

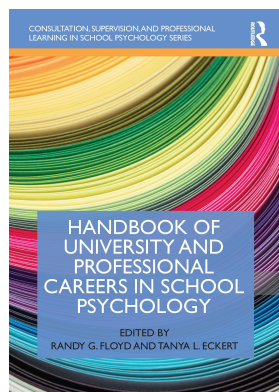
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Getting Involved in Professional Organizations

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30 Getting Involved in Professional Organizations

Sally L. Grapin, Celeste M. Malone, and Gary Stoner

Professional associations have an essential role in fostering the vitality of the field of school psychology. Among others, organizations such as the National Association of School Psychologists, American Psychological Association's Division 16 (School Psychology), and the International School Psychology Association promote the growth of school psychology by asserting its professional identity, maintaining standards for training and practice, and providing a powerful forum for collective advocacy. More importantly, these organizations enhance school psychologists' capacity to achieve their ultimate goal of supporting the well-being of youth and families. To accomplish this, professional associations rely heavily on the contributions of members who dedicate their time, talents, and other resources to advancing the organization's mission (Jimerson, 2014).

In school psychology, *professional organizational service* refers to contributions (in the form of time and assistance) to professional associations that directly or indirectly enhance the organization's capacity to advance or advocate for children and families, practice, training, or the profession itself. Professional organizational service may assume a variety of forms (as described later in this chapter) and confers a number of benefits on both members and the organization itself. For individuals, it can be vital for career development. Especially for university faculty, service to professional organizations can contribute to a well-rounded portfolio for tenure and promotion. Professional organizational service can also facilitate networking, which is critical for career advancement and professional development. For many school psychologists, involvement in professional organizations allows them to gain a deeper understanding of their profession (including its goals and challenges) as well as to establish communities of social support outside of their immediate local contexts (i.e., their districts, universities, or other employment settings).

This chapter provides an overview of professional organizational service in school psychology. Specifically, it discusses types of school psychology associations, theoretical and empirical considerations, and strategies for getting involved and advancing in professional service. We also provide recommendations for additional reading.

Types of Professional Organizations in School Psychology

The profession of school psychology is represented by several state, national, and international organizations. These organizations play a significant role in defining the profession, developing professional standards, and delineating the scope of practice (Jimerson, 2014). Some organizations are broad in scope and therefore represent not only school psychologists but also the populations they serve (e.g., children, families, and local education agencies). Others, however, are narrower in focus and represent specific constituencies within the profession (e.g., graduate educators, licensed psychologists, and graduate program directors). Examples of these organizations are described next.

National organizations. With over 25,000 members, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is the largest professional association of school psychologists in the United States. Its membership comprises school psychologists of all education levels (i.e., specialist and doctoral) and professional roles (e.g., practitioners, graduate educators, and graduate students). NASP is distinct from other school psychology organizations in that its mission broadly encompasses advocacy for the profession and for the populations school psychologists serve. As such, there is a significant focus on advocacy for the well-being of children and families (Tharinger, Pryzwansky, & Miller, 2008). For example, over the past several years, NASP has developed position statements on a variety of issues that impact youth and families broadly, such as children's rights, prejudice, and discrimination.

A second major national organization in school psychology is Division 16 (D16; School Psychology) of the American Psychological Association (APA). D16 aims to facilitate the professional practice of school psychology as well as to address larger systemic and societal issues that significantly impact the well-being of children, families, and communities (e.g., education and healthcare reform). Although it was the first national school psychology organization to be established in the United States, D16's membership is considerably smaller than NASP's membership. Because membership in APA is restricted to doctoral-level psychologists, D16's membership comprises mostly doctoral-level school psychologists, with some specialist-level school psychologists holding associate memberships.

Other national organizations focus specifically on graduate preparation in school psychology. The Trainers of School Psychologists (TSP) comprises graduate educators (including full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty) who teach or provide supervision in both specialist and doctoral-level school psychology programs. TSP's mission centers on supporting the efforts of graduate educators to provide high-quality education, supervision, and professional development for school psychology trainees. Graduate educators may hold individual memberships in TSP or may be part of a graduate program that holds an institutional membership. Like TSP, the Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs (CDSPP) also represents the interests of school psychology graduate educators; however, it aims to support the advancement of doctoral-level training specifically. Membership in CDSPP is restricted to directors of doctoral school psychology programs; directors of specialist-level programs may join as associate members if they are interested in developing doctoral programs at their respective institutions. Historically, CDSPP has worked closely with APA on issues related to doctoral program accreditation.

The American Academy of School Psychology constitutes 1 of 15 branches of the American Board of Professional Psychology. The American Board of Professional Psychology's mission is to provide an independent, rigorous review of practitioners' attainment of standards and competencies relevant to their respective specialty areas (e.g., school psychology). As a member specialty board of the American Board of Professional Psychology, the American Academy of School Psychology strives to foster the development and maintenance of high-quality school psychology doctoral-level practice. To qualify for membership in the American Academy of School Psychology, school psychologists must have completed an approved doctoral program of study, a doctoral internship of at least 1,500 hours, and at least 2 years of supervised practice that meets individual state licensing requirements. Candidates must also demonstrate active identification with the profession of school psychology specifically.

Finally, the Society for the Study of School Psychology (SSSP) differs from the aforementioned organizations in its exclusive focus on promoting high-quality research and scholarship in school psychology. Essential goals of SSSP include fostering the scholarly productivity of early career and mid-career school psychologists, providing grant funding for research projects that show promise for advancing the field, and managing the *Journal of School Psychology*. Unlike membership in the aforementioned organizations, SSSP's membership is by invitation

only (with a maximum of 150 members permitted at any given time). SSSP also sponsors the Early Career Forum, a group of early career school psychologists (non-members) who develop and curate resources (e.g., blog posts and conference presentations) designed to promote the scholarly productivity of early career researchers in the field.

State organizations. Both NASP and APA maintain relations with state-level affiliate organizations. While these organizations generally adhere to standards (e.g., ethical codes and graduate preparation standards) adopted by their national affiliates, they often focus primarily on meeting the needs of children, families, schools, and community agencies in their local context. State organizations may vary considerably in their governance structures, levels of activity, and priorities. Presently, NASP has affiliate organizations in all 50 states of the United States, the District of Columbia, and in Puerto Rico. As will be discussed in a subsequent section, involvement in state-level affiliate organizations can serve as a gateway for involvement in national school psychology organizations.

International organizations. While NASP is the largest school psychologist association in the world and comprises members both in and outside of the United States, other school psychology associations cater specifically to an international audience. The most prominent international organization dedicated to the practice of school psychology is the International School Psychology Association (ISPA). Founded in 1982, ISPA is committed to the proliferation of school psychology practice, particularly in countries where the profession is less well-established. ISPA also is strongly committed to fostering the well-being of children and families and to protecting children's rights (as outlined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). The organization is an affiliate of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Union of Psychological Science.

Types of Professional Service

Across the profession's state, national, and international associations, school psychologists have a range of opportunities for organizational involvement. In many cases, the breadth and nature of service roles varies depending on the size and resources of the organization. Larger organizations (e.g., APA and NASP) typically employ full-time staff to oversee day-to-day logistical operations, such as membership, credentialing, and management of funds. Smaller organizations (e.g., TSP and ISPA), however, often rely on appointed or elected leaders to coordinate these functions. Typically, these leaders are school psychology practitioners, graduate educators, and students who volunteer their time to support the organization's mission and operations (Jimmerson, 2014).

Often, an organization's mission and priorities determine the nature of available service opportunities. For example, organizations that are committed to promoting high-quality graduate education may maintain program accreditation boards or committees devoted to cultivating resources for school psychology trainers (e.g., NASP, APA, ISPA, and TSP). Service opportunities in this area may involve conducting reviews of graduate programs, updating accreditation guidelines, and curating webinars, articles, syllabi and other resources for school psychology trainers. Organizations that are committed to promoting rigorous research in school psychology often maintain professional journals and sponsor funding opportunities for scholars (e.g., APA D16, NASP, and SSSP). For these organizations, service opportunities may involve serving as an editorial board member or ad hoc reviewer, guest editing special issues, and coordinating application reviews for grant competitions. Many school psychology organizations (e.g., NASP, APA, ISPA, and TSP) have broad, multifaceted missions that include elements of all of the aforementioned goals and service activities.

Most school psychology organizations (state, national, and international) sponsor periodic conferences to promote the dissemination of research or to provide professional development

opportunities. Due to the intensive amount of work involved in their planning and coordination, conferences often create numerous opportunities for professional service. Opportunities may involve serving as a presentation proposal reviewer, coordinating meetings for various groups (e.g., editorial boards and interest groups), managing booths and exhibits, and delivering workshops and presentations.

Overall, school psychologists have many outlets for involvement in their professional organizations. Additional professional service opportunities (not listed previously) may include serving as a member or chair of an interest group (e.g., NASP's Social Justice Interest Group) or committee (e.g., D16's Early Career Workgroup), coordinating the publication of professional newsletters (e.g., NASP's *Communiqué* and ISPA's *World-Go-Round*), advocating for organizational priorities by meeting with legislators, and serving as a liaison to other related groups (e.g., NASP's Liaison to the APA Board of Educational Affairs). In addition to the aforementioned roles and responsibilities, many other professional service opportunities are available to school psychologists. Collectively, these activities allow school psychologists and their larger associations to promote high-quality practice, training, and scholarship in a systematic and organized manner.

Types of Organizational Positions

School psychologists can be involved in their professional associations by serving in many different types of positions. As noted previously, some organizations employ full- or part-time staff to carry out essential operations. Depending on their roles in the organization, these staff may or may not be trained as school psychologists. For example, NASP employs an Executive Director as well as full-time staff members to oversee day-to-day operations related to membership, program accreditation, credentialing, and political advocacy. These staff work collaboratively with volunteer, appointed, and elected leaders to carry out essential organizational tasks. Other organizations, such as TSP, ISPA, and CDSPP rely exclusively on the efforts of individuals in unpaid positions (i.e., volunteer, appointed, and elected positions) to coordinate their activities (Jimerson, 2014).

School psychologists who work in academia, practice, or other settings generally provide professional service through unpaid positions, including volunteer, appointed, and elected positions. In this chapter, we use the term *volunteer position* to describe activities for which large numbers of members are recruited and whose required qualifications do not exceed those associated with general organizational membership. Examples of these activities include NASP Student Leaders (NASP), National Certification in School Psychology (NCSP) portfolio reviewers (NASP), and conference proposal reviewers (e.g., ISPA, APA D16, NASP, and TSP). Collectively, hundreds of individuals may serve in these roles to assist organizations with high-volume tasks (e.g., reviewing applications for the NCSP). These activities are ideal entry positions for members with limited service experience who wish to learn more about the organization's operations and priorities.

We use the term *appointed positions* to describe positions for which relatively fewer individuals are selected (often through an application process). Examples of these positions include members of D16's Early Career Workgroup, SSSP's Early Career Forum, and the SSSP's School Psychology Research Collaboration Conference Planning Committee. Individuals typically apply for these roles by submitting their curriculum vitae along with a brief description of their interests, qualifications, and reasons for applying for the position. Applications are evaluated by the committees themselves, and qualified individuals are selected for the roles. In many cases, these positions have term limits (e.g., 1, 2, or 3 years).

Finally, *elected positions* require a formal voting process (typically involving all eligible voters within the organization). Organizations that have elected positions include TSP (Executive

Board members), D16 (Executive Board members), and NASP (e.g., Officers and State Delegates). Individuals interested in these positions must educate themselves about policies for being listed on voting ballots, campaigning, and other issues that may arise. Elected positions typically are reserved for high-level leadership roles that contribute broadly to a range of essential activities across the organization.

Collectively, individuals in volunteer, appointed, and elected positions (as well as general members) make invaluable contributions to school psychology's professional associations. Decisions regarding which types of organizational activities and positions to pursue often require school psychologists to consider their personal goals and the goals of their larger associations. The following describes theoretical, empirical, and personal considerations for pursuing involvement in school psychology's professional organizations.

Theoretical, Evidence-Based, and Personal Considerations

Involvement in professional associations can be understood through several theoretical lenses. For example, when viewed as a mechanism for orienting professionals to the field, association involvement can be understood as a form of *organizational socialization*. Broadly, organizational socialization refers to “the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 211). According to Van Maanen and Schein, organizational members acquire knowledge and skills through a variety of means, including self-guided, “trial and error” processes (e.g., wandering around a professional conference) as well as more formal exercises coordinated by the organization itself (e.g., training sessions for program reviewers). Through their involvement in these activities, members become increasingly adept at understanding how their behaviors are viewed by others, prioritizing various work-related tasks, and carrying out essential activities efficiently and effectively.

Research on organizational socialization provides insight into the many ways in which involvement in professional associations enriches members' career development and professional identities. To illustrate this impact, Gardner and Barnes (2007) conducted interviews with 10 doctoral students in fields such as higher education leadership and administration. Results of their qualitative analysis indicated that the nature of students' involvement in professional associations evolved over time. As they became increasingly knowledgeable about organizational norms and expectations, participants gradually moved from more peripheral organizational roles (e.g., dues-paying members and conference attendees) to more embedded ones (e.g., conference presenters and student leaders). According to these participants, benefits of professional involvement included increased access to networking and professional development opportunities. Overall, the results of this study (and other related research) suggest that becoming involved in professional associations is a developmental process that confers a number of benefits on members.

When school psychologists assume advanced positions in their professional associations, leadership theories can also be valuable for conceptualizing organizational involvement. Although many contemporary leadership theories have been criticized for their emphasis on Eurocentric and male values (Fassinger & Shullman, 2017), several scholars have proposed alternative frameworks to account for the diverse sociocultural contexts in which leadership occurs. For example, Chin and Trimble (2015) described the diverse leader-member organizational exchange (DLMOX) theory, which underscores the impact of forces such as power, privilege, and oppression on leadership dynamics. Proposed as an alternative to leader-member exchange theory, which posits that leaders form stronger relationships with some organizational members than others, DLMOX accounts for the myriad ways in which leaders' and team members' lived experiences shape the nature of their interactions. It also advocates inclusivity,

group decision-making, social responsibility, and culturally competent notions of leadership style. Diversity leadership approaches such as DLMOX provide essential foundations for fostering intra-organizational relationships that engender multicultural and social justice principles.

Collectively, organizational socialization and leadership theories provide useful frameworks for understanding the nature of school psychologists' involvement in professional associations. These theories may be especially useful for guiding school psychologists in identifying professional service opportunities that foster both personal and professional growth. They also are critical for conceptualizing school psychologists' roles in supporting professional associations that value equity, diversity, and social justice.

Considerations by Career Stage

School psychologists in different career stages must carefully consider the types of service roles they pursue within their professional organizations. Although valuable for networking, cultivating social support, and accruing field-related knowledge, organizational service can be time-consuming. For early career professionals, too much organizational service may detract from other necessary developmental tasks, such as accruing postdoctoral supervision hours for state licensure, acquiring new clinical skills, preparing to teach new courses, and honing a research agenda. Early career professionals must be sure to protect time allocated for other essential career-related activities while also pursuing organizational opportunities that are aligned with their professional goals and interests. For example, school psychologists who are committed to building skills in social justice advocacy may find that involvement in committees dedicated to these activities (e.g., NASP's Social Justice Interest Group and Social Justice Task Force) simultaneously confers benefits on their professional development (e.g., inspiration for future scholarship) and on their larger professional organizations.

Later career school psychologists may have more flexibility in selecting service opportunities, as they may have more time to devote to these activities. They also may be sought out routinely for specific service opportunities within an organization, especially if they have long histories of professional involvement at the state, national, or international levels. Experienced school psychologists may be relatively better positioned to contribute to especially time-intensive service activities, such as serving as journal editors, convention chairs, and other high-level organizational leaders. Moreover, as these individuals assume leadership positions, opportunities may arise for them to mentor and prepare early career organizational members for more advanced roles. Nevertheless, later career school psychologists must also be sure to protect their time, as they are likely to be contributing to the field through many other activities (both within and outside of professional organizations).

Considerations by Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Numerous studies have indicated that women faculty spend more time engaged in service activities than do men (e.g., O'Meara, Kuvavea, Nyunt, Waugaman, & Jackson, 2017). Specifically, women are more likely to be responsible for "organizational housekeeping" tasks (e.g., mentoring and committee work) than men, who are more likely to be charged with tasks that involve problem-solving, strategic planning, and other well-regarded activities with high promotability (Acker & Dillabough, 2007; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; O'Meara et al., 2017). This dynamic is highly problematic for numerous reasons. First, it decreases the likelihood that women will have the time and opportunity to engage in other important work that traditionally leads to career advancement (e.g., manuscript writing, grant development, and organizational leadership). Second, it marginalizes women by devaluing their perspectives, talents, and contributions to their academic and professional communities.

To date, most research on service involvement has emphasized binary conceptualizations of gender identity (i.e., men versus women), and very little scholarship has explored the experiences of gender and sexual minority psychologists, or school psychologists, in contributing to service and leadership activities. Moreover, most of this research has focused on service to academic institutions rather than professional associations. Despite these limitations, research from academic settings reminds school psychologists to be aware of the many ways in which gender and sexual diversity influence leadership and organizational dynamics. Ultimately, school psychologists must strive to ensure that diverse gender and sexual identities are represented across the organization's membership and leadership. They must also ensure that individuals who represent a range of identities have opportunities to engage in work that is meaningful to their individual careers and to their larger professional communities.

Considerations by Race and Ethnicity

Individuals of racial and ethnic minoritized (REM) groups often encounter several barriers to entering and navigating professional leadership. The low number of REM individuals in school psychology (approximately 12%; Walcott & Hyson, 2018) limits access to same-race or ethnicity mentors who can provide access to networking and leadership opportunities. Given that most volunteers for NASP are recruited through direct outreach by active members of the association (Hyson, Malone, & Vekaria, 2018), REM individuals may have fewer opportunities to volunteer or serve in leadership roles. Additionally, REM leaders have reported that same-race or same-ethnicity mentors provide support in ways that White mentors cannot. Specifically, REM mentors may provide models of leadership for their protégés as well as support them in developing their identities as multicultural leaders (Chin, 2013; Hewitt et al., 2017; Storlie, Parker-Wright, & Woo, 2015). This guidance is invaluable because, once REM individuals assume leadership roles, their legitimacy is often questioned. Consequently, they may feel increased pressure to prove their capability and efficacy within the organization, as their actions are more likely to be scrutinized (Chin, 2013). These feelings of hypervisibility are counterbalanced by simultaneous feelings of invisibility, as REM leaders may feel their viewpoints are not represented, considered, or valued in decision-making (Hewitt et al., 2017; Storlie et al., 2015). As a result, they may ultimately disengage from organizational leadership or from the association altogether (Settles, Buchanan, & Dotson, 2019).

Recommendations for School Psychologists

In line with organizational socialization theory, school psychologists may become increasingly involved in state, national, and international professional associations over time. Next, we discuss two key developmental stages in organizational involvement, namely, (1) entry and (2) advancement. We also provide recommendations for facilitating organizational involvement in both of these phases.

Entry

School psychology associations rely heavily on members of all career stages to be involved in their professional activities. Although many school psychologists demonstrate interest in being more involved with their professional organizations, they often do not know how to get started (Hyson et al., 2018). *Entry* refers to the process of first becoming socialized in a professional association. This phase of involvement requires school psychologists to consider their personal goals and interests as well as the needs of their larger professional associations.

For school psychologists, an important first step to pursuing professional service involves identifying the organizations in which they wish to become more active. For example, graduate educators who are particularly interested in training issues may pursue involvement in organizations such as TSP or CDSPP. Typically, school psychologists can research the missions, governance structure, and needs of these professional associations on their organizational websites. They can also obtain this information by subscribing to organizational newsletters (e.g., NASP's *Communiqué*, DI6's *The School Psychologist*, and ISPA's *World-Go-Round*), virtual communities (e.g., NASP Communities), and e-mail listservs. If this information is not listed in any online materials, school psychologists might consider contacting the organization's membership chair, as this individual's primary role is to engage current and prospective members and to facilitate their connection to the association.

Identifying cultural brokers and leadership mentors. Once a target organization has been identified, school psychologists might consider identifying individuals in the association who are in their existing professional networks. For example, colleagues in one's school district, university, or other professional setting who are also association members may be able to provide valuable information regarding the organization's priorities and needs. These individuals can serve as "cultural brokers" who provide insight into the organization's structure, norms, and goals. If school psychologists do not have relationships with any individuals directly involved in the association, they can attend conferences to network and learn about its operations. They also can join organizational listservs and reach out to potential contacts identified online, via email, or through other colleagues and acquaintances.

Using state associations as an entry point. In addition to exploring national organizations, school psychologists should consider pursuing involvement in their respective state associations. State associations typically have more openings for committee members and other volunteer roles than do national organizations. Involvement in state associations can strengthen connections to the local school psychology community, promote partnerships between school districts and university training programs, and provide opportunities to engage in advocacy at a state and local level. Additionally, they may have seats reserved on their executive boards for members of specific groups or job functions. For example, one of the authors (Celeste) sits on the Maryland School Psychologists' Association's Executive Board as the faculty representative for her graduate program.

Involvement in state associations can also be an important steppingstone to involvement in national associations. Often, state association leaders are involved in national organizations as well; in turn, they may be able to connect colleagues in their state networks with leaders in national associations. Moreover, individuals active in their state associations may consider running to serve as NASP delegates for their respective states or regions. In general, because state affiliate organizations typically are aligned with the standards and values of their parent organizations, service to these local associations can prepare school psychologists to contribute effectively to their larger national organizations.

Getting involved early. School psychologists can learn about an organization's infrastructure and eventually advance to higher levels of organizational service by getting involved early on in their careers. Many organizations have positions and volunteer roles specifically designated for graduate students or early career professionals to facilitate a leadership pipeline for the organization. For example, NASP, DI6, and ISPA have both graduate student and early career groups. Many state-level organizations also have student groups (e.g., Graduate and Undergraduate Student Organization of the New Jersey Association of School Psychologists). Additionally, these organizations may appoint designated graduate student or early career representatives on other standing committees.

Learning about volunteer and leadership opportunities. To increase member engagement, most organizations post information about volunteer, elected, and appointed positions

on their websites and e-mail listservs. For example, NASP shares committee “want ads” on the NASP Member Exchange so that all members are aware of existing opportunities for involvement. If there is a point of contact listed on the announcement, interested candidates may contact that individual to learn more about the leadership vacancy and desired qualifications.

Given that there are typically more applications than there are committee openings, it may take multiple attempts to join a committee. Nevertheless, the application process builds name recognition and familiarizes leaders with a candidate’s skillset. This familiarity may lead to subsequent invitations to be involved in specific projects later on. In the meantime, volunteer activities (which, as described previously, often require a high volume of participants) can provide excellent avenues for initiating involvement in professional organizations. Such activities may include serving as conference proposal reviewer, NCSP portfolio reviewer, faculty sponsor or student leader for the NASP Student Leader Program, or mentor for TSP’s Early and Mid-Career Mentorship Program or NASP’s *Find-a-Mentor* program.

Advancement in Organizational Service

Consistent with theory and research on professional socialization, the nature of school psychologists’ involvement in professional organizations is likely to change as they advance in their respective careers. While initial organizational involvement often assumes the form of attending conference presentations and seeking information through cultural brokers, school psychologists may eventually have additional opportunities to assume leadership positions and other advanced roles, such as committee chairs, state representatives or delegates, and elected board members. We use the term *advancement* to refer to the process of becoming increasingly integrated in a professional association’s activities and social network. As compared with early service opportunities, advanced opportunities often require greater time commitments, longer-term positions (e.g., multi-year terms of service), and effective management and leadership skills. The following sections discuss considerations and strategies for securing and succeeding in advanced professional service roles.

Identifying interests and priorities. Research on involvement in professional organizations suggests that such activities can foster greater professional growth and a deeper, more integrated sense of professional identity (Hirschy et al., 2015; Pittman & Foubert, 2016). As school psychologists advance in their careers, they should consider the many ways in which service to local and national organizations may allow them to strengthen their respective professional identities. This first involves identifying areas in which they wish to cultivate professional expertise. For example, individuals who build expertise in graduate curriculum and training may be well-positioned to assume leadership roles on program accreditation committees (e.g., APA’s Commission on Accreditation and NASP’s Program Accreditation Board). Similarly, individuals who cultivate expertise in advocacy, policy development, and legal issues may be well-positioned to assume leadership roles in government and professional relations (e.g., NASP’s Government and Professional Relations Committee).

School psychologists should also consider the needs of their larger field and professional organizations. By reading organizational literature (e.g., newsletters and position papers), connecting with other members, and attending conferences, they can learn about the association’s needs and identify potential avenues for improvement and innovation. As they consider these possibilities, school psychologists should reflect on questions such as (1) Where does my organization have needs or gaps in service?; (2) What knowledge and skills can I bring to address these needs?; and (3) What additional knowledge and skills might I develop to better serve this organization and the greater school psychology community?

School psychologists should also consider the ways in which they might present their strengths and experiences to others. Just as academic school psychologists are taught to craft

narratives describing the evolution and anticipated directions of their research agendas, school psychologists can construct “professional service stories” that convey their experiences, expertise, and goals to others (Pfeifer, 2016). School psychologists who are able to paint a clear, cohesive picture of their qualifications and long-term goals may be best positioned to advocate for their advancement to leadership roles. In telling their professional service stories, school psychologists should be prepared to articulate the scope of their past contributions; the ways in which multiple, related experiences have allowed them to cultivate expertise in a particular area; and the impact their work has had on various audiences (e.g., youth and families, colleagues, and organizations).

Networking is also an essential activity for learning about potential leadership opportunities and becoming integrated in organizational communities (Ansmann et al., 2014). Effective networking involves building strong, supportive relationships with others that are built on trust and common interests. Within professional associations, school psychologists often have a variety of opportunities to connect with peers who share their passions and goals. At conferences, events such as poster sessions, social hours, and interest group meetings are especially conducive to networking because they allow for ample interaction among attendees. Networking has been associated with a variety of positive career outcomes, including higher levels of career satisfaction and increased feelings of belongingness (Wolff & Moser, 2009). Such networks can be enriching for both individuals and professional communities, as they foster social support, innovation, and powerful chains of communication that can lead to the accomplishment of greater shared goals.

Exceling in advanced service roles. School psychologists in advanced service and leadership positions should take measures to maximize their effectiveness in these roles. Fassinger and Shullman (2017) advised that psychologists who aspire to leadership roles seek formal preparation through graduate coursework, continuing education, and professional development on topics relevant to these roles (e.g., policy studies, program evaluation, and college and university accreditation). They also recommended that psychologists pursue formal leadership training through targeted programs. Relevant training opportunities for school psychologists may include the Practice Leadership Conference (APA), Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology (APA), the Public Policy Institute (NASP), and the Emerging Leaders in Psychology Academy (APA). Additionally, both NASP and APA also offer a variety of face-to-face and virtual opportunities to connect with current and aspiring leaders across career levels (e.g., NASP’s Advocacy and Public Policy Interest Group and APA’s Early Career Psychologists Leadership Network).

Because numerous approaches to leadership have been proposed, scholars continue to debate the various contexts and relational styles that give rise to effective leadership. Most of the literature in this area has been developed in related fields (e.g., industrial-organizational psychology and counseling psychology) rather than in school psychology specifically. For example, in line with diversity leadership approaches, Fassinger and Good (2017) described the application of feminist multicultural principals to leadership in psychology. Specifically, they noted that effective, equity-driven leaders (1) share power (rather than emphasize traditional hierarchical relationships), (2) focus on building authentic and transparent relationships, (3) foster collaboration and joint problem-solving, (4) demonstrate a commitment to diversity and augmenting the voices of traditionally marginalized members, and (5) engage members in thoughtful political analysis to interrupt discrimination and facilitate positive organizational change.

Although limited, some scholarship in school psychology has explored attributes and behaviors of effective leaders and advocates (Rogers, Marraccini, Lubiner, Dupont-Frechette, & O’Bryan, 2019; Shriberg, Satchwell, McArdle, & James, 2010). While this research generally has focused on leadership in K-12 schools, it also has relevant implications for framing leadership in professional organizations. For example, Shriberg et al. (2010) used a qualitative survey

to explore NASP and state association leaders' conceptualizations of leadership. When asked to define leadership, at least one-fourth of respondents described it as involving (1) facilitating change and promoting positive outcomes; (2) possessing competence; (3) possessing vision or a "big picture view"; and (4) collaborating with others and working effectively in teams. When asked about the characteristics and attributes of school psychologists who exhibit leadership, at least one-third of respondents described qualities related to (1) competence; (2) team skills; (3) knowledge and expertise; (4) personal character; and (5) interpersonal skills.

Almost a decade later, Rogers et al. (2019) interviewed award-winning (i.e., state or national school psychology awards) advocates in school psychology to explore factors that contributed to effective advocacy. Their study yielded a wealth of findings related to obstacles, pathways, and approaches to advocacy, many of which are relevant for school psychologists who are interested in pursuing organizational involvement (please see our list of recommended readings at the end of this chapter). Notably, study participants described effective advocates as knowledgeable, interpersonally skilled, and organized. They also viewed professional organizations as critical for connecting with allies, accessing resources (e.g., position statements, handouts, and other publications), and sharing information.

Collectively, these studies suggest that effective school psychology leaders and advocates are outcome-oriented, knowledgeable, and interpersonally competent. The results of these studies also indicate that many critical leadership and advocacy competencies can be honed over time through professional development and relationship-building with colleagues. In light of these findings, professional organizations can be conceptualized as both facilitators of and platforms for leadership and advocacy in school psychology.

Summary

Overall, organizational service is vital to the profession of school psychology, including its workforce and the clients it serves. Across school psychology's state, national, and international associations, faculty, practitioners, and students have numerous opportunities to contribute to the development of their profession through organizational service. These opportunities may involve serving in volunteer, appointed, or elected positions related to conference planning, advocacy, graduate education, continuing education, professional publications, and other areas. As school psychologists become increasingly familiar with their profession and its representative organizations, the nature of their service to these organizations is likely to evolve. Specifically, school psychologists may progress from a phase of entry (i.e., initial socialization and learning) to one of advancement (i.e., increasing integration in the fabric of organizational operations). To effectively navigate these phases of involvement, school psychologists can educate themselves about potential service roles, pursue relevant professional development, and evaluate their interests and priorities in relation to those of their professional organizations. While this process can be time-consuming and, at times, arduous, it can also lead to mutually beneficial outcomes for both school psychologists and their larger professional associations.

Recommendations for Further Reading

The literature on professional service, organizational socialization, and leadership is vast and has numerous implications for school psychologists seeking greater involvement in their local and national associations. The following provides recommendations for further reading to support school psychologists in their pursuit of meaningful professional service. These readings include conceptual and empirical literature targeted at early career, mid-career, and senior school psychologists and address a variety of topics in professional organizational service and leadership.

Professional Organizational Involvement and Service

Dodgen, D., Fowler, R., & Williams-Nickelson, C. (2013). Getting involved in professional organizations: A gateway to career advancement. In M. J. Prinstein (Ed.), *The portable mentor: Expert guide to a successful career in psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 257–267). New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.

This chapter describes relevant professional organizations in the field of psychology broadly (e.g., APA). It also describes strategies and opportunities for professional involvement.

Pfeifer, H. (2016). “How to be a good academic citizen”: The role and importance of service in academia. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 27, 238–254.

This article provides guidance for faculty members on developing strategic agendas for their service activities (including their professional organizational service).

Jimerson, S. (2014). The roles of school psychology associations in promoting the profession, professionals, and student success. *International Journal of School and Educational Psychology*, 2, 214–222.

This article describes opportunities for graduate students and professionals to become involved in school psychology’s professional associations, with a particular emphasis on international involvement.

Leadership and Advocacy

Augustyniak, K. M. (2014). Identifying and cultivating leadership potential in school psychology: A conceptual framework. *Psychology in the Schools*, 51(1), 15–31.

This article presents a framework for conceptualizing the behaviors, skills, and dispositions needed for school psychologists to serve in leadership roles.

Kelly, J., & Stops, D. (2017). Promotion of leadership and advocacy in school psychology. In M. Thielking & M. Terjesen (Eds.), *Handbook of Australian school psychology* (pp. 723–736). Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

This chapter summarizes basic considerations in leadership and advocacy as they pertain to the profession of school psychology.

Rogers, M., Marraccini, M., Lubiner, A., Dupont-Frechette, J., & O’Bryan, E. (2019). Advancing advocacy: Lessons learned from advocates in school psychology. *Psychological Services*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000334>

This article describes a qualitative study of 21 award-winning school psychology advocates’ perspectives on developing expertise in professional advocacy.

Note

The views, perspectives, and opinions expressed in this chapter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy, views, opinions, or positions of the professional organizations referenced throughout.

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