

# **School Psychologists: Promoting Competence, Capacity, and Opportunities for Children, Families, and Schools**

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## **Promoting Competence-Creating Capacity-Expanding Opportunities**

### **COMPETENCE: Children and Families**

#### **Predictors (Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2009)**

- Within child contexts: Intellectual functioning/problem solving, self-regulation, self-efficacy, beliefs, talents
- Family contexts: Close to parents, connections with extended family/adults, parents who are involved in education, faith activities, socioeconomic factors
- School/community contexts: Effective schools, friendships with peers, community opportunities/supports, culture, positive standards/relationships

#### **Promoting academic, social, emotional, and life competencies**

- Research demonstrates the relationship between social-emotional factors and academic achievement (e.g., Downer & Pianta, 2006; Elias & Haynes, 2008).
- Research supports impact of social-emotional-behavior interventions on academic competence, as well as social-emotional competence (e.g., CASEL, 2008).

#### **Issues in typical home-school collaboration practices (Christenson, 2004)**

- "School-to-home" model is predominant
- Distance, both physically and socially, between families and educators
- Limited resources for programs
- Limited opportunities for reaching all families
- Challenges related to culture and ELL
- Little consideration of the process of interaction and relationship building

### **CAPACITY: Schools and Communities**

#### **Research supports positive impact of:**

- Instructional excellence
  - High expectations for students
  - Student support services
  - School connectedness
  - Systemic strategies
  - Population-based services
- (Doll & Cummings, 2008; NASP, 2008; UCLA Center on Mental Health in the Schools, 2000; U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009)

#### **Strengths of school psychologists to help principals (Barbacane, 2009)**

Knowledge of:

- Learning
- Children's development
- Mental health
- Schools systems

- School psychologists' strengths cont.  
Expertise in:
- Using data and outcomes
- Research based strategies
- Individual strategies for students
- Prevention and early intervention
- School wide behavior and academic supports
- School wide mental health services
- Safe and healthy schools
- Home-school-community partnerships

#### **Is there a disconnect???**

- Identified strengths of school psychologists to help principals
- Principals' actual knowledge and recognition of the value of school psychologists?

## **OPPORTUNITIES: School Psychologists**

### **Critical Questions: Promoting and Preserving School Psychology**

#### **Who? Professional Identity---Who are school psychologists and what do they do?**

##### **School psychologists:**

- Apply knowledge and skills in both psychology and education
- Are essential and uniquely qualified school personnel
- Provide effective services to help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally
- Meet stringent criteria for graduate education and state credentialing
- Apply ethical, legal, and professional standards throughout all services

#### **Why? Why is there a current emphasis on promoting and protecting school psychology?**

##### **Factors impacting children, families, schools....AND school psychologists**

- State education budget cuts
- Reductions in school district staff and programs
- School accountability demands
- Family financial crises
- Three-tiered service delivery
- Expanded provision of school mental health services
- Others?

#### **Where are we promoting and protecting school psychology?**

- Local level
  - Classroom
  - Building
  - District
- State level
- National level
- What?

#### **What are we promoting and protecting?**

- For children, families, and schools?
- For school psychologists?

##### **We are promoting and protecting:**

- Programs/services/FUNDING
- Positions

- Access to school psychologists
- Maintaining/expanding roles and functions
- RTI; general and special education roles
- Influence
- Credentialing
- Title
- Scope of practice
- Standards/qualifications
- NCSP adoption/incentive
- Stakeholder awareness of our value
- Others?

#### **When? When should we implement strategies to promote and protect school psychology?**

- Responding to issues & threats
- Ongoing, proactive promotion/preservation

Threat  
Challenge  
To Increase Opportunity  
and  
Opportunity  
Challenge  
To Reduce Threats

#### **How? How do we implement effective actions?**

##### **Strategies to protect and promote practice and title**

#### **Our best proactive tools:**

- School psychologists' strong qualifications and effective roles

#### **State and national standards for school psychologists:**

- Define and communicate our strong qualifications and unique expertise
- Identify critical competencies for graduate education and credentialing
- Guide effective practice and proper ethical conduct

#### **NASP (2010) Standards Documents**

- Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services
- Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists
- Credentialing of School Psychologists
- Principles for Professional Ethics

#### **Model of Comprehensive and Integrated Services by School Psychologists**

- Purpose: Continue a strong foundation for graduate education, credentialing, and practice, as well as support for the profession

#### **Responding to threats to title and practice: APA's *Model Act for State Licensure of Psychologists***

- Serves as a template, or model, for psychologist licensure laws in states
- Has included an exemption for individuals credentialed by their State Education Agencies to use the title "school psychologist"
- Revision in 1987; new revision was needed

#### **History of MLA revision**

- Latest revision process began in 2006
- Proposed removal or restriction of the school psychologist exemption
- Drafts for public comments in 2007 and 2009
- 2007: 10,000 public comments

- 2009: 20,000 public comments
- Many individuals, as well as national groups, SEAs, LEAs, and others sent comments
- Thank you, state leaders, for your continued advocacy

#### **Our NASP Position**

- Specialist- and doctoral-level school psychologists are well-qualified to use the title “school psychologist.” TITLE IS IMPORTANT!
- SEAs have established authority to credential (and use titles!) and regulate/provide oversight for professionals who provide services in schools.
- The title “school psychologist” and our services are widely recognized; appears in many federal and state law and regulations.

#### **Good News-February 20, 2010: APA adopted a revised MLA that**

- Recognizes the right of State Education Agencies to credential and title

### **Strategies to promote our value and ensure our essential roles in schools**

#### **NASP (2009) Public Awareness Campaign: Key messages targeted to administrators/ principals**

- School psychologists are a unique, essential, and valuable part of the school team.
- In today’s tough economic climate, your school psychologist is a potentially untapped resource.
- Support the well-being of your school/ district by supporting school psychologists’ role and funding.

#### **School Psychology Awareness Week 2009**

- November 9-13
- “Possibilities in Action” partner program
- “POWER” award for children
- “Gratitude Works” program
- School Psychology Awareness Week (November 9-13, 2009)

#### **NASP’s professional collaboration and national advocacy**

- U.S. Senate hearing on “Children and Disaster Recovery” (12-2009)
- Congressional briefing on “Positive School Climate, Student Wellness, and Improved Academic Outcomes: Bringing Out the Best in Students and Schools” (11-2009)
- Collaboration on NASSP’s RTI-Breaking Ranks initiative
- IDEA Partnership activities
- Department of Education and SAMSHA consultation on and participation in children’s mental health and safe schools initiatives
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (NCLB) Reauthorization

#### **NASP (2010) document---*School Psychologists: Improving Student and School Outcomes***

- Summarizes our outstanding qualifications and effective school psychology services that will contribute to learning and mental health outcomes for children in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

#### **School psychologists’ outcomes demonstrated for:**

- Improved instruction and learning
- Supporting healthy successful students
- Creating safe, positive school climates
- Strengthening family–school partnerships
- Improving assessment and accountability

#### **NASP Periodicals: Research to Practice**

#### **PREPaRE Curriculum**

- A comprehensive school-based crisis prevention and intervention training curriculum

## **Newest Publications from NASP**

### ***Best Practices V* and Online Resource Center**

#### **Online resource pages include:**

- Chapter-based monthly Learning Events in the online Communities
- Chapter abstracts
- Expanded and annotated bibliographies with live links
- Links to online resources
- Discussion questions for graduate educators, students and supervisors to use in pre-service education and staff development
- Online CPD modules
- Featured chapter each month in CQ

#### **Extensive Resource Library**

- Position statements, fact sheets, handouts, etc.
- For school psychologists, parents, and educators
- Topics include
  - Crisis and Safety
  - Diversity
  - Health and Wellness
  - Helping Children Cope
  - Home and School
  - Instruction and Curriculum

#### **Online Professional Development & Social Networking Opportunities**

- Online Learning Events
- More than 30 Online Communities
- Podcasts
- Blogs
- NASP Facebook

#### **New NASP Workgroups**

- Early Career
- Graduate Education
- Expanded Student Development Workgroup

#### **Get involved with NASP and the profession!**

- Share your expertise
- Interact with colleagues
- Advocate for the profession
- Promote diversity awareness
- Outreach to parents and educators

#### **School psychologists have a rich history and a bright future!** NASP and the school psychology community will:

- Continue to stand up for school psychology... and title and practice of school psychologists
- Promote the value of school psychologists' services for children, families, and schools

#### **This is a critical time to promote the value of your expertise.**

- School psychologists are essential school professionals.
- School psychologists are uniquely and highly qualified.
- School psychologists assist with solutions for many issues related to children's learning and mental health.

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