Greetings!

Greetings Rhode Island School Psychologist! Happy New Year! I hope your 2014-2015 school year is moving along swimmingly and you’re refreshed from the first major break of the school year. So far it appears that the weather has been mild this winter. We have not had a lot of snow hit the ground and the air has not been as frigid as in winters past. Here’s hoping it remains similarly mild for the remainder of the season and we sail into spring 2015 without the expected freezer burn. In the winter newsletter, there’s a review of our well attended and well reviewed 2014 Fall Conference. There’s also an update from the 2014 Northeast Regional Conference. Finally, SAVE THE DATE! There’s another RISPA school psychology event happening very soon.

Morayo Sayles
School Psychologist, CAGs.

Meet RISPA's new leadership committee

Dr. Gary Stoner- Gary is the School Psychology Program Director at the University of Rhode Island. He has been a longstanding member of the RISPA board and volunteered to present multiple professional workshops for RISPA members on a variety of topics within the field of school psychology.

Susan Casey Torrey- Susan is a longstanding school psychologist in South Kingstown. Susan has become highly active with the RISPA board over the past 2 years and served a special assignment as RISPA representative for the support professionals educator evaluation model. More recently, Susan has taken on the role of recording secretary.

Steve DeBlois: Steve is serving his 11th year as a school psychology practitioner in West Warwick, and over 10 years in RISPA with different board positions, including NCSP committee member, webmaster assistant, webmaster, newsletter editor, President Elect, and President 2012-2014. Steve just entered into his new role as Past President.

Kim Pristawa- Kim is in her 12th year as a practicing school psychologist in Burrillville public schools. She has served more than 10 years in RISPA with different positions, including NCSP committee chair, conference committee member, secretary, President Elect, President 2008-2010, and Past President. Kim is the current NASP Delegate for RISPA.

Gail Mastropietro- Gail is a longstanding school psychology leader in Providence schools, and has served over 10 years with RISPA in different board positions, including legislative committee chair, conference committee member, President Elect, President 2010-2012, and Past President.
Recently RISPA sent four of their member’s to the NASP Northeast Regional meeting held in Burlington, Vermont. It was a weekend spent on resource sharing among colleagues engaging in professional development opportunities and on brainstorming leadership development and empowerment within the association at both the state and national levels. Professional development focused on transformational change and the NASP practice model presented by Stacey Skalski, NASP Director of Professional Policy & Practice and Steve Brock, NASP President. Additionally, Steven Brock presented on Suicide & Threat Assessment. The NASP practice model workshop explored how these standards provide a framework for sustaining positive changes to the role of the school psychologist. RISPA discussed formally adopting the NASP practice model as an association. The regional meeting also focused on school psychologists as mental and behavioral health providers. A major development that the regional meeting highlighted was Title V of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This specifies that both specialist and doctoral level school psychologists are qualified health professionals, and should be recognized as such in funding and programmatic initiatives intended to improve mental and behavioral health care for children and youth. [http://www.hhs.gov/healthcare/rights/law/title/v-healthcare-workforce.pdf](http://www.hhs.gov/healthcare/rights/law/title/v-healthcare-workforce.pdf)

NASP believes that the language in the ACA should affect Medicaid reimbursement since it has changed the rules for federal reimbursement. State associations were encouraged to take the language in title V and bring it to the state Medicaid representative. If school systems are able to submit for Medicaid reimbursement for psychological services, this could help us advocate for more psychological services in schools. The regional meeting included a time for small group breakout topics including: school psychologist evaluations, threat/suicide assessment, charter schools, DSM-5, LD regulations. State associations also had the opportunity to share hot topics. It was interesting to see some of the successes and challenges that other states in the Northeast region are experiencing.

So what came from this weekend? Well, there are currently many initiatives that RISPA needs to organize to help shape and develop our association. Currently, attracting new members and more importantly building capacity within our current RISPA members is a top priority. At the moment, RISPA does not have a President or a President Elect. We have created a Leadership Committee to share the responsibilities normally performed by these positions. As an association, RISPA has been held afloat by a few members doing a majority of the work. It is very disheartening to see lack of involvement on a state level by so many of our members. I highly encourage our members to get involved, whether it be on a leadership level or joining a committee to help support RISPA’s efforts. Some of these efforts include: creating an operating manual, a strategic plan, updating by laws, or joining an established committee. Given, the new development with the ACA, RISPA would love to have more of the members advocate to their districts, as well as on a state level to make a change to Medicaid reimbursement. There are many other opportunities to get involved with RISPA, such as helping out with planning our professional development, social activities, being apart of the minority scholarship committee to name a few. I highly encourage our membership to make it a priority to advocate for our profession. RISPA has tried to be flexible with meeting times and now is offering online meetings to try to get more involvement from its members. If you can’t attend an in person meeting, please take the time to check out the online meetings. Even if you don’t have excessive amounts of time to help with our efforts, your time is needed because small contributions from more members will add up! I leave you with a quote for Fred Rogers to highlight the need to be active participants in our association. “We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say "It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem." Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.

Kristen Messier, CAGs
RISPA 2014 Fall Conference

The 2014 RISPA Fall Conference was held on October 17, 2014 at Rhode Island College. Dr. Ray Christner, the CEO of Cognitive Health Solutions in Hanover, Pennsylvania presented on Cognitive Behavior Therapy in the School Setting. The presentation was very informative, somewhat entertaining, and filled with concrete examples of the use of the theory with problems that occur in the school setting. The attendees were provided with practical applications of cognitive behavior therapy and given access to free downloadable forms and worksheets. The conference was well attended and the attendees provided much positive feedback regarding the presenter and the materials provided and referenced. Dr. John Eagle secured the venue and assisted with technological needs. A number of graduate students assisted with tasks before, during and after the conference.

Pauline Tardif, NCSP
RISPA Conference Chairperson
Let’s get psyched! Re-energizing RISPA

Come check out what’s new with RISPA. The RISPA "Get Psyched" Event will be held at Blake's Tavern (122 Washington St., Providence RI) on **Friday 1/23/15 from 4:30 to 7:30PM EST**. This is a great opportunity to meet School Psychologists from throughout the state and see what is being done in different districts and share resources. Find out ways to get involved with RISPA. This is also a great opportunity for students to meet professionals in the field.

RISPA Minority Scholarship

RISPA is pleased to announce the tenth year of the RISPA Minority Scholarship Award. RISPA annually awards a scholarship to at least one or two qualified minority graduate students of school psychology. This scholarship was established to provide financial support to help curtail the financial burdens associated with an extended academic program and to infuse the profession with a needed presence of diversity and cultural awareness.

To be eligible a student must attend a School Psychology/Educational Psychology program in Rhode Island or be a resident of RI attending an out of state program. Out of state students attending RI programs may also apply. A student must be a person of color and/or speak a language other than English with excellent proficiency. Students who are bi-lingual must intend to use the second language in their practice as a school psychologist.

To apply, download the application after 1/9/15 from [www.rispa.org](http://www.rispa.org) under RISPA Awards: Minority Scholarship Application. Follow the instructions on the application form and submit all documents. The application cutoff date for 2015 is Friday, February 13th, 2015.