



PRESS RELEASE
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School Psychologists Support New York's Most Vulnerable

NEW YORK CITY: On September 30th, 2021, the Chapter N (New York City) Representative for the New York Association of School Psychologists (NYASP), Gregory L. Mellon, served on a panel at City & State's first "Addressing New York's Most Vulnerable Summit." The summit was broken up into panels composed of experts from various organizations to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on New York's most vulnerable. Mr. Mellon represented School Psychologists and NYASP on the panel: "How is New York Making Disability Rights a Priority." The panel was moderated by Kristin Malek, Director of Business Diversity, CDW. The purpose of the panel was to discuss how to support the diverse group of one million New Yorkers who identify as having a disability through various city programs. More specifically, Mr. Mellon discussed how school psychologists play a critical role in supporting students with disabilities in New York City, where special education is approximately 25% of the NYC Department of Education's budget (www.cityandstateny.com).

Mr. Mellon discussed how school psychologists work collaboratively with school staff to promote positive school environments so students can focus on learning. School psychologists play an important role in the special education process and ensuring that educational plans are appropriate for students. This involves collecting data from multiple sources (parents, teachers, related service providers, assessment, work samples, etc). School psychologists are trained to interpret data through a culturally responsive lens, to determine how a child's cultural and linguistic background plays a role in their abilities and the development of their educational plans. School psychologists work to ensure that specific populations are not overidentified in special education by considering all aspects that contribute to a child's learning. Mr. Mellon noted, "It's a school psychologist's responsibility to make sure that every child's educational rights are spoken for and are put at the forefront when we are helping children and families, and we are going to do everything that we need to do to ensure that services are given in a fair manner regardless of race, gender, and sex."

While significant issues related to learning and development are apparent as a result of the pandemic, Mr. Mellon emphasized that students were dealing with significant concerns that impacted their ability to learn prior to the pandemic as well. Examples include not having access to technology, experiencing community and family trauma, and socio-economic status. These factors should be considered by school psychologists when conducting evaluations, consulting with parents and teachers, and implementing interventions.

Their work does not stop with evaluation. School psychologists implement evidence-based interventions and work with students with disabilities to develop a transition plan after graduation that is relevant to their skills and interests. School psychologists play a critical role in helping students with disabilities during their school years as well as preparing for life after high school.

To view the recording of City & State's "Addressing NY's Most Vulnerable Summit" go to: [Link](#)

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Respectfully submitted by Courtney Huguenin, NYASP Public Relations Chair