

GRAD CONFERENCE-SPEAKER BIOS-ABSTRACTS

Nicole Alston-Abel: Bio

Nicole Alston-Abel has worked with low income and minoritized students for over 20 years. She has been a practicing school psychologist for 14 years. Nicole received her BA in Psychology from Spelman College, in Atlanta, GA. She then completed a Master's degree program at New York University in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. After teaching in early elementary for 7 years, Nicole enrolled in the School Psychology program at the University of Washington. She completed the MEd program in 2006 and received her PhD in 2009. Her dissertation examined the role home literacy practices played in the academic achievement of students. Her dissertation research was published in 2017 in the Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation. She was also a contributing author in the book Essentials of Specific Learning Disability Identification, Second Edition in 2018.

Nicole has previously presented at WSASP and the National Association of School Psychologists annual convention on the topics of making the switch from using the Discrepancy Model to Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses Model, and on Social Justice and Assessment. She is a member of the NASP African American and Social Justice Subcommittees.

Nicole is a wife and mother of two daughters. Her work with under-served populations has made her passionate about making education accessible and equitable for all students, and fueled her desire to make a difference in the field.

Title: Assessment is a Social Justice Issue: Abstract

In this presentation, practitioners will examine how policies and practices can support or undermine efforts to build equity and social justice. Case examples and related policy implications will be used to illustrate the ways in which assessment decisions and eligibility determination decisions can either advance or hinder student success. Attendees will be challenged to examine their own practice, and look for opportunities to grow and better serve students.

.....

Amanda Crawford, NCSP: Bio

Amanda Crawford has pursued her passion for students and families for over twenty years as a special education teacher and school psychologist. She has worked with all age groups (3-21) in several diverse districts in Western Washington. For the past seven years she has been focused on our youngest learners in early childhood settings as part of North Thurston Public Schools.

Title: Increasing Family Engagement in Early Childhood Evaluations: Abstract

Early childhood assessment is typically a parent's first experience with the school district. It is our first opportunity to introduce them to special education and the assessment process. These early experiences can set the tone for their future evaluations and their relationship with the school district. In this session, strategies are discussed to increase parent involvement, obtain parent input and encourage a positive relationship between parent and school. This session is ideal for those that work in early childhood, those with a high number of initial evaluations and those wanting to increase parent participation in the evaluation process and with schools in general.

Alexandra Franks-Thomas, NCSP: Bio

Alexandra (Alex) is a Nationally Certified School Psychologist in North Thurston Public Schools. Alex is in her seventh year of practice and currently supports one elementary school and an early learning center. Alex currently serves as President of WSASP, in addition to serving as WSASP Communications Committee Co-Chair, and editor of the WSASP Prior Written Notice electronic newsletter. She is also a member of the NASP Communication Committee.

**Title: Enhancing Your Value With Decision-Makers Through Individual Advocacy:
Abstract**

Our educational landscape is beginning to shift dramatically in Washington State. As new policies and procedures around MTSS, RTI and SLD identification begin to roll out at the state level, it is crucial that school psychologists have strong communication skills to articulate their role and contributions to school and district systems. In this session, participants will learn how to link their training and skills to district or building priorities, as well as how to connect with key decision makers surrounding the school psychologist role. This interactive session will teach participants the fundamentals of good communication and professional advocacy planning, message development, and implementation.

Laurie Harrison, PhD: Bio

Dr. Laurie Harrison earned her school psychologist certificate from the University of Washington in 1987. She was in a dual doctoral program for Educational Psychology and Counseling Psychology at Washington State University. She earned her doctorate in 1992. Dr. Harrison has worked in 3 districts: Lake Washington School District, Snohomish School District, and Spokane Public Schools. She has been a union representative off and on since 1987. Dr. Harrison was President of the Washington State Association of School Psychologists 2016-2017 and editor of the SCOPE from 2014 – 2020. She is Co-Chair of the Retention & Recruitment Committee. She won the Louisa Thompson Award in 2015 and was the first recipient of the Outstanding Advocate Award in 2017. She has advocated for school psychologists within the field, at the Washington Education Association, National Education Association, legislators (federal and state) and OSPI.

**Title: Your First Contract: Everything You Need to Know, But Were Afraid To
Ask: Abstract**

This presentation will focus on how to find a district that best meets your needs and what to do if problems arise. Many new school psychologists believe that all districts have the same contract language. However, there can be substantial differences even with districts in close proximity. Although the focus for most graduate students is to find a position, with some insight you will be able to ascertain districts that support school psychologists and those who do not. This presentation will also give some tips for interviewing, initial strategies when you start a new school, and what to do if challenges occur at your school.

Steve Hirsch, PhD, Bio

Born in the deep south (south Brooklyn that is), Steve grew up and attended school (typical ghetto school with bars on windows) where he earned a Master's degree in Experimental Psychology. A rat runner, he did unspeakable things to the little cuties, all in the name of science (and publications). Once he received his doctoral degree at UW in abeyance, he saw the light and stopped working with rats. He instead switched to mice and did unspeakable things to them also in the name of science. His fame came from setting up a Roman Coliseum type apparatus where, in exchange for a PhD, he investigated the ability of mice to recognize potential predators based on where their genes typically resided (eastern vs western WA). Many a brave deer mouse gave their life in this manner but Steve got his degree and internationally recognized publication.

For the past 29 years, he's actually been doing something useful-School Psychology. First in Sumner, then East Valley Spokane, and now, in Shoreline, all the while training future School Psychologists for WSU and EWU. He has numerous publications and over 100 conference/workshop presentations. He obviously likes to listen to himself speak. He also has a very good sense of humor!

Title: If it walks and quacks like a duck...An avian model for using general education data to help guide special education decisions

At my high school, I have encountered two particular decisions that often lack supportive data thus leaving the team to their 'gut feelings'. The re-evaluation decision as to whether a student continues to require specially designed instruction (SDI), and the placement of a student new to special ed or new to our school via transfer or promotion from middle school, on our continuum of classes in either English or Math rarely are based on data. Our school offers classes at an Essential level (elementary school equivalent); Skills level (middle school equivalent); co-taught general ed class level (one teacher is gen ed while the other is special ed) or a non-supported general ed classroom with only accommodations. The model presented in this talk will walk you through the establishment of local norms for **any** test used by general ed. Data from these tests could then provide supportive data for either decision. The basic assumption is that if a student's academic levels are similar to those in a specific program or class placement, then the curriculum match is probably the most appropriate for that student and academic success most probable. We were able to establish cutoff criteria in the areas of Reading Comprehension (using the Reading Inventory); Algebra readiness (using iReady); Written Language (using a writing sample to HS level prompt); and Study Skills (using my own 20-item survey). The necessity for this type of data collection and use is a result of the need for remote assessment during the pandemic and also the future direction of SLD eligibility in the state.

.....

Mona Johnson, Ed.D: Bio

Dr. Mona Johnson currently serves as the Executive Director of Wellness & Support in the South Kitsap School District located in Port Orchard, Washington. In this role she manages a wide variety of programs focused on ensuring that students and staff district-wide are healthy, safe, engaged and supported in their pursuit of individual social emotional wellness and academic success. Before joining the South Kitsap team, Mona was the Director of Student Support at the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction where she provided strategic leadership and policy guidance to a diverse team of professionals responsible for coordinating non-academic supports in schools/districts

focused on promoting student health, safety and well-being. Mona also served as Chief of School Behavioral Health at the U.S. Army Medical Command Child, Adolescent, and Family Behavioral Health Office on Joint Base Lewis McChord. While there she had overall responsibility for the development and management of an international Army School Behavioral Health project aimed at ensuring that evidence-based practices were implemented at Army Installations in the U.S and Europe.

Mona presents, publishes, and consults at the local, state, and national levels in professional wellness, social emotional resilience, and trauma recovery. She co-authored *The Heart of Learning and Teaching: Compassion, Resiliency and Academic Success; Supporting and Educating Traumatized Students: A Guide for School-Based Professionals* (2009), with Ray Wolpow, Ron Hertel, and Susan O. Kincaid; *Compassion Fatigue Training for Educators* (2012), with Marleen Wong; and *How the Traumatic Experiences of Students Manifest in School Settings*, co-authored with Ron Hertel, in *Supporting and Educating Traumatized Students* (Rossen & Hull, Editors, 2010 & 2013). Mona was most recently received the 2019 Touching Trauma at Its Heart Educator Award from the National Attachment and Trauma Network. In 2012 she received the Champion for Children by the National Association of Children of Alcoholics and in 2009 received the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America Advocate of the Year Award.

Mona completed her Doctorate in Educational Leadership at the University of Washington Tacoma in 2016 and her Superintendent credential in 2019. She has masters and undergraduate degrees in Social Sciences and Social Work from Pacific Lutheran University and is a certified Chemical Dependency Professional.

Title: Surviving or Thriving? Remaining Well While Navigating Inequity and Trauma in Schools: Abstract

With continued pressures and demands in our workplaces, navigating all forms of trauma while fostering our own resilience often takes a back seat. This presentation addresses the natural phenomena of compassion fatigue often experienced by educators who find themselves dealing with frequent systemic inequity and school-based trauma. Participants will reflect on their own social emotional competence, explore comprehensive areas of professional wellness and create an individualized self-care plan to support professional resilience and positive growth.

Cassie Mulivrana: Bio

Cassie Mulivrana is a Nationally Certified School Psychologist in the Snohomish School District. Cassie is dual certified as a School Psychologist and a School Counselor and is currently in her 12th year of practice. Although her current assignments include middle school and preschool child find, Cassie has experience at all grade levels. Cassie currently serves as the President-Elect for WSASP and the Assessment Committee Co-Chair.

Title: Leadership 101: Abstract

Aligns with NASP Domain 2: Consultation & Collaboration

This presentation reviews effective leadership habits and strategies, the leadership structure of WSASP, and opportunities to become involved in supporting Area Representatives and Committees.

Title: Power of the PWN: Abstract

Aligns with NASP Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, & Professional Practice

OSPI has provided specific guidance regarding when a prior written notice should be provided and the information that should be included in a prior written notice related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement of or provision of FAPE to a student. This session will review these recommendations and provide attendees with a quick reference guide to take back to their buildings and teams.

The materials in this presentation were adapted from the eLearning for Educators course *Mini-Training Module: Prior Written Notice in the Special Education Process*. The eLearning for Educators Project offers affordable online courses and no-cost mini-trainings. This project is one of the OWSI Special Education State Needs Projects.

.....
Jason R. Parkin, Ph.D., NCSP: Bio

Jason Parkin is an Assistant Clinical Professor in School Psychology. He joined the Seattle University faculty in 2018. Jason has a doctoral degree in school psychology from the University of Missouri. As a practitioner, Jason worked in Texas, Missouri, and Washington state. He has experience in both "traditional" and RTI/MTSS-based school settings, where he provided comprehensive psychoeducational evaluations, and facilitated the grade and school-level problem-solving process. Jason's current scholarly interests focus on the use of psychometric tests. His research has appeared in publications such as the Journal of School Psychology and Psychoeducational Assessments. As a trainer, Jason hopes to support students' developing skill sets, and their practice in school-based settings.

Title: The Professional Art of Meeting Facilitation: The Collective Experiences of School Psychologists: Abstract

Aligns with NASP Domain 2: Consultation & Collaboration

In school psychology, meeting facilitation is a professional art. Despite its ubiquity in practice, many clinicians received little formal training in meeting facilitation. Aside from the internship, school psychologists seldom have the opportunity to observe their colleagues facilitating meetings. Indeed, our experiences leading others in team-based decision making is essentially done in isolation from our professional counterparts. Our team has interviewed school psychologists working in diverse roles across the nation regarding their experiences with meeting facilitation. We asked them about the persona they portray in meetings, their experiences with interpersonal team dynamics, and what works (and doesn't work) for them in facilitating challenging meetings. What are their experiences in various meeting types? What interpersonal dynamics are evident in meetings? The purpose of this presentation is to review meeting facilitation practices through the lens of task group dynamics and facilitation methods. We will describe the group dynamics that characterize successful meetings, and highlight the various roles that the school psychologist may play in meetings. Attendees will be invited to share their

own experiences with meeting facilitation Interactive discussions will allow the audience to collectively plan strategies to minimize challenges that arise in various professional meeting settings. Together, we will also brainstorm effective oral communication practices that may lead to meeting success. After the conference, follow up opportunities will be provided for attendees who would like to share more about their experiences in this pivotal professional role.

Carrie Suchy: Bio

Carrie Suchy is a nationally certified school psychologist in her 9th year of practice. She works in the Franklin Pierce Schools with students from kindergarten through age 21 at several schools, with an emphasis on students with moderate to severe disabilities. She also serves on the WSASP Board as the co-chair of the Government and Public Relations Committee Co-Chair. As part of this role, she co-founded the ESA Behavioral Health Coalition several years ago and continues to serve in leadership for this group. She has been a part time lecturer for the University of Washington Tacoma's School of Education for 3 years, teaching summer courses focused on special education and assessment.

Title: Enhancing Your Value With Decision-Makers Through Individual Advocacy

Our educational landscape is beginning to shift dramatically in Washington State. As new policies and procedures around MTSS, RTI and SLD identification begin to roll out at the state level, it is crucial that school psychologists have strong communication skills to articulate their role and contributions to school and district systems. In this session, participants will learn how to link their training and skills to district or building priorities, as well as how to connect with key decision makers surrounding the school psychologist role. This interactive session will teach participants the fundamentals of good communication and professional advocacy planning, message development, and implementation.