

HU-SPA OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

Volume 2 Issue 2

Announcements:

- **October is ADHD Awareness Month**
- **Monday, October 1st- NASP 2019 Annual Convention registration opened**
- **Friday, October 19th- MSPA Fall Conference**
- **Monday, October 29th- HUSPA General Body Meeting**
- **Monday, November 12th- Friday, November 16th- NASP Awareness Week (Theme: Unlock Potential)**

Congratulations to all the HU-SPA, Alumni, Faculty, and Students who got proposals accepted for the NASP 2019 Annual Convention

- **Dr. Noelita Bowman:** "Preparing Ready Kids: Understanding Teacher and Parent Attitudes on School Readiness."
- **Sarah Cooke:** "Beyond IQ: Gifted Assessment Practices for Culturally Diverse Youth."
- **Dr. Tierra Ellis:** "How Can You Evaluate Your PBIS System?"
 - Co-author: Kathryn Bangs
- **Ayanna Johnson:** "Treatment Adherence among Preschool Children with Sickle Cell Anemia"
- **Jasmyn Ledford:** "What's your function? Reducing self-injurious behavior in students with autism spectrum disorder"
- **Teneisha McIntyre:** "Power of Place: The Impact of Racial Socialization in Neighborhoods"
- **Dr. Tiffany Phillips:** "Equipped: Exploring Special Education Classroom Performances on ELLCO K-3."
 - Co-author: Dr. Chakoria Wells
- **Terrell Wyche:** "Teleconsultations in School Psychology: A Developing Idea"
 - Co-authors: Dr. Jacqueline Caemmerer and Dr. Celeste Malone
- **Dr. Jacqueline Caemmerer:** "Relations of Students' Cognitive Abilities and Writing Across Several Tests"
 - Co-authors: Terrell Wyche and Dr. Tim Keith
 - Dr. Caemmerer co-author: "Gender Differences in Social Skills Development in K-6 Graders" Other author: Dr. Daniel Hajovsky
- **Dr. Celeste Malone:**
 - Mini-Skills: "Did They Just Say That? Responding to Microaggressions in Schools," Co-authors: Jasmyn Ledford and Terrell Wyche
 - Paper: "Examining the State of Multicultural Training in School Psychology," Co-author Kareem Ishmail
 - Symposium: "The Exposure Project: Implications for Workforce Shortages and Increasing Diversity," Co-author is Charles Barrett HUSP adjunct faculty
 - Paper: "Perceptions of the Effect of Dress Code Policies on Education"
 - Practitioner Conversation: "Building Support Networks to Diversify the School Psychology Faculty Pipeline"
 - Practitioner Conversation: "Differences in Career Needs Among White and Minority Academic Faculty"

October Student Spotlight: Gabrielle Artis



Where is your current internship placement and how are you liking it so far? My current internship placement is in San Jose, California. I'm interning with a public charter, and serve both a middle and high school. I absolutely love it here; both the kids and the staff have been receptive and kind. But, my assessment caseload is pretty hectic (especially at the middle school level).

What has been your biggest struggle as a grad student so far and how did you get through it? My biggest struggle as a graduate student has been effectively managing my time and self-care while experiencing the stresses of school and personal/family issues. I've had to deal with health issues in my family, personal relationships ending, anxiety, and depression, and failed to prioritize myself or my school work in those moments. Being accountable (and held accountable!) for my actions and missteps helped me refocus. I've also had the unwavering support of the School of Education, professors, and students, which has uplifted me in so many ways. It has also helped me be transparent about my strengths and weaknesses.

What has been the best thing about being on internship so far? The best thing about being on internship is being physically present every day. In practicum, I was onsite twice a week. Here, things feel much more familiar because I'm at my site(s) everyday, all day, and get the opportunity to make connections and build rapport with staff and students. It's been so amazing to watch students progress day by day and week by week. The district has been so kind, supportive, and considerate of me relocating, and I find solace in knowing that I'm in an environment that not only champions for their kids, but also champions for each other.

What advice can you give those that will be applying for internship in a few months? Plan ahead. Like most application processes, you'll need to have references and letters of recommendation. Identify which professors you would want to draft your letter, and check in with previous and current practicum supervisors about the matter months in advance. Know which states or districts you'd not only be interested in for internship, but also for job placement. It is also important to keep in mind that different districts, states, and even geographical regions have different deadlines. You may find that you are not seeing available internship positions on the west coast for the upcoming school year until February-March, while applications for internship positions in districts on the east coast are in November-December.

One word to describe the Howard School Psychology family? Nurturing. Some of the now-alum were so nurturing during my time in undergrad, and provided me with a wealth of knowledge that ultimately led me into this field. We take care of each other, we look out for each other, and we look out for members of not only our school psych community, but members of our local and cultural communities.



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Faculty Spotlight: **Dr. Celeste Malone**

Dr. Celeste Malone has served as my academic and research advisor over the past year. She is an assistant professor and the program coordinator for the school psychology program and embodies multiple roles and functions of a school psychologist. Dr. Malone received her PhD in school psychology from Temple University and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in child clinical and pediatric psychology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Her research focuses on multicultural education and training and diversification of the school psychology professional pipeline. By having a faculty member entrenched in the training process it ensures we, as graduate students, are adequately prepared to be school psychologists. Aside from her role at Howard University, Dr. Malone has been an active member of national and state professional organizations: National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), the American Psychological Association (APA), and Maryland School Psychology Association (MSPA). She was appointed to the NASP Board of Directors as strategic liaison for professional services/lead board member for the Social Justice strategic goal and, prior to that appointment, served as the co-chair of the NASP Leadership Development Committee. In addition to her leadership activities with NASP, Dr. Malone is a member of the APA Board of Educational Affairs, and serves as a role model to graduate students who are inquisitive about leadership initiatives.

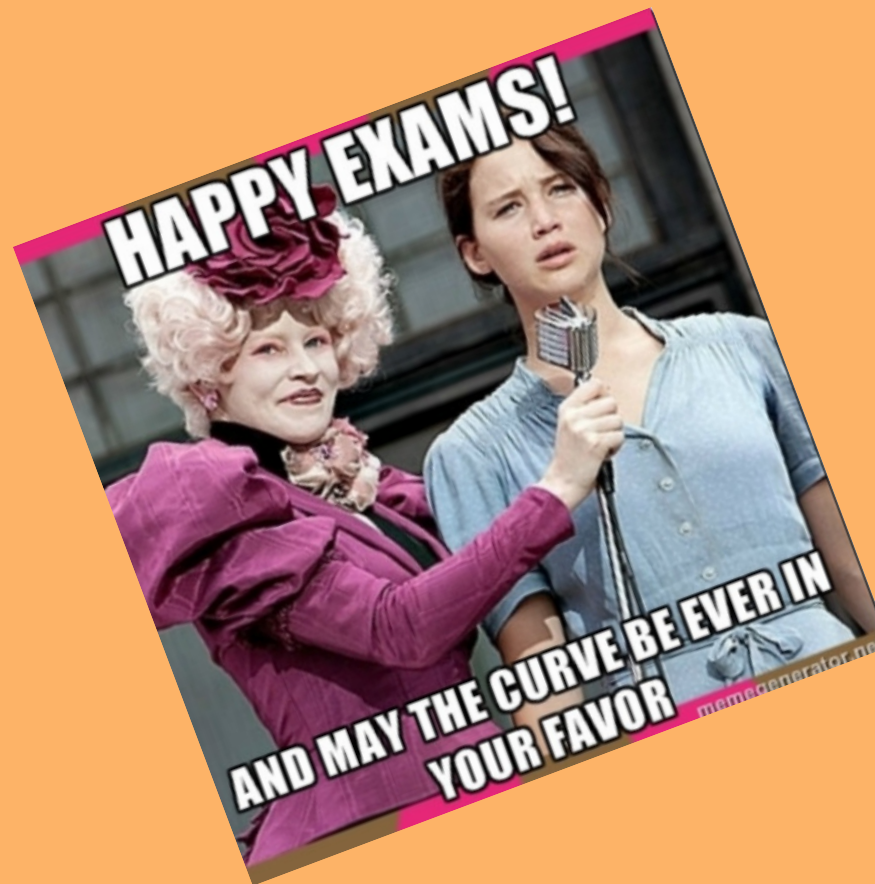
However, all this information can be found online. The intent of this interview was not to simply recount Dr. Malone's curriculum vitae, but to bridge the gap between faculty and students. For that purpose, Dr. Malone shared some personal information: career aspirations and fun details her students would not expect. Dr. Malone aspires to be in academic leadership, but is currently mastering a developmental task – the skills to ride a bike since she never learned to do so in childhood. Dr. Malone was also the youngest of her high school graduating class, starting Brown University at the age of 16-years-old, after having skipped a grade in elementary school. At Brown, she was a cheerleader for one basketball season to prove she could do it better, as we all have done with our friends, and was a radio host known as Celestial.

Dr. Malone, on behalf of all of your students, thank you for all your hard work (your many emails from different committees, divisions, etc.) and serving as a role model to your students who envision their dream to unlock their potential as a successful school psychologist.

.....MIDTERMS



**My first reaction
when I see
the question paper**



NASP ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

Achieving and Maintaining Change in Urban Schools: The Role of the School Psychologist

By: Bradley Petry & Nadine Serbonich

School psychologists in Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) are engaged in efforts to expand their professional roles from a traditional to a more comprehensive model as encouraged by NASP (2016). In Baltimore, the traditional role is a special education-specific gatekeeper and service provider. There are many reasons why this traditional role became the status quo. Conventionally, school psychological duties tied to reactive, special education-driven services were considered an inflexible outcome stemming from original special education law and continuing through the social and educational reform movements of the mid-20th century. These laws, along with a variety of general education initiatives, such as Goals 2000 and No Child Left Behind, led to increasing ideological and fiscal emphasis placed on the role of special education in public education and school psychologists' duties tied to special education. On top of these variables, City Schools was subjected to a consent decree emphasizing compliance to special education for more than 2 decades. Though the importance of compliance to special education statutes should not be minimized, the impact of intensive focus on compliance has become an overreliance on using these protections and processes to provide students individual support. City Schools eventually superseded its consent decree goals, and is no longer subjected to intensive court oversight. However, the lasting impact on the culture of the city is not only cemented within the school district, but also among the families of the students served.

These problems are not unique to City Schools. Many urban districts have historically tied the role of the specialist to special education both fiscally and ideologically. These districts also tend to be cited as illustrative of systems where clashes between district administration and elected officials is common (Broadwater, Prudente, & Dresser, 2017; Hill, Campbell & Harvey, 2001; Peck, 2017) and where factors such as extraordinary school administrator and teacher turnover rates, minimal material resources, high frequency of impacting sociological variables, and the effects of trauma on students lead to the need for comprehensive reform. These factors imply a great need for reactive services, which is consistent with a more traditional model. A negative consequence of this situation, however, is that urban school psychologists may be facing a greater challenge than their nonurban counterparts in advocating for a comprehensive practice model to district and school leadership. They may also face the added trial of convincing the greater urban community that they can indeed support necessary reform in systems where reform efforts are many, and their effects are often negligible.

Catalysts for Change

A confluence of circumstances made it possible for City Schools' school psychologists to engage in both role and system reform. The successful completion of the court oversight led to less district prioritization of special education compliance, consequently freeing up options for usage of funding. Concurrently, the supervisor of psychological services for the district began a campaign of advocating for a shift in school psychologist roles (Olley, 2015) to district leadership.

The challenge remains that even if leadership is convinced that school psychologists can and should be facilitators of change, financial resources are always precious. School psychologists cannot be negligent in special education duties, as the funding model typically supports their services. So where is this “extra time” to engage in the “extra” duties involved in a comprehensive model of school psychological services coming from?

Though City Schools is no longer subject to the consent decree, outcomes for students, particularly students receiving special education services, continue to be the subject of scrutiny. Given the need for the district to increase positive outcomes for disadvantaged racial minority students while decreasing negative outcomes for this population, the district continues to receive funds through the federal Coordinating Early Intervening Services (CEIS) grant. The outcomes of this grant project relate to special education service identification rates, disciplinary outcomes such as suspension and expulsion, and attendance. Significant emphasis is placed upon a high disproportionality of students being identified in need of special education in early education. Given that this grant provided the resources necessary to embark on reform initiatives, along with a supportive administrative team, this funding became the final piece of the puzzle needed to set the stage for school psychologists to engage in a comprehensive service model, using a broad base of skills in systemic reform.

The Piel Team

Beginning in 2013, a group of school psychologists, working primarily in tandem with speech–language pathologists, as well as some other specialists (eventually named the Prevention and Intervention for Early Learners [PIEL] team), identified common needs in schools in an effort to stem the tide of students entering special education service at a very young age. Perhaps unsurprisingly, strategies to address these needs tended to be prime components of what is known as multitiered systems of support (MTSS), a framework specifically designed to focus more student supports on prevention, which should, consequently, minimize overidentification. Concurrently, the systematic development and implementation of these components by related services professionals overlaps considerably with the work inherent to the comprehensive practice model (NASP, 2016).

Between 2013 and 2016, the PIEL team implemented structures and supports in schools toward the goal of alleviating an apparent overreliance on special education processes as a means for providing individual student support. Team members were knowledgeable about MTSS frameworks, but initial goals focused on expanding the role of school psychologists and reducing overidentification, rather than implementing an overall MTSS-focused systems change. Through these years of team development, the PIEL team identified that data-based decision making for all students, comprehensive intervention design for groups of students in need, and an effective problem-solving framework to meet individual student needs were the most likely components missing from schools with disproportionate populations of students with disabilities.

Over the past 4 years, the results of this pilot initiative have been positive. Teachers consistently self-report referring fewer students to school teams and perceiving greater value in consultative relationships with school psychologists and speech–language pathologists. Hundreds of students receive specific skill and data-driven intervention due to volunteer-based intervention programs that the team has established in many schools. Special education referral frequency in project schools tended to decrease overall with PIEL support, while the accuracy of the referrals that do occur in light of PIEL support tended to increase.

Despite these successes, the challenge comes in sustaining this impact. The first concern is that although team members are embracing a comprehensive school psychology role with the advent of PIEL, only this specific dozen school psychologists see immediate change in day-to-day work. The district employs more than 130 other school psychologists. These remaining school psychologists are limited to making only incremental changes to their roles. They experience differing levels of success, but without the extra resources and focused efforts that a grant-funded initiative provides. Furthermore, the school psychologists who participate on the team can personally begin implementation of MTSS initiatives in only about 20 of roughly 180 City Schools at any given time. And of course, the most intimidating challenge of all is the impending fate of all grant-funded initiatives—imminent funding dissolution once grant-specific goals are achieved.

Designing Sustainability – Key Initiatives

With just under 180 schools in the district, and about 20 being impacted by the PIEL initiative, it became clear to the team that prescribing certain products, or even specific processes, would not suffice to meet total district needs. The team could not encourage products or processes that were solely reliant on team members to deliver or support, given the relatively small number of schools staffed by team members. An additional challenge is that even relatively minimal shifts in the way a school schedules time or staffs a related arts class or chooses a curriculum can make the blind adoption of a specific tool or concrete process difficult or even impossible. Several years ago, the district decentralized resources to be more school-centric, a shift that led to a myriad of curricula, initiatives, administrative supports, and even physical plant difference between schools. The variability in schools in terms of readiness to improve in certain areas is also significant. Our team can help schools identify areas of improvement and areas of need, but have to come up with solutions based on the workings of the individual school at that time. Keeping our fingers crossed that administrative turnover does not erase significant efforts from year-to-year is another concern. Turnover, plus challenges related to the adoption of specific resources, continue to be major challenges to consider when designing sustainability of this project.

To address these challenges, the team needed to identify broad areas for improvement that could transcend differences in school structure and functioning, but that were also interpretable by staff other than team members. The team can reliably identify needs for implementation or improvement in three key areas: data-based decision-making for all students, establishing and standardizing processes for providing intervention to groups of students in need, and collaborative problem-solving to discover and meet the needs of individual students. Sometimes, schools had portions or aspects of these key factors in place, but not with the consistency or integrity necessary to elicit positive impact. Some schools did not have the infrastructure in place to begin the implementation of such efforts. Very few schools had additional funding or other resources to support the establishment of these initiatives or provide professional development to staff. However, all schools had professionals who were willing and able to learn, and were interested in supporting students. All schools also have assigned school psychologists and speech–language pathologists who with administrative

encouragement, were engaged in shifting their own professional efforts from traditional roles to overarching, systems-based roles that emphasized meeting student needs preventively and appropriately.

Designing Sustainability – Key Processes

The first few years of the PIEL team were spent gaining experience in effecting change within the three key areas at PIEL team school sites. Once these areas of overall improvement were established, the team's next step in promoting sustainability was to begin to step away from direct implementation of strategies, and to begin a consultative “handoff.” Such a handoff required at least one consultee (or more) at school sites. These consultees would benefit from support of PIEL team members, even as the PIEL team members focused on fading support from the school site. Support from the supervisors of school psychologists, speech–language pathologists, and other specialization areas was critical; our team was allotted time to meet with the practitioners at these schools, provide professional development and mentoring support, and strategize a handoff of responsibility that was practical and did not interfere with the consultees' traditional duties. Advocacy by team leaders and discipline supervisors parallel to these pragmatic efforts allotted more personnel funding to time for these site-based practitioners to continue to carry out the work. These advocacy efforts would not likely produce fruitful results if the PIEL team had not been able to present such positive outcomes of the project to district leadership. Broadening the duties of the team's school psychologists and site-based providers is supported by student-centered outcomes. By broadening our role and working to change the systems of individual schools, we presented our plans for rolling out these initiatives to many of our colleagues and district administration persuasively.

Mentoring and Coaching

The first component of ensuring sustained, continued impact with site-based providers was to establish a structured mentoring and coaching system. Ongoing support is integral to skill-building and perspective-shifting. The team was mindful that despite clear and consistent advocacy for a broader role nationally and locally, not all consultees were intrinsically motivated to significantly adjust their day-to-day efforts. Consultees frequently cite a lack of ongoing training and support, lack of achieving feelings of value for participants, and unrealistic expectations (Colorado Department of Education [CDE], 2016) as barriers to having a beneficial consultant–consultee relationship. It was important to the PIEL team to circumvent these typical barriers. The team recognized the importance of establishing a systematic coaching and mentoring program as a necessary component of sustaining the project goals with our limited staffing levels. It was important to meet each consultee “where he or she is” while also providing hands-on support given the uniqueness of each school site. Individual mentoring and coaching could achieve that practical support. The support time allotted and provided by supervision was consequently structured and aligned to both PIEL team goals and practice model implementation.

Key school-based participants with the capacity to further model and coach were identified at each site and assigned to team members. These participants always consisted of the site-based school psychologist and speech–language pathologist, but also sometimes included lead teachers or assistant administrators as well. Individual coaching of these key staff members was then designed to ensure that the skills of the consultee could sustain the progress made by the PIEL programmatic supports at each site. Team members acting as collaborative consultants established clear exit plans that relied upon skill-building in the school-based consultees to sustain vital project initiatives. A technical assistance plan outlining diminished contact between the consultant and school staff was designed based upon ongoing coaching needs and in line with the “continuous improvement” stage of implementation science (CDE, 2016). The team's mantra became, “Never do it alone.” It includes everything from leading a collaborative grade-level meeting to providing individual interventions for students. When a PIEL team member is engaging in any aspect of the comprehensive role of school psychologists and of implementation efforts, the site-based stakeholders are present and engaged in order to facilitate progress toward closure.

Ongoing Professional Learning

Although it is considered imperative to provide individualized support directly to mentees, presenting standardized professional learning regarding topics that align with the team's goals is also necessary. The determination to bring about lasting change means that this ongoing professional learning needs to be effective and impactful, truly shifting the perspective of the participants. The team recognized that ongoing professional learning means much more than single-session professional development (Learning Forward, 2017); it implies ongoing, participant-centered, and data-targeted efforts to significantly improve skills. Ongoing professional learning includes didactic skill-based workshops, with time dedicated to shared goal-setting between collaborative consultants and participants in the system, frequent feedback, and using data to drive supports. In this way, the professional development sessions are coupled seamlessly with mentor–mentee coaching relationships.

Given that the team has identified the key components that need to be the focus of efforts at all schools, these components are the likely topics of professional development. Often these topics are incredibly broad, and are not necessarily amenable to providing practical 1-hour learning sessions. It is important that the consultants identify components of these broad areas that can drive individual consultee goal-setting and support individual needs. These key components and the subsequent practical applications become the topics of ongoing professional learning. Collaborative consultants approaching closure with specific schools used data and participant need to drive the themes of ongoing professional learning within the topic areas. During the final year of direct, consultative support from the PIEL team member, the improvements of the school teams based on goal achievement of the consultees and rooted in continuous improvement stage of implementation science (CDE, 2016) are integral in establishing lasting change.

Administrative Buy-In

Between establishing robust individual consultant relationships and providing universally applicable professional development, the PIEL team members encourage role change and system reform for many colleagues and in many schools in addition to those directly supported by team members. However, to establish lasting change, a more formal network of support not solely reliant upon grassroots team efforts is also necessary. The supervisors of school psychology, speech–language pathology, other support specialists, and several special education administrators are convinced that the team's efforts are positive and poised to enact lasting change. A major challenge of any large urban district is that full-scale support for such a worthy

initiative among one organizational office is not nearly enough to change the culture of the district. In this case, the culture related to traditional roles of school psychologists and other related service providers.

The importance of making data-based decisions is not unique to those schools the team served. The team itself encompassed this ideal as a pillar of both the practice model and MTSS (NASP, 2016). When opportunities have arisen to present team outcomes to district administration, the team is poised to present data in many forms. Student achievement, teacher confidence, school improvement, principal buy-in, and heart-string-tugging vignettes are all sources of data that the PIEL team uses for public relations and to achieve top-down support.

The PIEL team has become an integral component of the district's plan for the CEIS grant; team leaders help to write the grant plan specifically in support of the two overarching goals. These overarching goals continue to be (a) to broaden the role of the school psychologist and other specialist practitioners to encompass a more preventive and intervening effort, and (b) to reform school culture to focus more on preventive and intervening strategies without overreliance on the special education system. In the years since the team was established, the district has created an MTSS office, which views the PIEL team as an important collaborative partner and relies heavily upon the experience of PIEL team members when designing MTSS implementation efforts. Coordination with the MTSS Office and the Office of Differentiated Learning, as well as the Office of Student Support has been made possible by continued positive grant reporting and the presentation of positive project-based outcomes. The benefit to linking with these other offices is twofold: It produces positive outcomes for our students and schools, and offices that oversee work inherent in the NASP Practice Model are well aware of the value of our profession and how comprehensive school psychology services can result in positive benefits to student outcomes and educational reform (2016).

Next Steps

The PIEL project continues to be an initiative, and though broadly established and accepted, the team continually feels the need to prove its worth. A main reason to establish worth is to convince fiscal decision-makers of the importance of the work and its outcomes. To meet this challenge, the team often refers to the NASP Practice Model (2016) and uses it to illustrate the appropriate use of team member expertise and to highlight challenges with using traditional models.

Team members are data analysts, yet they can consult effectively with others based on those data and the analysis that indicates benefits to comprehensive student support models. Recognizing the value of these efforts to the school system, the district system, and the individual student inspires the intrinsic motivation inherent in each team member.

A further challenge is that the district community beyond those familiar with the PIEL team's work is not always aware of the broad training and skills of school psychologists, or the benefits of our efforts for students. It is difficult to change the cultural mindset that has relied upon an IEP as a contract guaranteeing support. Nearly all team members have had to rely on great communication and outreach skills to convince a worried parent that an IEP is not necessary for the school to support his or her child individually. Needs can be met in a variety of ways, particularly with the support of specialists encompassing the broad, comprehensive role and schools on the verge of reform. Rivka I. Olley, Supervisor of Psychological Service in the district and one of the administrative supervisors and advocates for the PIEL team, often likens the work of the team to "turning around the Titanic as it is about to hit the iceberg."

That analogy is apropos, given the decades that the district adhered to court orders prioritizing special education services and the IEP contract over other forms of student support. The main challenge facing the team is convincing the families of nearly 90,000 students that the broad-spectrum professional services of school psychologists, along with our partner speech–language pathologists, as part of a comprehensive MTSS plan, can support children even better than overreliance on IEP-driven services for students without handicapping conditions. In a district that has been the target of reform movements for as long as most parents and even grandparents can remember, it is a tough sell. The PIEL team is dedicated to working persistently and patiently on behalf of all of our children and families, whether they believe in it currently or not. Given the team's continued efforts, we believe that the benefits to the students, the families, the schools, and the community will eventually speak for themselves.

<http://www.nasponline.org/publications/periodicals/communique/issues/volume-46-issue-6/achieving-and-maintaining-change-in-urban-schools-the-role-of-the-school-psychologist>

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