royal Alexandra Theatre and, oh yes, attended several of the conference sessions.

The State Leadership Meeting I attended was divided into three segments. The first part, for instance, looked at needs from the state perspective and highlighted national priorities identified by the Futures Conference. Participants then had the option of two "breakout" workshops and I chose the one on developing websites. I also participated in a number of other sessions, including one entitled, IDEA Reauthorization: The Expanding Role of the School Psychologist. I don't know about you, but my note taking has a lot of room for improvement, so I won't be able to do any of the presentations true justice. However, let me attempt to share with you 15 priority goals generated by the Futures Conference, and then I will end with some abbreviated excerpts from the IDEA Reauthorization session.

FUTURES CONFERENCE: 15 PRIORITY GOALS

1. Advocate for universal early prevention and intervention programs.
2. Ensure that assessment practices of school psychologists are empirically-linked to strategies to improve academic performance.
3. Develop and implement in-service training for school psychologists
4. Promote the availability of a comprehensive range of services.
5. Educate all stakeholders about the importance of social-emotional competence
6. Ensure that school psychologists develop a plan to reduce social/emotional barriers to learning
7. Identify evidence-based models of effective family-school partnerships
8. Ensure that families are integral partners in the educational process
9. Change school psychology training to focus on families as integral partners
10. Identify key components of effective instruction of all learners.
11. Provide in-service training for school psychologists in the use of data-based problem solving model.
12. Implement a national training initiative for school psychologists regarding effective instruction.
13. Define and promote population-based service delivery.
14. Prepare current practitioners to implement a public health model.
15. Prepare future practitioners to implement a public health model.

NASP invites state associations to participate in

implementing the goals of the Futures Conference and recommends that states focus on 1-3 goals that are most relevant and appropriate for their own states.

The following are abbreviated excerpts from the IDEA Reauthorization slide presentation, but I also regularly see similar phraseology when reading the discussion section of most *School Psychology Review* articles.

- * School psychologists are not only needed to implement...they have the ability, skills and statutory license to move among programs.
- * School psychologists are the link...
- * School psychologists work with all students and all staff.
- * School psychologists are needed as the assessment experts...
- * School psychologists have the skills and experience...
- * School psychologists can make the case...
- * School psychologists must continue to define their roles and stress the importance of the qualifications...
- * School psychologists are the providers of early behavioral interventions...
- * School psychologists are trained experts in identification...
- * School psychologists as facilitators...and innovators of...
- * School psychologists as advocates for prevention and effective interventions.
- * School psychologists as consultants in learning and behavior.

Wouldn't one think after reading the above statements that school psychologists would:

- ✓ be employed at a decent wage?
- ✓ be employed in sufficient numbers to be able to provide a modicum of services?
- ✓ never have to worry about losing their jobs?
- ✓ never have to listen to a teacher berate them and tell them they are incompetent?
- ✓ never have to listen to a parent berate them and tell them they are incompetent?
- ✓ never have to wait for the custodian's room to become available before being able to work with a student in crisis?
- ✓ have office space that could be furnished with equipment that wasn't being discarded by the clerical

staff?

Wouldn't you think that would be the case?

Thoughts on My Presidency By Charles Szasz

The coming of summer reminds me of our vacation trip last summer to Ireland. On a flight from London to Dublin, I had a pleasant conversation with a gentleman who was flying home to see his father who was very ill. He told me that he was an investment banker in California. When he asked what I did for a living, I told him I was a school psychologist in West Virginia. He then made the comment that my profession was one that makes a real difference for children, which made me feel good. While we all know that school psychologists do indeed make a difference for children, it is not often we hear this comment from others.

As school psychologists, we are facing many immediate and long-term challenges to our profession at the national and state levels. At the national level, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation is placing school systems under considerable pressure for all students to do well in schools and on standardized group tests. I see the NCLB as an opportunity for school psychologists to step out of their typical roles and use their expertise to help schools modify or design classroom instruction for students. It is also an opportunity to work more closely with administrators, classroom teachers and student assistance teams.

This is also a critical time for all children in our country. As school psychologists, we must be sensitive to their mental health needs and provide support and counseling to them. This is especially true for children of families that may not have economic resources to obtain counseling services.

At the state level, the West Virginia Board of Examiners of Psychologists (WVBOE) appears determined to reinterpret and change the psychologist licensing laws. At our last WVSPA Executive Board meeting, Bob Childers, our school psychologist representative on the board, reported that the board had "reinterpreted" the school psychologist licensing law. The board, which is made up of several new members, verbally approved clinical licensed psychologists working in schools without being certified or licensed as school psychologists. This is contrary to the purpose and intent of the school psychologist licensing law, which was to insure that children would receive appropriate psychological services by trained and competent school psychologists.

I invited Dr. Stephen O'Keefe to our meeting to assist the

executive board in preparing a response to the WVBOE's actions. As one of his first graduate school psychologist students and as a colleague, I felt that Dr. O'Keefe's wisdom and professional knowledge about school and clinical psychology would be a valuable asset in understanding the issues involved with the WVBOE and how to deal with them. After much discussion, the board voted to have an attorney ready to file a Writ of Mandamus when the WVBOE issues a written statement regarding their new interpretation of the school psychologists licensing law. Bob relayed the intentions of the WVSPA Executive Board to the WVBOE. At the time of this writing, the WVBOE has not yet made a written statement pertaining to their new interpretation of the school psychologist law. If and when this statement is issued, the executive board is committed to aggressively fight the WVBOE.

The school psychologist licensing law was borne out of the need in the 1990's to show that the field of school psychology is a unique and specialized field of psychology. The training of school psychologists differs not only in its scope from other disciplines of psychology but also in its requirement of completing greater coursework and completing a year of internship working in public schools to earn an Ed.S. degree. This differs from the coursework requirements for clinical psychologists who achieve a MA degree.

The emergence of a letter sent by Dr. Thomas Stein, WVBOE Secretary, to Representative Lindsey Hugh Holliman in North Carolina is also very alarming to both school psychologists and clinical psychologists alike. Dr. Stein indicated that the WVBOE had unanimously voted to propose to the West Virginia Legislature licensure revisions to require all psychologists in West Virginia to have a Ph.D. in psychology rather than the required minimum of a master's degree. Dr. Stein indicated that the rationale for this change is that the master's prepared candidates who have completed five years of post degree supervision never achieved a minimum passing average score of 70% or 140 out of a possible 200 on the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (E.P.P.P.). The letter points out that the WVBOE concluded that the candidates for licensure were marginally prepared and the WVBOE routinely found it necessary to require restrictions on practice activities and impose additional supervision requirements. While the WVBOE did admit that a few master's prepared candidates did exceptionally well, no figures were reported regarding the number of licensing candidates who were deemed marginally prepared. There was no mention of the WVBOE examining the supervision practices, which may be inadequate.

Dr. Stein also indicated that the change in licensing law

would provide greater protection of West Virginia citizens. It is readily apparent to me and others on the WVSPA Board that such a change in the licensing law would actually have an opposite effect than what the WVBOE intended. It would result in the severe restriction of psychological services for West Virginia citizens. In these unsettling times it would be especially devastating for West Virginians to be unable to get mental health services. This would be very similar to having a shortage of doctors in West Virginia to provide adequate health services to the state's citizens.

Last, but not least is the WVBOE's proposal for an increase in licensing fees for licensed school and clinical psychologists. All licensed psychologists received letters a few months ago from the WVBOE about these fee increases. In some instances, the increase is 150%, which is drastic and outrageous. These increases seemed unwarranted and arbitrary. The WVSPA Board is opposing these changes proposed by the WVBOE. I urge you to write the WVBOE and let them know about your concerns about these proposed changes. I also suggest that you write your legislator and the governor to express your displeasure with WVBOE's proposed actions.

2003 WVSPA Awards

By

Nancy Cooper

During the spring 2003 WVSPA conference, awards were presented for the State Psychologists of the Year, Chloe Hollinger, Exemplary Program in the Delivery of School Psychological Services, National Certificate of Appreciation, and the Special Friend of Children Award. This year's recipient of the State School Psychologist of the Year was presented to *Lottie Pack*, Logan County, in recognition of providing a full scope of school psychological services that benefit the students in West Virginia in an exemplary manner. The Chloe Hollinger award was presented to *Nancy Cooper*, Wood County, for providing exemplary services to the field of school psychology in the state of West Virginia. Putnam County Schools Office of Special Education, *Debra Layne, Patricia Mickel, Rachael Parde, Kathy Showen, Leann Vaughn, and Bonnie Vickers*, received the Exemplary Program in the Delivery of School Psychological Services Award. The award was presented in recognition of implementation of innovative practices or programs by a county school system. *Angel Madia*, Harrison County, was the West Virginia School Psychologists Association nominee for the National Certificate of Appreciation for professional activity, leadership, and dedication in promoting government and professional relations and children's rights. *Dr. Fred Krieg* was presented the Special Friend of

Children Award. This award was presented for outstanding dedication to the children of West Virginia and commitment to the profession of school psychology and for advocating on behalf of children to improve education and mental health services for children, youth and their families.

Honorary guests that attended the luncheon were Dr. Friebel, Superintendent and Vic Fisher, Director of Special Education from Harrison County; David Godbey, Superintendent and Jim Guy, Director of Special Education from Logan County, Dr. Santelle, Superintendent, Mr. Hatfield, Assistant Superintendent, and Pat Homberg, Director of Special Education from Putnam County; and Dr. Santin, Director of Special Education from Wood County.

Special congratulations to the award recipients. Special thanks to those who nominated the individuals for the awards. Start thinking now about whom you want to nominate for next year's awards.

Special Friend of Children Award

Fred Jay Krieg, Ph.D.

By

Heather L. Paxton

Editor's Note:

Dr. Fred Krieg has committed the better part of his life helping and working for the improvement of education for children and families in the state of West Virginia. His commitment and drive has expanded to the Marshall University Graduate College School Psychology program. As a Professor, he works diligently, preparing future school psychologists for this endeavor. He has served as the West Virginia Delegate to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) for eight years now, and by statute, this is the last year he may serve in this position. Dr. Krieg replaced Beverly Winters as West Virginia's NASP delegate in 1995, who had also served her maximum term. During his tenure as delegate, Dr. Krieg served for two years as the Southeastern Representative to the Executive Council of NASP. Dr. Krieg also served on NASP's Educational Research Trust, which funds research projects aimed at benefiting children and their families. When asked to reflect on his experiences as West Virginia's Delegate to NASP, Dr. Krieg conveyed a very positive and moving attitude on his years of service:

NASP is a vibrant, politically astute organization, which is member-driven. At its base is a central office staff, which is solid, well organized, and efficiently administrated. Susan Gorin is an outstanding Executive Director. During

my eight-year tenure, NASP went through an organization restructuring designed to allow greater member input. The structure has been studied and refined using the data-based decision making system, which has become the "hallmark" of school psychology. NASP has gained respect among other professional organizations, especially the United States Department of Education and key legislators. Our success in that area is only matched by failure to work out our differences with the American Psychology Association (APA). Although our differences with Division 16 are not substantial, our overriding differences with APA led to the dissolution of the Interprofessional Organizational Committee (IOC). NASP continues to advocate for children, their families, and for the profession of school psychology. APA's position has been much more guild oriented and focused on when and how those services should be provided. A great deal of effort has been directed to reauthorization of IDEA and the "No Children Left Behind" legislature. At the most recent delegate assembly meeting, efforts have been made to develop a position paper on the identification of learning disabled students. With the recent move to eliminate the "IQ discrepancy" model in identification of learning disabilities which relies on a "wait-to-fail" approach, school psychologists are working to find a system of identification that will be fair and equitable.

What impresses you the most about NASP?

NASP has, more than any other entity that I can think of, truly helped define the role and function of school psychologists. Through publication of key books, NASP journals, and most importantly, the Communiqué, NASP keeps the working school psychologist informed and up-to-date. As I have moved into my position as full-time faculty member in the MUGC School Psychology program, I have become even more impressed with NASP's ability to guide the profession. NASP recently completed their annual convention in Toronto, which, despite the SARS virus, still represented the most effective way to continue professional development and network with colleagues. Next year, the convention will be in Dallas, Texas March 30th - April 3rd.

What do you think are other issues facing NASP today?

A major issue is the shortage of school psychologists and how to meet the growing demands of practitioners in the field. In addition, school psychologists must decide if they are mental health professionals in schools or whether they will continue to function as gatekeepers to special education.

Any last thoughts?

I have really enjoyed my time with NASP, especially my work as chairman of the Mental Health task force and my work on the Government and Professional Relations Committee. I want to thank all of the members of WVSPA for the opportunity to serve as your delegate and to thank everyone for my "Special Friend of Children" award.

about being the only school psychologist on the board?

Well, this is where the challenge I spoke of earlier comes in; it's the importance of school psychology in WV and in the schools. One should have a background in school psychology in order to work within the school system. I am not sure that all psychologists truly appreciate that school psychology is the blending of two disciplines, psychology and education.

What do you see as the future of school psychology in WV?

I think the role of school psychology is expanding everyday. When one looks at the "No Child Left Behind" and the reauthorization of IDEA, it becomes clear that it's not just about the assessment. Our roles are evolving to examine WHY children are having difficulties learning. Whether it is intellectually or a matter of a learning disability, it is our role to provide interventions to make students successful. Testing will always be a part of our role as school psychologists, but our responsibilities are expanding to become the problem solving person in the school system to relate data to student achievement.

Left Behind

Mr. Sturrock shares a transcript of a telephone call between a federal employee and a student who inadvertently got "left behind".

By Alan Sturrock (*Phi Delta Kappan*, p.560)

- * 0 "Hello...?Hello...?"
- * 0 "Hello, this is the federal government, which office would you like?"
- * 0 "I'd like to speak with the President."
- * 0 "The President is in Denver today, talking about school vouchers."
- * 0 "Well, can I speak to somebody about being left behind?"
- * 0 "Left behind? Where? When?"
- * 0 "Left behind in school..."
- * 0 "Oh, you must want Secretary Paige's office, then. Sorry, but he's in California,

How do you like your new assignment on the board?

It's very challenging and interesting. I have already learned a great deal by working with people on the board who have served for many years. I work in the area of school psychology where I am the only board member who is working as a school psychologist as well as in other areas of school psychology. My role is important because there is a need for the perspective of a school psychologist on the Board to integrate my perspective with that of my colleagues.

Did you feel like it was an endorsement of your professional skills that lead to your appointment or did you feel it were political?

I would like to think it was an endorsement of my background and interest to work in the area of school psychology and serving the public. I have a willingness to work with others and a commitment to improve the area.

Given the controversy of school psychology at this time, are you concerned

speaking about the Pledge of Allegiance.
Can I transfer you to someone else?
Hello, are you still there?"

- * 0 "I just need to talk with somebody about my problem."
- * 0 "Well, maybe I can help you. Why don't we start at the beginning?"
- * 0 "Well, you see, I was left behind."
- * 0 "Left behind...I don't quite understand."
- * 0 "You've hear about the No Child Left Behind Act?"
- * 0 "Of course."
- * 0 "Well, see, that's my problem. I was left behind. Now who can I talk to about this?"
- * 0 "Well, we don't actually have a complaints desk yet, because, you see, it's all so new."
- * 0 "That's what they all say. Anyway, it all started with a story in the local papers. That's when my mom and dad found out that I was in a failing school."
- * 0 "Where do you go to school?"
- * 0 "Madison James Elementary...in southern Maryland."
- * 0 "And you say that it's a failing school?"
- * 0 "Yep. No sustained significant progress in standardized test scores for the past two years."
- * 0 "But surely there are other factors. Percentage of free and reduced-price meals? Per-capita wealth of the district? Level of state aid?"
- * 0 "Nope. Just test scores."

- * 0 "But that's awful..."
- * 0 "Anyway, my parents found out that I could transfer to a high-performing school."
- * 0 "And..."
- * 0 "Well, I and 331 buds transferred to the Solomon Tichener School, and the long and the short of it is that, three months later, we had totally changed Solomon Tichener into a low-performing school."
- * 0 "So you went back to your original school?"
- * 0 "Nope. The people there figured out that, if they didn't want kids rotating in and out all the time, they should become a mediocre-performing school. So we were sent to another high-performance school, where..."
- * 0 "It happened again?"
- * 0 "You're starting to catch on. Suffice it to say that we were in four different high-performing schools last year.... brought them all down.
- * 0 "So what happens next?"
"Well, Mom says that, when our whole school district has just low-performing schools, then we can transfer to the school district next door."
"You mean, all 332 of you?"
- * 0 "Wait, we've accumulated another 226 along the way. It's like the Children's Crusade in that Vonnegut short story."
- * 0 "Really...I mean, really [changing tone]. Well, I think it's just terrible. Is there anything at all we can do? I mean what would happen if you brought all the

schools down--I mean changed all the schools--in the next school district too?"

- * 0 "Probably, we'd move on to the next state. My dad says that, when this is all said and done, there'll be a great big bunch of us left behind."
- * 0 "But surely that was not the intent of the legislation. I mean they told us it was working in Texas..."
- * 0 "Texas? Did you say Texas? Just where is that? Remember, I'm attending a low-performing school."
- * 0 "I understand. Well, Texas is south, south of here."
- * 0 "Do you go through Myrtle Beach? My dad loves to fish down there."
- * 0 "Well, I suppose you could...but it's sort of out of the way."
- * 0 "Say, you wouldn't happen to have a list of the high-performing schools in the Myrtle Beach area?"