

## Leveraging Essential School Practices, ESSA, MTSS, and the NASP Practice Model: A Crosswalk to Help Every School and Student Succeed

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) presents significant opportunities to improve school and student outcomes by implementing comprehensive school psychological services within multitiered systems of support (MTSS). MTSS offers an evidence-based framework for effectively coordinating and integrating services throughout the school system to ensure that *all* students succeed. Maximizing and sustaining these efforts requires schools and districts to promote and implement a set of essential school practices (defined below). School psychologists have specific expertise, knowledge, and skills to help schools employ these essential school practices and leverage ESSA policy opportunities. These skills and the broad range of services available from school psychologists are defined within the *NASP Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services*, more typically referred to as the NASP Practice Model. School psychologists are uniquely trained to provide a comprehensive range of services that enable schools to implement comprehensive systems of student supports, improve school and district effectiveness, and support improved outcomes for all students. Full realization of these efforts requires full funding of ESSA as Congress intended, effective blending of multiple funding streams, committed leadership, and consistent efforts to work toward the NASP recommended staffing ratio of 1 school psychologist for every 500–700 students.<sup>1</sup>

The table below outlines how ESSA connects with MTSS, essential school practices, and the broad role of school psychologists working within the scope of services described in the NASP Practice Model. To learn more about the NASP Practice Model, visit [www.nasponline.org/practicemodel](http://www.nasponline.org/practicemodel).

Essential School Practices	ESSA Policy Provisions	Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS)	Examples of Relevant School Psychological Services
<b>Effective, coordinated use of data that informs instruction, student and school outcomes, and school accountability</b>	<p>Accountability systems <i>must</i> include at least one indicator of school quality.</p> <p>Use of growth models and other methods <i>can</i> be used to measure student achievement.</p> <p>Specific funding streams require a school- or district-level needs assessment.</p>	<p>Universal screening and progress monitoring for academic and mental and behavioral health concerns are essential components of MTSS.</p> <p>School climate data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of school-wide, universal supports and services intended to improve conditions for learning.</p>	<p><b>School Psychologists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help schools and districts maintain accountability by assisting in data collection and analysis, progress monitoring, and effective problem solving.</li> <li>• Contribute to the comprehensive, valid, and reliable measurement of academic, social, emotional, mental, and behavioral health indicators.</li> <li>• Help school leadership teams to develop data-based targets for yearly school improvement goals.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The recommended staffing ratio for school psychologists is defined in the NASP Practice Model as one school psychologist for every 500–700 students when providing a comprehensive range of services. This ratio, along with the standards for the profession, were developed through a rigorous and transparent 3-and-a-half year process that included input from school psychologists, leaders, and affiliated group representatives. In total, more than 4,000 school psychologists and other stakeholders provided input that allowed for consensus.

		<p>Data-based decision-making is used to determine which students need targeted or intensive supports. Student progress is monitored at regular intervals to help educators adjust interventions as needed.</p> <p>Data are used to inform the selection and implementation of interventions to meet specific student needs.</p> <p>A student's response to interventions may help schools determine the need for more intensive interventions or a referral for special education eligibility consideration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effectively evaluate programs and initiatives focused on developing supportive learning environments.</li> <li>Consult with classroom teachers on how to embed formative assessment in order to inform instructional efficacy and to improve students' mastery of curriculum.</li> <li>Coordinate and help school and district leaders interpret data collected within MTSS.</li> </ul> <p><b>NASP Practice Model Domains</b>  <i>Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability</i>  <i>Research and Program Evaluation</i>  <i>School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning</i>  <i>Preventive and Responsive Services</i></p>
<p><b>Comprehensive, rigorous curricula provided to ALL students</b></p>	<p>States must set challenging achievement goals for <i>all</i> students and ensure that meaningful progress is made toward those goals.</p> <p>Federal funds may be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>social–emotional learning and activities to improve the mental and behavioral health of students;</li> <li>instruction in music, social sciences, civics, art, physical education, and other subjects that contribute to a well-rounded education; and</li> <li>professional development to improve staff capacity to meet the diverse needs of students.</li> </ul>	<p>MTSS supports high-quality, evidence-based curriculum with high expectations for <i>all</i> students.</p> <p>MTSS facilitates improved instruction and alignment of curricula across special and general education.</p>	<p><b>School Psychologists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and integrate school-wide programming to promote social–emotional and mental wellness for all students.</li> <li>Utilize culturally competent assessment to help set student goals, identify appropriate interventions, and measure progress toward those goals.</li> <li>Help select school-wide programs based on the needs of the school community.</li> <li>Design, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive range of interventions for students at risk for academic, social–emotional, or mental and behavioral health concerns.</li> <li>Work collaboratively with teachers in delivering effective differentiation strategies for students with diverse needs.</li> <li>Regularly provide professional development in services to school staff and families.</li> </ul> <p><b>NASP Practice Model Domains</b></p>

			<i>Diversity in Development and Learning</i> <i>School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning</i> <i>Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop</i> <i>Academic Skills</i> <i>Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop</i> <i>Social and Life Skills</i>
<b>Effective coordination of services across systems and within schools</b>	<p>ESSA authorizes funds for the development and maintenance of school–community partnerships.</p> <p>Federal funds may be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implementation of MTSS, positive behavioral interventions and supports, or other tiered models of support;</li> <li>• improving parent and family engagement; and</li> <li>• identification and elimination of barriers to coordination of services and integration of funding streams.</li> </ul>	<p>MTSS supports the integration of systems to support the academic, social–emotional, and mental and behavioral health needs of all students.</p> <p>MTSS facilitates effective collaboration and coordination among community-based systems and families.</p>	<p><b>School Psychologists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance coordination of efforts to improve school safety, including crisis prevention, intervention, and response.</li> <li>• Facilitate collaboration and coordination between school and community providers to ensure access to wraparound supports for students with the most significant needs.</li> <li>• Collaborate with parents and families to promote treatment integrity and improve intervention success at home and school.</li> <li>• Help develop school practices that enhance parent/family engagement.</li> </ul> <p><b>NASP Practice Model Domains</b>  <i>Consultation and Collaboration</i>  <i>Family–School Collaboration Services</i>  <i>School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning</i>  <i>Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop</i>  <i>Academic Skills</i>  <i>Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop</i>  <i>Social and Life Skills</i></p>
<b>Use of evidence-based comprehensive learning supports</b>	<p>Schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support must deliver evidence-based learning supports.</p> <p>Federal funds may be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implementation of MTSS, positive behavioral interventions and supports, or other tiered models of</li> </ul>	<p>Essential to MTSS is use of evidence-based instruction and interventions provided along a continuum of supports. Universal screening and progress monitoring are assessment tools used to determine what supports are needed, how to allocate resources, and to measure outcomes over time.</p>	<p><b>School Psychologists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help schools conduct comprehensive needs assessments to develop strategies to address attendance, poverty, trauma, violence, and other barriers to learning.</li> <li>• Collaborate with staff to provide school-wide instruction in antibullying strategies, self-advocacy, conflict resolution, stress management, problem solving, and other areas that promote social skills and mental and</li> </ul>

	<p>support;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• universal screening to identify students in need of support; and</li> <li>• addressing resource inequity, including availability of learning supports across districts.</li> </ul>		<p>behavioral health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver individual and small group counseling (including direct instruction in social skills).</li> <li>• Collaborate with teachers and school leaders to implement universal, targeted, and intensive academic and behavioral support programs using evidence-based practices.</li> <li>• Regularly engage in opportunities to maintain knowledge of current evidence-based practices to support learning specific to their roles and expertise.</li> <li>• Help school leaders develop and implement effective discipline strategies.</li> <li>• Serve as members of school committees such as student success teams and wellness teams.</li> </ul> <p><b>NASP Practice Model Domains</b></p> <p><i>Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability</i></p> <p><i>Research and Program Evaluation</i></p> <p><i>School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning</i></p> <p><i>Diversity in Development and Learning</i></p> <p><i>Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills</i></p> <p><i>Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills</i></p> <p><i>Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice</i></p>
<p><b>Integration of comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services into learning supports</b></p>	<p>Schools identified for targeted support may implement school based mental health services as part of a comprehensive school improvement strategy.</p> <p>Federal funds may be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activities to implement comprehensive services, such as wellness promotion, mental health screening, and mental health first aid programs; and</li> </ul>	<p>Services that support positive mental health and social–emotional learning are provided along universal, targeted, and intensive levels of support within MTSS.</p>	<p><b>School Psychologists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide mental and behavioral health services for individual students and groups of students.</li> <li>• Help implement wellness promotion programs such as Mental Health First Aid and social–emotional learning in classrooms.</li> <li>• Develop and monitor universal mental health screening processes to identify students in need of mental and behavioral health services, or concerns affecting the entire school community.</li> <li>• Provide professional development inservices to</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>professional development to improve school capacity to identify at-risk students and of relevant school staff to deliver mental and behavioral health interventions.</li> </ul>		<p>school staff and families addressing student mental and behavioral health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate the development, implementation, and evaluation of integrated service delivery systems.</li> </ul> <p><b>NASP Practice Model Domains</b>  <i>Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills</i>  <i>Data-Based Decision Making</i>  <i>Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice</i>  <i>School-Wide Preventative and Responsive Services</i>  <i>Consultation and Collaboration</i>  <i>Family–School Collaboration Services</i></p>
<b>Integration of school climate and safety efforts into school improvement efforts</b>	<p>States must report school climate, bullying, and harassment data on state report cards.</p> <p>States may use measures of school climate and/or school safety as part of their accountability system.</p> <p>Federal funds may be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>activities to improve school climate and safety; and</li> <li>professional development for school staff to improve climate and safety, including crisis response.</li> </ul> <p>ESSA authorizes Project SERV grants to help schools recover from a crisis.</p>	<p>MTSS facilitates the integration of multiple methods to improve student outcomes, including school climate and safety.</p> <p>MTSS helps target school-wide and individual strategies to improve school climate.</p>	<p><b>School Psychologists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and lead crisis prevention and response efforts at the district and school levels.</li> <li>Provide direct and indirect postvention services following a crisis.</li> <li>Help in the planning and development of evidence-based school and district-wide crisis response policies.</li> <li>Deliver professional development to improve school and staff capacity to improve school climate and safety.</li> <li>Evaluate and select <i>evidence-based</i> school climate assessment tools that lead to meaningful school improvement.</li> <li>Help in measuring and interpreting school climate and safety data, and using those data to set annual goals.</li> <li>Develop, implement, and evaluate practices that promote safe school environments.</li> <li>Conduct threat assessments.</li> </ul> <p><b>NASP Practice Model Domains</b>  <i>Research and Program Evaluation</i>  <i>Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop</i></p>

			<i>Social and Life Skills</i> <i>School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning</i> <i>Preventive and Responsive Services</i>
<b>Provision of high-quality, relevant professional development</b>	Federal funds may be used for job embedded, ongoing professional development for all school staff, including school psychologists.	<p>For MTSS to be successful, all staff must receive training in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence-based assessment, instruction, and intervention;</li> <li>universal screening and progress monitoring;</li> <li>data-based problem-solving and decision-making;</li> <li>strategies for providing a layered continuum of supports; and</li> <li>successful methods for partnering with family and community members.</li> </ul> <p>Select staff, including school psychologists, must receive ongoing professional development relevant to their specific roles and responsibilities, such as in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence-based techniques to improve the social-emotional and mental and behavioral health needs of students, and</li> <li>crisis prevention, intervention, and response.</li> </ul>	<p><b>School Psychologists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver professional development to teachers and other school staff on a range of topics, such as trauma informed practices, mental health first aid, crisis prevention, suicide prevention, effective discipline, and behavior management.</li> <li>Use data to help identify relevant professional development based on the needs of the school or district.</li> <li>Continually engage in professional development to understand best practices for students.</li> <li>May be trained in comprehensive school safety and crisis prevention, response, and recovery.</li> <li>Collaborate with school leaders to provide professional development for teachers and staff members about MTSS concepts, processes, and strategies.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>NASP Practice Model Domains</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Consultation and Collaboration</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice</i></p>
<b>Maintain a comprehensive accountability system</b>	<p>ESSA requires states to develop accountability systems that include indicators of academic achievement, English language proficiency, high school graduation rates, and school quality.</p> <p>Multiple data sources must be used to measure student</p>	MTSS supports the use of evidence-based formative assessments and regular monitoring of student progress. Students needing and receiving targeted academic supports are monitored for mastery of grade-level curricula and performance on nationally normed assessments.	<p><b>School Psychologists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help districts maintain accountability by applying best practices in data-based decision making and problem solving.</li> <li>Recognize the unique challenges when assessing culturally and linguistically diverse student populations.</li> <li>Effectively integrate and interpret multiple data sources to aid in decision making.</li> </ul>

	academic performance.  States and districts must offer support for schools in need of improvement.		<b>NASP Practice Model Domains</b> <i>Data-Based Decision Making</i> <i>Research and Program Evaluation</i> <i>Consultation and Collaboration</i>
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## DESCRIPTION OF ESSENTIAL SCHOOL PRACTICES

***Effective, coordinated use of data that informs instruction, student and school outcomes, and school accountability.*** Schools collect a multitude of data about student and school performance. Schools must have the capacity to collect, integrate, and interpret data that are relevant and capture the most important indicators of key outcomes. They also must be able to look at data in a coordinated fashion to identify connections that should influence decision-making related to instruction, programming, and learning supports and services. Examples of necessary student data include screening for academic and behavioral concerns, health data, engagement, performance on classroom assignments and standardized tests, and more. Examples of system and school-wide data include attendance and truancy data, discipline reports, school climate and safety indicators, teacher engagement and self-efficacy assessments, and student and family engagement information.

***Comprehensive, rigorous curricula provided to ALL students.*** All students, including high-performing students , English language learners, students receiving special education services, those struggling with barriers to learning, and those with disciplinary problems, should have access to a rigorous, high-quality balanced curriculum and high expectations for achievement. Students should receive instruction in subjects including reading, math, science, social studies, foreign language, physical education, and the creative arts. This instruction, and related assessments of progress, should be culturally and linguistically responsive to students’ individual backgrounds and circumstances. Rigorous curricula must provide opportunities for students to meaningfully engage with content; teach students how to access and evaluate the validity of information; build the capacity to conceive, develop, test, and communicate diverse ideas; and contribute to the ability to thrive in an increasingly competitive global economy. Schools should also make a sustained commitment to teach and hold students accountable for critical life skills such as social–emotional competency, self-control, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

***Effective coordination of services across systems and within schools.*** Multitiered systems of support (MTSS) include a cohesive data collection process that demonstrates student progress through the curriculum and toward goals regardless of whether they are receiving special or general education instruction. Effective coordination requires regular opportunities for peer-to-peer consultation focused on problem solving, assessment, and intervention among teachers, principals, and other specialized instructional support personnel. Equally important is the development of mechanisms to increase family engagement and supportive relationships between students and caring adults within the school and the community.

***Provision of evidence-based comprehensive learning supports.*** Learning supports are the resources, strategies, and practices that provide the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual supports that directly address barriers to learning and teaching, and that re-engage disconnected students. Learning supports within

MTSS provide a framework to promote success and wellness and prevent problems, coupled with a continuum of evidence-based interventions of increasing intensity for students in need of additional support.

***Integration of comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services into learning supports.*** Mental and behavioral health services are essential components of comprehensive learning supports, as students' mental and behavioral health underlies every aspect of learning. Access to school-based mental health services is linked to improved students' physical and psychological safety and reduces costly negative outcomes such as risky behaviors, disciplinary incidents, delinquency, dropout, substance abuse, and involvement with the criminal justice system. Importantly, mental health issues can also impact school culture and climate, which can affect the learning and sense of well-being of the entire student population. Comprehensive mental and behavioral health services, like other comprehensive learning supports, must be linguistically and culturally sensitive and are most effective when embedded within an MTSS framework. MTSS enables schools to promote mental health and wellness and identify and address problems before they escalate or become chronic and to provide increasingly intensive, data-driven services as needed.

***Integration of school climate and safety efforts into school improvement efforts.*** Feeling safe and supported are necessary conditions for students to learn and achieve. Schools enable teachers' ability to teach and students' ability to learn when we ensure that all students: (a) come to school feeling safe, welcomed, and respected; (b) have a trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school; (c) understand clear academic and behavioral expectations; and (d) see their role as positive members of the school community. Comprehensive school safety is supported when schools combine reasonable physical security measures (e.g., visitor check in procedures, locked doors) with efforts to enhance school climate, improve student engagement, foster respectful and trusting relationships among students and staff, and support overall student success. Similarly, school safety and crisis teams should be multidisciplinary and trained to address the continuum of prevention, planning, response, and recovery, with response and recovery building on ongoing positive behavior, risk assessment, safety, and mental health services.

***Provision of high-quality, relevant professional development.*** All school staff must have access to continuous, job embedded professional development that improves their capacity to address the unique needs of the school community and its students. Professional development should include classroom-based strategies for ongoing progress monitoring; practices for improved recognition of mental and behavioral risk; and teaching practices that promote positive and specific academic, social-emotional, and behavioral strategies for struggling students. Professional development should be targeted to the specific needs of professionals within the school rather than one-size-fits-all training for staff at large.

***Maintaining a comprehensive accountability system.*** School accountability systems must use multiple indicators of student outcomes including academic achievement, behavioral health indicators, progress toward life goals, perceptions of the school environment, college and/or career readiness skills, indicators of educator effectiveness, and factors that contribute to positive learning environments, including school connectedness and safety. Effective accountability systems help identify and offer the appropriate supports needed for schools struggling to meet student needs and allow a reasonable time to improve and appropriate response when schools fail to progress.

## **FOUNDATIONAL RESOURCES AND SYSTEMS**



**NASP Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services.** The NASP Practice Model represents NASP's official policy regarding the delivery of school psychological services and is one of four major parts of NASP's 2010 professional standards. In addition to the NASP Practice Model, the standards cover ethical principles, training, and certification. The NASP Practice Model is not a job description; rather, it identifies what services can reasonably be expected from school psychologists. Specifically, the model delineates the 10 domains of practice in which school psychologists are trained and the organizational principles that need to be in place in school districts to support effective service delivery.

**Multitiered systems of support .** MTSS describes a framework for providing comprehensive systems of differentiated supports. Data-driven decisions regarding instruction and intervention are provided in increasing intensity (i.e., tiers) based on student need. Tier 1, or universal supports, typically refers to services available to all students (e.g., wellness/skills promotion and school-wide programs). Tier 2 services (targeted) are available to some students identified as needing some additional services or supports (e.g., small group counseling, tutoring, targeted behavioral skills training). Tier 3 refers to more intensive services for individuals or small groups and is usually limited to only 5–10% of students (e.g., individualized instruction, intensive therapy, wraparound services).

**Adequate and integrated funding sources.** ESSA offers states and districts more flexibility to blend various funding streams (e.g., Title I, Title II, and Title IV) to provide high-quality instruction, professional development, and comprehensive learning supports based on the unique needs of the school community. This allows for a more holistic review of the needs of the school and where funds can be used most effectively.

**Adequate staffing ratios.** NASP recommends a ratio of 1 school psychologist per every 500–700 students, along with appropriate and adequate professional supervision, in order to provide comprehensive school psychological services. School psychologists able to provide a broad range of services to *all* students and families to improve school climate and safety, remove individual barriers to learning, and ensure that students are engaged, attentive, and available for learning. However, due to inadequate staffing ratios, they often must limit their range of services to a small subset of students, leaving fewer opportunities for prevention and early intervention services.

## RELEVANT NASP RESOURCES

NASP *Model for Comprehensive and Integrated Psychological Services* (NASP Practice Model)

<http://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/nasp-practice-model>

NASP Practice Model's 10 Domains of Practice

<http://www.nasponline.org/practice-model-domains>

NASP Practice Model Organizational Principles

<http://www.nasponline.org/practice-model-organizational-principles>

NASP Practice Model Implementation Guide

<http://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/nasp-practice-model/nasp-practice-model-implementation-guide>

NASP 2010 Professional Standards

<http://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification>

Ready to Learn, Empowered to Teach: Guiding Principles for Effective Schools and Successful Students

<http://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/ready-to-learn-empowered-to-teach>

A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/a-framework-for-safe-and-successful-schools>

School Psychologists: Qualified Health Professionals Providing Child and Adolescent Mental and Behavioral Health Services

<http://www.nasponline.org/white-papers/qualified-mental-health-professionals>

The PREPaRE School Safety and Crisis Prevention and Intervention Training Curriculum

<http://www.nasponline.org/professional-development/prepare-training-curriculum>

NASP Online Learning Center

<https://nasp.inreachce.com>

Download the Crosswalk and related advocacy and communications planning resources [www.nasponline.org/practice-model/ESSA-MTSS-crosswalk](http://www.nasponline.org/practice-model/ESSA-MTSS-crosswalk)

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