School Psychology Leadership for Marginalized Students

Staci Ballard, Stacy L. Bender, Brian Daniels, and Andrea Molina Palacios

School psychologists provide services to help youth succeed socially, emotionally, behaviorally, and academically by conducting assessment, consultation, and intervention at both the individual and systemic levels (National Association of School Psychologists [NASP]). While these three domains are considered the primary focus of school psychology practice, incorporating leadership and advocacy skills within these domains is becoming required of school psychologists (Augustyniak et al., 2016), particularly in the context of persistent educational inequalities faced by students from marginalized backgrounds. As advocates, school psychologists are required to "speak up for the rights and welfare of students and families, and … provide a voice to clients who cannot or do not wish to speak for themselves" (NASP, 2020, p. 41). *Leadership* in advocacy further asks school psychologists expand their advocacy efforts by encouraging school-wide changes for marginalized students.

School psychologists serve as leaders by working collaboratively with others to combine various forms of expertise to meet the needs of schools. Contemporary leadership practices in schools emphasize decentered models and a team approach to distributed leadership practices (Coleman, 2011; Harris, 2005). Although the field reports a lack of research and definition of "leadership" as it relates to school psychology practice (Shriberg, 2007), efforts have been made to examine what this means. According to a survey of school psychologists (Shriberg et al., 2010), the ability to achieve positive outcomes for students and systems is an imperative characteristic of a leader. Furthermore, competence, knowledge, and strong interpersonal skills and personal character were terms that described school psychology leaders.

S. Ballard · S. L. Bender (✉) · B. Daniels · A. Molina Palacios
University of Massachusetts Boston, Boston, MA, USA
e-mail: stacy.bender@umb.edu

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Augustyniak (2014) adapted five dimensions of effective school leadership practices to illustrate how they could be utilized within school psychology service delivery. These include (1) establish goals and expectations; (2) resource strategically (e.g., advocate and dedicate resources aligned with instructional goals, model effective use of own professional resources); (3) plan, coordinate, and evaluate teaching and the curriculum; (4) promote and participate in teacher learning and development; and (5) ensure an orderly and supportive environment for students. As Augustyniak describes dimension 5, "a practice orientation for social justice is enriched to a leadership orientation when, in addition to designing and implementing interventions and programs that promote fairness and social justice, school psychologists actively collaborate with others in monitoring and responding to the broader school culture."

Leadership in advocacy and social justice naturally align with the transformational model of leadership, a style that many school psychologists already identify with (Shriberg et al., 2010). The transformational model of leadership calls for school psychologists to "emphasize values while fundamentally targeting growth in motivation and capacity" of other team members (Augustyniak, 2014). Taking a transformational approach within the five leadership domains can help school psychologists function as leaders collaboratively, sharing and distributing leadership power with others as they strive to create meaningful change for marginalized students (Augustyniak et al., 2016).

Leadership in advocacy for marginalized students and social justice go hand in hand. Shriberg & Clinton (2016) described social justice as both an aspirational goal, a filter through which information is gathered, and something school psychologists actively do while faced with injustice. Furthermore, it is described as a distinct approach that emphasizes fairness, equity, advocacy, and cultural awareness (Moy et al., 2014; Shriberg et al., 2008, 2010). School psychologists are placed in a critical role to advocate for marginalized students, which can be done from a leadership perspective due to the knowledge and skills they possess. Moreover, school psychologists have access to the systems and systemic forces that are involved when delivering psychological services to the school system, students, and families. Collaborating with different partners has proved to be helpful in sharing resources to support the mission and responsibility of advocating for social justice (Barrett et al., 2019).

School psychologists strongly embrace the view of themselves as active leaders in their roles (Augustyniak et al., 2016). Given the importance of understanding, supporting, and advocating for students from marginalized populations, it is imperative for school psychologists to provide leadership in this area through ongoing critical reflection and engaging in culturally responsive practices, as well as action toward equitable service delivery at the individual and systemic levels (Vera and Speight, 2003). The purpose of this chapter is to describe ways school psychologists can serve as leaders for advocating for marginalized students in schools. The chapter briefly describes the importance of supporting marginalized students and

describes individual and systemic leadership efforts school psychologists can engage in to advocate for students. Throughout the chapter, vignettes are included to illustrate examples of the practices described.

1 Importance of Advocacy for Marginalized Students

School demographics in the United States have shifted rapidly over the past decades, with schools continuing to become more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation (Aud et al., 2013). In 2010, non-Hispanic European-American children accounted for only 60% of the population, compared to 74.6% in 1980 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Furthermore, ethnic minority populations are expected to represent a majority in the United States by 2042. In public school, approximately 10% of students are currently considered English Language Learners (ELL; Aud et al., 2013). There are currently 13 million children living in low-income and economic marginalization (LIEM; Fontenot et al., 2018). Four to five percent of students self-identify as lesbian, gay, bi−/pansexual, transgender, queer, questioning, asexual, aromantic, or other sexual orientations, gender identities, or gender expression (LGBTQA+) (Proctor & Meyers, 2014). Family composition is also becoming increasingly diverse, with 191,000 children reportedly living with same-sex parents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019) and 23% of children living in an only-mother household (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Students with disabilities represent approximately 14% of the total student population (7.3 million students; NCES, 2021). Clearly student populations are reflecting a wider range of culturally and linguistically diverse identities, a trend which will likely continue throughout coming years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

Although diversity in schools is certainly growing and is a reality (Miranda, 2014), minoritized students have faced systems of oppression that continues to marginalize them and contributes to negative academic outcomes. For instance, Hart and Risley (1995) found that by age 4, children from low-income families have heard, on average, 30 million fewer words than children from higher-SES backgrounds, which was found to be correlated with reading achievement. Poverty impacts school readiness, with less than 50% of students in LIEM possessing necessary readiness skills compared to 75% of their middle-upper class peers (Isaacs, 2012). Fifty-two percent of African American and 51% of Latino students in fourth grade scored below a basic level on NAEP reading tests (Fiester, 2010), and less than two-thirds graduated on time (Proctor & Meyers, 2014). Fewer than one in five students that are ELL meet reading and writing state standard level (Thorius & Sullivan, 2013). Students from marginalized backgrounds continue to be overrepresented special education yet underrepresented in "gifted" programs (Proctor & Meyers, 2014).

In addition to academic disadvantage, students from historically marginalized populations are placed by systems as "at-risk" for social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. Black and Brown students, as well as Latino students are more likely to receive exclusionary school-based discipline and face grade retention (Skiba et al., 2011). LGBTQA+ students face increased school-based victimization including physical and verbal harassment and assaults; these instances of victimization are associated with increased levels of depression, substance abuse, lower grades, school avoidance, and higher dropout rates (McCabe, 2014). Students with disabilities are bullied at far higher rates than peers without disabilities and report feeling less safe and included at school (Graybill et al., 2016). In addition, students with disabilities are found to drop out more frequently and receive less preparation for the transition out of high school (Proctor & Meyers, 2014).

If school psychologists are to provide high-quality educational services, the above risks must be addressed. The foundations of school psychology practice are grounded in the Professional Standards of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2020). The Professional Standards make explicitly clear the need to create equitable school environments for all students, regardless of background. The Practice Model calls for "an understanding and respect for human diversity and promote effective services, advocacy, and social justice for all students, families, and schools" (NASP, 2020). This encourages practitioners to develop culturally sensitive skills in direct services for students, including interventions to support academic development and life skills (e.g., instructional strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners, evidence-based interventions targeting student social, emotional, and behavioral wellness) and indirect services and school-wide services to promote learning (e.g., policies and practices that support effective discipline and home-school collaboration, multitiered continua of services). Similarly, NASP, (2020) clearly establishes an ethical responsibility to respect the rights and welfare of all persons and "cultivate school climates that are safe and welcoming, and equitable to all persons regardless of actual or perceived characteristics, including race, ethnicity, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, immigration status, socioeconomic status, primary language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, or other distinguishing characteristics" (p. 44). NASP explicitly embeds a call to action within school psychology training and practice, creating a critical responsibility to lead advocacy efforts for all students, especially marginalized and underserved students.

Despite the professional urgency for school psychologists to function as advocates and leaders for marginalized populations, and the growing number of students that would benefit from such efforts, action remains difficult for many practitioners. Competing daily priorities, fast-paced school environments, and growing caseloads already leave many school psychologists feeling overwhelmed so that additional leadership and advocacy work feels infeasible to many. Even when school psychologists can make time, many are unsure of what action looks like. *Why* school psychologists need to be advocacy leaders might seem obvious, but the *how, what,*

when, and *with whom* of leadership and advocacy are much less clear. To help guide school psychologists, the following sections outline specific strategies practitioners can take at the individual and systemic level to become leaders in advocating for marginalized students.

2 Individual Practices to Support Marginalized Students

Self-Awareness and Self-Reflection From an individual level, it is imperative for school psychologists to be aware of and continuously reflect on their own worldview and biases and acknowledge how this plays a role in the work they do (e.g., NASP, 2020; Shriberg et al., 2008). This can be challenging, given that implicit bias, the bias in judgment and/or behavior that results from subtle cognitive processes, operate at a level *below* conscious awareness and *without* intentional control (National Center for State Courts, 2012). As a result, implicit bias often goes *unexamined*. How can one examine something that they are unaware of? It is important to educate oneself on what implicit bias is and how it is formed. It is even more important to acknowledge that everyone is susceptible to implicit bias. It is helpful to continuously reflect and educate oneself about biases and work to actively combat them. There are excellent resources available to more fully understand how to identify implicit biases and evidence-based practices that help minimize the effects of implicit biases (see NASP (2017) list of resources). One of the resources suggested by NASP (2017) is the Implicit Association Test (Project Implicit, Harvard University; https://implicit.harvard.edu), an online tool designed to measure the strength of associations between concepts and evaluations or stereotypes. The researchers that created the IAT report that it is not intended to predict behavior at the individual level. However, it could be used to provide a way to reflect and have conversation about one's results of the test. As research has suggested, "… implicit bias is arguably one of the most significant challenges facing our profession as it influences the educational outcomes of an increasingly diverse student body" and "only when the effects of implicit bias are effectively addressed will all students have access to quality education and a positive affirming educational experience" (NASP, 2017).

Assist Others in Self-Awareness and Self-Reflection Consistent with dimension 4, promoting and participating in learning (Augustyniak, 2014) and the transformational model of leadership (Shriberg et al., 2010), school psychologists can engage in leadership efforts to support school personnel in examining their own implicit biases and providing cultural responsiveness and social justice training in the school. This could be used as an opportunity to educate and enhance school climate, rather than a punitive and reactionary practice used after a negative incident occurs. Just as school psychologists are susceptible to bias, teachers and administrators are too. By providing educational opportunities to learn about and examine implicit bias, school

psychologists can help increase school-wide awareness of the ways in which these factors impact students.

Example
Mr. Green is a school psychologist in a medium sized suburban district. With frequent discussion of racial inequalities in the media, several teachers have expressed feeling "unsure" about how to talk to their students about privilege, power, and inequalities. Mr. Green decides to conduct professional development for school staff designed to provide information on how bias and privilege can manifest in school relationships. As part of the training, Mr. Green includes some concrete suggestions for teachers and makes himself available for follow-up discussions with individual personnel.

Education on implicit bias may be particularly important in reducing instances of microaggressions often experienced by students and families from marginalized backgrounds. Microaggressions are "everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership" (Sue, 2010, p. 4), which often stem from individuals' implicit biases. Microaggressions can take the form of microinsults (insensitivity to or disregard for an individual's identity), microinvalidations (dismissing of thoughts, feelings, or experiences, of an individual from underrepresented background), or microassaults (overt discrimination) and often leave the recipient feeling invalidated, confused, or hurt by the interaction (Sue et al., 2007).

While many microaggressions are delivered unconsciously by individuals without malicious intent, the negative consequences are nonetheless very real for the recipients of microaggressions. Research has shown that microaggressions can negatively impact students' behavioral, cognitive, physical, and emotional health (Sue, 2010), in addition to negatively impacting their school relationships (Malone, 2019). In advocating for students that are minoritized, school psychologists can educate themselves and others on microaggressions, helping minimize invalidating experiences for students based on identity factors.

Leading efforts to examine implicit bias and instances of microaggressions within staff and students is difficult. Discussions of microaggressions in particular are highly controversial in nature and may not be well received by some. It is suggested that when one takes this on, that they are comfortable doing so. At the same time, discomfort should not be an excuse to not engage in self-examination at all. While it may be challenging to discuss implicit bias or white privilege, depending on one's own awareness, comfort level, and context, school psychologists can still function as advocates by leading education on other topics that could be informative, contribute to a supportive environment, and further the mission of advocacy for marginalized populations. In helping raise awareness of implicit biases and

microaggressions, school psychologists can lead others by establishing a safe and supportive environment for students from all backgrounds (dimension 5; Augustyniak, 2014). For example, Malone (2019) suggests the following recommendations:

- Acknowledge when a microaggression has occurred
- Understand that intent does not equal impact
- Speak to the behavior, not the person
- Ask questions to make the invisible visible

Knowledge and Understanding of Factors that Influence Service Delivery While school psychologists might be well positioned to lead advocacy efforts for marginalized students, they are not automatic "experts" in culture, diversity, social justice, or understanding the experiences of all students. Understanding the influence these factors exert on practice could help school psychologists be more equipped to take a leadership stance in the advocacy process. This practice is consistent with school leadership practice 4, promoting and participating in learning and development (Augustyniak, 2014).

Suggestions from NASP (2017):

- Support school staff in the implementation of culturally responsive academic and behavioral MTSS
- Increase positive representation of people of color (and people from marginalized backgrounds) throughout school building
- Emphasize professional objectivity
- Show professional accountability when incidences of implicit bias occur
- Review disproportionality data in a variety of areas (e.g., discipline practices and outcomes, special education eligibility, representation in gifted programs) regularly
- Acknowledge and disrupt instances of microaggressions experienced by students and staff

Example
Jo, a school psychologist in a large, urban school district with a large number of students that are immigrants and students from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, was recently tasked with assisting schools in implementing trauma-informed practices. Jo thought it would be helpful to educate teachers and administrators about what trauma is, the effects of trauma, and how it might impact students' functioning at school. To do this, she provided didactic instruction and facilitated small group discussions with administrators and then with teachers. For both groups, she shared copies of her presentation materials, readings about the topic, and additional resources.

Collaborate with Staff and Students School psychologists do not necessarily need to assume sole responsibility for educating others around issues of marginalization. Collaborating with others to provide information to others in the school is also a great way to gain buy in, improve sustainability, and allocate resources effectively (dimension 2, resource strategically; Augustyniak, 2014). Many other professionals within schools have extensive knowledge that may help enrich education and professional development. Collaboration can be particularly powerful when students become involved, allowing students to identify meaningful issues within their schools and feel connected to and empowered by staff.

Example
Ms. Lee is a school psychologist at Sunshine High School. Recently it was brought to Ms. Lee's attention by the students that many people in the school misuse terms related to sexuality and gender and do not honor students' pronoun use. With the support of the principal, Ms. Lee and students worked together to create a presentation describing accurate terminology, common misconceptions about sexuality and gender, and strategies to support all students, including LGBTQ+ students. After Ms. Lee and the students presented in several health classes, students reported to feel comfortable and empowered in taking the lead and presenting this information to their peers and teachers in other classes.

Enhance Student Connectedness Students' connectedness to adults and peers in schools is important and related to academic, social, and emotional functioning (e.g., Roeser et al., 2000). This is particularly important for students from marginalized backgrounds. Students of color are significantly less likely to feel connected to school adults and report less care, support, and encouragement compared to their White counterparts (e.g., Anyon et al., 2016; Bottiani et al., 2016). Research has also suggested that poor relationships between educators and marginalized students, particularly students of color, is one of several causes to racial discipline gaps. Serving as a mentor or helping others learn to serve as mentors for students can help to improve the quality of student-adult relationships in schools. The school counseling literature suggests that students who report having a responsive mental health professional with whom they had a relationship and could turn to in the school improves their feelings of connectedness and safety (Lapan et al., 2014). Given that school psychologists provide intervention and therapeutic services for students, they can also contribute to supporting students as a mentor.

School psychologists can advocate for student clubs/organizations that aim to enhance connectedness among students. For example, the Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSA; formerly known as Gay-Straight Alliance) is a student-led extracurricular club focusing on LGBTQA+ identity, support, and advocacy (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network [GLSEN], n.d.). While the Equal Access

Act (1984) protects the right of students participating in GSA clubs, people within the school and broader community have tried to prevent the formation of GSAs. School psychologists could serve as leaders in their school community by helping form or chair the GSA at their school/district. Research shows that students who attended schools with GSAs were less likely to feel unsafe due to their sexual orientation or gender expression and LGBTQA+ students reported less discrimination (GLSEN, n.d.).

Example
Mr. Plume, a new school psychologist in a small-sized, rural district learns that there is no GSA in the high school he currently works in. He raises this to administrators, who respond "there are no gay students in our school." This is likely an inaccurate assumption, as students may not have identified themselves because they may perceive the school as an unsafe environment to do so. Mr. Plume believes that he is in a position to challenge the administrators' assumptions. He also knows the research that indicates GSAs are positive for school climate for all students, including students who identify as LGBTQA+. Mr. Plume leads efforts to inform students of what a GSA is and prepare an initial survey to gather student interest. As part of his advocacy, Mr. Plume provides deidentified survey data to the administrators to show them empirical evidence that interest in the club exists. After being approached by a few students who expressed great interest in leading the club, Mr. Plume worked with the students to get the club up and running and then agreed to serve as faculty chair of the club.

Engagement and Outreach to Families As outlined by NASP (2017), school psychologists should take initiative to understand students' cultural background. They should also strive to improve a cultural match between educational and psychological practices and student identity and background. To better understand students' identity, culture, and background and improve family-school collaboration efforts, it is important to engage students' families, who may also be marginalized, in the educational process. Schools are less likely to engage diverse families, often due to the misconceptions by schools that families of marginalized students "value education less" or are "less interested" in their child's schooling (Blanchett et al., 2009). Since research suggests that schools make fewer efforts to make parent engagement culturally relevant for families from diverse backgrounds, caregivers mays perceive that they are not welcome in the school environment, and additional barriers make it difficult to navigate the educational context (e.g., discrimination, bias, and less social capital) (Ong-Dean, 2009), school psychologists can lead in these areas by acknowledging this and taking actionable steps to reduce these barriers.

Considerations when reaching out to families:

- What are my preconceived notions or biases about the marginalized families I work with?

- How do I conceptualize family engagement?
- Are my efforts to engage families culturally sensitive?
- What method am I using to reach families (e.g., phone, email, text, note home)?
- Am I considering what families may face when being invited to engage with the school?
- What am I doing to reduce these barriers?
- How am I collecting family input in overall school culture (e.g., school climate and practices)?

3 Systems-Level Advocacy for Marginalized Students

While working at the individual level is an important (and necessary) component of advocating for marginalized populations, school psychologists do not work in a vacuum. As practitioners, school psychologists must also work as advocates as a member of a larger school system. This requires school psychologists to work collaboratively with others across a variety of teams in order to create and sustain change, all while balancing needs of the school with the needs of students. An important function of the school psychologists at the systems level is to ensure that the needs of school systems do not overshadow the needs of students, particularly the needs of marginalized students, who are historically and currently impacted by systemic inequalities. School psychology leadership "seeks to change the status quo for purposes of breaking down institutional barriers to student learning" (Ratts & Greenleaf, 2018, p. 2). As leaders, school psychologists should guide school teams in examining systems-level factors within their schools and advocate for necessary changes that can benefit marginalized students. While this task may seem overwhelming, school psychologists can start by taking concrete steps in evaluating systemic level factors within their schools and districts.

School Materials The foundation of all systems-level school practices should include culturally appropriate and responsive materials. School psychologists should already strive to use culturally responsive materials and practices within their own work, but they can also function as leaders in advocating for school-wide culturally sensitive, inclusive materials (Briggs, 2013). Consistent with leadership dimension 3 (planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and curriculum; Augustyniak, 2014), school psychologists can help evaluate the curriculum for culturally sensitive material at a classroom level, utilizing formal tools (e.g., Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard; Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019; Curricula Appropriateness Scale; Howard & Weiler, 2003) and/or empowering teachers to evaluate their own curriculum. This allows for diverse representation and has the potential to help students from marginalized backgrounds feel safer within their environments (Snapp et al., 2015). Additionally, less marginalized students can be exposed to diverse perspectives. By advocating and leading others in creating culturally inclusive classrooms,

school psychologists can help ensure that students feel represented within their classrooms and learning materials.

Example
A parent reaches out to Ms. Bee, the school psychologist at Central Middle School, with concerns that their child with a physical disability feels "different" than the "normal" kids in his class. At a curriculum meeting, Ms. Bee collaborates with teachers and administrators to brainstorm ways to include representation of individuals with varying abilities within classrooms. The team decides to include books that depict students with disabilities into the reading curriculum, ensure that positive role models with disabilities are included in history units, and buy inclusive classroom decorations that depict students with varied physical abilities.

Materials used outside of the classroom, including decorations, celebrations, and communication with families, should also be evaluated for inclusiveness. School psychologists should strive to create an atmosphere that acknowledges and validates the cultural experiences of students from traditionally marginalized backgrounds. In creating environments that feel welcoming and collaborative, school psychologists can help ensure that students feel connected to their schools rather than excluded and/or different. Materials used for schoolwide communication should utilize representative and inclusive language, helping to create an atmosphere that emphasizes respect for students and families of all backgrounds. By addressing these changes on a school-wide basis, school psychologists can help inspire and lead others in advocating for marginalized populations.

Example
Mr. Sommer notices that all communication sent home is addressed to "parents." Recognizing that student family composition is diverse, he asks at a staff meeting if official paperwork can be changed to use "caregiver" instead.

Considerations that might guide evaluation of school materials:

- Do history curricula cover material related to non-Eurocentric events?
- Do English curricula include a variety of diverse authors?
- Do science curricula acknowledge historically ignored contributors to scientific discovery?
- Do health curricula contain LGBTQ friendly terminology?
- Do school enrollment forms contain gender diverse options?

- Does communication with families acknowledge diverse family compositions?
- Do school decorations, photos, and celebrations represent a variety of backgrounds?
- Are materials translated into families' preferred or native languages?

Multi-tiered Systems of Support In addition to being inclusive, school materials should be examined to ensure that all students are benefitting equitably. Through the use of evidence-based practices such as Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), school psychologists can help evaluate the impact of their school's universal curriculum to ensure that the academic and behavioral needs of all students, including those from marginalized backgrounds, are being met (Avant, 2016; Shriberg & Moy, 2014). The MTSS model (which encompasses other models such as PBIS and RTI) calls for a three-tiered approach to providing academic and behavioral services, with students receiving progressively more support based on their need as identified by universal behavioral and academic screening. At a foundational level, MTSS calls for culturally responsive universal curricula and behavioral expectations to be provided to all students (Tier 1). Students identified as needing additional support receive targeted, evidenced-based interventions (Tier 2) or intensive supports (Tier 3). The use of an MTSS model helps schools move away from a traditional student deficit model, instead moving toward an ecological perspective and creating system-wide accountability for student outcomes (Li & Vazquez-Nuttall, 2009).

The use of an MTSS framework helps increase equitable outcomes for marginalized students in many ways. For one, the use of MTSS has been shown to reduce inappropriate special education referrals in culturally and linguistic students by providing curricula to all student needs and identifying a need for support before the referrals to remedial services (Li & Vazquez-Nuttall, 2009; Castro-Villarreal et al., 2016). Thus, schools can ensure that underserved students are receiving proactive supports and interventions. In a behavioral sense, the use of MTSS has been shown to decrease disproportionality in office discipline referrals by proactively teaching behavioral expectations and proving social-emotional learning to all students (Noltemeyer et al., 2019). Through the ideal implementation of MTSS structures, schools embed cultural responsiveness within all levels of policy and help reduce the impact of implicit bias by creating objective criteria for behavioral and academic referrals, ensuring that marginalized students are not unfairly penalized for cultural factors (Avant, 2016; Castro-Villarreal, 2016; Naser et al., 2018). School psychologists are in a particularly good position to lead collaborative MTSS implementation teams in ways consistent with Augustyniak's (2014) five leadership dimensions (Eagle et al., 2015):

- School psychologists can help set goals and expectations (dimension 1) by collaboratively developing and communicating school-wide goals for behavior and academic improvement.
- Leaning on their extensive training in MTSS, school psychologists can help resource strategically (dimension 2) by provide information and resources that facilitate implementation.

- In planning, coordinating, and evaluating teacher and the curriculum (dimension 3), school psychologists can manage and monitor student-level data to evaluate universal curriculum for bias.
- Consistent with promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (dimension 4), school psychologists can provide training and consultation on the use of various interventions at all three tiers.
- Finally, school psychologists can ensure an orderly and supportive environment (dimension 5; Augustyniak, 2014) by aligning their school's MTSS framework with evidence-based practices that reflect sensitivity and concern for traditionally marginalized populations.

Importantly, MTSS implementation requires significant structural change and high levels of staff and administrative support. This makes taking a transformational leadership approach crucial in collaborating and inspiring others to make systems-level changes within their schools and districts.

Example
Jaime, a school psychologist in a large urban district, is a member of her school's MTSS team. Throughout the year, the team has been collecting academic and screening data. Jaime has noticed that students of color are being disproportionately identified by the systems being used as "at-risk" in math, and she shows the team how she reached this conclusion by modelling her data analysis strategy. Jaime suggests to the team that they reexamine the universal math curriculum to determine if it is meeting the needs of as many students as possible. Jaime also leads the team in setting a data-driven goal for reducing disproportionality.

Example
Ramone, a school psychologist in a medium-sized suburban district, is a member of their school's PBIS team. Currently, the team has well-developed academic practices in place and school-wide behavioral expectations. However, the school does not currently implement behavioral screening. Noticing that students of color and students whose English is a second language are disproportionately referred for special education based on behavior, Ramone advocates for adopting behavioral screening to help identify students that may need additional support and implement preventative interventions before the need to refer for special education services. Additionally, implementing a data-driven process to identify students in need of additional support reduces subjectivity in the referral process.

School Policies/Procedure Embedded within the implementation of a culturally responsive MTSS model is the examination of broad school policies (Briggs, 2013;

Shriberg & Moy, 2014). School policies should be fair, explicit, and consistent and in line with best practices; however, school policy does not often reflect this ideal. In fact, many school-wide policies have the potential to unfairly impact traditionally marginalized students (Rogers & O'Bryon, 2008). School psychologists can take the lead in critically examining all school policies, helping school teams recognize harmful policies, and advocating for the implementation of fair alternatives that contribute to equitable outcomes across the student body. The identification of problematic school policies and procedures can be aided by MTSS data, which should be examined for disproportionality. In taking the lead in advocating that ineffective, harmful, or unjust school policies be addressed, school psychologists can help develop a safe and supportive environment (leadership dimension 5) by helping ensure marginalized populations are not further disadvantaged by school policy.

Example
Dr. Noname works as a school psychologist in a public school district, which has decided to adopt school uniforms. Families are required to purchase the uniforms, and students face disciplinary consequences for uniform infractions. Several families struggle to afford the uniforms, resulting in higher rates of discipline referrals for students that are economically marginalized. Dr. Noname recognizes this and raises this issue to administration.

Also consistent with ensuring a safe and supportive environment (dimension 5; Augustyniak, 2014), school psychologists can also assist in the proactive development of explicit procedures that address issues faced by marginalized students. Students from marginalized backgrounds are at higher risk for being targeted (Rogers & O'Bryon, 2008; Williams & Greenleaf, 2012), necessitating that school staff effectively know how to manage these incidents. To help prepare staff, school psychologists can help develop training or professional development that addresses how to manage incidents related to different identity factors, helping to address lack of confidence in dealing with incidents of bullying or harassment (Bradshaw et al., 2013; Greytak et al., 2013). Through these school-wide trainings and the development of specific policy, school psychologists can take the lead in ensuring that staff responses to incidents of bullying or harassment based on factors such as limited wardrobe, religious-related clothing, gender identity, or sexual history which are appropriate and culturally sensitive. School psychologists should advocate for the development of clear and explicit policies that protect marginalized populations from discrimination or harassment.

While all school policies should be monitored for equity, the following policies and procedures may warrant special consideration and closer examination:

- Do school discipline policies disproportionately impact marginalized populations?

- What are school procedures for referring students for special education evaluation?
- What are the policies and procedures around grade retention?
- What are the policies and procedures around placement of students into AP classes or gifted and talented program?
- Are staff trained to appropriately respond to instances of bullying and harassment related to identity factors?
- Do proposed new school policies and procedures have evidence to support their use with culturally and linguistically diverse students?

Ethical, Professional, and Legal Guidelines Although it may be difficult to develop fair alternative policies and practices that can be implemented to create equity for students, school psychologists can take guidance from various professional resources. NASP's ethical codes, for example, can provide a helpful framework for guiding school psychologists in their advocacy work, encouraging school psychologists to "assume a proactive role in identifying social injustices that affect children and youth and schools, and they strive to reform systems-level patterns of injustice" (NASP, 2020, p. 53). School psychologists can take the lead in advocating for systems level change by incorporating aspects of these ethical principles within school policies.

In addition to professional ethical codes that provide aspirational goals, school psychologists can also look to professional bodies for specific guidance related to systemic change. NASP releases position statements related to working with marginalized populations frequently, including working with low SES, hard of hearing, indigenous communities, and many more (https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/policy-priorities/position-statements). In addition, both the American Psychological Association (APA) and American Counseling Association (ACA) have released multicultural and advocacy competencies, both of which can prove important resources for school psychologists looking to structure their school's systemic practices in ways that support marginalized students (APA, 2017; Ratts et al., 2007). By maintaining up-to-date knowledge on these professional guidelines, school psychologists can help educate and inform others regarding current standards on how to best advocate for marginalized students, positioning themselves as social justice leaders within their schools.

In addition to knowledge of their own professional standards, school psychologists should also remain up to date on current legal issues that have the potential to impact marginalized students. The law often fluctuates at federal, state, and local levels, requiring that schools remain abreast of legal implications for their students, for better or for worse (Briggs, 2013). Laws such as transgender bathroom laws, anti-discrimination laws, special education law, and immigration policies have the potential to either support or further marginalize some students (Jacob, 2013; Lemke, 2017). School psychologists can start by being knowledgeable regarding these legal issues; they can take knowledge one step further by advocating that fair laws become reflected and ingrained in their school policies and help lead school

teams in minimizing the potential for harm resulting from unjust legal regulations (Ratts & Greenleaf, 2018).

By continuously remaining up to date on the latest changes in ethical, legal, and professional guidelines, school psychologists can help ensure that their school policies are aligned with current standards in how to best serve marginalized students. Consistent with leadership dimension 5 (ensuring an orderly and support environment; Augustyniak, 2014), school psychologists can advocate as members and leaders of their teams to align their school policies with current guidelines in the field that facilitate safe environments for all students. By helping create school-wide policies and practices based on these professional standards, school psychologists help ensure that the needs of marginalized students are being protected and upheld by educational institutions.

Example
Ms. Foster, an early career school psychologist, has been seeing an increase in special education referrals for multilingual students. In seeking to develop explicit and fair assessment procedures within her school (a requirement of her professional ethics), Ms. Foster consults various guidelines for the assessment of culturally and linguistically diverse students. She reviews relevant special education law (IDEIA) for regulations surrounding CDL evaluations. She also refers to various NASP resources for suggestions and guidance on best practices for evaluating multilingual students. After reviewing these resources, she is able to meet with the school leadership team and develop school procedures that align with current guidelines in the field.

Advocacy For and With Students While school psychologists can certainly function as independent leaders, the transformational model of leadership calls for a focus on growth and personal development, in both the leader and within other members of the team. In addition, distributed leadership calls for the sharing of power among different stakeholders, allowing school psychologists to further resource strategically in their advocacy efforts (Dimension 2; Augustyniak, 2014; Augustyniak et al., 2016). Therefore, while a school psychologist can certainly be a leader in advocating *for* others at a systemic level, as described above, it also becomes important for school psychologists to become leaders in advocating *with* others. The ACA calls for advocacy on behalf of and with others at all levels of advocacy, including the individual, school, and public level (Ratts et al., 2007). In their advocacy, school psychologists should "consider if and when [they] should speak on behalf of others as opposed to working in collaboration to help create and support a platform for other to speak for themselves more effectively" (Shriberg & Moy, 2014, p. 26). This calls for the shifting of traditional leadership dynamics toward the sharing of leadership power with invested stakeholders, allowing marginalized students and individuals to create socially just, meaningful change that will be sustainable in the absence of the school psychologist.

Advocacy *with* others in schools starts by recognizing and empowering the students themselves, helping to support and encourage traditionally marginalized students to create their own change (Briggs, 2013; Shriberg & Moy, 2014). By empowering students to advocate for themselves rather than assume the role of primary advocate, school psychologists can facilitate the creation of socially just schools through student action (Pearrow & Pollack, 2009). School psychologists can help and encourage students to take their own action against unfair systemic practices, as identified by the students themselves. This necessarily involves sharing power and resources with students, which school psychologists can do and encourage others in the schools to do through facilitating empowerment-focused clubs, afterschool programs, and school-based social justice projects (Russell et al., 2009; Zimmerman et al., 2018). In this way, school psychologists can lead with instead of for, reducing the impact their own biases may have and recognizing the efficacy of marginalized students in creating change. School psychologists should lead by example in allowing this sharing of power, which may be difficult for many educational professionals to accept given tradition teacher-student roles. This view of leadership involves taking less of a leadership role, instead of empowering the students themselves to take the lead in addressing issues that most impact them.

Suggestions for student empowerment:

- Encourage students to form groups and clubs to further their own advocacy interests.
- Actively solicit feedback from students on what social justice issues need to be addressed at their school.
- Create opportunities for authentic student leadership (e.g., clubs, projects, classwork).
- Encourage staff to take a genuine and supportive stance toward student advocacy work.

In alignment with an ecological approach, advocacy with others and sharing of power should also incorporate stakeholders beyond the school building, particularly the caregivers of students from marginalized backgrounds (Cooper et al., 2010; Li & Vazquez-Nuttall, 2009). The development of strong family-school collaboration has been shown to impact all students' academic outcomes and social emotional health (Sheridan et al., 2019), including students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Kratochwill et al., 2009). Although a collaborative approach and sharing of power often requires a difficult systemic shift from traditional models of family-school relationships, "school psychologists can be key players on leadership teams who aspire to develop family-school partnerships," helping other school staff incorporate parents as true decision-making partners (Jones & Hazuka, 2012, p. 208). As part of this intentional leadership team, school psychologists can help strengthen family-school collaboration by revising tradition school-family roles and responsibilities, developing a collaborative school structure, and recognizing family marginalization (Cooper et al., 2010; Jones & Hazuka, 2012). Through collaboration in advocacy work with families and caregivers, school psychologists can help identify targets for social justice change that impact marginalized students

and families across settings and utilize a shared leadership approach to address barriers outside of the school. Again, school psychologists can lead other educational professionals by example, setting the stage meaningfully including caregivers in advocating against systemic marginalization.

Outreach and Engagement with the Community Going beyond even the home level, school psychologists as leaders in social justice advocacy should take steps to create and sustain partnerships with crucial community organizations to help develop even stronger systems of support for marginalized students (Jones & Hazuka, 2012; Williams & Greenleaf, 2012). Organizations such as community mental health centers, hospitals, police departments, or charities can offer opportunities for marginalized students and families to access resources (particularly mental health resources) and get connected with advocacy efforts themselves (Briggs, 2013; Hess et al., 2017). By including and empowering community organizations within school advocacy work, school psychologists can again help lead in collaboration with others to create change for marginalized populations and providing for equitable access to services. By helping to facilitate these connections, school psychologists can help lead the effort to create even broader systemic supports for marginalized students and families.

Suggestions for collaboration with community:

- Invite local organizations to speak at school events to address issues currently faced by students and families.
- Collaborate with community organizations to distribute resources that may be helpful to students and families.
- Maintain a list of active community organizations available for students and families.
- Reach out to community organizations for guidance on what advocacy efforts the school could engage in.
- Refer students and families to relevant community resources as necessary.
- Develop and maintain professional partnerships with community organizations in the area.

Example
Jordan works as a school psychologist in a district with a large population of students that have documented and undocumented immigration status. Recognizing the challenges this presents for many students, Jordan initiates a group for immigrant students. Upon the suggestion of the students, Jordan restructures to allow for family attendance. When several issues are raised that go beyond a school psychologist's expertise, Jordan reaches out to a local community center that frequently works with documented and undocumented immigrants, and individuals that are displaced, refugees, or asylum-seekers, Jordan asks them to participate in the group and provide resources. Jordan continues to facilitate the organization of the group and provide the space but transfers primary leadership to the students and families, allowing them to collaborate with the community agency in meeting important goals.

4 Conclusion

School psychologists are well positioned to serve as a leader and advocate for marginalized students. Emerging research suggests that the ability for school psychologists to emphasize values and target growth in other team members, while working toward achieving positive outcomes for students and systems, are important characteristics of leaders. These characteristics are well aligned with the field's mission of social justice. By striving to be an advocate and leader that creates change within themselves and others, school psychologists can also work to address structural inequities within schools at a systemic level in order to create environments that benefit all students and sustain equity for marginalized populations.

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