

What is your background and experience?

I have been working as a School Psychologist for 7 years now. I first began my career in New York City public schools, where I worked for two years in the area of the Bronx. I moved to Maryland six years ago and started working in Baltimore County. I worked there for five years and am currently working in Montgomery County Public Schools. This is my second year in the county and presently work in two elementary schools. This year I also serve on the MSPA Board as a co-representative (LSPO) for Montgomery County. I also participate on the Diversity Committee. I have worked in mostly urban settings since the start of my career and have worked with all age groups. I have also worked in a variety of programs across these settings. As a Latina woman, who was born and raised in the Bronx, it was always important for me to serve those children who are from similar backgrounds. Being of Hispanic descent has helped me build rapport and support our Hispanic communities as I am a fluent bilingual speaker.

What are current and future issues and concerns of the discipline?

Current and future issues and concerns within School Psychology are the increase of mental health disorders and or behavioral concerns within the younger population. As a Psychologist in the Elementary schools, I have witnessed an increase in the need to supply more support to younger children. Due to the fact that Psychologists have so many roles and responsibilities, it is difficult to focus on the more important issues like providing mental health support to the children as well as for the staff. Another issue and or concern within the discipline is also with the diagnosing of Dyslexia, Dysgraphia and Dyscalculia. Recently there has been a push to provide more specific codes within Specific Learning Disability, however how counties identify these disorders are different across locations.

What are the issues and concerns that unite rural, suburban and urban districts of Maryland?

The issues and concerns that unite all areas across Maryland State is the need for more School Psychologists. Psychologists are expected to provide services to multiple school buildings as well as keep up with the demands of each building. School Psychologists are overwhelmed and are in increasing demand given the state of our country. It is becoming more difficult to be as effective as possible when time is scarce given the responsibilities within multiple schools. There is a strong need to have one Psychologist for each school building in order to provide the best support possible.

Another issue and or concern that surrounds all areas within Maryland State is the continued increase of over identification within the minority population. Students of color continue to be over identified with having a disability or a disorder and continue to lead other populations in suspension rates. How schools deal with students of color continue to be a challenge and continue to show a disparity between the growth in learning and suspension rates among the different races.